

## Oral interview with Joseph Winker

### 94.35 minutes

While leisurely talking about dictation devices, he mentioned that when he went to Israel, he recorded the entire narrative of the tour guide.

Three years ago, he went to Israel for the first time.

Q: How did you like it here?

A: Well, I wanted to stay open-minded. Originally, I didn't want to go to Israel.

Q: Why?

A: I wasn't a Zionist. I may sound weird, but I always felt as a German here. Therefore, I never participated within the Zionist movement. Back then, there was a Jewish movement that was German-centered. It was called Deutschjüdischer Wanderbund (League of German Jewish Hiking Youth), and I was a member. Hans-Georg Kirchner was our leader.

First, in 1933, I became member of the Jewish Boys-Scout League, that was dissolved 1936.

Q: Was it a conscious decision by you or by your parents to not join the *Werkleute* [Independent Youth association, after the Deutschjüdischer Wanderbund split into three separate organizations, one of them became *Werkleute*]

A: Not necessarily from the parents though, but rather my friends have influenced my decision some. Also, I was living only with my mother who was very "German-Thinking", and I myself felt more drawn to my circle of friends and, as I've mentioned, I never had the urge to go to Israel. This is why I joined the Deutschjüdischer Wanderbund.

Q: Is this the first time for you to be back in Stuttgart?

A: No. I've been to Stuttgart at least three times.

Q: When did you come back first?

A: Long story... I've belonged to the Intelligence Core and had my own car. As a group we were separated and sent to different divisions in order to interrogate the inmates as they were getting out. I was in Leipzig and there I heard that ..... was liberated.

In 1940, I left my mother and one sister behind. They continued living in Stuttgart until 1943. I didn't know that. I didn't have any kind of information. So, I explained to my general, whom I knew very well, that my mother must still be in Stuttgart and asked for his consent to go and see after her. He then told me to take the car and gave me a permission that allowed me to drive past the American Zone and so I drive from Frankfurt to Stuttgart. This was on April 22, 1945. There was hardly a soul on the streets. I asked a passerby if they have a Bürgermeister (mayor). He said, yes, his name is Klett. I then went up to the Burg Weissenstein to ask Mr. Klett about my mother. He didn't know anything about my mother. Back then, I lived on Evastrasse 1, im Schwabenzentrum, in a large, beautiful building, adjacent to the Müllers church. There also lived a girl whose family owned a shoe store and with whom I grew up. She was half-Jewish because she later married a half-Jewish man, to be exact she was one-quarter Jewish.

Q: When did she married him?

A: In 1938. She wanted to move to Israel; but it wasn't possible anymore for she couldn't get the necessary papers. I also left her behind. I then inquired about her whereabouts and I was told that she had lived in Stuttgart-Schwabtunnel. I then went to there. Wearing my uniform, I knocked a couple times on the door. She opened the door and asked quietly "What do you want". We exchanged some memories and that was it. She still lived with her mother who was Christian and kept the daughter hidden in the cellar.

Q: Did she talk about how she survived the war?

A: Not much. She remained hidden most of the time. She could not go outside. Her mother got her everything she needed.

Q: And her husband?

A: He also lived there. They both lived there. Sometimes they left the apartment at night. I asked her what had happen with my mother. And they told me that in 1943 they took her and my sister away on a train. They didn't know to where, and I don't know until today to which camp they were taken. I know that they did not go to Dachau. Might have been Treblinka, or around there. It was a small train. I was not able to find out exactly.

My father was Austrian/Hungarian and came from the area of Czernowitz. They spoke German. After the war it became Rumania. Then in Stuttgart under the Nazis they were considered Rumanian without a nationality. And whoever was a foreigner, they didn't want to touch. That was why they went to the KZ (concentration camp).

Q: Can we go back to your beginnings before we come back to this point. When were you born?

A: 1914

Q: Which school in Stuttgart did you visit?

A: I went one year to the Karls Gymnasium; then I went for three years to the Jakobsschule, and then I went two years to the Knobsschule which was an educational commercial school, where I finished with my Abitur. In total I went to school on 12 years. When I left school, I got a job in Feuerbach as an apprentice of a Jewish owned company that was basically a wholesale company for iron a raw product. One year after I worked there as an apprentice, in 1934, the owner had to give up and transfer the ownership of the company to a Christian. I was allowed to remain working for the new owner. In 1938 then, the Partei (Nazis) told my boss that as long as you're hiring Jews, we are not buying from you. With a heavy heart, my boss then asked me to leave.

In 1928 my mother owned a vending booth in the market hall. She was known by everyone there because it was a beautiful stand. She worked there until Kristallnacht in 1938. The entire stand was demolished and looted. My sister and I were depended to live on the money that my mother brought in.

I then went to the church and told the ecclesial community that I would like to work somewhere. I then found someone who offered me a job, a so called "*Mittelstelle*". There, I helped with the paperwork. My goal was to go to America. An uncle of mine lived there but he did not have enough money to vouch for me on an affidavit. I filled out my papers and sent them to the consulate. There, they told me that without the affidavit the paperwork was not complete. They suggested for me to remain in the "*Mittelstelle*". There, I worked until 1940. Then, once war started, my boss said that I had to leave quickly. Back to consulate and it worked. I got my visa and I had to be out by May 15.

Q: Did your mother every tried to leave?

A: She was not able to. I was the only one. There was no way for her to get out; no connection and no papers.

Q: Did your mother have before 1938 a lot of problems?

A: No, not directly. I have to say that in Stuttgart, if one was not very loud but rather subdued, one could live without fear. The people knew my mother from the time she worked in the market hall and many tried to help her.

Q: This was probably the reason why you waited so long to try to emigrate.

A: Yes, perhaps. I also could've emigrated to Palestine or Israel, but that I didn't want to do.

Q: In '33, when the Nazis called for the boycott of all of the Jewish stores, would you have any recollections about that?

A: I need to say here something. Please don't misunderstand me know. I don't want to say that it was pretty being in Germany during this time but the people in Stuttgart didn't have anything against the Jews. It was mostly the SA people who insulted us.

Q: So, this action didn't take place in the market hall?

A: Yes. Later there were signs, but they were so small that no one could see them. The people knew that we were Jewish, and the people wanted to support my mother. I've not experienced this all like many other people. We were lucky.

Q: Kristallnacht must've been then the more frightening.

A: I was 19 years old. The day of the burnings, I was on my way home with my bicycle when I heard about it. I then drove to see for myself. I was not able to explain why this was happening. But it somehow didn't really frighten me.

Q: You didn't feel personally affected by it?

A: No, I didn't. I can't understand why. Perhaps it was because I felt somehow protected as a Rumanian without a citizenship.

Q: You said that you rode on your bike to the fires to look at them. Where the other people looking at the burnings?

A: There were many people who were looking. There were just a few SA people in their brown shirts who went inside the buildings to see whether it was burning fully. But the people were standing there for hours and looked at it.

Q: Is your sister older than you?

A: No, she's younger. She sang in a Choir and made friends there. She also worked as a seamstress. This all that I know. My sister and I did not get along very well and we didn't talk much together. And then, when she left in 1940, it was the end.

Q: She did not try to go to Palestine?

A: No. I don't know if you can understand but we were not like some other people. My mother was very social. She spoke with everyone.

Q: Did you know about a grocery store named Koeff close to the Leonard church?

A: No, never heard about it.

Q: It seems like that you were not necessarily confronted by antisemitism coming from the general population and that, for a fairly long time you did not experience the discriminatory and dangerous actions to be addressed against you.

A: Yes, I have to admit that we were pretty much lucky.

Q: How was your reaction when you were let go from your job? Wasn't this a warning point for you?

A: Not necessarily. I was expecting this. The people in the company were all nice to me. My supervisor did prepare me for this. He said that 'one day, we will have to ask you to leave'. He was a member of the Party – he needed to join the Party. I had a very good co-worker with whom I am still in contact; he did say back then that I do need to worry that as long as we are here, you can stay with us.

Q: You must have been faced quite often with the fate of others while working in the Mittelstelle. What exactly did you do there?

A: I helped to sort the documents. We had to check whether all of the required documents by the consulate. Then, we also needed an approval from the SS explicitly allowing the emigration. The SS held an office in our office where we went to get their ok. The SS officer acted like a middleman. So, the people came, sat in the waiting room while we checked their papers before handing them to the SS officer. There were always a lot of people that came.

Q: There were also many people who came from outside of town to apply for a visa.

A: Yes. But often they sent us the documents for us to look through them before they actually came in person. All I did, though, was to help sort through the documents. A co-worker of mine knew more about the actual requirements and was able to decide what was missing or not.

Q: While you were working in the Mittelstelle, have you heard about this case in 1938/39 of a German policeman who was allegedly taking bribe money?

A: I believe that I was a too young to grasp the entity of what had happen. I can remember now that there was somebody who was accepting money.... I don't know what happened to him.

Q: How was the morale among the Jews who went to the Mittelstelle during the time you worked there in 1939? My impression is, according to the US consulate files, that there was increasingly desperation among the Jewish people.

A: It was somehow terrible because those who came thought that everything was ok. But very often, their documents were not at all complete and we were not able to take them upstairs to the consulate. There were also some people who would only be allowed to get out of the KZ (concentration camp) if they got the consulate's approval. So, we had to send them back again. If the paper were all correct, the process of getting their visa went pretty fast.

Q: Was this possible to do for the entire family?

A: Yes, absolutely.

Q: Was it the case then that entire families would receive their approval to emigrate? Was this the norm?

A: Yes, that was pretty much the norm. As long as the documents were all complete, the entire family would then be able to receive their permission.

Q: Did the Stuttgart office take care of visas to other countries than just to the USA?

A: Actually, only to the USA. But, in fact there was an organization, I was not part of it, who would smuggle those individuals who did not receive their visa over the border. One member of this organization was working with me at the Mittelstelle. He would get some money for taking the people who would be denied a visa, to a specific location at nightfall from where they would be taken across the border to Switzerland or Belgium. They didn't help many to flee... only those who were desperate.

Q: Do you know what kind of connections they had?

A: No, I've never knew of their connections. The leader of this group already died, unfortunately. He was way older than I. He only told me that he would have connections, and that he would get the money to do this.

Q: Do you know where the money came from?

A: There was a secret fund that was established by some people in Stuttgart that donated money into that fund. Also, Christians gave money.

Q: Do you know of any of the Stuttgarter people who belonged to that group?

A: No. There was this man named Theo Hirsch, the parish council, and a Dr. Dachsen were the ones administering the fund. From where the money came, I don't know, but I do know that there were many Christians who donated to the fund. I knew the women here in Stuttgart personally, she was my private English teacher, she too gave some money. Her name was Mrs. Dr. Kranz, came from Ludwigsburg, and worked as a secondary-school teacher. Because she taught English to many Jewish people she got in trouble and was fired from her job in Ludwigsburg. She also helped my mother. In the house where she

lived, there is now a Mrs. Jenny Heiman living. She's very old. I believe 85. She is Jewish. Went to London and returned after the war. I actually saw her when I was visiting for three days.

Q: In the Mittelstelle, about how many people were there?

A: We were about six to seven people.

Q: This is relatively a small number. How was it possible that you were able to get the job in the Mittelstrasse so shortly after you were fired from your other job?

A: Because they knew me in Stuttgart. Theo Hirsch knew me very well; he knew my mother. My mother had asked him to hire me, and this is how I got that job.

Q: Was it a paying job?

A: No. But in the beginning, I worked in something like a benevolent society that offered help to the Jewish people in Stuttgart. The owner gave the money I earned to my mother. I, myself, didn't have any money. But I also didn't need anything. My mother supported me fully.

Q: While you were still there, in 1939 and 1940, in addition to the consulate work that you were doing, did you take part in the Jewish cultural life? Was there actually anything like that going on? For a long time, especially Mr. Adler took great care to organize events, to continue leading the choir ...

A: Yes. That was still going on. But that was not the only thing, there was also the Jewish school where they would hold lectures.

Q: Did only members of the Jewish community participate in these events?

A: Yes. Everyone was welcome. But anyone else than the Jewish people didn't come. That was dangerous.

Q: Adler left after you. Did you meet him in New York?

A: 1941. Yes, of course. I was in touch with him and his wife. He died four or five years ago. I held his eulogy. I wanted to do that for him. His wife died two months ago. I was also there. They both knew me very well. I was known as Sepp, Joseph. Because I ran 10,000 meters, he wanted me to take part in the Jewish Olympic games in 1936/1937 in Berlin.

Q: Have you tried to reconnect with those individuals who were taken to a KZ (concentration camp)?

[part of the recording is missing]

A: ...most of the people were killed. However, I did reconnect with those who were able to leave Germany on time, and who were within my age-group, 1914 to 1922.

Q: Where was your mother from?

A: From Rumania. From the border area in between Austria and Rumania. She was born in Austria. She's never learned to speak Rumanian. My parents then moved in 1913 to Stuttgart. I was born 1914. Because they spoke German, they didn't have any problems to get to here. When I was six years old, we went back to Rumania to visit my grandparents. All that I remember from Rumania is that I tried to find

out whether I still have relatives living there. Last year, I actually found some relatives from my aunt, her son who lives there. Now, it's not called Rumania anymore. It is now called Suceava.

Q: Are you ancestors Sephardic or Ashkenazy Jews?

A: I believe they were Ashkenazy.

Q: I'll have a question now in regard to the Mittelstelle. If I understand it right, all of the restrictions towards Jews were known to the Mittelstelle. What was the process? Were there periodic meetings?

A: Yes, they knew. And, no, the restriction orders were sent by mail in the form of a flyer.

Q: So, it was like the German state agencies informed the Mittelstellen that, i.e., from now on, all of the radios have to be turned in, and you passed on these orders.

A: Yes, we passed these flyers on to the people. But it didn't happen that often. That wasn't a problem.

Q: I sometimes hear this from a different perspective; there were a number of Nazis that have converted from Judaism to Christianity or belonged to the Christian population who have suddenly joined the Jewish community. How was this seen by the Jewish community? They would actually not necessarily identify themselves as Jewish.

A: They were accepted. They weren't going into the Synagogues, but they were accepted. I know of an example: a relative of a friend of mine married a Jewish woman. They lived as Christians and didn't think much of it. But they needed to acknowledge to be Jewish. They first disconnected from the Jewish community. But then, they ordered them to be Jewish and they gradually connected with the Jewish people and continued to live on like this. They just did not identify as Jewish.

Q: Outside of the Jewish community, you would not experience any problems?

A: No. We needed to take them in.

Q: While reading the letter exchange, I get the impression that Adler's personality made a big difference also while dealing with German jobs. Are you able to say something about Adler?

A: Adler was a strong man. He fought in WWI. He radiated a big personality; the way he spoke, the way he looked at one, his keen way of using language; the people respected that. He was like a schoolteacher. The Germans recognized that he was fair and strict. They trusted him. They knew that he wanted to help them, and the German agencies respected him, too.

Q: Did he stay here this long because of the solidarity he felt towards the others?

A: Yes, I believe he wanted to stay here as long as it was possible for him to be of help. Yes, he did have opportunities to leave earlier – no doubt about that.

Q: Do you know how he was able to get the permission to emigrate in 1941?

A: Through the consulate. The American consulate protected him. And also the local authorities in Stuttgart have helped and protected him, because they knew that once he's gone, they would not have any kind of connection to the Jewish people here. He was the middleman between the local authorities, the American consulate, and the Jewish people. You know that he lost his son, right? His wife, Greta,

was very weak, but she helped him a lot. She suffered a lot; and she was very Jewish. She kept always in the background; helped a lot whenever there was a need. However, he had the personality.

Q: What happened to Adler's children?

A: He only had one son who died on the transport to England.

Q: Who else in the Jewish Mittelstelle made a great impression on you?

A: No one from the Jewish community. I was active in a sports club, the RJF, and there was a coach, his name was Mann. To this day, I can't understand how he was allowed to train us. When he came to the RJF, we thought that he was a spy sent by the SS. However, he was very good to us. He coached us in running, jumping, etc. He was a fantastic man. He told us that he got permission to train the Jewish people. He survived the war. I visited him in 1964 in Stuttgart, where he was still living.

Q: For how long did the sport-activities last?

A: Until 1939. We trained at the Feuerbacher Tall, that belonged to the Jews. Mr. Mann was there until the end.

Q: The other man you mentioned, Mr. Baumann, he died in the KZ, right?

A: Yes, he died in the KZ. After Mr. Baumann, came Mr. Burckhard.

Q: How many people were actively training?

A: About 100 or 150 people. With time, that number gradually got smaller. I frankly can't remember what really happened in the end. I did not belong to any other sports club. In 1933, I belonged to a German sports club. In 1933 or 34, I was forced to leave that club.

Q: Do you recall which of the ever-increasing restrictions you were affected by?

A: Just the ones in 1938, during Kristallnacht. But before, not really. My mother was at home and we rented out one room to Jewish people.

Q: Do you remember the start of the war? How did the Jewish people react to it?

A: I was in Stuttgart. I find it awkward that I didn't spend much thought about it. We knew that there was war now and I took this as it came. War didn't really move me much. I did know that Hitler had an agreement with Russia but then, when he invaded Poland, I told Adler that I wanted to leave by way of Holland. And then, on May 17, Holland was invaded. I then asked Adler, "how can I get out of here now?".

Q: You were already in the possession of a visa for the US?

A: Yes, I received it just then. The only way for me to get out then, was through Genoa, Italy. So, I together with three other people, Loewenstein, Maien-Schlessler (sp?) and Rainer Dreifus, from the Mittelstelle got out.

Q: You were able to get the transit visa to Genoa.

A: Yes. That was not a problem.



Q: How was the far-well from the other people in the Mittelstelle? After all they too had to know that the situation was getting worse for them.

A: No, not necessarily. You know, one felt somehow numb. One just kept going. And Mr. Adler kept saying to them, "as long as I'm around we will help you and you don't have to be afraid."

Q: Did your mother at that time also hoped to get a visa?

A: When she walked with me to the train, she said, "write to me and tell me what you can do for me." I promised her that as soon as I'm over there I'd try everything. I tried but I didn't have any connections to German.

Q: Until fall 1941, you were still able to write from the US to Germany.

A: Yes, but only by way of the Red Cross in Switzerland. I sent one letter to my mother, and I received one letter saying that she's doing well and that she was hoping that I'd be able to do something to help her get a visa. This was the last letter I received from her. There were also other letters that arrived from Germany. I don't know anymore how many. I also don't know whether I still have them. My wife may have kept them. I wasn't interested in knowing what they said. It was too hurtful for me.

Q: You took the ship in Genoa, correct?

A: By way of Gibraltar. It took two weeks. In New Jersey, one uncle of mine picked me up and took me to his home, where I ended up living. He didn't have much money and he told me, after one week here, you have to look for work. I found work in a bakery where I had to work from 10 PM to 6 AM, scrubbing floors etc. After four months I injured my foot and needed to stay home for three days. When I returned to work, my job was filled by someone else and I was out of work. In October, November, an acquittance helped me to find work at a fur dealer store. My job there was to work in the basement and detach the parts of fur coats which were then kept. It was terrible work; the fur would stick to one's throat. I managed to work there for two months. I had a friend from Stuttgart living in Jersey; he belonged to the Bund and worked as a baker. He offered to teach me the baker trade, and I was also allowed to live with him. This was around January 1941. In February, then, the US made all of the younger people, enlist; no matter whether they were citizens, naturalized, or emigrants. I, too, enlisted. I was given a low number, so on March 5<sup>th</sup>, I was drafted into the American army. I went to New York where I was checked up health wise, then I went for six weeks to a trainings camp, from which I was then sent to the south, to Charleston. All of this happened before the war began. Once I got back home, as an infantry man who hardly spoke any English, I answered to a job offering at the army as a typist. It was not a problem that I didn't speak much English for my job was just to copy the words from a paper into the typewriter. I was hired and worked in the general's headquarters. I worked there until war begin in 1941. Then, once war broke out, we received an order stating that Germans were not allowed to work in the headquarters.

In November 1942, all foreigners were given the US citizenship, meaning that I didn't have to wait five years. Once I became a citizen, the general called me back to the headquarters and asked me to continuo working for him.

Q: Were you ever worried to be sent and fight along the Americans?

A: No. What happened was that in February 1943, I was recruited to go to the south, where there was a special camp, called Fort Richie, in which they trained people who spoke German to work in the intelligence.

I was very glad to have had the opportunity to fight in the war on the side of the Americans against Germany.

Q: Were you happy to have gotten the American citizenship in 1942 already?

A: Yes. I was happy but I wasn't necessarily elated about the fact that there was war. But I was young, and being in the military meant comradeship, outdoor sports, etc. I felt good. Granted, though, as a German soldier, one was looked at a lot. I was proud to be an American soldier. I did not have any problems to fight against Germany. Undoubtedly, I had the feeling that that was the right thing for me to do. The fact that I had to leave my mother there, it was my duty to fight against Germany.

Shortly before D-Day, I was sent to Ireland, and then, on D-Day, to England. In England we were further trained and divided into groups, sent to Paris and assigned to an officer, corporal, and sergeant. We then drove along with the troops to the front, to Bastogne in Belgium. The troops would send their prisoners to us in order to be interrogated.

Q: What kind of questions did you ask?

A: We asked questions such as, to whom did they belong? How large were the groups they belonged to? The questions we asked were solely of military nature.

It came a point when we were besieged by the Germans and not able to get out of Bastogne, until in December 1944, additional American forces came and relieved us. This battle is also known as Battle of the Bulge. I was very lucky. Something weird happened back then. The Germans dressed in American uniforms and speaking very well English, crossed the border. After a few days we found out, that there Germans among us.

Q: Were people back then aware about the murdering of the Jews in the East? Did you and the American soldiers know that?

A: Yes, they knew it. I, myself, have asked the Germans a couple of times and they were not able to give me any kind of information.

Q: During your interrogations of the German soldiers that were held by the Americans, how did you feel? Were they willing to talk and to cooperate?

A: Yes – about 75%, of whom most were older soldiers, was willing to talk. They were fed-up by the war. They knew that war was over and that it would've been crazy to continue fighting. Considering what they went through, I was not surprised by their answers.

Q: When you entered Germany, crossing the Rhein by Remagen, you joined two new different groups. One was the German public and the other were troops comprised of very younger men, not even 18 years old. How did they react?

A: The young people were mostly in hiding. On the other hand, though, there weren't many young people left anymore. Most of them had been gunned down; but the older people were actually really glad that we were there.

Q: Did you have contact with the German public during that time?

A: After the war, some American troops and I were stationed in Bayreuth. Our order was to search for Nazis and arrest them.

Q: Weren't you surprised about how few Nazis you found?

A: It's kind of complicated. Everyone was forced to belong to the Party. And, it was not easy to separate those people who were forced to join and those who willingly became members of the Party. Some people cooperated and gave us names and addresses to investigate.

Q: Can you describe to us some more your personal move to Stuttgart?

A: I have to admit that it hurt me when I saw the rubble. The worst was when I went to the Geroplatz in Stuttgart and my house wasn't there anymore. The fact that I wasn't able to find my mother. About all of this, I couldn't do anything anymore. I was glad the war was over, and I wanted to get back to New York so quickly as possible and start a new life there. For me, going back to Stuttgart, one half year after Germany's capitulation, and seeing what I saw represented for me something like I was able to put an end to all of this.

Q: How come that you came back to Stuttgart in 1964?

A: My wife, who is from Bochum, and I got married in 1947. Together we had a daughter and a son. When my son turned 20 years old, I wanted to take him to Stuttgart on his birthday. He was a little too young to understand everything. My daughter, who also travelled with us, was able to understand it somehow better. I'll never forget when she said that she "experienced Stuttgart through the eyes of my father." She showed more empathy for what I'd experienced. My son, on the other hand, just came along. My mother-in law and one aunt came too. We spent five days in Stuttgart and then continued on to Italy.

Q: When you left Stuttgart back then, what were you allowed to take along?

A: 10 Marks. Additionally, I had 10 Marks hidden inside my shoes. Something that was very dear to me to take a long was a Leica. I thought that I might be able to sell it in the States. Anyway, I also owned a stamp album which I was allowed to keep. However, the stamp album needed to get sealed and its value assessed. I declared its value to be 50 Marks. I then went back home, opened the seal and put the Leica inside of it. My mother also owned a very thick fur coat. These items then I stuffed inside the only suitcase that I was permitted to take with me. In the States then, I was able to sell the Leica and the fur-coat. That got me a little cash. It was not easy for me in the beginning in America. I didn't speak English very well, didn't know anybody other than a few Germans with whom I spoke German.

Before I emigrated to America, I took private English lessons from a woman who taught me and my sister English for about one year without charging us any money. My mother offered her money, but she was not willing to accept it.

Q: Was your father killed during the war?

A: No. He went back to Romania in 1937 or 1938. Because he was Romanian, he was able to leave. When I went back to Romania, I could only find out that he got sick; that was about it. His name was Max. I didn't take pictures of my family with me because I thought that I'd be back after the war and get them then. But everything was gone. We also had beautiful furniture; hand made by a woodcarver in Stuttgart who later immigrated to America.

I would've loved to talk with someone and find out what had happened in Stuttgart during these three years after I left for America.

Q: Have you still experienced the time when Jews were allowed to only shop in certain stores?

A: Yes, I remember. The stores Jews were allowed to shop were in the Seestrasse. But my mother went shopping in the other stores too, where they knew her; she also didn't look Jewish very much. Then, the English tutor, Mrs. Dr. Kranz, she helped my mother being allowed to get into the other stores. She lived on the Ameisenbergstrasse 39. I still remember her address, after 50 years. I went to her house for the English lessons. She was 75 years old and she was determined to learn to drive a car. She had money and she asked me to teach her how to drive a car. She bought a Mercedes car and I was allowed to drive it as well. Once, I took the wrong turn, it was bad because as a Jew, one was not allowed to drive that car. A police officer stopped me and ordered me to go to the police station. There, I was made to pay a fine only; no questions asked. I don't understand why he did this. He saw in my passport that I was Jewish.

Q: Where did your mother live during the last three years?

A: Eberhardstrasse 1. It was a Jewish home. We were made to move in there in 1938. The name of the house was Gebrüder Baer and was right at the corner. Our Apartment was considerably smaller than the one we had to leave from.

Q: What happened to the furniture that you weren't able to take with you?

A: My mother was able to take all of the furniture into the new apartment on the Eberhardstrasse.

Q: This woman-friend of yours was the one who told you that your mother was deported in 1943?

A: Yes, and from Mrs. Dr. Kranz. And then there is also a Mrs. Heyman who is surely able and willing to talk with you about this, too.

Q: Do you talk with your children about it?

A: In the beginning we did not talk much about it. It was too hurtful. My mother-in law tried sometimes to talk with the children when they were little. She was the one who raised the children. We wanted that they ask us first; and they began to ask questions when they became adults, before they got married. My daughter, who lives in Chicago, was very interested about it. I explained more details to her; how it happened. In 1967 she and a girlfriend together traveled to Germany. They spend three weeks in Germany and stayed in a youth hostel. My son was not very interested in this. I am not sure why. We didn't want to impose on him and thought that someday he'll inquire more. He's teacher. My daughter, in comparison to my son, is more of a matter-of-fact person. One can talk with her about it. She has children of her own now, and she's talked with them, especially with her son who is 11 years

old. He already knew about it some through his school. He's also asked me a few times about what I was doing in Stuttgart; where I'd lived; about the war and my involvement in it.

I have to say that the entire community here in Stuttgart was fantastic. All that they have done for us. And the feeling that all of them extended their hands to help us... I can not forget what happened, that my mother was taken away, it hurt tremendously....but I wanted to know what they had to say for themselves and if they understand what had happen to me. I have to admit that since I'm here, the people who came have truly tried to explain to me that they understand what had happened and that they understand that I cannot forgive. It felt good to me to hear that... When I first came back, in 1964, over the board in Switzerland to Germany, I needed to turn around. I was emotionally not able to pass the border into Germany. We went into a restaurant, ate something, and convinced myself that I had to go to Stuttgart. We went back to the border, showed them my passport and we were flagged through. Perhaps seeing the border patrol person in a uniform was the worse for me. My wife didn't experience the same emotions. She didn't care much about Germany. She was also 10 years younger than I. I was just very German-conscious.

Q: From where did your mother get the goods that she sold in the market hall?

A: From a whole seller. We also had connections and were able to receive good from Holland. My mother had a store already by the house where I was born, on the Tübingerstrasse 74. After the war (WWI) they had a business selling lard, eggs, and butter that my father imported and introduced them to the people here back then; these items were not easy to get to. Many Stuttgarters came to buy these goods from my mother. After that, they took the shop and placed it inside the Markthalle. This was the reason why my parents were known by so many people.