

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 Georgian 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.

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.

Each year, on April 11th, 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, Abraham, 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. And 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.

Abraham Korn died in 1972. He was 49.

In the years between Buchenwald and his death, Abraham 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 Abraham 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 a chapter in my father's book that discusses the liberation. 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 believe 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 it 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, about that thick. Almost 100% pure chocolate.

And I was throwing them out. And they said, we 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 in all that chocolate. So we had to go take it away from people.

Have you ever tried to take something from somebody 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 Abraham Korn. Years later, fate would throw them together again. This time, in Augusta.

When 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 of John's Lake one day, my wife and I, and my kids swimming. And I seen this man-- he kept noticing me.

And I got nervous. So I moved on down, away from him. So they moved there-- they go 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 Panzer? I said, yeah. And he says, Buchenwald. I said, yeah.

He said, I was there. I says, you were there? He says-- I said, you 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 John'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. 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. 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. You understand? And it, to me, I just up-chuck. Could just almost pass out when you look at it.

And the stench, you'll never believe. There's only one stench like it-- if you ever once smell it, you'll never forget it. And this will be the last time I'll ever talk about it. I will never 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, Abraham 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 and 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, Abraham. 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 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 seven 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.

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 on to 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 on to 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.

Abraham 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 with you-- come to you with 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 commissions 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.

[AUDIO DROP]

--admit that it didn't happen.

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, the chances that this will happen again are great.

Well, that's what I wanted to ask you-- you're being a child of a survivor, perhaps the next generation, your children, if they knew more, do you think that it would decrease in the amount of hate crimes? And help with racism?

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.

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 SOUNDS]

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

Buddy 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 sky hangs overhead, as Buddy points to the empty fields and--