

## FREDERICK SEITZ ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT

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### ABSTRACT

#### *Biography*

Frederick “Fred” Seitz was born in 1934 in Glendale, Queens. He moved with his family to Queens Village right before World War II. Fred attended P.S. 33 during the war, while his father worked as a driver for the City of New York and his mother was a homemaker. After World War II, Fred attended Our Lady of Lourdes High School and then went into the construction business.

#### *Summary*

In this interview, Fred discusses life in Queens Village during the war years, including the Victory Gardens grown on his block and the air raid drills at school. He also describes witnessing the collision of two Army transport planes above his neighborhood. Fred further reflects on visiting a captured German submarine moored in the Hudson and seeing the wreck of the S.S. *Normandie*.

#### *Keywords*

*child, Queens Village, New York, plane spotting, Victory Gardens, National Guard, submarine, radio, air raid drills, S.S. Normandie*

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31: 46 – How he talks about these years to others

## **STORY TRANSCRIPTS**

### **Story 1: Witnessing a Plane Crash**

**[4:50 – 5:46]**

Before the war, I started at P.S. 33 in Queens Village. One morning on the way to school—which is in 1942, I guess; yeah, had to be '42 because I transferred to another school after that and my father had taken me to school, which wasn't always so—we saw two planes in the air. We didn't know whether they were military or not, and we saw them collide.

So rather than stop and drop me off at school, my father drove over to where the planes crashed, which was only about six blocks away. But by that time, they had demolished the houses and everything was in the ground, broken and [on] fire; the fire engines had just come. But my father had retrieved a piece from the fire, from one of the planes.

### **Story 2: Hearing About Pearl Harbor**

**[7:08 – 8:06]**

Every Sunday, we would go to my grandparents' house. My cousins lived across the street, so my two cousins and my aunt and uncle, myself, my brother, and my parents would drive down to Brooklyn—Himrod Street—and show up at my grandparents' for Sunday dinner.

Well, usually Sunday after dinner, [our] parents would be inside talking and I would go into the living room because I liked to listen to *The Shadow* on the radio. *The Shadow* was on at 5 p.m. at night. And while *The Shadow* was talking—or they were talking about the show or something was going on about it—they interrupted [with a] news cast telling us that the Japanese [had] attacked Pearl Harbor.

Well, I didn't know too much about the Japanese or Pearl Harbor, so I went and told the parents. And, well, everybody was all upset. And then I realized that it was a major problem, but I didn't realize how much until I got older.

### **Story 3: Shopping at Mitchel Field [8:47 – 9:23]**

Fortunately, [due to] my father being in the National Guard, he had a pass to go to Mitchel Field. And he was stationed at Mitchel Field before the war because he was in the Army Air Force; he was a mechanic.

So, he took me there and we would go shopping. And you didn't *need* your ration coupons, so we saved them, where we could buy, especially candies, for my aunt and uncle, and for us and my grandparents. So that was a little bit of a perk that my father had being in the National Guard, that you could get some things at the PX [Post Exchange] at Mitchel Field.

### **Story 4: Walking Aboard a German Submarine [10:11 – 11:08]**

There was an article in the paper about [the fact] that you could go to see a captured German submarine in New York Harbor, on the North River. But you had to provide the access fee, [which] was a twenty-five-pound bag of newspapers.

So, my mother and I [went]. I did the carrying and we carried the twenty-five-pound bag of newspapers to the bus on Hillside Avenue and Springfield Boulevard; got the Q1 into Jamaica; got the subway to Jamaica, which took us into Manhattan. And then, we went across uptown, on the north side, and we walked across to the ship where the captured German submarine was. It was the best thing. That twenty-five pounds was really worth the effort of carrying it because I was actually on a German submarine.

## **PHOTO CAPTIONS**

### **Current 1**

Fred Seitz being interviewed at Sayville Library (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)

### **Current 2**

Narrator Fred Seitz and with interviewer Chris Kretz (Photo Credit: Morgan Brett)

### **Artifact 1**

Fred Seitz with a photograph of himself at eight-years-old and his father at the National Guard's Camp Smith in Peekskill, New York, circa 1942 (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)

## **Artifact 2**

Photograph of Fred and his father at Camp Smith in 1942 (Courtesy of Fred Seitz)