

Verein Bürger fürs BADEHAUS Waldram-Föhrenwald e.V.

Kolpingplatz 1 • D-82515 Wolfratshausen-Waldram, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)8171 2 57 25 02 • Email: info@badehauswaldram.de

Shoshana Bellen (née Blanka Hellman) – brief history

My mother, Fancia Silberschein, was born on April 22, 1923 in a small village in Poland, Zaleszczyki. Her parents were Isaac Silberschein, born on September 15, 1896 in Balzec, Poland, and her mother was Sonia Einhorn, born on November 16, 1896 in Zaleszczyki, Poland. They were married in Worwulince, Poland in 1920. She had two siblings: Solomon, born on August 8, 1929, and Edith, born about 1925. The family survived the horror of the Holocaust in various work camps and when they feared they would be sent to an extermination camp they were able to persuade a Polish friend to hide them in her small house. They were with her from the later part of 1943 until June 1944 when the Russians liberated the area of Poland where they were. My mother told us that during the time they were in hiding her father died of typhus and her sister ran away and was subsequently murdered. Later, however, I found documentation that says that Isaac Silberschein was killed in a work camp in Belzec, Poland, in October 1942.

My father, Max Hellman, was born on June 4, 1921 in Zaleszczyki to David Hellman and Blanka Fischer. He had one sister Batsheva and two brothers, Israel and Moshe/Boris. The whole family was murdered during the Holocaust but Boris who managed to pass as a Christian and found his way to Yugoslavia (Macedonia today) and my father who survived by hiding in the woods, being placed in work camps, escaping and hiding again. He was wounded badly the last day before liberation by airplane fire. A Russian army field hospital saved his life.

My father and mother met when they traveled back to Zaleszczyki. They married in June 1945 in Tulste, a neighboring town. They then lived for a short time in Katowice. Documents show that they traveled through Budapest and also Vienna before arriving in Föhrenwald in December 1945.

I was born in Föhrenwald on June 11, 1946. My given name was Blanka Hellman (my parents called me Blimeh in Yiddish). The family lived in 2 Floridastrasse.

My mother's mother and her brother also arrived in Föhrenwald and stayed there until 1950. Because of a continuing infection in my father's wounded leg, we were not sent to Israel, which was my parents' first choice for resettlement.

On September 9, 1949 we sailed to New Orleans on the *SS General W.M. Black* arriving on September 20. We then traveled by train to Los Angeles where our first home was on East 4th Street.



I do not remember my life in the DP Camp but from pictures and the stories of my parents I know that they were able to start a new family life together. My mother learned how to work as a seamstress and my father learned carpentry and received medical treatment in the camp hospital. My grandmother also started a new life and married Osias Katz in Foehrenwald on June 14, 1949. She, her new husband and her son Solomon were sent to Montreal, Canada.

I was raised in the USA, got married to Anthony Bellen in 1967 and we made Aliyah to Israel in 1969 as our personal answer to what had happened to my family and millions of other Jews in the Holocaust. We felt that we could make a difference in the destiny of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. We wanted to ensure that all Jews would have a viable homeland. We have two children, four grandchildren and today live in Nordiyah, Israel.