

My name is Henry (Heinz) Bauer. I was born 9/19/17 in Mannheim (an industrial town southwest of Frankfurt, Germany) to Irma and Ludwig Bauer. This was toward the end of World War I and I remember my mother telling me of the times we had to spend in the cellar because of the allied air raids.

My father's family came from Ingenheim in the lower Palatinate and I can presently trace my ancestors to 1760. My mother, whose maiden name was Hochherr, can trace her ancestry back to 1686 to Hambach (also in the Palatinate area, from where they moved to Berwangen in the Southern German region).

We lived near the railroad station, mainly because my father was a commercial traveler representing manufacturers in the cigar industry. He was industrious and well thought of and because of this he was introduced to my mother, whose 2 uncles had a cigar factory near Heidelberg. (Her father had died many years earlier.)

On October 7, 1919, after the end of the war, my sister Susi arrived and on December 9, 1927 our brother Werner joined the family. We had a happy childhood and a good middle class family life. While we were not strictly orthodox, our parents were observant Jews. They adhered to all the dietary laws. We had 2 sets of dishes which were changed for Passover. Our mother kept house with the help of a maid and would bake her own challa every Friday. Before getting married on December 12, 1916 she was a nurse, taking care of wounded veterans and then learned cooking at the Hotel Nassauer Hof in Karlsruhe. Our father was usually on the road, but was home Friday nights for candle lighting. When he returned from extended trips, however, he would always bring us a small gift. On Saturday mornings we went to the (conservative) Hauptsynagoge. Services were dignified and supported by an excellent choir. Most men added to the dignity of the service by wearing top hats. With the beginning of anti-semitism in early 1933 this practice was changed and the men, including our father, stored their hats in assigned cubicles in the Synagogue.

In April 1924 I started public school (Pestalozzi Schule) and graduated in April 1928 with above average grades. After this I went to junior high/high school (Badisches Realgymnasium) where I took courses in Latin, French, English, History, Math. etc. and graduated in March 1934. I was an average student. Religious instructions were part of the high school curriculum, but my parents also sent me for private religious instructions to the orthodox Lemle Moses Klaus school in Mannheim.

In 1930 I had joined a Jewish youth group (Kameraden, later renamed Werkleute). I am still in contact with some of the friends I made in this group and studied with in school. Early on we started to discuss our future in Nazi Germany and in 1933 it became apparent that it would be difficult for Jewish students to finish high school or even go to college in an increasingly hostile and anti-semitic environment. Generally we had two options: to learn agriculture with the ultimate goal of going to Palestine or to learn some practical trade that might be useful wherever one decided to emigrate to.

I became Bar Mitzvah in 1930. Rabbi Max Gruenewald as well as Cantor Hugo Adler instructed and prepared me for this solemn occasion. At the customary party that



followed, my "little" sister entertained the family and guests with her dancing. Being too young, our brother was left home in charge of the maid. Since our father was "in the trade", every male guest received a box of cigars with the picture of the bar mitzvah boy on the cover. The ladies got a box of chocolates. Among the gifts I received was my first camera. Like my mother, I was never an aggressive person and taking photos later on became a very important activity for me.

In 1924 our father had bought an automobile and hired a driver/mechanic to take him and his sample cases to the customers. Father was an excellent salesman, but would have never been able to change a tire. Our mother was more adventurous and the chauffeur gave her driving lessons. She stopped this when she was caught and fined for driving without a permit. The automobile, however, played a more important part in my life. When it became impossible for Jewish youngsters to finish college and the time came in 1933/34 to prepare for a trade and eventual emigration from Germany, my father remembered, how several years before, while on a trip, his driver had helped 2 brothers whose car had broken down. While the driver took care of the mechanical problem, the brothers told my father that they had a printing plant in nearby Ludwigshafen. So we inquired in 1934 if they could take on an apprentice. This is where I started my career as a compositor apprentice in April 1934. As was customary, a contract was signed for the usual period of 4 years. I commuted every day by bicycle and started my apprenticeship by sweeping floors and sneaking out to get beer for the journeymen. In the composing room Gebrueder Neubauer employed about 15 hand- and 1 machine compositor. The bulk of the work was advertising and commercial printing. We also printed 2 Jewish papers, the "Israelitische Gemeindeblatt" and the "Juedische Schulzeitung". After I had advanced from the menial jobs and had mastered the fundamentals of typesetting, I started to set Hebrew type which was frequently required for the two publications. I was the only Jewish worker out of about 50 plant personnel and we had approximately 4 or 5 Jewish colleagues in the office and sales department. Like all other apprentices, I attended trade school from which I graduated in March 1938. After completing the required practical and theoretic tests, I became a journeyman.

Although by this time anti-semitism in Germany was slowly reaching a climax, I never really felt it in my daily activities or at work. I only remember that I was picked up once by the Gestapo, because I was treasurer of our Jewish youth group and after I confirmed the information they had about us, was released.

During these years the Mannheimer Jewish community gave us the opportunities, which were otherwise denied us, by establishing a "Lehrhaus" where we could listen to lectures or take educational courses to prepare us for the inevitable emigration. I was always interested in photography and studied portraiture, film developing and chemistry. At home I set up a small darkroom and took portraits of our various friends. With the money I earned at work, I bought additional lenses and equipment for the Leica camera I had previously gotten.

My sister had to leave high school (Liselotteschule) in 1936 and went to private school to finish her education. Our father had a married sister living in New Jersey and she sent Susi an affidavit that was required to immigrate into the United States. When she



graduated in 1937, she was able to emigrate and miss all the persecution of the Jews that was yet to come. At this time it would also have been fairly easy for the whole family to emigrate, but our parents (like many others) never believed that conditions could become so disastrous for the Jews and aside from that would have to leave behind all their property, because at that time already there were strict limits on what Jewish emigrants could take out of the country.

On November 9, 1938, Kristallnacht, I had gone to work in Ludwigshafen as usual. Having completed my practical training, I was working in the estimating department. During the morning the Gestapo and the SA picked up the Jewish office workers at Gebrueder Neubauer, but I was apparently not on their list. When I came home that evening, however, I could not believe what I saw and heard. My mother was in tears. The stormtroopers had come earlier to pick up my father. Later on I found out that with all other Jewish men he was taken to Dachau near Munich. After that, she told me, some more broke into our apartment and destroyed it completely. It was impossible for my mother to stop the mob and my brother was just a frightened youngster of 11. I was so outraged and wanted to be able to remember this wanton destruction. We tried to clean up the apartment a bit and I searched for my camera and started to take pictures. Later that night I sneaked out of the house to look around. It was dark and we lived in a Jewish neighborhood. There was destruction all over. I heard the mob shout that our synagogue in the city had also been destroyed and set on fire. About two weeks later my father was returned and we now realized how serious our condition had become. We all wanted to go to America because we had close relatives there and my sister had adjusted well. The biggest obstacle was obtaining the necessary visas. We travelled to the nearest US consulate to put our names on the waiting list and were advised that it might take 1 to 2 years before we could get the necessary papers. By now my father had stopped traveling altogether and in preparation for an eventual emigration, started to learn how to make cigars. I finished my education by learning the fundamentals of letterpress printing. I also took a course as a movie projectionist at the Technical University in Frankfurt. In the meantime I tried everything to get out of Germany and finally, through the efforts of the Jewish Committee in England, I got a trainee job in the printing department of a corset factory in Market Harborough, England.

On April 30, 1939 I left Germany and arrived in London on May 2. Travel was by train and channel boat. While technically an enemy alien (England and Germany were at war by this time and many of my friends who had emigrated there before me were sent to internment camps in England and Australia) I was permitted to work but had to report regularly to the local constabulary until my number to get an American visa was called. Everybody in this small, rural town was very helpful and sympathetic. The only other Jewish person was a retired tailor who spoke some Yiddish. The Committee had arranged for me to stay in the same boarding house, so the initial language difficulties would be minimized.

In the Summer of 1939 my parents sent our brother to an aunt in Antwerp, Belgium, hoping that from there he could join his sister and eventually myself in America. On November 27, 1939 I travelled to London and received my visa for the United States.



Our brother, unfortunately, was listed on our parents visa application and was not permitted to join and travel with me. With a visa in my passport, I was able to make travel arrangements and I booked passage on the Holland America Lines "Veendam", sailing January 26, 1940 from Southampton.

On my arrival in the USA on February 5 my sister and our relatives met me at the pier in Hoboken and I was soon shown off to all their friends in Newark, NJ. Fortunately, by that time I spoke a pretty good English, although with a strong British accent. My uncle had a butcher shop and after a few days of getting acquainted, I got a start making deliveries for him.

In late 1938, Gebrueder Neubauer in Ludwigshafen was sold to Arian owners and the brothers who had earlier purchased the rights to a hot spot carbon process (which is still used on the back of forms like airline tickets) opened a small plant in New York City under the name of Transkrit Corporation. I contacted them as soon as I felt comfortable traveling by myself in the city. They offered me a job as pressman on the carbonizing equipment. I moved in with my mother's sister and her family who had arrived here in 1939 after my uncle's release from a Concentration Camp. They had a small apartment in the East Bronx. I commuted downtown every morning with my uncle who had found work as a tool and die maker. By that time America was also in the war and in March 1941 I registered for the draft. In the meantime, Transkrit had opened a branch in Rochester, NY and I was sent there first to help out and when this facility got real busy, mostly spotcarbonizing payroll checks for a local printer, I moved there permanently. At the same time I made every effort to get the rest of our family out of Germany. The Neubauers lent me the money to pay for their passage and the local draftboard kept granting me deferments.

By May 1940, the Germans had invaded Belgium. Shortly thereafter the same anti-semitic laws that were in effect in Germany were introduced there and our brother returned home to his parents to join them in their emigration to the USA. On October 22, 1940 however, the same day he arrived from Belgium, all Jews remaining in Mannheim were deported to Gurs in Southern France, so when he came home, our parents were gone. Because of this, Werner was sent to the Jewish Orphan Asylum in Frankfurt where he was Bar Mitzvahed in December. In May 1942 he was deported to a camp in Poland with about 3000 other children.

Our parents still had an outside chance to travel to America. Money for their passage had been deposited and therefore they were transferred to separate camps (Hotel Bompard for women and Camp Le Mille for men) in Marseille, France late in 1941. Unfortunately it was impossible for them to get the American visa in time and in August 1942 they were deported to Auschwitz.

In October 1942 I received the order to report for induction into the Army and I started active service on November 7 in Fort Dix, NJ. As a result of military service, I became an American citizen on February 11, 1943 in Macon, GA while in basic training in Camp Wheeler. My army service took me to North Africa, Italy and Southern France. Our unit administered prison camps with large numbers of German POWs, but I could never bring



myself to talk to them in their own language or socialize with them. While stationed near Marseille in the Spring of 1945, I was able to go and see the places from which my parents were deported. I also met friends from Mannheim who had been in hiding during the German occupation. Through them I could correspond with and send food packages to my mother's aunt who had been in the hospital in Gurs during the deportations. She was later set free and came to America. On November 11, 1945 I was honorably discharged as T/Sgt.

When I returned to civilian life, I resumed my job with Transkrit Corporation. I realized, that in order to advance myself, I needed additional schooling and received my High School Diploma from Jamaica High in Queens, NY. After graduating, I attended Baruch College of the NY City University. In 1946 I left my employer and began working in the composing room of a large financial publisher. Because of my Army service, I was able to join the Big 6 Typographical Union. I stayed in this job until 1956 and again returned to Transkrit to work in their estimating and customer service department.

Over these past years I had felt very comfortable with life in America. I had traveled a bit, acquired an automobile, joined some organizations and became a member of a congregation that was founded in 1939 by refugees from Germany (Congregation Habonim). I was still living with my relatives who in the meantime had bought a house in Forest Hills. My sister had also adjusted well and finished her education. She stayed with our relatives in NJ and joined their social circle. In 1942 she had met Sam Winarsky, also a veteran, and the brother-in-law of one of her girl friends. They were married in 1946 and had 3 children who all pursued professional careers.

As for myself, I dated several young ladies but nothing serious ever developed until I met Ellen Drucker who had come to New York from Lima, Peru. She and her parents had emigrated from Hamburg to South America. There was only a small German-Jewish community in Lima and she felt her chances to meet someone were bigger in New York, where she came to stay with a married cousin. When we met, she was a secretary at the Spanish language newspaper El Diario. We were married on January 1, 1950. At first we lived in a furnished apartment until we found a small house in Forest Hills. Our son Larry was born on October 25, 1950 and his brother Jeffrey arrived on March 28, 1956. In December 1960 we moved to a larger house in Rego Park where we are still living. Our children are both married and have their own homes in Teaneck, NJ and Pleasantville, NY, respectively.

My professional career was still with Transkrit and in 1965 I was transferred to Los Angeles to manage their spot carbonizing plant which had been established a few year earlier. It was a big opportunity for me but a very difficult decision for my family. We did not want to take the children out of school and living a continent apart was expensive. I did a good amount of traveling and Ellen came frequently, alone and with the children to visit. We had even bought a house in Sherman Oaks, but the time and circumstances were not right for such a change. We returned in 1966 and I resumed my old position in the customer service department.



In 1967 I left Transkrit again for jobs in estimating and plant management with business forms/printing companies in New York and New Jersey. I changed positions several times but never really felt comfortable with any one, mostly because they were all small operations and I eventually returned to Transkrit in April 1972. Because of their unique specialty products (spot carbonized business forms to the Trade) they had experienced considerable growth over the years and by then had moved out of the city to a large plant in Westchester County. When they outgrew this facility and moved into an even larger plant near Brewster, NY, I retired in 1983 because the commute was too long and I had reached retirement age.

"Retirement" didn't last too long. Our son Larry has a print shop in Hackensack, NJ and I started to travel there regularly to give him a hand. For several years this went fine and though I was not on a regular schedule, I always got caught in rush-hour traffic. In 1985 an opportunity came along which was difficult to pass up. The South Street Seaport Museum was looking for a hand compositor and pressman for the Museum's antique print shop. It was exactly the kind of work I had done over 50 years earlier and I am still going there 2 days a week. As a fringe benefit, I have a chance to have lunch with our son Jeffrey, who does computer consulting for some large financial organizations downtown.

In June 1990 a reunion of former Mannheimer took place at Kutscher's in the Catskills. Besides meeting friends I hadn't seen or heard of in years, I also met 2 charming representatives from the "Living Memorial to the Holocaust - Museum of Jewish Heritage". I had brought along copies of photographs I had taken in Germany and on Kristall Nacht. They were very interested in some of my pictures and back in New York I started to sort through the material I had carried with me since I left Germany. Some of the printing samples of my apprentice days also caught their attention and I decided to donate it all to the Museum in memory to our parents and brother.

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