

**NPS-20**

**LENKE REGINBOGIN**

**BIRTH DATE: 1882**  
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**RUNNING TIME: 17:17**  
**INTERVIEWER: MARGO NASH**  
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**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: CHARLENE A. KEYLOR, 3/1979**  
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**GERMANY, 1937**

**AGE 55**

**SHIP: NAME NOT RECALLED**

**PORT: HAMBURG**

**RESIDENCE:**

- **GERMANY: HAMBURG**
- **USA:**

**REGINBOGIN:** I am born in 1882 In Hamburg in Germany. And I lived all my years there till I come, came to America. I went to America '37. And I was

thrown out by the Nazis. When I like to go to America I had to have my papers. And I went to the Nazis and asked for them and they never give them to me. And then the last time when I went there, I said to my mother, "I will call you and what I say, say 'yes, yes, yes' to me." He said, "I don't have the paper." I said, "I need them because the moving men is coming, and get my, move my furniture and so on." I said, "Would you allow that I talk with my mother?" And he said, "Yes. talk with your mother," and called her up and said, "Mother, please when the moving men are coming don't send them away, I must have the paper, and I think the gentleman will give them to me." And they close the office at four o'clock, and five minutes before he went out and then he gave them to me. Only to aggravate me. *Nicht*. It was terrible. I was the pins and needles, it was terrible, yes. And then I sold my store.

NASH: Tell me a little bit of what your life was like before you actually...

REGINBOGIN: I had four stores, and my husband was dead. Und I had a big house.

NASH: What kind of stores?

REGINBOGIN: *Konfitüren*, chocolate, coffee and tea. And at the last when the people came in my store, sometimes somebody said, "This is a Jewish store?" And my saleslady said, "Yes." "Come out," or something, "come out. Don't buy here, have nothing to do with Jews." *Nicht*. And April 3rd, '33 we had the boycott of the stores. The people closed the stores. I told you before, *nicht*, that a man has to ask me "please," otherwise I wouldn't close my door. And he did it. And then one gentleman came with his hand bandaged and the Nazi in front of my store hold his hands

and said, "Nobody goes in." And he said, "You are not allowed to do this, (*German*)."

NASH: What does that mean?

REGINBOGIN: That means (*German*) I cannot say, that's a terrible word. And he would come in and I closed my door and said to the gentleman, "Look what you did now. You cannot go out, you would not be alive." And I showed him to go through my basement in the back of my house, I had it with alley. And that they did then and then the Nazis noticed that he is not in my store anymore, and they put a man in back of my entrance, private entrance into the basement. Another couple came in and said, "Can we stay with you?" Jewish couple. I said, "Go in and sit in my dining room." And they were sitting there, they didn't risk to go in the street. It was so terrible I cannot tell you.

NASH: Was this on the day of the boycott?

REGINBOGIN: Huh?

NASH: On the day of the boycott?

REGINBOGIN: Yeah, that the day when they close the store. People who doesn't know they were Jews has to close the stores when the Nazis knows the grandparents were Jews.

NASH: Can you tell more about why did they have this boycott? What was the purpose of the boycott?

REGINBOGIN: Huh?

NASH: What was the purpose of the boycott?

REGINBOGIN: To show that they have the power over us. The people cannot open the stores. *Nicht*. And once, maybe four weeks before, a boy came in, maybe nineteen years, other lady called me up from the other store and said, "Mrs. Luvenhevs, you have to close your stores." "They come around and said we should close the stores. They said so?" "Yes," she said, "Yes." And that doesn't take very long. And the boy came in, nineteen years, and says, "You have to close your store." I said, "Who said it?" "I said it." "Ach," I said. "You said it. Go to the *Führer* there, from the block, from the houses, *nicht*, blockhouses, and when he said that I should close my store, then I do it." And he went away and never came back. They think they have the power over the Jews at the time. Many, many Jews got killed. My mother died, she was ninety years old, and my whole family, we went to be *vergast*, *nicht* whole family. If I talk about it then I don't sleep. We will talk about something else that is better, *nicht*? And then later I sold my business. And then, I went to, Jena, Karlsbad because I have to go through all the excitement, I get my sugar content, diabetes, *nicht*. And then I moved out of my apartment and moved and took a room and then, then I get, what would I say, one moment (she pauses). Yes, I went to Karlsbad and came back and then I went to the Colert Line and get my ticket and went by train over Holland to London and then from Liverpool to America. That was 26th of August.

NASH: And what was the train ride like?

REGINBOGIN: The train ride? That was funny. I had a lot of things of my best friend. Maybe one gold service, gold and maybe cost ten thousand mark, so very valueable, and I put it in front on top where I sit and I said if somebody comes, I say is and a wedding present, *nicht* nobody came and suddenly I said I go first class naturally, and I said to the gentleman, "How long does it take when we are in Holland?" (*she says it in German*) So he said, "Oh, we are already there." (*she gasps robustly*). My happiness, and I went out and I met a son in London and gave him all his things. He was very happy that I brought it, *nicht*? And then the next day I went to Liverpool and the next...

NASH: How many things were you actually allowed to take out of Germany?

REGINBOGIN: I could at the time take three hundred and sixty mark, but the people who came later, ten marks. I was lucky. And I had little difficulty that the man on the boat give me dollars, but he did it finally. When I was there on the boat and nobody was nasty to me. You look right and left, no, I was always afraid somebody was hearing what you say. It was terrible, the whole thing. I went through time I was lucky. And the many people came at '40 or '39, they couldn't take only ten dollars or nothing, *nicht*. And when I came here on the boat, they were very nice, (?) are and very nice, and we had a masquerade. Do you know what a masquerade is? I will tell you. If you put on...

NASH: Costumes?

REGINBOGIN: Nein, different, all different things, masquerade. And it was very nice and when we came here to America, I didn't have to wait. I could go out. I don't know why. I don't know why I could out. And then I came out again to the, what do you call it?

NASH: Customs?

REGINBOGIN: Customers, and he said, "Okay, you can get your..." I had eleven big boxes, *nicht* wooden boxes, *nicht*? And then I met my children and they took me home. My boy, I was at my boy, he was married one year, and I lived there for eight years and keep his house, no?

NASH: How old were you when you arrived?

REGINBOGIN: Fifty-five years. That was my age, *nicht*?

NASH: Did you know many German Jews when you got here?

REGINBOGIN: Nein, my daughter-in-law only speaks English, and you have a big family and I know them all and they were very nice to me. I had no, what shall I say, difficulty, because my son take care of me, and I would like to work and he said to me, "*Mutti* (Mother), you work all your life, I do not allow that you work." And I keep his house it was for me very good, *nicht*? They both went out, *nicht*? And worked. And later my daughter, she was already one year before me here, and she is a very good, she studied, she make her master here and then she said, "Mother, I think it, it's better when we move together." And I told my son what he thinks about it. He said, "Yes," and then we took a little apartment for thirty-six

dollars and very nice four rooms. And there I spent until I came here. Yes, to the ... and now what? *Mein Gehirn* ... My brain doesn't work so right ... here? ...*wie heißt das Haus jetzt, wo ich bin?* (break in tape) One day a good customer came in my store and asked me if she can use the telephone. I said, "Naturally." She knows where the telephone was, took the *Hörer* [receiver] put it down, went back to my store and threw everything what I have on my counter on the floor. Out she went. To show me how she hates me. And there were many, many things that people come in the store and ask if you are Jewish and then they have children with them, out, you cannot buy here. It is terrible. You cannot buy with Jews there. (?). My store was very, very known and a very good store, and I sold this for almost nothing. That is why I have to do with that, I have to go out, and I cannot tell you another story. I had four stores and one store was, he had birds and cages and such a store, and one day he came over to my store and said to me, "I can tell you, when I knock at the table here, you don't stay behind your counter." I said, "Okay." I didn't know what he and he went out. And so other people didn't greet me anymore. That's when I have cancer, or cancer is the right word, *Lepra* or something like this, *nicht?* You know what *Lepra* is. And people who were not living in Germany and didn't go through it could not imagine how terrible it was for us.

NASH: What city was this?

REGINBOGIN: Hamburg. I lived in Hamburg. I was born in Hamburg and went away from Hamburg, was never out. It is terrible and now it is early, when I would tape this during the evening, then I wouldn't go to sleep. (she laughs) And then I would be too upset. I have here a wonderful family

and must be happy that I am healthy and that is the most important thing. (break in tape) This Nazi song, I must, I must tell you in Germany they sung up in the street, "*Und wenn das Blut am Messer spritzt. Verfluchte Juden, die ihr seid ...*". *Und there waren [were] a hundred people singing the same song.*

NASH: What did the song mean in English?

REGINBOGIN: That means in English, "And when the blood is on the knife, then they should kill with this knife." Terrible. (break in tape) Then before I went, I sold my house and would buy a house here in America, house in Ronconkomo, three houses and a boarding house. I would then have a business, and then when I went away, I said to the Gentile, I don't know how you call it here, I cannot tell you, I don't. I said to him, "Can I rely on it that when I go away that you don't kill me in this way that I cannot get this. That is my whole fortune that I have." And he said, "No, I take care of it." And when I was here I never get the houses and my house was standing there and they took the money away from the house, everything from there. But I left, and that was the best (she laughs) thing, *nicht?* (break in tape) I always thought when I lived in Germany, when I am old, my son lives here in America, that I can visit him and have a wonderful life. I never would have thought that I would be here for good. I am happy here. (she laughs)

END OF THE INTERVIEW