

Henry Werner Bloch

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Abstract

Henry Werner Bloch was born on March 11, 1914 in Duisburg, Germany where his mother, Emma David, lived near her sister during World War I while his father, Ludwig Bloch, served in the German Army. Henry had an older brother, Fritz, who was born in 1905 and they grew up in Mannheim. His father was in the family business of making kitchen cabinets which Henry's brother joined for a while and changed to a bigger company. Henry's family was not religious and considered themselves German. Henry specialized in language in high school. He experienced no anti-Semitism before Hitler. Afterward Jews could not attend certain functions or go to certain areas and his father's business suffered as people did not want to buy from Jews. In 1933, all men born in 1914 were drafted into the Germany Army Reserves. Henry was drafted and was given a passport indicating he was Jewish. He decided to leave Germany against his family's wishes. He went to the American Consulate and applied for immigration. Two years later he obtained a visa by being sponsored by a distant relative in the US and he resigned from the German Army. Henry took the ship, "Columbus" to NY. The German Military told him to register with the German Consulate in NY upon arrival. Instead, he went to relatives in Newburgh, New York. Henry's brother's apartment was demolished during Kristallnacht and he left Germany and arrived in the US in 1940 and settled in Washington, DC. Henry thought he would obtain a visa for his parents but was unsuccessful and they were deported to Gurst, a concentration camp in France. Henry's brother contacted Senator Hamilton Fish who arranged to have their parents removed from Gurst. They came to the US in 1943 and settled in Manhattan. Henry worked a while in his cousin's clothing factory in Newburgh before he obtained a job managing a small lumber yard in Manhattan. Then he worked for a bigger company in Brooklyn until he was drafted into the US Army in 1943. He married Hilda Lazar Katzenberg (?) just before he was drafted and they had two children, a boy and a girl. The Army sent him to the U. of Pittsburgh to study Russian and then to Camp Richie, MD for intelligence work in Europe. His duties were to capture Germans and interrogate them to learn their equipment and location. He arrived in England in June '44 and, with three in his unit, were connected to the French Army from Normandy to Strasbourg, liberated Paris and helped free King Leopold of Belgium. At the end of the war, he was assigned to General Patton of the US Army and they discovered many jewels the Germans had hidden in caves and liberated Dachau. After discharge, Henry and his wife moved to Newburgh where he was in the business of obtaining soft lumber to construct homes. Henry feels that in 100 years, the Holocaust will be history and forgotten as an example to deter such behavior. He has spoken to his friends in Germany and feels their military actions were necessary to save themselves. Henry hopes the US never has a Jewish president as a minority should not tell others what to do and he would serve as a scapegoat for problems.