

[MUSIC PLAYING] From Peach State Public Radio, this is Georgia Journal. I'm James Hargrove.

And I'm Anna Marie Hartman. Is the disintegration of the former Soviet Union creating new problems for Moscow? On today's program we'll talk with former Soviet official, Dr. Igor Khripunov.

Last March, when I was there, people were not sure about the future. It was a tug-of-war between Yeltsin and the conservative parliament.

Susanna Capelouto travels to Germany to explore the effects of the Holocaust on two Georgia men and their families.

Dad, when he was 17, escaped from one of the ghettos. And that was the last time he saw his family.

And we'll tell you about a new book by University of Georgia Professor Richard Westmacott that traces the history of gardens among Black families in the rural South.

It's all just ahead on Georgia Journal.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

A few weeks ago, the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC opened its doors to the public. Its mission is to teach future generations about the atrocities committed in Nazi Germany.

The Holocaust took place in Europe almost 50 years ago. But it affected many lives around the world, some of them right here in Georgia. Reporter Susanna Capelouto accompanied an Augusta family to Europe and listened as they tried to understand the fate of their ancestors.

[BELL CHIMES]

[INDISTINCT CONVERSATION]

[BELL CHIMES]

Each year on April 11, hundreds of people from all over the world meet under the bell tower of the Buchenwald concentration camp, near the German city of Weimar. They are there to commemorate the day the prisoners and military forces liberated the camp, putting an end to the Nazi persecution of thousands of Jews, Gypsies, communists, socialists, Catholics, Protestants, men, women, and children.

This April, Joseph Korn traveled from Augusta with his wife and teenage son to attend the Buchenwald ceremony and remember his father, Abram, who spent part of his youth as a prisoner at the camp.

Dad, when he was 17, escaped from one of the ghettos, and that was the last time he saw his family. And he tried to help them by being outside the walls of the ghetto. And he just went to what was then an open ghetto. But soon he was placed in another one. Then fairly soon after that, he was put in a concentration camp. Then he was moved from one concentration camp to another for a period of about five years, four to five years in concentration camps.

Abram Korn died in 1972. He was 49. In the years between Buchenwald and his death, Abram Korn found his way to Augusta, where he worked and raised a family.

He spent a few years in Germany, where he got some education, put a little bit of order in his life. He met my mother, who was not Jewish. She was a German Lutheran, as a matter of fact. And they eventually married and came over here to America to find the virtual American dream. And they found it.

Joseph Korn says his father rarely talked about his life in Buchenwald and in other camps, including Auschwitz, where

he was imprisoned by the Nazis. He says he learned most about his father's early life from a book Abram Korn wrote in the late '60s.

My parents' generation, the generation that survived the war, whether they were survivors of the Holocaust or just people that lived through it, they didn't want to talk about it. They found it difficult to talk about an era that they let happen. It was just like it was there. It was something that we really didn't talk about. But I had asked enough questions to know that dad was a part of that, but really didn't know much about it. When I really learned about his life was after he died, when I finally read his memoirs. And I began to feel closer to him than ever before.

This is the chapter in my father's book that discusses liberation. (READING) Late that afternoon, as I was resting, my strength having been exhausted in fighting my foot infection, without nourishment or medical attention, I raised my head. I heard singing. Was it my imagination? Was I losing my mind too. The singing became louder and more distinct.

The huge door, which was made to admit or enclose horses, now swung open. I believed my ears because my eyes saw a sight I shall never forget. I beheld a miracle. In front of me, in full view, were the German SS guards, their hands and bodies were bound, and our fellow prisoners were now pricking them and sticking and goading them with their own rifles. They were singing to us and for themselves.

Behind the singing prisoners came the American soldiers. It was unbelievable, but it was true. I was human again. I reacted like a human being. I was touched. And the only thing I could do was to cry, and cry, and cry. I was not alone. Other men, who, like me, had withstood years of persecution, of being pushed around, of being treated worse than animals, of hunger, of deprivation beyond description, of whippings and psychological torture, all without shedding a tear, all without feeling pain, now began to feel again, to react again, to be human.

We had been resurrected, brought back from a life, which was worse than death. And our liberators, the Americans, were there before our eyes.

Among the US forces at Buchenwald that day in April 1945 was a young soldier from Georgia. Tom McIntyre was part of the Third Army's 737 tank battalion.

And I was there, that there were concentration camps. And what I did, I was throwing away D bars. You know what D bars are? Candy. Chocolate bars about this long, about that wide, and about that thick-- almost 100% pure chocolate. And I was throwing them out. And they said, well, you got to go get them back because if they eat them, it will kill them. Too much chocolate in their system-- see, chocolate has got caffeine. And all that chocolate-- so we had to go take it away from people.

Have you ever tried to take something from somebody that was-- I mean, they fight you like a cat. But you had to take it away to get it.

One of the prisoners Private McIntyre took the candy away from was the young Abram Korn. Years later, fate would throw them together again, this time in Augusta.

Whenever I came back to the United States, I never in my wildest dream that I'd ever associate meeting, of being with anyone that I'd ever seen-- that had seen me rather, from overseas. I was out at Jan's Lake one day. My wife and I and my kids were swimming. And I seen this man, he kept noticing me. And I got nervous. So I moved on down away from him. And so they moved there, on down there where I was at.

And he kept looking at me, kept looking, kept looking. And I got nervous, and nervous, and nervous. So I moved on down a little farther. And finally he came up and approached me. And he asked me was I in a tank outfit. And he says, you're the [INAUDIBLE]. I said, yeah.

And he says, Buchenwald. I said, yeah. He said, I was there. And I says, you were there? He says-- he said, y'all come through giving out D bars. Come to find out, he was in the same place I was, but I did not know him. And at Jan's Lake, so we became friends.

Tom McIntyre is now in his 70s. He and his wife own a 22-room Inn in Pisgah Forest, North Carolina.

[BIRDS CHIRPING]

The peaceful serenity of his mountain retreat is a sharp contrast to what he saw as a 20-year-old soldier in Germany.

I seen lampshades with tattoos on them. I seen all that. When you see children stacked up, that's bad. And it's things like that that you see, you don't want to see. Do you understand? And to me, I just upchuck, could just almost pass out when you look at it. And the stench, you'll never believe.

There's only one stench like it. And if you ever want to smell it, you'll never forget it. And this will be the last time I'll ever talk about it. I won't ever talk about it again as long as I live. This is it. And it took a lot to bring it up. I mean, I'm not trying to repeat myself.

Such reticence on part of the people who survived the war may be one of the reasons why a movement that claims the Holocaust never happened is growing in the US and in Europe. That idea is horrifying to people like Tom McIntyre and the Korn family, especially Abram Korn's 13-year-old grandson, Jason.

I have shared the story of my grandfather with some classes, like in language arts or social studies, about when we have to do reports about our relatives. I usually tell a story about him. And we haven't really learned much about Nazis in Germany and all the concentration camps. But we might learn about them in World History, when I get to that book in school.

Jason never knew his grandfather Abram. Most of what he knows of his grandfather's life he learned from reading the book.

I feel that I know him better because I know a little more about his past. And it makes me think how fortunate I am that I don't have to live through any terrible things, such as the concentration camps that he was sent to. And I just feel a little closer to knowing him.

Could you read us something out of your grandfather's book?

Yes. This is chapter 7 of my grandfather's book. And the name of the book is Fate. And I'm starting a little into the chapter, where my grandfather has to leave his family. And now I'll begin.

(READING) My heart broke when the moment of departure and separation from my parents and sisters neared. I ran to meet the outstretched arms of my mother. She held onto me with a grip that expressed volumes. It said, "go." It said, "stay." It said, "how sad." It said how much I love you, now and forever. It said, "God, please watch over my son." It said the unspeakable. It spoke of a mother's love for her only son.

My sisters cried and held onto me as if to hold on to the memory of this moment and to life. My father, who had always been as my strength, as my shield and by my side, waited until last to come over. His rugged face and simple short mustache and head of premature gray born of pain. My father removed his pinched spectacles, fell on my shoulder, hugged me with all of his might, and then abruptly let me go.

"Don't ever forget us. Don't ever forget your identity and who you are and what our religion teaches us. Watch yourself, and may The Eternal, who watches over all of us, mercifully protect you."

I had to summon all of my strength in order to make my feet take me away and be on my way. I was never to see my family again.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Abram Korn's autobiography, *Fate*, ends when he arrives in Augusta. His son Joseph is currently editing the work. He has plans to publish it next year. For *Georgia Journal*, I'm Susanna Capelouto.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

With us now in the studio is Sylvia Wygoda. She is the president of the Georgia Holocaust Memorial Council. Thanks for coming today. I want to begin by my asking you, what is the mission of the council?

The mission of the council is to provide Holocaust education to the community at large and to the schools, to the young children. So this commission has been functioning for two years now. It is established through the governor's office but has no funding. There's no government funding whatsoever, or any funding except private contributions.

I understand that you are-- well, you and I have talked before. And it's quite shocking that this part of history really can't be found in any of the textbooks in any of the classes, well not only in the rest of the country, but especially here in Georgia.

It's very hard to conceive that children grow up and they read social studies texts or world history texts, and they do read about World War II with no mention of the Holocaust. If children grow up and have no mention of it in a textbook, or their teachers don't tell them, their families have no reason to mention that occurrence, why should they believe that it happened? Why shouldn't they believe the neo-Nazis and the skinheads, who are out there with their revisionist information, saying it was a hoax, it never happened.

Well, there's nothing to make them feel otherwise. So the commission has developed a project. And this is with the cooperation of the State Department of Education, several other organizations in the Atlanta and the Georgia community, the Anti-Defamation League, many other organizations, the Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters, Christian ministers. And they are providing services to produce a video documentary, an accurate video documentary of the history of the Holocaust from a Georgia perspective. The people who will be interviewed will be survivors of the Holocaust, men and women who were in concentration camps or who were partisans hiding out, resistance fighters. The other segment will be liberators, many American soldiers, Christian soldiers who came into the camps, who opened the camps, liberated them, and found what had happened, people who can testify to the fact that it did happen.

We are securing the funds for that now through the William S. Scott Fund for Holocaust Education.

Well, it sounds like you have a lot on your plate. Are you looking for help in terms of, perhaps, people to come to you at their stories, perhaps for the documentary, maybe people who would like to contribute or people who would like to help in some way. Is there a number they can call just to get in touch with you?

That would be wonderful. They can call the governor's office at the State Capitol and ask for the Commission's Department. And they will be able to reach us. They will be given an address to write. And we would be more than happy to hear from anyone who would like to assist. We anticipate having the historical documentary finished by December. And the best part is it will be disseminated to every school system in the state of Georgia.

So that's a start.

Public and private.

What will Georgians do with this information, particularly children, something that happened a long time ago. And we know that family members are quite reticent about bringing it up, which is why this movement to admit that it's happened is-- admit that it didn't happen--

Yes, it's been very difficult for people who lived through this to discuss it, even with their own families. So we're trying to help them tell the story. And if we don't, if children don't hear this, they-- the chances that this will happen again are great.

Well, that's what I wanted to ask you. You, being a child of a survivor, perhaps the next generation, your children, if they knew more, do you think that it would decrease the amount of hate crimes and help with racism a little bit.

I certainly hope so because this is an example of the end product of hate. When one instance is allowed to go on, many people who are just as guilty as the Nazis were the people who stood by and did nothing. They knew about it, and they did nothing to help someone.

Children, we hope, will get a lesson. This video documentary also is a lesson on values. What do you do if you're on the playground and a bully starts pushing someone around? Do you turn your back? Do you help them? What do you do? That is a way to bring this down to a value judgment, for people to see the consequences of their choices in life on a grand scale, what can happen, what can hatred do.

Thanks for being here.

Thank you so much for having me.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Coming up on Georgia Journal, Melissa Hampton travels to Moscow with the Friendship Force and shares with us some memories of her trip to this struggling city.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

University of Georgia professor, Richard Westmacott, is breaking new ground in the research of African-American culture. Earlier this year, he published an unprecedented book that traces the development of gardening among Black families since slavery.

The book, *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South*, is the first of its kind in the US. It's an exploration of the history and traditions of African-American families, as well as their spiritual beliefs and family values as seen through gardening. Peach State's Rob Hilton spoke with Westmacott about his new book and met with several gardeners. He has this report.

[ENGINE CRANKING]

At a small farmhouse just east of Athens, 69-year-old Buddy Burgess cranks the engine of his 1945 tractor.

[ENGINE STARTS]

He says it's time to plow his 10-acre farm for spring planting. But the ground is too wet. Until there's a break in the rainy weather, he'll have to wait. But he stands beside a tiny shed and looks out over his land, a rich expanse of Georgia soil framed by long rows of trees. For nearly 20 years he's farmed the property entirely by himself. A gray sky hangs overhead as Buddy points to the empty fields and describes his plans for the new season.

I'll tell you what. It's a beautiful sight when I get it in. I'm going to get my tractor, till all this land up, start to planting corn, peas, squash, tomatoes. Sometime I go down and don't carry nothing. I come back to the house and get me a bucket. I got several five-gallon buckets. I start picking tomatoes, start picking tomatoes, start picking beans, start cropping okra, just-- you know, it's just really fun.

Buddy grabs a large white bucket that's sitting in his yard and walks to what remains from last year's garden. There isn't much left, just some collards and a short row of okra that's grown dry and brittle. But he begins to pull the okra pods from their stems and drops them in the bucket. He wants to use the seeds for this season's planting.

That's what you call "okry." Yes sir, some of the best want to eat, brother. Yes, sir.

How many plants do you get from just one of those seed pods there?

Oh, my Lord. I'm just glad when somebody else might want some seeds. One of these here will plant a whole row.

Buddy is just one of nearly 50 rural Southern gardeners featured in Professor Richard Westmacott's new book. Like many, he's been farming all his life. He and his wife Rosina live almost entirely on what they grow each year. They rarely eat meat and store vegetables in large freezers to get them through the winter months.

Tucked into a corner of the garden is Buddy and Rosina's home. It's a small, one-story white house, neatly kept. In the front yard are a few scattered shrubs and flowers. Inside Buddy sits in the living room and remembers his father, who was a sharecropper. He says he learned how to garden from his parents and still practices traditions that have been handed down for generations.

Now, my dad always told me, when you plant a white potato, when you cut it turn it down. Turn the cut part down to the ground. And he said it will come up a heap quicker. And he's right about that. Another thing, he said always, anything that makes in the ground, under the Earth, set it out dark nights. He said if set it out light night, light crop. That's a fact.

Corn, you got three days. You can plant it three days before the full moon or three days after, and it'll grow just about like that. But if you plant is on the growing of the moon, that corn will grow so tall and the ears will be so high you can't hardly reach them. Now you can try that. That'll work.

That ain't no superstition. That's actual fact. The moon has something-- it controls it.

Buddy and the other gardeners in Westmacott's book represent a way of life that was once commonplace in the South. During the time of slavery, gardens were the only thing many African-Americans had. Because of this, Black families often incorporated gardening into every aspect of their lives. They used the land to teach children long-held values, like hard work, dedication, and respect for the environment.

Through gardening, many young African-Americans learned about their heritage and spiritual beliefs. Despite this, Professor Westmacott says gardens are an often overlooked and forgotten part of African-American culture.

I think one can't fail to be impressed by the impact that African-Americans have had on the arts, the performing arts-- music, and the decorative arts-- painting, sculpture, and so on. And yet, in my own field, in garden design, designers didn't seem to look to African-American yards for any inspiration. In fact, you know, I even discerned rather the opposite, a certain sort of disdain, that these places weren't really worth looking at.

Through his studies, Westmacott also learned that gardens reveal how many African-American families structure their lives, manage their resources, and cared for each other. For example, he says many gardeners and farmers raised food in order to provide security as well as build relationships with others.

Well, the vegetable garden was quite clearly seen as a real symbol of commitment to the community. For instance, in the north of Oglethorpe County, there are two families in the Vesta community. Now, they clearly sell some produce and so on. But a lot of what they grow they give away. I think the garden is seen as a sign of commitment, not only to community but also to family.

[BIRDS CHIRPING]

In a quiet Athens neighborhood stands a small one-story house surrounded by colorful flowers, groomed hedges, and an assortment of leafy green plants. A short concrete path weaves its way through the garden to the home of 71-year-old Eloise Cook. Mrs. Cook has lived in Athens all her life and was an inspiration for Westmacott's new book. Today she keeps only a flower garden. But when she was growing up, Mrs. Cook helped her mother raise vegetables. She describes her childhood as a simple time, when people used their gardens and yards to help each other.

My mother was a gardener. She used to have a good garden because at that time, we used the compost that come from

the chickens and from the cow. And sometimes she would have so many string beans she would just give a big mess to the neighbors. And my mother was the type of person, when we killed our hog, she would share messes of meat with the neighbors. And my dad used to tell her, "we don't have nothing to make no sausage out of. You're going to give it all away." She said, "I know what I'm doing." [LAUGHS] And so she believed in sharing.

Like Buddy Burgess and other gardeners, Mrs. Cook has preserved techniques and traditions that were taught by her parents. She talks about growing on the full moon and following signs and the Farmer's Almanac. But Mrs. Cook most remembers singing songs with her mother while they worked together in the garden and around the home. Today she lives right across the street from the house she was born in, the same house where her parents raised vegetables and livestock.

Now when Mrs. Cook works in her garden, she can see her childhood home, remember her mother, and sing.

And now, when I sing these old-time songs, sometime I know my mother is nowhere around, but look like I can just feel the vision of her helping me out with this song. You know? And one of her favorite songs was "Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray."

(SINGING) Well, I couldn't hear nobody pray. Couldn't hear nobody pray. I was way down yonder by myself, and I couldn't hear nobody pray.

Today there aren't many people left who keep gardens and yards like those featured in Westmacott's book. Most African-Americans have left rural communities and family farms to start new lives in the city. Westmacott says changing times and modern conveniences have made it hard for people to maintain gardens and preserve traditions.

Well, I think most of the traditions that are being lost are being lost for very practical reasons. Things like eggs-- no way can you raise eggs at the same price that you can buy them in the store. I think it's sad that many of these changes are coming about. But I think it's simply a reflection of younger families don't have the time to do it. They may not have the need or the necessity to raise food at home, as they used to. And it's purely a practical consideration.

While others continue their mass consumption of prefab supermarket foods, silk ferns, and plastic flowers, gardeners like Buddy Burgess and Eloise Cook will still be working the land. For them, gardening is almost a religious experience. Mrs. Cook says her yard is like a spiritual sanctuary.

Now, I can be feeling bad, and I go out dozing and start working in the yard. I either start feeling better or just forget about how I'm feeling, one. But it really does help me. Now I begin to get arthritis in my hand. I resist against the pains, other words. It hurts, but I just go ahead and resist against them because I feel like if I don't do that, then it's just going to cripple me more and more at a more earlier time. I know one day, if I live long enough, I'm probably going to really have to give into it and give up. But I'm going to fight it for as long as I can. [LAUGHS]

[MUSIC PLAYING]