

ILSE FRIEDMAN  
RG-50.154.0010. (recorded 1987 in Sarasota)

Ilse Friedman (nee Goldschmidt) was born in 1914 in Dortmund, Germany, which lies between the Rhineland and west Berlin. Her mother was a gentile but she had converted to marry her father. She had a sister 10 years younger. Her father worked as a haberdasher. Ilse moved to Elberfeld after school, where she met and married Herbert Gottshalk in 1936. Her husband wanted to emigrate to Belgium. He worked for a steel company and had a lot of money which he had saved in various banks in Belgium, Holland and America.

After 1933 and the harsh laws against the Jews, Herbert wanted to emigrate to Belgium, but he was caught and sent to prison for 10 months. When he came out, he was a very sick man with TB and a disease that damaged his reproductive ability.

Her father's business was destroyed during Kristallnacht and her mother in law died that night. Ilse and Herbert emigrated to Belgium in 1929 while her parents and sister were still in Dortmund, but they came to Belgium in October 1939. Her father had been beaten several at the border. Ilse mentioned that all the women had to put the name Sarah on their passport and the men had to put Israel. Some of their money and savings were stolen by some relatives.

Ilse's husband was arrested and sent to south France in 1940; life for Ilse was still all right. Herbert escaped to Lyon where Ilse met him with some hidden money and he was able to have surgery on his testicles. Because of his illness, they were never able to have children. They then went to a smaller city, but things were getting worse for Jews in 1942. They tried to escape to Switzerland through the mountains, but a guide took all their money and they were sent back to Bibeizat in France with 350 other others.

Herbert was going to be sent to Drancy, and then Auschwitz, but Else was able to help him get free. A Rabbi Fuchs helped relay messages between the couple. She also mentions that in Perpignan she met a Mr. and Mrs. Weil who were very helpful to her. Herbert and Rabbi Fuchs were able to escape the train to Drancy when at a station the Rabbi told the guard they had to go into the village to get bread. Ilse and Herbert then went from Perpignan to Lyon to get false papers.

In 1942 Ilse and Herbert were able to stay with an elderly man, Mr. Chaproneau, who had a large chateau in the country. They used the French names from their false papers. Even when Germans took over the house, Ilse and Herbert were able to pretend they were workers on the estate. Once they were able to escape the Gestapo who had come for them by climbing onto the roof of a steeple on the building. They met Mr. Conier who at first, they thought was a spy, but it turned out that he was really helpful. He arranged to meet them in Lyon and then sent them to hide in a small cottage.

In March 1943 Mr. Conier contacted a catholic priest, Pierre Challiet, who gave them different identity cards. They went to Grenoble, which was then under the Italians. They then went from village to village working on farms. They stayed in the village of St. Laurent du Pont where they found a room with a hidden niche behind an armoire where they could hide. They stayed there for 10 months.

Right before liberation the Germans came into the town, and the last 3-4 weeks were horrible. But suddenly one morning the Marseilles was playing and they knew they were liberated. They stayed the winter in St. Pierre Chartreuse because the north of France was not

yet liberated, but then they were eventually able to go to Brussels and find Ilse's parents and sister. Ilse and Herbert got visas for the US and came in 1948; she describes how difficult it was to get the visas. Her parents and sister had come right before them. They could have stayed in Belgium but Ilse no longer felt comfortable in Europe. Herbert died in 1969.