

Written by Karen Komar niece to Beatrice Levy, known to Karen as "Aunt Biggi." Beatrice was on the Hamburg transport with her sister, Martha Levy. Beatrice was a pianist.



**Etui.** French word for pouch or container to hold precious objects like jewelry. Following the Nuremburg laws, Beatrice was not allowed to work. She made these pouches by hand and sold them to Jewish shoppers for income.

The etui weighted a few ounces, very light. Size H. 3.5" W 5" D 1.5 closed. Open 6.5" x 4.5". It is made from what cotton cloth and a Zipper to keep contents from spilling out. In Karen Komar's (great niece who has fond memories of her aunt). The Etui is now in Karen Komar's custody, in Newton, MA.

Memories of Aunt Biggi...I still remember her and her two sisters Martha and Clara. The three of them were sisters of my paternal grandmother Anna who had already passed away before my birth. I used to believe that all three of the surviving sisters died in Riga, but recently I learned that Clara died of stomach cancer in a Hamburg hospital shortly after our departure for the U.S. in July, 1941.

I remember Clara and Biggi teaching me to count to 10 in English, and also telling me about the marvel of American escalators shortly before my family's departure.. My grandmother was the only one of the four sisters who married. They had a brother whose daughter Hilde emigrated to Chile as a mother's helper to a German family. Hilde was able to sponsor my father's brother Lothar Gumprecht to Chile where the two of them married the next year, even though they were first cousins. Hilde and Lothar had two sons born in Santiago, Tommy and Rene Gumprecht, my first cousins whom I didn't meet till they were both grown up. Tommy now lives in Rome and does translating into Spanish for certain United Nations publications. Rene lives in Lima where he married a Peruvian woman with whom he has a son and a daughter, who are now grown up. Their daughter, although born in Lima into a large extended Catholic family (her mother's) has chosen to spend her adult life in Germany, where she works in the travel industry. Biggi taught piano to my father when he was a child. My father played fairly well (as did my mother). One of the first items of furniture they bought after we

settled in Cleveland was a spinet piano.

My three great-aunts were warm and loving to me and my sisters. Biggi wrote a beautiful farewell composition in my older sister's farewell Poesie album, which has been preserved. Very shortly before we left Hamburg for the U.S., the three sisters, my parents and my sisters and I went on an excursion into some woods near Hamburg. My father (and apparently his aunts as well) loved hiking.



I did not start piano lessons until I was 7 years old, already by then in Cleveland. I do not know anything more about Biggi's pianistic skills other than she taught both my father and his brother Lothar, and my father played well. Perhaps she taught her niece Hilde as well.

I have a poignant last memory of my great-aunts, the three Levy sisters. After our final goodbyes at the train station in Hamburg on the beginning of our train journey to the Spanish border, my parents and us three sisters were totally surprised to see our three aunts on the platform of the very first stop our train made on its way to Berlin. Somehow they had figured out a way to surprise us by getting to that station before we did, so they could wave a final goodbye to us through the window of the train. That was the last any of us ever saw of them, just shortly before Clara's death of stomach cancer and Biggi's and Martha's deaths at Jungfernhof.