

RG-50.030.0918

Summary

Gertrude (née Kraus) Leiser was born January 3, 1930 in Vienna, Austria. She had two older siblings, Edith and Leo. Her parents were Max and Pearl (née Schifter), both from Stanislaw, Poland. German and Yiddish were spoken at home, and they observed most Jewish customs. Her father was a traveling stationery salesman. Their address was Danischegasse 6.

Gertrude attended a public school until Hitler's takeover when she moved to a Jewish school. She recalls experiencing periodic anti-Semitic harassment in the streets, and had some Nazi neighbors. She described the family's experience during *Kristallnacht*. When her father learned of the *Kindertransport*, bookings to England were full, but her father arranged passage to France for her and her sister in March 1939. Her brother had already been sent to the United States to stay with his father's sister-in-law.

Gertrude and her sister traveled to Paris by train, first staying at a hospital named for Baron Rothschild, and then onto a castle (Legette?) owned by Rothschild. The children were from Austria and Germany and conditions were good. The children remained there for 12-18 months until escaping to the mountains for another 12-18 months after the Germans occupied Paris.

Her parents immigrated to Brooklyn in January 1940 while the children were still in France, staying with one of her father's sisters. In June 1941, the children went from Marseilles to Portugal and then to America. The family lived in Brooklyn at 115 Belmont Ave. and then on to East Flatbush. Her father worked at a burlap bag factory and her mother in garments. Gertrude remained with her parents until she met her husband, who had come from Vienna on the same boat as her parents. They have two children, Sheri and Bennet.