GD™

Geborener Deutscher®

A Newsletter for German-Born Adoptees and Their Birth/Adoptive Families

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Reunion With My Daughter Kathy in the U.S.A.

by Christa Hertgen

Last year, GD-subscriber Kathy Hearne of Garland, TX was found by her birth mother, Christa Hertgen. Soon thereafter followed reunions in Germany and Texas. Frau Hertgen was kind enough to provide us with a brief reflection on her reunion with her daughter. For the benefit of our English-speaking readers, Leonie Boehmer has translated Frau Hertgen's story; and for the benefit of our German-speaking readers, we have also included the original German text. -- WLG

The year 1989 brought great happiness into my life! The hope to find my girl again seemed only a bare chance. I had been searching for her too long unsuccessfully. But on February 18, 1989 I got her back.

In May, Kathy and her husband [Dan] came to us to Germany. It was an indescribable joy. A feeling of it not being real mixed with fear that everything might be just a dream. Then I sat opposite her, we were holding hands. At that time we could only exchange our questions and thoughts via an interpreter, my daughter Felicitas, she is the older one.

Now I want to tell how things developed: first I received an invitation from Kathy and her husband [to visit them in the US]. Due to the high prices for the flight I wanted to take some time to save some money from my retirement check. Dan sent me a check for the flight -- he said, it goes without saying …. So at the end of September I flew per Lufthansa to Texas for six weeks. The flight was very long. But I could not sleep, too many thoughts were going through my head.

Upon my arrival in Dallas I saw my girl with her husband standing at the exit. Kathy had flowers in her hand. We drove a distance of approximately 30 km. With joy I saw the American flag again and again, as well as skyscrapers and nice wide freeways.

We arrived at the house of my children. The table was set and there were two tortes with the inscriptions: "Glück Mama!" and "Willkommen." We hugged and laughed and cried. In my pretty bedroom there were more flowers and a letter of welcome from the adoptive Mom. That, I thought, was tremendously endearing. All in all: an exception. Again the feeling arose: is this all reality?

Then we enjoyed the six weeks to the fullest. This time my girl could speak German quite nicely. Immediately after her visit to Germany she started a German course. Her teacher invited me to come to school with her. The whole class knew already Kathy's stroke of fate. Now they wanted to meet her mother. I was there and met Americans of different national origins. Very nice people. By the way, I think, the typical American is uncomplicated and friendly, companionable, very charming. With Kathy I only spoke German. Next to me was always a Langenscheidt computer dictionary which translated from German to English, and Kathy had her thick English-German dictionary on the table. Every day we gained more, we were able to talk more and more, and could exchange thoughts, feelings and ideas. And, what especially made me happy: her voice sounds so much like mine, that on the telephone one could mistake me for her.

In Dallas I experienced the skyscrapers from the highest floor. I was afraid to look down. Everywhere there was marble, glass and steel. Completely different, much more powerful than in Germany. But very impressive.

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Wiedersehen Mit Meiner Tochter Kathy in den U.S.A.

von Christa Hertgen

Das Jahr 1989 brachte in mein Leben großes Glück! Die Hoffnung, mein Mädchen wiederzufinden, war nur noch ganz wage in mir. Zulange hatte ich vergeblich nach ihr gesucht. Doch am 18. Februar 1989 bekam ich sie wieder.

Im Mai kam Kathy mit ihrem Ehemann [Dan] zu uns nach Deutschland. Es war eine unbeschreibliche Freude. Ein Gefühl von Unwirklichkeit gemischt mit Angstgefühl, es könne alles nur geträumt sein. Dann saß ich ihr gegenüber, wir hielten uns an den Händen. Damals konnten wir nur mit einer Dolmetscherin, meiner Tochter Felicitas, sie ist die Ältere, unsere Fragen und Gedanken austauschen.

Nun will ich aber erzählen, wie Dinge sich fortentwickelten: Ich erhielt zuerst eine Einladung von Kathy und ihrem Ehemann. Wegen des hohen Flugpreises wollte ich noch Zeit gewinnen, um Geld von meiner Rente anzusparen. Dan schickte mir einen Scheck für den Flug -- er sagte, es sei doch selbstverständlich…. So flog ich ende September mit der Lufthansa für sechs Wochen nach Texas. Der Flug war sehr lang. Ich konnte aber nicht schlafen, zu viele Gedanken gingen durch meinen Kopf.

In Dallas angekommen sah ich mein Mädchen mit ihrem Ehemann am Ausgang stehen. Kathy hatte Blumen in der Hand. Wir fuhren durch eine Strecke von ca. 30 km. Ich habe mit Freude immer wieder die amerikanische Flagge gesehen, auch Wolkenkratzer und schöne breite Autofahrstraßen.

Wir kamen in das Haus meiner Kinder. Auf dem gedeckten Tisch standen zwei Torten mit Aufschriften: "Glück Mama!" und "Willkommen". Wir haben uns umarmt und gelacht und geweint. In meinem hübschen Zimmer standen noch mehr Blumen und ein Willkommensbrief der Adoptivmutter. Das fand ich ungemein liebenswert. Alles in allem: ein Ausnahmezustand. Wieder kam das Gefühl auf, "Ist alles Wirklichkeit?"

Wir haben dann die sechs Wochen sehr genossen. Mein Mädchen konnte dieses Mal schon ganz nett deutsch sprechen. Sie hatte, gleich nach ihrem Deutschlandbesuch, einen Intensivkursus in deutscher Sprache angemeldet. Ihre Lehrerin hatte mich in die Schule eingeladen. Die ganze Klasse kannte schon den Schicksalsweg von Kathy. Alle wollten ihre Mutter nun kennenlernen. Ich war dort und fand Amerikaner verschiedener nationaler Herkunft vor. Sehr nette Leute. Übrigens, ich denke, der typische Amerikaner ist unkompliziert und freundlich, kameradschaftlich, sehr sympathisch. Wir haben mit Kathy dann immer nur deutsch geredet, den Computer Langenscheidts Wörterbuch deutschenglisch hatte ich neben mir liegen, Kathy hatte ihr dickes Wörterbuch englisch-deutsch auf dem Tisch neben sich. Jeder Tag brachte Gewinn, wir konnten mehr und mehr reden, alle Gedanken, Gefühle, Ansichten mitteilen. Und, was mich besonders freute: Ihre Stimme ist meiner so ähnlich daß man uns am Telefon verwechseln könnte.

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The Editor's Page

William L. Gage



Geborener Deutscher is a newsletter dedicated to, among other things, the chronicling of reunions between German-born adoptees and their birth relatives. Now, as many of you are already aware, a reunification of another sort is currently taking place in Europe -- specifically, the reunification of the two Germanies. And, as one might imagine, this has provided much fodder for political pundits of various stripes, including commentators, editorial writers and political cartoonists.

I have sampled a number of opinions on this topic and am quite dismayed by the fact that the vast majority of such opinions tend to be hysterical and unrealistic diatribes against Germans in general and the prospect of *ein Deutschland* in particular.

Typical among the offerings of political cartoonists along these lines have been two by Oliphant: one pictured two large boots labeled as East and West Germany with infants hanging on the inside edges of each. The caption, which reflects the comment of one infant to the other, went something like: "You know, it's funny, but I have this overwhelming urge to march, too."

Another, earlier, cartoon pictured the earth being overshadowed by the silhouette of a German soldier labeled "A United Germany," as if the world were actually threatened with yet another global conflict if the two Germanies were to reunite.

The only cartoon I noticed recently which actually managed to be both funny and not anti-German was one by Doug Marlette in *New York Newsday* (right). Unfortunately, even Mr. Marlette could not resist indulging in a little German-bashing. His cartoon for February 28, 1990 pictured Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, standing at a podium where he poses the question, "Would all those in favor of reunification signify by raising your hand." In the next panel, we see a number of hands raised in the infamous Nazi salute, whereupon Mr. Kohl is pictured saying, "Let me rephrase that..."

Curiously enough, one of the most measured and reasonable analyses of the "question" of German reunification came from none other than George F. Will in the February 26, 1990 issue of *Newsweek*. Mr. Will, a noted conservative and someone with whom I rarely agree, observed, among other things, "Much of the purported anxiety about [a re]unified Germany is expressed with reference to Germany's savage past. But some of the anxiety seems disingenuously phrased....

"Much of today's resurgent Germanophobia is a cynical ploy for political and commercial advantage. But there may also be in it a dash of perverse nostalgia for Europe's lurid past, when horribly high stakes gave politics higher purpose, or at least higher entertainment value....

"...[National Socialism] sprang, in part, from a European malady, one from which Europe has recovered. The malady was spiritual, or at least emotional, malnutrition.... Today Europe, not least Germany, has the blessedly bland politics of bourgeois peoples whose everyday lives are sufficiently ... satisfying."

Meanwhile, in *Amerika*, it is President George Bush who is spearheading the campaign for a Constitutional amendment which would prohibit "desecration" of the American flag. And it is George Bush who is calling for a law that would require teachers to lead their students in the pledge of allegiance every morning.

Elsewhere in this country, so-called prolifers also call for a Constitutional change that would prohibit women from obtaining abortions. Certain of their moral righteousness, they are indignant that their narrow and philistine views cannot be forced upon the entire population of this country.

It does not take a genius to discern who in 1990 -- the Americans or the Germans -- is behaving more like Nazis. -- WLG

A Newsday cartoon reprinted and distributed by Geborener Deutscher



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My First Memories: The Birth of an Adoptee

by Kathy Hearne

Well, I'll bet you never guessed that adopted kids are born differently than the rest of the world. They are.

For example, at the age of 2½ years, I am told I emerged from the belly of an overloaded, tired Sabena jet airliner. After 18 hours spent in the overseas journey, the poor expectant airliner circled over New York's Idlewilde Airport for many hours unable to discharge its precious cargo due to foggy conditions. Eventually the mother plane wended her tired way to New Jersey's Newark airport and landed.

There, in the Newark Airport, I was born at the ripe and disoriented age of 2½ years! After exiting the plane fully clothed in unusual foreign attire, my pockets stuffed with candy, I rode a mechanical horse in a frenzied panic until it broke. (The nickel had run out.) With a disgusted exclamation of "Kaput!" I dismounted and was escorted home by the only parents I knew. They gave me my memories for the next 34 years of my life.

As an adopted kid, the first 2½ years of my life were an amnesic enigma. They evidently occurred, I am told, but no one had any memories of that time. All recollections of my life began when I emerged from the belly of the Sabena airliner.

My parents later quickly built many warm memories -- of my first bath (accompanied with screams of terror); my first picture sitting session (while I washed my hair in a mud puddle); my first toy (the string of wooden ducks that I dragged around the house); my first only food -- milk (all other food, with the possible exception of candy, was shunned in terror); my hyperactivity; the neighborhood boy who said, "She's dumb," when he discovered I couldn't speak English; the day the nursery school called to have me taken home after I had bitten 11 children; etc.; etc.

But unlike other children, I had never been a baby. I didn't really come from anywhere except a big machine from the sky. I had a vague sense of not being like everyone else -- of being alone. Everyone else was connected. Everyone else belonged to their parents, their sisters and brothers, their home, their country, their world. I was a guest. I had drifted in.

Yes, there was a story. I had been born in Berlin and had been given up for adoption. But no one I knew could help me build any memories to attach to the words of this story. So that's all the story was -- words! Disconnected words that set me apart and said, "I was different from everyone else." Words that said "I didn't really belong here." "I didn't come from here;" "Something's wrong with me" and "What was I doing here?" But like the words of the birth story, my question was only words;it was unanswerable.

My only reality said I now was part of this family in Darien, Connecticut. I was an only daughter -- a wanted child -- and my life began at

cont. on next pg.

Briefe

We strongly encourage readers to write in response to any materials published in GD. The opinions expressed in letters published herein are the authors' own, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor. Letters may be edited for clarity and/or brevity.

January 1, 1990

Dear Bill,

Thank you for sending me your newsletter. It is very helpful to find a newsletter that addresses the problems and situations of a very specialized group of people -- German adoptees!

At 2½, I was adopted by my parents in New England. I grew up knowing that I was adopted from Germany and formerly named Beate. When I came to America, my parents renamed me Kathy.

As a child I often wondered why I had been given up. Perhaps I was unwanted or something was wrong with me. Secretly I always felt I never belonged with the other children and wasn't "good enough."

On the surface, I spoke little about the adoption and appeared well-adjusted. As a young child, when my parents were unable to answer my questions, I dropped the matter. My questions were unanswerable and it was at best impolite to discuss such things with those who were nice enough to pretend they were my parents -- with those who believed they were my parents.

I used to wonder about my German mother and felt very sad that she had given me away. But eventually I suppressed my feelings. Later I didn't associate the deep depressions, intense anger towards my adoptive mother, search for other replacement mothers, and feelings of rejection experienced throughout my later childhood and early adolescence with the adoption reactions I had submerged.

I always had mixed feelings about being a German. I was very proud of my background and also felt partially ashamed knowing of the atrocities of Hitler and the concentration camps. I sometimes wondered if my parents had been war criminals and for that reason had to send me away. I wondered if I had bad blood.

During my first year at college, I threw away the religion of my adoptive parents and became an evangelical Christian. While this change brought much healing to me, I was also somewhat extreme in my fervor, let my grades in school slide and eventually joined a Christian cult group. At this cult group -- run by two "mothers" -- enrolled in the novitiate, hoping to become a sister for the rest of my life. Later I married, became a career woman and lived a normal dull life.

I never had any plans to search for my German parents. I felt I had been given up -- not wanted. I certainly wasn't going to look for those who had given me away and risk further rejection from them. Additionally, I had avoided studying German in school. Later in college, I rejected an opportunity to go to study and live with a German family for a summer.

I was completely surprised when I received a registered letter this March from my birth mother and a sister I never knew I had! My mother had evidently been searching for me for years and had experienced 20+ years of depression including amnesia. With the amnesia, she had forgotten she had a second child. After 20 years of amnesia and depression, the doctors certified my mother medically unfit for work. The root cause is presumed to be the adoption and her inability to know if her child was alive and how it fared. Eventually, and at considerable expense, my mother and sister hired a private detective, who located me after ten months.

After recovering from some of the shock of this unexpected communique, I visited my mother, sister, two nieces and brother-in-law in Germany this past May for 3 glorious weeks. I felt for the first time in my life as if I had gone home.

While my sister, fortunately, speaks English and was our translator, it was still extremely frustrating not being able to understand what was spoken. But sometimes when the exact words cannot be understood, we can see beyond the words and see the person behind the words more clearly. I met a lady who was very anxious to make sure I understood her suffering and that, while she had been unable to keep me, she had made the most responsible decision she knew for my care -- to save my life.

I also found that I needed my mother emotionally. The baby of 36 years ago suddenly came crying full-force to life. Some of the most difficult months of my life were after I left my family in Germany. I cried. I grieved for the days lost -- for the childhood lost with my sister and my mother -- for the holding that as a baby I needed, etc. I was angry at my inability to change circumstances and push the time clock back -- my inability to make all things "right." I was angry that as a baby I had not been consulted. I was an object passed from one hand to another and had no part in the decision-making process.

After working through some of these feelings, my mother visited me here in America for 6 wonderful weeks. In the meantime, I had studied German on my own and was able to communicate somewhat. Mama and I found we have much in common. Our personalities -- feelings, thoughts, temperament -- are so similar we have been called twins. The parallels in our life situations, interests and world views are startling to me. Our voices are identical.

My mother is now happy, healthy and stable. Since I have been found, I have been reevaluating my life from its very foundations; my identity, my naming, my national identity, my roots all have been shaken. I am coming to new and more mature terms with myself. I am gaining new control over my life, a greater inner assurance and self-acceptance I never before had.

At first my birth father had no interest in knowing about me. He was angry at my mother and about the adoption. Since discovering how important my contact with my mother is to me, I had decided that wanted or not I would at least see my father's face. My rejection fears were no longer so important. I thought, "Perhaps the blood ties would cry out loudly enough that he would one day accept me as his daughter. I have a right to know him and I can bring joy into his life if he would accept me." Now my father has written me and to say he accepts me wholly and completely. He and his wife have invited me to visit them.

This spring I plan to return to Germany alone for several months. I look forward to meeting my birth father, gaining further healing through time spent with my mother, and learning more about life in my homeland.

To those adoptees who are still searching for their parents, I wish you all, "Good luck!" Don't get discouraged. Keep pressing on. Even if the reunion cannot be successfully completed, every tiny shred of information about our past -- our roots -- ourselves -- helps establish us and gives us freedom to live like normal people. Because of my pain, I would never have searched. My mother and sister gave me one of life's greatest gifts when they found me.

Yes, I am juggling some delicate interpersonal relationships with my adopted family. I felt at first that I was a traitor, loving my birth blood family so deeply. But I am an adult and I have a right to my roots, to myself, to the relationships with all those people dear in my life. I will not compromise myself again. As an adopted kid, I felt I compromised myself all of my life. I never knew who I was or where I fit so I accepted the only identity I had -- the one given me by others. Sincerely,

-- Kathy S. Hearne, Garland, TX

Birth of Adoptee cont. from prev. pg.

2½ years. For my family in Darien, the only reality was when the long-awaited airliner landed and I was delivered to the only world we knew.

Perhaps we adopted kids are just late bloomers. Our life begins a little later than most people's. But we are also missing a vital blood connection to our roots. I was missing the memories of love -- holding, nursing, protection -- that a baby requires. When I ran off the Sabena airliner I was already toilet trained and obviously walking. No one in my new world remembered my first step, first words, first smile. No one remembered what type of a person I was instinctively from the beginning. The first memories others have of me are of a scared child reacting to and eventually learning to cope alone with a terrifying situation. Sometimes I felt I was never understood because I was never seen naturally. I was always reacting to an unnatural situation.

We adopted kids are missing the sense of family, the sense of normalcy, the sense of ourselves. Most of the other people who populated our early world didn't have this lack, so they didn't perceive ours. We were alone with our aloneness. The questions, the frustrations were too big to put into words. Or maybe they were just dumb since no one else worried about them.

We adopted kids grasp at our identity by either creating it artificially with those in the world around us who pretend we are a natural part of it, or like me, by savoring our aloneness and quietly pondering our unanswerable questions.

Now I have been found by my birth mother and am establishing that vital link to this world. I have more strength to be my own person because the first 2½ years of my life, while not fully known, did occur. My foundation years are not 2½ years of air. I was not born by a machine; I was loved by a warm human being from which I was born, mothered and briefly nursed. I have a genetic connectedness and I was wanted. While I still live in a country foreign to my birth and nature, I am connected to the rest of mankind around me. My story now has a ring of similarity with those other kids who were born of their own parents. Ende

Wiedersehen

cont. from pg. 1

In Dallas habe ich die Wolkenkratzer von der obersten Etage erlebt. Bekam Angst, in die Tiefe herunterzuschauen. Überall Marmor, Glas, Stahl. Ganz anders, viel gewaltiger als Deutschland. Aber sehr beeindruckend. Meine Tochter hatte im Juli ihre Berufsarbeit aufgegeben. Sie sagte, sie brauchte Zeit, um ihre Vergangenheit kennenzulernen. Sie müsse ihre Leben neu ordnen. Das konnte ich gut verstehen. Auch ihr Ehemann sah die Notwendigkeit ein.

So sah ich meiner Tochter morgens zu wie sie den Tisch deckte. Nach dem Frühstück fuhren wir meist ein Stück fort und gingen einige km. in einem Parkgelände Hand in Hand spazieren. Wir redeten über unsere getrennt verlaufenden Lebensgeschichten. Ganz besonders glücklich macht es mich, daß mein Kind nun versteht, daß ich in schwerer Notlage, ohne Hilfe von außen, die Adoption in der USA in die Wege leitete. Daß alles aus Verantwortung und Liebe geschah. Mein Kind sollte leben, eine Zukunft haben. Wie glücklich werde ich von jetzt ab bis ans Ende aller Tage sein, daß alles so wurde, wie ich es vom Schicksal erfleht hatte!

Die Tage, Wochen gingen schneller dahin, als wir dachten. Wir hatten eine Autoreise nach Neu Mexiko vor. Kathy sah den Motor ihres Autos durch -- sie ist Ingenieur, versteht es -- dann packten wir Lebensmittel, Trinkwasser, Säfte, Brot und Trockenfrüchte in eine Kühlbox, setzten unsere Texashüte auf und gingen auf die ziemlich weite Reise. Den Texashut hatte mir mein Schwiegersohn gleich zu Anfang gekauft. Er ist stolzer Texaner, seine Gastfreundschaft war un übertrefflich!

Wir hatten eine wundervolle Reise. Die Landschaft war voller weite grüne Wiesen, schöne Rastplätze. Wir aßen Aprikosen und tranken Wasser. Saßen uns gegenüber und lachten miteinander. "Unglaublich, du bist meine Mutter!" sagte meine Tochter. Einmal fragte sie: "Bin ich wirklich in diesem Bauch gewachsen?"

Abends suchten wir ein Hotel auf. Es war praktisch und bot alles was Reisende brauchen. Gute Betten, Dusche, Eis zum kühlen der Getränke. Wir aßen abends mexikanisch -- scharf und schmeckte gut. Am anderen Tag ging's weiter. Die Landschaft veränderte sich. Immer näher kamen hohe blaue Berge auf uns zu. Die Städte, welche wir durchfuhren, sahen so aus, wie ich es durch Filme und das Fernsehen mir vorgestellt hatte. Ganz anders als in Europa.

In Albuquerque gingen wir in eine Bar um eine Erfrischung zu genießen. Ich verlangte ein "kleines" Eis. Das mexikanische Mädchen brachte mir einen Riesenbecher mit Eiscreme und Sirup und Nusskerne waren zu allem Überfluß auf dieser Kalorienbombe. "Hier gibt es keine ‚kleinen' Portionen," sagte das Mädchen. Wir waren glänzender Stimmung und haben gelacht und alles genossen.

Abends dann besuchten wir unsere Freundin, Leonie, in ihrem Haus. Außen war alles mexikanisch, innen europäisch. Auf dem Klavier lagen die Noten einer Bachkantate. Wir wurden umarmt und in das gemütliche Haus geführt. Dort blieben wir drei Tage -- unvergeßliche Tage voller Freundschaft, voller Mitgefühl und Verstehen.

Meine (arme!) Freundin dolmetschte alles, es ging schneller als mit dem Wörterbuch. So erfuhr ich viel mehr aus dem Leben meines Kindes. Problematisches, schwierige Entwicklungszeiten.... Ich erzählte Geschichten aus meiner Kindheit: wie ich mir einen Regenschirm gewünscht hatte und diesen zu einem Fallshirm umfunktionieren wollte. Ich war damals sechs Jahre alt. Kletterte auf einen hohen Kirschbaum in unserem Garten und sprang aus der Baumspitze mit aufgeklapptem Schirm herunter. Leider, er trug nicht wie ich gehofft hatte. Es brachte mir ein verstauchtes Bein ein. Ich humpelte mehrere Wochen danach in die Schule.

Unsere Freundin Leonie brachte uns auf den Indianermarkt. Dort kaufte ich meiner Tochter ein kleines Weihnachtsgeschenk, das Indianer angefertigt hatten: Türkisohringe. Anderentags fuhren wir auf einen Berg, wohl 3000 m. hoch. Wir aßen im Restaurant und Leonie machte Aufnahmen. Am anderen morgen, um 7 Uhr, fuhren wir zurück -- zwei Tage lang bis Dallas. Ende

Reunion

cont. from pg. 1

My daughter had quit her job in July. She said, she needed time to get to know her past. She had to rearrange her life anew. I could understand that very well. Her husband also thought this was necessary.

So I watched my daughter set the table in the mornings. After breakfast we usually drove to the park and went for a walk for a few kilometers hand in hand. We talked about our separate life histories. It makes me especially happy that my child now understands that in a difficult situation, without any outside help, I arranged the adoption to the USA. That everything happened because I felt responsible and loved her. My child should live, have a future. How happy I will be from now on to the end of my life that everything happened as I had begged fate to make it happen!

The days and weeks moved faster than we thought they would. We had thought of a trip by car to New Mexico. Kathy looked at the engine of her car -- she is an engineer and understands it -- then we packed food, water, juices, bread and dried fruit into a cooler, donned our Texas cowboy hats and started our rather long journey. My sonin-law had bought me the Texas hat right in the beginning. He is a proud Texan, his hospitality was unsurpassable.



Kathy Hearne (l) & Christa Hertgen
Albuquerque, New Mexico, 10/89

We had a wonderful trip. The landscape was full of wide green meadows and nice rest stops. We ate apricots and drank water. We sat opposite each other and laughed together. "Unbelievable, you are my mother!" said my daughter. Once she asked: "Did I really grow in this belly?"

In the evenings we looked for a motel. It was practical and offered everything a traveller needs: good beds, shower, ice cubes to cool the beverages. We ate Mexican food in the evening, it was hot but tasted good. The next day we continued. The landscape changed. Blue mountains got closer and closer. The cities we passed through looked just like the ones I had seen in the movies on television. Quite different from Europe.

In Albuquerque we went to a bar to get some refreshments. I asked for a small bowl of ice cream. The Mexican girl brought a gigantic bowl with ice cream and a lot of syrup and nuts to add to the calories. "We don't have any 'small, portions," said the girl. We were in a terrific mood and laughed and enjoyed everything.

In the evening we went to visit our friend Leonie at her house. On the outside everything was Mexican style, on the inside European. On the piano was the music of a Bach Cantata. We were hugged and asked to come into the comfortable house. We stayed there for 3 days -- unforgettable days full of friendship, sympathy and understanding.

My (poor!) friend translated everything, it was faster than using a dictionary. In this way I got to know much more about the life of my child. Problematic, difficult times of development.... I told stories from my childhood: how I wished for an umbrella and wanted to make it into a parachute. I was six at the time. I climbed high into a cherry tree and then jumped with the open umbrella down from the top. Unfortunately, it did not carry me as I had hoped it would. It cost me a sprained leg. For several weeks afterwards I hobbled to school.

Our friend Leonie took us to the Indian Market. There I bought my daughter a small Indian-made Christmas present: turquoise earrings. The next day we drove on top of a mountain, approximately 3,000 m. high. We ate in the restaurant and Leonie took pictures. The next morning we left at seven o'clock to drive back -- two days to Dallas. Ende

Leonie Boehmer

Independent Search Consultant

Specializing in adoptee-birth parent reunification searches for German-born adoptees and/or German or American birth parents w/German-born children

805 Alvarado, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108
(505) 268-1310