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Dorothy Schussler Jacobs  
Born May 13, 1902

Born in Grandmother's house in Tyrolean part of Austria

Family lived in Hanover, Germany

My mother first surviving child (older brother had died in infancy)  
Next child, a sister, born on Simchas Torah eve - a real simcha,  
5 years later; then another sister, a year later; and finally a  
brother the next year, a very big celebration for one week, the  
whole community came to the Kiddush

Her father in the hide and leather business - her maternal grandmother in  
the same business elsewhere

She lived in a middle class Jewish community

Her father had a regular seat and went to Schul every Saturday  
They observed holidays and the Sabbath - Conservative congregation  
(there were reform Jews who were very assimilated and also orthodox)  
They also kept kosher

They had help in the house and someone to look after the garden.

The family and some parts of the community were very Palestine conscious.  
JNF was also born in 1902. She was sent to collect money in the blue  
boxes, her father said the nickels and dimes were very important.

Each year the community had a student from Israel come (like an internship)  
and teach the children - he lived with different families for 3 months  
at a time - the community supported him - after school and on Saturdays  
the children, boys and girls separately, would learn Hebrew (reading,  
writing and speaking) and the celebration of all the holidays, i.e. on Lag  
Bomer they would go on an outing and plant trees, in preparatin for  
living in Palestine. During the day the tutor taught older people Hebrew  
and did some jobs to help support himself. Palestine was very much a part  
of their lives. Clubs when they were older; Chaluzta for girls and  
Shevrim for boys.

Her mother was very sick when she was very young and went away summers  
and some winters and often to doctors in Vienna. At these times her  
maternal grandmother would stay and take charge. She herself had been  
widowed at 36 and left with 6 children from 6 to 20. She took over  
the business (hide and leather) office (middleman as best as I can make out)

Her paternal grandfather had a goods and trimmings store, which his wife ran.  
He was a part time journalist and wrote humorous anecdotes for the Yiddish  
Morning Journal in German (no one spoke Yiddish, only German) - he travelled  
around Europe and wrote stories of the Shtetl and his travels.

Her paternal grandmother traveled through the United States at 93 years  
and then went to Israel to die.

Purim was a special day. It was said that when the Messiah will come all  
holidays will be abolished except Purim. It was a charity day, guest  
came. a "showspieler" entertained with stories from the bible. Everyone  
got dressed up and all collected for different charities.

Their games in Germany were similiar to ours - hopscotch, sleigh riding,  
belly whopping, skiing, big wheels with a stick and dominoes were some.

page 2

Her mother died when she was 11 and almost immediately thereafter her father was drafted into German Army and her maternal grandmother came to take charge of family, her brother was 3 1/2 then

Father returned 1917 wounded and with typhoid fever - soon her mother's friend divorced husband and married her father - didn't like step-mother.

Education - in public schools - got along - mostly stayed with own friends (Jewish), probably was anti/semitism, but was unaware of it - school compulsory through high school - studied Latin and German (German grammar helped later with Hebrew grammar)-only spoke German - everybody went to high school - all could go to University - her younger sister was a doctor. She attended Catholic School when she lived with her Grandmother while father was in Army because there was no public school in that town. When others were receiving instruction in Catholicism, she received instruction in Judaism.

Grandmother's family lived in Cassel

Her father was educated in the University (to teach), but went into wife's family business when married - He was a great storyteller and fed them with stories of "Our People" and Palestine.

She remembers talk about Zionism and when there was a great conference and Weitzman (she thinks) was to speak - it was a big secret and they talked only very quietly about it.

They were Ashkenazic - second generation German, maybe from Austria originally - there were textile merchants and doctors in the family (cousins).

After the war, 1917, 1 uncle who had been in American Army came back to Germany and she discussed her leaving Germany with him. He advised her to get her passport, which she did secretly. She took her inheritance from her mother (good money from Lloyds of London, not German money which was bad at that time) and came to America. Her family was upset, but probably glad. The younger children knew they had to stay.

She came to America first class, a luxurious trip and was met by her Uncle. He took her to another uncle in Brooklyn and after the first night there (in crowded, dirty conditions) she was ready to return home. On the second day he took her to her mother's cousins in Harlem, 110th Street across from Central Park where she would stay and be happy. There were three girls about her age in the family, who had been born here. They were all in school. The father was a furrier.

1919 or 1920

clerical work  
for Uncle Max  
in Warsaw -  
process paper

-page 3

It was 1919 now and she paid the cousins \$10 a week. The house was next door to a Y. She went to the Y to learn English and in 6 weeks went out to look for a job. There were only jobs open to her in shops so she went back to the Y and took a course to take care of children. She got governess work and was kept very busy. She would stay with the family, always a nice family, always a Jewish family. Some were German, some American. Her grandmother had advised her "In which home you come don't make waves) My father had always said she was a Nurse, because he was ashamed of her working as a Governess.

The Y had many trade courses - millinery, etc. The buildings (brownstones) were very beautiful with marble stoops, brass door knobs. 116th Street on Friday night was like Jerusalem, she used to write her father; everyone was out walking and listening to the Cantor Yosselah Rosenblatt. She kept in touch with her father in Germany until the war and would send money home to her sisters. She kept in touch with her cousins here and visited with the family.

She became governess to the family of Alexander Kahn, lawyer for the Forwards, who eventually took over the Forwards. She stayed with them until she married in 1928. My father used to say, "Abe Kahn, President of the Jewish Forwards, is the best thing that ever happened to the U.S." He wrote for immigrants who came to the United States and didn't know how to brush their teeth, he told them to buy a tooth brush; they used their sleeves to wipe their noses, he told them to get handkerchiefs. They knew only Yiddish.

In 1935 Mr. and Mrs. Alex Kahn went to Europe to distribute money (she says \$1million). At that time they visited in Vilna with my father's mother.

She had arrived in 1918, become a citizen after 5 years and married in 1928. She had supported herself for 10 years. Back home in Germany her first sister had married and had 3 children; her second sister had left home and gone to medical school, became a doctor and worked in a hospital. Her grandmother died just before the war. Her brother had belonged to a Zionist organization (many of whose members had emigrated to Israel), but his father didn't let him go to Israel because he wanted him to remain to say Kaddush for him. She had sent papers for her father to come to America, but he hadn't wanted to leave his apartment house. The last contact was in the late thirties. All of her mother's family had gone to Israel (3 brothers and 2 sisters) and she made contact with them in 1960 when she went looking for them.

Her father's four brothers had all settled in America.

page 4

Some of her memories of my father:

He and his father came to America in 1907, my father was 15, from Vilna, but his father didn't like the job opportunities for his son (my father) so they went back home

My father went to the University in Vilna, but there were no jobs there when he finished

His father had been in the Catering Business, but died soon after his trip to America

He came to America in 1914 and lived in Philadelphia with an Aunt

He earned \$4 a week and went to school at night to learn a trade

His sister was married and wanted to come to the United States, but her husband had some eye disease so they couldn't come

There had been Russian students in her area of Germany.