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Becoming American: Poland, 1928 to Hot Springs, 2009

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

“Becoming American: Poland, 1928 to Hot Springs, 2009”

written by

Sara Ann Terlecki

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for completion of the
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meets the criteria for acceptance
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

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On September 1, 1939, Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, eliciting a declaration of war from Great Britain and France. The Second World War had begun. Hitler's authority proved detrimental to countless individuals lives. However, amid the chaos and agony felt by some, a few found a certain freedom by Hitler's presence. Edith Krueger Terlecki saw Hitler as a type of savior. This is Edith's story.

Gros Orlin, Poland, was a small, predominately German, village. Edith's family lived with about a hundred families in this community, thirty miles from the largest town. Edith's maternal grandfather was born in this village and stayed there as a Lutheran minister and teacher. As a result, Augusta, Edith's mother, lived in the village where she married Adam Krueger. Although he was previously married with five children, Augusta married Adam and together they had five more. Edith was born July 20, 1928, and was the third child in this marriage. Edith's parents were subsistence farmers. Augusta would travel to Germany to work on other farms for the family to have enough money for winter. Edith's older siblings were rented-out to neighboring farmers or relatives in return for a little money or food. The first ten years of Edith's life were spent in Gros Orlin. Her memories of that time include fond thoughts of doing laundry in the river and of stomping down cabbage in a barrel to make sour kraut.

Being located in rural Poland, the Kruegers knew little of international events—except that received over her uncle's radio. From the radio they learned that they were now under Hitler's rule. Shortly thereafter, her uncle advised them to move to Pilsen because of the opportunities there.

In Pilsen opportunity manifested when Hitler removed Jews from their Poland homes. By the time the Kruegers arrived in Pilsen, most Jewish people had been removed from the city.

People of Aryan descent were now able to buy Jewish properties from the government. Edith's uncle arranged for her family to purchase a home with a grocery store attached.

Moving naively into this opportunity the Krueger family was unaware that a Jewish family had previously occupied the grocery store. Edith recounts, "They were all taken out to go and work on big farms and then they put them in camps. But we did not know how all of this was" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). Slowly, by word of mouth and radio, they learned that Polish Jews had been resettled to internment camps. Word on the street led villagers in Pilsen to believe these camps existed to keep Jews together under military arrest.

Although the Jews suffered during the Third Reich, the German communities within Poland experienced advantages. Previously, German communities under the Polish regime were not treated well, forced to the margins of society. Hitler wanted more for the German people. Once he controlled Poland, he made several changes: German families received government assistance when needed. Hitler also improved the roads and built factories. These changes contrasted to Edith's life in Gros Orlin, where she recalled nothing was paved and buggies would sink into the sand covering Gros Orlin's poorly built roads. Hitler also seemed to improve the moral code of those under him. Edith remembers nobody would steal because the swift and severe punishment would follow. Hitler created nationalism for Germans living in Poland.

Edith developed a sense of nationalism with Hitler's occupation because she connected with her German heritage. Polish Germans now had a leader which made citizens proud of their heritage. Around the age of twelve, Edith joined one of the Third Reich's girls' organizations. She remembers, "We had once-a-week get together... [We would] sing and learn all the German songs [and] the German language. [It was] better than what we learned in school [, which] was

very minimal, not much of an education” (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Despite the privileged life she was living in Pisern compared to Gros Orlin, Edith did not escape hard work. The grocery store attached to their home created many opportunities, but the Kruegers needed Edith to help operate the store. Edith was now the oldest child at home: Her older brother and step brothers were sent off to fight in the military and her older sisters were sent to aid other families with child care. Each day when Edith returned home from school she completed her homework then assisted in the store. Edith’s primary chore was to help separate ration stamps for flour, sugar, eggs, butter, and other staples. She also prepared rations for customers. She would “pre-weigh the sugar, the flour. [Customers] were allowed only so much and so when we [the Kruegers] would close the store we would weigh up pounds of sugar, pounds of flour. Things did not come pre-packaged. We had to pack [items] in the store ourselves” (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Because of Adam Krueger’s cleverness with operating the store and the family’s hard work, the Kruegers were able to have things other villagers did not have at the time. Handling rations brought advantages. Leftover rations provided barter for the Kruegers. Edith distinctly recalls, “We would go to a big city with butter or a goose and [barter] is how we would shop, because, during the war, everything was rationed. When you came with butter or with a goose or with something like this you were able to buy” (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). Through barter, Edith and her younger sister, Erika, were able to have a piano and music lessons as well as be fashionably dressed. Additionally, the family obtained nice home furnishings such as rugs and furniture. Although Edith enjoyed the Third Reich’s control of Poland, her father, Adam Krueger, was not naïve regarding Hitler’s intent. Adam had previously

served in the Russian military and spoke the language. This enabled him to communicate with individuals in Russia, learning what was taking place there. Edith would hear her father say,

‘What Hitler does it not quite right,’ and he was always a little . . . how should I say it—criticizing. And this was not allowed. We lived in Peisern with lots of my relatives . . . and they would say, ‘Adam, you cannot talk like this, you [will end] up you know where’ (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Adam’s intuition concerning Hitler eventually came to pass. In 1945, the Kruegers left Peisern for what they thought would be only a short time. At this point in time, the German government instructed the individuals in Peisern and surrounding areas to leave town for a couple of days—potentially weeks—because the German army was being pushed back by the Russians. On January 21, the Kruegers and three other families loaded a few belongings onto a horse and buggy. The teens road their bicycles, though they eventually left them alongside the road because the ice and snow made riding difficult. The fleeing families—alongside the German military—left Peisern in a slow progression. After walking for approximately forty-five kilometers, Adam instructed the teenagers to ride with the military. The available horses were not strong enough for everyone to ride on the buggy. Upon arriving at a train station, Edith took a train to Berlin to stay with her cousin, Tonta Trudy. These cousins had once fled to Peisern to escape air raids in the city. As Edith traveled she remembered her cousin saying, “Now when you ever have to leave home you know where to go. You come to us” (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). As a young child Edith could never imagine needing to leave her home in search of safety or a night’s rest. However, that time had come. Edith arrived in Berlin with her stepsister and nephew and awaited the arrival of the rest of her family.

Upon arriving at Trudy's home, Edith knew nothing concerning her family who were still in route to Berlin. Edith waited for six weeks for her parent's arrival. During this time Edith grew extremely frustrated as she experienced the nightly air raids. Trudy's home was not safe during the raids, so whenever the sirens sounded, they would run to town square where an old church was converted into a bunker. Nothing happened close the area of Berlin that Edith was located, but she could see other areas of Berlin burning from the falling bombs.

Edith's frustrations about her family began to subside when her sister Elisabeth finally arrived to Berlin. Edith recalls Elisabeth saying, "Did you hear from Mom and Dad? They are going to come here. You and I are to get on the train and we are going to go tomorrow morning...and help them" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). After a few changes in plan, Edith was finally reunited with her parents, younger sister, and brother. Up until this point in time, the Krueger family, experienced little to no devastation. The immediate family had been kept safe except for the brothers serving in the military (only one of the soldiering brothers would survive the war). However, in Berlin unanticipated tragedy would encompass the Krueger family.

On most nights, the air raids came around nine o'clock. One evening the raid did not come. The Kruegers were excited about not having to run to the bunker in the middle of town. Around ten o'clock they were all in bed when the siren indicated planes were on their way. Tonta Trudy, Edith's cousin, woke everyone telling them that they should go to the bunker and that she was not willing to wait on the tardy. As Trudy ran out the door towards the shelter, the Kruegers decided to stay in the house, reasoning that during the previous nightly raids nothing ever happened. This raid would be different.

The Kruegers arose from bed because they could hear the planes approaching more closely than in the past and ran to the basement of the house. Edith and her sister, Elisabeth, sat on a bed in an opening that adjoined the cousin's duplex with their neighbors. A bomb fell two houses away from Trudy's and caused a brick wall to fall into Trudy's home onto the beds the Kruegers had occupied moments before. Although the Kruegers believed they were safe in the basement, a piece of the bomb hit Elisabeth. Edith recalls the heart wrenching moment

So, she fell over and we thought she had fainted. We couldn't see anything that had happened. It was dark, and then we got some light on [by lighting] candles. My mother had washed Elisabeth's hair and put in rollers in, which we removed. We thought maybe she had fainted and we wanted to make her comfortable on the bed. Then my mom lifted her up a little bit, and when she put her hands around Elisabeth's back to lift her, blood covered both hands. Then we knew something had happened. Elisabeth passed away, right then (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

All together five people died in the homes that the bomb had hit, and three people had shrapnel in their legs. An eighty-five-year-old lady, who did not make it to the shelter, survived the air raid and continued to sit in her chair as though nothing happened, despite the fact that an entire wall was missing from her apartment.

After the death of Elisabeth and the devastation of Berlin, the German government ordered the Kruegers to move about fifty kilometers west of Berlin. This section was assigned because people who lived in this area had moved further west to escape the air raids. The Kruegers stayed in this assigned area because air raids prevented any further travel. They now

occupied homes that were fully equipped and had been occupied days if not moments before the Kruegers arrival. These vacated homes seemed a solace for Edith and her family. Unfortunately, the English and the Russians met in the village where Edith was staying. The Kruegers were caught in cross fire between English and Russian armies and watched as bystanders were shot in the streets. Though the Kruegers hoped the English would win, the Russians successfully overtook the village, and the Kruegers would again be fighting for survival. The Russians demanded that guns, ammunition, and any potential weapons be surrendered.

A humorous but terrifying encounter with a Russian soldier made Edith thankful her father could speak Russian. Russian soldiers enjoyed drinking vodka very much. One day a Russian soldier entered the house the Kruegers were occupying. The inebriated soldier found an iron in the house and did not know what it was. He believed the iron might explode and ordered the Kruegers into the house's basement. He entered the basement with a rifle and, with slurred words, proclaimed he was going to kill the fifteen huddled people. As the soldier staggered around the basement trying to get his rifle ready to kill his hostages, a sober soldier entered the basement and Adam was able to explain what was taking place. Once again, Edith's father's knowledge of the Russian language saved their lives.

During their time as prisoners under the Russians, the Kruegers received no pay for their work. The Russians occasionally gave them food, but most of the time the family had to steal food from the fields. Edith recalls, "Everybody was grinding seeds that were supposed to be put in the ground. We had some seeds in our pocket that we took home. We ground them with a coffee grinder. My mom would cook soup from that. We also took home some of the potatoes we were supposed to plant." (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

On one occasion Edith was sick in the morning and struggled to accomplish her work for the day. During her lunch break she retired home and did not return to the fields to work. The Russian soldiers came to her home and at gun point escorted her to a cellar the Russians had converted into a prison. Edith's parents did not know she had been taken by the Russians. She was required to spend the night in the prison. She was unable to escape the punishment that she brought upon herself. Her fellow workers went into the office and demanded 'if they [Russians] are not going to let me out they all are not going to come to work tomorrow.' The Russians let her go home that evening.

Edith's father decided that if the family stayed under Russian occupation throughout the winter they would die. He stated, "If we stay here the winter we are all going to starve to death. We have to do what other people do: Try to escape across the border into West Germany" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). They took a train from their current village to get closer to the train station that would put them into West Germany. Once they got closer to the train station they occupied a hotel nearby as Adam carefully strategized how to cross the border. He realized the train tracks were a little higher up than the area they were in, and a culvert ran underneath the tracks to let the water flow through. Adam knew they could crawl through the culvert to freedom, but they would have to avoid the Russian's who patrolled the tracks. The few possessions they had they took with them would be whatever they could carry. In the late afternoon, early evening, Adam crawled quietly through the drainage ditch, followed by the children with Augusta last. Although they were filthy from the mud, they did not mind. They were in a wooded area but it was West Germany and they were safe.

Adam found a nearby home whose occupants took his family in. Before they crossed the border they left a majority of their possessions at a hotel with the front desk. Knowing a majority

of Germany lie in ruins, Adam knew he and Augusta needed to return back to Russia occupied Germany to collect the rest of their items. Edith waited nervously with her brother and sister in this strange home. The day after her parents left reports came saying nine people were killed trying to cross the border. Edith was scared. She was only sixteen years old, and she was not ready to have the responsibility of her brother and sister. A few days passed by and parents finally made it back to West Germany. Adam and Augusta were alive, and Edith was relieved.

The Kruegers were ready to embrace the freedoms of West Germany. An organization arranged for them to move to an area twenty miles from Osnabruck where they would live in a one roomed barn of a farmer. Edith chuckled, "When we opened up our door from our room we were in the stall where the cows were" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). All five of her family members lived in this barn.

While living in West Germany, Edith's mother knew it was time for Edith to learn a profession. One day when her mother was chatting with a local woman who taught handiwork, the lady volunteered to teach Edith the profession. Edith attended school one day a week aside from receiving the training from the local lady. At school she learned about the various materials and how they were made. A usual day for Edith began around eight o'clock in the morning. She would spend the day doing handiwork for people, earning twenty five marks a month in addition to other things like butter or food with which people would barter. Edith apprenticed for three years. During her final year she had to take an exam to see if she had properly learned her trade. Despite being terrified of failure, Edith passed the exam.

Edith applied for papers to immigrate to America because both her father and mother had brothers and sisters already living in the States. Adam's brother left Europe and went to Canada to escape going into the military. The uncle's family eventually settled in North and South

Dakota. Augusta's sister, Anna, came to Chicago because people from Poland had moved there. Having family members already in the United State proved beneficial. Edith needed a guardian to sponsor her way. Edith's Uncle Albert, her father's brother, provided her the counsel she need because he was a landowner, a citizen, and a store-owner. Although Edith's uncle sponsored her trip to America, she would live with her aunt in Chicago.

Edith's papers were processed and she was approved to come to the United States shortly after taking her exam for handiwork. Uncle Albert went to Germany to visit his family as well as bring back his most precious cargo, his niece Edith. Knowing an American citizen was coming to Germany to visit, great preparations were started to make him feel as a welcome guest. During his visit, twelve family members stayed in one room. Despite cramped quarters Edith recalls, "It was just [a] very, very joyous occasion" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). Adam Krueger accompanied Edith to Bremen, Germany, where Edith would catch her flight. Although Albert would provide some guidance for the trip to America, Edith would make a portion of it on her own because she could not book the same plane as her uncle. Edith traveled alone. When her plan refueled in Greenland, a mechanical problem was discovered. Upon arriving in New York, Edith met up with Albert and they caught a train to Chicago.

Edith and Albert were on the train all night and got off of it the next day on the south side of Chicago. They made it to Uncle Emil's home in time for breakfast, and Edith knew she was in America. After breakfast Edith was to go to the north side of Chicago to Aunt Anna and Uncle Gus's home where she would stay. Edith had grand visions of the cityscape of Chicago in her head. As they drove down Ashland Avenue she questioned Uncle Emil about how far it was

to Chicago. He candidly replied to her that she was in Chicago. Edith did not understand because she had been told *all* of Chicago had grandiose buildings, not just downtown.

After the drive through downtown her uncle took her to meet her family members that were in the Chicago area. After only two days in America, Uncle Gus took her to a screw factory where he worked in order to find her a job. Edith knew absolutely no English. However, the vice president of the company spoke German and the owner, who was Yugoslavian, and could speak a bit of German. Edith started out earning fifty cents an hour. A week later she received a ten cent raise. The bosses were impressed with her work, and she quickly made a dollar an hour. Edith chuckles as she recalls an amusing memory.

A week later I got another little dime raise. And then my vice president said I should not talk about it, I couldn't talk, I couldn't speak English. So, I had a chair by my machine and then there was lunch. [S]omehow I went to the wash room and when I came back my chair was gone...I always heard everyone talking, talking, they would say son of a bitch and so I come to my machine and my chair was gone and I said son of a bitch. And the floor lady...went to the German vice president and she said 'I think Edith has already learned how to speak English.' And so, she told them what I had said, and so he came and said what I had said was not very pleasant to say, and I was so embarrassed (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Within the first two months of Edith being in America, she quickly learned the confines of being in debt. First, she was indebted to Anna for her trip to America, which was five hundred dollars.

Whenever she received a pay check she would always give a portion to Anna helping cover the expenses of the trip. Additionally, Edith needed her appendix taken out, which was an additional five hundred dollars. The vice president of the screw factory covered her bill for the hospital, so a portion of her paycheck would also go to this debt. However, Edith managed to pay off her bills, and she worked at the screw factory for almost two years.

While recovering from her appendix surgery on Monday, June 21st, Uncle Gus suggested they visit the Lincoln Park Zoo. Standing near the polar bear exhibit Uncle Gus turned to the young gentleman next to him and joked, "What do you think? Do you think that white bear could jump over the fence?" The young gentleman replied in broken English, "I don't know" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). Immediately, Uncle Gus knew the young gentleman was from *drausen*, meaning outside, and he started to converse with the young gentleman in German.

With the conversation developing between the two men, Edith wandered around and finally took a seat on the park bench and listened in on the conversation. Uncle Gus explained Edith just moved to the United States, and the young gentleman volunteered to help Edith fill out paperwork the next day because he would be off from the steel mill. This young gentleman was William (Bill) Terlecki, Edith's future husband. Bill's story was different from Edith's, but he was in the process of becoming an American after escaping the Ukraine.

William Terlecki was from Oleshiv Ukraine. He was born, June 10, 1919 to Semen (Simon) and Paraska (Maria) Terletsky. He had two brothers, Dmytro and Ivano as well as a sister Maria. His parents were farmers growing wheat, rye, barley, and other crops that were good to harvest in the spring. Bill grew to be a remarkably talented and smart individual. He loved wood working, and his nephew referred to Uncle Bill having "golden arms from God."

Bill would make wooden skies and given them to the boys in the village, so they could go skiing. Additionally, he would make beautiful things for the girls too. His “golden arms from God” would serve him well throughout his life (S. Terlecki, personal communication, June 19, 2008).

Before 1939, Ukraine was under the power of Franz Joseph of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1939 Soviet Power occupied the Western Ukraine, and Bill worked as a guard for the Soviet Army for the goods trains from the station in Oleshiv to Yvshniv, Monastyrsk, Buchach, Chortkiv, Ternopil, and then to Stamislav. He then joined the army in Simferopol in the South part of Ukraine. Then for a brief moment in 1939, Ukraine came under the power of Poland. World War II impacted the Ukraine starting in 1941. While serving in the Soviet Army, Bill was captured by the Germans. It took him one month to return home by walking. Bill returned to his village, but he started to move from village to village because he could not find the right place to live. Bill left Ukraine around the age of twenty two or twenty three and was never to return until later in life (P. Moskaluk, personal communication, July 12, 2008).

Details to Bill’s life are vague. Documents appear to help piece together his life starting in 1945. Starting approximately in July of 1945 until March 18, 1946, Bill was employed for nine months by the United States Army. From April to June of 1946, through the United States Army he served as a battery kitchen cook helper as well as a janitor. Documents from the International Refugee Organization and Displaced Persons from 1948-1949 showed him certified as a butcher and wood joiner and turner. Then, in 1949 a document shows where he was unemployed by a furniture factory in Munich, Germany. This particular document described Bill as a cabinet maker who was a good, diligent and punctual worker. Finally, in 1950 Bill was sponsored by his cousin, Peter, to come to the Chicago. Peter had immigrated to the United States in 1949 through the help of a Catholic organization.

Bill's experience allowed him to be knowledgeable of paperwork needed for citizenship, and this knowledge provided the foundation for a relationship to grow between him and Edith. The day following the polar bear incident at the Lincoln Park Zoo, Bill took a street car for forty five minutes to Edith's home with Uncle Gus and Aunt Anna. Not only did Bill bring citizenship papers for Edith, but he also brought a bottle of wine for her aunt and a cigar for her uncle. Edith's aunt volunteered for them to go get some ice cream down the street. Edith felt comfortable going with Bill because he knew a bit more English than she did since he worked for the American Military near Munich. As Bill was leaving that night he expressed the next time he was off, on a Saturday, he would come back and take Edith dancing. Earlier in the night they discussed dancing and Bill claimed to know all the German clubs where they could go. As Edith watched Bill leave on the streetcar, she patiently waited for the next time she would see him for them to go dancing.

A couple of weeks passed before Bill was off from work to take Edith dancing. In the meantime a distant cousin arranged with an uncle of Edith's to bring him a German girl to marry. Edith's uncle joked with him letting him know that Edith already had a boyfriend and if he was interested he better hurry up. So, Leonard, this distant cousin, came on a Sunday to visit Edith and to take her dancing. Edith solicited the presence of a German girlfriend to go out with her and Leonard. Thus, Leonard took Edith and her friend to a German café and then dancing. After an evening together, Leonard decided to come back and take them out again sometime. To Leonard's surprise Bill was at Edith's place the next time he came, and Edith tried to play matchmaker for Leonard. Leonard faded from the picture that day.

Bill and Edith's relationship started to grow, and Bill would come and visit Edith whenever he had a day off from the Steel Mill even if it was during the week. Edith was nineteen

years old at this time and Bill was twenty eight- he was nine years older. With Bill's paychecks he would try to purchase various things for Edith. For her twentieth birthday Bill bought her a watch which surprised Edith. One time he purchased a dress for her to wear out dancing.

Although the dress was a little large, Bill knew how to alter clothes, so he rushed downstairs to a neighboring home and tailored Edith's dress to fit perfectly. Bill and Edith dated for a year and a half before they decided to marry.

Knowing she needed to inform her family of her upcoming marriage, Edith wrote a letter to her parents in Germany telling them about Bill. She knew opposition would arise when the letter was received because Bill was Ukrainian and Greek Orthodox. Adam Krueger responded to Edith's letter expressing his desires for her to marry a German who was a Lutheran. He was not pleased that his daughter would marry someone not of their culture or religion. However, this did not hinder Edith's decision to marry Bill. She was a twenty one year old woman and her parents were in Germany; she felt as though she could do whatever she wanted.

Adam, being a wise father, knew complications could arise with this inter twining of cultures and religions. One of the first places Bill and Edith experienced problems were choosing a church to be married. Bill wanted to be married in the Greek Orthodox Church; however, the priest would not marry them in front of the altar since Edith was Lutheran. The priest kindly offered to allow Edith to take a few classes and be baptized as a Catholic if they wanted to be married in front of the altar, or he could marry them in the corner where they light candles in remembrance of people. Edith had no desire to convert to another religion; Bill refused to be married in a corner, so they chose to be married in City Hall.

Before hearing the news of where they would be married, Edith purchased her wedding dress. So, when they decided on a City Hall wedding, Edith returned the dress and exchanged it

for a new gown because they would not refund her money. Instead of wearing a gown she fashioned a suit and hat for her ceremony.

Attending the wedding as witnesses was Edith's cousin, Wanda Krause from South Dakota who was living in Chicago and Wanda's boyfriend Jack. Wanda and Jack were the witnesses and chauffeurs for the day, and in the evening they all returned to Bill and Edith's newly rented two bedroom apartment for a wedding celebration. The celebration consisted of a dinner and cake prepared by family members. Edith purchased dishes for the occasion (she still uses them today). There was no honeymoon; they were not even aware of what a honeymoon was. The day after the wedding Edith returned to work and Bill went back to the Steel Mill.

Overcoming difficulties with finding a place for marriage, Bill and Edith needed to learn how to mesh two different traditions into one household. Edith did not think it was too difficult to blend because Bill had worked for five years in Germany before coming to the United States, so he had learned the language and food. These were two important things to Edith. For the first years of their marriage they communicated predominately in German because they were both learning English. Bill taught Edith how to cook because he was better in the kitchen than what she was. He cooked foods she enjoyed and would make a Ukrainian dish every once in a while. They would bake together as well which enabled them to spend a lot of time together in their new relationship together.

Children created an interesting journey for Bill and Edith. Once again the two distinct traditions held in one household provided opposition not within the immediate family but within the context outside the home. When Edith learned she was pregnant in 1952 for the first time she and Bill decided if it was a boy he would be baptized Greek Catholic and if it was a girl she would be baptized Lutheran. Well, their first child was a boy whom they named Roman because

it was an extremely popular name in Ukraine. Roman was christened in the Greek Catholic church, yet he needed Catholic godparents. Bill's cousin was Greek Catholic and Edith's uncle's wife was Catholic, so together these two individuals became Roman's godparents because they were the only ones who met the qualifications. Three years later, a daughter, Juditha, was born and christened in the Lutheran church. Despite the challenges of the various religions within one household, both children were confirmed in the Lutheran Church, and this is where the children attended regularly and Bill and Edith would join on occasion.

Coming from Europe provided numerous but hilarious challenges for Bill and Edith. They purchased their first car in 1953; however, neither one of them had their driver's licenses or had driven a car. Bill's cousin, Jimmy, drove them to the car dealership where they purchased a Chevy Bellaire; fortunately it was automatic. While at the dealership Bill and Edith were both able to purchase a driver's license for three dollars a piece without having to take a test. Neither Bill nor Edith had ever been behind the wheel of a car before, so Jimmy drove them a nearby park and taught them how to drive. Edith was the first student; for two hours she practiced driving the car with Jimmy sitting next to her. Bill just observed; he would get lessons later. When Jimmy thought Edith was a decent driver, he suggested Edith drive them back to the dealership and explained traffic rules and regulations- the very basics. Jimmy escorted Bill and Edith back to their apartment with Edith proudly behind the wheel.

The next day, a Sunday, Bill was anxious for his turn behind the wheel of his new car. Edith was trying to catch up on the previous day's laundry, but Bill insisted she leave the wash alone and they go driving. Edith taught Bill how to drive except she never thought he was that great because he was a little bit of the nervous type. He was not comfortable behind the wheel of the car, so Edith chose to drive home from the park. The car provided a new found freedom for

Edith. Bill's coworker would pick him up for work allowing Edith to drive to work at the Delco factory. This Chevy Bellaire was their first significant purchase in the United States.

Bill and Edith were adopting American lifestyle with their new car and later on owning their own property. Once crucial component was missing and it was United States citizenship. People were required to live in the United States for five years before they could take the test. Edith was the first to earn her citizenship in 1956. For months she attended classes to learn about the United States, and when she was ready she took the test and passed it. Bill took his test during the 1960s because working late shifts made it difficult for him to attend the schooling required. Additionally, Edith was slightly more motivated to take her test because she was wanted to go back to Germany to see her family, so she needed a United States passport. Citizenship was necessary for this document to be issued. Owning real estate was the next step in becoming more American.

The first property Bill and Edith owned was a two flat located at 7200 South in Chicago. After owning this property for three, Bill decided it was time to find another place because the neighborhood was becoming integrated. Blacks moving into their neighborhood decreased the value of the real estate. Bill knew it was time to sell, but the market was not right at this particular time. Bill had been saving his money to provide a down payment for a newer flat just west of their current apartment. He rented out their former two flat to two different black individuals. One of those individuals purchased the two flat later on. Once the previous two flat was sold as well as the one they were currently living in the Terlecki's purchased a two flat on the North side of town- 3600 Cicero that was also a two flat with an apartment upstairs, a liquor store downstairs, and a fifty foot parking lot on the side for forty five thousand dollars.

This business venture occupied Bill and Edith's attention seven days a week for the next eight years. Previously, Edith worked at the Germania Club as a waitress where she learned about drinks; however, Bill had no knowledge on operating a business. He was still working at the Steel Mill which was now making tools. Bill continued to work at the mill for ten months until he was told he had to choose between the jobs because he was taking off three days a week remodeling the liquor store. Physically he could no longer spread himself between two jobs.

Edith's Lounge, the new name for the neighborhood liquor store was a labor of love for Bill especially. He remodeled the liquor store into a beautiful cocktail lounge. A mural of the Chicago skyline from the shoreline of Lake Michigan provided a back drop to the area behind the counter. Adding dabs of phosphor paint to some of the windows, Bill made the windows in the mural appear as though they were lit up. In the corner of the lounge Bill, created a small waterfall with phosphor coated flowers surrounding it and a black light illuminated the petals. Adding to the atmosphere was a jukebox in the corner where the customers would play the favorite songs.

Edith's Lounge provided services for the neighborhood composed primarily of Italians and Irishmen immigrants. Locals stopped by after work for a drink, a visit, and to purchase a six pack for later. Edith's Lounge served mixed drinks such as Whiskey Sours, Manhattans, Martinis, Highballs, and other alcoholic beverages. A particular couple, who were regulars, brought potato pancakes every Friday night for the other customers to enjoy. This couple did not have a car, so they walked for five blocks with these pancakes. The regulars knew each other well and watched out for Edith when she was alone late in the lounge by herself. If Bill was already asleep and someone strange came in, the regulars would not leave until the stranger did.

Even with their new found business and success, Bill and Edith became tired of their demanding work schedule and started to explore other options.

During the last years of owning Edith's Lounge, Edith's sister, Erika and brother in law, Heinz started to look for homes that would properly accommodate their six year old son, Wayne and Augusta Krueger. The area they were looking for homes was Glenview, a suburb of Chicago. The first home Erika found she knew it was ideal for the Terleckis. For fifty two thousand dollars, a single level home with a swimming pool could be the Terleckis; however, Bill insisted it was too much money and they could not afford it. Instead they purchased a little house and an additional lot where they could one day build their own home. Two years after previewing the house with the pool, Bill questioned Edith about the home wondering if it sold. Erika and Heinz purchased a home in that neighborhood, and he thought if the home was still available they could purchase it now. Edith suggested he call the realtor. Surprisingly, the house was still available and Bill and Edith bought the home and lived five houses down from their relatives. With this purchase of the house they decided to not build a home on the lot they previously purchased. They lived in Glen View for eight years.

Edith's Lounge provided them with the money they needed for the down payment for their new house in Glenview; plus, it allowed them to start with their next business venture, an apartment building. Edith cared for the apartment building by collecting rent and cleaning the hallways and stairs. Bill decided to take a job elsewhere and let Edith manage the building.

Bill found a job thirty miles away in Wheaton, Illinois where he supervised the maintenance department at Wheaton Center, a new seven hundred apartment building project. Upon completion of the project, Bill was asked to move into one of the apartments for a quicker response time to building emergencies. Bill and Edith agreed to move into this apartment

complex where they chose an apartment for the family on the twelfth floor. Sadly, this meant they needed to sell their home in Glenview.

The Terleckis placed an ad for open house in the newspaper to sell their home. An older couple viewed the home first, but Bill and Edith did not think it was appropriate for them. Then, a younger couple came in, viewed the home, and wrote a ten thousand dollar check for a down payment. Bill and Edith were starting to get a knack for turning around real estate.

With their new incurrence of finances, Edith started to explore the papers for more business opportunities. Edith found an apartment building for sale and knew they could sell their present apartment building. Edith did not particularly like their current apartment building because the apartments were small and it had stores located on the bottom level. So, Edith called Bill at work and told him he better come home in order to check out this new apartment building. During Bill's lunchtime he returned home, viewed the apartment building for sale, and made an offer to the realtor. They moved into the newly acquired apartment building and made a larger apartment for themselves by combining two apartments together. Life continued as normal until they planned a visit to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

While visiting some friends in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Bill found the house that would be his next investment, an old Victorian home. This Victorian home, built in 1901, was known as the Short Dodson House located at 755 Park Avenue, and it was on the National Register of Historical Places. Bill caught a glimpse of the house's interior and knew he would purchase it solely for the woodwork. At that time Bill did not know the Short Dodson House was significant for its architectural design, characteristically Queen Anne (National Park). Adjacent to the house was a small motel- The Tower Motel; both the house and motel were for sale. They viewed the home in the fall and by Christmas they flew into Little Rock to pay the earnest money.

In the process of escaping Chicago winters the Terlecki's experienced winter in Arkansas. A winter storm was currently blanketing the state with ice and no planes could land at Little Rock. After spending three hours in the air trying to land, the plane finally landed in Memphis. Bill and Edith purchased a bus ticket and came to Hot Springs because they were to meet with the realtor. Arriving in Hot Springs after the stressful trip Edith looked to Bill and said "I don't think I want to move here, we better go home" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). Edith expressed this to her husband because they were looking to escape the cold. Plus, the house was cold inside and to Edith the home that Bill saw potential in meant nothing to her at all. Bill convinced Edith it would all be okay, but Edith insisted they take the first flight available that evening to Chicago.

In 1978 the Terleckis started to haul their belongings, acquired over twenty eight years from Chicago to Hot Springs through U-haul trucks and Bill's famous brown van. They threw nothing away considering Edith came to the United States with very few belongings and accounts claim Bill only had five dollars to his name when he arrived. This was their tenth move in these years and separation from the city that provided unlimited possibilities and opportunities.

The Terleckis left behind not only their immediate and extended family but their social life as well. In Chicago, they belonged to various organizations. One in particular was the D.U.N.K., an organization that tried to renew German culture within the United States because it received bad reputation after WWII. The goal of the organization was to promote that not every German individual was a Nazis, not all Germans knew about the Holocaust, and Germans should be accepted despite the awful things their country did. Upon arrival to Hot Springs, the Terleckis joined the local chapter. Aside from the D.U.N.K., they would find other social circles in

Chicago where they would go dancing. Their biggest social circle was their large extended family. Edith's younger brother and sister lived there with their families as well as Edith's mother. Moving to Hot Springs meant leaving their family behind with whom they visited often not just for holidays but birthdays and other get to gethers.

Hot Springs encouraged political involvement. Bill and Edith became active members in associations and campaigns. The primary reason for involvement rooted from their son's interest in politics in addition to talk radio. Bill and Edith listened everyday to local talk radio shows concerning political issues both locally and nationally; they called in to let their voice and view be heard. They also attended local city meetings in order to know about the affairs of the city. Even though their views might never have been fully accepted, they felt better just being able to express them.

Despite having a limited social life in Hot Springs compared to Chicago, they filled their days with work once again. Bill and Edith were extremely busy renovating their newly acquired home as well as establishing a customer base for the motel that was once again open seven days a week. Their children, Roman and Juditha joined them in life in Hot Springs after a period of time. Eventually, Roman and Judy found spouses in Hot Springs and married. Bill and Edith were blessed with four grandchildren.

By 1985, Bill decided to purchase a small cottage located alongside Lake Hamilton. He and Edith knew the grandchildren would need a place to play, and the cottage could provide the perfect place for retirement. Bill transformed the cottage into a beautiful home where occasional holidays were spent with the family. This lakeside home provided lodging for family and friends when they came to Hot Springs for a visit. Finally, this home was where Augusta Krueger spent a portion of her later life living.

Bill and Edith continued working relentlessly at the motel as well as any other project they could find. Bill spent numerous hours in his shop where he exercised his "golden arms" creating unique pieces of work. He designed and created beautiful pieces of work including cabinets, birdhouses, benches, plant stands, lamps, albums, instruments, and picture frames. Today his pieces grace the homes of the ones he loved.

In 1996, Bill and Edith traveled to Ukraine. This was the first time Bill returned to his home country since he left in his twenties. During his time there Bill helped put a new roof on his sisters home as well as build an outhouse attached to the house. The village where he grew up had no running water. Going back to his country was like going back in time. Bill and Edith wanted to help Bill's family members financially, but they had to be careful with how much help they gave them. Bill returned home and man extremely thankful for his life in America. He was not afraid to share his gratefulness with anyone he encountered.

Then, in 2001, Bill and Edith celebrated fifty years of marriage. A celebration was held for them in the Short Dodson House with a dinner following at the Arlington Hotel. Bill commented to his family and friends at the celebration that not everybody is lucky enough to have family and friends. He felt gratitude for each of the people celebrating their special day with them. More importantly Bill spoke candidly about the opportunity American provided for both him and his wife. No other country could have given them this wonderful opportunity. He valued the importance of living each day to the fullest because tomorrow was never a guarantee.

The next four years would be filled with continued work on their house or their other properties as well as countless hours working the motel. During the summer and early fall of 2005 Bill fell ill due to medical complications. His family knew his time was at the end because he could not longer work in his shop which he loved greatly. October 19, 2005 Bill passed away.

Bill's obituary captured the essence of his life. It revealed one of his favorite sayings, "You eat American bread you should speak American." This showed he valued what America gave him, but he also became a proud American in the process. He wanted other immigrants to embrace America like he had. The obituary goes on to relate Bill loved Arkansas because it reminded him of his home in Ukraine. To date Bill is still mentioned at almost every family gathering because he was one man who could never be forgotten.

Bill's passing grieved Edith greatly because he had been part of her life for fifty four years. In 2006, Edith sold their business, the Tower Motel and their home, the Short Dodson House. Reluctant and relieved she retired to her home on the lake. Moving her belongings of fifty six years provided a task for her immediate family. Many months were spent downsizing everything to fit into her lake home, but Edith is now successfully retired. Edith is trying to learn to relax which is a difficult thing for her to do especially since she worked diligently for the past fifty six years of her life. Despite physical ailments due to arthritis she is in excellent health considering she is currently eighty years old.

When asked to sum up her life Edith commented, "If you are not born rich, you are only going to make it if you learn how to work, no matter what kind of job, and learn how to save." Edith credits her success to work and wealth by mirroring her parents. Edith went on to say "it doesn't matter how much money you make, if you don't know how to save, you will never be able to get places" (E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008). Bill and Edith never tolerated laziness; they worked hard and they believed everybody else should too. Bill worked up until his last days, and Edith will continue to do the same.

Bill and Edith became Americans. They adopted a brand new culture and participated actively in American life. Although they started with nothing, they lived the American dream

owning their own car, property, and businesses. However, their past was never to be forgotten; memories of the old country resound deeply in their souls. Those memories are what made Bill and Edith to be thankful for American and to become proud Americans.

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Appendix

E.K. Terlecki, personal communication, July 12, 2008

Principal interviewer: Dr. Randall Wight
Secondary interviewer: Sara Terlecki
Interviewee: Edith Terlecki
Date: July 12, 2008

rdw: ...Edith Terlecki in Mrs. Terlecki's home in Hot Springs, Arkansas. It is July 12, 2008. Mrs. Terlecki was born in Poland in 1928. Today we are going to talk about her early life in Eastern Europe. May I call you Omi? (whisper)

sat: May he (rdw) call you Omi?

et: Of course (laughter) everybody does

rdw: Thank you, that means a lot to me. Tell us where you were born and under what circumstances. What you were told about the time of your birth.

et: Ok well I was born July 20, 1928 at that time my parents lived on the farm in Poland and I am the third child from my father's second marriage. There were five children from his first marriage and five from his second marriage. And I am the third from the second marriage. So we always had baby sitters. And when I got to the point when the others got old enough to go out of the house to work I had to babysit for my youngest brother.

rdw: Bruno

et: Besides this I had to take care and watch the cows in the meadow. Cause my mother in the summer time would go to Germany from Poland to work over there to make money so my parents could take care of us in the winter time. My father was quite a bit older than my mother, and so he would stay home and take care of the couple acre land we had in Poland and a few cows and pigs and chickens of course. So we mainly grew our own vegetable and lived from that.

rdw: What vegetables did you grow?

et: Beans, we had cabbage we had potatoes uh carrots, all um cucumbers, and tomatoes and all of these kinds of things. We did go into a lot of melons. And to this day since I was not introduced to this as a child I don't care for melons and uh some of the other things I do like But this was probably because we did not have it in our country.

rdw: Now when you farmed did you farm with machinery or did you use live stock?

et: Oh no this was all mainly...if you were fortunate to have a horse and you put that on a tiller and a lot of people used a cow. The cow would pull the tiller or the gardens we did it by hand.

rdw: What did your mother do when she went to Germany?

et: Working on the farms.

rdw: She went over there to work on the farms.

et: She went to Germany and she worked on the farms picking different fruits and vegetables and things like that

rdw: Did you grow just enough for the family or grow enough to sell some too?

et: We mainly just for the family. Yes in this village everybody that lived there had a garden. And there were no possibilities to go to the towns to sell some of our products. So we just grew it ourselves and we would can it for the winter. We made sour kraut from the cabbage – I myself have been in a barrel and stamping the sour kraut down

rdw: Down in the barrel?

et: Oh yes, we would make a big barrel of sour kraut so we would have from one year to another

rdw: And it would keep?

et: Oh yes definitely. Because we did not have this kind of temperature like here. The summers were warm but not as warm here And we would also have cellars under the house or we would have cellars very insulated with straw deep in the ground where we kept our potatoes and fresh vegetables even carrots at a fresh point. But uh lot of the fruit we would do a lot of canning so we would have from one year to another. We always had fruit trees, cherries and apple

rdw: You had orchard?

et: Not orchard just some trees. Cherries, apples, plums, this was probably all I remember as far as fruit trees, Pears. But none of these peaches and things like this.

rdw: How did your family come to that part of Poland?

et: My mother's father is born in that same area And my mother's father was a Lutheran minister and teaching at the same time school.

rdw: At the Lutheran school?

et: In the Lutheran school and teaching German language. Even though it was under Polish regime we lived in a village where mainly all German people lived and I think there was only one Polish family in that village. And everybody like I said lived on their couple acres of land. Then we had a school house and my grandfather lived in the school house It was like an apartment. And there was a church also adjoining to the school house where we would go on Sundays to uh take our church uh what do you call it doings. Across the street was the cemetery where people would be buried.

rdw: And that was Gros Orlin?

et: Gros Orlin was the name of that village and to get to the biggest town was about at least 30 miles. It was a little far to walk but at times my parents did walk

rdw: If they needed something?

et: Yes. Since uh if you had to go to get some paper work or something you had to go to town there was nothing in our village whether it was police or post office. There was mail delivery at a certain place and from there we had to pick it up.

rdw: So you didn't got into town very often?

et: I don't remember I ever went to town when I was a child.

rdw: How close a community was Gros Orlin? You said they were mostly German people?

et: Yes there was at least like 100 families

rdw: 100 families. With life centering around church and school?

et: Church and school was more less in the middle And there was this street and there was nothing paved. The street was white sand and if you would go with horse and buggy you would sink about 4-5 inches into the sand and then you already had a road established that was already a bit ended on the side and you had a road on the side where you could walk and that was already walked down when we went to school that we were able to walk on that sidewalk sort of. And all of the properties the house were facing mainly the road and the back part was where the meadow and a couple acre land And a little further down on the same property as the way the road was going this is the way we had a river going On the other side like 500 yards or something was a river

rdw: River, road, community. The village

et: Here was the street and here were the homes and then were the meadows then was the river where we would have the cows graze their grass and they could go to the river. We would have shallow areas there and dug in somewhere where they could go and get water. This is where we would also wash clothes. Yes, we would have a big wooden what would you call it a

sat: A tub?

et: Like a tub, not so high and this is what we would wash our clothes in. And like when my mother was gone I would wash clothes in that tub and would get water from the river and on the area that was fenced off we would put the clothes on the meadow to dry and to bleach. Because most of our linen for the bedding and even some shirts and stuff were made from linen. And this was linen that a lot of ladies in the winter time made themselves

rdw: From?

et: We had sheep and from the sheep they would make that yarn And we as children sometimes would help. They had these things where they would step with their foot on it and the wheel would turn and make the yarn and then not everybody had a weaving device so people would help each other out so we would weave and make the linen and from the linen we would make our sheets and things like that And when it was drying in the sun it was bleached really beautifully.

rdw: And it smelled wonderful too?

et: Oh well definitely. (laughing) I still take my linens sometimes out to air it out on the patio especially quilts and pillows. Oh gosh yes I am going to do this for my relatives when they come I'm going to put everything on the chairs, the pillows and let it all air out nicely. This is something I grew up with and um I enjoy it.

rdw: You said that some people didn't have spindles and couldn't weave and people helped one another. And I believe Sara said that once your older brothers were lent out to other farms to work.

et: Oh yes

rdw: How did that work out and what did lending out mean and what would you get for in exchange?

et: We would help with each other also with relatives. My father had cousins and they had a little bigger of a farm and so he would hirer some of my brothers or sisters and they would help them out. And they would get a little bit in return some wheat or things like that.

rdw: Oh so that is how they would pay them, more food.

et: Or a little money if they had it And of course when they were 18 they would also be taken in the military.

rdw: Into the German military?

et: Polish military then later on German military. Since I had three step brothers. Two of my step brothers got killed in the last war. The oldest one returned and my oldest real brother was 18 at the time and he had to join the German army and then the other ones were in the German army. We never knew how he [my real brother, Richard] was killed, where he exactly was killed. We knew approximately where he was stationed and so we never heard anything from that. But the oldest one from my father's second marriage was a girl and somehow when we left home they were all working other places but we had relatives in Berlin in a suburb and we had made up in and wherever we were going to be this was going to be our point where we were going to meet after we left from home. And so my sister, the oldest one was sitting next to me in the cellar

rdw: Elisabeth

et: Elisabeth, she got killed. She got a piece from a bomb that fell in the second house from my relatives and so she was killed. She was 19 and that was in the suburb of Berlin and my brother that was 18 he would never return from the military. The oldest brother [step] is the only one who stayed alive. And then of course my youngest brother [Bruno] who was at that time just a child.

rdw: Let's talk about the war the war begins in September '39. The war begins with the invasion of Poland. Were you aware there was a run up to the war?

et: Not much. Not much at all.

rdw: *Then it happened.*

et: It happened and it was over in just a couple of days.

rdw: *So how did life change? What happened? How did it happen? And how did life change?*

et: When we were at the village and we did not get much of all of this to know how things were you know. My mother's brother lived in the city. He was a there in the city and he would communicate with us. By that time we already had a radio and through the radio is how we heard Hitler had invaded Poland and that we were now taken over by the German regime. We were in the middle part of Poland and they still had to go to the eastern part of Poland. So we were already how do we call it taken over by the German government Then we heard from my uncle, my mother's brother, that we could come to the city

rdw: *This was Pilsen?*

et: Pilsen and live in the city and to get out from the area we were at and he would help us getting into a home in the city.

rdw: *And the city was safer than the countryside?*

et: Well it is not just the safer side but you had more opportunities. It was not a big city and this was when went to that city and when we came there lot of Jewish people were already taken out of their property

rdw: *In Pilsen*

et: Yeah they were supposed to go work on the farm and they were supposed to work like we had to work under the Polish regime. Since they were not used to doing heavy physical work they were very devastated. And when we came to the city we were told we could buy or with time pay off a home with a little grocery store. And this was the house my uncle had designated for us to move in And then we had to keep paying every month a little bit to the city and we were able to operate the grocery store.

rdw: Who had owned the grocery store before you moved in?

et: They were Jewish people. And they were all taken out to go and work on big farms and then they put them in camps. But we did not know how all this was

rdw: That was really stuff people talked about

et: No. No there was not newspaper there was nothing written about these things and so on and so forth. We just heard about it.

rdw: How did you hear about it through people talking?

et: Through the radio and through people talkin. People to people talkin. Is when we heard about these things. But no details no that there was a concentration camp or it was just said they took them to Germany and that they took them to places where they could all stay together in camp because they did not want to go to work so they had to be umm watched over and to see they would go to work the next day. They were like under military arrest. So we lived there and did not have much know how about running things.

rdw: Grocery store

et: Grocery store or this or that. But my father was cleaver and my mom and I We all because my older [brothers] they were all in the military and my sisters were working some places to watch children cause then everything got organized because children were able to go to kindergarten and we needed the ladies...older girls to watch these children in kindergarten so that the mothers would have help if they had more children they would go into the homes and help mothers take care of the children because the men were all in the military.

rdw: Now the German government came in and organized?

et: Oh yes they organized all of that. So that my older sisters so that if they were helping in the household with children they still had to help cleaning with the mother and since there was un no other help from the men. So the women had to step in.

rdw: Everyone would step in to do the work.

et: And they would also take a lot of the Polish men to work on the farms. They were a little bit more used to doing this kind of work. Where Jewish people were bankers, store owners, business people, politicians, so that they were not used to working like this. But the Polish people did. They had farms and they knew how to do different works. Sometimes there were 3 to 4 young men on one farm which they did not need them all and the German government took them to Germany and they got paid for their work. But when they first came to say "you will have to come and we take you to Germany" they were very devastated, they didn't want to go, and they would hide. So the German government had to go sometimes at nighttime to get these young men out to take them to Germany to work. And so when Christmas time came or winter time came they had saved themselves some money and they had bought themselves some clothes,

they bought a watch, bought this and they came for the winter for Christmas home and they were very happy that they had been able to work, make money, and buy themselves things.

rdw: So they had been to Germany.

et: Yes

rdw: They had worked. They had been paid.

et: Yes. And then they were glad to go back again to work again and so when the war ended there were a lot of Polish people in Germany working on the farms because like I said the German men were all gone. And some of them did not want to go back to Poland. They stayed there in Germany, learned the language, stayed in Germany, even married German girls and because like I said there were very few men. And then people from Yugoslavia came to Germany to work and they were all happy to come there. Or Greece or whatever you know and work there And that is how the intermarriages started.

rdw: So six years is a pretty good time

et: [19]39 and then yes and then it was 6 years and also families with children got help from the government and streets were built and factories were built in Poland and usually we had whatever there was a factory built and also there were so that homes were built and so that people lived closed buy and they didn't have to have much of a traveling beside the bicycle, that is all we were use to, all we had and could afford and so it was all done in a form that was practical and Hitler was very strict so if anybody we could leave our bicycles outside, nobody was taking anything, stealing anything, because the punishment was very severe. So we all grew up like this, you know, I was 12 or 13 and by the time it ended I was 15, so we had our organization, young girls belonged to the what do they call this and the bigger ones were the N and we had once a week get together with, started to sing and learn all the German songs, the German language, better than what we learned in school was very minimum, not much of an education. And in the summertime we were a family a big family, we were even sent to Germany to some of the farms for two weeks or so vacation. So, we got better food, clothing and thinks like that.

rdw: So what did you, you were working very hard during this time, what did you do for fun?

et: We would play ball, and Peisern was on the river, and we would have paddle boats, we would go and paddle boat on that river and play soccer, or the one with the net?

rdw/st: Basketball

et: Yes, and from school, we would have lots of homework, and when we came home we had to help in the household, with the children, this and that, had to help in the store, I was then the oldest one all the others ones were all gone, and I had to help. We had rations stamps. you still had to pay. You were allowed so much flour, so much sugar, so many eggs, so much butter a

month and then we had little stamps. We had to separate them, each item, we had to glue them on paper so it was easier to overlook this then count, so when we came home from school, we had to do this, separate these stamps and glue them on newspaper or whatever it was at that time- I don't remember.

And then people would get paper for wrapping, maybe one or two sheets of paper a month, it was on a roll and we had to cut it a certain measurement and fold it up and so when they came and needed something like this, it was all folded. We would pre-weigh the sugar, the flour, they were allowed only so much and so when we would close the store we would be in weighing up pounds of sugar, pounds of flour, it did not come pre- package, we had to pack this in the store ourselves.

rdw: So, you were working almost all the time.

et: School work, working, and you know, that is how we grow up.

rdw: The Germans and the Russians were initially Allies, when they first invaded Poland. Where you aware when that changed?

et: This is way before my time.

rdw: When they carved up Poland, Russia got half.

et: Oh, yes

rdw: When the war started Russia got half and Germany got half, but that didn't last very long.

et: Well, Germany didn't get any part of Poland as a matter of fact, they took half of Germany.

rdw: Ahh ok

et: Poland got part of Germany and Russia got some of Poland at that time.

rdw: Right, right

et: But Poland was that took over East Germany . That was, again then under the Polish Regime, because they claimed, this was years ago Polish, but I don't know how many years ago, but what year it was, one time Germany.

rdw: During

et: 18 something

rdw: There was a war 1820 or 1920

et: And my father had to serve in the Russian military.

rdw: In that war?

et: Yes, and my father spoke Russian.

rdw: That's where he knew Russian before the war

et: And he knew a lot about what was going on in Russia and this and that. So, my father always said, "What Hitler does is not quite right" and he was always a little...how should I say it, criticizing

rdw: yes

et: And this was not allowed, but we lived in that Peisern and lots of my relatives, my mothers cousins and he had some relatives living there and so on, so on, and they would say, "Adam (that is my father's name) you cannot talk like this, because if you keep talking like this, you winded up you know where". So they kind of, you know, and so he would be careful and then my grandfather would come over and the two of them would sit there and talk about different things.

rdw: So tell me, at some point you had to leave?

et: This was in [19] 45.

rdw: So what was that situation?

et: We had actually worked ourselves out very nicely with that grocery store and we had music lessons, my sister and I, people from Latvia would come and live in Peisern, they would bring things along like a piano or organ and my father would but this for us children, because, and we had a cabinet maker living next door, that would make furniture for us and we would go to a big city with butter or a goose and this is how we would shop, because, during the war, everything was rationed, but, when you came with butter or with a goose, or with something like this you were able to buy a rug for your house, or materials, and then there were dressmakers in the city and when you had the material, you would get a suit made, dresses made, shoes made, a shoemaker was in our town, so my sister and I were always kind of dressed very well, because of the groceries we did not use up all of it, we were able to gave, and this was mainly Polish people. Polish people were the ones, that were, dressmakers, shoemakers, and they were already taught the profession when they were younger and they were still there at that time and doing some of the things for everybody or anybody. And so, my father would go to that big city with some like I say food and come home with some beautiful materials for suits for him, and so by 39 by 45 we already had a piano, nice furnishings but we were told, the Germany Army is being fought back by the Russians and we will have to leave home for just a time- where there is going to be fighting in our little town and Hitler did not want us to get killed and so they told us to take the most important things for a couple of days, weeks or so on a wagon on horse and buggy.

And with 3 families we went on the horse and buggy with some small belongings and I for some reason took a purse, a big purse, and I put all these stamps in that purse and money we had. We took money with us- and so then we left home with the horse and buggy and I on the bicycle We teenagers went on the bicycle-but we didn't get very far, because it was January 21

and there was ice and snow we threw the bicycles in the ditch and went on that wagon or walked because the whole marching was going very slowly and we did a lot of walking because the horses were not strong enough to pull that buggy with more people on it and we would have sacks of food for the horses and stop occasionally and feed the horses and then we were about 45 kilometers And then we left in the evening it was starting to get dark and we walked about 45 kilometers from home and then there was German military and my father says you teenagers get with the military, get on their trucks, see how far you can get to catch a train and go to Berlin, to my relatives, because during the war, my relatives from Berlin would come and sometimes spend a week at our house to get a night's sleep because they had air raids every night, and they were never really getting a good night's sleep and so they would come and stay with us and spend the time of a week to get a good night of sleep and my relatives would say "Now when you ever have to leave home you know where to go – you come to us", and we younger children would say "Why would we have to leave home? Why do they talk like this?" And you know the time came- and so then we went to Berlin and then the military as far as we could and then could catch a train to Berlin and then could catch a train to Berlin and then is when we went with the train. My older step sisters, and from the other family their daughters, they only had 1 daughter from Rega and I was there and my step sister and her little boy and we went to Berlin.

st: Was it your step sister or was it Elisabeth?

et: No, it was my step sister-Gustel. Elisabeth we didn't get to her she came a couple of weeks later to Berlin, she went a different route- because she was not at home – she was someplace else working and she left with some friends to go to Germany the southern part of Germany we were more up west near Berlin- you know- and that's when my sister and we had a sister-in-law she lives at Pumin which was northern Germany, so my sister, my step sister and her little boy they went to my sister- in-law – she was living there and the other girl stayed there with me at my relatives and it was 6 weeks until we knew that my parents were alive and they got way from the Russians and that they were going to come to Berlin

rdw: How did you feel during these 6 weeks?

et: Very, very frustrated – you know we had those air raids every night, my Aunt she would always go to town square there was like a bunker it was like an old church or something, there was a cellar and when she heard the air raids she had so and so long that she could get to that and she too us always along we always had to go, just a handbag we took with us and went there and it was weeks and nothing has really happened in our area we could see from far how it was burning and where the bombs were falling

rdw: In other parts of Berlin?

et: In other parts of Berlin and you could see that, but nothing right there in the area where we were, so then when my mother and my- and in the meantime my sister came from the other area and she said "did you hear from Mom and Dad?" Yes, they are going to come here, she says, you and I get on the train and we are going to go tomorrow morning over there and help them come here. And they actually were already going to leave that morning and something came up and they didn't leave and so we still caught them at the place where they were at and the next

morning we got on the train and we all came to Berlin, my younger sister, my youngest brother, and my oldest sister and my parents and I And so we were sleeping where ever- on couches and they gave us one bedroom because my cousins husband was in the military and since we went every, my father and mother we always went to the bunker there, so then one night they didn't come at the same time like a 9 o'clock- and so we like ah – today they are just going to go over us – we are not going to have any raid and so we decided to go to bed, and so we are just barely in bed at 10 o'clock and then there went the siren- the planes are on their way – my cousin, my mother's cousin, she just everybody up, up let's go, let's go- she would run, she would not wait for us. So she would run and we thought oh Tonta Trudy, my aunt's name was Trudy, nothing is going to happen we are just going there we are just going to stay here – we got out of bed, actually we didn't want to get out of bed, but somehow, the siren and the plans were coming closer and went down in the cellar, and there was a bed in the cellar, and we were sitting there and there were other seating chairs and my sister and I sat next to each other and this was a duplex where my mother's cousin family was on one end of the duplex- so they made a wall in the basement so in case something was happening- you could go from one basement to the other – and the bed was standing in front of that opening that was made and so 2 houses away from my aunts a bomb fell- the room we slept in usually there was an outside wall the whole brick wall fell on the beds where we would have been killed probably and a piece of the bomb that fell 2 houses from us came in thru the cellar and hit my sister, which was sitting right in the bed – so, she fell over and we though she had fainted we couldn't see anything that had happened to her everything was dark and then we got some light on, we had candles and so and then my mother had washed her hair and put rollers in- so we took this out and we thought maybe she had fainted we would make her comfortable on the bed and then my mom wanted to lift her up a little bit and when she put her hands around her back to lift her up she was in blood with both hands and then we knew something had happened she passed away, right then. And so the 2 houses apart there were 5 people who got killed and the duplex, the sisters from mom's cousin- husband there were 3 of them who got pieces of a bomb in their legs. And 85 year old aunt from them was on the second floor in a little apartment the whole wall was goin [gone] and she sat on a chair and nothing happened.

rdw: The wall fell in- she was on a chair

et: the whole wall was down at the end of the house and she sat on the chair

rdw: Watching? Now your house is destroyed now what do you do?

et: It was not all destroyed, but it was damaged quite a bit and so then we could see there was no way for us to stay there and from the government came the order that each, like we lived in the Peisern and our- and like here is Little Rock, is our city from the state so every area, from where we came from had an area where we were suppose to go to be an we would get some housing.

rdw: So everyone from Peisern would go here?

et: That was already from Berlin- this already came from the German government so then there and went to another area which was 50 kilometers west from Berlin- and there all the people had already left they were already going further west

rdw: They already had evacuated

et: They left, so, there were all these vacant houses with beds in them, fully equipped homes, and this is where we settled down, because the air raids were very bad one after another- and it was difficult for us to go any further, so we settle there in that area and we were hoping the English military – we didn't know much who was coming what side but there was just the German military in back of us were the Russians. And so we didn't know what to do but they were shooting the single people on the street and so we just settled in these homes where the people left and stayed there.

rdw: How long had they been gone, could you tell?

et: It was only days- it was only days they had left you know, so when the Russians came closer they thought they were going to fight the Russians back- but they didn't, the Russians and the English people met practically in the village we were staying in.

rdw: You are in the middle of this?

et: We were in the middle and we wound up in the Russian side of Germany

rdw: So, you are here, the English, British come in one way- the Russians come in another, there is a battle and the Russians end up takinn.

et: They were shooting, they had dug up some bunkers you go in thru the ground and we stayed in those things not even in the house and when the Russians came- then, they caught us and we were almost like prisoners.

rdw: You felt like prisoners or did they treat you like prisoners?

et: Oh yes, definitely, we were treated from the first Russian military that invaded our village. They put us al in that one big house in the cellar. They said if we had anything like ammunication, or anything that shoots, or anything that was of any danger, we should hand it out, but you see at Russia, they were far behind, they didn't know whatan iron was

rdw: for ironing clothes

et: and they thought that would be something exploding or this and that and the Russian Army- half of the Russian Army was always drunk.

rdw: Vodka

et: Vodka was what they were drinking, so this one Russian solider found an iron in this house, he though we did not want to give this up because this would explode or something, so we were all in the basement and he came down with a rifle, and he was going to kill us all- with 15 people of us in that cellar. My family, other people, so he was getting ready- toppling around and while

he was getting his rifle ready some other Russian military came in, came down in the basement, they were not drunk, and they got him out. And we were saved. And then there were more Russian Army that came in, that were higher up military, and so we could stay in that house, and live in this house for a couple of days. There were some of them very brutal.

rdw: Russians?

et: Yes, they were after the women, they raped them, my mother jumped from a barn from the second floor into the area of where the house was- there is a special word and I cannot think of it in English. So, hide, we little girls would hide, crawl in someplace in the basement, and stuff like that. But it was only one day and the second day they already came and had higher military people set up their office in that house.

rdw: So, the Command came in.

et: The Command came in and then things got better it was just that day and a half before they took over that it was very wild.

rdw: So, then how did your life go for the next few days?

et: From that on, organized that all people had to go and work on a farm, because there were big farms in that area and we had to meet in the morning and they had interpreters so that we were told what to do and go and work and at noontime, we would take an hour, so we could come home and eat, and go back to work again until five or six o'clock in the evening on that farm. So, that was May, when crops had to be put in.

rdw: So, this had been German farms a few weeks before?

et: Oh, yes

rdw: Now the Russians come in and occupy and you are working.

et: Yes, under the Russian government. And occasionally there were still these things the Russians would get drunk and evening we women, we went to one of those homes, they were a little bit out of the village, and we crawled, slept and spent the nights under the roof in the attic, and there were stairs you could go up and we would take the ladder up, so that they would not see any of this or that. My mother and some older ladies with my father stayed downstairs. My father helped us a lot, because of knowing how to speak to them in Russian, saved a lot of times our lives.

rdw: Now, did they pay you for working on these farms?

et: Oh no, no, no, there was no pay involved at that time.

rdw: How did you get food when you had no money?

et: We would go and sometimes they would give us a little food and then when the food was growing in the summertime in the fields and it get dark- we went to the farms, we stole food so we had something to eat.

rdw: They weren't taking care of you at all?

et: There was nothing like, everybody was just grinding seeds that were suppose to be put in the ground, we had some seeds in our pocket, so we took home, and coffee grinder and grind that and my mom would cook soup from that and we would go get potatoes that we should put in the ground and bring a couple of potatoes home.

rdw: Put in your pocket.

et: And this is how we lived for then the new crops came in the summertime and then we were in the fields and then it was better because we were able to get some. I don't know what the situation was with the money, we did not buy, there were no stores, we were just handed out some food.

rdw: You would line up and get it from the Russian Military?

et: Yes, yes

et: And then my father says, and we could hear, of so and so they left, they went and tried to get over the border, go into West Germany.

rdw: People trying to escape?

et: You could hear this, thru talk, thru people, talking, talking, talking. We were taken for a week to build an airport, right afterward, when they invaded our village, we were taken on the trucks about 15 or 20 miles and to build we had shovels the ground to even up so that they wanted to build an airport. And then we stayed there a couple of nights and we escaped the next morning, early in the morning, we just went close across the fields and went away in little groups two or three girls alone and then not on the main road where they were driving over the fields.

rdw: Where were you going?

et: We would go home to our house into the attic and hide, and then mom and them would cook something to feed us you know and just to hide. But then it got better after a couple of weeks, then everything got better. The Regime had more Russians, how should I say, organized everything, with offices and everything was very you know [she can't find the word] (tape ended changed to another tape)

et: Yes, at one time I got sick it was in the morning and I was not feeling well, went home for lunch, and I didn't go to work in the afternoon

rdw: You were sick.

et: Yes. And my parents went evening visiting with some other people there in the village, because in the evening you could walk around and we could visit after a while so everything was pretty much normalized you know for us. And a Russian soldier came with the what do you call it

ST: a gun

et: Yes, and picked me up.

rdw: Because you were home since you didn't go to work

et: Because I did not go to work, and they put me in a, they had sat their office a big farm they called in German a (<Gutz House>) they had a special large home on this big farm like what do they call that and this is even where they had rooms for the help and things like this, and this is where they settled in this big house there the Russians their government in there, in the cellar they had some rooms locked up like they use as a jail.

rdw: Under the big house.

et: O K, they came and picked me up with the gun and took me there and put me in there, in the cellar, and I was about 15. 15 years old.

rdw: What did you do?

et: Cried my eyes out, and now we had to walk to the village and here are the kids playing on the streets.

rdw: And you are walking through them .

et. And I'm walking with them and he is walking me through the village and others are questioning... my parents where , where are the Krueger's? Where are they taking their daughter. And so they ran to find find my parents , and so they found my parents, they brought them over there and my father talked to them, you know, but it didn't matter. I had to be punished because I was not at work.

rdw: How long did you have to stay in the jail?

et: They put me down there, locked me in, they gave me something to eat, and I had to spend the night there.

rdw: By yourself.

et: By myself, but I was not mistreated or anything, I was just mainly locked in . Now you be 15 years old and be locked up. So, it was frustrating, my parents could do nothing.

rdw: You had no ideal how long you would be there?

et: No, the next day when all the people came to work they came by my window, there was a window in there, you know, a little window, and they all knew what had happened already because that went like a fire thru the village and they went in the office and they told them I was sick and I was really almost falling over in the morning and that I could not come to work because of this and that, well, they did not take me out, no matter what so all day I had to stay in that cellar.

rdw: Another whole day.

et: Yes, and then in the evening all the workers went into the office and said "if they are not going to let me out they all are not going to come to work tomorrow." Then they let me out in the evening, they did not want

rdw: They didn't want

et: A victim

rdw: They might just have left you there

et: Yes, yes, but, this is some incident that I could never forget. My goodness, and my father speaking the language no matter what, punishment was punishment.

rdw: What sort of things were going through your mind as you were sitting there?

et: I don't remember, it's a long time ago, I cried, if I ate anything, and I fell asleep toward morning, I did not sleep much,

rdw: So you stayed awake all night.

et: Yes, and this is just, I know there were others in the cellar, but each separately, but they also would take older men and put them in the cellar.

rdw: People who could not work.

et: And they would beat them, and you could hear them screaming.

rdw: And you were there hearing that.

et. So, naturally, you expect the worst is going to happen to you, you know. So then my father said, "If we stay here the winter we are all going to starve to death, we have to do what other people do, try to escape across the border into West Germany." So we took hand packages that people had left there like a blanket or something like this and whatever we could carry a little bit and there was already some kind of a train going.

rdw: Train east and west?

et: No

rdw: Among the workers?

et: Yes, I think we took a train closer to the border. Because the train track was the border. It divided where we went into the woods, there was a wooded area and thru the woods, higher up, was the tracks where the train would run and underneath once in a while there were these holes where the water would run thru [a culvert], the water would run off like this and so we were in the late afternoon early evening we went into the woods there with whatever we had, little bit, what we could carry,

rdw: You, your parent, your brother?

et: My brother, my sister and my nephew we took through this. So, we discovered that mud hole there, but now the Russians post are walking back and forth on the train tracks to patrol this area that nobody would cross over to West Germany.

rdw: Is this British occupation?

et: No, no

et: Over to the other side, yes

rdw: The other side?

et: The other side was British or was it American, I don't remember anymore, but anyway the Russians are patrolling that train station so much so that nobody crossed over, if somebody crossed over they would shoot, they did shoot. So we had discovered that hole and we figured when the time comes, it was getting dark we are going to crawl thru that hole. My father was a little heavier,

rdw: How big is this hole?

et: It was not very big, no no no , I would say it was not as big as this table

rdw: Small

et: Yes, smaller like this. And my father went first, my mother was last with children and we crawl all through on their knees, with shoes on with whatever we had on was muddy and dirty and on the other side still wooded area, we were in West Germany, we just real quietly got out of there, that wooded area, and we were safe.

rdw: Where did you go?

et: In West Germany, because of a lot of people tried to escape from the beginning it was possible, they had set up, like there was a big school or something with a big room where they could put people in to sleep. They had hay or something they brought in that we could sleep on blankets, from West Germany, they furnished that and they had soup kitchens where they fed us and so we were taken over there and we spent I don't know a week or more and they tried to find places for us that we could go to, a room or whatever

rdw: A place to live?

et: To farmers, so we could work on a farm, and they found a small room for us with two beds, two full size beds, a stove and a table and they sent us over there, I think we went with the train maybe all day to Osnabruck. and in the area of Osnabruck. That was about 20 miles from the sound of Osnabruck not Bergin. They took us over there, or they picked us up, I don't even remember any more of it, but, we were finding these accommodations there in a farmers' house which was bombed out the farmer himself lived in a trailer in the garden. The farmer had passed away, no, he was killed in the war, but the lady of the house and her two sons lived there and the maid in that trailer and the maid gave up the room we had, because it was adjoining to the barn where the cows were. There was when we opened up our door from our room we were in the stall where the cows were, but the cows were not running around they were in a extra fenced up area. But you know, if you wanted to go, you had to go from the house, from the kitchen, you had to come in that area you could walk thru the front area which was clean and so this is where we lived for two years. In that room. With the five of us.

rdw: How and what did you work?

et: *We worked at the farm, we did farm work, milking cows, working on the farm it was September but we went to the woods to pick up wood for us because we had the stove we had to heat with wood*

rdw: In your room?

et: Yes, and the farmer provided us with some pots, we had a stove so we could cook and there was not much there to cook, they provided us with the vegetables and whatever little meat we got from them and then all of a sudden it came that there was a German government. The government all of a sudden was you were in the British zone of Germany but it was handled by German people and all the German money was all of a sudden worth nothing. And everybody got fifty (50) marks per person.

rdw: What kind of money were you using?

et: We had German marks and we got German marks again

rdw: Same kind of money?

et: Different money, and 50 per person we got to start out with.

rdw: That was the initial sum.

et: That was the initial sum, so there was five of us and so we got 250 dollars.

rdw: okay

et: And you know we bought a bike a bicycle. Because the nearest village we could go shop when we walked it took us about an hour to walk. We lived close by the woods, my parents would go and pick mushrooms sometimes at six o'clock in the morning, we ate a lot of mushrooms, the farmer provided us with milk, with potatoes, and some vegetables, and some meat, this is how we started out and then I got myself a job working

rdw: Working? With children?

et: Yes, in a household because then already, like the people I worked for, he was building organs and you know German was already starting to get building up towns, businesses, building up this and that, started to build up churches and this guy was building organs for the churches and she worked in the office and they had two small children and I took care of the children, wash dishes, clean the house, this and that and this is where I then she cooked fish one time and I got very sick on the fish and since then I have never touched any seafood. We never had much seafood in our childhood anyway there was no place that had sea food.

rdw: So even with the river that ran you did not fish?

et: We did not fish that water, I don't even remember there being fish in there. But we would go swimming in there but I don't remember the fish being in there. And anyways so that was the end of the fish, so I was working there we had taken a blanket along from the Russian section and that blanket had yarn was as thick as a finger so we took that yarn and pull it apart to make a yarn that we could use for knitting sweaters.

rdw: How many sweaters could you get out of one blanket?

et: Well, I don't remember how many sweaters we got but we got some yarn there that my mother already everything was organize I mean there were stores, and this lady she did this before the war there were two sisters and neither one was married and she opened up a store where people could bring material and she would knit or crochet or do these things for people, sweaters or dresses or this and that and so there was a little yarn short for my sweater my mom went there and took some of that yarn for to have a sweater knitted for me and my mother use to know how to sew, but not very much knitting. And that sister, that lady, she rode the bicycle from that village that she had to come thru our village to go to the city where she use to have her store with the bicycle, so she stopped and she says "Mrs. Krueger I'm a little short, do you still have a little bit of that yarn" and my mother says, oh yes I do, so they got to start talk about this and that and to my mother says oh I have a daughter she really needs to learn a profession and she is working now on a household not really learning anything and she says "I have two girls that I'm teaching how to do handwork, embroidering, knitting, crocheting, sewing on little

pearls”, and this was in the winter time, she says “let me think about it. Maybe if she is interested and wants to start, she can fill out papers and I’ll have her to start here”. And so she came by and she says yes, okay, she is going to meet me and I went there and she’s alright I will be the third girl she will teach a profession.

rdw: So this is like apprenticeship?

et: Like a apprentice and one day a week we had to go to school to the city.

rdw: What kind of a school was this?

et: To learn how silk was made, how do we get silk? From the worms. How do we get the wool? From the sheep. How does that become yarn that we can use? It has to be processed all the different processing we had to learn, we had to learn all of that and how these kind of things, you know. One day a week we had to go there to the school there were buses already that were taking us to school and we were all day in school and that was usually on Monday we went to that school and this is how I learned my profession

rdw: Now the rest of the week you would practice?

et: Oh yes, I would go oh yes, I would have to be there at eight o’clock in the morning, and be in there doing hand work, mainly for people, farmers, and they sometimes would pay with butter or with food they would butcher something, and my teacher, my lady, my boss, she would get some of that things and we would get like twenty five a month concession, spending money a month, twenty five marks, see. that’s all. But she would sometimes get some money or food for an exchange for us students for our products.

rdw: You worked at this for how many years?

et: Three years. And I had to make an exam,

rdw: At the end of the three years.

et: Oh, yes

rdw: And what was that like?

et: I was scared to death, that I was not going to pass, and not the handwork or so, but all the other things that we had to know, we had to draw, make drawings, what kind of a pattern we would put on material in order to sew on these beads, this beaded designs on dresses and all of this we had to work three days under supervision make these different samples for our exam, and I didn’t think I would pass, but somehow, my papers were supposed to be, we had applied for me to come here to America, because my father had a brother here, my mother had a sister here they had came to America when they were eighteen and nineteen, they didn’t want to go to the military, the men, so they went to Canada and from Canada they would come to America and usually settle in North Dakota and South Dakota and this is where my

relatives were settling my fathers brother settled in South Dakota and my mother's brother settled in North Dakota and this is where they made, land was given to them, where they could make it fruitful. You know, in the beginning, when they came here. They were young men, twenty, twenty-one or so from Canada and then they stayed in America and my mothers sister she came to Chicago because there was already people in Chicago from back home that she knew and then her other sister came to Chicago and some other cousins came to Chicago and so when I came to this country my Uncle is the one that could, we had to have somebody that was signing papers so that they would be our guardian and our sponsors. And my uncle [Albert] was able to do this, because he owned some land and he had a little store and he was an American citizen.

rdw: In South Dakota?

et: In South Dakota, but I stayed in Chicago with my mothers sister there were more opportunities for jobs.

rdw: In Chicago?

et: My mothers sister was sick all of her life, they did not have an automobile, they did not have a house, they lived on rent, but she was very clean and she cooked good for me and I stayed with them and my uncle was working a couple of blocks away from where they live and he took me over there and I got a job there.

rdw: This was the screw factory?

et: That was the screw factory

rdw: Before we go there tell me what you felt like, do you remember the voyage over or the trip over?

et: Oh yes, I have to go back to when I finished my exam.

rdw: okay

et: And I thought, I hope my papers will arrive before I have to take that exam .

rdw: Cause you didn't want to take that exam.

ST: LAUGHS

et: But it didn't happen, I had to take my exam and then I was work as an apprentice, not as an apprentice, but the next step [as a journeyman]. So, all of a sudden we had a letter from America, my fathers brother is going to come to visit,

rdw: Alfred

ST: NO

et: No, Albert, that was my fathers brother, and he came over to that village, now in the meantime, before he came, the farmer already finished a room, next to our little room, and we had a big room adjoining our little room so that we had more room to live in and my mother made all kinds of mattresses from burlap stuffed them with straw or hay and made all kinds of beds when we heard my uncle is coming from America, because all of my other relatives were going to come and visit and we now had this big room where they all could sleep on the floor.

rdw: She is getting ready

et: Yes, because we already had that letter that he is coming. When he was suppose to come, I got the papers that my papers were ready, and I was going to choose a date when I was supposed to come to America. So, my uncle came and my other relatives came to us there and visiting, we still had my fathers other brother there and nieces and nephews and my mother had a brother there and they all came and we slept twelve people in this room and my mother cooked for all of us and it was just very, very joyous occasion. So, I could not come back with my Uncle on the same plane, because everything was already reserved and I had to make reservation on a plane a couple of hours ahead of my uncle, but also from Bremen in Germany that is where we had to go to the train, and from there we could take the plane to New York.

rdw: So you flew into New York?

et: New York, but that was not all that simple, we had a real good time while my uncle was, there all this and that, and we went then, there is one item that happened and not very pleasant my mother was very clean, she always cleaned the floors, washed the floors, it was wooden floor, and so she just finished cleaning that room which was now a kitchen and left the door open to dry and one of those little calves came into that little kitchen, could barely turn around, and you know that little calf had an accident. And my uncle nearly died laughing.

rdw: Your mother didn't die laughing?

et: No, I wasn't home when that happened, when we heard about it when we came home, it was just funny. But I thought this was really something. So anyway, we had this farewell party and we had to go with the train and I left first, my father went with me to Bremen and I got on the plane and we had to land in Greenland, that is where the ice is, our plane had to land there to fill up with fuel and they discovered a problem with the plane, so we could not take off they had to repair that plane and my uncle had to leave later, so I was suppose to be waiting for him in New York and it turned out he had to wait for me. So when I came to New York he was already waiting over there and it was evening, he grabbed me and at that time we could not fly direct to Chicago we had to fly New York and from New York take a train and he grabbed me and said, "come come come girl, come come we have a cab over here and we have to get to the train station to catch the last train to Chicago", and we got in that cab and I got so sea sick in the cab from all of this and we went in the train and we caught the train, closed the doors and we were off to Chicago. And we were on the train all night, and we went at eight o'clock we arrived in Chicago and we landed at the south side and we got of at south side exit because my uncle's

cousin lived on the south side, we took a cab and a driver there on the train he had the money and we went to my uncle's house and they were just getting out of bed, so we had breakfast over there and I was in America. And my Aunt lived on the north side of this city, so after breakfast, after talking and after visiting with them, they were going to take us to my aunt's where I was suppose to stay. So when we drove thru Chicago with the car, which was Ashland Avenue and I said to him, I called him Uncle Aimel even though he was my father's cousin and I said how far is it to Chicago? And he said "you are in Chicago". And I said "I am in Chicago, how can it be where are the homes, one story homes and this? We were told that there is all big tall buildings like downtown", oh you know, he said we are almost going to pass there and you will see that area where the high buildings are.

rdw: So you are going to drive from the north side thru downtown?

et: We didn't drive all the way thru, but not to far from the downtown area and then we saw the buildings, the high buildings. Oh, I was under the impression that all Chicago was like that. The paper was flying around peoples head, Chicago has these old street cars, very noisy, shaky, and Chicago was not very pleasant to look at, and so, I was a little disappointed, you know. But, then I was taken to downtown; paper was flying around over there too, but, relatives came and everybody brought something for me, you know, oh, this and that, and clothes and so on, food and so on, and then the first Sunday that was on a Saturday, then on Sunday, we went to Glen View which is quite a ways from Chicago, where we lived for a while, and there was my father's aunt ninetieth birthday, and so all the relatives from my father's side they were all over there for this birthday party and so I met them all and they met me and this and that and all of them spoke German still, and then in the evening they took me to my aunt, my aunt was picked up and she was with me to my mother's sister and this and that, so they took us home and then the next day, two days later, this is when I went with my uncle he worked in that screw factory there where they were making screws and got me a job.

rdw: That was the first week you were there?

et: Yes, and the vice president could speak German, he was German, and the owner of the factory was Yugoslavian he could speak a few words but not much, but they would always watch me, how I was working there was a floor lady and a floor lady, she would show me how to operate the machines and this and that. And these two men would stay behind the door, with the glass window and watch everybody how they were working, the man on the machines, and the girls where on the smaller ones and this and that. So, I started with fifty cents and hour, and a week later I got a dime raise.

rdw: They like the way you worked.

et: And a week later I got another little dime raise. And then my vice president said I should not talk about it, I couldn't talk, I couldn't speak English. So, I had a chair by my machine and then there was lunch, my aunt would make me lunch, we would sit. and some how I went to the wash room and when I came back my chair was gone, and this may have already been two or three weeks later and I came back and my chair was gone by my machine, and I always heard

everybody talking, talking, they would say son of a bitch and so I come to my machine and my chair was gone and I said "son of a bitch" .

rdw, ST, et: Laughing

et: And the floor lady, she was a white lady, most of the other ones working there were all black ladies, you know, she went to the German vice president and she said, "I think Edith has already learned how to speak English".

rdw, ST: laughing

rdw: So, these are some of your first English words.

et: And so, she told them what I had said, and so he came and said what I had said that was not very pleasant to say, and I was so embarrassed. And so then on the weekend this vice president would take me home to his family they had two daughters and I would baby sit for his two daughters so he and his wife could go out on the weekend and I would spend the night there and stay with the girls and they could speak German and watched the girls for extra money and six weeks later I got, I think it was six weeks, no four weeks later, I got very sick and I had to be operated on my appendix and my trip had already cost me five hundred dollars and I owed that to my aunt she put that money out for me and she had no money for her self much, so I always when I got a pay check I always paid some of the money off and the factory, the vice president, president paid my bill, hospital bill which was another five hundred dollars at that time, so that was not much money left for me, but I got these, you know, paid off my bills and so and stayed with this factory almost two years. Did that kind of work , but did get raises, you know, and then this vice president, he designed something making three, four or five operations at one time.

rdw: As oppose to doing just one..

et: And so he got himself situated and moved to Wisconsin and opened up a factory there of his own. and I had met my husband in the meantime, when I was operated on with my appendix, I was home for a week and on a Monday, my uncle said, you here already a couple of weeks and we have not even been to the Lincoln Park and that is a zoo, and it was in June the 21st and nice weather, and he said we take a walk today and go to the Park and my aunt could go no place. And so we walked, we lived in walking distance from the Lincoln Park, we walked there and we looked at the animals and he would talk to me in German and we look at this and that, and then all of a sudden there was a man standing next to my uncle and my uncle would talk to everybody always, and I was walking around there, so he talked to this man and he said, "What do you think, do you think that white bear could jump over the fence?" and this man said, "I don't know," and he could barely speak a couple of words of English and my uncle said, "oh you must be from out, from *drausen*, from outside," when they spoke from a different country, from *drawsen*, outside of America. Then he started to speak German, do you speak German, yes I speak German, this is my niece she just came from *drawsen* and so we started to talk German, my uncle spoke German, so we talked a few words, this and that, so he and my uncle are getting into a conversation, and I'm still looking around and I went over there to the bench where they

were sitting and listening to their conversation and so it got to be a little dark and so we said time to go home, this man [Bill] which became my husband later had to ride on a street car for at least forty five minutes to get to the south end of town where he lived, because he was working in the steel mill and he would be off on a Monday and work on a Sunday that was always rotating. So he tried to educate me that I need to fill out some paperwork, when I come to this country, which was the first papers, he had some forms at home, he filled it out already sent it in, he still had Tuesday off cause he had Monday and Tuesday off and he would come on Tuesday and bring me these forms, we would fill them out so we could send them in for those first papers.

rdw: Were these citizenship papers?

et: Yes, and so we walked from the park to the street car together, he got on the street car it went south and we walked home and the next day, my husband [Bill] came and he brought these papers to fill out and we filled them out, he brought a bottle of wine for my aunt, brought a cigar for my uncle and I don't think he brought anything for me. And so we were talking and so then my aunt says oh if you want to go for a ice cream or something it is just down the street there is an ice cream parlor and you could go there if you want to and he said okay, he spoke a little more English cause he worked for the American Military near Munich. So, we went for a walk and we had some ice cream, cause that he knew how to say, so we had some ice cream and we took some home for my aunt and uncle and we went back home and then he had to go back to the street car again. And so we decided the next time he would be off would be on a Saturday, a couple of weeks away he would come and take me out dancing, because we talked about dancing and he said he already knew there were all kinds of German clubs, that they had dances and we could go there, and so he would take me out dancing. So then we made this arrangement, but I didn't know when that was going to be, he said he would come and one Saturday we would go in the evening, which he did.

rdw: Very soon I suspect.

et: It was a couple of weeks, see he did not get off Saturdays, and in the meantime, my uncle that we went to when I first came to this country, when we went to that birthday party I was introduced to his nephew, because when my uncle came to Germany this nephew said not Uncle Albert I want you to bring me a German girl from Germany, actually he was a second or third cousin to me. And when we had that birthday party, on that Sunday, he said to him "well you told me to bring you a German girl and here she is; I brought you a German girl." He did not know that my papers were ready at that time that I would be ready to come with him at that time to America you know, and he was quite a bit older than I, I think fifteen years or more older than I, he had a feed mill that he owned. And he was making for cows or so, grinding the feed mill. So, then in the meantime, my father's cousin already went over there because there was an aunt he went to visit and he said Leonard, I heard that Edith has a boyfriend, and he had not come to visit.

rdw: This was just after the Lincoln Zoo visit?

et: Yes, so I heard Edith already has a boyfriend but now if you want a German girl and take her out, you better get on your toes, something on that order

rdw: What did he say?

et: And Sunday came and Leonard was there.

rdw: And he showed up?

et: Yes, and my husband [Bill] was not there because he had to work that Sunday, and at the place where I worked there was another German girl that has started the job was just a couple of houses away from that factory, her and I got kind of chubby, was just the two of us and we already got to know the neighborhood, and we already went shopping together, and this and that, and so when my cousin came that Sunday, Oh, he wanted to take us out dancing, because he had a car, so he took us out dancing on a Sunday afternoon because there was a German café and they even had dancing, so we went there, that girlfriend of mine and I. So then somehow he said he was going to come again and take us dancing

rdw: And this was Leonard?

et: Leonard. And the next time he came, my husband [Bill] was there, at that time by boyfriend [Bill] was there.

rdw: Did you tell him that was your boyfriend?

et: Well yes, I think in the meantime, at that time he found out, when he came the second time and he took us again over there dancing and we introduced him to my friend, which she was older than I, so she was actually a better match to him than I was. And I had a boyfriend already, you know. So, we went there and he said, "She is to quite that other girl, she is a little bit too quite," he didn't think she was a good friend to him. So, then he did not come for a while and then he came again once and then we went out again, somehow, but my husband would come a little more oftener you know every time he had a day off, it wasn't a weekend it was during the week then he would come already and so we went together a year and a half before we got married and I thought that's an old man my husband was nine years older, I was nineteen at that time, but for my birthday he came and he had already bought a watch.

rdw: This was your 21st birthday?

et: This was my twentieth, and he came and already brought me a watch that he had bought on credit.

rdw: He was serious.

et: (laughs) I didn't know that, but he paid off that watch when he was getting his pay check. Oh my goodness, what a present.

rdw: How did it look on your arm?

et: Something, so then when he would come and take me out dancing and one time when he came, I don't know what it was he brought me a dress, he had bought a dress for me even though he didn't know the size it was a little bit loose on me and where my aunt lived there was a lady downstairs that owned the house she had a sewing machine and my husband said I mean my boyfriend at that time said oh that's is no problem I can take in that zipper and that dress will fit you better. So he went downstairs, and on sewing machine there and ripped the zipper out, and took my dress in there, and sewed my dress in, taking it in a little, so that the dress would fit me better and we would go dancing, because my husband's friend one that was let my husband come in February and he was a tailor and he worked for a cleaning store doing all the alterations and my husband at that time, my boyfriend, stayed with him even though they had one room, like a kitchenette, everything in one room, where they lived, he was married, but he showed a little bit my husband how to do the sewing, so he could tailor a little bit.

ST: SO THIS FRIEND IS PETER?

et: This is Peter.

rdw: And they had grown up together?

et: They grew up together.

rdw: They had been conscripted in the army?

et: No, they were not in the army together.

ST: NO?

et: No not Peter, I don't think Peter was ever in the Army. That was Jimmy, my husband's cousin, but not Peter. Peter left home way before my husband, because he left already and went to Germany and he was single, at that time to, but he met his wife and married in Germany. But when he came to America he was already married and they lived together and my husband at that time, lived with them for a couple of weeks. So, anyway, we went dancing, oh and we were sewing there and then it became, we would go out often. The wintertime came and we would take the streetcars to where ever we went to dances, and sometime we would have to wait half of an hour, forty five minutes, for the street car to come and at nighttime eleven or twelve o'clock and it was cold, and ice and snow, and we would stay in door ways, to get a little away from the draft and this and that, but we would go dancing. And so a year and a half later we were planning that we were going to get married, and I wrote a letter home to my parents that I had a boyfriend and we were going to get married and my father says in a letter, it would be much better if you would marry a German fellow, and a Lutheran. So, he was not very happy that I was going to marry a different nationality and a different religion, but they were in Germany and I was in this country and in the meantime I was twenty one and so, then we decided on our wedding day, we wanted to get married inside of the church, but since my husband was Greek Catholic and we went to talk to the church minister he would marry us in the church, but we

would have to marry in the corner where they were lighting candles for the people to be remembered, but not in the front of the altar.

rdw: Why?

et: They could not marry us because, I was not Catholic, Greek Catholic or Catholic. So if I wanted to be married there I would have to go a couple of weeks for studying together with him the Bible and be baptized Catholic. And my husband told them, if he could not get married in front of the altar, we would decide not get married in this church. And we decided to get married just in the City Hall, downtown. I had already bought a wedding gown, they took it back, but I had to take another dress, they had other dresses and so I exchange it and I went and bought a suit, for it was proper to dress in a suit, with a hat and this and that and we were married in City Hall, my cousin who lived here from South Dakota, she was living in Chicago, and working in Chicago, she was my best girl, at that time she was not married, her boyfriend, and they belong to the American Legion, so we went downtown Chicago to City Hall they would drive us and we would get married there my fathers cousin Uncle Emil, his wife, his brother and his wife, were guest of the wedding, they were at the home where we had already rented an apartment, two rooms, and they stayed home and cooked a dinner and I went and bought my set of dishes for twelve so we had something to eat in and they baked a cake, I think they baked a cake, so we were twelve people.

rdw: Back at the apartment?

et: At the wedding, for dinner, my husband's friend with his wife, and the people who lived in that house, and upstairs there was another couple, my uncle, I called him uncle but he was a cousin, with their wives, and my cousin and her finance', so my aunt and uncle who I lived with, there was twelve of us. And this was our wedding, so we lived there in this little two room apartment.

rdw: Honeymoon?

et: No, honeymoon

rdw: Just back to work?

et: We didn't even know anything about a honeymoon. {laughter} So, we went back to work the next day, my husband with his job, I with my job, I had changed jobs in the meantime and that is how it went, working everyday.

rdw: You are from two different traditions, how did you mesh those in a household, his background and your background?

et: My husband worked already five years in Germany and he was very German oriented already and once in a while we would cook a Ukrainian dish, I had not done a lot of cooking in my life, cause I was a young girl, I was always working, my mother was the one cooking and my husband was much better with cooking than I was. He taught me. It was not that I always

enjoyed his cooking, because my husband like onions and lot of onions and when he made hamburger there were onions in it , I like the hamburger, but I would pick out the big chunks of onion and so little by little I learned how to cook from my husband. And from my aunt sometimes, I ask questions, and then we started to bake things together and this is how little by little I learned how cooking and baking is concerned.

rdw: When did you get your first car?

et: [19] 53

rdw: Did you have a driver's license?

et: (laughing) That was a real joke.

rdw: Let's hear it?

et: We never drove a car, my husband neither did I. And in [19] 53 it's time we are going to get a car and my husband's cousin, he already had a car and he came, but before that we had heard from other friends that we had met in the meantime, that you can buy your driver's license, I think it was three marks, three dollars.

rdw: Just buy one? No test, just buy one?

et: We bought the driver's license his and mine for three dollars. Never sat behind

rdw: Never drove a car?

et: Never drove a car. So my husbands cousin picked us up, took us to the dealer, we bought a Chevy Bellaire and he left his car at the dealership and we took the new car

rdw: Who drove?

et: He did, drove to the park in Chicago, in the Park I had to sit behind the wheel and he sat next to me and he showed me first how to

rdw: This is a standard shift too?

et: No, it was an automatic, it was automatic, so I learned on the automatic and we, I learned how to drive, my husband had already sat behind the wheel somehow, but he didn't know much about driving . We drove around for maybe a hour and half it was two hours in that Park, back and forth, and this and that, and Jimmy says "I think you will make it, you are going to drive to the dealer and I will sit next to you".

rdw: This is your first day driving?

et: Yes, my first day driving, we drove to the dealer. He got his car and he went ahead of me and I followed him in the new car with my husband, in Chicago, and drove the new car home, that was a Saturday.

rdw: Were you scared?

et: Umm, yes, not really, you know, traffic in Chicago, is if you don't go, know the highway, but at that time you always followed the traffic and you had your lights and he explained all of this to me, so it wasn't really all that difficult, so, Sunday morning was laundry day, because Saturday we had spent the whole day driving the car and I started my washing and my husband said "just leave that wash all alone and lets go driving the car." So we got into the car and then we drove again to that Park, we didn't live to far away from that Park and then in the Park, my husband tried to practice a little driving, he drove the car a little, but my husband was a little bit nervous type, he was not so relaxed, like I. So he drove a little bit and then, okay, we are going to go home, it is lunch time and I drove the car home again and we continued with our work and then the next day was Monday and I took the car, picked up my girlfriend and we drove to work.

rdw: First time you had driven to work?

et: Yes, drove to work and on the way back , we came to a main road and we had to stop from the side street to the main road and my car stopped and it won't start

rdw: In the street? What did you do?

et: Yes, but fellows came out and helped and looked and got me going again, start the car and I drove home.

rdw: Do you know what was wrong?

et: Just something I did wrong, when I stopped there and I have been driving ever since.

rdw: Do you like to drive?

et: Yes, I very much like to drive, always did. And my husband then slowly drove the car to. But there was somebody that lived in the area by us that would always pick him up for work, so he didn't need the car. But I worked on the south side, and the north side and then his, my girlfriend there on the south side and I drove to Delco where they used to make radios, that is where I worked

rdw: So you were living on the south side and working for Delco?

et: And so, that is how it went

END OF TAPE

et: My parents came to Chicago, we made papers, my mother came here to visit us two times, before she came to stay here. When she came to visit, in the meantime I had the child and Roman was six months when she came the first time to visit. So she said, "I'm going to be here for a couple of months, now you can go and get yourself a job and I will watch the child." So, I went to work, while she was watching the child. And then a couple of weeks later, a month later, we had another friend we had met that she would go downtown Chicago and clean offices. She was talking and my mother says, "isn't that something that I could do, could I go there and clean offices and make myself some money? I still can watch the baby in the daytime while you go to work and then she will pick me up, take me downtown."

rdw: Would she work nights?

et: She would work nights. And that is what she did the first time she was here. So she was watching Roman and fell asleep on the couch and Roman went into the cupboards, got the flour out, got the sugar out and bake cake.

rdw: Baked a cake?

et: [Laughter] First when we came home, everything was cleaned up, she didn't want to tell us. She told us later.

rdw: Why did you name him Roman?

et: Roman is a very popular name in the Ukraine. Everybody who wanted their child to be a little bit something, was Roman, Roman, Roman is a very religious name in the Bible. And so when he was born, my husband being Greek Catholic and I being Lutheran we had decided if it is a boy he would be baptized in the Greek Catholic Church and if it's a girl it would be baptized in the Lutheran Church, because we had a lot of Ukrainian friends and of course they didn't want nothing else but then their child to be baptized in the church. So, it was a boy, we didn't know that at that time, first what it was going to be and so he was baptized and I had to have godparents that were Greek Catholic. So, his cousin was Greek Catholic and my one uncle's wife was Catholic, so they accepted her as Godparents.

rdw: Because she was Catholic?

et: Yes, and that's how come he was baptized in that church. But then, when Judy was born, three years later, it was a girl and we had her baptized in the Lutheran Church. So, we had two children and each one was baptized in a different church. We had a big Christening party because in the mean time we had met a lot of people, so when Judy was baptized, there were a lot of people in church and all of this and that. So, then later on when my mother was here, my mother was easy, that didn't bother her, that Roman was baptized, then Judy. Then later on in life when we had the bar and the children were walking to school and there was a Lutheran Church in walking distance and both of them went to the Lutheran Church and grew up in the Lutheran Church and they both joined the choir, and Roman played the guitar, and the minister there let them come and practice in the back room there with the boys that Roman was friends

with and they weren't all Lutheran either, so Roman grew up to be actually Lutheran. Never was baptized.

rdw: Just grew up in it.

SAT: HE WAS CONFIRMED IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

et: No he wasn't, Judy was, but not Roman.[note: Roman was actually confirmed Lutheran] And so, every Sunday they were at church, because we had the bar and we could not go to church, we were busy, Sunday was open day too. They always went.

rdw: What made you decide to open a tavern?

et: My husband was working in the steel mill not the steel mill anymore it was already a place for making tools and I was working five years in a private club when I had Judy, Judy was one year old, but when Judy was born my sister came later to the United States and stayed with us and she sometimes had three jobs, she worked in sewing, she worked in an office, because she had already taken English in Germany, she knew a little bit of English, and on the weekends, Saturday and Sunday she would go to the private club and work as a waitress. Then she said oh, she was here for four years or something and she was going to take a vacation to Germany, and I said to my husband, "I'm here for five years and I would like to go visit my parents" well then you will have to go to work and make the money and take off.

rdw: What did you say?

et: I said, "Okay", so I went Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday to that private club.

rdw: To make the extra money?

et: To make the money for a whole year so that I could go to Germany on a vacation.

rdw: You are waiting tables?

et: Yes, and learning the different drinks mixed, the different beers, and so I knew all about it, the drinks the beers and my husband didn't know anything from anything. So, he was always looking, we already had a house by that time.

rdw: North side or South side?

et: On the south side. And my husband always looked at the newspaper for something we could, you know, and that first house we bought was a two flat and it was not too far from the integrated neighborhood, where black people would come closer and closer and the value of your property would be losing and so my husband said we need to sell this house and move further west. But we could not sell it right away and there was a two flat a newer one available, he had already saved a little money for a down payment on that newer flat, it was a two flat, and we rented both apartments out, one was a black lady she was a teacher and the other party he was a mailman, a

black man, and they were real nice people and kept everything very orderly, so we had that rented out and with that money we could make the payments on the two flat we had bought and when we lived in that two flat already two years, I think, my husband was looking and if we get the money from the other house, because the mailman thought he would be able to buy it, because he wanted to buy it, when we get that money, we could take that money and buy something and he saw in the, there was this two flat, a liquor store downstairs and an apartment above and on the side a parking lot fifty foot lot for forty five thousand dollars.

rdw: This was on the south side?

et: No, the north side, 3600 North and we lived 7200 South. So we went there and they bought the house that black mailman bought the house and we got the money and we went there and looked at that property over and right away made an offer on it.

rdw: So you are moving in upstairs?

et: Yes

rdw: The liquor store is downstairs

et: Yes

rdw: Was it a liquor store or a bar?

et: It was a liquor store with a little bar, where you could have a shot with a beer

rdw: Tables?

et: No, no, just a shot and a beer. [Note: some of the tape went faulty here] So, we bought the place and I quit my job as a waitress, lived upstairs. My husband was still working ten months in the place where he was working with the tools, sometimes very late when he came there, sometimes he would take off a day or two a week and when he came home I would watch the basement in the daytime was not big business just small and I would take care of the guest who would come for a shot and a beer or a highball or sometimes I would cook something on the second floor, the kids were in school it was in walking distance, and so everything worked out really well.

rdw: And you are running this by yourself?

et: Running it by myself, and then when my husband would come home he would start to remodel something.

rdw: Downstairs or upstairs?

et: Downstairs, upstairs was not to bad. We were able to live there. And we made out of that liquor store that beautiful cocktail lounge, and I have pictures.

rdw: I have only seen the mural outside.

et: And so then the people, where my husband would work, Bill, you have to decide whether you are going to stay here working or your are going to quit. Because you can not take three days off a week.

rdw: So he was coming back then and working, remodeling?

et: Two weeks, sometimes he would take two days off a week, sometimes one, sometimes three. And I was always worried, in the meantime he was driving and there was the Dan Ryan on the highway and when he left in the morning early, I was worried he was going to fall asleep at the wheel.

rdw: He was working way to much?

et: Yes, way to late and so this is how we kept going for eight years, but he quit after ten months he quit. We already had established our business and it was running good and he was making it into a cocktail lounge and it was a neighborhood area where people would like to come in and visit, have a drink after work and then go home and take a six pack with them or so and this was not people, not immigrants, these were neighborhood Italians, Irish mainly, all different nationalities within walking distance they came , somebody had a car, and this is how we worked seven days a week for eight years, until 2 o'clock every night [am].

rdw: So you would open up at ten?

et: Yes, and the last three years, I think it was, we opened at four in the afternoon. There was not much business in the daytime and then we would open in the afternoon.

rdw: What kind of food would you cook?

et: We would not serve meals, just drinks and potato chips. But we had one of our guest, a wonderful couple, that didn't have a car, didn't drive, and she begin to bring like a eighteen by twelve pan on a Friday she would bring stacked up potato pancakes for the guests to pass around for a snack on a Friday. She did this every Friday, carried it five blocks with her husband, bringing these potato pancakes. And, because we got to all be like one family the people that were there. And if someone came late in the evening, and my husband was sleeping and I was there alone and it was a stranger, and well that person who knew me would not leave me alone with a stranger, that person would stay there until that person would leave.

rdw: One of your regular customers?

et: Yes, and so it was just like one club there.

rdw: What kind of drinks did you serve?

et: We started to mix Whiskey Sours, Manhattan, Martini's, Highballs, and thinks like that.

rdw: Gin, Vodka Martini's?

et: Yes, Yes. And we made liquor store on one corner just a little shelf we decorated it with beads, green and brown beads, you could see that it was a liquor store and the rest of it, the back bar, my husband put a sky[line] from Chicago lake front. When you are on the lake and you saw Chicago, all these big tall buildings there was this mural behind it.

rdw: He painted it?

et: No, you could buy it. He put it up on the wall and he put little dabs of paint and that was phosphor paint on windows, not every window, but on windows and then he put a black light across from the bar to shine up that mural and it look like if those windows downtown were lit up. And in the corner he put in a waterfall with flowers.

rdw: A real waterfall ?

et: A regular waterfall, small., And these flowers were lit up with this paint, and the black light would shine up , it was a nice little waterfall. And in the men's room he put beautiful wall paper with some ladies in there with cats.

rdw: What kind of a room?

et: Men's room, it use to be downstairs, he brought it upstairs, first floor he made a men's room and a ladies room.

rdw: So they would go to different rooms, so they could visit?

et: It was just a one person room to get in.

SAT: A restroom

et: So, my husband went in there one day, someone had cut out a piece from the wallpaper.

rdw: Someone had taken a piece from the wallpaper?

et: He was so upset. But we didn't know who it was, it was more of a joke to speak of, but we had a lot of fun. But after eight years, I said to my husband, you know, I'm really getting tired of these seven days a week.

rdw: Never a day off?

et: We did take a bartender and then occasionally. We could go and we did go, there was a Ukraine New Year's Eve, we would with our New Year's Eve be in the bar, the Ukraine New Year's Eve we would go dancing and have a ball.

rdw: Was that a different day then?

et: Yes, 12th of January is the New Year's Eve from the Ukraine. The 7th is Christmas. So we would go and have a good time. And of course we had music and dancing in our place.

rdw: Did you hire musicians to come in?

et: No, we would only have a accordion player or the jukebox, the place was not big enough for a lot of dancers, just for some of our guests. And of course, even though I served all of these drinks I never drank beer until today. I would like a mixed drink, a whiskey sour or so. When we went out one time for a New Year's Eve party I thought well they will have beer and highballs, I will mix a whiskey sour bottle and take it with me, so we ladies would have something nice to drink, well we drank that stuff and it hit me pretty hard, I was not use to it. My husband had to take me home before twelve o'clock midnight. And carry me to the second floor.

rdw: That was very unusual for you.

et: And my mother was there watching the children and she was so serious and said I felt so sorry for Bill and then he had to carry her [Edith] upstairs to the second floor. So, we did some crazy things sometimes. We were young. Having a ball. Then we decided we were going to sell. When we decided to sell my sister's boy was going to be six and he would start school, she wanted to change she just had a little two flat, the bedrooms where upstairs and she wanted something out and on one floor, she went house hunting.

She went house hunting there in that suburb [Glenview], where she still is today. So she saw the Real Estate party showed her a house, with everything on one level, and a swimming pool. And at that time, that house and swimming pool was fifty thousand dollars. So my sister said, "No, we cannot buy that house because my mother watches our son, she may, just, you know we might have an accident or something, but I going to talk to my sister, they are looking for a house, because they are selling their business." So, she calls me and says, you know I have found just the house for you, but don't take the children when you go, just in case you don't buy it, because when they see this, they will really be wanting you to buy this house. So, my husband and I went to see that house and they wanted fifty two thousand and my husband says, "No, that is too much money, we can't afford that". So, then we were selling our house and we bought a little house, that we could put under everything and we had bought a little lot where we were going to build a house. A year later my husband says- and my sister found five houses further from that house with the swimming pool, she bought a little house I think for thirty thousand. A year later my husband says, "I wonder if that house sold with the swimming pool?" I said, "I have no idea", he said, "you go call the Realtor and find out, "because we were going to start building a house on that little lot we had bought. Called the Realtor, no, that house has not been sold, it has been waiting for you, that is your house.

rdw: Two years?

et: So, we went there and these people had to build a house, when they moved out, and the reason they moved out that suburb they could not park a pickup or any kind of vehicle

commercial in front of their house, it was a very exclusive area, everybody had to keep everything up very well. So, it was five houses away from my sister and somehow they sold us the house for fifty thousand dollars. We bought the house and we didn't build.

SAT: THIS IS IN GLENVIEW?

et: Yes

rdw: Now how where you working?

et: We just took some money to pay down on the house and the rest of the money when we sold the bar, we made a good profit on it, and we took this for a down payment on an apartment building. So, I would take care of the apartment building, collecting rent, cleaning the stairs, the hallways, and my husband started a job - working.

rdw: What was he doing?

et: He had started a job where they were building a new seven hundred project homes and he was in charge, he had people in charge, and they were building, and some of it was already built, and he was in the maintenance department over there, but it was thirty miles from home. So he had to travel quite a bit, but it was no problem with my husband, and I took care of the apartment building and we lived in that house for eight years [the one with the pool]. And then he was to move in that project, because it took him too long to get there when there was a disaster, water pipe breaking, because this project was built on fill and land and a lot of times pipes would break, after it settled, and they would have flood and this and that. They wanted us to move in there, and so we went there and decided on apartment on the twelfth floor and we were going to move in there, and we were going to sell our house in Glenview. We put it on the paper, For Sale by Owner, open house on Sunday, and we sold the house to the second party that came into the house. The first party was an older couple but the second party, they were younger people and they wrote us out the down payment of ten thousand dollars and they bought the house.

rdw: And you finance it yourself?

et: No, they paid us. They were business people and we bought the apartment building, but the apartment building, were very small apartments, and for that money we bought another apartment building, because I looked in the newspaper and I said Bill, he was thirty miles away, I said, "you have to come home it's Sunday, here is an apartment building for sale, and we can sell the other one because they were a lot of stores and we really weren't to happy with it," and I said, "you have to come home today and we have to go and look at this, because it is not going to last long," "Okay" [Bill] he came home, it was lunchtime, we looked that house over and we went to the Realtor and we made an offer and he went back to work and then we had to move out of our house and moved into our apartment. And we were still in a small apartment.

rdw: That was quite a big adjustment.

et: We have moved nine times. This is the ninth time. Bought and sold, bought and sold. So, we made one apartment out of two for ourselves in that newer apartment building and we had two fires in the old apartment, there was a restaurant in it, we had two big fires.

SAT: NOW TELL US ABOUT THE FIRES, BECAUSE IT HAD TO DEAL WITH THE GREEK MOB PEOPLE.

et: Yes, There were stores downstairs and when we bought it the party that had the restaurant, they were Polish decent, and they sold it to Greek people, and at that time in Chicago there was something going on that there were a lot of restaurants catching on fire. Nobody knew why. And we had that building and all of a sudden at night there was a fire, so it was the restaurant and a store next to it which he had rented it already for like little parties are so. So it caught fire, and we remodeled it again, my husband fixed everything up and let it go. And then, all of a sudden my cousin and I had a fling, maybe we should buy that restaurant and run that restaurant in our building, cause she was a waitress working at one time and I had worked as a waitress and knew all of this, but somehow we talked about it, we really didn't do it. But we asked him how much he wanted for the restaurant, that Greek owner, but he wanted a lot of money, he wanted to make a lot of big money, everything was going up anyhow at that time. So, a little, I don't know how much longer it was two years the second fire and that fire was a big one, it even shot up to the apartments and the apartments burned up and all this and that and he thought that we had sat the fire because we had wanted that restaurant and wanted him out. And later on we found out he had a walk in cooler in the basement and this and that and everything was just burned up. And even some people had a little burning and had to go to the hospital, but we had insurance and it was no big deal. But when that house was burning the second time we already lived in the other apartment and my relatives at six o'clock in the morning called us and said, "Do you know your apartment building is on fire?" and it was in the winter time and we could not even get our car to start and go out to the building. It was terrible, my husband said what can you do, just let it burn.

rdw: You never knew what started the fire?

et: Yes, we found out, both fires were sat by a Greek Mafia, this person that ran the restaurant, did not want to buy the meat from them, because it was more expensive, and he was a beginner and he didn't buy it, and so they sat this place on fire. So then, he was going to go and he was going to remodel, and he had a friend that was going to get everything sat up and open up the restaurant and we said as long as we own this building there will not be a restaurant in here. And the fellow that was remodeling said this is my friend and if he tells me to remodel, I will remodel. So then we had to get an attorney.

SAT: WHO WAS YOUR ATTORNEY? DO YOU REMEMBER?

et: I don't remember any more.

SAT: IT WAS TINAGLIA, HE WAS FRESH OUT OF LAW SCHOOL.

et: Yes, Yes, that was Roman's friend, and he was our attorney at that time, see you remember that. And then he said I will buy this building, he gave us fifty thousand dollars down, he

couldn't get the mortgage until the building was ready to operate and we got the money, and we sold the building.

SAT: NOW IN THAT TIME PERIOD THERE WERE SOME LEGAL ISSUES THAT WERE GOING ON BECAUSE THOSE PEOPLE WANTED THEIR SHARE OF INSURANCE MONEY FROM THE THING, THIS IS WHAT DAD TALKED ABOUT, APPARENTLY THEY STARTED TO THREATEN YOU TOO.

et: Yes, that is right. When the threatening was going on was when they wanted to remodel and we said no. Definitely not. And that is when they started to threaten us, we got phone calls, and they said "do you like your children?" "do you love your children?"

rdw: And these where phone calls?

et: These were phone calls. And Roman, in the meantime, and Roman was already at that time able to carry a pistol. So, he didn't even walk out of the house without it. He lived there within walking distance, already on his own. And Judy was suppose to come home for Christmas vacation or something, and we got a little scared, you know, when I got a phone call like this. And then he decided to buy it and we decided to sell it to him, just to get rid of it. Then when we live in that new two flat, that is when we, no two flat, apartment building, that's is when we took the trip here to Hot Springs.

rdw: To Hot Springs, you were going to Florida to look to move?

et: No, No

SAT: I THOUGHT ORIGINALLY YOU WERE VISITING FLORIDA.

et: Oh, we had been to Florida several times but we never took Florida seriously.

rdw: So, you were just coming down to visit friends?

et: Yes, and we were actually going to go to Texas to visit a cousin, but we never made it, we stayed in Hot Springs. And this is when my husband saw the house, that is when we made them an offer and they wanted to sell badly and we bought it.

rdw: So how long did it take you to get moved?

et: Nothing very long, everything, it was in the fall and around Christmas time we came and brought them the earnest money the ninth of December and we came flying to Little Rock and the Real Estate office fellow was going to meet us, he lived in Fort Smith, and he was going to meet us in Little Rock and take us to here to sign the papers. We were supposed to arrive at eight o'clock in the morning and we could not land because Little Rock airport was all iced in, the ninth of December. So we had to fly to Louisiana, we went down there Louisiana airport and then at eleven o'clock they said oh Little Rock is okay, we fly back to Little Rock, we flew back to Little Rock, no we couldn't land, we had to fly all the way to Memphis. Little Rock was still

all in the same day. We came to Little Rock from Memphis and we had already at the airport a note to take the bus from Memphis to Little Rock, take a room in Little Rock, and the Real Estate people let them know, telephone number where we are staying in Little Rock and he will meet us the next day and take us to Hot Springs. It took us from two o'clock until eight o'clock at night from Memphis to Little Rock on that bus. Dropped us off at a hotel, when I got to Hot Springs the next day, I mean the road was clear the sun was shining and from Little Rock to Hot Springs the trees were all crystals, it was a sight and when I stood in the kitchen signing papers for the acceptance and offer in the house, I said to my husband, "I don't think I want to move here, we better go home."

rdw: Why did you say that?

et: It was such weather here, why should we move here? We wanted to go someplace where it would be warm and everything was all ice, the house was cold inside, there were furnishings already out and to me this house did not mean much of anything. But my husband said, "oh come on, we are so far, everything is going to be okay," and then I signed. I said to the Realtor, "now don't leave, take us to Little Rock on your way home and drop us off at the airport; we will take the next flight home." So, we didn't even spend the night by my friend, we went home the same day at nine o'clock we appeared at a Christmas party in our village and they all thought we were in Hot Springs. And we showed up at the party.

rdw: Did you have quite a social life in Chicago?

et: Yes, because we belong to organizations and my husband and I both loved to dance and we were involved with the organization and helping them set up different doings, every month we had a get together, a dance or this and that, so we were very busy, and if it was not our organization that Saturday we would go to a different organization chapter and we would go there and dance. Sometimes my husband would have ten minutes to get ready from work till we had to leave to go dancing.

rdw: Did that continue once you moved to Hot Springs?

et: Yes, because Hot Springs had the same organization and chapter here D.U.N.K. and we were very involved here too, but then we had a president, and he didn't do really the things we were use to and he wanted to separate us from the organization in Chicago, just to be a German club.

rdw: Why?

et: Because he thought for these part of the dues that we had to send from this chapter to the organization we could keep all of that money here and we could have a German Club and why do we need organization. But the organization was all over the United States and it was an organization that was working very hard to bring back our German culture and to really let people know what German people actually knew during the war; what we do and what we were standing for and so on and so forth so we worked with Washington, with the German Counsel, we had German officials coming to Washington and we would bring them to Chicago, and we were trying to bring the German name back to what it once was. And that not all German were Nazis, not all German knew about the Holocaust, and all of these kind of things.

rdw: It was a social club and a outreach?

et: Yes, it was an outreach, so we were very active in it.

rdw: How successful do you think those efforts where?

et: Very successful. Little by little, look at the last years, people that came from there had no problem finding a job because they all were good craftsman, and they all were very orderly people, they kept their home life, their families in shape and the children had to listen, because that is what we were taught from little on and we again our proud of our heritage, which we had lost- people, that was after the war people did not say I am German, they said no, because nobody wanted to be anymore German from the people that came here from when my relatives came here .

rdw: Did you find Hot Springs to be different in reception than from Chicago was there a smaller?

et: Do you mean with the German descent? By the time we came here, this had all changed already, by the time we came here and we had here at least three hundred German families.

rdw: Hot Springs was a very diverse city.

et: Yes, yes, so there was not as many Polish people here or Ukrainians but there was quite a German population here, and this is how this all came about, and we did split up into two organizations, but we still kept

rdw: The Germane

et: The Germania Club, [no] The Edelweiss they were not involved with any of the other organizations and the D.U.N.K. we were affiliated, our main D.U.N.K. office was in Chicago, D.U.N.K. office in Chicago, we had an office that somebody was always there and did all the book work, we had people working in the office and our German National President was always invited different places, Washington, New York, wherever, and tried to better our image with the American government and all people.

rdw: Very active club in Chicago?

et: Yes, oh yes, and my sister was very active. My sister worked in the office, she has been to New York to the Statue of Liberty, from the organization to the organization, she has been everywhere. Meeting with the President of the United States, meeting with all different officials, because we had a lady President, then in the meantime after that and she was absolutely terrific and so it was I came here and dropped everything, mainly because I was to busy, but she still kept being very involved with the chapter, but slowly it is slowing down, we still have chapters but not as active anymore. The older people that were active, they are all to old or have passed away, and the younger people are all to busy, man and wife have to work today and there is not

much time left for socializing, but we still have German schools in Chicago on Saturday the children can go and learn the German language and I think it is a very important thing to learn a different language, I think our politicians should all have that, they should be that they know a different language it doesn't have to be German, it can be Spanish, it can be whatever, they should learn a different language and it's important. You cannot always trust the interrupters with these things and so I give Condalisa Rice a lot of credit and I have to give Bush and that is the only credit I'm going to give him, is that he hired somebody that knew how to speak Russian.

rdw: She is a Russian expert.

et: She went to college in Russia, she is a very, very terrific knowledgeable person, being black and being knowledgeable like this, shows you that everybody in this country can learn and everybody can make something of themselves when you think of my husband and I came with and empty suitcase here and we have now helped our children, our grandchildren, we had lots of bad luck, you know my son, Sara's father, and with the grandchildren all have grown up to be real nice people and very, very studious willing to make something out of themselves and that is our happiness.

et: So, that is our life story.

rdw: Based on what I know about Sara you have much to be happy about..

et: So, that is our life story.

rdw: So, if you could sum this up for me- your life, what would you want them to know?

et: If you are not born rich, you are only going to make it if you learn how to work, no matter what kind of job, and learn how to save. My husband and I, we had learned this from my parents to save, it doesn't matter how much money you make, if you don't know how to save, you will never be able to get places and save money and don't buy things if you can't afford them, if you don't absolutely need, because a credit card was not in our family until I don't even know when, and we never bought things besides a house on credit. If we didn't have the money we didn't buy it, because the interest that you pay, look who is getting rich on it, we are getting poor and look who is getting rich on it, and look at the situation we have in this country now.

rdw: Very true.

et: Our middle class is being wiped out, because we are the ones who pay the taxes. People who make a lot of money they always have loop holes and they always know how their earn money that they have to invest again and get bigger, bigger and bigger and with the middle class we can only do so much and of course the poor people, if it is something that they are sick and sickness is not allowing them to get on their feet, then it is probably being lazy. And lazy is just not something my husband and I ever tolerated, because we worked hard and we thought everybody else should work hard until the very end.

rdw: You are still working hard aren't you?

et: Yes, I do. I have two bum hands they keep me from doing what I would like to be doing. So now, all I can do is talk, and I was thinking getting a job at the Visitor's Center.

rdw: Downtown?

et: Yes, because I know all about Hot Springs, where everything is and how people can get entertained in Hot Springs, and how to find things, and once I have everything a little more settled, I still might do this a couple of hours a day cause I think it will really make me happy. [laughs] I have been with the public all of my life, mainly, did all the work at the motel, because my husband was always busy redoing furniture and creating something and he would always tell me "your English is better than mine", but I was always with people and mainly learned from speaking with people, didn't do much schooling, did a little bit from the beginning, but otherwise, have very little schooling and therefore I am stressing for my grandchildren to educate themselves so they never have to work as hard as my husband and I had to work.

rdw: You do want them to work hard though?

et: And I hope, this is what they will do, and of course I have to say, we came here at a time when it was a little different than from now, it's not as easy today, there are still opportunities today and that is the education, you know, that is the education. And we are always happy to see them smiling and be happy and be successful in their schools, and getting good grades, it is just wonderful.

THE END