

Interview with Ilse G. (Gerty) Levy, Hillsborough, CA, 1999

Excerpts related to Waitstill and Martha Sharp

Transcribed by Fred Wasserman who highlighted key portions in **bold**.

01 Track 1.mp3

10:35

Kimberly Levy:

“When you were in Prague, how did you know that it was time for you to leave?”

Gerty Levy:

“Hitler marched in, like in Austria. We had to leave. But there’s also a very long story, if you want to take it that long.”

Kimberly Levy:

“Yeah”

Gerty Levy:

“After Hitler went into Czechoslovakia, people came from the American Joint. You know what the American Joint is? This is a society that helped the Jews get out of Germany, of Austria, of Czechoslovakia. Wherever Hitler came, they went to help the Jews, trying to get them in to America, bringing some food. And **a man named Mr. Sharp, which was not a Jewish man, came from the American Joint. And he discussed things with my father, and me of all the people, I was the translator because my father couldn’t speak English and Mr. Sharp couldn’t speak German. So I translated. He was there with his wife. He was a clergyman, and very, very nice. So before they went back to America, to give reports of what’s going on in Prague, he said, ‘What do I owe you for your work?’ because as I said, I translated. I said, ‘Oh, nothing of course, I was glad to do it.’ He says, ‘But I want to.’ I said, ‘If you want to help me, send me some tickets to Shanghai.’** Because we couldn’t get in anywhere. Hitler took away our passports. We had no citizenship. Nobody wanted us. The only people that let us in, in Shanghai, were the Japanese because they occupied Shanghai at the time. And they let in, at the time, whoever wanted to go in. But by the time, **he sent me the tickets—he sent me tickets for my father, my mother, and myself.** And when we were on the ship, the Japanese had changed their minds in Shanghai and you needed a permit to land in Shanghai. So we went to the captain and we asked, “What can we do, they won’t let us land?” So the captain said, “They won’t let you land any place else either.” You know, because we were in Hong Kong, we were in Manila, we were everywhere, you know, all those stops with the ship. Nobody would let us come down. By the time we came to Shanghai, my aunt had gotten a permit for us to get off. Because I had my aunt there, my uncles, my cousins, several uncles, my grandfather was already there. So part of my family was already in Shanghai. And my aunt had gotten us a permit so that we could get off in Shanghai.”

02 Track 2.mp3

0:39

Gerty Levy:

“I had several relatives in Theresienstadt. I had several in Auschwitz. We lost a lot, a lot of people, practically all of my father’s family perished there. Less people from my mother’s family. Most of them got out in time. But if you missed that time, you didn’t have a chance, not much of a chance.”

Kimberly Levy:

“My mom mentioned that you were on one of the last ships to Shanghai.”

Gerty Levy:

“*The last!*”

Kimberly Levy:

“Do you know what you would have done if you didn’t make... if you hadn’t met Mr. Sharp, then...”

Gerty Levy:

“I wouldn’t have had tickets.”

Kimberly Levy:

“How did people get tickets to Shanghai?”

Gerty Levy:

“Some people had enough money, but we didn’t.”