

Oral history interview with Ruth Geller
RG-50.030.0671

Summary

Ruth Ginsberg [Gunsburg] Geller

Born on April 10, 1933 in Moravska Ostrave, Czechoslovakia. (Sometimes known as Maehrisch-Ostrau in German)

Mother, Blanche Basia Ehrlich Ginsberg (born March 13, 1904 in Krakow, Poland), and father, Gerson Ginsberg (July 7, 1897 in Szinov, Czechoslovakia)

Her father worked as a fur merchant and her mother worked with him

They also owned property in Merling, Germany and had a house for his parents in Szinov.

Had a bother, Oskar (October 16th, 1928), who died young of a heart attack while living in America

Had a comfortable life growing up before the war as the family was well off, and were religious (Heschel Shabbat) - her father was Orthodox

Remembers the Germans marching into Moravska Ostrave when she was six years old around March 1939

Her mother was able to talk the German Authorities into letting her and the two children go to Krakow to visit her dying grandfather. Were also able to ship things to London to her father who was there for business. (1939)

Ruth, her mother and brother were the only members of her family who decided to leave and went across Poland to Gdynia (Gdenask) port and took a ship across the English Channel.

Initially lived with her Great Aunt at Six and Andrews Grove in Stamford Hill as her father was in the hospital with a heart attack

Moved to Two Stamford Hill Mansion when her father was recovered

Eventually evacuated to Kennington, outside of Oxford (Lived there multiple times, including 1941, 1942, 1943)

Attended a Catholic school in a covenant while living in London, but they allowed her and other Jewish children to attend (along with a Jewish teacher)

Her father decided that the family should move to America. Had gotten the paperwork and tickets for the children to go to Canada on a ship (similar to a Kindertransport - I believe the SS City of Benares) from Liverpool, but eventually decided not to and kept the family together - this ship had been sunk and over 70 children had died

Would often go down to the Undergrounds in London during the bombings

Was a part of Zionist youth group, B'nai Akivah

War ended in 1945

Moved to the United States in 1948 on the SS Degrasse, and lived with her (m)Aunt (Lena Ronga) and Uncle (Henry Ehrlich) in Manhattan - eventually moved to Astoria where her father opened a Victory Five and Ten

Attended high school at the Long Island City High School

Her father passed away in 1948 while at temple

Began college in 1950 at 17, and studied Retail and Business at the Baruch School on 23rd Street and Lexington Ave

When graduated, worked at Gertz department store, and eventually became an assistant buyer for the children's department

Eventually moved to California with her husband, and has continued living there till this day

Attended graduate school in California for business administration and marketing at California State San Bernardino, and eventually taught there. Taught for 15 years until her mother got sick and passed away in 1993 at 89.

Cousin, Zvi Barlev (Bleicher), wrote a book, "Would God it Were Night," about his experience during the war - was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum