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Moore: Good afternoon this is Kate Moore for the National Parks Service and today is the twelfth of July 1994 and I'm in Logan, Utah at the home of Margarita Astel who came from Germany in September 1927 at the age of 13 years old. Now why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth please?

Astel: My name is Margarita Alfreda Foerster Astel [sp]. I was born in Germany, Saxony June 20th 1914.

Moore: And what was the name of the town that you were born in?

Astel: Nuedorf, N-E-U-D-O-R-F in Erzebirge, E-R-Z-G-E-B-I-R-G-E.

Moore: Alright. And what size town was that?

Astel: Very very small.

Moore: About?

Astel: They did mostly mining for silver and quartz so it was kind of hilly.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: The size I don't know.

Moore: Size was mall [not understood] small.

Astel: Small. Mhmm.

Moore: What was your father's name?

Astel: My father's name was Ernst A. Foerster. F-O-E-R-S-T-E-R.

Moore: And what was his occupation?

Astel: He was in the service at first and then he was retired from that to a conductor in the railroad. Passenger railroad.

Moore: And that was in Germany?

Astel: Uh-huh.

Moore: Mhmm. What did your father look like?

Astel: He was very distinguished gentleman. Very dark and he had a little mustache at times. We always thought he was from a Jewish race but we couldn't hook in.

Moore: And how tall was he about would you say?

Astel: Oh what was five, oh about five-five, five-six, real short.

Moore: [superposed] Eyes? And you said very dark eyes?

Astel: Very very, black almost.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And his skin was kind of like mine on an olive tint.

Moore: Mhmm. And do you have any, what about his personality and temperament?

Astel: Very outgoing. He could get mad or angry but mostly even tempered.

Moore: And what, is there a story about your father that you associate with your childhood?

Astel: He was a disciplinarian, very firm and when he spoke (laughs) you did what he said (laughs).

Moore: And what was your mother's name?

Astel: My mother's name was Ella E. Fischer F-I-S-C-H-E-R.

Moore: And what was her occupation? If any?

Astel: She was a housewife.

Moore: And describe what she looked like?

Astel: She was fair, blond, blue eyes, her skin was very fair; just the opposite but she was, she was, she wasn't as friendly or outgoing. She had a different temperament.

Moore: Like how was her temperament then would you say?

Astel: It was soft, feminine.

Moore: And what were her chores around the house then?

Astel: She was quite talented, she could draw paintings and things but she never did that for, you know, outside. And she did, she was a very good cook, I'm not, and baking. That was, and the house, she kept neat and very attractive home.

Moore: Did you have servants at all?

Astel: No.

Moore: Okay. Is there a story about your mother that you associate with your childhood?

Astel: Not really.

Moore: Okay. What about brothers and sisters? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Astel: I have one sister. She lives in Salt Lake.

Moore: And she is how much younger than you then?

Astel: Six years younger.

Moore: Mhmm. And what is her name?

Astel: Dorothea and that's D-O-R-O-T-H-E-A Foerster Carlson C-A-R-L-S-O-N.

Moore: Mhmm. And do you remember your house in Germany, you were thirteen when you came. Could you describe where you lived before you came to the United States?

Astel: Yes, that was in Chemnitz, Saxony. That's a large industrial city in the south.

Moore: (superposed) [not understood]

Astel: C-H-E-M-N-I-T-Z. Now it is Markstadt M-A-R-K-S-T-A-D-T. And it is a south eastern part of Germany. It is close to Czechoslovakia, you spell that and (laughs) Austria (laughs).

Moore: Mhmm. Now,

Astel: And our house was an apartment, six stories and we had a butcher in the bottom, in the corner and we lived on the first floor. We had the apartment up there now that's one thing you have to understand, the apartments, you couldn't go and just say well I like this and I want to move in. You had to go to the county courthouse and there they gave you an apartment, assigned an apartment to you. And that was yours and when we start to leaving, we sold our apartment to a Jewish family. They wouldn't have had any place to go. That's the way they, newcomers would get apartments by buying one from the old people that lived there. Then we don't have any more right to go back.

Moore: Mhmm. Now what about lighting? What type of lighting was in that apartment?

Astel: Gas.

Moore: Gas.

Astel: They had gas lights, mhmm.

Moore: What about heating?

Astel: We had a large flat coal stove, it was in a corner and that would heat the apartment.

Moore: What about water? What was your water source?

Astel: That came in pipes, you know into the house.

Moore: So you had running water?

Astel: Yes, we had running water.

Moore: What about toilet facilities?

Astel: The toilets were, we had to go down four or five steps. We had to go out of the apartment, go down those steps and then they had four or five toilets in like a closet you know. And that was four the four or five tenants that lived on that floor, and that was a flush toilet.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: I know I had to scrub the hall floor, every so often it was our turn (laughs).

Moore: Now did you have a garden at all outside the apartment?

Astel: No.

Moore: And what about furniture? What type of furniture, was it store bought or [not understood].

Astel: (superposed) Yes, it was store bought, I know the bedroom furniture was blonde or light and they had these marble tops, the dresser and them. And the kitchen furniture was about like we have now.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: Not these chairs. And we had a sofa in our front room, and easy chairs and I can't remember everything else but it was, it was like we, modern day.

- Moore: How many rooms were in that apartment?
- Astel: Well there's a bedroom, and a large kitchen, and a front room and the hallway.
- Moore: Mhmm. And you said your mother was a great cook, could you, what was your favorite food as a child?
- Astel: Oh there's many. *Sauerbraten* [German pot roast], and let's see, she made something with the hamburger, I can't [not understood], but mostly was regular German food, and *wienerschnitzel* [breaded veal], I guess they know how to spell that (both laugh).
- Moore: What about the kitchen, describe the kitchen? What was the kitchen like?
- Astel: It was a large square room and that stove was built in, and then we had a, it's like a two burner with the gas the burner that was on a stand that was, belonged to the apartment. And the rest of the furniture, we had a small sofa, there a table and chairs. My mother had a sewing machine, she was a good seamstress. She made all our clothes, and a large window, and we had what we called *jalousin*, that's French and I think it's J-A-L-O-U-S-I-N. They're similar to our blinds now, like these.
- Moore: Uh-huh. Venetian blinds.
- Astel: [superposed] Venetian blinds. Mhmm.
- Moore: And how did you keep food cool?
- Astel: I don't know.
- Moore: Alright. Now, what was meal time like? Did you eat meals as a family or was it separately or-?
- Astel: No, that was strictly family except noon, cause Father usually was at working. But they specific times we had, and you better be there or you don't eat. (laughs).

Moore: And were there any other family members nearby, where were your grandparents?

Astel: Oh, they lived quite a ways away. They lived down in Nuedorf, and we were in Chemnitz so I didn't get to see them very often but when I did, my parents put me on the train and then I was turned over in the baggage cart for a conductor to take care of me (laughs). That's how we went down to see them.

Moore: How did your father get to work every day?

Astel: I guess he walked.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: Cause there were no cars in those days.

Moore: Mhmm. And were you especially close to anyone in the family? Who were you closest to in the family?

Astel: My sister.

Moore: Your sister, younger sister.

Astel: Uh-huh.

Moore: And do you have any anecdotes about your family members that you remember?

Astel: Well I had two more sisters but one died at almost four years and the other one died just a week old. But I just remember a little about it. Those times, the people didn't speak much about to children about whatever goes on in in the family. And I remember though, we all had diphtheria. And this four year old, she started, she had it. And we were quarantined in, we had nuns came to, I guess that was their service. And they came every day, they had black garb on you know and their hoods. And I remember I would get these shots in my leg so I wouldn't get diphtheria so

much and my dad mother, all of us, but she died and I remember that. And I remember then we were moving from that place, the doctor insisted we should get a different apartment, and the city gave us this in the newest section of town where they all these tall apartment buildings. And that's when I remember when they, you know, buried my sister.

Moore: And what do you remember about that burial, how was it done at that time?

Astel: Well I know they took her to the cemetery, up in Germany. I don't know if they have it this or not but they have a large building in front, at the entrance of the cemetery. And in that building, it's called the morgue, where they put the deceased, and they open their casket and they show them that way, for two-three days. And then the family goes there and the burial is from there out to the cemetery. And most of their graves, they had these high, what do you call them, foundation-like?

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: Around the grave.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: [superposed] They were encircled. And then in the center, the family would plant flowers and take care of the graves.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: They were well kept, these cemeteries.

Moore: And what happened after a burial? Was there a dinner or was there any?

Astel: I don't think so.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: It's very vague.

Moore: Do you remember why the doctor told you to get out of that apartment?

Astel: It was very depressing for my parents.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: So they thought a new environment, a new, you know change would be good.

Moore: After the loss of the child.

Astel: [superposed] After the pass mhmm.

Moore: Alright now, what about religious life? What religion were you as a child?

Astel: My parents, we were Lutherans.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And I remember, I went to the Lutheran Sunday-School. And I remember, you know, these churches, Lutheran church and Catholic and all these churches, oh beautiful buildings, they're just outstanding. And they, we used to have our Sunday-School class inside, in the church, in the chapel and we would, every two-three benches there'd be another teacher with another little group of children to teach Sunday-Schools. And that's where I started my church training. But then after this sister died then my parents, when they moved to a different section, they heard about the Mormonism; about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day saints, and that's what they joined.

Moore: So it was the dea-, do you think it was related to the death of your sister?

Astel: I think so, because they kind of turned kind of bitter, my dad especially. He said he couldn't be a just god to take an innocent child like that. And she was a beautiful child; she was blonde, just lighter than I am. But, you know it was just the way life is sometimes and.

Moore: Now before that, before your sister died, what were the- how often did your parents go to church?

Astel: Oh I don't know. I don't think they were over religious or anything. They saw that I went to the church, when we moved. The old place, I don't even remember where the church was.

Moore: Oh alright, so the new place, where was the church in relation to where you lived?

Astel: Just about a block behind us.

Moore: And how was this new place different from your old place? How was it better than the doctor?

Astel: Oh it was new.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: New section, and it was entirely different.

Moore: How? How so?

Astel: The streets were square (laughs) for one thing, and more stores there and we had a park not about half a block from where we are and then they had these gardens, families have their own gardens there. It was entirely different setup. We were, first we were in the old section.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: When we had moved up from Erzebirge.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And that's the place they gave us at that time. But the schools were right across the street from there. And so, but the new section was better.

Moore: So, after the death of your younger sister, your parents then, how did they get connected to the Mormon church?

Astel: Through me (laughs).

Moore: So it was you?

Astel: I was, had a girlfriend across the street. And she and her mother and her grandmother were members of the church. And you know, in those days we would trade pictures or little booklets and things and I gave this girl pansy, it was a picture of a pansy, it was a pretty picture and she gave me a little pamphlet called "friendly discussion" and I brought home and put it in my toy box. And my mother always at night, she cleaned the box out and she found that and the next morning she asked me "where did you get this?" and scared me I thought I had done something wrong. And I told her from my friend and she read it and evidently, I haven't read the pamphlet myself, but evidently it sparked something and so she asked this girl if her grandmother would take her with her to the bible classes which was on a Wednesdays.

And that was a long walk from our place to where they held their church and they had to go through an old old cemetery. But she of course was very kind and she said "yes I'll be happy to take you." And so that's how they started but my dad didn't want anything to do with religion, after that. And so then mother she, the missionaries, they got ahold of them and they came. And they gave my mother this book of Mormon and so she read that and it sounded true to her and so she, a wise woman you know, she opened this certain section in the book and she laid it on the table and my dad being a conductor he was, comes at late hours. When he came home, he saw the book and he read a little and he got more interested and more interested. So then, they asked if the missionaries wouldn't come to the house and teach them, it was just was strange how all this worked together. And so they had the missionaries come once a

week, they came to dinner and they told them about the gospel. And I remember this, times were not plentiful but we never suffered. Weren't hungry or anything and but all week long mother would save specialties so she could have that big meal for those two young fellas that came from that came from America. And that's how it just all started.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And-

Moore: They speak German to you then?

Astel: Yes.

Moore: Yes they did.

Astel: It was all in German.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: Because those missionaries had to learn German.

Moore: Well then, how did your life change after that?

Astel: Well, for one thing, the church, they have what they call the- I can't think of oh come on here. Word of wisdom, we then by that, we believe in no smoking and no drinking hard drinks liquor that. And of course my dad, he smoked tobacco, he smoked pipes or cigars because he would get a lot of cigars on the trains. And so when my sister died with diphtheria, when the doctor checked him he said "you don't need any shots, you've got enough poison of nicotine in your throat, it's white." So he wouldn't give him any shots. Now you see how strong that tobacco was. But he drank beer and we always had what we called in Germany *liqueur* [sp]. You know how that and we had a coal man and his wife would bring coal in before winter and they would some *liqueur* [sp] and mother would buy it. And we put it away and it was usually food *liqueur* [sp] and I know they had a chocolate

liqueur [sp]. That's another story. And so when they started investigating the church, dad says "well, I'll have to try and if I join that church, I want to do it right," he said. So he quit smoking in three days, that's how strong. If he decided something, he went through. Then they used to have on Friday nights he had some friends some in and they would play, oh I don't know, cards or something. And they would take beer and make beer soup, I don't know how you do it, but they heat beer, what they have a-. So then he quit all that. And then they didn't want to drink the *liquor* [sp] so they gave that away. And they had one bottle before they joined the church and I got ahold of it. I was just a youngster you know, before they joined it so it must be seven years old. And mother and dad, they when they had wash days then they went to the mangle to iron their clothes. And then so I was with my sister alone and like children I, we snooped around and we found that bottle of chocolate *liqueur* [sp] and then well it looked interesting. The bottle was green, I don't know, and so I was giving my sister some of that and I drank some of that and we ended up under the table, (laughs) sound asleep when the parents came back. So I can't say I was never drunk because (laughs) because I was, that's just a [not understood] (both laugh).

Moore: Now what about your holiday celebrations? How were they? In Germany?

Astel: Oh the Christmas is a big holiday. And we always have two holidays, that's the national. And you have Christmas eve where they really celebrate and we have goose for Christmas and a big tree and it's usually very well decorated. We have Santa Claus comes on Christmas eve and then Christmas Day you play around. And the next holiday, the next day, you go visiting friends and family if you have them. And then, let's see, there's about two-three weeks before Christmas where they call it, oh what we call that day, when Santa Claus comes around to see if you've been good all year and you have to usually recite something. And their

Santa Claus has a long coat on and big pockets and he has a switch in the pocket and in the other hand he has a bell. And he comes to your door and he rings his bell. And then oh we children you run around you know, scared, and he talks to you and he wants to know if you've been good, what you've done in school and he knows everything. And it's, I guess more of a scary tactic for the children. But it was fun and I remember it.

Moore: What about school life, do you remember school?

Astel: Yes, the schools are separated. I mean boys and girls, you never have them together. And school, you sit in your desk and fold your hands and you're quiet. You don't talk. And of course the discipline is different than we've ever had here. I know, of what I had in New York. But I guess the teaching is harder, they push harder than they do over here and always have done. I know I was thirteen when I came over here and I had already, they teach you knitting and crocheting and tatting and these hand craft and we had already had to make a pair of socks or stockings. And they're not easy to knit because you have to, your toe and your heel. But we had taught, they had taught us that then I had made, we had learned *haudanger* [sp] that cut out work. And we had to make a handkerchief holder and they graded us on those. And we learned all kinds of fancy stitches for embroidery work. And so, over here, they don't do that.

Moore: Mhmm. What about subject? What was your favorite subject in school?

Astel: Hmm. I really can't say if I had a favorite one or not. I know I liked numbers.

Moore: Now did you learn English before coming to the United States?

Astel: Yes. Two years, I was, but that wasn't general. They took the ones that were in a certain, what do you call it, category? Certain average, what do you call it?

Moore: [superposed] Grade average?

Astel: Grade average, yeah. And they took you in they put you in what they call higher school. And I know I had, we had a green and white ribbon across our front, our dress. And we had a cap, white student cap with green and white ribbon around it. That was our uniform, we wore uniforms out there.

Moore: Mhmm. Now what was the name of that school you went to?

Astel: It was just higher school and I guess, at that age, then from there I don't know, fifteen-sixteen they probably evaluate you and you go on.

Moore: And where, what was, that, you say that was a higher school in which town was that?

Astel: That was in Chemnitz.

Moore: Yeah, and how far from home was the school?

Astel: Hmm.

Moore: How did you get there?

Astel: I can't remember, I guess we walked.

Moore: Mhmm. And what about, how many students per classroom were there?

Astel: Oh-.

Moore: Fair guess would you say?

Astel: Oh maybe twenty.

Moore: So it wasn't particularly crowded?

Astel: No, no it wasn't.

Moore: And the school itself, the building, how big was it?

Astel: Oh, there were pretty good sized bricks, school, brick buildings. And they had wire, high wire fencing around the whole playground and all.

Moore: Now what year did your family change then, how old were you when your family changed to the LDS church?

Astel: I was about close to eight.

Moore: Did you ever suffer any persecution in Germany for being Mormons?

Astel: My parents were disowned, by both families. And well, your neighbors, they kind of looked at you but you just went your way.

Moore: What about at school, were you singled out at school at all?

Astel: Not so much in Germany, we were too young. But in America, you just kept quiet and you went your way and they went their way and so I didn't have many problems. I have friends and I had black girl was a friend of mine, Jewish friends, I had Catholic girlfriends and we got along fine. We accepted each other as a person, not what religion you belonged to.

Moore: And that was in New York?

Astel: That was in New York. Mhmm.

Moore: [superposed] right. Well back in Germany, what did you do for entertainment as a child?

Astel: I didn't get much entertainment because I was handicapped.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: I just got over that rheumatic fever.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And so the Doctor, the only way they treated you is with hot packs and rest. So you were in bed most of the time.

Moore: What age did you have rheumatic fever then?

Astel: What age?

Moore: Yeah.

Astel: Real 6, about six I imagine.

Moore: About 6 years old?

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: So from 6 to 13 you were still ailing a bit, or?

Astel: Oh yes, I could not go swimming. They wouldn't let me. And my friends, we used to have these wooden hoops. You know you run with them, have a stick and play ball and you roller-skate and stuff like that. And I was not allowed to that, but that was all we knew, was during that period, that.

Moore: [superposed] You should take it easy?

Astel: Should take it easy. To get over it.

Moore: Now, how did you come to the United States? What motivated your family and who came first?

Astel: My father came first, he came in June. Because financial problems turned up and so there was only enough money for one. And my mother and my sister and I, they had sold the apartment so we moved in with a widow lady whose son was on a mission, there was that bedroom available. And we came in September then.

Moore: Now, your father sponsored his own trip.

Astel: Right.

Moore: How did he get through, who sponsored him in the United States? Did anyone sponsor him?

Astel: I don't think so. We were going to come to Utah and then when he had to come alone, he decided to stay in New York. He had a cousin there, a married cousin. And that's where he stayed.

Moore: Where in New York?

Astel: Astoria.

Moore: Queens.

Astel: Queens, mhmm.

Moore: Okay. And what was the cousin, hold we're going to switch the tapes now and take a break here.

Astel: Okay.

Moore: Alright, so your father came first to the United States, you said he came to a cousin. What was your cousin doing at that time in New York, professionally?

Astel: Her husband was in the jewelry business.

Moore: Mhmm. And your father, do you remember your father leaving?

Astel: Yes.

Moore: And do you remember selling the apartment?

Astel: Yes.

Moore: And what was the attitude of your parents for this move?

Astel: They were quite, what shall I say? Happy or joyful, to look ahead to see what their new life would be like.

Moore: And what did he come here? What was he, what was your family looking for here?

Astel: Well it was, the main thing was the church. Because they felt they would better accepted and opportunities would be more open.

Moore: For them here?

Astel: For them and for us two girls.

Moore: And were they going anywhere specifically, originally to Utah? Why there? Why to Utah, where they wanted to?

Astel: That's the head of the church. That's where they wanted to be, with their own people.

Moore: Mhmm. Now, your father came in June?

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: And what did he find as work here?

Astel: He, when in Germany, when he was with the railroad, then they retired a lot of people or laid them off or transferred them from the passenger division to the freight division. And of course, on the railroad you worked Sundays. And my dad didn't want to do that anymore so he put in for retirement and he was in his thirties and this was unheard of for a young man. But, it came through, his retirement so he received a pension. And so then he changed, he had to find another job, change his occupation. And he tried several things and then in Chemnitz is the, or was the Rineke, I think it's R-E-I-N-E-K-E Machinist factory, *large concern* [not understood]. And that's where dad went and started as an apprentice. And that's how he learned to be a machinist. When he came to America, he went to, oh dear, to this large factory they have a, they make large chandeliers for railroads and the iron gates and this kind of stuff. And that's where he got a job and worked quite well while he was there.

Moore: Mhmm. Now back up a bit, before your father left, did your parents sell their furniture and everything first?

Astel: [superposed] Oh yes, oh yes.

Moore: [superposed] Do you remember what they kept?

Astel: Well, mostly household items, no large pieces like any furniture. I know I kept my big doll. I had a beautiful great big baby doll. And then my mother gave it away in America. [not understood] (laughs). But there wasn't any toys or things like that that we could bring.

Moore: Were there any family relics? Anything from the family that you kept? A bible (vocal pause).

Astel: No. My sister got my dad's and mother's bible but it was a small one.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And no, there wasn't anything like that.

Moore: Now when your father left did you give him a farewell party or dinner?

Astel: I don't know, his friends might have but I wasn't included so (laughs) can't remember that.

Moore: And where you lived while he was away was a bedroom. Of Someone's apartment?

Astel: [transposed] Uhuh. Right.

Moore: And what was that like? Did you have to go to a new school or anything?

Astel: Yes, I went but it was only, they knew it was temporary. My records, my school records and things had all been packed and shipped so they took me in. Of course they probably found information from the other school.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: But that's-.

Moore: Okay. So you came in September. Do you remember leaving and packing to leave?

Astel: I, well there wasn't too much to pack. Because the other things had been packed, we thought we would all go together.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: At one time. So what we had, we went up to Hamburg.

Moore: How?

Astel: By train.

Moore: Did you have to say goodbye to relatives before you left?

Astel: No. They didn't want us to go and they was going to keep me, my grandparents and so we didn't go back down to say goodbye.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: But we went up to Hamburg, and I've always been frightened of water. And when we had to get across the gang plank, you know, I thought we was going to fall down (laughs) between the ship and the docks. But we saw that big ship, it was the Westphalia [sp] W-E-S-T-P-H-A-L-I-A I think it is. And we had very very rough crossing.

Moore: Now what did you br, did you bring any food with you?

Astel: Oh no.

Moore: No.

Astel: M-mm.

Moore: And were there any other families from your village that went?

Astel: No. We were the only three from our group.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: But we made friends on ship, it was a full ship. There's nothing, overcrowded.

Moore: Did you have wait over night?

Astel: To get on board?

Moore: Yes.

Astel: We could have done, I don't remember that.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: I don't remember, I just remember going into, onto the ship. But then I.

Moore: [superposed] What were you wearing?

Astel: Oh don't ask me, a dress (laughing) I guess. I don't remember those little details.

Moore: Where in the, what about the conditions on the ship? What type of accommodations did you have?

Astel: We were, had a cabin with I think there were four bunks but it was just Mother and us two girls in it.

Moore: Was it, what class was it?

Astel: Passenger I guess?

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And I know we had a, it was like a, a what do you call it? A closet, oh not to big about this size. And they had water basin in it, and a mirror and things like that. But we were all seasick, it was horrible.

Moore: And was it the first time you had ever taken [not understood] on the water?

Astel: [superposed] Yes, mhmm.

Moore: And the first time for your mother?

Astel: Yes.

Moore: And what about the food? Were you able to eat the food?

Astel: Very good food, it was the Cunard line C-U-N-A-R-D. Very good cuisine, very good. And the service with the stewards and it was very good, it was excellent. They had a ship doctor and he was really, went out of his way to meet all the passengers and see that they were okay.

Moore: Speaking of doctors, did you have a medical examination before you left?

Astel: Oh yes, about a year before. In those days, each country had a quota and to come to the United States and when that quota was full, you just too bad. You have to wait another year. And we had to go to Berlin, which is a large city up north from us and there we have the American doctors that check you, really give you a complete check. And on my visa, was a large letter. We never paid any attention to that. And my mother had varicose veins, large ones. And she was afraid they wouldn't give her a visa, and then they wasn't going to give us even the entrance visa to come. And there was a friend of my dad's was there, of ours and he and his family and he says "Oh I've known this girl all my life, she's okay." And so they put that on my letter and that was it. So we got our visa but when we then tried to come in, that's where our problems started.

Moore: Alright so let's back up a little bit. Do you remember, what do you remember about boat trip? Anything happen that you had never seen before on that boat trip?

Astel: Yes, they buried a baby at night.

Moore: How?

Astel: They wrapped it in oil cloth or something like that. And then they had a big chute and they shot it down into the ocean. And there was some lay priest or somebody there, I noticed he was saying a prayer or whatever.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And I know I cried, I said that wasn't right. [not understood] And we saw, when we came closer to this side of the ocean; we had a lot of porpoises following the ship. And they'd fly out of the water. And then on the water there was, we came to the gulf stream and that was this kind of orange like cork was on the water and I kept asking what that was. And there was an old English gentleman, had had crossed the ocean man times, and he said "that's the gulf stream." He said, "if you jump that, that's warm. And if you jump on the other side, it's cold." I was kind of strange to accept that but anyway that was one of the things.

Moore: Did you find any other German children on board?

Astel: No. Strangely, we were the only two German girls, little ones.

Moore: Mhmm. And what about, were you able to go on deck?

Astel: Oh yes. But we were out thirteen days and eleven days I was seasick. So when I came out deck every once in a while, and you see the ship go with the waves; and even today (laughs) I see that on water it just makes me sick.

Moore: So what, do you remember seeing land for the first time or hearing about land?

Astel: When we got into Boston first, we landed there; and we saw land coming and I thought it was where we would get off and they said "no, you have another day." And so we saw Boston.

Moore: Mhmm. And then did you, when you went to New York then?

Astel: Yes.

Moore: And what do you remember about that?

Astel: Not too much except that we were all excited to think that we finally had reached our goal and we wouldn't be (laughs) seasick anymore.

Moore: Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

Astel: Oh yes, they called us and they said "there is the Statue of Liberty." So we went past it, we all waved. It was, it was exciting.

Moore: Did you know what the Statue of Liberty was?

Astel: I didn't know what it was, really what it stood for. It was just a beautiful statue, it was great to see.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: After nothing but water.

Moore: So after the Statue of Liberty, and were people on deck, you said. Was it festive?

Astel: [superposed] Oh yeah, mhmm. Well everybody, they were kind of quiet and ooh and ahh you know. And everybody was happy to think it was almost the end of our trip.

Moore: Mhmm. And what happened after that? Tell me what happened after the Statue of Liberty?

Astel: Well, my dad and his cousin's husband, they came on board like all the other passengers had friends or family. They came on board and it was a happy reunion. And then people were called out, names were called out when you could go and leave the boat, go on dock. And everybody called and everybody got called we were still standing there and finally my dad went and talked to the captain he said "Well you can't land, they can't

land. You have to leave them.” So he went and he said, came back and he said “They’re going to take you to Ellis Island. We’ll meet you over there.” And I said, “Oh I wanna go with Dad” and they said “no, you can’t.” And so Dad and his cousin and some other people that were not on board, that were friends, they went in a motorboat to Ellis Island. And then after a while they had that bigger boat, a larger boat, and they put quite a few people, I couldn’t tell you how many, they put us in that and took us to Ellis Island. And of course we were all excited, didn’t know what it was all about, what was going to happen and as we embarked from the boat and saw this building, a red brick building, then we went there. And it looked, as far as I can remember, it looked like we these metal stalls like they have for cattle. You go here, you go there, you know.

They divided you up. And we went there, then they took my mother and dad in separate locations and my sister and I, we must’ve been kept in one room. I don’t remember but we were kept out. And they examined them, and Mother thought again, she thought, “well here it goes: my veins.” And you know she looked at her legs, the doctor checked her and he says “you’re alright.” She looked and she just she could not see a vein. That was really something. And then my dad, they checked him out, he had to jump rope; he had to run; he had to go up and down steps; and everything under the sun. And to see whether that heart problem that I had was hereditary. And of course Dad was a strong man. And then he called his place, his place of work and find out what kind of a man he was, what kind of a worker, how he got along with people. And then they called the place he where had an apartment for us and they asked the neighbors how kind of man, if he had a lot of parties and things. And then finally they gave us the okay, they says well, he had to a sign a letter though for this, for the government that he would see to it that I would never fall a ward to the state of New York or go on welfare.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And then he came out and they brought us back we got our luggage from the big boat.

Moore: Let's walk back a little bit. What language did they use when they talked to you?

Astel: I think they used German or they had an interpreter there.

Moore: Mhmm. And were they polite to you?

Astel: Well of course I can't say that because I wasn't in with where my dad and mother was. But they treated us two girls quite nice.

Moore: Was there a real fear on your part about not getting out?

Astel: Well, yes we didn't know what to expect why we were there. We heard a lot of crying women and children, you know, and other all because there was a lot of them in there, there it seemed like that room was full.

Moore: What were the sanitary conditions like of the place that you were kept?

Astel: I can't tell you, there wasn't any rubbish or stuff on the floor there where we were.

Moore: All together, how long were you at Ellis Island then?

Astel: Oh, several hours.

Moore: Mhmm. Did you eat there?

Astel: No. I don't think we did.

Moore: Mhmm. So finally, you got your luggage you said.

Astel: Uhuh.

Moore: Yeah, back up to heart problem, sorry. What was the situation with your heart then? What, why was there concern about your heart?

Astel: I had, from the rheumatic fever, there was a what they call rheumatic heart. And it damaged the left ventricle.

Moore: Ventricle, yeah.

Astel: Yeah. That muscle that whatever it is. And so it left a murmur at times, not all the time. And that's what was wrong. And it's been all my life, every once in a while when I go to the doctor they hear the murmur and then they don't. And now my heart goes crazy, it runs away at times. My pulse is very fast, one two three strong pulse and then very light ones. And that is from there. I've always thought in later life maybe I'll have to have a heart transplant but so far I've been fine.

Moore: So it was because of that.

Astel: Because of that.

Moore: That.

Astel: For a thirteen year old child.

Moore: Mhmm. Now was your sister healthy?

Astel: She was healthy, yeah.

Moore: Mhmm. Okay so what happened after that? We got to the point of you getting luggage.

Astel: Okay. Then my dad and his cousin, they took us, oh I don't know where went on a, on the subway or whether he got a taxi, I don't know how we got to their apartment. And then they took us to our apartment.

Moore: Now what were the addresses of those apartments, do you remember?

Astel: No I don't. But his cousin lived in Astoria too.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And I know we thought it was just heaven (laughs). The furniture was old, he you know, they he bought used furniture but it looked to us just beautiful. We were so happy. And we had a bathroom, which we never did have in Germany. You had your tub you brought in Saturday nights and so. And the food, he had so much fruit there on the table. It was really, we really thought we were come to the home of plenty (laughs).

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And then the thing, the next thing was they took me to the school. And because my English was a little different and not as fluent as they had, they started me in the first grade. And in those days, it didn't make any difference if you spoke English or not, you were on your own. They didn't have special teachers or special help, nothing. And you just worked yourself up. So I went from first grade and then you know jumped a grade or two usually when they thought I was ready and that's how I went through school. And when I think what they do today, to these immigrants, I just shake my head. We didn't get help, none of the immigrants did.

Moore: Were you ever, suffer any persecution from being German at the school? Did anyone make fun of you?

Astel: Mm-mm [negative non-verbal vocalization] Oh, once in a while a Jewish boy would call and say "sauerkraut," or "kraut-head," kraut.

Moore: Yeah, kraut, right.

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: But that wasn't common?

Astel: No. uh-uh. Only.

Moore: [superposed] And your teachers, did your teachers?

Astel: [superposed] Very very good teachers.

Moore: Mhmm. Now tell me a little bit about life and your family members' adjustment to life here? What did, how did your mother adjust to life in the United States?

Astel: Well Mother and Dad went to night school. They weren't here very long, they went to night school to learn English. And they told us girls not to speak German in the house because they had to learn English and so they had to learn it from us and from school.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And that's how they adjusted. Then they went to church and of course there were quite a few Germans, but in New York were scattered. You don't live as close as you do out here in Utah. I mean next door neighbor is LDS so it doesn't bother you. But Dad got along good at work, we didn't have any problem really.

Moore: Mhmm. Did anyone ever want to go back to Germany to live?

Astel: No. I've never been back, never had a desire to go. And I think that was because the family kind of cut us off.

Moore: Mm.

Astel: And so we said okay. But after a while, Mother and Dad started writing to their parents. But they, we've never wanted to go back. Mother went back once and of course she was the rich American, you know they said and she wasn't (laughs). But she left all her clothes over there and came back with empty suitcases and my dad went back twice but he was very upset because what he found, the conditions.

Moore: Yeah. When did your parents go back, what year?

Astel: I can't tell you when my mother went back, my dad went back oh dear, it was after the war.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: But I don't know what year it was.

Moore: Yeah. To East Germany did he go?

Astel: He went to East Germany, he got permission to get in. And if they had ever caught him, he had the Book of Mormon in German, translated to give to his sister over there. And if he was caught with that, it would've been too bad.

Moore: Hmm.

Astel: But he wasn't. But he was very disappointed, he landed in Frankfurt with the airplane and from there he took the train to get into East Germany with special permits. And he had to declare how much money he was taking in and that he could take out but no more. And he said the railroad from Frankfurt to I don't know how, I guess to the East German border there where the Russians took over was good. But when he got into East Germany he said it was terrible, it was dirty. The service was very poor but that's what happened, see.

Moore: Mhmm. What about your sister, how was her adjustment?

Astel: Oh she adjusted well. She started school in kindergarten and then she went right on.

Moore: Mhmm. Did any family tragedy occur during the time that you lived in this country when you came here?

Astel: No. We've been lucky.

Moore: Mhmm.

- Astel: Of course both my dad and my mother are dead now. So.
- Moore: What years did they die, your mom and dad?
- Astel: My mother died about three years ago. She was ninety-seven. And my dad died, let's see, nineteen years ago.
- Moore: Mhmm. And do you think that your parents' expectations as such were fulfilled in this country?
- Astel: I think so. I think so. They had better times here, better life. And they progressed, so I'd never heard them complain about anything.
- Moore: Briefly tell me about your life now, you went through the American school system in New York you said.
- Astel: Mhmm.
- Moore: You moved, you mentioned before the interview, you had moved from Queens to Washington Heights in Manhattan.
- Astel: Uh-huh.
- Moore: What year was that?
- Astel: Mm, Oh let's see that was about in nineteen thirty two or thirty three.
- Moore: Mhmm. And what brought your family to that location?
- Astel: Well it was usually the neighborhood changed and my mother, she was, at shall we say? She liked certain groups of people and when they changed, when they moved out and others moved in that she didn't like, so we moved.
- Moore: Mhmm. And did your father continue the same line of business?
- Astel: Yes. Uh-huh.
- Moore: Did your mother work outside the home at all?

Astel: She did for a little while, she worked in where they made these radio batteries and things. And there was a man in the church that, he had that factory in New Jersey and moved, she traveled with the tubes went under there.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And so but she didn't, oh maybe two-three years, that was all. It was just, she didn't have anything else to do.

Moore: Mhmm. Now what about your education, how far did you go through school?

Astel: I graduated from elementary school.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And then I was about seventeen-eighteen and I had to catch up, you know. I went to, no sixteen, I went to Drake's Business School.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And that was two years.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And there I signed up for court stenographer.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: And I just got the job and then I was called on a mission for the church. And so I went, came from New York, went to the northern states which is Chicago headquarters. And that's where I met my husband. And he came from the west. The west and the east met (laughs).

Moore: And what was his background?

Astel: His father, they had from Wyoming at first. They had a cattle ranch and then they moved to Providence, Utah and they silver foxes, they raised. And then we had chickens, a lot of chickens.

Moore: Now how did you, was it love at first sight or what was the situation with meeting your husband?

Astel: [superposed] No. As missionaries, you know you get together once in a while and there's of course on a mission, you don't do any dating and there's no hanky-panky. There's just, you make friends and so we just hit it off as friends and of course there was quite a few other missionaries that I was corresponding with. And then when my mission was over, he had been home a year before I came home and so I had to go to Salt Lake to report to headquarters and there's quite a few missionaries got together and we had a party. And he was there and he said, "I'd to get" no "I'd like to get better acquainted with you." And I said there's always the mail man and I went home to New York (laughs). And he corresponded and I decided, I told my parents let's move out to Utah. Why I had lots more friends out here, you know. And so we came out in March of forty, nineteen.

Moore: Whole family moved out here?

Astel: Uh-huh. The four of us.

Moore: What did your mom and dad think when you moved, went back there and says "let's move to Utah."

Astel: Well, Dad and Mom they had decided a long time ago that it was time to come out here. And so they, we decided okay so they gave their furniture away and we came out here. And we had quite some experiences in that car. Came out in an Oldsmobile. And we, it was in March and so my Dad says "We can't go the middle route," there were the three fifty highways: One north and one went through the middle and one through the southern

part. So we took the southern part and when we got down into Richmond, Virginia, where you're supposed to turn, one of our rear bearings burned out. So we were there for a while to get that fixed. Then from there we went on and we got into Kentucky and the hotels were not as plentiful as they are now. Eating places weren't. So we had a booklet from the A-A-A [not understood] (tape error, audio is mixed). So many mines to the next eating places or to the next cabins. There were mostly cabins. And so if you don't there by five, don't go on further because it's five to six hundred miles. Ended up at five o'clock at the nearest (tape repeats) Ended up at five o'clock (tape jumps) we were in this cabin (tape jumps). We got into Kentucky and we were in this cabin and as we was about ready to go in the morning, on the radio, they said all low lying people you get out here, you're having floods here. (tape jumps) [not understood] after we left to pay for the next day we read where we were was flooded. (tape jumps) we read where we were was flooded. So we went on further and we got onto the next highway and they were building, there was highway construction workers and these fellas were coming towards us with shovels and they were motioning, we didn't know what was wrong. And so my dad stopped and as we stopped, the one fella lifted the hood up from the side and flames came shooting out. So they threw sand in our machine (laughs) in our car. And then of course they killed the flames and we went onto the gas station and they had to vacuum the machine out. Then we came on to (laughs) to Denver, though I don't think it was quite Denver. But we got into Colorado and were going to go (tape jumps) that you can't go over, you have to go further (tape jumps) [not understood] he said you can't go over, you have to go further south, it's all snowed in. (laughs) So we had to go further south to get into Utah but it was quite a trip. (both laugh)

Moore: And when you went to come into Utah, where were you coming to live?

Astel: We stayed with some friends at first and then we soon got a place in First Avenue in Salt Lake City. Got an apartment, got all new furniture. Dad got to work at the Great Elevators. As long as it was work.

Moore: Uh-huh.

Astel: And so that's where we lived.

(tape repeats)

Moore: Uhuh.

Astel: And so that's where we lived. Up in the avenues for a while.

Moore: And what happened with your boyfriend at that time, then you were in contact with him still?

Astel: Oh yes, he came down from Logan every Saturday and he had one excuse after another why he was in Salt Lake. (laughs) but that's how our friendship developed.

Moore: Mhmm. And Okay, what was your husband-to-be's profession?

Astel: He, well he was poultry man. And silver fox, whatever that is.

Moore: Mhmm. Silver fox [not understood].

Astel: Uhuh.

Moore: We're going to change the tape here and take a break for a moment.

Astel: Oh [not understood].

Moore: Alright so we were at the point of asking or talking about the fact that your husband-to-be found every excuse he could to come to Salt Lake City.

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: And what happened after that?

Astel: We, that was in four, forty, nineteen-forty. And then in September of nineteen-forty he came down and brought me a ring. And we got married in February of forty-one.

Moore: Now this is wartime soon so.

Astel: Well, it's still not war yet. But it was getting close.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: It was getting close. I was an American citizen because I married an American, became naturalized. And that's first time that I had lived long enough (laughs) in one place. And then, let's see, the following year, in March of forty-two our first son was born.

Moore: And was your husband ever drafted for service?

Astel: [superposed] No, he was older.

Moore: He was older.

Astel: He was, what was he, thirty six? I think when we got married.

Moore: And you were how old when you got married?

Astel: Twenty five, he was thirty seven.

Moore: He was thirty seven.

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: So he didn't have to serve?

Astel: No he didn't.

Moore: Mhmm. So your first son, so how many children did you have?

Astel: I had three boys.

Moore: And what were their names? What are there names?

Astel: Earnest, who's 52 now. And Dale who is going to be 50. And John who will be 48 in December.

Moore: And so when you look back on your life, now you've lived in many places in the United States, or you've had quite a life here in the United States

Astel: [superposed] Mhmm.

Moore: And you lived also in what was East Germany now is Germany.

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: What do you think about (tape jumps) family's original decision to come here?

Astel: I think it was a good one. (laughs) for our life, we've had better life here. We had better opportunities here. It just all around it was better.

Moore: You came here for the church primarily.

Astel: Mhmm.

Moore: How has that been for you here as compared to what it would have been in Germany?

Astel: Well it's entirely different here, we're more organized. You have more members and you work more together and well it's just different from what it was.

Moore: Did you raise your children in the church also?

Astel: Oh yes. Uhuh.

Moore: [superposed] So they have in turn become members?

Astel: Oh yes, they're members.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: Well that's all they know.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: I've never questioned it.

Moore: Mhmm.

Astel: I feel, you know I feel good about it. If I had any questions I would go after it.

Moore: Mhmm. In terms of your nationality, how do you feel? What nationality do you feel now?

Astel: I'm American and German born. I guess that's about it.

Moore: And so do you keep up, did you pass on German to your children?

Astel: No. I'm sad about that. I can't speak German. (tape jumps) [not understood] but I can read it, I can write it, I understand it.

Moore: And do you keep up with reading and writing?

Astel: Yes, I, it's that hasn't stopped me from that. But speaking with other people is the problem, you don't find the person that you want to converse with.

Moore: But basically you've dedicated your life to living in the United States?

Astel: Oh yes. This is my life, this is my country now.

Moore: I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island for taking the opportunity, of giving us the opportunity to speak with you.

Astel: Thank you.

Moore: And this is Kate Moore in Logan Utah on July 12, 1994; signing off for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

KM-065 / ASTEL

END OF INTERVIEW