

**Fred Lubcher**

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### **Abstract**

Fred Lubcher was born January 28, 1931 as Ephraim Luczer and changed his name to Americanized Frederick Luczer when he enrolled in elementary school in the US at age nine. He was born in Lesko, Poland and soon his parents moved to Vienna, Austria because of a difficult relationship with the father's brother Moishe who was in business with him. Fred had two older brothers: Herman born in 1925 and Bernie born in 1927. His parents, Rose Schatten and his father, Jacob Lubcher, had an arranged marriage and spoke Yiddish. His father had two brother beside Moishe: Kalman in Vienna and Benny in the US. The entire family were in the butcher business. Fred's family lived across the street from their Butcher Shop on Shifnap Strasse. They had an outhouse though their apartment was fairly modern. His mother occasionally helped in the shop and had a helper at home to clean the apartment and care for the children. The family kept kosher and the Sabbath. They visited Lubsko when Fred was about five and also visited his mother's brother on a farm in Poland. They saw Uncle Kalman more frequently as he lived nearby. Fred recalled seeing the Germans march into Austria and having the Jews clean the streets with their underwear. The first change was the unavailability of kosher meat so his father divided the store into two separating the kosher from the non-kosher. Fred never discussed difficulties with his brothers as did not want to recall bad memories. Uncle Kalman's son, Joey, was born in the Austria so was able to obtain preference on the quota for the US and the first to emigrate. Fred's father was warned he would be arrested if he did not leave by September 30, 1939. They decided to leave Herman home alone, thus eligible for Kinder-transport, while the rest of the family went to Poland. Unfortunately, Fred's father was suspicious of the smuggler and they returned home. The SS arrived and ransacked their home and arrested Fred's father. They received a telegram that his father died and soon received a box of his ashes which they buried. Meanwhile, Fred's family was upset when Uncle Kalman and his wife disappeared. They had obtained illegal passports to Italy without telling the family. Later Uncle Kalman and his family arrived in the US and sponsored Fred and his family. Fred's family received visas January 1940, shipped a few belongings and left for NY March 1940 on a ship from Genoa. Their relatives did not meet them in NY so HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) contacted them and put the family in a taxi to the HIAS shelter. After a short stay with Uncle Benny and his family, they moved to a Bedford-Stuyvesant railroad flat. At first Uncle Kalman and a half-aunt lived with them. No family member spoke English but Fred's mother obtained a position as cook for a catering hotel in Brooklyn. Soon all learned English and never spoke German again. The following year, Fred obtained part-time work delivering grocery orders. Herman lived with his cousin and worked in his Butcher Shop until he was 17 or 18 and entered the Army where he served in the European Theatre. Bernie was sent to a UJA camp for nourishment and at 17 enlisted in the Navy and married at 20. Fred registered at P.S. 25 where he remained for two years. Fred was Uncle Benny's favorite so Fred frequently visited him. Fred's mother remarried

when he was 16 to Jacob Feldman. Fred lived at home until he married Shirley at 22. He was the only sibling with higher education as received his law degree from NYU and later specialized in trusts and estates. He has two children: Jeremy and Howard. Fred seldom talked about his life as others seemed uninterested. He knows what it is like to live in a dictatorship so hopes people realize how great the US is. He returned to Vienna once in 1972 and his hired secretary explained the Jews were still treated the same as in World War I. Fred remains friends with Chester, his first friend in the US. After the interview, Fred shows a photo of his family: His parents and two brother and Fred holding a teddy bear and shows his German passport indicating he is stateless with December '40 stamp showing he is leaving Italy for the US, Nazi authority stamp in Vienna, and stamp showing entrance into the US.