

***RALPH PREISS ZOOM TALK    October 18, 2020***

I would like to thank you all for joining us today. It is amazing that in this scary time of isolation, we can all reach out and be together. In my lifetime, I have seen extraordinary technological advances in computing, and the way we can come together on Zoom, from all over the world, still feels like a little bit of a miracle—especially when I can get it to work! My heart is full of all the good wishes I received for celebrating my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday yesterday. I feel so grateful for all the love you have shown, and I'm happy and honored to share with you the story of the early years of my life, and why I have always felt so lucky to be alive, living on what I've considered borrowed time. And I have borrowed quite a lot it!



I was born on October 17, 1930 and grew up in the small town of Rosenberg O/S in what was then southeastern Germany, into a Jewish family who considered themselves Germans.



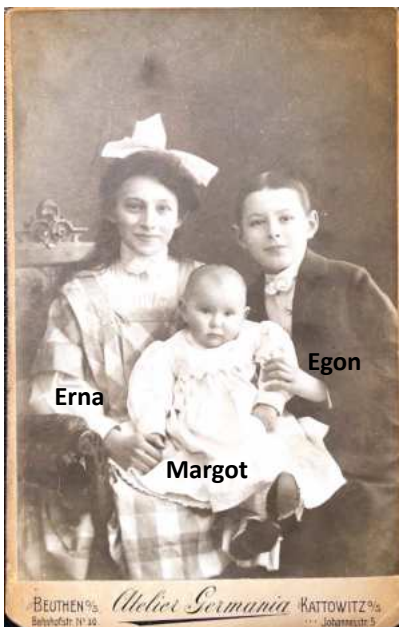
On my father's side, our family could trace our ancestors back to 1740. All were assimilated Jews who contributed to the Fatherland and reveled in its culture.



My mother's father, Adolph Suessbach, had been an army doctor who had risen to the rank of general in charge of hospitals on the Eastern Front during the Great War, now known as World War I.



Upon retirement from the army, Dr. Suessbach and his wife Bertha settled in Rosenberg, where he had his home had office directly across from the town's impressive synagogue.



After her graduation from boarding school, my mother, Margot, the youngest of their three children, worked in his office as a receptionist and nurse. She was tall and beautiful and was known to be a bit wild, driving her own convertible and smoking cigarettes.





My father, Harry, had been a private in the German medical corps during the Great War.



In 1926, shortly after his graduation from the medical school at the University of Breslau, my father was assigned to my grandfather's practice by the German civil service.

So you can see where this is going. My parents married the following year. Wearing a top hat, this is the only time my father was taller than my mother.



My early years were idyllic. I lived with my parents and grandparents over the doctor's office, and always had a nanny.





1933 marked a year of great changes. Opi Suessbach died, and my father moved the family into one of five two-family homes he had built on the outskirts of town as an investment. We lived on one side and Omi Suessbach lived on the other. The sides were connected by a glassed-in porch and I roamed freely back and forth.

This was also the year that Hitler rose to power, and all Jewish civil servants were dismissed. Hundreds of thousands of Jewish lawyers, doctors and teachers were suddenly out of work. This did not affect my father at this time, as we lived in such a remote part of the country and there weren't enough replacement Aryan physicians to be found.



But it did affect my mother's older brother Egon, a surgeon in Berlin, and he immediately left for Shanghai, an open port city where he easily found employment.

My mother's sister, Erna, was married to a lawyer,

Erich Wohl, in Berlin. He left for Paris, and while he studied for the French Bar, my aunt and cousins Frank Arthur and Ernst Olaf came to live with us for a year.



The boys shared a room with me, and as an only child, this year of having two cousins to play with, was a highlight of my young life.



Here is a photo of a birthday party we three attended with my other best friends, Horsti and Marion Seelig, and Kaethe and her older brother Rudi Karmeinsky.



I'm getting ahead of myself a bit, but Rudi's father Ewalt was an importer/exporter and had IBM accounting machines in his office with 80-hole punched cards, sorters, keypunches, and printers. This made a huge impression on

Rudi and me and we would sit and watch the punched card machines at work, fascinated.



After my aunt and cousins left for Paris, I was too old for a nurse, and my mother's mother took care of me. Omi Suessbach was my constant companion, and taught me how to cook and bake, wash clothes, add coal to the stove, and clean house.



I attended Kindergarten and first grade in the public school from 1935-37 and I proudly saluted my Fuehrer every morning. But finally at the end of 1937, a Hitler law was enforced revoking German citizenship for all Jews.

I clearly remember the shock and devastation I felt when my teacher called me out in class to tell me I was no longer allowed to salute the picture of Hitler since he is not the Fuehrer of Jews! Shortly after that, I could no longer go to school with Aryan children, and I had to take a train every day with the other Jewish children in order to attend a Jewish school 21 km away. On returning home from school, I was often attacked by older boys who lay in wait and chased me, throwing stones and calling me "dirty Jew." Boy did I become a fast runner!

At the end of 1937, an Aryan doctor arrived in town to take my father's job, so my father converted our back porch into a doctor's office where he could treat Jewish patients.



And although it was against the law, my father also continued to treat non-Jewish patients secretly. My father had been taking care of people in the town for many years and they trusted him. I remember farmers would leave produce and game as payment for his care. But the Jewish patients and the few farmers were not enough to support us, and in response to pleas from family that had already left the country, my father began desperately to search for a way to leave Germany.

Luckily, he found an ad in a Jewish newspaper stating that the Philippines was looking for physicians. We later learned that out of 400 applicants, my father's was one of 20 accepted that summer.

We had never heard of the Philippines, so we looked it up in our encyclopedia, and read that this country in the South Pacific was a Spanish colony since the late 1500s and Spanish was the common language. So, while we waited for our visas, my father knew what to do – study up on tropical diseases and enroll the family in Spanish lessons. My mother also took a class in corsetry since she would need to support the family while my father prepared for his medical exams to get his license when we got to Manila, the Philippine capital.





Preparing to leave, my father had to sell his real estate holdings to the Nazis at their price but leave the money in Germany. We were only allowed to take out 100 marks each, but we were allowed to bring a large lift. My father wanted to use up as much of his money as possible and not leave it to the

Nazis, so he bought medical equipment that would outfit a small hospital, as well as tropical furniture, and tropical clothes and leather shoes in all sizes for me to grow into. He also bought first class passage for us, by boat, to Manila from Genoa, Italy, which we would reach by train after flying to Paris to visit my cousins.

The encyclopedia my grandparents owned was dated 1898, the year that the Philippines was ceded to the U.S. after the Spanish-American War. So English was actually the spoken language, not Spanish, a fact we only learned a few days before our arrival in Manila.



In 1935, the Philippines became a Commonwealth under President Manuel Quezon. He is one of the heroes of the Philippine Rescue story, along with the five Frieder brothers of Cincinnati, who ran their two-for-a-dime cigar business out of the Philippines. Before 1937, there had been a small Jewish community there of about 150 families, but Jewish refugees fleeing from the fighting in Shanghai began to arrive in Manila at this time.

Alerted to the plight of the Jews in Germany and Austria, the Frieders and other members of the Jewish community decided to take action. Over games of poker played on the veranda of the Frieder home in Manila between Alex Frieder; President Quezon; High Commissioner Paul McNutt who was the highest-ranking U.S. official in the Commonwealth; as well as a young Lieutenant Colonel named Dwight D. Eisenhower, they hatched a plot to earmark 10,000 visas to the Philippines for German and Austrian Jewish professionals and farmers. (The farmers



were Quezon's idea. He was impressed with the kibbutz system in Palestine where the Jews had made the desert bloom.)

The Jewish community, of which Frieder was the head, had to guarantee they would support the refugees coming to Manila. So, working with the Joint Distribution Committee in the U.S., funds were raised to guarantee the visas.



President Quezon also gave acres of his own land and a farmhouse sleeping 40 in Marikina, outside of Manila, to be used for a model Kibbutz. He also suggested that he could eventually bring up to 1 million Jewish refugees to the sparsely inhabited Island of Mindanao. Quezon saw the economic advantage of such a move, but also felt a

humanitarian responsibility. The Filipinos had been a conquered and persecuted people for much of their history and they identified with the Jews of Europe. In fact, one of the larger demonstrations against the crimes committed on *Kristallnacht* was held in Manila. In his speech, when signing over his property in Marikina to the Jewish community, President Quezon said, "It is my hope, and indeed my expectation, that the people of the Philippines will have in the future every reason to be glad that when the time of need came, their country was glad to extend to a persecuted people a hand of welcome."

I was at this ceremony, and even got my picture in the newspapers getting President Quezon's autograph.



Unfortunately, the plan to save Jewish refugees was only begun in late 1937, and the U.S. government did everything it could to hold up the visas, fearing that the Jewish refugees

would see the Philippines as a steppingstone to immigrating to America. Ultimately, only 1,300 Jewish refugees made it to the Philippines before the war started and Europe's borders were closed. Imagine if the timing and the obstacles had been different.



Back in Germany we continued our preparations. On the morning of November 9, 1938, my parents drove to Breslau to hound the American consulate for our visas and to spend the night with my father's uncle Alfred and aunt Lina and other Lindner cousins. This left my grandmother and me home alone on what was later to be known as *Kristallnacht*.

I remember it clearly: being awakened in the middle of the night to the sound of the shutters of our house being ripped from their hinges and the breaking of windows on our ground floor. Omi and I hid together shaking with fright in our attic air raid shelter. Then we heard gunshots and shouting, the running of feet, the slamming of car doors, and the screeching of wheels. Our (Aryan) neighbor, Teacher Langer, the father of my friend Guenther, a *Hitlerjugend* member, had scared away the hooligans who were attacking our house by firing warning shots into the air. The hooligans weren't locals, we later were assured, but hired hands from neighboring towns. Teacher Langer helped Omi clean up the glass and hang sheets over the broken windows.

Later that night the Gestapo also came to the house to arrest my father, but Omi was able to tell them he was not at home. It was expected that he'd turn himself in on his return.



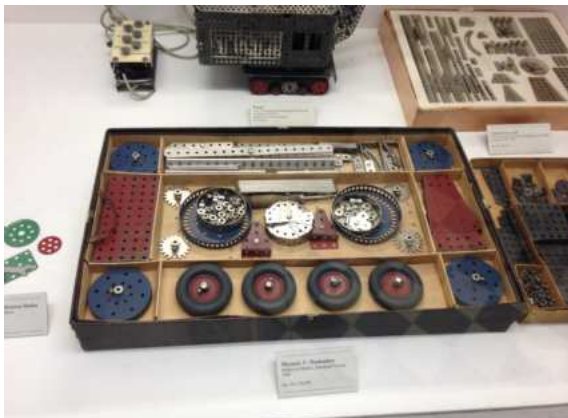
That night they also burned our beautiful synagogue.

I was able to see the flames from my bedroom window, and I suffered from terrible nightmares of that fire for a long time afterwards.

Meanwhile in Breslau, the Gestapo came to arrest Onkel Alfred Lindner and his son Hans,

and they were taken to a concentration camp. My parents were in the same house upstairs and my father wanted to volunteer to go with them, but my mother stopped him. My father stayed hidden in Breslau until we left for the Philippines three months later.

This left my mother on her own in Rosenberg. I remember Gestapo coming to the house to make sure we didn't pack anything we weren't allowed to take with us. One extraordinary item that we were able to pack was a Torah scroll from our synagogue that had been saved from the fire by a local farmer.



I don't remember saying goodbye to my friends, but I do have a few memories from that time. 1.) I was able to take my train set and a cuckoo clock I had made from a kit, but I had to leave my beloved 1000-piece Erector set with Rudi. 2.) Our German Boxer Axel was recruited into the German army, and 3.) Omi gave me my first real fountain pen.



Technologie Museum  
Munich, Germany  
October 2018



Our first stop was in Paris to say goodbye to the Wohls. We were with them for a month but my sharpest memory from that time was seeing Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in English, with French subtitles. I did not understand a thing, having learned Spanish and not yet English, but I knew the story in German, so I got the gist of the film. It was fantastic.

From Paris we took the train to Genoa where we were to board our ship. The train took a long tunnel through the Alps, but at border control in Italy we were put back on the train since we didn't have Italian visas. This was something Germans didn't need previously, but *our* passports had a large red "J" for *Jude* stamped on them! Once back in France, we were turned back to Italy since our one-month visas to France had expired. Thus we were sent back and forth through the tunnel a few times, which was great fun for me but put my parents in a panic that we would miss our ship.

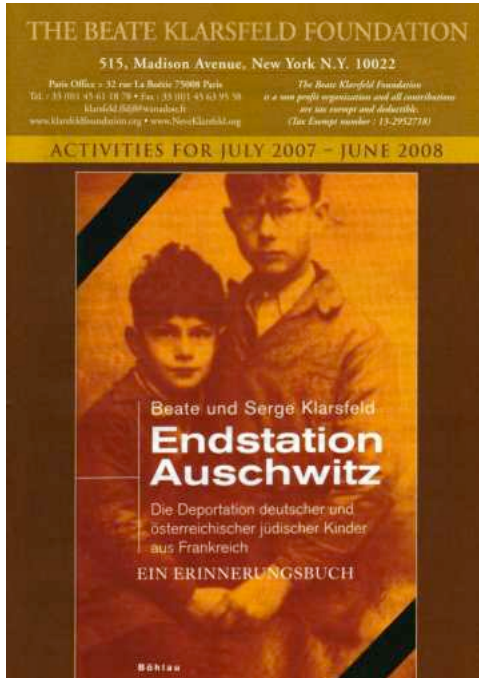
Finally my father used the 300 marks we had been allowed to take with us to bribe someone at the shipping bureau who sent escorts to take us through to Genoa and onto the SS Potsdam.

At this point I will tell you the fate of those we left behind:



Leaving Paris was indeed the last time I saw the Wohls. It was not until the 1970s that I finally learned of their fate from records discovered by Beate and Serge Klarsfeld.

The family was rounded up by the Paris police on July 16, 1942, detained, transported to Auschwitz, and gassed to death. But not together. Onkel Erich was on transport #13 that left Paris a few days after the initial roundup. Tante Erna and Frank Arthur, aged 15, were on transport #14 many days later, and Ernst Olaf, only 12 years old, was all alone on transport #24, two weeks after his mother and brother.

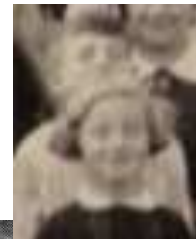


After each transport's arrival, the survivor number was posted by the Nazis. On all these transports the number was zero.

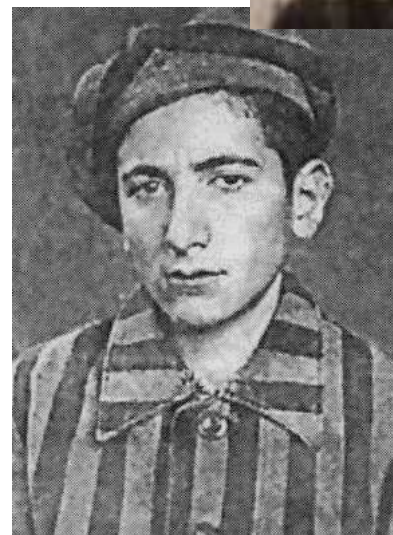
A picture of my cousins is on display in a barracks at Auschwitz which has been converted into a memorial to the murdered Jews of France, with one room devoted to the French children who perished there.



The Karmeinsky family were all deported to Auschwitz. Kaethe and her mother were murdered upon arrival.



Rudi's father didn't survive the camps, but Rudi did, living by his wits, as a slave laborer, building V1



rockets for Werner von Braun. Rudy and I found each other again in London in 1974 and were as close as brothers until his death in 2008. I, and our whole family, mourn his passing. Finding Rudy again, and his wife Gitti and their children, has been one of the joys of my life and something for which I am most grateful.



Omi Preiss stayed behind in Germany and died in a cattle car, being transported to Theresienstadt. If it were not for President Quezon and his Open Door policy, my fate and that of my parents would have been similar.

Omi Suessbach was able to join my uncle in Shanghai, and died after the war, but her grave was destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.



The voyage to the Philippines lasted about 21 days, and for me, an 8-year-old boy, it was a great adventure, with day trips to exotic ports. Then our ship was unexpectedly re-routed to Japan, by-passing the Philippines, so we had to get off in Hong Kong and finish our trip on the Dutch liner Tjinegara.



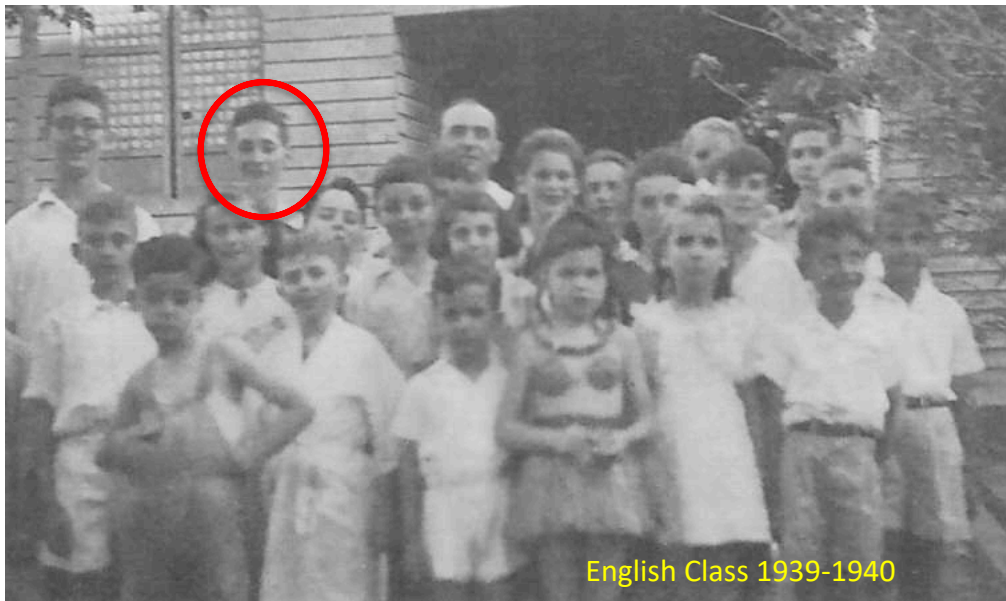
We arrived in Manila on March 23, 1939. I remember being greeted at the dock by an imposing man in a white sharkskin suit. This was Alex Frieder, who had headed the selection committee to recommend Jewish refugees to President Quezon.

At first the Jewish Committee settled us in a boarding house.



I remember Manila had an overpowering smell of frying fish and at night, the frogs were so loud I couldn't sleep. But like anything, one gets used to it.

Manila was beautiful, and I loved the fresh fruit and spicy rice dishes, and the local people were so friendly.



There were places to explore and new friends to make. I started English lessons at the Jewish Community Center with refugee kids of all ages. When our lift arrived, we moved into a house a block from the Jewish Community Center, and my father's medical equipment was used to furnish the newly-built Mercy Hospital where he first found work as an X-ray technician. I was put into the second grade again, this time in English, at De La Salle College, a Christian Brothers K-12 plus 4-year institution.

Although being a physician was our ticket out of Germany, my father was not allowed to practice in the Philippines because of a law created after our arrival to protect Filipino jobs.



But my father was able to engage in a number of different professional pursuits, using his background in chemistry and a lot of ingenuity. He started a small manufacturing company producing lotions, called Precioso, and sold door-to-door by other Jewish refugees.

In the fall of 1940, he took a job as a medical supervisor at an American soft-drink factory in Lilio, Laguna, about two hours

south-east of Manila. There he improved the recipe of an orange soda drink by adding Vitamin C, bottling it in brown beer bottles to protect the potency of the vitamin. He called it Tone-Up and sold it to the U.S. Navy for use in submarines to ensure American service men were getting their daily Vitamin C requirement.



I stayed on in Manila, living with our friends, the Cassels, so I could continue to study at La Salle, where I dutifully learned my catechism daily. Their daughter Margot was my good friend, (and she's listening in from her home in Jerusalem.)

And life went on. I went to English and Hebrew school, ate

lunch every day at the soup kitchen at the Community Center of Temple Emil, and attended occasional parties held for the Jewish refugees at either the Community Center or at the Frieder's compound.



Life changed suddenly yet again on Sunday, December 7, 1941. News came that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and war was expected in the Far East.

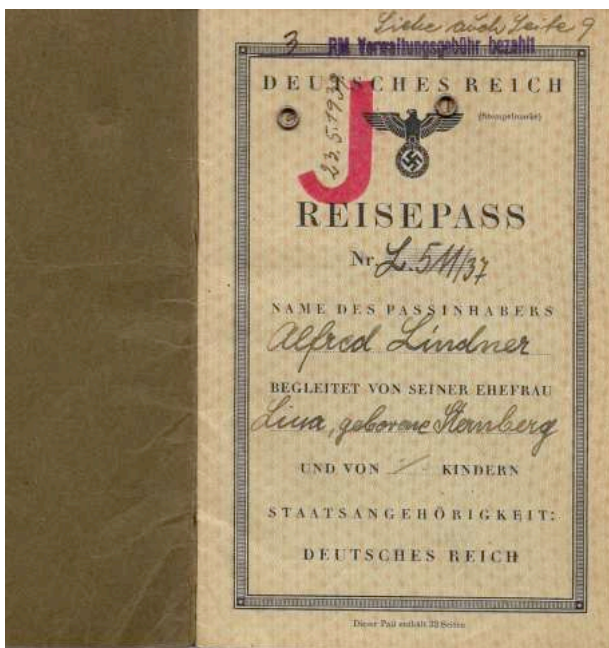
My parents were scheduled to come to Manila the next morning to take me to the hospital to get my tonsils removed. They called to tell me to get a good night's sleep and remember, no breakfast.

Margot Cassel and I were awakened in the middle of the night by the house shaking. Air-raid sirens were wailing. In our pajamas, Mr. Cassel moved us all to the street. It was cold. I was trembling. I've never been so scared in my life.

In the sky were bursts of anti-aircraft fire, flares, and the sound of exploding bombs. The whole neighborhood was in the street as if it were an earthquake, but nobody knew what to do. Kids were crying, mothers were trying to keep them calm while being scared themselves. The Cassel's house was located just three miles from the airport, which was the target being bombed, so we heard the planes screeching in the black sky and only saw them occasionally zipping through the lights from the flares, searchlights, or bomb blasts. This lasted the longest time...until the all clear sirens wailed and we could go back to bed. In the morning my parents called and told me, to my relief, that my tonsil operation had been cancelled.

To this day I still have my tonsils!

After that, schools were closed and I went back to Lilio with my parents where we were soon cut off from Manila. The Philippine army dynamited the bridges to prevent Japanese vehicles from advancing.



With the Japanese occupation, my family was once again lucky, for our German passports, despite being expired and marked with that large red "J," still made us "allies" of the Japanese, and we were not sent to the brutal internment camps that the Americans and other "enemy" Europeans were.

My father, with a Filipino partner, established his own soft-drink factory in San Pablo City, a bit closer to Manila. Using local produce, he created a new product called Vitona, fashioned after Tone-Up. Bottles were hard to come by, so I organized a bottle collection scheme.



My father invented a way to recycle crown caps, using rubber from inner tubes instead of cork, creating the first serious recycling scheme in the Philippines.

I enjoyed working for my father, pushing a cart to find recyclables, making bottle caps, and checking sealed bottles for sediment or ants. In the evenings I studied with my father from German medical texts and German novels to keep up my education.



San Pablo 1942



Cantor Joseph Cysner

By 1943, I was back in Manila, living with Cantor Cysner while preparing to become a Bar Mitzvah. Once again, I attended La Salle where the curriculum had changed to include Japanese and



De La Salle College, Manila

“current events” -- which were really propaganda for the Japanese regime and its Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In my spare time I bought supplies for the soft drink factory on the Manila black market.

There are two highlights I remember from this time:

In May of 1943, the Japanese proclaimed independence for the Philippines. Premier Tojo of Japan came to Manila to attend the inauguration of the puppet president, José P. Laurel. José Jr. was in my class at La Salle, so our class was chosen to be at the inauguration, waving Japanese flags as a symbol of Philippine/Japanese friendship. During the ceremony, Tojo reviewed those in attendance and stopped right in front of me, asking *who* is this tall white boy standing among all these Filipinos. Brother Adolf, my Japanese language teacher, explained in Japanese that I was a good German boy. Premier Tojo was satisfied, smiled, and moved on.



Five months later, I became a Bar Mitzvah at Temple Emil, reading from the Torah scroll we had brought out with us from our destroyed synagogue in Rosenberg.

The next month I returned to San Pablo to continue school there, learning carpentry, farming, and animal husbandry, and helping my father in the soft-drink factory.

Then, General MacArthur made good on his promise, “I shall return,” on October 21, 1944, and so I also remember the first time we were bombed by the Americans.

I was taking a shower and no one else was in the house. Scared stiff, I rushed naked down the stairs and hid in a hole we had dug in the cellar as an air raid shelter.

Thereafter, at the same time every day, a U.S. P-38 would fly over our house and strafe any Japanese car, truck or weapon visible. As long as the Japanese weren't around, we did not have to be scared.

I also remember, one day while I was attending my vegetable garden in the schoolyard, seeing a dogfight between a Japanese Zero and an American P-51. I didn't realize that standing there in the open with bullets flying around was really dangerous – as a young boy, I just found it exciting. The P-51 was shot down, and I later learned the pilot was rescued by Filipino guerillas.

Much later I also learned that my father's cousin in America, Berthold Lindner, had won a Presidential Citation for his work designing the P-51!

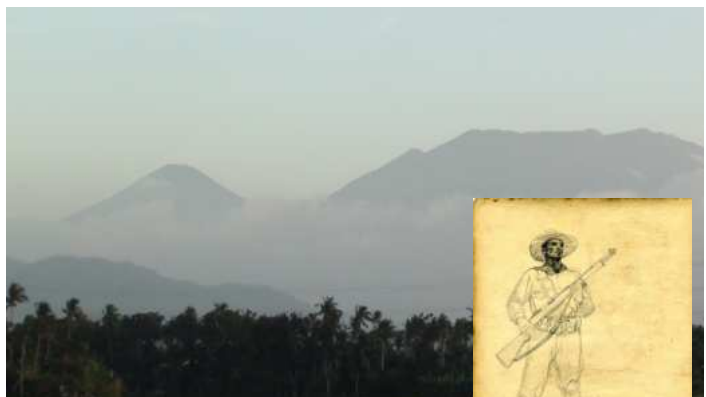


Up to this point, the small Japanese garrison in San Pablo had caused little trouble for us. In fact, the Japanese commander of the region spoke perfect German and often borrowed German books from my father's library.

The commander also befriended another refugee with whom he played poker. So once again a poker game played a crucial role in our fate. In late December 1944, over cards and drinks, the Japanese commander warned that he had orders to take the lives of 10 white people for every Japanese that was killed. So from this, along with leaflets dropped by the Americans urging civilians to evacuate San Pablo, we realized it was time to flee.

My father had already buried all of our valuables under our house and dismantled the factory equipment and hid it in a nearby town. But our final preparations were sudden, and we had to leave our beloved dog Boogie tied to the front post of the house with a bowl of food laced with poison so he wouldn't suffer at the hands of the Japanese.

Our party of 20 left San Pablo in the middle of the night in the final days of 1944. We found refuge on the slopes of Mount Banahao with a guerrilla group, creating a community of about 70, composed of 11 Europeans and the rest Filipinos and their families, of which 10 were gun-toting guerrillas. We also had about 20 horses.



We were well-organized, moving camp every week. My mother was part of the kitchen crew and my father was a member of the planning staff and was also the camp doctor. I joined the scouting and the lean-to building crews.



I was very proud of my sharp bolo, a 2 ½ foot-long sword that could cut through coconuts in one slice and chop firewood. I enjoyed being part of the scouting parties, chopping my way through the jungle. Hiding in the jungle on Mount Banahao, we could observe the fighting

below, and the dogfights above.

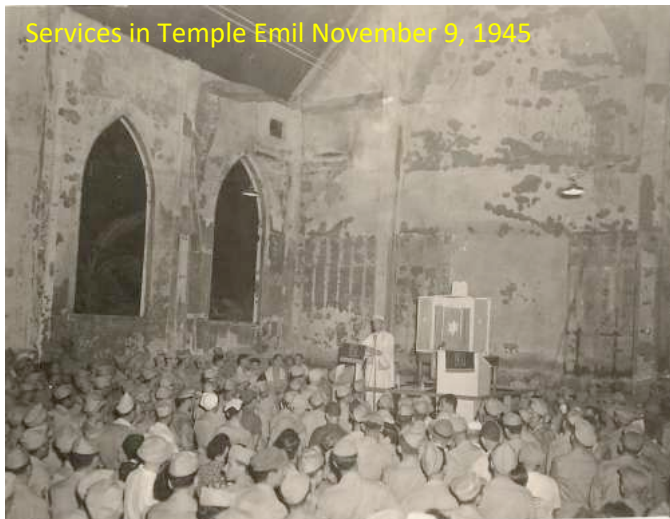
By early April the fighting came closer to us as most of the Japanese force retreated to the base of Mount Banahao. Our group was now caught behind Japanese lines and we knew we had to sneak past the encroaching Japanese to reach the Americans.



We descended the mountain in two groups – my parents in one group on foot and I helped in the other with the horses. My parents made it through first, and anxiously awaited my group, which was held up by an approaching Japanese force.

The next day we tried again but ran into a band of troops wearing what looked like Japanese helmets. Just before making a fast turnaround, I heard the soldiers talking English. They were Americans equipped with the new bowl-shaped helmets. We were liberated! They had encountered my parents who had pointed them in our direction.

During the fighting, most of San Pablo had been destroyed. Our house was completely gone, but to our great surprise, upon our return after four months, Boogie, free of his collar and chain, greeted us among the ruins, emaciated and with a 50-calibre bullet stuck in his leg. Boogie went on to live a long and happy life.



Temple Emil was the only synagogue on American soil to be destroyed during WWII. The Japanese had used it to store munitions and blew it up as they retreated from Manila. American servicemen helped rebuild it after the war.



The month-long battle for Manila had been brutal, with fighting, street to street, and many of the Jewish refugees, as well as other civilians, were caught in the crossfire. All of the brothers at LaSalle were massacred. I saw this plaque at the school when I returned for a reunion in 2015. Adolf Gebhard was my

Japanese teacher, and Baptist de la Salle was my favorite 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher.

After the war I began high school at Laguna Academy in San Pablo. The back wall of the school had been blown away, so we had to be careful not to get too close to the edge. I graduated in three years, taking summer courses to get all my credits.



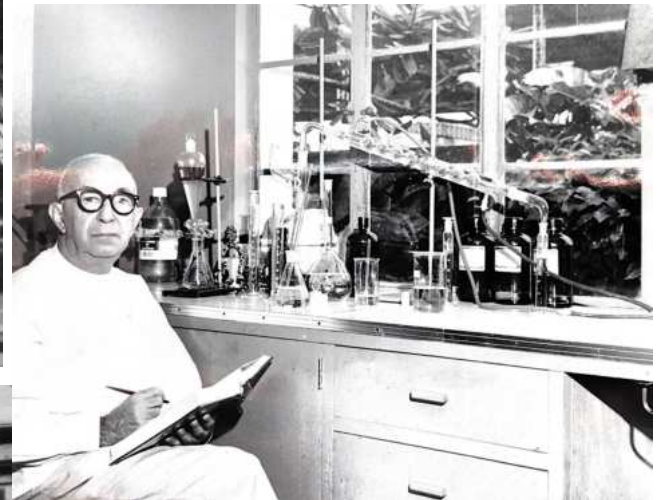
Freshman School Picture 1946



Once again, my father had to rebuild our lives – first re-opening the soft-drink factory in San Pablo, and then distributing pharmaceuticals through three provinces.



Finally, in 1949, he started his own laboratory, Estraco, which manufactured drugs in a newly opened area of Manila called Malate, which had been the airbase the Japanese bombed on the night of December 8, 1941.





After high school, I went back to Manila and entered the University of the Philippines as a Freshman in Engineering, living with the family of Rabbi Schwartz.



But after the engineering school Quonset hut was destroyed during a rare tornado in 1949, my father's cousin, Berthold Lindner, invited me to the United States to study engineering at MIT.

My trip to Boston in September 1949, took four days on a Pan Am clipper, island hopping from Guam, to Midway, to Wake, and Honolulu, finally landing in Los Angeles.

Then by train cross-country, and finally to New York, to Tante Lina and cousin Berthold for a visit. Finally I flew on to Boston to register as a transfer student into the second year of electrical engineering at MIT.





I worked throughout my time at MIT, including the summer when I answered a want ad for a “Filipino house boy” at a large home in the Back Bay, to complement their Filipino cook. The owner was thrilled with me at first but wasn’t happy when I started dating his granddaughter.

I had always planned to return to the Philippines after earning my degree. It was my home and the country had given my family and me so much.



But after following an MIT professor to the University of Connecticut as a graduate assistant, my roommate set me up on a blind date with his girlfriend’s roommate, a woman named Marcia Splaver.



From our first date, I knew I would not be returning to Manila. Marcia and I celebrated our 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary last June in quarantine.



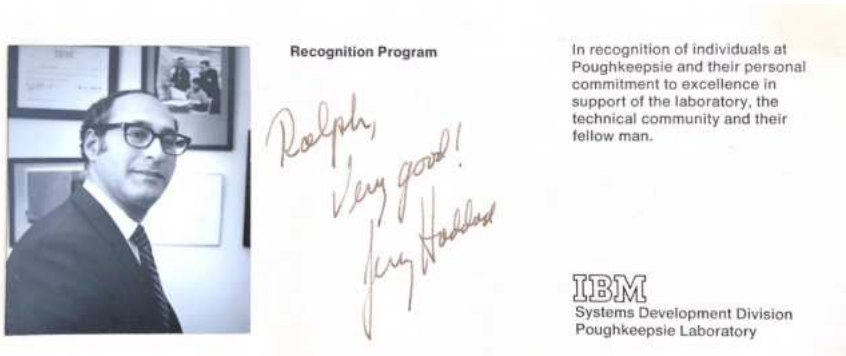
Extraordinary good luck and our Jewish community and faith helped my family escape Nazi Germany, and then again to survive the war in the Philippines.

And luck and my Jewish faith seem to have followed me ever since.



I loved every moment of my 37 years at IBM, working on projects that excited and challenged me.

As a true engineer, I always wanted to work on things that would ultimately save work. In other words, eliminate the need for ME. I helped develop a system to design computers automatically. Once that got done, I designed a system that diagnoses failing parts, in both cases minimizing human intervention. My last project was applying artificial intelligence to both tasks.



I retired before completion, though, and others are continuing this work.

The family Marcia and I have created with our four daughters and their husbands, our ten grandchildren, four great-grandchildren (with another one on the way!), as well as extended family and lifelong friends, has given me love and a stability I could only have dreamed of as a child. I thank you all for making my life so full. I look forward to the next 90!



And yet, I would be remiss not to mention that I would never have imagined that in this great country of ours -- where so many refugees like me found freedom and opportunity -- would I find myself once again living in a society on the brink of an autocracy. Marcia and I can only pray that things will turn around for the better in the coming days. Please Vote.

Thank you all again.