

My name is Marion Fredman My maiden name was Seidemann



I was born on March 10, 1945 in Apeldoorn Holland. My parents were German Jews hidden in Holland. They spent from 1942 to 1945 in hiding in a house in Apeldoorn.

My father was born in 1892 in Johannesborg East Prussia.



He was the fourth of nine children. His parents were Edward Seidemann and Fredericka Schlochauer. Johannesborg was a fairly small town. They actually lived outside of it in another small



town, Biala. They had a cider vinegar distillery. Not many stories about them. I have very little sense of them as people. Edward was deported by the Nazi's in the early 40's; he was taken away and died of untreated illnesses or he was gassed. He was 88 years old. Fredericka died of natural causes (?Spanish Flu) in 1919.



Everyone was traditionally Jewish in those days but my father and his family had no stories of heder. They weren't Jewish Scholars or anything like that. They covered the table with a board for Passover. That was the concession to how you make things different for Passover. Edward was kosher, but he liked eel and did not want to hear that it was not kosher. At some point when the sons started doing well they moved the parents to Berlin, into a house with a maid and a housekeeper. I have a feeling that the eel story refers to the years in Berlin.

Julius and a couple of his brothers were drafted into the German army during the First World War. I can't imagine

them enlisting. They fought for Kaiser Wilhelm. One of my uncles got a stomach wound and a bullet grazed my father's forehead. Stomach or head wounds meant an automatic discharge, so they got out and were thrilled. They were not well suited for military life

After the war my dad and his brother Herman (the brother right above my father in age) took off for Bochum in Westphalia—western Germany near the border with Holland—to join two of the older brothers who had left Biala years earlier and had settled in Bochum. They had men's' haberdasheries or ready to wear. They started businesses-- Bought, sold, got them running. They were successful, lived well, had help, traveled in Europe, and kept women. They had mistresses. My father had a lady for many years. He bought her a store and set her up in an apartment. Her name was Heady. When the heat was on with the Nazi's in the early 30's my dad shipped her off to England, where I understood she lived out her life.

The household: there was the cook named Kochoka. She was the shared cook for all the



brothers and took care of them. There were little girls working under her who made the beds and did the cleaning. She was the housekeeper. There was a chauffeur named Shavinsky who later turned out to be a big Nazi. He drove my dad around in a big 1939 Packard. They lived in a large apartment, the size we think of as a house: 4-5 bedrooms, living room, dining room, salon, and some kind of garden outside. I think other people lived in the building too. They owned some buildings that they received restitution for after the war, though I don't know if they owned their apartment.

Vacations: they would go off to the seashore or mountains and to France or Italy or other parts of Germany. When they went to the beach there were as many servants as there were children.

My father worked hard and played hard. They dabbled in the cabaret scene a little bit. At three every afternoon my dad and his brothers would go to a fancy hotel to talk, and have coffee, and to see and be seen. They had a night life, smoked big Havana cigars..The 20's and 30's equivalent of "swinging" older bachelors. Julius played a card game called Skat which I think is a combination of poker and bridge. There's bidding and memory. In his older years my father learned bridge and said he liked it

because it reminded him of Skat. He gambled a little, not that much. Though his younger brother Tao got into big trouble with gambling. He always had people running after him for bad debts.

He went to school through the 7th grade. He repeated that top grade two to three times because he didn't want to be through with school yet and there was no place to go. Then they kind of kicked him out because they couldn't keep him in that grade anymore. He was very good at math. Then he did all kinds of jobs, and that's why he wanted to leave Biala. The jobs that were available there were pretty horrible, like cleaning out latrines.

Jews in Germany before the war? My sense is that there was a huge awareness that you were Jewish, but you were just Jewish. Even less social identification than in this country. It sounds like friends were all mixed up. In my family Jewishness meant you went to the synagogue for the high holidays. If you had some money you helped the synagogue buy what they needed. Apparently they brought a torah for the synagogue when their mother died. The synagogue was just called "die synagoga". They were fairly prominent albeit uninvolved synagogue goers. The synagogue was just there, a fact of life. It belonged to you but if you weren't religious you didn't spend very much time there. They definitely filled that category. Clearly they were Jewish and identified as such but their life

style was not particularly Jewish or not Jewish. When the Nazi's first came to power in 1933 there was a lot of excitement around it and overt anti-semitism. My father was arrested under the miscegenation law..because of Heady. He spent a little time in jail, and then paid off whoever he had to pay off to get out of jail. Then the whole family wet to Holland on a vacation and to wait for this to blow over. That was in the early spring of '33 or '34. They were in Amsterdam. Senta remembers the family splitting up and going to different family homes for Seder. They stayed 5-6 weeks in Holland. Then somebody decided it had all blown over so they all went back to Germany, and apparently life proceeded as business as usual for a short time. Then one by one their rights were taken away. You couldn't own this. You couldn't go to school there. You couldn't attend concerts. You couldn't if you were Jewish. Things got pretty bad politically, but the family thought it was all part of a political thing and that it would again blow over. They weren't making moves towards leaving Heady was shipped off to London after the whole miscegenation thing in the early '30s.



My mother was Grete Benjamin. She was the only daughter of Bernard Benjamin who was a horse meat butcher and Cilly Buxbaum. My grandmother seemed to have been well liked. Senta remembers her as woman who was tall for the times: maybe 5'7 or 5'8. On her photographs she has a very friendly face and sparkly eyes. My mom talked mostly about her sense of humor. She was droll and funny. She had a sister named Frieda Jacobs and the two were inseparable. She was widowed early. My mother's father died when she was 14. She was born in 1911. My grandmother was probably 40'ish when she was widowed. They were apparently pretty comfortably middle class. There are no horror

stories about no heat or not enough food. None of that. There was a family in Bavaria. They had businesses. My mother would hang out there. There are lots of pictures of seaside vacations and mountains and skiing. It looks like a pretty privileged growing up. She and her mom were very, very close. There were lots of uncles and aunts of her mother. Her mother was one of 17 children. The legend about the Buxbaum family is that they had 8 sons who went off to world war one and they all came back. I do have a photo of the old grandfather sitting with his 8 sons when they came back to the war. My mother was close to her grandfather. The Buxbaums had lived in Germany since the time of Martin Luther. My mother had an aunt Tutti who ended up in Australia. Tutti's brother Willi ended up in Australia too. He had a son, Peter who married Meghan.



My mother went to a Catholic convent school. She got excused during Catechism and sat outside with the other Jewish girl. It had a big curriculum that included needle work and learning the difference between different kinds of fabric. It prepared you to be a good hausfrau in Germany. She also had a lot of English so her high school English was very adequate. She learned French in school. She could recite a few poems. For those days it was a fancy education. She then did gymnasium. She



had boyfriends. Seems to have had a fun life. There are pictures of her boyfriends in her picture albums. Some of these pictures of the mountains and skiing

and new year eve parties shoe boys but usually she's with her mother or her very best friend Mary, who was a very Aryan looking Jewish girl, blond, lovely. But every once in a while there's a boy picture in a party scene. Mary was deported. During the early years Grete felt that day to day life wasn't that different. You just had these crazy laws being passed about miscegenation. Jews couldn't go places. It probably started with country clubs and the university then filtered down to more basic things.

My parents met at synagogue on the high holidays. Apparently my father knew her earlier. My father had some kind of business dealings with my mother's father and when pressed would say he remembered a little girl at his house. My parents were 19 years apart in age. So they get to the high holiday services in September of 1937 and he spots her and recognizes her mother and realizes that that must be the little Benjamin girl grown up. He was 44 at the time. My mother was 25. He asked to be introduced. They met and went out for coffee. They were married 5 weeks later on November 17, 1937. Senta was at the wedding. She was 11. She remembers being at uncle Leo's house. It was a nice party. They went on a honeymoon to Baden Baden. It's a fancy resort in Bavaria, one of THE resorts of the world. It was probably a greater on then. While there they probably took hot baths and ate and drank a lot, got massaged, and took walks in the woods.



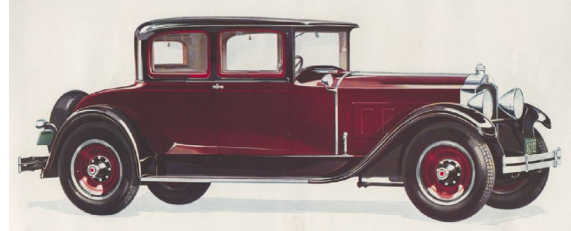
After they got married my mother had trouble with the cook, Kochocha. The cook was so used to being alone with all those bachelors that she really resented anyone in her kitchen and didn't let my mother have anything to do with anything. She treated my mother like she wasn't a very desired person. So my mother said she handled by not being interested in cooking. My father's family was a little overwhelming. They were very close. They were in each other's business completely. She found the sisters to be unbelievable, like you marry a man and get four mother-in-laws. She said they were a bit of a crew, all large, domineering women, and she was either large or domineering.

They got back from the honeymoon in December. There are pictures of New Years Eve. Then things must have gotten very bad early in 1938. Peter Jacobsohn, my cousin, had been sent to live in Arnhem in an apartment with my aunt Ria who was uncle Bruno's non Jewish girl friend and she was in trouble because of the miscegenation laws. Peter Jacobsohn had been in a special gifted high school and at some point had been kicked out for being Jewish. The uncles who were the voting body of the family said: OK, we'll send him to Ria; he can live there and He'll finish gymnasium in Holland.

Peter was born Feb 3rd 1921 In 1938 he was 17 years old and the family decided to go to Holland to celebrate Peter's birthday. So they went. By then Jews had lost rights and needed a lot of permission to travel. My mother and father arrived in Holland at aunt Ria's apartment, and a little later my Uncle Bruno arrives a little breathless. He had gotten into an altercation at the border because his papers weren't so kosher. He doesn't know what happened. He went into a rage and he hit the guy. Thinks maybe he killed them. He was in a state at this time. He had been rescued by the Dutch border police. When he broke away from whoever was hanging on to him on the German side he dashed over to the Dutch side and the Dutch border police threw their arms out and got into a stance and insisted this man is on Dutch ground. You can't bother him. So they all ended up in



this apartment. For some reason even though uncle Bruno's papers were bogus, he was convinced they knew who he was. He said we can't go back anymore. They'll kill us. So they powwow. It's decided that the only person who wouldn't be known is my mother. So they send my mother back. She's new. Not associated with those Seidemanns. So she goes over to Germany, to their town, to their business. And she tries to take some money out of the register. The story goes: to pay for a newspaper. She's informed by a manager who has been co-opted by the Nazis that she can't take money out for anything. Then she goes to the banks and finds the accounts are all frozen. Then she goes home to the apartment where Shavinsky has taken over. He owns the Packard now. It's his Packard. She can't even get a ride. Kochocha though, has some stuff to give her: some candle sticks, silverware, some little oriental rugs, some jewelry, and some cash.



Then Grete visited and stayed with her mother. She tried to talk her mother into coming to Holland. Her mother wouldn't do it. She wouldn't leave her sister. She'd been here all her life. Now she is not going away. My mother didn't talk about it much, but it was a horrible, horrible separation for her because as it turned out she never did see mother again, and her mother was deported. I don't know if Mary was still around. Mary's whole family. I don't know how long Grete stayed in Germany...if it was a few days or longer. Then my mother came back to Holland bringing what she could. She went to a village next to Arnhem named Velp, where they rented a house next to ma and pa Budel on Rheinholdstrasse. They lived in Velp from 1938 to 1942.