



Freeport Texas



CHAPTER 22

RETURN TO AMERICA

Having lived in the United States when I was very young, I had always dreamt of returning—to come back to the country where my memories began. I was ten and a half when my parents decided to return to Germany. For one thing, I remember how difficult it was for me to attend German classes after learning English at school here. Although I was very angry about returning to Germany, the first years following our return were certainly happy years: the farm in Konradhof where I grew up is always lovingly remembered; my marriage to Herbert and the birth of our daughter were certainly memorable and happy events. But the years that followed contained indescribable pain and proved to be the most disastrous of my life.

Therefore, I had always entertained the thought of returning to this “Land of Opportunity,” to start a new life and raise our family in a less dominated environment. It wasn’t too hard to convince Herbert likewise.

In 1949, we decided to embark on our journey to America. But alas, at the clinic where I had my health checkup prior to departure, the doctors found tuberculosis scars on one lung. Our plans to leave were delayed pending further tests. It seemed that our trek to escape the Russians in 1945 resulted in an illness I didn't even know I had. Sleeping in those cold barns with people that had all kinds of sickness took its toll on me. I realized for a long time that something was wrong when many times I felt so tired I could not do the field work like the others.

Fortunately, my body was strong enough to heal itself. The result was that my scars had healed over and there was no reason for further delay for our journey. So, in 1950 we started again. My relatives in Freeport, Texas, sponsored us. In fact it was the same great uncle who had helped my parents to emigrate in 1926.

We left Germany in July 1950. We boarded an Italian ship named Europa in Belgian to New York, then by train to San Antonio, Texas. Great uncle Johnny (who was only three years older than my father) had a little house ready in Freeport, Texas, for us. He was a widower so we invited him to come live with us.

Karin started school in Freeport shortly thereafter, not knowing any English. It brought back memories of my first days in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where I first started school at age six, and then my first days of school in Germany. The children in Karin's class told their parents about the girl with blue eyes in their class who couldn't speak English! This was so new to them because they all had brown eyes! I recall the kids in her class even brought her an apple or other fruit and candy to welcome her to their school. It didn't take long for Karin to learn the language--in less than three months she was chattering away in English. What helped her is that every day after school she was

invited by the neighbor children to come and watch the "Lone Ranger" on television with them.

Freeport didn't have night classes at the time for Herbert to study English. So, to start with, he worked with Uncle Johnny as a carpenter.

I was pregnant at the time when we came to Freeport. Our second daughter, a 9-pound baby girl, was born March 23, 1951. We named her Evelyn but labeled her "made in Germany!" The people in Freeport were nice and friendly. The women from the Baptist Church gave me a wonderful welcome shower. We had nothing as our luggage didn't arrive until three months later. The ladies brought many beautiful things for the house and for the baby. The Lord blessed us in so many ways.

Shortly thereafter, we decided to move to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for several reasons. One was that Herbert could go to night school to study English to enable him to get back into hair styling professionally. Herbert went on to Milwaukee ahead of us when Evelyn was only five days old. He stayed with friends of my parents and got a job at Papst Brewery. He started night classes immediately. By 1955 we became United States citizens.

We had our first house built in Menomonee Falls, near Milwaukee. When Herbert got his hair styling license, we started our own Beauty Shop. I also began working for J. C. Penney stores. Our children and our work became the focus of our attention and life was very good. I continued to work for Penney's for twenty-two years, transferring to their Reno store in 1978.

In the fall of 1975, Herbert began having trouble with his teeth. After having his lower teeth pulled, it was discovered that he had cancer of the jaw, resulting in the

removal of his lower right jawbone. Even though Herbert trusted the Lord there were days he'd say "*Why Lord?*" He struggled with cancer for four years and passed away in Reno in April 1979, on his 61st birthday by German time.

Herbert loved to sing. He started a Village Folk choir in Braunschweig, Germany. He sang in church choirs many years. I think of him now singing praises in the heavenly choir in the presence of the Lord. What a Glory.

The transfer to J.C.Penneys Distribution Center in Reno 1978 was one step closer to our daughters who lived in California. Karin lived in Fullerton and Evelyn in Chino. We had three grandchildren and there wasn't a weekend that either one or the other of our daughters with their children didn't come to Reno to visit their father and grandfather. He developed a close relationship with his grandchildren before he died.

After my retirement in 1984, I moved to Ontario California, a neighbor city of Chino where Evie (short for Evelyn) lived. She and her family have since moved to Pomona, California, not too distant for me to drive often to see them.

The windmill my
husband made in
Wisconsin. I had
it moved to Ontario.
It is gone now.
That too old age.



Christmas-taken abt. 1994