

Liesl Loeb

Liesl Loeb was born on June 17, 1928, in Rheydt, [Germany](#), the only child of Josef and Lilly (Kamin) Joseph. Liesl's father was a successful lawyer and her mother a trained soprano, though she performed only occasionally. One of their neighbors, [Joseph Goebbels](#), later became the Minister of Propaganda in the [Nazi Party](#).

Despite the implementation of the oppressive [Nuremberg Laws](#) in 1935, Liesl's father, Josef, continued his law practice. However, on November 9, 1938, during the [Kristallnacht Pogrom](#) he was arrested and imprisoned. After their family home was destroyed, Liesl and her mother hid temporarily with non-Jewish neighbors. Then Liesl was sent to Bonn, Germany, to live with family friends and attend Jewish day school while her mother stayed in Rheydt to await Josef's release about six weeks later. During the first part of 1939, Liesl's parents focused their efforts on obtaining immigration affidavits for the family from relatives living in the [United States](#).

Along with over 900 other German-Jewish [refugees](#), Liesl and her parents departed Germany for Cuba on May 13, 1939, aboard the cruise ship, *MS St. Louis*. They hoped to stay only until they had their visas to enter the United States. Upon arrival in the Havana Harbor after two weeks at sea, Josef chaired the St. Louis passenger committee, which negotiated for a



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week with the Cuban government to gain entrance. After their efforts proved unsuccessful, the *St. Louis* sailed to the United States only to be turned away there as well. After some forty days, a deal was made to divide the passengers among four countries: England, [Belgium](#), [Holland](#), and [France](#). Liesl and her parents were sent to England. In September of 1939, after England declared war on Germany, Liesl and her mother lived in London while her father was interned with other German males on the Isle of Man.

After the family was again reunited in September 1940, they immigrated to the United States, living out the war in Philadelphia. In addition to attending high school, Liesl frequented a German-Jewish club where she met

her future husband, Hans Loeb, a German-Jewish refugee and American World War II veteran.

Liesl and Hans were married on June 1, 1947. They later had two children, Joan and Joel. Liesl's career included stints as an art director, graphic designer, and German-language correspondent. In 1987, just two weeks short of the Loeb's 40th wedding anniversary, Hans died of heart failure. Liesl has been featured in several documentaries about the *St. Louis*. At the time of her interview in 1996, Liesl had three grandchildren.