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Searching for Home at Château de la Guette and Beyond: Social and Spatial Dimensions of Jewish German and Austrian Children's Journey to Flee Nazi Persecution via Children's Homes in France

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SEARCHING FOR HOME AT CHÂTEAU DE LA GUETTE AND BEYOND: SOCIAL AND SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF JEWISH GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN CHILDREN'S JOURNEY TO FLEE NAZI PERSECUTION VIA CHILDREN'S HOMES IN FRANCE

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of a group of Jewish German and Austrian children who were sent on the *Kindertransport* to France in an effort to escape Nazi persecution. Using oral history interviews from the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, written testimonies, personal papers, and archival collections from organizations such as the Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), this study analyzes the children's experiences at the Château de la Guette children's home in France and their subsequent time at the children's home Hôtel des Anglais in La Bourboule. This thesis examines the social and spatial dimensions of the children's journey to find home and flee Nazi persecution via France. While research has more extensively covered other children's rescue efforts such as the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain, this thesis demonstrates that the migrations of children fleeing the Holocaust via France were diverse and often characterized by frequent movement due to the historical context of France during World War II. In conjunction with a digital project, this thesis maps and discusses four paths taken by the La Guette children during the war: life in hiding in France, illegal flight over the border into Switzerland, deportation, and immigration to the United States. This research also examines the impact of children's homes on the pre-war, wartime, and post-war experiences of Jewish refugee children fleeing Nazism. After the La Guette group dispersed, many of the children stayed in contact with one another. Through survivor reunions and other commemorative activities years later, many survivors maintained a connection with their peers, educators, the Rothschild family, and others associated with their time in France and constructed memory of their wartime experiences. Ultimately, the La Guette case shows the long-lasting impact of children's homes on the lives of Jewish refugee children fleeing the Holocaust.

Dedicated to my great-grandparents Sabina and Georg Buchholz, who sent their children to France in order to save their lives but were unable to save their own.

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Thank you is also due to the staff of the Photo Archives of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, who helped me view and include in my thesis photographs of the La Guette group. Please note: The views or opinions expressed in this thesis, and the context in which the images are used, do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of, nor imply approval or endorsement by, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ix
LIST OF ACRONYMS xii
INTRODUCTION 1
Sources and Methodology 7
Historiography of the Château de la Guette Group 13
Notes about Terminology 15
Chapter Outline 16
CHAPTER ONE: HOME IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA, THE RISE OF NAZISM, AND FLIGHT VIA THE KINDERTRANSPORT 18
National, Socioeconomic, Family, and Religious Backgrounds Prior to the Rise of Nazism 19
Childhood Pastimes and Movement Abroad Prior to the Rise of Nazism 28
Life in Germany and Austria with the Rise of Nazism 32
La Guette Children's Encounters with the Hitler Youth 40
La Guette Children's Experiences of *Kristallnacht* 44
Aid from Gentiles during Nazi Rule 49
Efforts to Flee and the *Kindertransport* to France 50
Conclusion 61
CHAPTER TWO: FINDING HOME IN FRANCE AT CHÂTEAU DE LA GUETTE AND IN LA BOURBOULE 63
Traveling to France and Temporary Placements before La Guette 68
Transitioning to Home Life at Château de la Guette 71
Daily Rituals and Education at La Guette 74
Leftist Educators and the Creation of a Children's Republic at La Guette 77
Envisioning Home and Building Community through Zionism 82
Recreational Activities at La Guette 87
The Rothschilds Visit La Guette 91
Communicating with Family while at La Guette 93
Off-Site Placements from La Guette 95
Reflections on the La Guette Experience 97
Searching for Home again in La Bourboule 101
Exposure to Religious Ritual and Home Life through La Bourboule's Jewish Community 105
Communicating with Family while at Hôtel des Anglais 108

Visiting Family in the Gurs Internment Camp 110
Off-Site Placements from Hôtel des Anglais 113
Conclusion 119
CHAPTER THREE: WARTIME MIGRATIONS: HIDING IN FRANCE, CROSSING INTO SWITZERLAND, DEPORTATION TO THE EAST, AND IMMIGRATING TO THE UNITED STATES 122
Remaining in France and Alice Berney's Story 123
Erika Goldfarb and La Guette Children in the Resistance 133
Fleeing Illegally into Switzerland 135
Alex Waters's Story 139
Discovery and Deportation 145
Louis Scott's Story 151
Transports to the United States in 1941 157
Alice Samson's Story 169
Conclusion 174
CHAPTER FOUR: RESETTLING, REBUILDING, REUNITING, AND REVISITING: POST-WAR MIGRATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF HOME, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND SURVIVOR COMMUNITY AFTER COMMUNAL LIFE IN FRANCE 176
Post-War Migrations 177
Places of Residence Later in Life 181
National Identities 185
Remembering and Revisiting La Guette through Survivor Reunions and Commemorative Activities 187
Informal Survivor Gatherings and the La Guette 'Family' 200
Survivors' Continued Relationships with their Educators, the Rothschild Family, and Aunt Elisabeth 204
Individual Visits to Sites of Memory in France 208
Revisiting 'Home' in Germany and Austria 209
Conclusion 215
CONCLUSION 217
APPENDIX A: DIGITAL PROJECT IMAGES 220
APPENDIX B: PHOTOGRAPH COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS 227
REFERENCES 235

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of the La Guette Children's Places of Origin in Germany and Austria. 20

Figure 2: *Jenny Porges poses with her two sons, Kurt and Paul Peter, at the beach.* 28

Figure 3: *Austrian and Jewish children in the Schubert Schule in Vienna.* 30

Figure 4: *Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht.* 45

Figure 5: *A young Jewish woman poses with her father shortly before she left Germany for France on a Kindertransport.* 57

Figure 6: *Eva and Walter Weitzmann bid farewell to their mother and grandmother prior to leaving on a Kindertransport to France.* 58

Figure 7: *France, The Chateau de la Guette estate.* 71

Figure 8: *A group of Jewish refugee girls from the Chateau de la Guette OSE [Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants] children's home dance outside.* 89

Figure 9: *A group of girls stand in a line holding flowers in the Chateau de La Guete children's home.* 100

Figure 10: *Gerhard Mahler poses with the children of a family in La Bourboule who hosted his bar mitzvah.* 107

Figure 11: *Two women work in a vineyard in Ebnet-Staefa.* 109

Figure 12: *Children from La Guette children's home pose for a group portrait in a plaza in Pau while on route to visit their parents in the Gurs concentration camp.* 111

Figure 13: *Group portrait of teenage girls studying hotel management in a school in Clermont-Ferrand.* 115

Figure 14: *Group portrait of Jewish refugee children at the Château de la Guette children's home.* 120

Figure 15: *Gisela Edel and another Jewish teenager live under false identities in a convent-operated old age home.* 125

Figure 16: *Jewish children in hiding study in a classroom of the children's home in Sevres.* ... 128

Figure 17: *Page of a photo album showing Gisela Edel in the Couret children's home as well as a map in the shape of a Frenchman's face, showing where she hid during the war.* 133

Figure 18: *Residents of the Hôme de la Forêt children's home eat a meal in the dining hall*.... 142

Figure 19: *Werner Neuberger poses outside with a group of friends from the La Guette children's home.* 151

Figure 20: *Identification tag issued to Kurt Moses by the American Friends Service Committee for his voyage to the United States on board the Mouzinho.* 160

Figure 21: *Two uniformed Portuguese policemen stand on the pier in the port of Lisbon as a group of Jewish refugee children wait in line to board the SS Mouzinho.* 165

Figure 22: *Jewish girls and teenagers eat outside in a courtyard in a postwar children's home in Feneyrols, France.* 179

Figure 23: Countries where La Guette Survivors were Living in 1946. 180

Figure 24: Map of La Guette Survivors' Countries of Residence Later in Life. 183

Figure 25: Map of La Guette Survivors' Cities of Residence Later in Life. 184

Figure 26: Map of La Guette Survivors' Cities of Residence in the United States Later in Life. 184

Figure 27: *Peter Watkins greets his stepchildren, Gerhard and Sylvia, upon their arrival in Sydney.* 187

Figure 28: Front Page of VisualEyes5 Digital Project, "Searching for Home: Migrations of the Château de la Guette Children during and after the Holocaust." 221
Figure 29: Childhoods in Germany and Austria Prior to Nazi Rule. 222
Figure 30: Visualization of the *Kindertransport* to France. 222
Figure 31: Mail Forwarded between France and Germany/Austria via Aunt Elisabeth in Switzerland. 223
Figure 32: Off-Site Placements from Hôtel des Anglais. 223
Figure 33: Fleeing Over the Border into Switzerland during World War II. 224
Figure 34: Alex's Journey Crossing Illegally into Switzerland. 224
Figure 35: Deportation to the East. 225
Figure 36: Wartime Migrations to the United States via Spain and Portugal. 225
Figure 37: Alice S.'s Journey, including Migration from France to the United States in 1941. 226
Figure 38: Visualization of Survivor Reunions. 226

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
GJCA	German Jewish Children's Aid
JDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
OSE	Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants
USCOM	United States Committee for the Care of European Children

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) Party in Germany in the early 1930s and the Nazi *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, Jews in Germany and Austria faced discrimination and violence. Jews tried to flee for other countries, particularly after the violent pogrom *Kristallnacht* in November of 1938. Local Jewish communities organized efforts to send Jewish children to safety, resulting in *Kindertransports* (children's transports) that took children, unaccompanied by their parents, out of Germany and Austria and sent them to other countries.

Around 10,000 children traveled to Great Britain in what has become widely known as the *Kindertransport,* and there are a variety of works about this rescue effort. These include histories of the *Kindertransport*, such as Vera K. Fast's *A History of the Kindertransport* and Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz's book *Never Look Back: The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-1945,* both of which describe the children's flight from their home countries, organizational dynamics at play in the children's rescue, children's experiences in Great Britain, and the children's post-war and later lives and adjustment.[1] A special issue of the journal *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* was devoted to articles dealing with issues of "Rescue and Integration" in the *Kindertransport*, and a collection of articles about the *Kindertransport* was published in *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives*.[2] Frances Williams examines the case of the "forgotten" *Kindertransport* children who were sent

[1] Vera K. Fast, *Children's Exodus: A History of the Kindertransport* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz, *Never Look Back: The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-1945* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2012).

[2] Wolfgang Benz, Claudia Curio, and Andrea Hammel, eds., "Kindertransporte 1938/39 - Rescue and Integration," special issue, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 23, no. 1 (Fall 2004); Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz, eds., *The Kindertransport to Great Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012).

to Scotland in *The Forgotten Kindertransportees: The Scottish Experience*, and Iris Guske analyzes refugee children's psychological adaptation in *Trauma and Attachment in the Kindertransport Context: German-Jewish Child Refugees' Accounts of Displacement and Acculturation in Britain*.[3] The *Kindertransport* to Great Britain has also been the subject of a film, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*, and a play by Diane Samuels.[4] Survivors such as Edith Milton, author of *The Tiger in the Attic: Memories of the Kindertransport and Growing up English* have also written about their *Kindertransport* experiences.[5] Clearly, there has been a great deal of attention to and interest in the subject, likely in part due to the size of the rescue effort as well as memory of Great Britain's role in World War II.

Though lesser known and lesser studied than the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain, children were also sent on *Kindertransports* to other countries, including France. This thesis documents the experiences of one group of about 134 Jewish children sent on the *Kindertransport* to France. The children first lived at the Rothschild children's home Château de la Guette in Villeneuve-Saint-Denis, outside of Paris (often abbreviated as "La Guette"), and later in Hôtel des Anglais in La Bourboule. This thesis analyzes the group's experiences searching for home on their journey to flee Nazi persecution, and in the process sheds light on Jewish refugee children's experiences from their early lives in Germany and Austria through to their later lives as they reunited with fellow survivors and reflected on their wartime experiences.

[3] Frances Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees: The Scottish Experience* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Iris Guske, *Trauma and Attachment in the Kindertransport Context: German-Jewish Child Refugees' Accounts of Displacement and Acculturation in Britain* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

[4] *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*, directed and written by Mark Jonathan Harris and produced by Deborah Oppenheimer (Warner Brothers Pictures, 2000), DVD (Warner Brothers Home Video, 2001); Diane Samuels, *Kindertransport* (New York: Plume, 1995).

[5] Edith Milton, *The Tiger in the Attic: Memories of the Kindertransport and Growing up English* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

The experiences of the children going to France differed from the children going to Great Britain after they left their countries of origin. Historians researching the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain have discussed and debated such subjects as the conversion of Jewish children, evacuation of children to the countryside, classification of children as enemy aliens, and involvement of leaders such as Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld and the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council. However, a separate national context, organizational context, and approach to children's rescue in France meant that many of these subjects do not apply to the children who fled to France. Furthermore, unlike the children in Great Britain, the La Guette children were eventually unsafe in France because of German occupation and the anti-Jewish policies in unoccupied France. This led to the children's continued migrations during the war.

This thesis analyzes La Guette children's spatial movements to, within, and beyond France and uses a digital project to map spatial patterns. This builds upon recent scholarship that has focused on the spatiality of the Holocaust and in some cases has also employed digital mapping. *Geographies of the Holocaust*, edited by Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano, argues that the Holocaust was a "profoundly geographical phenomenon."[6] The book is made up of case studies that powerfully apply spatial methods to Holocaust research using GIS.[7] In the process, these case studies add new findings to the field on such subjects as the creation of concentration camps and daily life in ghettos.[8] *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich*, also a collection of individual studies, similarly points out that the Nazis viewed the expansion of the Reich in spatial terms and states that studying "the relationship between

[6] Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano, eds., *Geographies of the Holocaust* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 1.

[7] Ibid., 7-9.

[8] Ibid., 10-12.

geography, spatial theory, and the Third Reich" needs to be further explored.[9] Published in 2014 and 2016, respectively, these works demonstrate the opening of a new approach to Holocaust Studies and the spatial turn with its focus on space, place, time, and use of technology such as GIS.[10]

In addition to the spatial implications inherent in studying the Holocaust because of Nazi occupation and expansion, the La Guette children's experiences are particularly well suited for spatial analysis because they were refugees, and flight – movement over space and time – is central to the refugee experience during the Holocaust. Analyzing the movement of refugee children makes clear the impact that flight from persecution had on their lives, illustrating how Nazi persecution dramatically affected and disrupted the lives even of those who were able to escape. Digital mapping is also beneficial for this study because it makes information accessible to a public audience, as will be discussed further in the Sources and Methodology section.

Approaching the La Guette story from a spatial perspective poses questions about when and why the group moved and how geography and history affected these movements. Due to the German occupation of northern France in the summer of 1940 and the danger eventually confronting refugee Jews in Vichy France, children had to continually migrate within and beyond France. The history and geography of France during World War II, as well as the restrictive refugee policies of other countries such as Switzerland and the United States, directly impacted the movements and rescue options of La Guette children and other Jewish refugee

[9] Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, eds., *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1.

[10] Edward L. Ayers, "Turning toward Place, Space, and Time," in *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, ed. David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1-4.

children. The La Guette children's migrations exemplify diverse wartime spatial patterns of children fleeing Nazi persecution via France.

In addition to illuminating the spatial patterns of the children's flight, this thesis also analyzes the social elements of day-to-day life in children's homes in France and the importance of these homes in the lives of refugee children fleeing the Holocaust. This adds to existing literature about children's lives under Nazism, children's homes in France during World War II, and rescue efforts to save Jewish refugee children in France. Deborah Dwork's analysis of Jewish children living in Europe under Nazism, Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt's research about refugee Jews fleeing Nazism, Hillel J. Kieval's article about resistance activities in Vichy France, Vivette Samuel's account of her rescue work with the Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), Katy Hazan's study of OSE children's homes, and Walter W. Reed's book about the La Hille children are all vital works for understanding the experiences of Jewish refugee children fleeing persecution, particularly via France.[11] Serge Klarsfeld's extensive research about Jewish children deported from France is another crucial source for determining what happened to La Guette children who were deported and understanding the danger that Jewish children in France faced during this period.[12]

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[11] Deborah Dwork, *Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich: Refugee Jews, 1933-1946* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009); Hillel J. Kieval, "Legality and Resistance in Vichy France: The Rescue of Jewish Children," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 124, no. 5 (Oct. 10, 1980): 339-336; Vivette Samuel, *Rescuing the Children: A Holocaust Memoir*, trans. and with an introduction by Charles B. Paul (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002); Katy Hazan avec la participation de Serge Klarsfeld, *Le Sauvetage des Enfants Juifs pendant l'Occupation, dans les Maisons de l'OSE 1938-1945* [*Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation: OSE Children's Homes, 1938-1945*] (Paris: Association Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants, 2008); Walter W. Reed, *The Children of La Hille: Eluding Nazi Capture during World War II* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2015).

[12] Serge Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial*, ed. Susan Cohen, Howard M. Epstein, and Serge Klarsfeld, trans. Glorianne Depondt and Howard M. Epstein (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

Studying the La Guette case provides information about another children's home for Jewish refugee children in France (in addition to previous works that have begun to detail the group's history, as will be discussed later), and personalizes the impact of children's rescue organizations and efforts by examining one group of children. Because La Guette children had a variety of experiences during the war after their collective life ended, analysis of the La Guette group also highlights numerous facets of life in hiding in France and other migration patterns (namely, illegal flight into Switzerland, deportation, and immigration to the United States). Furthermore, La Guette children's experiences are particularly beneficial for understanding the impact of children's homes, which likely had a similar impact on other Jewish refugee children in France during this period.

A variety of works provide context and analysis about the wartime and post-war migrations and adaptation of Jewish refugee children. Children's movement to and resettlement in the United States, a category that includes some La Guette children, is the subject of Judith Tydor Baumel's work *Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934-1945*.[13] Baumel's book deciphers the role of different organizations involved in the children's rescue from Europe and resettlement in the United States, and also provides an analysis of how the children adapted to life in America after their arrival.[14] In a similar vein, Michal Ostrovsky's article "'We Are Standing By': Rescue Operations of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children" specifically discusses the work of USCOM and their involvement in children's transports to the United States.[15] The book *Case*

[13] Judith Tydor Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934-1945* (Juneau, AK: The Denali Press, 1990).

[14] Ibid.

[15] Michal Ostrovsky, "'We Are Standing By': Rescue Operations of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 230-250.

Closed: Holocaust Survivors in Postwar America by Beth B. Cohen also talks about Jewish refugees (including refugee children) who immigrated to the United States, but the focus of *Case Closed* is on the post-war period.[16] Additionally, *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust and Postwar Displacement*, edited by Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian, is a collection of essays about refugee children's migrations, and importantly "places the experiences of children and youth in a transnational context."[17]

Building on the transnational context, organizational dynamics, and resettlement trends explored in the aforementioned works, I provide details about some La Guette children's experiences immigrating to the United States in 1941 and to the United States and elsewhere in the post-war period. I include details of survivors' adaptations to life in the United States, visualizations of where survivors were living in 1946 and in their later lives, details about the existence of survivor networks in countries where they settled, and analysis of their national identities years after their displacement.

Sources and Methodology

My grandmother, Rita Grusd, and great aunt, Helen Ostrow, née Rita and Helli Buchholz, were two La Guette children, and as a result I was first introduced to the La Guette story at a young age. Rather than discussing their personal stories, this thesis is about the collective La Guette experience. I believe that my personal connection to the La Guette story has provided me with a deeper understanding of this history and its impact on people's lives, and I have appreciated being able to learn more about this history because it is part of my own family's

[16] Beth B. Cohen, *Case Closed: Holocaust Survivors in Postwar America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press is association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2007).

[17] Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian, eds., *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust and Postwar Displacement* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 1.

history. However, I strive to tell a collective story in this thesis and let the sources guide my conclusions rather than introducing my own personal experiences or assumptions.

A large component of my research has been viewing and analyzing the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive oral histories of La Guette children and educators. The Shoah Foundation oral history project was spearheaded by Stephen Spielberg in 1994 in order to collect and preserve the experiences of Holocaust survivors.[18] Interviewers for the Shoah Foundation were trained for the project, and interviews were conducted in many different languages all over the world throughout the 1990s.[19] The collection contains over 50,000 interviews with Holocaust survivors and the Shoah Foundation has since collected interviews with survivors of other genocides.[20]

The interviews vary in length, but the ones I viewed were typically between an hour and a half and two and a half hours. They cover the interviewees' life histories from their early lives to their post-war experiences. The bulk of the oral history interviews are made up of interviewer questioning and interviewee responses. Following the main question and answer portion of the interview, interviewees show photographs and documents pertaining to their life experiences, and they describe the photographs and documents as they are being shown on film. Some interviewees are also filmed with family members near the end of the interview, and in such cases spouses, children, grandchildren, and/or others are introduced and share short reflections.

I viewed the oral history interviews at three locations: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC; the University of South Florida Library in Tampa,

[18] "About Us: Institute History Timeline," *USC Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education*, accessed April 24, 2017, https://sfi.usc.edu/about.

[19] "Collecting Testimonies," *USC Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education*, accessed April 24, 2017, https://sfi.usc.edu/vha/collecting.

[20] Ibid.

Florida; and on the campus of Georgetown University in Washington, DC. I watched twenty-three English-language Shoah Foundation oral history interviews of La Guette survivors and two English-language Shoah Foundation oral histories of La Guette educators. There are additional interviews with La Guette survivors and educators in French and Hebrew that unfortunately due to my limited language capabilities I did not include in this project.[21] In addition to utilizing the Shoah Foundation testimonies, I viewed two oral history interviews with La Guette survivors that were conducted by the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center in Miami, Florida and were accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.[22] I viewed all of these oral history interviews in their entirety and took detailed notes because transcripts of the interviews do not exist at the time that I am writing this thesis. I have transcribed select portions of the interviews to the best of my ability in order to quote the interviewees directly.

In my training as an oral historian, I have been taught to reduce bias by avoiding leading questions and minimizing interruptions of the interviewee's narrative as they choose to tell it.[23] The Shoah Foundation interviewers at times excel at providing thoughtful, open-ended questions, successfully asking follow-up questions, and clarifying details such as dates and names. However, I found that some of the interviewers asked leading questions in the interviews, incorporated their own emotions or reactions in their responses, and/or cut off interviewees

[21] See the following Visual History Archive testimonies in other languages: Hanna-Ruth Klopstock (15937), Werner Matzdorff (33256), 'evah Gal'or (31940), Lydia Jablonski (10116), and Georges Loinger (10400).

[22] Note: Louis Scott has both a Visual History Archive testimony and a testimony from the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, both of which have been consulted.

[23] Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 74-75, 98; Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 93.

rather than letting them finish their thoughts. While viewing and analyzing the oral histories I have taken into consideration how these factors influenced the interviewees' responses.

Using oral histories as a source base presents unique opportunities and challenges because oral histories "are not static recollections of the past but are memories reworked in the context of the respondent's own experience and politics."[24] Oral histories are not objective sources (though no sources are), but they are beneficial sources to use because they shed light on the meaning of events in addition to what may have happened.[25] Oral histories are not only about one individual's remembrances; an individual's narrative is influenced by how society and culture construct memory of the past.[26] The concept of collective memory, which sociologist Maurice Halbwachs introduced, speaks to the role of an individual's existence as part of the collective, which affects how events are remembered and retold; a "group consciousness" of events affects how individuals remember the past.[27] This means that La Guette survivors' narratives and remembrances have been shaped by collective memory of the Holocaust and particularly of the La Guette group. Because many La Guette survivors have been in contact with one another, information or memories shared within the group might influence what an individual says about the group in an oral history interview.

I provide frequent oral history excerpts throughout the thesis because survivors' narratives vividly show the personal impact of historical events, and survivors' testimonies often include eloquent reflections that are best communicated in their own words. I also include these excerpts so that survivors' voices guide, at least to some extent, narratives of their own journeys

[24] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 7.
[25] Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," in *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36, 38.
[26] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 7.
[27] Ibid., 95-96.

to flee persecution. Nevertheless, I do not hesitate to consider when memory has been affected by time, collective memory, or other forces, and I aim to include information that appears plausible and/or can be verified by other source materials. In some cases, however, what is most important is how survivors reflect on their own experiences and identities.

In addition to using oral histories as a source base, I used other primary sources including collections of survivors' personal papers, written testimonies, a wartime diary, a memoir, photographs, drawings, and archival organizational records such as the records of the Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) and Swiss refugee records. Most, but not all, of these sources were viewed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's archives in Washington, DC. These source materials were in a variety of languages, and I was able to use English-language and to some extent French-language sources. I also occasionally drew from German-language materials. However, I hope that future scholars will be able to more thoroughly incorporate sources in French, German, Hebrew, and any other relevant languages.

In conjunction with my written thesis, I created a digital project using the VisualEyes5 interface (www.viseyes.org). The VisualEyes platform is a tool that was created at the University of Virginia's Center for Digital History, and the project is under the leadership of Dr. Bill Ferster.[28] The VisualEyes website describes VisualEyes5 as "a HTML5 version of the VisualEyes authoring tool for historic visualization to weave images, maps, charts, video and data into highly interactive and compelling dynamic visualizations."[29] VisualEyes is "freely available for academic and non-profit use" and is accessible to scholars regardless of their computer programming background due to the use of spreadsheets to add information to the

[28] "visualeyes," *VisualEyes*, accessed April 24, 2017, http://www.viseyes.org/viseyes.htm.
[29] "SHANTI Interactive," *VisualEyes*, accessed April 24, 2017, http://viseyes.org/.

map, timeline, and story panes.[30] The tool is also particularly suited to historical research because of its ability to visualize change over time and incorporate written, photographic, and/or auditory contextualization. The Sciences, Humanities & Arts Network of Technological Initiatives (SHANTI) at the University of Virginia and the National Endowment for the Humanities have provided funding for VisualEyes.[31]

My digital project is accessible at http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848. I provide written interpretation and photographs about the La Guette group, map the children's movements as a group, and map the paths and tell the stories of four individuals (the same four children whose case studies of wartime migration I discuss in Chapter Three). One challenge when creating this mapping project was that the degree of specificity for dates in oral histories and written documents varied, ranging from specific dates to general time frames (e.g., "about a year") to dates that were forgotten or omitted. Therefore, some dates in my digital project are estimations. At times locations are also more or less specific than others depending on how much information is available in source materials.

My hope is that the digital project will make the history of Jewish refugee children fleeing the Holocaust via children's homes in France (through the experiences of the La Guette group) accessible to a public audience. Indeed, the power and purpose of creating this digital project is to use interactive maps and visualizations, photographs, and written text to communicate history in an engaging and user-friendly format. Just as films, memoirs, and other sources have made the history of the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain widely available to the

[30] "Introducing VisualEyes 5," *VisualEyes*, accessed April 24, 2017, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/.
[31] Ibid.

public, so too do I aim to reach broader audiences with the creation of a digital project about the La Guette children.

Historiography of the Château de la Guette Group

This thesis builds off of a few works previously created on the subject of the La Guette group. Alfred Brauner, one of the educators at La Guette, wrote *Ces Enfants ont Vécu la Guerre*, which was published in 1946, shortly after World War II.[32] The section of the book titled "*Les Enfants Juifs Émigrés d'Allemagne*" contains the subsections "*La Situation de l'Enfance Juive en Allemagne*" and "*Les Enfants Juifs Allemands en France*," which are about the La Guette children. In the first of these subsections, Brauner includes quotes from La Guette children about their experiences growing up in Germany and Austria with the rise of Nazism.[33] The next section analyzes children's writings after they arrived in France, including answers to questions posed by educators and stories that the children wrote, both of which relate to their backgrounds in Nazi Germany and Austria.[34] Through his book, Brauner provides a useful examination of the children's perspectives and psychology after arriving in France.

In 1990, Andrea Morgenthaler in conjunction with Südwestfunk Baden-Baden produced a ninety-minute documentary film in German called *Die Reise der Kinder von La Guette*.[35] The film features excerpts from oral history interviews with survivors and educators as well as interspersed narration and imagery to provide historical context about the children's experiences. *Die Reise der Kinder von La Guette* is a moving depiction of the La Guette story and importantly

[32] Alfred Brauner, *Ces Enfants ont Vécu la Guerre* (Paris: Éditions Sociales Françaises, 1946).
[33] Ibid., 81-86.
[34] Ibid., 87-102.
[35] Andrea Morgenthaler, *Die Reise der Kinder von la Guette*, Südwestfunk Baden-Baden, 1990.

preserves and presents survivor testimonies in an engaging form that makes the survivors' experiences accessible to the public.

In 1999, the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC) published *Les Enfants de la Guette: Souvenirs et Documents (1938-1945)*.[36] This publication is a compilation of materials in French by La Guette survivors, educators, Guy de Rothschild, and others associated with the children's time in France. The publication provides an overview of the group's background, experiences in France, and dispersion elsewhere, containing vital details such as the names of educators at the home. It also contains excerpts from Andrea Morgenthaler's film and Alfred Brauner's book. *Les Enfants de la Guette* additionally includes a list of La Guette children and educators in chart form, which provides such information as when the children were born and where they ended up after the war.[37] The publication incorporates photographs, drawings, and documents from the group, thereby preserving historical documentation about the group's experiences.[38]

All of these sources are extremely valuable in their documentation of the La Guette group's history. I aim to expand upon these prior works by using new primary sources, including Visual History Archive testimonies, personal papers, and archival collections, as well as secondary sources to provide in-depth historical context. By focusing on the survivors' migrations and social experiences beyond the group's dispersion and into their later lives, I hope to expand the time frame of study. Moreover, my work sheds light on two elements of the La Guette experience that have not yet been explored in depth: the spatial component of the

[36] *Les Enfants de la Guette: Souvenirs et Documents (1938-1945)* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, 1999).
[37] Ibid., 82-87.
[38] Ibid., I-XIX.

children's experiences and the import of La Guette as a home, site of memory, and long-lasting community for many survivors.

Notes about Terminology

Many La Guette children's names changed over time due to a variety of factors. Some individuals had false identities while in hiding, changed their names after immigrating to new countries, and/or changed their names after they got married. When I refer to oral history interviews, written testimonies, or other sources that survivors have created, I will typically use their post-war names that are included in these sources. For example, I will mention survivor "Louis Scott," his name at the time that his oral histories were conducted, rather than referring to him as "Ludwig ("Lutz") Scheucher," his birth name and name before immigrating to the United States.

I also chose to use the terms "La Guette child" (or children) and "La Guette survivor" (or survivors) depending on whether I am discussing individuals' experiences before/during or after the war. However, by the end of World War II, the children had grown, and many could be better classified as teenagers or young adults. I will still refer to them as children, which highlights their youth and distinguishes them from the experiences that adult survivors faced.

Additionally, I will refer to the group as the "La Guette group" or "La Guette children," which refers to the first children's home where they lived together in France. The group is also called the "La Guette children" in other sources and amongst survivors themselves, so I will follow this pattern, though the children also lived together in La Bourboule at Hôtel des Anglais.

Chapter Outline

This thesis follows the journey of the La Guette children chronologically, analyzing their experiences of home in a variety of locations and time periods. Chapter One documents the children's experiences of home in Germany and Austria before the rise of Nazism and then explores the persecution that they faced with the rise of Nazism. It also discusses their plans to leave home behind through going on the *Kindertransport* to France. This chapter therefore demonstrates what home and family looked like before the children's flight, why the children had to flee their homes, and how they were able to get out of the country.

Chapter Two discusses the children's acclimation to life in France and details the children's experiences of home at the children's homes Château de la Guette outside of Paris and at Hôtel des Anglais in La Bourboule. It highlights the facets of the children's homes that made them "home" for the children, particularly focusing on the educational, recreational, ideological, and communal elements of their life together. Chapter Two also discusses the children's contact with their previous homes through corresponding with family members and visiting parents at the concentration camp Gurs. Spatially, this chapter covers how the children fled once again as they moved from La Guette to La Bourboule due to the advance of Germans towards France.

Chapter Three highlights four main paths taken by the children during the war, including life in hiding in France throughout the war, illegal crossings into Switzerland, discovery and deportation, and immigration to the United States in 1941. Through these paths, it becomes clear that the children had to continually flee persecution and search for home in France and beyond. Case studies also provide personalized narratives of four children's flight and search for home. Additionally, Chapter Three shows that many of the children maintained contact with others from the La Guette group during the war after their dispersion.

Chapter Four discusses the post-war experiences of the La Guette group and their continued migrations and searches for home after World War II. It details the survivors' post-war migrations, visualizes the countries and cities where survivors established homes later in life, analyzes formal and informal survivor reunions and connections between members of the La Guette group, and describes survivors' visits to former homes in Germany, Austria, and France. In the process, Chapter Four highlights the impact of children's homes on the survivors' later lives. Moreover, visits to former homes in Germany and Austria and in France at Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais show survivors' relationships with home in the post-war period and the importance of La Guette and Hôtel des Anglais as sites of memory. Chapter Four also sheds light on survivors' national identities and relationships with national boundaries in their later lives.

Analysis of the La Guette group's social experiences and spatial movements reveals that after their experiences of Nazi persecution in Germany and Austria and forced migrations from their homes, the La Guette children continued to search for home in other countries. This search occurred across time and national boundaries, first at Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais in France and then years later through a transnational community of survivors. Along the way, children often had to flee many times and to many places in order to escape Nazi cruelty. Throughout these movements, the La Guette community provided a source of comfort and camaraderie for many of the children, and the group's shared wartime experiences would continue to provide some of them with community (a so-called family), decades after they lived together in France.

CHAPTER ONE:
HOME IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA, THE RISE OF NAZISM, AND FLIGHT VIA THE KINDERTRANSPORT

Understanding the La Guette children's origins is vital for understanding what home life was like for the children as they grew up with their families, how the rise of Nazism impacted their everyday lives and experiences of home, and how persecution resulted in the children's forced migration out of Germany and Austria. This chapter introduces the La Guette children by detailing their experiences of home as children growing up in Germany and Austria. The children's backgrounds and individual identities affected how they experienced and responded to Nazi persecution at home and how they would later transition to life in France at Château de la Guette on their journey to find home once again.

A variety of historical works have focused on the experiences of Jewish children growing up during the rise of Nazism in Germany and Austria.[1] Testimonies of La Guette survivors demonstrate that the La Guette children's experiences in Germany and Austria are generally reflective of trends discussed in these other works. The La Guette children's experiences are also similar to those of children who were sent out of Germany and Austria through other means, such as on the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain. A robust historiography details the experiences of the 10,000 children who were sent to Great Britain to escape Nazi rule, but less has been written about children who fled to France, particularly in relation to their experiences of home in Germany and Austria before they left on the *Kindertransport*. Therefore, studying the La Guette

[1] See: Deborah Dwork, *Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); Patricia Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2011); Michael A. Meyer, ed. and Michael Brenner, assistant ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, *Renewal and Destruction, 1918-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Lynn H. Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005); and Kiryl Sosnowski, *The Tragedy of Children Under Nazi Rule* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1983).

group expands discussion of Jewish children's home life in Germany and Austria in the 1930s to include children who fled to France and other countries; Jewish children sent on the *Kindertransport* collectively faced persecution prior to their flight regardless of the countries to which they were fleeing.

National, Socioeconomic, Family, and Religious Backgrounds Prior to the Rise of Nazism

There are small discrepancies between different archival sources about the exact number of children who lived at Château de la Guette. My findings put the number at about 134, and diverse source materials consistently point to a figure between 130 and 140 children.[2] Of these 134 children, fifty-seven of the children were female and seventy-seven were male.[3] About sixty-six lived in Austria, primarily in or around Vienna, prior to their departure for France, and about sixty-eight of the children lived in Germany prior to leaving for France.[4] Therefore, the group was fairly evenly split between children from Germany and Austria. The children who grew up in Germany were much more widely dispersed throughout the country than the children who lived in Austria, as is depicted in Figure 1.[5] This fits with Jewish demographic distribution in Germany and Austria in the 1930s; close to ninety percent of Jews in Austria lived in Vienna in

[2] Data compiled from: *Les Enfants de la Guette: Souvenirs et Documents (1938-1945)* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, 1999); "Jewish Refugee Children Receiving JDC Aid in France, Including Information on Overseas Relatives and Friends, 1940," The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Georgette Bennett and Leonard Polonsky Digitized JDC Text Archive, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Names%20Databank/France%20Children/Additional%20Links/CompleteNY_AR3344_00033_00099.pdf#search; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; and Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[3] Ibid. Note: The role of gender in the La Guette children's experiences is worthy of greater attention and analysis in future research.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

1933, whereas Jews in Germany were scattered throughout the country, with over half in ten urban centers and the others in less populous areas of the country.[6]

Figure 1: Map of the La Guette Children's Places of Origin in Germany and Austria. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

The La Guette children came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and there were children who grew up in rural and urban areas. Some of the children were descended from a long line of German or Austrian Jews, whereas others were the first generation born in their home countries or had been born in another country and immigrated with their families to Germany or Austria as young children. The following accounts illustrate the children's diverse backgrounds and exemplify how the children were raised before their lives were disrupted by the rise of Nazism.

Kurt Moses and his brother Werner Moses grew up in the small town of Tütz, Germany.[7] Kurt describes the family's modest circumstances by stating, "It was just a small life. We had a

[6] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times,* 33.

minimum of electricity, we had no running water as most other people did – or did not. I don't really know what else to say about it except that we were, we knew all of the neighbors, and we probably, my parents I think probably knew everybody in town and everybody else knew us."[8] Tütz was a farm town and the children had little exposure to the outside world; the family did not have a radio or car and the children had never gone to see a movie.[9] Money was tight for the family, though Kurt says he always had enough food to eat and a home in which to live.[10]

Frederick Springer lived in the city of Vienna, and he also grew up in modest circumstances. He was the child of immigrant parents who at times struggled to earn a living for the family.[11] Frederick explains that he and his parents lived in one room: "Now we occupied the small room in one of these apartments. So we had to ring the bell, go through the kitchen, and then we were in our room. And these four apartments all shared one water…tap. Water tap. On the same level, and two lavatories."[12] Despite these small living quarters, Frederick states that he had a happy childhood: "But we were all very happy. We didn't feel poor. I felt quite well off, especially when my father passed his test and he was driving for his company. He was just delivering, but to me I was telling everybody we have a car now."[13] Frederick describes his neighbors by stating, "They were all working people. A few Jewish people in the same building.

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[7] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed February 8-10 and 14, 2017; Werner Moses, interview 7283, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed February 6-8, 2017.

[8] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, accessed April 26, 2017 and May 9-12, 2017.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

And I used to mix with the children of other – mainly one particular family who was very, very poor. Very poor family."[14]

Other La Guette children came from middle-class backgrounds. Alice Berney's father was a lawyer and she explains that she lived with her family in "a very small apartment in a middle-class neighborhood in the ninth *Bezirk*, section, of Vienna, and it was very quiet."[15] Paul Peter Porges grew up in the fifteenth district of Vienna, where his family owned a small grocery store.[16] Paul Peter describes the area in which he lived as "proletarian," but says of his family's socioeconomic status, "We were sort of middle class."[17]

There were also La Guette children who came from upper-middle-class backgrounds. Ruth Schloss describes her home and childhood in Höheinöd, Germany, in largely positive terms and speaks about the educational and social opportunities she had prior to the rise of Nazism. She explains that she had a "beautiful house" with fruit trees behind it and her own room with nice furniture, dolls, toys, and a bicycle.[18] Ruth went with her parents to the opera and ballet, and she describes her family as being very "charitable" towards others in the community who needed assistance.[19] She went on vacations with her family and even traveled abroad as a youngster with her family to Switzerland, Italy, and Holland.[20] Similarly, Felix Scherzer says that he grew up in

[14] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, VHA.

[15] Alice Berney, interview 23647, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed March 7-8 and 23-24, 2017.

[16] Paul Porges, interview 8219, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed September 29, 2016 and January 11-12 2017.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed January 18-19 and 23-24, 2017.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

Vienna "in an apartment in a very nice, upper-class neighborhood right in the center of town."[21] He explains that they were "well-off" and that he had a nanny and the family traveled.[22]

Ellen Bamberger had a less traditional upbringing than some of her La Guette peers due to her parents' separation.[23] Ellen says of this childhood, "Well, I remember, actually not a whole lot of my early years. My parents, at the age, when I was five, divorced, and I spent some time in a children's home near Frankfurt. Then I did live with my mother until the age of seven when she died, and I moved in with my father after that. 'Til I left the country, stayed with him."[24] Some other La Guette children also had divorced parents, such as Gerald Watkins and his sister Sylvia.[25] They lived mainly with their father and were taken care of by a nanny.[26] In Gerald's early childhood they lived in a home in the small town of Wieselburg, but then when he was in elementary school they spent time in Vienna in addition to time in Wieselburg.[27]

In some cases, the children had family living in Germany or Austria for many generations. Helmut Wolff speaks about the long lineage of German residency in his family: "I don't know exactly generations, but as far as I know they all came from the same section and lived there many, many generations back. In fact, I see on the gravestones in a cemetery how far back it really dated. Into the 1700s."[28] Inge Spitz has a similar family story; her maternal

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[21] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed April 17-19, 2017.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed January 24-26, 2017.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed January 12-13, 2017.

[26] Ibid.; Sylvia Cherny, "Story of Sylvia (Mahler) Cherny," Austrian Heritage Collection, Leo Baeck Institute, Center for Jewish History, 2003, http://digital.cjh.org:1801/webclient/DeliveryManager?pid=402498; Gerald Watkins, *A Childhood Lost and Found* (Los Angeles, CA: Gerald Watkins, 2016), 3-4.

[27] Watkins, *A Childhood Lost and Found*, 3, 9, 11.

[28] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1996, accessed March 3 and 5-6, 2017.

grandparents were born in Germany as were both of her parents.[29] She says, "So I don't remember anybody not having been born in Germany…We considered ourselves to be Germans, as far as my recollection goes…"[30] Many of the La Guette children's fathers or other relatives fought in World War I for Germany or the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[31]

Other La Guette children came from families who were recent immigrants. Both sides of Felix Scherzer's family were from Poland, but his father's side was more established in Vienna, whereas his mother was the only one of her family to immigrate.[32] Frederick Springer's parents were similarly born in Poland and each of them had immigrated to Vienna as teenagers or young adults.[33] Heinz Low and Maurice Horowitz were born in Poland and had immigrated with their families to Vienna, most likely as young children.[34]

Most of the La Guette children interviewed did not recall anti-Semitism affecting their everyday experiences before the Nazis took power, though some spoke about anti-Semitism that was less overt and violent than anti-Semitism after Nazi rule. When answering a question about anti-Semitism in Austria prior to Nazi rule, Alex Waters says that he experienced, "A little bit, but to a lesser degree and fairly hidden. It wasn't open."[35] For Paul Peter Porges it was there, but again as more of an undertone. "And there was, there was things, subtle things, like since we had

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[29] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed January 26, 30-31, and February 1, 2017.

[30] Ibid.

[31] See Visual History Archive oral history interviews of Alice Samson (48334), Felix Scherzer (9657), Henry Alexander (3857), Kurt Moses (36148), Werner Moses (7283), Paul Porges (8219), Ruth Schloss (2408), and Werner Neuberger (7905).

[32] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.

[33] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, VHA.

[34] Heinz Low's Diary, page 26a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; "Jewish Refugee Children Receiving JDC Aid in France, Including Information on Overseas Relatives and Friends, 1940," The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Georgette Bennett and Leonard Polonsky Digitized JDC Text Archive, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Names%20Databank/France%20Children/Additional%20Links/CompleteNY_AR3344_00033_00099.pdf#search; *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 83-84.

[35] Alex Waters, interview 38291, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, accessed February 14-15 and 21-22, 2017.

a store and were a tiny little bit better off than the rest of the people in the street there was always this underlying feeling that it's the Jews, the *Juden*, that have these kinds of things that the others have not."[36] Overall, anti-Semitism was not at the forefront of the La Guette children's experiences until the advent of Nazi rule.

Just as the socioeconomic backgrounds of the La Guette children varied, so too did the extent of the children's Jewish religious and cultural practices. Some of the La Guette children refer to how assimilated they were in German or Austrian society, as evidenced by their discussions about religious practices and their integration with non-Jews in everyday life. Louis Scott's was the only Jewish family in his village. He describes his family as being "quite assimilated"; after all, he only had gentile friends since there were no other Jewish children in his area.[37] Louis's family was not observant at home, but he did go to synagogue in Berlin on the High Holidays.[38] Paul Peter Porges also repeatedly states in his oral history interview that he felt assimilated in Austrian culture as a child: "We were raised very assimilated. We knew we were Jewish but we did not practice."[39] Yet, Paul Peter also describes his participation in Sunday school, where he learned about Jewish holidays and the Bible and met other Jewish children from the region.[40] Felix Scherzer and Harry Schoenfrank both use the term "liberal" to describe their family's religious practices and to indicate their integration in the non-Jewish world around them.[41]

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[36] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.

[37] Louis Scott, interview 8716, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed September 9, 2016 and May 14, 2017.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA; Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed February 23-24 and 27, 2017.

Inge Spitz's family, on the other hand, was more observant. Inge explains, "Because I was raised in a very – not Orthodox – but very aware Jewish home. Kosher household. My grandmother had two tables in our kitchen; I'm always talking about my grandmother because we lived together. Two tables: A *fleishig* table and a *milchig* table, and if I peeled potatoes for a *fleishig* meal it was at that *fleishig* table and nowhere else."[42] Inge went to synagogue every week and she walked half an hour into the city of Potsdam in order to get to the synagogue.[43] Alice Samson, too, came from an observant background and would walk a distance from Edesheim to Edenkoben to go to synagogue on Friday nights, and then would walk back to the synagogue on Saturdays.[44]

Despite growing up in a religious home, Inge Spitz celebrated Christmas with her gentile neighbors, including singing Christmas carols with them.[45] Gerald Watkins and his sister Sylvia celebrated some Jewish holidays with family, but they also grew up with a Christmas tree in their home and went on Easter egg hunts.[46] Kurt Moses's family also got a Christmas tree one year when he asked for one.[47] These examples demonstrate that many of the families, while identifying as Jewish and in some cases even following Jewish traditions closely, were also often integrated in the culture around them.

Some of the La Guette children had Jewish religious instruction in school and/or in a separate Hebrew school. Harry Schoenfrank attended Hebrew school that was separate from his public school education: "Well, *Pesach* time my father usually conducted a *Seder* in Hebrew and

[42] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Alice Samson, interview 48334, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998, accessed September 16 and 29, 2016.
[45] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[46] Watkins, *A Childhood Lost and Found*, 8.
[47] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

my brother and I, we learned the *Ma Nishtana* in Hebrew school, which we attended about, I don't know, maybe one or two days a week, afternoons a week after school. There was no Jewish school; I went to a public school."[48] Walter Weitzmann learned about Judaism in school in addition to attending Hebrew school: "We had religious training in school, in the grade school. They divided up the various religions and we met with the respective pastors or rabbis and we had at least one hour a week I think that we had some education. We went through the Bible, we had to learn about *Purim*, about *Pesach*, about all the various holidays. I also went to Hebrew school for a while and learned some Hebrew."[49]

A number of the children had one Jewish parent and a parent from a different religious background. Eva and Walter Weitzmann's father was Jewish and their mother came from a Catholic background, though their parents agreed to raise the children Jewish.[50] Eva was aware growing up that she had a different background than the other Jewish children and had also internalized the Nazi terminology "*Mischling*," which was a categorization to identify individuals of mixed Jewish and Aryan descent.[51] Eva describes her sense of identity coming from this background: "So well, I knew I was half-Jewish and there's even a word for that called *Mischling*, and so I already walked around knowing that I was a *Mischling*, and so I was a little bit different, yeah. And then when my father died I became a half-orphan, and there's a word for that, so I was a half-*Mischling* and a half-orphan, and I already felt set apart, you know, but I suppose every child has some identity, you know, feels different."[52]

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[48] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

[49] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed April 12-14, 2017.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, 211-212.

[52] Eva Moore, interview 5707, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed March 27-28, 2017.

As is demonstrated by the interviewees' reflections on their religious upbringing, the La Guette children came from a range of Jewish religious and cultural backgrounds. The majority expressed some ties to Jewish religion through attending synagogue, celebrating holidays, keeping a kosher home, and/or attending Hebrew school. Nevertheless, coming from a strictly religious background was rare in the La Guette group. Some of the children identified as assimilated and talked about their integration in German or Austrian culture. Jews experienced "unprecedented integration" in German society during the years preceding Nazi rule, and the La Guette survivors' accounts generally exemplify this trend.[53]

Childhood Pastimes and Movement Abroad Prior to the Rise of Nazism

Figure 2: ***Jenny Porges poses with her two sons, Kurt and Paul Peter, at the beach*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges.

The La Guette children's everyday lives in Germany and Austria were characterized by childhood pastimes; their memories of life before Nazi rule include stories of playing with friends, playing with toys, outings into town or the countryside, going to school, and sometimes

[53] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 3.

misbehaving. Survivors' accounts serve as a reminder that these children were indeed just that – children – who were free to play and undertake normal childhood activities before even childhood play became a segregated activity with the implementation of Nazi restrictions.

Inge Spitz shares very happy childhood memories in her oral history interview: "I had a wonderful, wonderful childhood…My grandfather had a little store and I loved to play in that store; it was part of our house. And as I said before, not a care in the world. I used to play outside with my friends, I used to go to school just up the street."[54] Werner Neuberger also talks of outdoor play with friends: "Of the early school days, we had a lot of friends, non-Jews, like my age, at the time we were ten – eight, nine, ten years old. We used to come home from school; we used to play on the street. What I remember is we used to play with marbles, they used to have games with marbles, and we tried to beat each other, and it was very, I had a good time."[55] Helmut Wolff says that he and his childhood friends "Played outside in the street, that was about it. The bikes naturally were a big to-do, you know, each boy wanted to have his own bike and go bicycle riding together."[56] Louis Scott loved playing soccer, though sometimes he got in trouble for playing rather than doing his chore of weeding the garden.[57]

Edith Cohen grew up in the small farm town of Steinbach am Donnersberg in Germany.[58] Her family had chickens, goats, and a porcupine that she would play with as a child.[59] She calls herself a "tomboy" and she played ball with her three brothers.[60] She also did some sewing,

[54] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[55] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed February 1-3 and 6, 2017.
[56] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[57] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[58] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed February 27-28, 2017.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

crocheting, and knitting.[61] Beatrice Rubens went to theatre school in Vienna in the afternoons, where she learned to dance.[62]

Figure 3: ***Austrian and Jewish children in the Schubert Schule in Vienna.*** **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Eva Moore.**

Eva Moore also grew up in Vienna and Figure 3 shows her in school prior to Nazi rule. Additionally, Eva describes her childhood adventures exploring different sites in the city:

> And mostly parks. Like, because in the winter you were inside and then as soon as it became May, park, park, park. We lived right near Prince Lichtenstein's castle, which is now an art gallery. And it had grounds, and those grounds were open to the people. And also we had in Vienna a thing called the Prater, which was a huge amusement park with alleys of chestnut trees and Ferris wheels…And also food and sausages. I learned how to ride a bicycle there.[63]

Eva's brother Walter particularly enjoyed going to museums in Vienna with his aunts and says that he liked "the *Technisches*, Technical Museums, that was very interesting for me and I took a

[61] Ibid.

[62] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed August 2016.

[63] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

great shine to that."[64] Eva and Walter's family had summertime stays in the country that gave Walter the opportunity to explore the outdoors: "Went on hikes and did all different things. I got myself involved in the farmer, to work in the stables with the cows and got on top of the manure wagon and went out where they spread the stuff on the field. It was quite interesting."[65]

Most of the La Guette children remained in Germany or Austria for the majority of their childhoods prior to leaving on the *Kindertransport* to France. However, some children had the opportunity to travel or live abroad prior to going to France. As a result, the *Kindertransport* to France would not be these children's first experience adjusting to life in a new country.

Erika Goldfarb, who grew up in the Berlin area, moved with her mother and brother to Denmark in 1934, and they lived there for almost a year.[66] When asked why they moved, Erika says, "I don't know, my mother wanted to get out of Germany."[67] The family most likely wanted to avoid Nazi rule even in its earlier stages, but Erika does not go into enough detail to know for sure. Even though Erika's family may have left to escape Nazism, Erika remembers disliking the German school she went to in Copenhagen, as she says, "because I noticed that the teacher had in his briefcase the *croix gammée*, *hakenkreuz* [swastika]…"[68] The family ended up moving back to Germany after her father was no longer allowed to send alimony payments and her mother was unable to work in Denmark without citizenship.[69] As a result, Erika had to flee again to France in 1939.

[64] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.

Felix Scherzer was another La Guette child who lived abroad briefly prior to going to France. He went with his mother to visit his relatives in Poland in 1936.[70] Felix explains, "That's when I first met my grandparents on that side, or that entire side of the family."[71] Felix was exposed to a new culture that was radically different from his life in Vienna.[72] He says of living in Poland, "So it was quite an experience. I mean life was very primitive. I mean for a ten-year-old to move from Vienna to a *shtetl* with an outhouse rather than a toilet."[73] In Poland he was around his strictly religious relatives and was sent to the *cheder*, or religious Jewish school.[74] After the summer he returned to Vienna and was eventually sent with the La Guette children to France.[75]

Life in Germany and Austria with the Rise of Nazism

With the ascension of Nazi rule in Germany in 1933, implementation of the Nuremberg Laws in Germany in 1935, and the *Anschluss*, or annexation, of Austria in 1938, the lives of La Guette children in Germany and Austria began to change. There are ample discussions of this period in the La Guette children's interviews, with the overwhelming majority of individuals interviewed discussing discrimination and violence that they and/or their families experienced.

Hitler became chancellor of Germany in January of 1933, followed by a boycott of Jewish stores in April and then a law banning Jews from government employment.[76] Anti-Jewish actions and measures continued with the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws in September of 1935, which imposed a ban on marriage between Jews and Aryans, prohibited most Aryan

[70] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times,* 197, 199-201.

women from working in Jewish homes, and took away full citizenship from Jews.[77] Even before the Nuremberg Laws, swimming pools and many entertainment venues barred Jews from entering, and such restrictions would continue to escalate.[78]

Starting in 1933 with the rise of Hitler and continuing with the subsequent Nuremberg Laws and spreading of Nazi ideology, La Guette children growing up in Germany began to face exclusion and prejudice. The children's schooling, friendships, and relationships with neighbors were affected by these changes, and many of the children adapted by playing with Jewish peers and/or family members when possible.

La Guette child Harry Schoenfrank experienced a drastic change in his daily childhood activities after the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws:

> Well, yeah, I know they [Harry's parents] were talking about, whenever a new law came out I heard they were talking about it. For instance, we had a maid, a live-in maid, and I know that she took us…to the rose garden where we had a season ticket. And one time, one year, we didn't go anymore because my mother told us they don't allow Jews there anymore. And we used to go to a swimming pool, which was out, well they had several pools…and eventually we weren't allowed to go there anymore. We weren't allowed to go to the local movie theater. I remember one time later on as a result of the Nuremberg Laws my father wasn't allowed to keep, my parents weren't allowed to keep the maid. So I know as time went on more and more restrictions were imposed upon Jews.[79]

The barring of Aryan women from working in Jewish households that Harry references was particularly difficult for children who had formed strong attachments with their maids and in some cases even saw them as parental figures.

Social isolation and exclusion were also experienced by most of the La Guette children as anti-Jewish measures were enacted and the Nazis gained power. Helmut Wolff explains his experience with the rise of Nazism by stating, "…the other children, the gentile children, were

[77] Ibid., 210-211.
[78] Ibid., 205-206.
[79] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

reluctant to associate with us. I couldn't say that they're very mean, but they called us names, naturally, and shied away from us."[80] Alex Waters echoes Helmut's words almost exactly when he says, "Well, I didn't like it and I didn't think that even some of my used to be, prior friends would all of a sudden shy away from me, the non-Jewish ones, because they were afraid to be caught in the middle or they just didn't like us anymore. It was just a change."[81]

Harry Schoenfrank also speaks about losing a friend during this period: "I know that about well, either 1935 or 1936 my parents told me that he wouldn't be coming anymore because he got flak from the other kids that, you know, they weren't going play with him unless, if he associated with us. So that was the end of it."[82] Werner Neuberger had trouble understanding why his friends suddenly changed their behavior towards him: "When we came out of school already we heard some of my friends that I used to play with call us 'Jew,' call us names. I said, came home and said to my parents, 'Why do they call me Jew, I mean why do they call me that name, my name is Werner,' I couldn't understand it. And then little by little it got worse."[83]

Inge Spitz had a hard time when her friends stopped playing with her during this period because there were no other Jewish peers in her area. Inge says, "My girlfriends no longer spoke to us after we were thrown out of school. And in a small place there were only gentile friends, I had no Jewish girlfriends because we lived in this small village."[84] Not only was it her peers in school, but Inge also lost contact with adults the family had known for years:

> Neighbors from upstairs that had known us all our lives, that had lived there all their lives, were not allowed to speak to us…And then suddenly, you're ostracized. And you have to understand it; there is no choice. So what do you do? You play with your dolls

[80] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[81] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[82] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.
[83] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[84] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

> and you play with your – and you read your books and you play with games and you hang around your parents and your grandparents.[85]

La Guette children also remember encountering Nazi propaganda as manifested in parades, newspapers, caricatures, and symbols. Harry Schoenfrank recalls, "Well I know that there was one newspaper that was specifically, as far as I remember, anti-Semitic, and that was called *Der Stürmer*. And of course my parents didn't get that paper, but I saw it on bulletin boards next to the union hall and possibly posted in the post office."[86] Furthermore, Harry remembers Nazi parades and boycotts of Jewish stores in Germany:

> Well, I have a recollection of the parades that they had in the street and watching, and the uniforms that they were wearing. I know that they were boycotting the store; they prevented people, customers from entering the store. Eventually I noticed that some of the stores, most of the stores, had signs in the windows stating that they were what they called *Reines Geschäft*, which means a pure Aryan store. And they had a swastika on the sign; it was a red and white sign, I remember that. And of course Jewish stores didn't have that. And so I know as the years went by the number of my father's customers started shrinking.[87]

The rise of Nazism also affected the children's experiences in school. Schools were often used to spread Nazi ideology to children, and teachers had high rates of membership in the Nazi Party.[88] Werner Moses's teacher wore an SS uniform to school.[89] Eventually, Jewish children were no longer allowed in public schools and only allowed in Jewish schools.[90] This exclusion from school resulted in what Deborah Dwork calls "the trauma of ostracism and expulsion" as not only were the children's daily routines ruptured, but the children also had to face that they were different and grapple with their Jewish identities.[91]

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 258.
[89] Werner Moses, interview 7283, VHA.
[90] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, 223.
[91] Dwork, *Children with a Star*, 15.

Helmut Wolff was one La Guette child who went to a separate Jewish school during this period: "I went to public school I believe until 1936. And afterwards, the few Jewish boys and girls, we had to go to a Jewish school, which was formed in Landau. That was one classroom from the first grade to the eighth grade. And our teacher was the cantor of the synagogue in Landau."[92] Some of the younger La Guette children had minimal formal schooling in their home countries because they were so young when the Nazis came to power. Werner Moses only learned one kind of German writing and did not learn Latin script; he never got to that point in his education before anti-Jewish restrictions caused changes in schooling and his ultimate departure to France.[93]

The incidents that the La Guette children experienced with the rise of Nazism often stayed with them throughout their lives. Kurt Moses remembers the violence that he was subjected to and his attempts to hide from Nazis in the midst of playing soccer with friends:

> But we used to get beaten up regularly, you know whenever they could catch us. We used to have some protectors, you see, we were good students and we used to give 'em our homework, and those are the people that used to shoo the others away. But I remember very often where we'd have to take long detours on the way home…We used to go through the woods, and something like that to get home. It was rather difficult. We used to play soccer, which was played in the same way we play baseball over here; a few people got together to play soccer. And whenever a couple of people from the SA or the SS came by they used to ask me to hide behind a tree, and when they were out of earshot I came out and played again.[94]

The anti-Semitism that Inge Spitz faced as Nazi ideology took hold in her community garnered an emotional reaction during her oral history interview years later.[95] Inge relates what happened when she went grocery shopping with her friend and the impact that it had on her as a child:

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[92] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[93] Werner Moses, interview 7283, VHA.
[94] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.
[95] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

> And in Germany it was custom for the grocers to give small children a little bag of candy from five cents worth of candies in the little bag in one of those cones. He gave her her candy, and I'm standing next to her, and he looks at me and says 'You?' – the vicious mouth – 'You're not getting candy, [*speaks in German*].' 'Jewish child, you don't get any.' He'd known me all my life…It made me feel – you see I'm still crying fifty years later. I was a child, I was a kid, I was ten years old, eleven years old, and what did I know from politics? What did I know, what did I want to know about politics, nothing. I was just playing and with my friends.[96]

Because the rise of Nazism in Germany preceded the *Anschluss* of Austria, German Jews felt the brunt of anti-Semitic policies and actions earlier than their Austrian counterparts. Alice Berney, who grew up in Vienna, recalls that her relatives from Germany came to live with them to flee Nazism. Alice explains, "I remember shortly before, very shortly before the *Anschluss* some of my mother's relatives from Dortmund, from Germany came, and they were fleeing and they didn't know where to go. Well they fled to Austria, which was not much of a safe haven, and from there they went to Poland, never to be heard from again. And we shared the apartment."[97] Alex Waters also talks about aiding Jewish refugees from Germany: "In fact, to track back a little further we used to receive refugees from Germany who came, Jewish refugees, and they spent Passover with us or the holidays. We tried to help them. And then finally we realized the same thing was happening to us."[98]

Indeed, on March 12, 1938, Nazi troops invaded Austria and the La Guette children in Austria were faced with the same challenges.[99] Alice Berney's memories of the *Anschluss,* or annexation of Austria, are those of a child – she was aware of the atmosphere around her and heard German troops march into Vienna, but she didn't understand what was going on.[100] When asked what the moment was like for her, Alice states, "Puzzling. I did not know why my parents

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[98] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[99] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times,* 216-217.
[100] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

were so afraid. I was safe in my bed or in the apartment. I know they were upset so I was upset, but did not really understand very much up to that the Jews had no more rights..."[101]

Anti-Jewish actions were carried out swiftly in Austria after the *Anschluss*.[102] Twice in his interview Felix Scherzer refers to the *Anschluss* as a demarcation point of when things changed in Austria. He says, "But we lived a very normal life. Everything was quite fine until 1938 *Anschluss*."[103] Then later he mentions, "And so life continued until 1938. March '38 to be exact when Hitler marched into Austria. And from then on everything changed."[104] Alex Waters echoes this point in his oral history: "Well, it started immediately after the Germans moved in. That was in March 1938, on 12th March of 1938. Overnight we started losing business; people didn't come into the store. Our maid was afraid almost to work for us any longer. And there was a very bad resentment because the Germans were very welcome and most of the Austrians really, if I may say so, did not act very nicely, contrary."[105]

Just as the children living in Germany were attacked or bullied for being Jewish, Gerald Watkins had the same experience in Austria after the *Anschluss*:

> And that was a tough year because that was the year during which the *Anschluss* commenced and I was still in that school. And several times – because everyone knew, the other children knew then that I was Jewish – and I remember several times being knocked out cold. And then we used to have to go on marches through the streets, you see, the children of that school, and the kid behind me would always tread on the back of my shoes so that I couldn't march properly, and there were things like that. There were constant irritations.[106]

Walter Weitzmann also felt this change in Austria as the Nazis took power and friends suddenly turned their backs on him:

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[101] Ibid.
[102] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, 216-217.
[103] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[106] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

> Of course Austria is known for being rather pro-Nazism quite a bit. And that you know, so a lot of them embraced this thing very, with welcome arms. And of course that spelled trouble for a lot of people because yesterday they were your friends and you talked with them and today, the next day, you were their enemy practically. Because you're somebody different, something different, and of course that was drummed in and out on the radio, and with signs on the streets, businesses were taken over by – Jewish businesses were taken over by the Nazis. The swastika was painted on the windows, on the doors. The word *Jude*, *Juden*, which means Jew, was also written on there. It was very visible and very traumatic, even for myself. The people that I was friendly with, my peers, when I walked in the street they started to tease me. They grabbed some of my clothing, a cap or a hat, and started to spit on me. And suddenly I was confronted with that and you start to realize that all of a sudden you are different.[107]

Walter's testimony demonstrates that he had no choice but to be "confronted" with his Jewish identity as Nazi ideology and propaganda infiltrated Austria and was embraced by the public. Paul Peter Porges, too, felt this change and was forced to acknowledge his Jewishness even though his identity as an Austrian superseded his Jewish identity. He explains, "I was ashamed. I was very ashamed. I didn't want to be Jewish. I would have loved to be like them. I was assimilated. All my life, that's the only thing I knew. You can say I was a nine-year-old Jew hater."[108] Alice Berney's father tried to instill pride in the family's Jewish heritage, most likely because he understood that his daughter could become ashamed of her background in the face of anti-Semitism.[109] Alice states, "My father said if anybody insults you say you're proud you're Jewish. Okay, we did."[110]

Public space became restricted for Jews as the Nazis implemented discriminatory laws, and as a result the immediate home environment gained importance as a place of childhood play and adult discussions. Alice explains this change in Austria after the *Anschluss*: "Well, almost immediately he [Alice's father] had no more clients, we couldn't go anyplace. The only place,

[107] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[108] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[109] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[110] Ibid.

we used to go out on Saturdays or on Sundays especially to a café where people met. It was, in Vienna you entertained more in the café than at home. So from then on it moved into the apartment, our social life."[111] Felix Scherzer discusses the impact of restrictions in a variety of places: "Well it changed in school, it changed in the street, it changed in the parks, wherever you went. You started learning very quickly what the *Anschluss* or the annexation meant for the Jewish community."[112] Furthermore, Walter Weitzmann states that freedom of movement was curtailed: "You know, it's – you didn't have the freedom that you had before. You couldn't go into parks because Jews are not allowed. You were very much restricted."[113]

The rise of Nazism in Germany and later *Anschluss* of Austria meant that the La Guette children were excluded from playing with their gentile friends, were barred from public spaces, and in many cases encountered violence from non-Jewish peers and adults. Some of the children also remember their encounters with Nazi parades, swastikas, newspapers, and other forms of propaganda. Though the Austrian children often felt the effects of Nazism later than their peers in Germany, they too experienced the same harsh consequences of Nazi rule, and children in both countries were forced to grapple with their identities as Jews and Germans or Austrians.

La Guette Children's Encounters with the Hitler Youth

Nazi leaders specifically targeted children in their propaganda efforts through the subject matter of children's books, toys, and games.[114] There were also organized youth groups, the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*) and League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*), to inculcate

[111] Ibid.
[112] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[113] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[114] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 261-263.

children with Nazi ideology.[115] Children were required to participate in these groups starting in 1936, though in practice not everyone followed the law.[116] The Hitler Youth is referenced in numerous oral histories of La Guette children, demonstrating the impact of Nazi youth groups on Jewish children's lives. The children's encounters with the *Hitlerjugend* and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* demonstrate the exclusion and verbal and physical violence that the La Guette children experienced as the Nazis rose to power, including in once-safe homes, family businesses, and public spaces. Furthermore, La Guette children often missed out on healthy developmental experiences, such as growing a positive self-esteem and forming friendships with peers, due to the harsh effects of Nazi rule.

For some of the younger children in the La Guette group, such as Edith Cohen, many of their earliest childhood memories and socialization experiences occurred with the rise of the Hitler Youth. When Edith talks about her school as a child she says, "I don't remember any of my classmates, because after all when I was six the *Hitlerjugend* had already started because it started in '33, so we really didn't do much playing with the other kids because nobody would play with us I guess."[117] Felix Scherzer, on the other hand, remembers the Hitler Youth as marking the change from a time when he would play with peers regardless of religion to a time when these same children beat him up at school. He explains, "The next thing that affected you directly was the Hitler Youth. And even guys who three months before were your best buddies now turned on you and loved to beat the heck out of you and started calling your names."[118] Paul Peter Porges also speaks of violence from Hitler Youth: "I remember one incident where we were really attacked by some Hitler Youth who then wore those belts you know, those Sam

[115] Sosnowski, *The Tragedy of Children Under Nazi Rule*, 28-29.
[116] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 244-245, 248.
[117] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[118] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.

Brownes and they took great joy in chasing us and hitting us with those belts. Boys and girls. I remember that; I was panicky."[119]

The Hitler Youth movement was attractive to children who wanted to fit in with peers, be a part of something, and feel powerful. Helmut Wolff speaks to this when he says, "I think so, because at that age, I would say twelve, thirteen, fourteen year[s] old you're very easily impressed, and they were impressed with the Nazi movement, the youth movement."[120] Kurt Moses's story also exemplifies this desire to belong, as well as the naivety of a child who did not understand what the group was:

> And when I turned ten, along with other people in my class we each got a letter from Hitler and we each had to go to a meeting that night to become members of the *Hitlerjugend*. And this may sound funny, but I went. I was there about five minutes and I was asked to leave. I couldn't figure out why I was asked to leave but I was asked to leave. Then my mother explained to me why I shouldn't have gone…You know there wasn't a question of safety or anything like this, nobody was going to waylay me, but yes I went to the meeting, which was held in school by the way, and in five minutes I was out of there.[121]

A Jewish boy wanting to join the Hitler Youth might seem unthinkable, but as the Nazis rose to power Kurt simply wanted to be a part of what was happening with his peers and he did not understand the political implications of joining a Nazi youth organization. Kurt was not alone; there were other cases of Jewish children trying to join Nazi youth organizations in the 1930s.[122] Henry Alexander also felt a desire to belong to peer groups during this period, as he explains, "And I remember that I felt very much aware that I was not one of them as much as I would have liked to be probably one of them, like all of us Jewish kids at that time would have liked to be

[119] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[120] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[121] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.
[122] Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web*, 99, 103.

one of them, you know, music, uniform, et cetera, et cetera. But we weren't. We were beaten up."[123]

Despite this childhood eagerness to belong, some gentile children resisted the group's violent tactics. The violence that Felix Scherzer experienced from his peers was at times mitigated by one of his friends: "Strangely enough one of my best friends, who very often at that time came to my defense, was a Catholic boy…But he was a good friend. I mean if he was with a bunch of Hitler Youth and they'd want to beat me, he'd say, 'No, leave him alone,' you know, 'He's okay,' or something. Or he'd warn me, and say 'Felix, get away, go.'"[124]

In addition to the Hitler Youth organization for boys, there was also a Nazi youth organization for girls. The *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM) or League of German Girls was "the official female branch of the Hitler Youth organization."[125] Harry Schoenfrank recounts an episode that happened with the BDM outside of his aunt and uncle's store:

> Well they had, in the United States it is well known that there was such a thing as the Hitler Youth but the girls also had an organization that was called BDM, which stands for *Bund Deutscher Mädel* and they, in uniform, they were picketing in front of my uncle's store so my aunt was upset about it because before Christmas was their best season, so she went out and chased them away. So they claimed that she hit them and that was considered, a, I don't know, a felony, or an offense, especially because they were in uniform. And so she was imprisoned in the local jail for how long I don't know, for a certain time, for a few days, a few weeks, I really don't know exactly how long.[126]

Ruth Schloss also experienced picketing by the *Hitlerjugend* and *Bund Deutscher Mädel* outside of her own house:

> Yes, we did have a *Hitlerjugend*, the BMD [BDM], which was a girls youth group and a boys youth group and they used to come in front of our house…And they used to come and used to sing, 'Jews you're gonna get killed, Jews you are terrible, we shall do what

[123] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed May 16 and June 2, 2017 and February 28 and March 7, 2018.
[124] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[125] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 248.
[126] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

> we shall do, don't come out, don't show your face,' so of course my mother used to put on the music very loud, she did not want me to hear it, but I did hear a lot and make believe that I didn't hear it.[127]

Members of the La Guette group therefore faced threats and violence from their peers in Nazi youth organizations and would continue to encounter attacks from peers and adults in their communities as Nazi ideology spread.

La Guette Children's Experiences of *Kristallnacht*

The violence that the La Guette children faced as Jews intensified with *Kristallnacht*, or the Night of Broken Glass. *Kristallnacht* took place on November 9-10, 1938, when members of the Nazi SA and SS attacked Jewish businesses and synagogues throughout Germany and Austria and sent Jewish men to concentration camps.[128] This violent pogrom pushed individual families and Jewish communal organizations to seek out emigration opportunities for Jews as the dangerous climate in Germany and Austria became even more apparent.[129] Again and again in oral histories, La Guette children reference *Kristallnacht* as a significant and scary event in the progression of Nazi rule. Many of the interviewees have clear memories of what happened on *Kristallnacht* and were directly affected by the events of November 9-10. Excerpts from some of these narratives provide a sense of the danger that was widespread amongst the La Guette children and their families.

For Louis Scott and Ruth Schloss, *Kristallnacht* represents the beginning of outright hate and violence that they remember in Germany. Louis states that *Kristallnacht* "was the first experience—I knew I was Jewish, by that time I went to a Jewish middle school, but I had never

[127] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[128] Meyer and Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, 221-223.
[129] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 68-69, 73.

heard a word like 'dirty Jew' or 'you are a Jew,' I never heard that in my life."[130] Ruth remembers that, "Actually, it started at Crystal Night, in November '38. That's when they used to throw stones at us, that's when the children used to call me 'dirty Jews,' used to take the dogs and push on me, and tormented me wherever and whenever they could."[131]

Figure 4: ***Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht.***
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

Paul Peter Porges says that after *Kristallnacht* the discrimination he experienced got even worse and a "Nazi mob" painted red Stars of David on his father's store.[132] Many of the children's families worked in or owned stores, and the stores were often targeted on *Kristallnacht*. Harry Schoenfrank discusses his family's store, which was ransacked and the windows broken:

[130] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[131] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[132] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.

> It must've been around, I don't know, maybe around eight o'clock in the morning because we were having breakfast and I heard the broken glass. And so what happened is that there was a bunch of men, how many I don't know. They broke the windows from the store and they went in through the windows…So evidently the leader came in through that door and he went through my father's papers and while the other people up front threw all of the merchandise onto the street, and when they finished emptying the store they left. So my parents told us you can't go to school today; you have to stay here. And a few hours later some police – and all of these men were in civilian clothes they didn't wear any uniforms – and a few hours later two men came back and arrested my father.[133]

Werner Neuberger also witnessed the destruction of the store below him: "That night I remember, we heard tremendous noises in our town. And the first thing was, like I mentioned before, we used to live above a store where they used to sell clothing. The first thing we heard was broken glass. And then, what happened, my parents woke us up, and we looked out, and they were all marching through the street, it must've been five, six o'clock, early in the morning."[134] Werner also saw the synagogue burning: "We were living about five, six houses away from where the synagogue was, and there we see the synagogue is on flame. They burned it down, they torched it, yeah."[135] Another child who witnessed a burning synagogue was Harry Rotenberg. He was sent home from school and he describes what he saw at the synagogue: "A friend of mine and myself, instead of going home, being young and curious, we went to see the synagogue. And there was this beautiful building aflame and hundreds of Germans were standing around. And every time that one of the beams started to cave in into the synagogue these people were outside and they were cheering."[136] When asked how he felt, Harry responds, "There was

[133] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.
[134] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[135] Ibid.
[136] RG-50.431.0951, Oral history interview with Harry Rotenberg, Oral history interviews of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center (Miami, Fla.), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

like hate. And I could not understand that people could derive such joy from a burning building falling apart."[137]

Not only did children often witness the traumatic events of *Kristallnacht*, but they also sometimes shouldered responsibilities beyond their years. On November 10, Alice Samson was the one to answer the phone when the SS called because her parents were not at home.[138] Alice says, "Anyway, the phone rang at twenty minutes to eleven on a Thursday and 'This is your SS leader in the area, we will pick you up in twenty minutes. Only pack what you can carry and you will never return to this area again or you will be killed on site.'"[139] As a nine-year-old, Alice received this message and "packed for the family."[140] Her family was forced out of their home and told that they could not return to the Rhineland.[141]

Many of the La Guette children's fathers were arrested on or around *Kristallnacht*, and the children sometimes witnessed the arrest, a traumatic experience for youth. Werner Neuberger states of his feelings, "We were screaming our heads off, we were crying, my parents tried to console us, you know, and they didn't know actually what happened either. Before we know, the German police came, about seven o'clock in the morning, and arrested my father. They took him away…I remember only I was crying, and then when I seen him leaving that did it, it was really something."[142] Felix Scherzer's description of *Kristallnacht* involves a near escape by his father, whose status as a World War I veteran saved him in this one instance:

> The most direct personal thing was my father going for cigarettes, and he didn't have more than thirty steps from the house to the tobacco shop, and being arrested by the Gestapo. And as I said before, my father was an officer in the German army in World

[137] Ibid.
[138] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

> War I. And I don't know what made him do it, maybe word was out do that – he carried his papers from that period with him, and when he showed his papers they said, 'Oh, an officer in the German army, we salute you, thank you very much,' and let him go.[143]

Many of the children's fathers arrested on *Kristallnacht* were later released. Inge Spitz's father eventually came back late one night without any warning.[144] Inge explains how lucky the family was to have her father come back alive, and then she describes how traumatic it was to see him when he returned: "And we're standing in the kitchen, and my papa had a hat on, one of those caps, and my papa took his cap off and his head was shaved. And I started screaming. I was in such shock from that that I started screaming, 'Papa, Papa, put your hat back on, Papa, Papa put your hat back on.' I guess he did."[145] When Ellen Bamberger's father eventually returned from Dachau after six weeks she noticed a big difference in her father's disposition: "I never forget it. It was a Sunday morning, really early, and in walked this man that I hardly recognized. I mean he looked like a ghost. His head was shaven and his demeanor was not at all what I had remembered, and he seemed rather lifeless."[146]

Frederick Springer lived for a time at a Jewish orphanage in Vienna because it became difficult for both parents to work and take care of him.[147] His parents would visit the orphanage on the weekends, and at one point his mother started visiting alone.[148] She made up reasons as to why Frederick's father was not visiting, and it was one of Frederick's school friends who explained that Frederick's father was in Dachau.[149] His father was eventually released from Dachau, but "because of his head injuries and others he died four weeks later in a hospital in

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[143] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[144] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.
[147] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, VHA.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.

Vienna at the age of nearly thirty-three."[150] By this time, Frederick was already in France, and he did not have the opportunity to see his father again before his father died.[151]

These powerful recollections of *Kristallnacht* and its aftermath provide a terrifying picture of what *Kristallnacht* meant for Jewish residents of Germany and Austria, and in particular the traumas of experiencing these events as a child. The La Guette children witnessed and experienced the destruction of family stores, burning of local synagogues, and arrests of loved ones. Some children were forced to leave their homes, marking the first step in a series of forced migrations. The violence of November 1938 invaded not only the public spaces and community in which the children lived, but also the confines of home, stores, and synagogues that were so integral to the children's everyday lives. *Kristallnacht* spurred intensified efforts to get Jews out of Germany and Austria, including *Kindertransports* to send children out of the country.[152] The La Guette children would leave Germany and Austria four months after the events of *Kristallnacht*.

Aid from Gentiles during Nazi Rule

Though time and time again La Guette children speak about the violence and discrimination that they faced in Germany and Austria, they also provide examples of gentiles who came to their aid in defiance of anti-Jewish measures. Kurt Moses tells the story of a dentist who assisted him in Germany: "So we went to the dentist, now at this time dentists were not allowed to take care of Jews. We went to the dentist, he took us in the middle of the night, and he put six fillings in my teeth in the middle of the night and he told me not to yell. And I didn't yell,

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web*, 147, 162-163.

I guess."[153] Similarly, Werner Neuberger's family was given food by townspeople: "But the only thing what I remember after November and beginning of 1939, that we had some families, they provided us with food. Like I remember next door was a bakery, and at night they used to bring us flour, they brought us a loaf of bread or something to eat."[154]

Inge Spitz recalls a time when the local police even came to the assistance of her family after they had been threatened:

> And my mother went to the police station that she knew from childhood, she knew these policemen from childhood. They grew up together, they were 'per du,' which was an unusual thing to do…And she told them, she said, you know, this guy threatened us, what are we going to do? He said, you know what, let down your jalousie and those are outside blinds, heavy, heavy, and just go home and don't look out. And we did look out, and there was a policeman marching up and down across the street guarding our house. Which is unheard of and most unusual. But I guess the friendship that they had cultivated, these youngsters that grew up together, because my mother was already born there, was worth something.[155]

These examples show that longstanding ties or the moral compass of an individual could prove powerful in the face of discrimination; there were gentiles who mitigated the brunt of Nazi rule due to their actions. However, these were exceptions to the rule, and in many instances even decades of friendship between Jewish families and gentile neighbors did not result in any kind of protection for Jewish families who were at risk.

Efforts to Flee and the *Kindertransport* to France

La Guette children and their families made attempts to emigrate from Germany and Austria to escape Nazi persecution, but particularly following *Kristallnacht* they were among

[153] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.
[154] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[155] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

masses of people who also wanted to flee the country.[156] There was a dearth of countries willing to let these refugees in, including the United States, where nativist, anti-immigrant sentiment and restrictive quotas minimized the number of people allowed to enter the country.[157] Other bureaucratic and financial barriers also prevented people from getting out of Germany and Austria.[158]

Eva Moore describes the atmosphere in Vienna as Jews tried to flee the country:

> And my Jewish relatives began to leave and I heard a lot of conversations about visas, like always it was about visas. And they came and gave us little gifts and left and went either to Shanghai, who easily gave visas to Jews, or Bolivia, those were the two countries that were visa-giving and gave an open entry, and so my relatives dispersed like that. And they left in safekeeping precious things with my mother, I guess in the hope or expectation that they'll be back.[159]

Felix Scherzer's family also tried to arrange for their emigration out of Vienna: "So but they set this into motion to get us the affidavits and the visas, et cetera so that we can emigrate. Because the idea was now get the hell out."[160]

Some of the children spearheaded their family's efforts to leave the country. Alex Waters says that he felt the desire to leave acutely as a child: "And all I wanted is to get out. And I went around, that was a little later on, to different consulates trying to find visas to immigrate. And my parents were a little hesitant thinking that maybe things might get better, but unfortunately they did not."[161] Henry Alexander also says that he encouraged his parents to get out, as he recalls:

> And I still remember to this day, I remember it very well, my father said goodnight to me, I said we gotta get out of here. We've got to leave. I mean I was always the one pushing. I was very young. Because maybe I suffered more than my parents did. The fact I was

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[156] Alexandra Garbarini with Emil Kerenji, Jan Lambertz, and Avinoam Patt, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, vol. 2, *1938-1940* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2011), 27-28.
[157] Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web*, 129-133.
[158] Ibid., 131; Garbarini, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, 36.
[159] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[160] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[161] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.

> beaten up twice a day practically every single day of the week when I went to school or even didn't go to school, just when I showed my face on the street. So I was very well aware I had no normal life; I had to get out.[162]

Erika Goldfarb and her mother tried to illegally cross the border into Belgium in 1938 in order to get out of Germany, but the Gestapo caught them and sent them back to Germany.[163] After this first attempt to flee, Erika's mother fled to Shanghai because she was being pursued by the Gestapo and Erika left for France soon after.[164] Harry Rotenberg and his father successfully made it to France due to a letter from Harry's uncle in Paris stating that the pair could immigrate to Cuba.[165] However, when they arrived in France, the officials at the Cuban consulate said that the contents of the letter were fabricated.[166] As a result, their French transit visa expired and Harry's father fled to Belgium while Harry was left under the care of Jewish communal organizations in France.[167] Unlike most of the other La Guette children, Harry joined the group after living with his father for about two months in France.[168]

The children's socioeconomic status played a role in efforts to flee – as Kurt Moses puts it, "We had no money; we couldn't get out. And the way to do this was to send the children out."[169] He reiterates later, "… all I know is they didn't have any money, they couldn't bribe anybody, they couldn't pay the passage to anywhere or anything else."[170] Beatrice Rubens uses

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[162] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.

[163] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed March 1-3, 2017.

[164] Ibid.

[165] RG-50.431.0951, Oral history interview with Harry Rotenberg, Oral history interviews of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center (Miami, Fla.), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

[170] Ibid.

similar language, "We had no possibility, money or otherwise, to leave. And from day to day Vienna became an unbearable place to live in, unbearable."[171]

Kindertransports, or children's transports, were organized in order to send children out of harm's way, and following *Kristallnacht* efforts to rescue children intensified.[172] The Jewish communal organizations *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien* in Vienna and the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* in Germany selected children for inclusion on transports.[173] Children were sent on *Kindertransports* in large numbers to Great Britain, ultimately totaling around 10,000 children, but children were also sent in smaller numbers to Holland, Belgium, France, Sweden, and Switzerland as well as to the United States.[174]

Baroness Germaine and Baron Édouard de Rothschild, members of the wealthy Rothschild banking family, sponsored German and Austrian children fleeing Nazism to go to France.[175] Felix Scherzer describes how his family first heard about this effort: "Sometime, I don't know when the process started, but it must've been in early '39, word came through the Jewish community that the French branch of the Rothschild family, that's Édouard and Germaine de Rothschild, were taking children…out of Germany and Austria into France for the duration. And through the Jewish culture society, whatever, where my father had some contacts, I was picked."[176]

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[171] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.

[172] Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web*, 162.

[173] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 171-172.

[174] Nicholas, *Cruel World: The Children of Europe in the Nazi Web*, 162; Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 170; Gerda Hofreiter, *You Must go Alone: The Rescue of Viennese Jewish Children on Kindertransporte during the Nazi Era: A Historical Enquiry with Particular Reference to the United States* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu.com, 2008), Translation of author's Master's thesis, "Transporte österreichischer jüdischer Kinder 1939 bis 1941: vor allem Kindertransporte von Wien in die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, von Wien nach Frankreich und von Frankreich in die USA" (University of Innsbruck, 2007), 29.

[175] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 9-11.

[176] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.

Children who were orphans or were in precarious situations were often chosen by the Jewish organizations to be included on the *Kindertransport*.[177] Gerald Watkins suspects that he may have been accepted on the *Kindertransport* because he and his sister did not have parents present to take care of them:

> We were regarded as technical orphans: The mother had immigrated to Australia and was divorced anyway, the father was dead. So we were technically speaking orphans. And I think that's what eventually helped us to be put on this *Kindertransport* to France…But I do know that obviously some preference would have been given to children who were particularly endangered, and maybe our status as technical orphans put us in a category of being particularly endangered, and so that may have been the reason why we were selected.[178]

Like Felix Scherzer, many of the La Guette children refer to family friends or other connections who they believe helped them make it onto the *Kindertransport*. Eva Moore credits her place on the *Kindertransport* to a friend of the family: "And there was a Dr. Feldsberg whose little daughter was in my class. So by virtue of being friends with her he became aware of my little family…So actually it was just very fortunate that they lived on our block, and that's it."[179] Helmut Wolff says that his teacher's efforts resulted in his ability to flee: "I understand that the teacher from the Jewish school worked in the office of the Jewish organization and put my name on the list that I was taken into the children's home to France."[180]

Frederick Springer thanks his friend, fellow La Guette child Robert Hess, for his ability to leave Austria. Frederick says of Robert, "Eventually, actually he was instrumental in saving my life without knowing it" because brothers Robert and Adolf Hess lived at the orphanage in Vienna with Frederick, and they had a relative in France, prompting their inclusion on the

[177] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 358.
[178] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[179] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[180] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.

Kindertransport to France.[181] According to Frederick, there was only one spot left on the *Kindertransport* and Robert and Adolf were asked who their best friend was.[182] They named Frederick, and as a result he was also chosen to go to France.[183]

Other La Guette children were also friends with each other before living together in France. Walter Weitzmann was a childhood best friend of Martin Axelrad, and Henry Alexander was friends with Helmut Wolff prior to their departure for France.[184] Heinz Low and Felix Scherzer also knew each other from Vienna.[185] These early connections set the stage for the later community that would emerge at La Guette. There were also at least nineteen sets of siblings and some cousins that went to France and lived at La Guette together.[186] However, Werner Neuberger, Alex Waters, Felix Scherzer, and Harry Schoenfrank all had brothers who were not allowed to go, possibly because they were outside of the accepted age range.[187] Inge Spitz was able to go with her sister Edith, but her cousin was left behind.[188] By Inge's account, the children accepted were between the ages of eight and fourteen, and it appears that most of the La Guette children were between the ages of eight to fourteen when they left for France, with the exception

[181] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, VHA.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA; Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.
[185] Heinz Low's Diary, page 3a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[186] "Jewish refugee children receiving JDC aid in France, Including Information on Overseas Relatives and Friends, 1940," The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Georgette Bennett and Leonard Polonsky Digitized JDC Text Archive, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Names%20Databank/France%20Children/Additional%20Links/CompleteNY_AR3344_00033_00099.pdf#search. Note: There may have been additional sibling pairs among those not included on this list, so the total number may be higher than nineteen.
[187] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA; Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA; Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA; Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.
[188] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

of a couple of children who may have been seven and one child who turned fifteen around the time the group left.[189]

In order to prepare for the trip to France, the La Guette families had to fill out paperwork, including forms signed by parents or adult guardians that turned over care of the children to the *Comité Israélite pour les Enfants venant d'Allemagne et de l'Europe Centrale* and any other organizations who would stand in for the children's care.[190] Heinz Low wrote a diary from La Guette, and in it he writes that he had to get a physical at the doctor in preparation for the trip to France, and medical certificates accompany some of the children's other forms.[191] According to Eva Moore, there were also meetings of the children in Vienna who were being sent to France in order to prepare them for the trip:

> And as it was determined that we would be sent to France, that group that was going met. And we began to get instructions and assignments and we had to sing songs about how we were gonna go to the Rothschild children's colony, you know, and we learned these songs. And the most stressful thing was that they said that unless we learned the words, the text, of the "*Hatikvah*," which is the Hebrew national anthem, that we couldn't go. And so then the big stress for me was wow, what if I don't learn it?[192]

[189] Ibid.; *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 82-87; "Jewish Refugee Children Receiving JDC Aid in France, Including Information on Overseas Relatives and Friends, 1940," The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Georgette Bennett and Leonard Polonsky Digitized JDC Text Archive, http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/Names%20Databank/France%20Children/Additional%20Links/CompleteNY_AR3344_00033_00099.pdf#search; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[190] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Garbarini, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, 49.

[191] Heinz Low's Diary, page 2a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[192] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

Beatrice Rubens also remembers meeting with other La Guette children prior to leaving.[193] She says that they met two or three times in order to get to know each other, and like Eva says that they learned to sing "*Hatikvah*."[194]

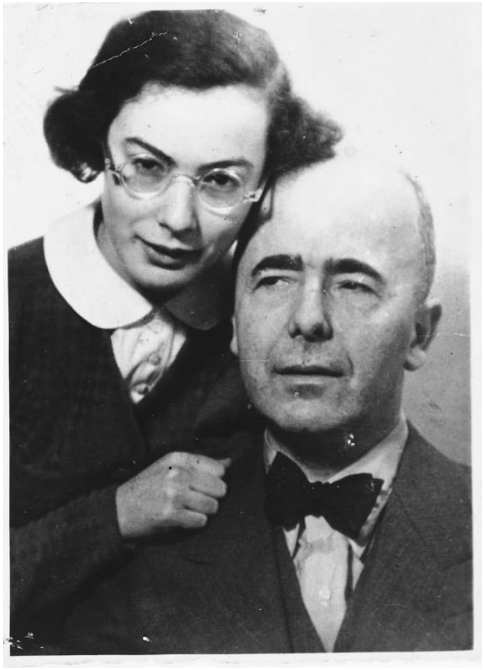

Figure 5: ***A young Jewish woman poses with her father shortly before she left Germany for France on a Kindertransport.***
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Eric and Erica Goldfarb.

Edith Cohen shares that valuables were not allowed out of the country, and she took a doll with her for the journey.[195] Erika Goldfarb brought with her a desk set from her father and some clothing.[196] Alice Berney got together with family before leaving and had clothes prepared for the journey:

[193] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[196] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.

> Oh, yes, all of the relatives came to say goodbye and they brought us candy, chocolates that we hadn't had for a long time, or even in the good days we didn't get that kind of stuff, so that was very exciting. Little presents. I got a little teddy bear and a pocket book and a wallet; everybody brought something. Before I left there was a seamstress that came to the house and sewed up a few dresses, so the whole thing was very exciting.[197]

Figure 6: ***Eva and Walter Weitzmann bid farewell to their mother and grandmother prior to leaving on a Kindertransport to France*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Eva Moore.

Eva Moore, too, had her clothes prepared for the trip, "And then I think our parents had to, as if we were going to camp, sew our names into everything, and then we were leaving."[198] Eva and her brother Walter also gathered with family just before leaving for France, and their friends and family wrote notes and drew pictures in books for them.[199]

The children's experiences with leaving varied greatly, and mirror differing levels of awareness of children leaving on the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain.[200] Some children were keenly aware of the dangers of staying in Germany or Austria and were eager to get out. Others saw the journey out of the country as a fun, new adventure, and were unaware of the gravity of

[197] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[198] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[199] Ibid.; Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[200] Fast, *Children's Exodus*, 25-27; Baumel-Schwartz, *Never Look Back*, 107.

the situation. Similarly, some of the children had a sense that they might never see their parents again or that their parents were in danger, whereas others were reassured by their parents that the trip to France was only a temporary move until the situation improved in Germany and Austria.

Inge Spitz was one child who was unaware that the trip out of the country would last so long. Inge comments, "And it was almost an adventure. In those days you didn't, I didn't worry too much…And we left and we went to Berlin, to the station. Got on the train, waved goodbye to our parents, and thought we'd be home in a few weeks."[201] Felix Scherzer also had a lighthearted departure, unaware of the permanence of leaving home: "I said goodbye to my brother and my father, and we were laughing, and I went – you know, to a kid it was not that serious an event. And everybody said, you know, this won't be forever…But my father took the approach you can get out, get out."[202]

Louis Scott, however, mentions the fear that he had as a child. "We were scared. Our parents gave us candy and all kinds of goodies yet, and it was scary. You leave your parents, you go to an unknown place."[203] For Gerald Watkins parting with his nanny, Ilse, was most memorable, as she was the only parental figure he had left in Austria.[204] Gerald states that, "Yes, I do remember saying goodbye, it was a very emotional experience of course. Because as I said she was almost like a mother."[205]

Beatrice Rubens was given the hefty responsibility of gathering children to leave at the train station, a task that as an eleven-year-old she felt was inappropriate and was difficult for her to carry out:

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[201] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[202] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[203] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[204] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[205] Ibid.

> My luck was, I must've been a little taller than the others definitely no other merit because somebody came and said would you please go to the different children and take them and say it's time to go. Which was a terrible thing to demand for a, I was barely eleven, I was eleven on March the second and on the fifteenth we left. So I had to go from parent to parent or whoever was there and say come. This was a terrible thing and I couldn't talk about it for years.[206]

Beatrice also shares her appreciation for her mother's decision to send her to France, and shows how difficult it was for parents and children to part and deal with those memories years later: "I couldn't, for a long time I couldn't talk about my mother's face when the train leaves the station, and even now I get this, this feeling. She must've been very strong and I have a lot of respect and she couldn't understand that later."[207]

Some of the parents attempted to instill in their children final lessons or values before they left. Louis Scott says that his parents "…were saying goodbye to me. The last words of my father, and how well he knew, 'Don't ever forget your mother and don't meddle in politics. Because whoever is in owes something to somebody or he wouldn't be in.' I can recall this now and I was thirteen years old. That was the last words of my father."[208] Ellen Bamberger's father marked the moment by giving her the traditional Jewish blessing over the children, as did parents of other children leaving on *Kindertransports*.[209] Ellen says, "Yeah, I remember the parting. We took the train to Kaiserslauten, and since we were Jews we were not allowed to go inside the waiting room. So I remember standing in the corner with my father, and I vividly remember him putting his hands on my head and giving me the blessing of – the ancient blessing."[210]

For some of the children, the parting at the railway station was the last time that they would ever see one or both of their parents. Helmut Wolff says of the farewell, "My uncle and

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[206] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[209] Fast, *Children's Exodus*, 27-28.
[210] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.

aunt came from Frankfurt. My parents, mother and father, they went with me to Ludwigshafen from where the train left. And that was the last time I saw the four of them."[211] Kurt and Werner Moses saw their parents for the last time at the train station, yet Kurt thinks that they didn't understand this at the time: "We didn't realize the importance of it. I really don't think that we knew that we would never see them again, you see."[212] Ruth Schloss says that she was aware of the meaning of leaving for France, and her parents, too, understood the reality of the moment given their parting words for their daughter.[213] Ruth explains, "The day we went to the railroad was a terrible, terrible day. It was very upsetting. Somehow I knew I will never see my parents again, and yet, I didn't want to go, but I went because my parents told me I must go. The last words my mother told me, 'You were born as a Jew, and please die as a Jew.' I kept my word."[214]

Conclusion

The La Guette children came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and were raised with diverse approaches to Jewish observance, but they lived as children who were generally well integrated in German and Austrian culture. The children grew up playing with Jewish and gentile peers and enjoying childhood amusements. Prior to Nazi rule, home was an established, concrete place for most of the children, and home was thrown into chaos with initial anti-Jewish restrictions and then an increasingly hostile climate towards Jews.

The La Guette children's experiences of home in Germany and Austria were in many ways typical of Jewish children living under Nazi rule, and in particular those who were sent out

[211] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[212] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.
[213] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[214] Ibid.

of the country on *Kindertransports*. Like other Jewish children, the La Guette children faced the increasing influence of Nazi rule in schools, were harassed by peers who joined Hitler youth organizations, and were no longer able to go to public places that they had frequented. Many of the La Guette children witnessed and were directly impacted by the violent events of *Kristallnacht*, and many had families desperate to flee Germany or Austria. The children's preparations for going on the *Kindertransport* and experiences parting with loved ones are also similar to accounts of children going on the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain. Not until the children arrived in France would their experiences significantly diverge from children fleeing to other countries. The La Guette case is therefore a reminder of the shared circumstances that Jewish children faced in their homes in Germany and Austria prior to their emigration regardless of the countries in which they ended up.

As the La Guette children left Germany and Austria, they were forced to leave behind their origins and their home in order to seek out safety. However, the children's identities and childhood experiences would stay with them and shape their acclimation to life in France as they commenced their transnational migrations to flee persecution.

CHAPTER TWO:
FINDING HOME IN FRANCE AT CHÂTEAU DE LA GUETTE AND IN LA BOURBOULE

As the children arrived in France, they adjusted to new homes and a new national context, first at temporary placements and then at the children's home Château de la Guette. La Guette provided a rich environment for the children to grow and learn through daily rituals, classroom lessons, recreational activities, and a Children's Republic. At the beginning, the children's national identities affected their interactions with one another, but eventually the children formed a collective community that transcended these differences.

After over a year together, the Germans advanced towards France and the La Guette group was displaced again, fleeing further south in France. The group settled at Hôtel des Anglais in La Bourboule. There were less favorable conditions at Hôtel des Anglais, resulting in new daily rituals and experiences for the children. By this time, Zionist ideology and a Zionist group also influenced some of the children's values and notions of home. Many of the children remained in contact with their parents and/or other family members while living in France, and a small group of La Guette children visited their family members in the concentration camp Gurs. These encounters with their former homes also affected their experiences of home in France. Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais provided the children with a crucial community at a time when family was physically absent, and these places became homes – not just places to live – for the children during their flight from persecution. Therefore, the La Guette case exemplifies how children's homes substantively affected the experiences of Jewish refugee children fleeing persecution via France.

There were other children's homes in France during this period that housed Jewish

children, and in particular Jewish refugee children from Germany and Austria. Many of the children's homes were run by the organization Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), and OSE homes would ultimately shelter thousands of children.[1] OSE (at the time OZE under its Russian name) was started in Russia in 1912 to provide healthcare, children's homes, and other forms of "medico-social" aid to Jewish children.[2] Following the establishment of the OSE-Union in Berlin in 1923, which managed the international branches of the organization, the OSE-Union moved to Paris in 1933.[3] A French branch of the organization was started in 1934 and became a key force in World War II-era efforts to rescue Jewish children.[4] As refugee children from Germany and Austria arrived in France in late 1938 and early 1939 following *Kristallnacht*, OSE children's homes were created in the region of Montmorency (not far from Paris) to house and educate the children.[5] In addition to operating homes in what would become the Occupied Zone, from 1939 to 1943 fourteen OSE homes were created and formed a network in what would become Vichy France.[6] Over 800 children were housed in OSE homes by August of 1942, and the "great majority" of them were, like the La Guette children, refugees from Germany and Austria or from Poland.[7]

OSE children's homes generally provided stimulating educational and social environments for children. The educational opportunities, plays and performances, singing, gardening, and other activities that characterized a variety of OSE homes are similar to the

[1] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 16.
[2] Ibid., 11.
[3] Ibid., 12.
[4] Ibid., 13-14.
[5] Ibid., 18, 68-71; Hillel J. Kieval, "Legality and Resistance in Vichy France," 342.
[6] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 19.
[7] Ibid., 20.

atmosphere and opportunities at Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais.[8] Some of the La Guette group's educators, including Ernst and Lida Jablonski and Henri Dybnis, worked in multiple children's homes during the war and likely employed similar pedagogical approaches in different homes.[9] This may have also been the case for other educators in the network of OSE and other children's homes throughout France, leading to similarities across homes.

In addition to OSE homes, there were children's homes in France supported by other aid organizations such as the *Secours Suisse aux Enfants*, which supported the La Hille children's home.[10] The "Children of La Hille" as they are known – much like the "Children of La Guette" – moved together between a few different homes, first in Belgium and then in France.[11] Their story is in many ways similar to the story of the La Guette children, particularly in terms of the educational, social, and communal facets of their children's home.[12] Thus, it appears that the La Guette group was not alone in finding a formative community and experience through the peers and educators at their home in France; other children similarly benefitted from homes created to safeguard Jewish refugee children in France during World War II.

As the La Guette children arrived in France, they were among other Jewish refugees who had found a home in France for many years; "about half" of Jews living in France by 1940 were born in other countries.[13] However, this French history of asylum was to change in the face of a "refugee crisis" as an influx of refugees fled from the Nazis and the Spanish Civil War.[14] Foreign Jews would become the first targets of anti-Jewish legislation.

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[8] Ibid., 73-74, 80, 85-86, 97-98, 109-110.
[9] Ibid., 85-86, 130.
[10] Reed, *The Children of La Hille*, 99-100.
[11] Ibid., xi-xii.
[12] Ibid., 47, 86-89, 90, 94-95, 240-243.
[13] Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), xii-xiv.
[14] Ibid., 58-59, 64-65.

Arriving in the spring of 1939, the La Guette children's early days in France were during peacetime. In the fall, however, France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, beginning the Phony War.[15] The war most directly affected the children through a change in their educators at La Guette, but accounts indicate that not until the spring of 1940 as the Phony War ended did the children's lives more noticeably change due to the effects of the Germans' advancement towards France. As Germany invaded the surrounding countries of Belgium and Luxembourg and also the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, France faced a massive influx of refugees.[16] The German army was in France by mid-May, and with the movement of Germans towards Paris, around four million French people fled to the south of the country.[17] On June 14, the German occupation of Paris began, and on June 22, 1940 the French armistice with Germany was signed.[18] France was split into Occupied and Unoccupied Zones.[19]

Though the La Guette group escaped to La Bourboule before the Germans occupied the northern part of France, the children would still be surrounded by anti-Jewish legislation even in Unoccupied, Vichy France. Scholar Robert O. Paxton made the case for Vichy's active collaboration with the Germans in *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*, which was first published in 1972 and was a marked change from earlier works on the Vichy government.[20] Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton then further elaborated on Vichy France's involvement in anti-Semitic policies in *Vichy France and the Jews*, demonstrating that at times Vichy France

[15] Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 31.
[16] Ibid., 37.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 40, 42.
[19] Ibid., 42.
[20] Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press Morningside Edition, 1982).

spearheaded anti-Jewish policies of their own accord without German pressure.[21] Beginning in July of 1940, laws instituted in Vichy France took away rights for naturalized citizens, thereby affecting many Jews who lost their naturalizations or job opportunities as a result of these laws.[22]

Jews were then more openly targeted by a series of laws in October of 1940, beginning with the October 3, 1940 *Statut des juifs* (Statute on the Jews) that was enacted by the Vichy government.[23] The *Statut des juifs* created a government definition of who was Jewish that encompassed – and therefore targeted – even more people than the German definition of who was Jewish.[24] The *Statut des juifs* also barred many Jews from public service positions and from other professions.[25] Additional anti-Jewish laws continued in October, including a law that targeted foreign Jews and sanctioned their internment or placement in assigned residences (*résidence forcée*) at the discretion of prefects.[26] A second *Statut des juifs* was put into place on June 2, 1941 that barred even more Jews from professions as well as mandating that Jews in the Unoccupied Zone declare themselves in order to get a census of the Jewish population.[27] Additionally, on July 22, 1941, a law was passed that allowed the Vichy government to take Jewish property and turn it over to non-Jews in a process of aryanization.[28]

The La Guette children were generally safe in children's homes as initial anti-Jewish legislation was put into place by the Vichy regime, but the enactment of these policies showed the increasing danger for Jews in France and in particular for foreign Jews, which included the La Guette children. As the children dispersed by the end of 1941, the children still in France

[21] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, xi-xiv.
[22] Ibid., 4.
[23] Ibid., 3-5.
[24] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, 56.
[25] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 3.
[26] Ibid., 4, 169.
[27] Ibid., 98-100.
[28] Ibid., 99-100.

would continue to encounter anti-Jewish policies as the country became more dangerous for children who could not leave.

Traveling to France and Temporary Placements before La Guette

The La Guette children were sent on the *Kindertransport* to France in March of 1939. The Viennese children left on two different transports and the German children also left on different days to get to France, with some children leaving from Berlin and those from the Palatine assembling together to go to France.[29] Most of the survivors interviewed do not mention any negative encounters with German officials on the trip to France, with the exception of Edith Cohen, who says that her doll was searched and ripped apart by guards on the train.[30]

When the children arrived in France, they first stayed at the Rothschild Hospital in Paris, where they had medical examinations. Walter Weitzmann says of the hospital, "We were examined, we were inoculated, and we spent the time there."[31] Alice Berney's memories from the hospital do not focus on the medical side of her stay; rather, she talks about wanting to safeguard the candy she had brought with her (she had heard that they took away candy in the hospital) and she remembers being punished for not eating the applesauce in the hospital.[32] Her recollections are a reminder of the kinds of concerns that the children may have had on some of their first experiences away from home. In Heinz Low's diary he writes that he stayed in the Rothschild Hospital for a week, so depending on when the children arrived in France, they likely

[29] 57236: (A/W 1986) Frankreich: Transporte 14. Maerz und 22. Maerz 1939, Reel 887, RG-17.017M, Archive of the Jewish Community Vienna-Jerusalem component collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 16.

[30] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.

[31] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

[32] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

only stayed at the hospital briefly before being sent elsewhere.[33]

From the Rothschild Hospital, at least some of the children – including the first transport of thirty-seven children from Vienna – were sent to Château de Maubuisson.[34] The château was part of a convent and served as a temporary home for the children. Kurt Moses says that he had a "good time" at the château, though there was less to occupy him there than there would be at La Guette: "…And Maubuisson was an old convent. And it was very interesting to live there…I remember that we had a rather good time there except that we didn't know what to do with our time. We didn't go to school and you know it was in March. We used to explore the convent but we were never allowed to go out."[35]

Alice Berney, on the other hand, shares negative memories of her stay at Château de Maubuisson. Alice was in a dormitory with a girl who got sick, and Alice and other children were quarantined. Alice says, "It was cold and miserable and we couldn't talk to the other kids, and we were alone, sort of, and we were just very, very unhappy. And there were two sisters who were sitting next to me and we decided we were going to run away. Of course we didn't, we didn't know where to go, we didn't speak the language, but we were really, really unhappy and homesick."[36] Heinz Low also did not speak highly of Maubuisson. He wrote in his diary, "After one week we were taken by bus to the Château Maubuisson. There it didn't go too well for us…We made several outings to town and in summary it was not outstanding."[37] Rather than

[33] Heinz Low's Diary, page 5a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[34] 57236: (A/W 1986) Frankreich: Transporte 14. Maerz und 22. Maerz 1939, Reel 887, RG-17.017M, Archive of the Jewish Community Vienna-Jerusalem component collection, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[35] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

[36] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

[37] Heinz Low's Diary, page 6a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

being sent to Château de Maubuisson, some of the children may have been sent to a children's home in Montmorency to live temporarily before going to La Guette.[38]

The children's initial experiences in France were mixed as they stayed at the Rothschild Hospital and temporary homes. Alex Waters, however, states that he felt a change in France: "Well, you could breathe, I mean you were in a free country, you could feel a complete different atmosphere."[39] However, it was difficult for some of the children to be away from their parents even in a country where they had temporarily escaped danger. Alice Berney comments on what it felt like to be in a new country without her parents:

> And then when I arrived in France, that's when it suddenly hit me; hey my parents are not here to greet me. I sort of – I thought that when I get to the other side my parents will be there. It didn't, I didn't – of course I knew they weren't going to be there, but for some reason that's how I felt, that I'll see them at the other end. So the whole thing was just an adventure. But they weren't there, so I cried myself to sleep.[40]

The children waited at their temporary placements for news about where they would be living in France longer-term. Heinz describes in his diary how it felt to find out what would happen next: "Suddenly they told us we would leave for another castle. There was great excitement. And shortly, all the girls and sisters left and we would follow in 14 days. The castle's name was 'Chateau de La Guette'."[41]

[38] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.
[39] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[40] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[41] Heinz Low's Diary, page 6a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Transitioning to Home Life at Château de la Guette

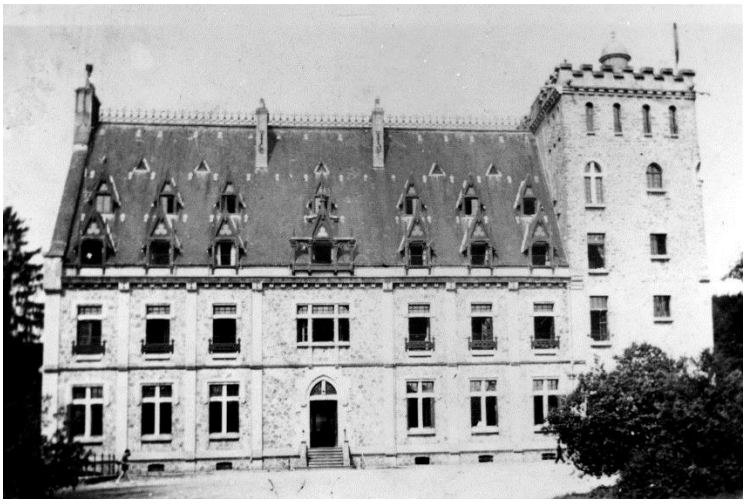

Figure 7: *France, The Chateau de la Guette estate.*
Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Jerusalem. 3983/1.

Château de la Guette was the hunting estate of Baron Édouard and Baroness Germaine de Rothschild, members of the wealthy Rothschild banking family.[42] Château de la Guette was (and at the time of this writing still is) located in Villeneuve-Saint-Denis, east of Paris in the Seine-et-Marne department.[43] As French Jews, the Rothschilds wanted to aid Jews facing Nazi persecution abroad, and they therefore supported the emigration of children from Germany and Austria in conjunction with the *Comité Israélite pour les Enfants venant d'Allemagne et de l'Europe Centrale*, which was started by the Jewish community following the creation of a *Comité Central des Réfugiés* "to bring several hundred children to the Paris area."[44] The La

[42] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 11, 15.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 9-12; Herbert R. Lottman, *The French Rothschilds: The Great Banking Dynasty through Two Turbulent Centuries* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1995), 211-212; Kieval, "Legality and Resistance in Vichy France," 342.

Guette castle was one of the placements available for refugee children due to the involvement of Rothschilds.[45]

Some survivors discuss their excitement upon arriving at Château de la Guette for the first time. Alice Berney discusses how the children were particularly "awed" by the château's appearance:

> And La Guette was the hunting lodge of the Rothschilds, the French Rothschilds, and they gave it, they donated it to the children. And here we were, most of us were either from poor, middle-class people; the rich had been able to leave. So we were really awed of the beauty of the place, it was very beautiful. They had, the entrance with marble floors and red velvet walls and the dining room was all wooden with parquet floor, it was – we all tiptoed around for the first few days, that changed of course. Beautiful staircase. And no huge dormitories, but rooms four or six kids or eight at the most, with nice slipcovers and well appointed with bathrooms and really a nice place.[46]

Inge Spitz has a similar memory of the accommodations at La Guette:

> And we were quartered in this beautiful La Guette, owned by the Rothschilds. We were totally sponsored by the Rothschilds. We had very good food, everything was brand new, our beds were new, our coverings were new, our pillows were new, the furniture was new, everything, it was beautiful. We were assigned to a room. My sister and I were in one room with another girl called Gerda. And life started. If you've been to camp you know what that's all about; I'm talking children's camp, I'm not talking concentration camp.[47]

Yet, the children's transition to communal living at La Guette was not without its challenges. Initially, the children from Germany and Austria did not get along; remarkably, the children's nationalities affected their initial interactions with one another at La Guette and superseded their similarities. Though all of the children were fleeing Nazi persecution they were not a homogeneous group, and the children felt loyalty to the cultures and countries in which they were raised. The children had not yet developed a collective identity, something that would eventually emerge from their time together in France.

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[45] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 10-11.
[46] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[47] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

Alice Berney explains how the children's places of origin affected their views of one another during their early days at La Guette:

> And we immediately went into fights, the Viennese against the Berlin. And the kids from the Palatinate were already there so they showed us around, but we didn't like them. I mean the prejudice, children that had never had any prejudice before immediately developed this, quite amazing. And after a while the Viennese and the Berlin formed together because we were kids from the big town and we all hated the kids from the countryside. But even that disappeared after a while.[48]

Paul Peter Porges also describes this separation between German and Austrian children that initially occurred at La Guette:

> Well first of all of course it was totally disastrous. Those children from all those different parts of Germany couldn't communicate. They had all different languages, habits, backgrounds. They looked at each other like aliens. And so in fact, one of my Viennese little comrades went up to a German and said 'You were the ones that invaded my country.' You know, we were that naïve.[49]

According to Gerald Watkins's recollections, a child's origins in Berlin, Vienna, or the Palatinate was more consequential in the early social life of the home than his or her socioeconomic background:

> It's very strange, you know we're all suddenly bereft of our families, and yet there was this enormous gulf you could almost say, and maybe even a little bit of animosity between the Berliners and the Viennese and the people from the Pfalz. Seemed to have very little in common and there were little cliques you know where we would oppose each other, but that settled down after a while. And then of course there was also an enormous disparity in the background and incomes, if you like, the social ladder element of where these children had come from. That didn't seem to matter so much. Children don't care much about that. The difference between Berlin and Vienna was much greater than the difference as to whether you had come from a wealthy family or from a poor family, and there were many who had come from very, very poor circumstances.[50]

[48] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[49] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[50] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

Especially at the beginning of their stay at La Guette, many children struggled because they were away from home. Gerald Watkins describes how he felt lonely and homesick soon after his arrival:

> I remember the first few days were very tough because I was very lonely. It was the first time I had been totally without any members of the family or in my immediate environment…So I remember on the first day or maybe the second day feeling extremely lonely, and it was the only time I think in that whole period that I cried, and the director of this place was, to me I mean obviously he was a very grown up man, but now it turns out he was only in his twenties, and he put me on his knee and consoled me and all the rest of it.[51]

Likewise, Paul Peter Porges had a very hard time adjusting initially because he had never been away from home before.[52] Paul Peter also explains that he had internalized the hatred against Jews that he had experienced in Austria, which at least some of the other children likely shared. Paul Peter says, "My other comrades in La Guette – from Germany and from – we all had the same brainwashed thing that we all felt yes, Jews are bad. We had been so intimidated, so brainwashed that we actually believed the Nazi line. We deserved to be treated like this. We are evil people. That was actually amongst us the root of our self-hatred, this kind of thing."[53] Several drawings created by children at La Guette depict scenes from their pasts in Germany and Austria including people threatening Jews, breaking into Jewish homes, and vandalizing Jewish stores.[54] The violence that the children had experienced in Germany and Austria certainly remained part of their consciousness as they adjusted to life in France.

Daily Rituals and Education at La Guette

While living at La Guette, the children attended classes in the home. There was a

[51] Ibid.
[52] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[53] Ibid.
[54] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, I-III.

particular emphasis on language learning; a number of survivors state that learning French was one of the main educational goals and speaking in German was discouraged. Edith Cohen says, "We had to, we learned French. There was no German allowed, so therefore in order to speak to one another we had to speak French, and we learned it very quickly…"[55] According to Inge Spitz and Beatrice Rubens, the children became fluent in French after only a few months.[56] Beatrice attributes this quick language learning to the educators' efforts to get the children integrated in French society so that they would not stand out; perhaps the educators had the foresight to bolster the children's French language skills for their safety.[57] Whether or not the educators had this foresight, learning French was a way for the children to become familiar with and integrated in French culture.

Language learning may have been just one part of what Paul Peter Porges remembers as "an attempt…to assimilate" the La Guette children into French culture: "The thing was that, an attempt was being made to assimilate all those children – I mean after all when you're nine, eleven years old you assimilate very quickly – to absorb them and assimilate them into the French system."[58] Another element of this assimilation attempt may have been the daily rituals that educators created at the home. According to Walter Weitzmann, every morning the group saluted the French flag and sang the Marseillaise: "And then there was what they called *appel*. All of us from the whole 130 children had to assemble in the courtyard by dormitories or packs or whatever and report to make sure that everybody is okay. And I think at that time they raised the French flag and we had to sing the Marseillaise."[59] Alice Samson also states that as part of

[55] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[56] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA; Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[57] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[58] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[59] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

the children's morning routine they would go outside where "right in front of the castle there was a large plateau with a flag."[60]

Some of Paul Peter Porges's drawings from his time at La Guette incorporate French symbols, likely stemming from the daily flag raising and the French cultural values taught in the home. In one cartoon he shows a boy holding a French flag.[61] Another drawing also shows a boy holding a French flag and there are other people in the image who might be French soldiers.[62] A poem is incorporated in the drawing, the last line of which has been translated to "we want to fight like the French army."[63]

The morning flag raising was one part of a daily routine instituted in the home. Alice Samson describes the morning activities at the home, including getting up, raising the flag, doing gymnastics, showering and getting dressed, and going to breakfast.[64] She says of these morning activities, "That was kind of a ritual."[65] Walter Weitzmann has a similar but slightly different description of the routine. Walter says that the morning activities including getting up around six or six-thirty, washing and dressing, cleaning rooms, raising the flag, and eating breakfast.[66] Survivors frequently discuss room cleaning and inspections at La Guette, and Walter's mention of room cleaning fits with other accounts, including Gerald Watkins's:

> And we had to keep those rooms clean, and there was a daily—and that's how I learned to make beds, you know, the thing with the blankets tucked in properly and hospital

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[60] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

[61] This cartoon shows a boy with blonde hair standing in a fire and holding up the flag of France. Below the fire, it reads, "Wir halten aus," [We last], United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #73042, Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[62] This Paul Peter Porges drawing shows a lion to the left, a young boy with a French flag, and three possibly French soldiers at the bottom. In the middle of these drawings is a poem which reads:, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #43793, Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

> corners and all of that stuff. And we had daily inspection before we started our tuition, and that was very tough. I remember once the light switch had a screw-on cap and because we had really gone overboard in cleaning up the space there wasn't a speck of dust, and the guy unscrewed the light switch and inside he found a speck of dust. So we lost a mark or something, you know.[67]

After the morning activities, Walter Weitzmann states that the group had classes and later on in the day had free time: "And in the free time we could do whatever we wanted. That's when we went out and we built that little clubhouse of ours and did other things, or played football and there was a track in the back of the château where we could have races. We had, you know, sport events just to keep busy and stay out of trouble."[68] Despite not living in a traditional home or school environment, this daily schedule provided the children with normalcy, probably more than they had experienced after the rise of Nazism in Germany and Austria. The routine and rituals created order and stability in the children's lives and in the process fostered a collective identity of those partaking in the shared daily rituals.

Leftist Educators and the Creation of a Children's Republic at La Guette

The people in charge of the education and care of the children were educators hired by the Rothschilds to run the home. The educators were the force behind everyday life at the home, and their political and ideological views affected what and how the children were taught. Many of the original educators at La Guette had leftist political views and had been part of anti-fascist efforts in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. These educators' views affected what was taught in the home and how it was structured, leading to a democratic and communal atmosphere, particularly exemplified by a Children's Republic that was created at the home.

[67] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[68] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

The original director of La Guette, though he was only briefly in charge of the home, was Willy Katz.[69] Following his leadership, Ernst Jablonski (known as Jouhy) ran the home and his wife Lida was also an educator at the home.[70] Another educator was Irene Spiegel (*née* Irene Goldin), who was an American nurse who had been in Spain during the Civil War, as she recalls, "to fight against fascism" with nurses, doctors, and other aid workers.[71] In Spain, she met her husband, Harry Spiegel, who was fighting for republicanism in Spain.[72] Like Irene, Harry was Jewish, and he was from Austria and a Communist.[73] After they left Spain, Harry and Irene went to France, and Irene describes in her oral history interview how they ended up working at Château de la Guette:

> When we were in Paris, we met some Austrians, one of them was a doctor who'd been in Spain and they were childhood friends of my husband, from the university, and they were working in a home for refugee children from Germany and Austria that was run by the Baroness Rothschild. And Fritzi went there as a doctor, and Fred was sent there as a teacher, and my husband and I also were there for one year. I was a nurse and he taught, he was a teacher, he taught. It was a refugee home for about 150 children from Germany and Austria. The name of the place was La Guette.[74]

As Irene explains, two of the other educators at the home were Alfred (Fred) Brauner, a teacher, and Françoise (Fritzi) Brauner, a doctor, and they had similar political leanings as the Spiegels.

Survivors generally speak well of the educators that they had at La Guette and Hôtel des Anglais. Inge Spitz, for example, says, "We had wonderful educators, they weren't just teachers as such, but educators. And they were wonderful pedagogues; they knew how to treat children

[69] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 17.
[70] Ibid., 16-17.
[71] Irene Spiegel, interview 37352, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1997, accessed February 22-23, 2017.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

without parents."[75] Beatrice Rubens also speaks highly of the educators, intimating that they were not simply caretakers, but rather taught the children values. Beatrice shares, "And then La Guette, as such, was the basis of our character. Our teachers were not teachers; they were visionaries. Some had been in Spain, the war, and they were fighters."[76] Looking back, Beatrice thinks that the educators were deliberate in how they educated the children because the children had endured and would continue to face persecution:

> Visionaries, I'll tell you why, because they say, these children cannot be educated like any other child because the situation is totally different. So we have to improvise. These children have to know, first of all, how to behave with responsibility for themselves and for others. They have to give a good example. They have to have a certain self-esteem because it was destroyed. They had no guidance and who knows when they're going to have guidance. We don't know how long this situation will last, in other words they will have to make decisions in their lives, the right decisions. So they decided to make a Children's Republic.[77]

Gerald Watkins similarly discusses the influence of the educators' ideologies in the creation of a Children's Republic at La Guette:

> It was an interesting experiment though one has to say because this home, this Château de la Guette was staffed by very young educators whom Baron de Rothschild had chosen for this purpose, some of whom had been, had fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War and who were left-leaning people you might say. And they instituted in Château de la Guette a kind of children's commune, which is a very interesting experiment.[78]

This Children's Republic, which was likely influenced by the educators' leftist values and was modeled after the French Republic, was a way for the children to become more familiar with French culture and democratic governance. The Children's Republic gave the children an opportunity to serve in leadership roles, make decisions as a community, and have a say in their day-to-day lives, an empowering experience for children who otherwise had little say over their

[75] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[76] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

life circumstances at the time. It also provided structure and rules for the home. The Children's Republic became a formative part of the children's experience at the home and is ingrained in collective memory of the children's home.

According to a document describing the Children's Republic, the République du Château de la Guette was formed in May of 1939, and its constitution established a governing body made up of child delegates ("*une Chambre délégués des enfants*") and a Senate made up of educators ("*une Chambre des éducateurs*").[79] Decisions made by ministers had to be approved by the Senate (educators) before they could go into effect.[80] Beatrice Rubens explains, "We had those educators who let us choose our ministers, justice minister, health minister, et cetera."[81] The student ministers included a President of the Council or Prime Minister (*Président du Conseil, premier Ministre*), Minister of the Interior (*Ministre de l'interieur*), Minister of Finances (*Ministre des Finances*), Minister of Hygiene (*Ministre de l'Hygiene*), Director of the Bank of La Guette (*Director de la Banque de la Guette*), Minister of Sports and Games (*Ministre des Sports et des Jeux*), Minister of Education (class programs) (*Ministre de l'Enseignement, programmes des classes*), Minister of French Knowledge (*Ministre des Connaissances du Français*), and someone in charge of Public Works and Amenities (*Travaux Publics et des Aménagements*).[82]

Alice Samson describes the Children's Republic by saying, "We had our own government at Château de la Guette and we used to own money for whatever we wanted to purchase, that we needed and wanted. It was all self-governed and we were all pretty active in

[79] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.

[82] Ibid.

that."[83] Louis Scott states that this government taught him about democracy: "We had our own ministers, our own president, they showed us democracy. We had our own money and we earned that money. We had a store where we could buy our toothpaste and our pens and stamps to send away letters. All of this was something new but it kept us going."[84] The money to which Alice and Louis refer was created in the home in the form of paper bills issued by the Director of the Bank of La Guette.[85] The bills were labeled "Francs-Guettes" and the design of the money included Stars of David, the numerical amount of the currency, and a statement that it was valid for the Rothschild Children's Republic.[86]

Erika Goldfarb says of the Children's Republic, "It was very well organized and we had ministers and I was Finance Minister, and we had all sorts of responsibilities."[87] Erika was one of the older children in the group and this may have been one of the reasons that she was a leader; Alice Berney, on the other hand, felt less powerful in the home because she was one of the younger children.[88] Alice comments, "Of course, I was sort of nobody, I was not even ten years old, I mean my voice was much less than anybody else's."[89] Nevertheless, all citizens ("*citoyens*") were at least temporarily included in decisions of justice in lieu of a Minister of Justice.[90] Therefore, even younger children were, at least in theory, afforded a voice in the republic.

Interestingly, a description of the educators at OSE homes is reminiscent of the early

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[83] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

[84] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.

[85] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA; Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[86] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[87] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.

[88] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

educators at La Guette: "The first three châteaux are under the direction of anti-fascist, communist or militant bundist educators, all of them idealists and enthusiasts, who succeeded in transmitting their optimism to the children, thereby giving them the strength not to despair."[91] Moreover, the community at the OSE home Château du Masgelier is referred to as a "children's republic," though it is unclear if it had the same structure of self-government as was created at La Guette.[92] Therefore, some other Jewish children's homes during this time likely shared some of the ideological and pedagogical attributes of the La Guette home.

Envisioning Home and Building Community through Zionism

The educators in charge of Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais changed over time due to wartime factors, and with this change came a change in some of the values transmitted to the children. After the war began in September of 1939, educators Harry Spiegel and Ernst Jablonski were interned as an enemy aliens, and Fred Brauner was mobilized to fight in the war.[93] As a result, leadership in the home changed. Flore Loinger became the new *directrice* of the home.[94] Flore's husband, Georges Loinger, would become an active member of the Resistance and participate in the rescue of Jewish children.[95] Erika Goldfarb explains that as Flore Loinger took over the children's home, some of the older girls came into conflict with her: "And direction changed, it was a lady and she had not at all the same ideas than her predecessors

[91] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 96-98.
[92] Ibid., 96-98.
[93] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 19.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Catherine Richet, ed., and Anciens de la Résistance Juive en France, *Organisation Juive de Combat: Résistance-Sauvetage, France 1940-1945* (Paris: Autrement, 2006), 220-221.

had. And I suppose all of the girls, we were about ten, nine, I don't know how many girls, we were not very, very happy with her."[96]

Changes in leadership continued as Henri Dybnis became an educator for the La Guette group. Henri had a background not dissimilar to the children who were fleeing persecution. Henri was born in a Jewish family in Ukraine and he fled with his family to Poland as a child in order to escape pogroms and anti-Semitism.[97] When Henri was older, he fled illegally into France by way of Germany and Belgium.[98] He created a new life in France, and after being injured in the French Army, Henri got in touch with a rabbi who knew the Rothschilds.[99] Henri explains how he ended up working with the La Guette children through the rabbi:

> He arranged for me, since I knew Hebrew and I was in the teacher's seminary, he arranged for me to go and work in a children's home – in a Jewish children's home – in La Bourboule. This was a big step for me because I had [some]where to be; I wasn't alone. This home was a start for a new career for me. Career, it's not a career, but a new life. Which, to a certain degree, continued the spiritual, and the cultural, and the whole atmosphere in which I worked before. Again I was with children, so again social work; the children were social cases. And I could teach Hebrew; I could work with them. It continued the whole atmosphere in which I was brought up, the youth movement, *shuls*.[100]

As Henri explains, working with the La Guette group provided a community for him just as it did for the children. Henri had been active in Zionist organizations growing up, and he brought his passion for Zionism to the La Guette group.[101] Henri describes how this was a change from previous leadership:

> When I arrived in that school I was in a hostile atmosphere because most of the educators there were very radical anti-Zionists and there were only two of us young people who

[96] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[97] Henri Dybnis, interview 738, *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1995, accessed January 17-18, 2017.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

> were Zionistic minded. Little by little, those radical Communist educators they had to leave because they were in danger, and we took it over and we made out of the home a Zionist home, we started teaching them Hebrew, et cetera. The man who worked with me there, my colleague Henry Pohoryles is now in Israel; he was a Resistance fighter in Paris and as I said he is now in Israel.[102]

As Henri mentions, Henry Pohoryles was another educator in the La Guette group, and a notebook from his time at La Bourboule is filled with songs sung by the children, some of which were related to the Zionist group at the home.[103] Thus, with the influence of these new educators, the La Guette children were more influenced by Zionism and less by leftist ideologies.

Only some of the children had an affinity for Zionism, but for those who did, it provided them with hope of finding a future home and homeland in Israel. Participating in a Zionist group at the home was therefore a way for some of the La Guette children to express their desire for a home, connect with their Jewish identities, resist persecution, and find community within the La Guette group. Beatrice Rubens was one of the children who was interested in Zionism, and she describes how it spread in the home:

> Also it gave me a certain food for the soul. Which we also had in La Guette, where we were exposed gradually and with a great selection to Zionism. Now two youngsters started it with an educator who was Zionist and he said 'Can you propose to others?' They did, and we were observed for a month if we were nice to others, if we were helpful, whatever, and if we qualified we were accepted, and then we again proposed to others.[104]

A document in the personal papers of La Guette survivor Naomi Elath lists thirty-eight La Guette children, eighteen girls and twenty boys, who were involved in the Zionist group.[105] The group

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[104] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.

[105] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

was called *B'nei Sion* (Children of Zion), which is written in Hebrew on the document.[106] *B'nei Sion* appears to have had the same structure as the *Hashomer Hatzair* Zionist youth movement, with a *Gedud* (Battalion) split up into *Kwuzot* (Groups).[107] Accordingly, in the drawing, the children are split into at least five groups with boys and girls in separate groups. Each group, or *Kwuzah*, was named after a Zionist leader or value, including *Kwuzah*s *Trumpeldor*, *Herzl*, *Achad Haam*, *Razon*, and *Achdud*. Underneath each *Kwuzah* on the document there is a unique seal or symbol that represents the group.

A statement written in French on the document calls on members of *B'nei Sion* to remember their common past and shared exile despite distance. It also states that they will continue to fight, demonstrating how participation in the Zionist group became a form of resistance for some children. The dates February 1940-February 1941 are listed below the group's name, likely indicating when *B'nei Sion* was active. If these dates are accurate, then the Zionist group existed both at La Guette and in La Bourboule. This document may have been created in February 1941 in anticipation of some children dispersing. Underneath the name of each *Kwuzah*, the children in each group signed the document.

Felix Scherzer was in *Kwuzah* Herzl, and he remembers the influence of Zionism in educational and recreational activities: "When we learned history it was from the political aspect, like I said Trumpeldor became a hero in that position. We had bonfires, we danced *horahs*, we learned Hebrew songs; we still sing them. Everything was geared to that aim. I had an

[106] Ibid.; Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.

[107] Jaakow Polesiuk-Padan, "History of the Haschomer Hazair in Bukovina," trans. Jerome Silverbush, from *Geschichte der Juden in der Bukowina* [History of the Jews in the Bukovina], ed. Hugo Gold (Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1958), 145, accessed May 14, 2018, JewishGen.org, https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/bukowinabook/buk1_145.html.

opportunity to go to Israel in a youth *aliyah*, but my father wouldn't give permission."[108]

For some of the children, participation in the Zionist organization gave them strength as they fled Nazism. Beatrice explains how Zionism gave her hope during her time in the children's homes. She says, "We learned all about Zionism, about a future homeland, which gave us another outlook on life altogether."[109] Walter Weitzmann also talks about Zionism being appealing because Palestine was a "haven" that some children looked towards as they fled persecution: "There was a lot of influence as far as Zionism was concerned through some of the teachers, and a lot of the children embraced that because they felt that the only solution was for all of us to wind up in Israel because that was the only haven that we could think would be the best at that time…"[110]

Participation in *B'nei Sion* was also a way for some children to express their Jewish identities. Two pages associated with *B'nei Sion* that are titled "*Kolenou, Notre Voix,*" have imagery related to the Jewish holidays *Yom Kippur* and *Chanukah*.[111] Both drawings have the years 1940 and 5701 (the equivalent year on the Hebrew calendar) written on them, and the one from *Yom Kippur* has the date "12 *Octobre* 1940" listed, which was *Yom Kippur* in that year. The *Chanukah* drawing features two *Chanukiot*. The *Yom Kippur* drawing has an image of a scale with good choices depicted on one side and bad on the other with the question "*Qui gagnera*" above, asking which side will win, symbolism fitting for the Day of Atonement. These pages hint at the inclusion of Hebrew instruction and Jewish learning as part of the Zionist group. Naomi Elath (who was then Gisela Edel) also had a notebook filled with information

[108] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[109] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[110] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[111] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

about Zionism.[112] One page in the notebook has a list of Jewish holidays and their affiliated dates on the Jewish calendar, reaffirming that learning about Judaism was part of their group. This connection to Judaism may have given the children additional strength and pride in their Jewish identities in the face of discrimination and persecution.

The La Guette children had varying levels of interest in Zionism. Ellen Bamberger remembers that she "was not ever terribly interested in that particular thing."[113] Walter Weitzmann also was not as passionate about Zionism: "And I'm not even that sure that I was really that much into it as some of the other people were. I guess I participated in it because that was the thing to do; again I didn't want to be different from somebody else. It was a strong movement in the colony."[114] While some children looked towards creating a homeland in Israel, others hoped to find a home in the United States. Some La Guette interviewees discuss this desire to move to the United States, and this sentiment was shared by over one-third of children in OSE homes in October of 1941.[115]

Recreational Activities at La Guette

The children took part in a wide variety of recreational activities and pastimes at Château de la Guette. These rich recreational and social opportunities allowed the children to develop new skills and spend time with peers. These activities also helped the children express themselves and persist in their journeys away from their former homes. Recreational activities may have distracted from political developments, separation from family, and the children's

[112] Ibid.
[113] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.
[114] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[115] Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France during World War II*, trans. Nathan Bracher (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001), 143.

previous lives in Germany and Austria, and in the process brought the children together and solidified the communal atmosphere at La Guette.

Felix Scherzer comments about the home, "Had tremendous grounds. We had an athletic field, which turned into a soccer field. We had a track. We had a building away from the château, which was a shop; we learned shop work."[116] Werner Neuberger also discusses the workshop and a garden at the home: "…he had gardeners there, but we had to work, when we were finished with school we worked in the garden and you got money for that. And then he set up a workshop, with machinery, it's unbelievable what that man did, you know, to try to teach us."[117] Alice Samson worked in the garden, kitchen, and as a physician's assistant, as task that she particularly enjoyed: "And then, the best of all, I was our physician's assistant, which means I took the temperature, you know with the children, and they were, the sick bay was up in the tower of the castle."[118]

Walter Weitzmann talks about other activities at the home, including a dark room for developing pictures and other opportunities for creative expression: "And of course we had the noon meal and then in the afternoon we had school again and then we had different assemblies where we read stories, created some plays of our own. We set up a dark room because a lot of us were interested in photography and were able to get that going. And some of the pictures that I have here were all printed in there."[119] Helmut Wolff also mentions performances at La Guette: "There was one fellow who was a performer from home in Vienna, so he was singing. Another

[116] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[117] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[118] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[119] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

fellow was a good comedian; he held our attention and told us jokes. An artist who drew pictures. And then we made our own little theater. With workshops together."[120]

Figure 8: ***A group of Jewish refugee girls from the Chateau de la Guette OSE [Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants] children's home dance outside*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Eric and Erica Goldfarb.

Singing was also an important part of the collective experience of life in the La Guette group. Eva Moore explains how singing was an integral part of everyday life:

> And I didn't know quite why, but we sang, and we sang a lot. And we sang before meals, we sang after meals and we sang Friday night and we sang at assemblies and we sang when we marched, and song was very important. And the songs were French and the songs were Hebrew. Now Hebrew was of course nonsense syllables to me, maybe to most of us, but they were really beautiful songs and the songs were important such that actually one of my friends, survivors, from that time has a book documenting all of them. Maybe singing did keep up our morale.[121]

[120] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[121] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

The children were organized into small groups for their classes and other activities. Gerald Watkins writes in his memoir that they were divided into groups according to the rooms in which they lived. Gerald says, "There was friendly competition between groups in each room (called Meute) in sport and leisure activities."[122] Paul Peter Porges created a drawing while at La Guette titled "Meuten Match: Weana – Lyon" that shows a group of boys playing soccer at La Guette, also demonstrating the organization by group (*Meute*) in sports.[123] Frederick Springer says that, at least at first, the groups had animal names: "And they each had – at first we started off in a kind of a Boy Scouts system, so we had names of animals for the – these were wolves, and these were the – I forget. We all had animal names for each room." In one of Paul Peter Porges's drawings from his time at La Guette he depicts the different groups named after animals, including the bison ("*bisons sangergruppe*"), wolf ("*loups sportgruppe*"), and eagle groups ("*aigles theatergruppe*").[124] In another picture he draws two boys holding flags, one that says "*Leopards*" (leopards) and the other says "*Loups*" (wolves).[125]

Though life at La Guette was mostly confined to the château and its immediate surroundings, children occasionally had the opportunity to go on outings. Harry Schoenfrank and others speak about taking a trip to visit sites in Paris such as the Eiffel Tower.[126] Alice Berney states that she was not allowed to go with the others into Paris, but instead she got to go to a local

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[122] Watkins, *A Childhood Lost and Found*, 17.

[123] This cartoon shows a mob of boys at a soccer match. It's called "Meuten Match: Weana – Lyon" [Mob Match: Weana – Lyon], United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #73046, Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[124] This drawing shows "Bisons Sangergruppe" or "Bisons Singing Group." At the bottom is a conductor leading someone to sing "Oh Gott, Oh Gott" or "Oh God, Oh God." Also in the picture are representatives from the "Loups Sprortgruppe" and the "Aigles Theatergruppe," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #43803, Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[125] This cartoon shows two young boys in blue uniforms each holding flags. The flag on the lett is mostly black and says across it "Leopard's" while the flag on the left (French-looking) says "Loups" with a small animal's head in the center. The two boys are shaking hands, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #43795, Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[126] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

circus with a different group of children.[127] In addition, the group occasionally received visitors from the outside, including the Rothschild family.

The Rothschilds Visit La Guette

Baron Édouard and Baroness Germaine de Rothschild visited La Guette and served as perhaps distant but nevertheless existent adult figures during the children's time in France. Different survivors have different accounts of their visits, but it is clear that the Rothschilds visited on occasion and the children looked up to them. This relationship with the Rothschilds was another way in which the La Guette children felt part of a home and had their needs looked after while they were in France.

Alice Berney discusses the Rothschilds' visits, stating, "In La Guette Madame de Rothschild came, and once her husband came but he was already quite frail and old. And then when they left for America, the son Guy de Rothschild came and played games with us, or, didn't come often but once or twice I remember him, he was very pleasant."[128] Felix Scherzer remembers that when the Baroness came to visit "that was always a big deal, '*La Baronne*,' '*Madame La Baronne*.'"[129] Felix says that when the Baroness came to visit the children would assemble in front of La Guette to greet her: "And that was in the main courtyard, right in front of the place. And that's where also the place where we would receive the Baroness when she came to visit. We would all line up and she would drive up in her Rolls Royce or whatever she drove, and come out. And always '*Bonjour les enfants*' and '*Bonjour Madame*,' et cetera."[130]

Accounts differ in regard to the timing of Rothschilds' visits, so it is possible that the

[127] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[130] Ibid.

Rothschilds came at different times or they may have had regularly scheduled visits. Alice Samson says, "On Thursdays either Édouard de Rothschild or his wife would come to visit us and would have goûter with us, that's the four o'clock snack. They would just drive in and maybe stay for an hour or two."[131] Werner Neuberger mentions Friday night visits, saying, "Like Friday nights, they used to come, drive from Paris to the home, and meet the children in the yard outside and we went inside, sat at the table, they ate their meals with us."[132] Ruth Schloss also talks about the Rothschilds visiting La Guette on Friday nights for *Shabbat* dinner: "Every Friday night the Baroness Rothschild would come and sit with us in the dining room, and the *challah* was there, the candles were lit, and the educators were as kind as possible, of course nobody could take the parents' place."[133]

Werner and Ruth are not the only survivors who associate the Rothschilds with Jewish observances; Kurt Moses recalls that the Rothschilds visited on Chanukah and gave the children gifts:

> She used to come around every Chanukah and give us each a gift, and we used to shake her hand and say '*Danke*' or '*Merci*' or whatever we said at the time. And the gift turned out to be something like a pencil, a little notebook, or you know, something very, very small. What we consider small nowadays but it didn't have that kind of an impression on us then. It was quite a nice gift. We looked upon it as quite a nice gesture. I had never heard of the Rothschilds before we moved to France. And of course then we find out that they were a very old, or rich – rich mostly, banking family. She came down and shook our hand, which we all thought was a very nice gesture.[134]

La Guette was not a religious home, and children who were Orthodox Jews were typically sent to more observant children's homes in France. However, some survivors mention celebrations on *Shabbat* (the Sabbath) and Jewish holidays, so it is plausible that the Rothschilds joined the

[131] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[132] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[133] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[134] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

children for some of these occasions.[135]

In addition to the Rothschilds' visits to La Guette, some of the children visited the Rothschilds' residence at Château de Ferrières. Harry Schoenfrank says, "As a matter of fact that place, that château, couldn't have been too far from another place that the Rothschilds owned that was still their residence called Ferrières. That's where they had all of the antiques and paintings, et cetera. As a matter of fact sometime during our stay there they took us by bus to visit their residence."[136] Ruth Schloss also visited, as she explains, "…the Baroness really tried the utmost that we should be happy. Every weekend she used to take about six, seven children with her in her own castle, and I was one of the privileged to spend the weekend with them too, which was really fabulous."[137]

Because survivors' accounts differ, it is difficult to know what details are most accurate about the La Guette children's relationship with the Rothschilds. However, it is clear that the children had interactions with the Rothschilds while they lived at La Guette, and these interactions may have been tied to holiday observances. The Rothschilds certainly made an impression on the children, and some of the children venerated them. The Baron and Baroness de Rothschild therefore were adult figures who were part of the La Guette community, and in addition to their financial sponsorship, their in-person visits may have added to the sense of home at La Guette.

Communicating with Family while at La Guette

Most of the children were able to communicate with their parents via letter while they

[135] See: Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA; Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[136] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.
[137] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.

were at La Guette. Through communication with their families back home, the La Guette children remained connected to their previous homes and shared about life in their new home in France. Inge Spitz says of this communication, "We wrote home all the time; we were very homesick naturally. I wrote to my grandmother I remember: 'Oma, if I could only wash dishes I would gladly do it for you.' I used to rebel about washing the dishes when I was a child. And then – who didn't – I wished I could wash the dishes and I wish I were home, and we were all very homesick."[138] Eva Moore adds, "And at the beginning mail was, like in the Army, it was a big event when they had the mail and they called out the names and all of the disappointments and joy that went along with that."[139]

Eva and Walter Weitzmann's mother was able to travel to France to visit them at La Guette, a rare opportunity in the La Guette group. Their mother, who lived in Austria throughout World War II, was most likely able to visit France because she was not Jewish. Walter Weitzmann describes this visit as a positive experience and one that helped him cope with his situation:

> Also, of course in our favor my mother managed to visit us about a half a year after we arrived in France. So she came and she stayed in a little town called Villeneuve-Saint-Denis in a hotel and she was able to have meals with us and be with us outside of schooltime. So that was kind of nice and she was nice to a lot of the other children, especially the ones that she knew from Vienna. So that was a great experience and it helped.[140]

Eva also describes their mother's visit, which she had mixed feelings about as a child who did not want to be singled out:

> Well, I was sometimes troubled by it because I didn't like to be the exception that my mother came and 119 mothers didn't. So that caused me – I was very conformist and I think that I was afraid of envy of others. My mother distributed gum and we all chewed

[138] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[139] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[140] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

> the gum gladly and then we stuck it on the plates and then we had a reprimand from the director about this gum and then I felt guilty for my mother that she didn't have good judgment to give us gum. And I had all kinds of very negative, petty emotions and my mother told me later that I hadn't been a very sweet girl to her. But I couldn't explain to her all of my reflections about, you know, I didn't communicate, I didn't explain, I just reacted. But I'm sure that I was also extremely happy that she came.[141]

Eva continues to describe her mother's visit by mentioning that her mother was able to report back to other parents of La Guette children in Vienna about the children's home and the welfare of their children. Eva says, "But she wanted to verify how it was going and then of course all of the parents in Vienna, they had formed a network there and my mother probably came back with photographs and told how we were and reassured them, so she was like a good messenger to bring the news to the other parents, whoever still were in Vienna."[142]

Off-Site Placements from La Guette

Two groups of older children were sent from Château de la Guette to off-site placements to live and attend school. As a result, these children were separated from the La Guette community to some extent, but they lived at their off-site placements with other La Guette children and maintained contact with the group in Villeneuve-Saint-Denis. The children placed off-site would later rejoin their peers (and in some cases, siblings) in La Bourboule.

A group of older girls was sent to Saint-Briac-sur-Mer in Brittany where they lived and studied in a French school.[143] Erika Goldfarb was one of these girls, and as she explains, the school was run very differently than La Guette: "So we went to Brittany, in a French school, to learn French. It was at the seaside. And we stayed there for about a year. It was pretty tough

[141] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA; Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA; *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 19.

because, but we learned French and it was not – we were so unaccustomed to this type of discipline, you see the French discipline and the restrictions and so on, but we managed."[144] Gerald Watkins's sister, Sylvia, was also at the school in Saint-Briac, and Gerald tells a similar story about her experience: "As I said she and some of the older girls as we called them were in this French school, and that was a fairly unhappy time for her because it was an extremely strict school. It was cold and miserable; it was not as pleasant."[145] Though Erika states that the children were sent there with the purpose of learning French, Erika also mentions that the group of older girls may have been sent away from La Guette because they did not get along with the home's new *directrice*.[146] The girls eventually rejoined the La Guette group in La Bourboule, as Erika explains:

> And I would say in May in 1940, beginning of 1940, the whole coast was declared an army zone, you know, so seeing that we were Germans they didn't make the distinction between Germans or Jew, we were just foreigners, we were Germans, so we had to go inland, we were pushed back inland. So our other, the whole house, the other group had gone already to another home in central France called Hôtel des Anglais, which the Baroness had rented I suppose in La Bourboule. So we, the other girls, joined the whole group again.[147]

A group of boys from La Guette was placed in Clamart, where they lived in dormitories and attended school.[148] When asked what he and his friends at the school would talk about, Helmut Wolff mentions in his response that "Naturally, the few boys of us who came together from La Guette, we talked about our home and what is going on and what's going on in La Guette."[149] Heinz Low also writes in his diary about living in Clamart. His entry on May 26, 1940 (the first since November of 1939) explains that he had moved to Clamart and details how

[144] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[145] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[146] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA; *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 19.
[149] Ibid.

the boys kept in touch with the La Guette group via letter and over break:

> My situation: I am no longer in La Guette. I am now in a Pensionat near Paris (École des Jeunes Gens, Clamart) in order to learn French faster and to make the 'Certificat d'Études.' At first it was very hard on us because we were used to La Guette. Now we are much happier since in a few days we will depart for Po[i]tiers because it is too dangerous here as a result of the bombings. We received lots of mail from La Guette. During Easter we went to La Guette for five days.[150]

The boys therefore still felt connected to the La Guette group even when placed off-site. The boys in Clamart eventually moved further south to the Unoccupied Zone and later re-joined the La Guette group in La Bourboule.[151]

Reflections on the La Guette Experience

Many of the La Guette survivors focus on the positive elements of Château de la Guette in their testimonies, including the educational experiences, extracurricular activities, Children's Republic, and camaraderie with their friends that they found at the home. Some go as far as to express that, as Beatrice Rubens states, "We were in this paradise I would say. There was no food problem, there was no war, yet."[152] Felix Scherzer also has a perhaps romanticized view of life in La Guette, as evidenced by his statement that "La Guette was an idyll. It was really an idyllic life. I mean just figure you're in a very posh boarding school, everything is there for you: you're clothed, you're fed, you're taught."[153] Then after being asked how the food was, Felix responded, "Excellent. Missing nothing. Made excursions, we saw things, et cetera. It was a beautiful life."[154] Without viewing the children in their original context, it is difficult to know to what extent these comments are idealized versions of reality based on hindsight and to what

[150] Heinz Low's Diary, page 20a, Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[151] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.
[152] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[153] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[154] Ibid.

extent they truly reflect what the children felt at the time. After all, throughout this time the children were separated from their families and their families back home were typically in danger.

Occasionally testimonies counter the glowing reports of La Guette with a more complex account of the children's experiences. Ruth Schloss sums up the contrast between the positive experiences at La Guette and the difficulty of being away from home. According to Ruth, "La Guette was a place that we felt at home, yet a home away from home. Because at night when we went to bed they came and kissed us, they tucked us in, but it was still very hard. We all cried. Life was good but not good."[155] Walter Weitzmann comments on the difficulties of being away from home in his oral history, but only after the interviewer mentions that some of the children probably had a hard time despite being in a supportive environment. After being prompted in this way, Walter replies:

> Oh, yeah. I mean it's no different than here today. I mean some people are able to cope with situations better than others. A lot of them were homesick for a long period of time at the beginning until they adjusted to the whole thing. Maybe some never adjusted, I really don't know. Others were able to adjust much more rapidly. I think I was one of them. I was able to fit in and sort of block certain things out and manage.[156]

Alice Berney had an extremely hard time at La Guette in the beginning and she adds a glimpse of the darker side of the children's adjustment to life in France without their parents:

> And it was very exciting in one way but also very, very sad. Especially the less popular kids were very lonely and there was a lot of crying going on. And I didn't realize how sad I was already then, I remember looking out the window for hours waiting for my parents to show up, coming up the highway – it was out in the country. And of course they never showed up. And I think many of us considered suicide, if not – nobody did it, but we all had passing moments of it. But towards the end of the year we had gotten used to it, and it was, we had good schooling and good teachers.[157]

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[155] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[156] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[157] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

Alice's account provides a striking contrast to the more idealized discussions of La Guette, though she also affirms that there were positive elements of her stay and she appears to have become more integrated in the group over time.

Though the children's experiences at La Guette may not have been as rosy in reality as they are sometimes remembered, it seems that some of the children did indeed have positive experiences at La Guette, and this is repeated many times across interviews. In part, this was because the war had not yet intensified, as Gerald Watkins explains, "And that first year, which of course was the year that war had already been – we got there as I said in late March and the war broke out in September, but nothing much happened in that war for a few months as you will recall. So that first year in La Guette we have quite a few happy memories."[158]

Positive memories also related to the sense of community at the château. Edith Cohen shares, "It was school and lunch and dinner and just being with other children. It's not like family life because in a family you're just with your brothers or sisters, whatever you have. But this is with strange children and who become your family."[159] Indeed, over time the group of children even pretended to be one another's family members. Eva Moore explains, "We formed families amongst us. You would go, I would go to an older girl and say, 'Will you be my mother?' I would go to another one and say, 'You can be my cousin and sister' and we would try to apply kinship terminology to a select few and then we would cast them in those roles. I didn't know at the time, but I think it was like the need for nuclear family."[160]

[158] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[159] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[160] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

Figure 9: ***A group of girls stand in a line holding flowers in the Chateau de La Guete children's home.*** **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Rita Grusd.**

Kurt Moses also comments on the community in the home, saying, "And during these fourteen months that we were at the Château de la Guette – it actually was a very good time, really a very good time, we had all these children who were very friendly, and we were kind of a close society."[161] After all, La Guette had become a home for the children in France, as Helmut Wolff states, "This was our home. And we lived again and free and were happy. Because they brought us up in very, very satisfactory circumstances."[162]

Testimonies suggest that the overall experience at La Guette involved rich educational, extracurricular, and social opportunities, and the children appear to have benefitted from these opportunities while living at La Guette and later on during and after the war. However, the children were only temporarily safe at La Guette in their continued flight from persecution, and part of the reason La Guette is remembered so positively is that Hôtel des Anglais and other stops along the children's journeys would have worse conditions.

[161] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.
[162] Helmut Wolff, interview 12419, VHA.

Searching for Home again in La Bourboule

The La Guette group had been living in France for a little over a year before the Germans approached France in May of 1940. The children fled once again, going with their educators by train further south in an attempt to evade the Germans' advance.[163] The group moved to and took over what had previously been a hotel called Hôtel des Anglais.[164] The Bank of Rothschild also moved to La Bourboule, perhaps explaining why the destination was chosen for the children.[165] La Bourboule was a small town in central France in the mountainous Massif Central region.[166] The area would become part of the Unoccupied Zone of Vichy France, which allowed the group to escape the German occupation, but over time the children would still be affected by anti-Jewish measures enacted in Vichy France.

The children were instructed not to bring their warm clothes with them on the exodus from La Guette, and Alice Berney says that this was because educators did not think they would be away for very long.[167] Alice describes the crowded trains as people fled Paris, stating, "We got out in the nick of time; we didn't get bombed, and the people behind us were bombed on the roads, but there were many, it was very, very crowded."[168] Ellen Bamberger also describes the journey to La Bourboule, saying, "And we took a train to – we were told we would be back, to pack only a small suitcase, and we took a train to the center of France, the Massif Central. To a little town, which is actually normally a spa. And the town was called La Bourboule; I hope you don't make me spell that. And there again the Rothschilds had rented a small hotel…"[169]

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[163] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 19-20.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA; Guy de Rothschild, *The Whims of Fortune: The Memoirs of Guy de Rothschild* (New York, NY: Random House, 1985), 121; Lottman, *The French Rothschilds*, 219.
[166] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 20.
[167] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.

Ellen says that once "the Germans invaded France, then things changed rather drastically."[170] Inge Spitz describes the accommodations at Hôtel des Anglais, explaining, "It was – during the peacetime it was used as a regular hotel because there were mountains around us and it was used for winter sport, for people who went for winter sports, skiing and so on. We were quartered there, again two, three, four to a room, dining room downstairs, kitchen duty."[171] During the group's stay in La Bourboule some of the children lived at a villa called Les Hirondelles because there was not enough room at Hôtel des Anglais. Inge explains, "And the older children were quartered eventually – no, the sisters, the siblings, there were several sets of siblings, and the older girls were quartered in a villa a little bit up the mountain called Les Hirondelles. And we used to go and eat at the Hôtel des Anglais."[172]

Some survivors contrast their experiences at Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais. Alice Berney says that at the château "there was no problem, the food was plentiful, the money was plentiful and we didn't have to worry about it. When we got to La Bourboule it got much more difficult."[173] Typically when discussing their experience in La Bourboule, survivors mention the lack of food and the cold weather, meaning that hunger and cold were two of the fundamental experiences in this location. Kurt Moses describes how the children would rush to get food at mealtimes:

> And I remember we used to sit ten to a table and they used to put the bread on the table and before we were allowed in the dining room. And when they opened the door everybody rushed to a seat to get first, be first at his table to get the biggest piece of bread. You don't know what hunger does. It's a matter of – we used to trade hunger for clothes – we used to trade bread for clothes. A pair of socks was worth, used socks, obviously, three pieces of bread. This was a high price. Anyway, cold water, minimal accommodations, and very little food.

[170] Ibid.
[171] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

Alice Berney also discusses the food and cold, "But the problem with La Bourboule was that it was extremely cold. Even in the summer it was cool. And it rained a lot and the winters were just awful. And we had no winter clothes whatsoever and we were always freezing. And after the first couple of months there was no food, or very little. So all we ever thought about was food and warmth, and everybody developed chilblains."[174] Inge Spitz also says that on the mountain, "…we used to pick blueberries to supplement our diet, and raspberries, wild raspberries and wild blueberries up there."[175] At the 1983 La Guette reunion the survivors also discussed looking for food to assuage their hunger.[176]

Though there were classes for the children at the home, some children attended public school in La Bourboule. Alice Berney was one of the children who attended public school, which she says allowed her to be in a heated environment during the day unlike her peers at Hôtel des Anglais.[177] Gerald Watkins, too, attended a public school in the area. He did well academically in the public school, but faced discrimination because he was not a native French citizen:

> I did quite well there, in fact I remember, this was another thing that you remember. I came first in class in that year, and at the end of the year there was a presentation of prizes, you got a book I think. And in each class the one who came first got a small prize. And before the prize-giving ceremony I was pulled aside by the teacher or the headmaster and informed that I wouldn't be getting the prize of course because I was a German; Austria and Germany were the same thing to them, and that this French boy who had come second would get the prize and I'm sure that I would understand. Well, that's just one of the things you understand. It didn't seem all that strange to me, I sort of almost – I was disappointed, but it's the sort of thing you had come to expect.[178]

Gerald coped with the disappointment of not receiving recognition for his first place standing in

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[174] Ibid.

[175] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

[176] Hilary Waldman, "40 Years Later…Tears and Hugs: Holocaust Survivors Reunited in Orangeburg," *Journal-News* (Rockland County, NY), July 11, 1983.

[177] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

[178] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

class, but it was likely a difficult experience for him as a child, and it is a memory that has stuck with him throughout his life. Sadly, Gerald says that he had "come to expect" such treatment after his previous experiences of discrimination.

Survivors do not mention the same daily rituals in La Bourboule as those that the group participated in at La Guette, but several survivors do reference walks that the children would take together. Inge Spitz explains, "What we had to do every single day: go for a walk. For health reasons…But every day, after lunch, winter and summer, we walked for a long time."[179] Alice Berney says of these walks, "The nearest town was another spa called Mont-Dore. That's where we went; we had to go for walks after every lunch, rain or shine, that was the French way of educating the children…We walked to the next town or to the town Saint-Sauves on the other side."[180] A song from the children's time in La Bourboule, "*Chant de la Guette*," also references these walks, which the children apparently did not always enjoy based on the lyrics that said, "*C'est vraiment détestable*."[181] Aside from these walks, the children may have been fairly secluded according to Ellen Bamberger's memories of life in La Bourboule:

> We did actually not get around too much; we stayed pretty well to ourselves. And when we did go out we mostly, it was out into the countryside rather than into town. I really don't remember a thing about the town of La Bourboule at all, and maybe that was intentional. They didn't want to make such a point of having all of these evacuated Jewish children amidst, you know, the population. The government was Vichy France, which was I suppose better than being under Nazi domination, but it was only one step better. And so I think we were somewhat protected.[182]

As the La Guette group settled into life in La Bourboule, they continued to build their community, but day-to-day life changed and eventually became more challenging. Communal

[179] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[180] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[181] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[182] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.

experiences may have been even more important for the children in the midst of these difficult conditions, and activities such as taking daily walks and even searching for food became new rituals for the group.

Exposure to Religious Ritual and Home Life through La Bourboule's Jewish Community

A few of the survivors mention contact with the Jewish community of La Bourboule while they lived at Hôtel des Anglais. The children's interactions with the Jewish community in La Bourboule allowed some children to visit home environments and provided the children with extra food at these homes or in school. *Bar mitzvah* ceremonies held for some boys in La Bourboule allowed the children to partake in Jewish ritual and mark their coming of age despite their displacement and harrowing circumstances. In this way, the group adapted to and made the best of their situation.

Alice Berney says of the interaction with the Jewish community, "And there were a number of Jewish refugees in town and one of the children always brought me – we went home for lunch – but like at four o'clock she brought me something to eat, a slice of bread or something. I guess they didn't have all that much either but they had more than we did and they did bring to this friend. There were two in our class from the children's home and she always brought us something to eat."[183] Similarly, Kurt Moses was invited to a Jewish family's house for dinner. Kurt explains, "We had a Jewish community in La Bourboule, which incidentally was a small town and sometimes the people in this town, the Jews, invited us to dinner at their house. I think they felt that it would be good for us to live, or to see how a family lived. And I remember being invited to a family's house where I ate a good meal once. I think I must've eaten

[183] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

them out of house and home."[184] Kurt also remembers services held by the La Bourboule Jewish community: "When we got to La Bourboule we used to take part in the Jewish community services. They had some services. And later on they had to be toned down because the Germans started walking through the town and so on and so forth and they didn't want to be seen."[185]

Some of the boys who were thirteen in the La Guette group had a *bar mitzvah* ceremony in La Bourboule, including Kurt Moses: "I remember being *bar mitzvah* in France in a living room with a *minyan* and we held our service and I said my piece and that was it. There was no big affair, there were no presents – I'm sorry, having said that I have one present, which I still have…they're a French copy of David Copperfield."[186] Of the preparation, Kurt says, "I was simply told to learn this little paragraph, it was very short, it was maybe half a page. And it was all over in twenty minutes or whatever. And that was my *bar mitzvah*. And I don't have any certificate to prove it."[187] Harry Schoenfrank has a similar story: "And of course by that time, at that time I got to be thirteen, right? I had a *bar mitzvah* in the local *shul*, which was not a – didn't have a synagogue in town but was in a rented space."[188]

[184] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

Figure 10: ***Gerhard Mahler poses with the children of a family in La Bourboule who hosted his bar mitzvah.*** **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Gerald Watkins.**

Gerald Watkins was another thirteen-year-old to have a *bar mitzvah*, and Figure 10 shows him with a Jewish family in La Bourboule who hosted him for the event.[189] Werner Neuberger recalls that he and some other boys who were of age said some prayers to have a *bar mitzvah* and they had cake to celebrate, so it is possible that all of the aforementioned boys had a *b'nai mitzvah* ceremony as a group.[190] Werner thinks that the *bar mitzvah* ceremony was in 1941, but he was older than Kurt, Harry, and Gerald, so it is possible that he was actually fifteen when he observed his *bar mitzvah* because he had turned thirteen at La Guette and likely did not have an opportunity to mark the occasion there.

[189] Gerhard Mahler poses with the children of a family in La Bourboule who hosted his bar mitzvah, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #64109, Courtesy of Gerald Watkins, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

[190] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

Communicating with Family while at Hôtel des Anglais

Correspondence between children and their parents became more difficult over time as the war prohibited mail from being sent between France and Germany other than short Red Cross postcards.[191] Mail could be sent, however, through the neutral country of Switzerland. As a result, a woman living in Switzerland named Elisabeth Luz forwarded mail for many of the La Guette children and other Jewish refugee children in France.[192] Though she was not a relative, the children called her Aunt Elisabeth in their letters, ostensibly as a way to hide from censors that she was forwarding mail.[193] Inge Spitz explains how she kept in contact with her family in Germany through Aunt Elisabeth:

> I had correspondence with my mother through Switzerland until she was deported. We had a wonderful lady called *Tante* Elisabeth, Elisabeth Luz, who forwarded mail, you wrote her and she forwarded our mail to my mother because Switzerland was neutral. And my mother wrote to *Tante* Elisabeth and forwarded my mother's mail to us, in France still. And we weren't the only ones, my sister and I; there were lots of other kids who did that.[194]

In addition to forwarding letters, Aunt Elisabeth often paid for postage and writing supplies for the children.[195] Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt discuss the "extensive postal service" run by Elisabeth Luz and explain that "More than three thousand letters passed through her hands."[196] In the process, Aunt Elisabeth allowed many of the La Guette children – and others – to be in touch with their family members when they otherwise may have lost contact with them.

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[191] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 260.

[192] Ibid., 247; La Guette children Eva and Susi Guttmann, Fée Beyth [Erika Goldfarb], Werner and Ursula Matzdorff, Adolf and Robert Hess, Norbert Roth, Hanna-Ruth Klopstock, Heinz Pfutzner, and Ludwig Scheucher [Louis Scott] were all in contact with Aunt Elisabeth, as discussed in *Flight from the Reich* (see pages 252-256, 258-259, 261-263, 343-346, 373-377). Alex Waters, Inge Spitz, Kurt Moses, and Werner Moses also mention correspondence with Aunt Elisabeth in their oral history interviews.

[193] Ibid., 246.

[194] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

[195] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 247.

[196] Ibid., 246-247.

Figure 11: ***Two women work in a vineyard in Ebnet-Staefa.***
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Kurt Moses.

Aunt Elisabeth was sometimes in the difficult position of telling the children that their loved ones had been deported or died. Erika Goldfarb's father told Erika in a letter forwarded by Aunt Elisabeth that her brother had been killed.[197] Erika also heard that her father had died, likely from Aunt Elisabeth:

> Because in '42, I was still in '42 in Clermont-Ferrand when I got a letter from the connection in Switzerland. We had connections in Switzerland who transmitted news from our families who still lived in Germany. So that in '42 I found out that my father committed suicide in Berlin. He was still in Berlin in July '42. I understand they probably wanted to deport him and that's when he did it.[198]

Kurt Moses similarly says that he and his brother Werner were in the United States when he heard from Aunt Elisabeth that letters they had written to their parents had been sent back to her,

[197] Ibid., 259.
[198] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.

indicating that his parents were no longer receiving the mail.[199] Dwork and van Pelt explain, "As 1942 wore on, letters accrued their final and most essential function: they served as a sign of life."[200] Some of the La Guette children were able to continually receive letters from family and see these "signs of life" thanks to the efforts of Elisabeth Luz, but sadly some heard or inferred that family members were deported and/or killed.

Visiting Family in the Gurs Internment Camp

Some of the La Guette children's relatives were deported from Germany to Camp de Gurs, an internment camp in southwestern France. They were among over 6,500 Jews from Baden and the Palatinate who were deported to Camp de Gurs in October of 1940.[201] Ellen Bamberger remembers sending packages to Gurs, where her family had been sent.[202] Additionally, six of the La Guette children visited family members in Gurs in the spring of 1941, likely in April.[203] According to Henry Alexander, the children traveled with an educator to Gurs, were allowed in the camp for the day, and then returned to La Bourboule.[204]

[199] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

[200] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 259-260.

[201] Geoffrey P. Megargee, Joseph R. White, and Mel Hecker, eds., *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, vol. 3, *Camps and Ghettos under European Regimes Aligned with Nazi Germany* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memoria Museum, 2018), 151.

[202] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.

[203] Children from La Guette children's home pose for a group portrait in a plaza in Pau while on route to visit their parents in the Gurs concentration camp, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #69327, Courtesy of Ruth Strauss Schloss, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Alice Samson collection, 2011.331.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[204] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.

Figure 12: ***Children from La Guette children's home pose for a group portrait in a plaza in Pau while on route to visit their parents in the Gurs concentration camp*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Ruth Strauss Schloss.

Henry was one of the children who visited his parents at Gurs. He describes the camp by saying, "Well the camp was a miserable camp, it was full of mud; everybody walked in mud. And they had no regular streets, no sidewalks, anything like that, and food was very scarce. I ate there, lunch, or whatever. And they lived in barracks."[205] Alice Samson was another child in the group who visited her relatives in Gurs. She has a similar description of conditions at the camp:

> We arrived in the morning and it was very dreary, extremely cold. It was even raining somewhat. How I got from the gate to my mother I have no idea because there were many, many barracks. I did not recognize my mother at all, and my mother kept showing me off to other members of the family and I was unable to recognize anyone. We spent a day there and so I was able to see what kind of food and how they lived at Camp de Gurs, which was terrible. Just to go to the john they had to walk through the mud and the mud came past ankle deep because it was always wet there in that part of the country.[206]

[205] Ibid.
[206] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

Henry spent the day in Gurs with his mother, father, two aunts, and two uncles, as well as seeing other people he knew from his childhood in Germany.[207] He describes the emotional encounter with his family, including his mother who did not want him to leave:

> Well again it was very emotional. My mother absolutely wanted me, like I said before, to stay with her and get myself interned, which I said no. And the OSE wouldn't have let me anyhow. I remember we ate together, we took a walk, and before you knew it – and I saw some other people, like the old teacher from the Jewish school in Landau, Zeilberger [*unknown spelling*], he was interned there; I saw him and a couple of other people I remembered from Landau. And eight hours when you're in a situation like that they go by very fast…[208]

Both Alice Samson and Ruth Schloss did not recognize their mothers when they visited the camp. Alice did not recognize her mother because she was very gaunt, and she saw the meager amount of food her relatives were given in Gurs.[209] Alice's mother gave her a box of personal items for Alice to take and presumably keep safe. Alice shows and describes a photograph of the box in her interview, saying, "This box comes from La Bourboule. However, it was given to me by my mother during the one day I visited Camp de Gurs. This is in France, in the Basses-Pyrénées area. Inside the box, she had two items. One, she had sewn a little sac filled with dirt from my father's grave, and the other was my father's wedding ring."[210]

Ruth Schloss also did not recognize her mother's changed appearance at the camp and describes her experience spending the day with her parents at Gurs:

> When I saw my mother I did not recognize her. She was very, very skinny, she was very, very nervous. My father was almost bald. And she tried to put a very good act on. She says that she thought she was too heavy and she lost some weight. Unfortunately I believed her at the time, or fortunately, I don't know. My father showed me around, my mother showed me, they were only allowed to go a certain amount of steps. And the little bit they had they offered me; I did not take it. There was one slice of bread my mother

[207] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Alice Samson collection, 2011.331.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[210] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

had saved for two days; she knew I was coming. My father had saved a little soup that looks like water…[211]

Clearly, it was an emotional and traumatic encounter for many of the children to reunite with family at the camp. The children saw firsthand the conditions in the camp and sometimes did not recognize their parents due to the long separation and the changes in their parents' physical and mental states. As Henry explains in his interview, the children also did not have the means or power to rescue their parents from the camp, and they had to leave their parents at the end of the day.[212] The children revisited their pasts at the camp by talking with family and sometimes others they knew from Germany, but this glimpse of home was in the dislocated and restricted place of an internment camp in France.

Many of the German Jews interned in Gurs were sent to Drancy and from there deported to Auschwitz.[213] Soon after visiting her family in Gurs, Ruth heard first that her mother was deported and then that her father was also going to be deported.[214] Ruth, Henry, and Alice's parents were all killed, and the visit to Gurs was the last time that they saw them.

Off-Site Placements from Hôtel des Anglais

While the La Guette group was at Hôtel des Anglais, some of the children were sent to off-site placements throughout Vichy France. These children were sent to schools (oftentimes professional training schools) or to work. The La Guette group was fragmented as some children left, though the children living off-site remained in small to medium-sized groups with La Guette peers. Some of the children living off-site also had the opportunity to return to Hôtel des Anglais

[211] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[212] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.
[213] Megargee, White, and Hecker, eds., *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, 150-151.
[214] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.

on breaks. As a result, the children's connection with the La Guette group and home was oftentimes maintained even when they were off-site. The children at off-site placements had access to practical needs such as food and shelter in the midst of shortages, and they also often learned educational and/or vocational skills.

As time went on, these placements may have been in anticipation of Hôtel des Anglais's closing and the need to protect children elsewhere. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, some children had already left for the United States in the summer of 1941 and other children had left to join family members in other countries. By October 9, 1941, there were seventy-five La Guette children remaining in the group, including thirty-three still living together and forty-two living at off-site placements.[215] Though some children were sent to off-site placements prior to September and October of 1941, records from these months provide a snapshot of some of the locations where La Guette children were placed.[216]

Some of the children were placed outside of Hôtel des Anglais but still in La Bourboule. In September of 1941, there were six La Guette boys and four La Guette girls placed at a variety of locations in La Bourboule, primarily hotels and farms, and in the case of one child's placement, with a carpenter.[217] Eight La Guette girls and two La Guette boys were placed in Clermont-Ferrand, a town not far from La Bourboule.[218] The girls attended École Primaire Superieure Professionnelle et Hôtelière de Jeunes Filles, a hotel school for young girls in

[215] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.

Clermont-Ferrand.[219] The two boys placed in Clermont-Ferrand also studied to work in hotels at École Pratique Amédée-Gasquet.[220]

Figure 13: ***Group portrait of teenage girls studying hotel management in a school in Clermont-Ferrand*****. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Alice M. Berney.**

Erika Goldfarb was one of the girls who lived in Clermont-Ferrand. She describes her experience at the hotel school in her oral history interview:

> A group, more or less the same group, the older ones, we were sent to Clermont-Ferrand, which is in the Puy-de-Dome where we attended a school, several sections. I personally was in the hotel section. I learned the hotel trade. Being a group, you know, you would hear the announcement: The little Israelites please come to Madame la Directrice, you know, this distinction. It was just, to me, I don't think it was meant badly but it really shocked us. And well, we learned. During the holidays we went back to La Bourboule, to our base, and I worked in a hotel at the time. Then I finished more or less the school in Clermont-Ferrand and was placed for the practical work to La Bourboule in one of the biggest hotels.[221]

Erika's description of the hotel school noticeably highlights the La Guette children's separation from the other students because they were Jewish and had come to the school as a group. Erika

[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.

also explains that the group returned to La Bourboule during breaks, which she calls their "base," demonstrating that Hôtel des Anglais was a home base even when the children were placed off-site.

To the southwest of La Bourboule, fourteen La Guette boys were placed in Brive-la-Gaillard at École Pratique d'Industrie et d'Artisanat Rural, a technical school.[222] The boys were placed at the school in July of 1941, and by January of 1942 there were still twelve La Guette boys living at the school.[223] Louis Scott was one of the boys placed at École Pratique, and he says that he learned about mechanics, a subject that greatly interested him.[224] Also to the west of La Bourboule, two La Guette boys were placed at Champcevinel in the Domaine de Borie-Brut for an agricultural internship.[225]

To the southeast of La Bourboule, there were La Guette children placed in Hyères, Dieulefit, Nice, and Boulouris-sur-Mer. Four La Guette boys attended the École d'Agriculture, an agricultural training school in Hyères.[226] In September of 1941 they were beginning their second year at the school.[227] Six La Guette boys and two La Guette girls were placed in Dieulefit at École de Beauvallon.[228] École de Beauvallon was a school run by Marguerite Soubeyran, Catherine Krafft, and Simone Monnier, and the school was for children who did not do well in a traditional school setting.[229] The leaders of the school took in Jewish refugee children, including

[222] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[225] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] RG-50.012.0061, Oral history interview with Simone Monnier, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

the La Guette children from La Bourboule.[230] Simone Monnier got to know three of the refugee children – presumably La Guette children – very well and remained in touch with them later in life, saying that they were almost like her own children.[231] Records about the La Guette children's placements note that the two girls at École de Beauvallon did household work as au pairs while they lived there.[232]

In Nice, there were initially five La Guette boys living together, three attending the École du Parc Impérial and two attending École Hôtelière.[233] Alex Waters was one of these boys, and he lived with the four others at a *pension* called Consuelo.[234] Alex attended École Hôtelière, a hotel school, initially with one other La Guette child and another La Guette student joined them by January of 1942.[235] Alex describes what they learned at the school, "It's a commercial and hotel school, which was very well-known, you learn a lot, anywhere from cooking—also didn't have much to cook because it was wartime—and waiting on tables, bookkeeping, shorthand, typing, you name it. In fact they did even send people overseas under normal circumstances to train in some nice hotels and stuff like that."[236] Alex's memories of his time in Nice relate to his studies as well as his efforts to acquire food; he says that an Italian woman who worked at a bakery in town gave him more bread than was allotted for his ration.[237] He also got peanuts from ships coming into the harbor in Nice, another way to scrounge up food.[238]

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[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.
[232] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[235] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[236] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid.

Additionally, the remaining thirty-four La Guette children were sent to the Institut de Plein Air in Boulouris-sur-Mer in Saint-Raphaël for the month of September.[239] A notebook likely belonging to educator Henry Pohoryles contains the "*Chant de Boulouris-sur-Mer*" and other songs from the group's time by the coast.[240] The songs describe the natural surroundings in Boulouris-sur-Mer, including the sea, seagulls, and the sunshine in the area.[241] The term "*vacances*" is used to denote their stay at Boulouris-sur-Mer, so perhaps it was a chance to enjoy time by the sea and remove the children from conditions in La Bourboule.[242]

Some of these off-site placements were the precursor to or became longer-term placements for the children as the children's home at Hôtel des Anglais was closed by the end of 1941.[243] The children in the La Guette group who remained in France were dispersed and would live in other children's homes, schools, or other locations throughout Vichy France. Édouard and Germaine de Rothschild had already fled themselves to the United States in 1940.[244] The Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) took over the care of the La Guette children by the end of 1941, and as a result, the children often lived in OSE children's homes.[245] In December of 1941 La Guette children were sent to the OSE homes Château de Montintin, Château du Couret (Le Couret), and Château de Chabannes in addition to other placements.[246]

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[239] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[240] Naomi Elath papers, 2004.435.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[241] Ibid.

[242] Ibid.

[243] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[244] Lottman, *The French Rothschilds*, 217-218.

[245] *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 22; Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 19.

[246] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

The collective La Guette experience ended with the dissolution of the home in La Bourboule. As the children continued their migrations in the wartime and post-war period, however, many of them remained in contact with La Guette peers and/or educators, and the La Guette community remained a part of many of the children's lives even years after the war. The children in France would continue to flee from persecution as further anti-Jewish measures were enacted and deportations carried out in Vichy France, and all of the children would continue to search for home in their diverse wartime and post-war migrations.

Conclusion

The La Guette children searched for and found home in France as a group, first at Château de la Guette and then at Hôtel des Anglais. Through the influence of their educators and the Rothschild family, the children were exposed to French culture and acclimated to life in France through daily rituals, education, and activities at La Guette. They also were taught values that aligned with the educators' views; at first, democratic values were transmitted through the Children's Republic at La Guette, and then with later educators some of the children were active in a Zionist organization at La Guette and in La Bourboule.

These opportunities and activities at the homes allowed the children to learn, develop, and find resilience and hope in the midst of difficult times. Furthermore, these activities were acts of resistance. Deborah Dwork discusses how children resisted Nazism by writing in diaries and singing, and indeed song was an integral part of the La Guette group and a way for children to resist persecution.[247] La Guette children also took part in other forms of nonviolent resistance

[247] Deborah Dwork, "Raising their Voices: Children's Resistance through Diary Writing and Song," in *Jewish Resistance against the Nazis*, ed. Patrick Henry (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 279-299.

that were common during the Holocaust, including participation in educational, cultural, and competitive activities, and involvement in religious or ideological groups such as the Zionist youth group and Children's Republic.[248] These were all ways in which the children defied Nazi persecution.

Figure 14: ***Group portrait of Jewish refugee children at the Château de la Guette children's home*****. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Werner Neuberger.**

Though the children initially clung to national identities upon their arrival at La Guette, over time the children developed a collective identity in the home and formed a strong community. This community served as a stand-in family for the children as they were separated from their parents and as they eventually faced hunger, cold, traumatizing news from parents, and other challenges in France, particularly in La Bourboule. Other individuals and groups such as Aunt Elisabeth, the Jewish community of La Bourboule, and educators at off-site placements oftentimes provided support for the children as well. Off-site placements separated the group but

[248] Patrick Henry, ed., *Jewish Resistance against the Nazis* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), xx-xxi.

kept smaller groups of La Guette children together. While living off-site, the children maintained connections with the La Guette community and often returned to visit their peers at La Guette or in La Bourboule.

Survivors' descriptions of their experiences at Château de la Guette and in La Bourboule demonstrate how their stays at these children's homes were formative experiences for them. Like other sites associated with the Holocaust, these homes should be studied for their role in not only rescuing many children from brutality and oftentimes death, but furthermore providing a vibrant atmosphere in which the children could grow up. At a time when their normal familial and community institutions were unable to support them, these children's homes played a critical role in their lives. The La Guette group's story is one powerful example of the influence of children's homes on the pre-war and wartime experiences of Jewish refugee children living in France during the Holocaust.

CHAPTER THREE:
WARTIME MIGRATIONS: HIDING IN FRANCE, CROSSING INTO SWITZERLAND, DEPORTATION TO THE EAST, AND IMMIGRATING TO THE UNITED STATES

The La Guette children's migrations constituted a number of patterns during World War II following their collective experiences at La Guette and in La Bourboule. Four of these patterns include: 1) Hiding in France for the duration of the war, 2) Hiding in France and then fleeing illegally through Switzerland, 3) Discovery and deportation, and 4) Immigration to the United States in 1941. These were not the only paths taken by the children during the war; for example, some children joined parents in other countries and some fled through Spain to Palestine.[1] However, the four aforementioned paths are frequently discussed in English-language oral history interviews and begin to illustrate the impact that flight to France had on the children's spatial trajectories during the war. Each of these four paths will be described in detail and exemplified by a case study.

What becomes clear from studying the La Guette children's wartime spatial patterns is that fleeing the Holocaust via France had a unique impact on the children's paths due to the specific historical context of France during World War II. The children's movements during the war differed from the children who fled on the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain because the children in France had to flee (or hide in) the country that was supposed to serve as their refuge. As a result, many of the La Guette children moved frequently and/or moved through multiple countries during the war in an effort to escape persecution. Therefore, the La Guette case sheds light on the complex migrations of children fleeing Nazi persecution via France.

[1] Elisabeth Hirsch escorted children over the border into Spain via the Pyrenees in August of 1944. According to OSE records, five La Guette children fled with Elisabeth Hirsch to this destination, likely at the same time. See: Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 212-213; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Remaining in France and Alice Berney's Story

In May of 1941, initial "mass arrests" of Jews in the Occupied Zone of France occurred.[2] Those arrested were sent to French internment camps, and additional arrests occurred in August and December of 1941.[3] Deportations from France to the concentration camp Auschwitz first occurred in March and then June of 1940.[4] Jews living in the Occupied Zone eventually faced new restrictions including a curfew and the inability to move to different residences in February of 1942, required wearing of a Jewish star in public starting in June of 1942, exclusion from public places such as entertainment venues, restaurants, and sporting events, and also severely restricted shopping hours, in July of 1942.[5] On July 16 and 17, 1942, close to 13,000 Jews, including children, were arrested in and around Paris and taken to the Vélodrome d'Hiver stadium in Paris or to the internment camp Drancy.[6] Following that mass arrest through September of 1942, over 33,000 Jews were sent on deportation convoys to Auschwitz.[7]

Occurring after roundups had already begun in the Occupied Zone, large-scale arrests in the Unoccupied Zone of France began on August 26-28, 1942.[8] Jews were rounded up, sent to camps in Vichy France, from there sent to Drancy in the Occupied Zone, and then they were deported to the East.[9] There were around 7,000 Jews taken in this roundup.[10] After Allied troops landed in North Africa in November of 1942, German troops occupied what had been the Unoccupied Zone.[11] In December of 1942, Jews were required to have their documents such as

[2] Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 6.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 28, 31-32, 37.
[6] Ibid., 7, 39.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 258-259.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 260.
[11] Ibid., 302.

identity cards and ration cards stamped to identify them as a "*Juif*" or "*Juive*" (Jew), although Jews in the region that had been unoccupied were never required to wear Jewish stars on their clothing.[12] By the end of 1942, "nearly 42,000 Jews were deported from France to the East."[13] Another large roundup occurred in February of 1943 in what had been the Unoccupied Zone, and other deportations were carried out during 1943 and through August of 1944.[14] There were ultimately around 75,000 Jews deported from France during World War II.[15]

These developments illustrate the persecution that La Guette children (those remaining in France) initially escaped by being in the Unoccupied Zone, as well as the danger that they faced in the Unoccupied Zone starting in August of 1942. La Guette children who were unable to get out of France by the end of 1941 when Hôtel des Anglais was disbanded were sent to a variety of placements, including children's homes, convents, farms, and professional training programs throughout Vichy France. The children were typically placed in these locations by the Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), which had taken over the care of La Guette children.

Some of OSE's rescue efforts eventually began to operate secretively.[16] Jewish children were hidden clandestinely through the Garel network, which was run by Georges Garel and was started in early 1943.[17] Through this network, children were often given false identities, and leaders placed children in different locations, moving them between placements as necessary.[18] The goal was for many of the children to blend in and appear to be "Aryan" children.[19] Members of the Garel network also sought out other rescue opportunities for children, particularly those

[12] Ibid., 240, 304; Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*, 184.
[13] Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 8.
[14] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 306, 329-330; Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, 206.
[15] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 343.
[16] Dwork, *Children with a Star*, 59.
[17] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 14, 28.
[18] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 28; Dwork, *Children with a Star*, 61-62.
[19] Ibid.; Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 209.

who were in danger or had trouble blending in.[20] Illegal crossings into Switzerland and to Palestine via Spain were organized as alternate rescue options, and these routes would allow some La Guette children to escape.[21] In February of 1944, all of OSE's rescue work went underground.[22]

Figure 15: ***Gisela Edel and another Jewish teenager live under false identities in a convent-operated old age home*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Naomi Elath.

Many La Guette children were given false papers and a false identity as they remained in France. Sometimes the children's false names had the same initials as their real names so that the false name was easy to remember.[23] Paul Peter Porges's false name did not match his real initials, but he chose to go by the false identity Georges De Nez, which he created from the name

[20] Samuel, *Rescuing the Children*, 96; Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 209.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Dwork, *Children with a Star*, 61.
[23] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA; Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

George Denes, one of his La Guette peers.[24] Many of the older children – now teenagers – worked in restaurants, on farms, or in other capacities, and some joined the French Resistance.

One of the La Guette children who hid in France for the duration of the war was Alice Berney (née Alice Menkes). She was born and raised in Vienna prior to being sent to France with her brother Herbert.[25] After living at Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais, she was sent with other La Guette girls in late December of 1941 to live at the OSE children's home Le Couret in La Jonchère.[26] Alice was one of thirteen La Guette girls who lived at Le Couret.[27] The home was run by a Jewish couple from Russian and Polish backgrounds, and the home was religious; the children were required to participate in services, which was a change for the La Guette girls.[28] Le Couret was an all-girls home and girls came from OSE children's homes, French concentration camps, and elsewhere in France to live at the home.[29] Le Couret did not have running water, and according to Alice's testimony there also was an infestation of mice as well as a lack of beds and supplies for the children.[30] Alice says of her stay at Le Couret, "it was not a good time."[31] However, she says that it was warmer than in La Bourboule and there was greater food availability.[32]

[24] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[25] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[28] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA; Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation,* 134-137.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 135; Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[31] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[32] Ibid.

Alice was still living at Le Couret in August of 1942 when roundups began at the home of children who were sixteen years old or older.[33] Alice witnessed some of the girls being taken away late one night.[34] Yet, she did not seem to fully understand what the roundups meant: "But the roundups, it sort of was so abstract to us, or to me, anyhow, I didn't know, it reminded me of Crystal Night, but I don't know what they did with these people."[35] Around this time, Alice's brother Herbert was deported from the technical school where he was living in Brive-la-Gaillard.[36]

The couple running Le Couret eventually fled and French Jews ran the home.[37] Alice speaks more positively about living at Le Couret under their leadership.[38] Like in the La Guette group, Alice says that the children would take care of one another and mimic family roles: "Everybody had a mother sort of. And, you know, the older ones took the little ones under. Even though I was already twelve then I still had, I was very sloppy and disorganized…She combed my hair and made sure I had clean clothes, and things like that."[39]

After living at Le Couret until February of 1944, Alice was sent to a children's home in Sèvres, not far from Paris.[40] Interestingly, this placement was a home for *Secours national* children, part of the aid program run by Marshall Pétain.[41] This children's home was not the only home affiliated with the *Secours national* that hid Jewish children; in fact, after the La Guette group had left for La Bourboule, Château de la Guette became a *Secours national* children's

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 213-217, 391-392.
[37] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA; Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 137.
[38] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

home, and about fifteen Jewish children were hidden at the home.[42] The home in which Alice lived housed "the children of the staff, most of them."[43] Alice explains that this was a risky place for Jewish children to be hidden: "The woman who ran the home, it turned out at the end that we found each other, we were thirty-two Jews hidden in the home, with a school with a little more than a hundred people. So she really took a big chance."[44]

Figure 16: ***Jewish children in hiding study in a classroom of the children's home in Sevres*****. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Alice M. Berney.**

Alice was given a false identity and she pretended to be a Catholic girl by the name of Alice Marquet, though she was not expected to attend church services.[45] She says that she was lonely, but she did know some of the other children were Jewish because they had been together previously.[46] Therefore, she was able to be herself with some of the children while nevertheless

[42] Fouzi Ghlis, "Des Enfants Juifs dans les Maisons de l'Entr'aide d'Hiver du Maréchal (1941-1944)," in *L'Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants et les Populations Juives au XXe Siècle: Prévenir et Guérir dans un Siècle de Violences*, ed. Laura Hobson Faure, Mathias Gardet, Katy Hazan, and Catherine Nicault (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014), 238-240.

[43] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

hiding her identity from most of the others. A few of the teachers at the home were secretly Jewish as well, including drama teacher Marcel Marceau, who would later become a well-known mime.[47] Though the *Secours national* officials came on occasion to visit the home, Alice and the others were never discovered.[48] Overall, Alice's experience at this home was positive; as she explains, "It was really very good. I mean I was extremely lucky. We had good schools, we had heat, we had food. We had a library."[49]

Paris was liberated in the end of August of 1944 and Alice and the other Jewish children were able to reveal their real identities to their peers at the home.[50] Alice stayed in Sèvres until the end of March 1945, when she went to a Jewish children's home in Lyon.[51] She formed a close relationship with the directors of this children's home, Nathan and Helene Samuel, and she states that they were supportive and loving. She says, "They gave me everything I needed besides my parents and my brother."[52] Alice says she was "full of hope" at this point in her journey and went with peers to the train station to see if she could find her relatives: "…we went down with water and fruit to the station every day. All of these trains came back full of people from deportation and we had the pictures of our family and everybody showed our pictures, not everybody, but like four of us would go down and do that."[53] However, attempts to find her parents were unsuccessful; it was not until after Alice had lived in America for some time that she learned that her parents had been killed.[54]

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[47] Ibid.; Marcel Marceau, "How I worked in the French Resistance and Created Bip as a Figure of Hope," *Michigan Quarterly Review* XLI, no. 1 (Winter 2002), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0041.111.

[48] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

Eventually, Alice's cousin learned that she was alive and Alice's relatives in America sent for her to immigrate to the United States.[55] Alice had a difficult time leaving the Samuels, and she would maintain contact with them and see them later on throughout her life.[56] As Alice was leaving Paris to travel to the United States she saw some of her La Guette friends and found out through them that her brother Herbert had been killed during the war.[57] After learning this news she recalls how she saw another La Guette peer, "And I got back on the train and one of my friends from way back, from La Guette, was on the train and I said, 'You know Herbert died?' She says, 'Yes, I've known a long time.' I don't know why nobody told me that. So that was really just a terrible, terrible night on the train from Paris to Marseille."[58]

Alice lived in five children's homes in France in the period during and immediately after the war. Her experience is not unique, and indeed some of the other children moved between locations even more frequently than Alice did. Though at times she went to new places with her companions from La Guette or other children's homes, she nevertheless faced a great deal of instability, lived through some challenging conditions, and witnessed the arrest of other children around her. After developing a strong bond with the Samuels, she again left to go to another country and find a new home. Alice left for the United States on August 24, 1946 on the SS *Athos II*.[59] When she arrived in the United States she lived with her aunt and her aunt's family in New York City.[60] Alice had a challenging time adjusting to life with her relatives:

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24GL-K79 : 2 October 2015), Alice Menkes, 1946; citing Immigration, New York City, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).
[60] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.

> And they were very good to me but not very understanding – you know, it was hard, they had a hard life too. They had only been here seven years or something like that; they were trying to make a life. And they must've been terribly depressed. I mean middle-aged people, past middle-aged when they got here, leave everything, the comforts. So it was very hard on them and it was very hard on me. They expected to have found a daughter and I expected to find parents and neither of us got what we wanted. But they were basically very good to me.[61]

This difficulty readjusting to family life with relatives was common, whether in Alice's case with her aunt's family or even with surviving parents who the children had not lived with for years.[62] Other La Guette children, too, had conflicts with their relatives or in some way struggled when reuniting with surviving family members.

Alice started high school right after arriving in the United States and this was also a difficult adjustment:

> Well, not just a transition from, to society, but it was a totally different; it was culture shock. The values were different, the language was different, the surroundings were different, the relatives were different, everything was different. And I always think of this period as the dark ages. It was dull. I hated it, I was very unhappy. I mean this was really like the punishment afterwards. And as I said my relatives were really good to me but it was, nothing was happening. I could barely understand what was going on in school. I was not interested because everything was so simple in school. I did probably very poorly, I don't remember anymore.[63]

Nevertheless, Alice made it through and graduated from high school.[64] She then studied economics at Queens College.[65] During college she took some time off and returned to France, but "realized I couldn't live there anymore and that I have become very Americanized."[66] Alice went back to the United States and completed school.[67] Alice met her husband, Arthur, soon after

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[61] Ibid.
[62] See: Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise*, 134-137.
[63] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[64] Ibid.
[65] "Alice Menkes Berney Obituary," *New York Times*, July 15-16, 2015, http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/nytimes/obituary.aspx?pid=175294309.
[66] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[67] Ibid.

she graduated college and they soon married.[68] Alice and her husband eventually had two children and lived in various cities throughout the U.S., ultimately settling in Massachusetts.[69] In addition to her undergraduate degree, Alice earned a Master's degree in French Literature, no doubt using her French language skills and interest in French culture from her time in France.[70]

When asked about the impact of the Holocaust on her life, Alice reflects upon the advantages she had in her life in the United States, while also acknowledging the effects of the trauma she experienced:

> I probably am better educated than I would have been if I had been in Vienna. I wouldn't have married my husband and wouldn't have had these particular children that I'm particularly fond of. On the bad side is that I lost everything that was what I needed, what I wanted. And I have a perpetual depression that doesn't go away no matter how up I am on days. I mean there's always the sadness and the depression. There are the good things: I have more empathy for people I think than I would have had possibly otherwise. I can see everybody else's side.[71]

Alice kept in contact with La Guette survivors and she attended the 1999 La Guette reunion in Paris.[72] Alice passed away in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2015.[73]

Alice Berney's story is one of the many La Guette children who hid in France for the duration of the war and moved from place to place in an effort to remain undetected. Like many of the La Guette children, she eventually assumed a false identity and she lived in multiple locations during and soon after the war. Figure 17 shows a map that another La Guette child, Gisela Edel, made of her locations in hiding during the war, showing the variety of places where she lived in France.

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[68] Ibid.; "Alice Menkes Berney Obituary," *New York Times*, July 15-16, 2015.
[69] Ibid.
[70] "Alice Menkes Berney Obituary," *New York Times*, July 15-16, 2015.
[71] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[72] Ruth Salmon Seltzer Papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[73] "Alice Menkes Berney Obituary," *New York Times*, July 15-16, 2015.

Figure 17: ***Page of a photo album showing Gisela Edel in the Couret children's home as well as a map in the shape of a Frenchman's face, showing where she hid during the war*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Naomi Elath.

Alice Berney was able to make it safely through the war, but afterwards she continued to search for home as she searched for her parents, found other relatives, and left France to start life in the United States. In the United States, Alice had to learn English, adapt to American culture, and adjust to living with her relatives. Though she briefly went back to France, Alice Berney returned to the U.S., completed higher education, and acclimated to American culture. Alice married and raised children, creating a new home in the U.S. with her family, though as she explains, her experiences during the war and loss of her family members remained with her throughout her life.

Erika Goldfarb and La Guette Children in the Resistance

Another La Guette child who remained in France for the duration of the war was Erika Goldfarb (née Erika Felicitas "Fée" Beyth). Over the course of her time hiding in France she had

four different false identities.[74] Erika hid in several locations in France and then fought in the Jewish Army (*Armée Juive*), a Jewish Resistance group.[75] By the time Erika joined the Jewish Army she was eighteen years old, and Henri Pohoryles, a former La Guette educator, was likely the one who recruited her.[76] In her role as a courier for the Jewish Army, Erika carried suitcases of documents and equipment such as radio transmitters to members of the resistance network.[77] She moved between Nice, Toulouse, and Lyon to carry out her missions.[78] Early on in her work for the Jewish Army, Erika was sent to a monastery where Jewish children were hidden and where some of them had been converted to Catholicism.[79] Erika talked with the Father to try and stop conversions, and she spoke with a La Guette child who was hiding there and had already converted.[80]

After the liberation of Paris, a friend of Erika's gave her keys to hold onto.[81] Erika did not know what they were for, but because she was in possession of the keys, she was arrested and imprisoned for about two months before being released.[82] The keys were connected with efforts to transfer money between countries.[83] Erika was eventually awarded the prestigious *Croix de Guerre* for her courageous actions in the Resistance.[84] In the aftermath of the war, Erika worked in OSE children's homes in France before immigrating with her husband and her children to Canada.[85]

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[74] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.; Richet, ed., *Organisation Juive de Combat*, 70.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

Other La Guette children also fought in the Resistance. Ernst Appenzeller, like Erika, served in the *Armée Juive* and engaged in a variety of Resistance activities from 1942-1944, including supplying false papers and hiding Jewish children.[86] Frederick Springer was in the *maquis* in the French Resistance; he used his German language skills to serve as a translator for German Prisoners of War.[87] Henry Alexander smuggled false papers as a part of OSE's resistance efforts.[88] These are just a few of the La Guette children who worked in the Resistance during their time in France.

Fleeing Illegally into Switzerland

As conditions in Vichy France became dangerous for Jewish children, OSE and Resistance workers organized illegal crossings over the French-Swiss border for groups of children.[89] La Guette children took part in these crossings and twenty-nine of them were accepted as refugees in Switzerland.[90] There were also La Guette children who attempted to illegally cross into Switzerland but were turned back by Swiss guards. Additionally, one La Guette child, Ellen Bamberger, was able to go to Switzerland legally because her father had

[86] Richet, ed., *Organisation Juive de Combat*, 44-45.
[87] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, VHA.
[88] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.
[89] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 209-214.
[90] See the files for Alex Erichwasser (Reel 237), Vera Malsch (Reel 132), Max and Leo Hirsch (Reel 211), Bertie Heiberg (Reel 369), Kitty Samet (Reel 387), Gerty Schnitzer (Reel 487), Gertrud Weihsmann (Reel 450), Hans Blum (Reel 239), Moritz Maurice Horowitz (Reel 239), Steffi Ziegel (Reel 200), Werner Ziegel (Reel 200), Ursula Matzdorf (Reel 130), Norbert Schilzer (Reel 203), Lore Heinemann (Reel 203), Eduard Weiss (Reel 185), Otto Weiner (Reel 185), Max Loeb (Reel 240), Siegberg Lewin (Reel 240), Kurt Pauker (Reel 72), Paul Peter Porges (Reel 165), Inge Rosenthal (Reel 387), Edith Rosenthal (Reel 387), Charles Karl Schwarz (Reel 219), Helmuth Wolff (Reel 222), Walter Paecht (Reel 77), Hans Leonhard Rosenberg (Reel 5), Adolf Hess (Reel 192), and Robert Hess (Reel 192), RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

previously fled into Switzerland and he found someone to sponsor Ellen so that she could enter the country legally.[91]

The twenty-nine La Guette children who ended up as refugees in Switzerland crossed the French-Swiss border between mid-September of 1942 and mid-May of 1944.[92] The children usually crossed in groups organized by the OSE, and Georges Loinger – husband of La Guette *directrice* Flore Loinger – spearheaded efforts to help children illegally cross into Switzerland.[93] The children were typically led by a paid *passeur* who knew when and where German guards were patrolling the border, though later on individuals such as Georges Loinger accompanied the children.[94] It appears that about eighteen of the twenty-nine La Guette children crossed the border with at least one other La Guette peer (including siblings who crossed together) according to the dates and locations of their crossings.[95] For example, it appears that brothers Leo and Max Hirsch crossed the French-Swiss border on the same day and at the same location as Lore Heinemann and Norbert Schilzer.[96]

Children who were sixteen years old and older were typically turned away and sent back to France, but as Hillel Kieval writes, this could be unpredictable: "And there was never a guarantee that the authorities across the Spanish or Swiss border would not send the fleeing party

[91] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.

[92] See the above-named files, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[93] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 209-214.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Leo and Max Hirsch crossed together as brothers, likely the same time as Lore Heinemann and Norbert Schilzer. Edith and Inge Rosenthal appear to have crossed with Kitty Samet. Hans Blum and Maurice Horowitz crossed together via Jussy. Werner and Steffi Ziegel crossed together. Eduard Weiss and Otto Weiner crossed together. Max Loeb and Siegbert Lewin crossed together. Charles Karl Schwarz, Helmut Wolff, and Hans Rosenberg all appear to have crossed together. See files in RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[96] Leo and Max Hirsch, Reel 211, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Lore Heinemann, Reel 203, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Norbert Schilzer, Reel 203, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

back to France out of mere whim or administrative technicality. Switzerland's official policy was to admit only children below the age of sixteen, but even this much was not a certainty."[97] Those who were turned away had to blindly navigate back through France with the risk of being arrested by Germans along the way. Erika Goldfarb was one La Guette child who attempted to cross the border into Switzerland but was turned away, and she hid in France for the rest of the war.[98] Henry Alexander attempted to cross the border three times, but he never made it and also remained in France until the end of the war.[99] Alex Waters was turned away on his first attempt to cross the border, but on his second attempt he was accepted in the country, as will be detailed later on.[100]

After arriving in Switzerland and being picked up by Swiss authorities, those allowed to remain as refugees filled out paperwork, in most (if not all) cases including a questionnaire about their personal histories.[101] The children would list where they had previously lived, where and when they crossed the border, the reason for their flight over the border, and details about family members (often revealing the locations of parents and whether or not they had been deported).[102] They also often wrote a short description of their life histories.[103] Interestingly, when asked if they had any relatives or acquaintances in Switzerland, nine of the La Guette children mentioned

[97] Kieval, "Legality and Resistance in Vichy France," 363.
[98] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[99] Henry Alexander, interview 3857, VHA.
[100] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[101] RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

Aunt Elisabeth (Elisabeth Luz), the woman who had forwarded letters for the children when they lived in France.[104]

Following their arrival in Switzerland, most of the children were sent to refugee camps, and from there some were sent to placements in children's home or private homes, oftentimes to work in a home or in the business of the person who owned the home. Beatrice Rubens remembers that after she crossed into Switzerland, word got out to her friends from previous children's homes that she had made it across and her friends sent her small packages and gifts to mark the occasion.[105] She says that they were from different homes but "mostly La Guette," though the interviewer's mention of La Guette in the question may have primed her response.[106]

Correspondence in Swiss refugee case files cover a wide variety of topics related to the children's status as refugees during and after the war, including where children would be placed and the details of gaining approval from authorities for the children to be moved to new placements; information about the children's immigration to the United States, Palestine via youth *aliyah*, or to other countries; information about the children's health; and information about the children's behavior or suitability for their placements.[107]

In some cases, correspondence about the children in Switzerland includes information about La Guette connections. Sometimes two or more La Guette children were listed as being repatriated to France on the same date or were going in the same youth *aliyah* group to Palestine. Additionally, the same refugee camps, children's homes, and other locations can be seen across

[104] See files for Alex Erichwasser, Vera Malsch, Gerty Schnitzer, Moritz Maurice Horowitz, Eduard Weiss, Otto Weiner, Inge Rosenthal, Edith Rosenthal, and Robert Hess, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[105] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.

[106] Ibid.

[107] RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

files; for instance, many of the La Guette boys who ended up in Switzerland were at some point placed in the OSE children's home Hôme de la Forêt, and no doubt many of their stays overlapped with one another. Another case of a La Guette connection in Switzerland is found in correspondence about Hans Blum visiting Madame Loinger – the former *directrice* of La Guette – in Switzerland in April of 1945.[108] Therefore, some of the children remained in contact with their La Guette peers, educators, and/or Aunt Elisabeth during the war even after crossing the border into Switzerland.

Alex Waters's Story

Alex Waters was born Alex Frischwasser in Vienna in 1927.[109] He was sent on the *Kindertransport* to France and lived at La Guette and Hôtel des Anglais.[110] From there, he lived in Nice with five other La Guette children and attended École Hôtelière, a hotel school.[111] Two of the other La Guette boys also attended the hotel school with him.[112] During his time in Nice, Alex had to register at the local police station because he was not a French citizen.[113] He had a buddy system with his friend Otto Weiner; every time they went to the station to have their papers stamped, one of them went inside while the other waited outside to make sure that the other one came out safely.[114] When asked about who looked after him during the wartime years, Alex highlighted the importance of his friendships, notably referencing several La Guette peers, including Otto:

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[108] Hans Blum, Reel 426, RG-58.003M, Swiss Federal Archives Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[109] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.

[110] Ibid.

[111] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.

[114] Ibid.

> I just looked for mys[elf] – everybody was out on their own to be honest. I had some, a couple of really good friends, which a couple survived. One is called Weiss, he's in Israel if he's still alive, and Gerhard Loeb, which also went to Israel and could be alive. And another one called Otto Weiner, which has became a very famous journalist in Israel under a different name, which I can't think about it now. So we had a good friendship; that's what kept us going.[115]

One day when entering the police station as usual, Alex was arrested.[116] Only out of cleverness and luck was he released – at which point he knew that it was no longer safe to disclose his real identity.[117] Alex was given a false identity and he hid at a children's home in Séranon run by Abbé Daniel Goens, who hid Jewish children amongst Catholic children.[118] Alex may have also worked in a restaurant in Chambéry prior to crossing into Switzerland.[119]

Eventually, Alex was asked if he wanted to lead a group over the Swiss border, and he accepted.[120] Alex describes the steps to cross the border in his oral history, including traveling by train through France, waiting at a farmer's home, and meeting up with a *passeur* who knew how to escort the group to the border.[121] Alex explains that he led a group of approximately ten to twelve people and they pretended to be a school group on an excursion in order to avoid suspicion.[122] They carried false papers to show to French officials on the train and elsewhere in France, but sewed their real papers inside their clothes in order to show them to the Swiss authorities after crossing the border.[123] During Alex's first trip, he made it with the group into Switzerland, but Alex and two others were sixteen years old, and the Swiss guards sent them

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[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Alex Erichwasser, Reel 237, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[120] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid. Note: This was a common tactic, see: Kieval, "Legality and Resistance in Vichy France," 363.

back to France because of their age.[124] It was nighttime and without the *passeur*, they did not know where to go and could have been arrested by Germans.[125] However, they were eventually able to navigate safely back to Lyon with the help of a priest.[126]

As a result of Alex's first failed border-crossing attempt, alterations were made to his real papers to make him look under sixteen. His birth month of January was changed in his papers from a "1" to a "12" in order to make it look like he was born in December, and therefore fifteen years old rather than sixteen.[127] Furthermore, the first letter of his last name was changed from an "F" to an "E" with the hope that border guards would not realize that he had already crossed the border once before.[128] He therefore pretended to cross as fifteen-year-old Alex Erischwasser, and on his second border-crossing attempt in September of 1943 he was accepted into the country.[129] Alex maintained this altered identity well into his time in Switzerland.[130]

Some of the other La Guette children's Swiss refugee records similarly reflect slight changes to birthdates or personal information, in most cases likely for the purpose of crossing the border successfully. In addition to Alex, five other La Guette children – Bertie Heiberg, Hans Blum, Maurice Horowitz, Siegbert Lewin, and Max Loeb – all appear to have changed their birthdates on records in order to appear younger than sixteen when in fact they were all sixteen-year-olds at the time that they crossed into Switzerland.[131]

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[124] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.; Alex Erichwasser, Reel 237, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Alex Erichwasser, Reel 237, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[130] Ibid.

[131] See the files for Bertie Heiberg, Hans Blum, Moritz Maurice Horowitz, Siegberg Lewin, and Max Loeb, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Figure 18: ***Residents of the Hôme de la Forêt children's home eat a meal in the dining hall*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Norbert Bikales.

After making it into Switzerland, Alex was placed in a refugee camp in Vevey.[132] Though he still faced restrictions, he says that the conditions and treatment in the camp were good overall.[133] He then was sent to live with a family in Speicher, and he worked in the family's butcher shop, a placement that he enjoyed because of the abundant food.[134] He then lived in a children's home in Speicher.[135] Following his time in Speicher, Alex worked at the OSE children's home Hôme de la Forêt in Geneva, where he procured food for the home and planned meals.[136]

Alex was one of the children who listed Aunt Elisabeth on his paperwork as an acquaintance when he first entered the country.[137] Alex recalls that he visited Aunt Elisabeth in Stäfa while he was living in Switzerland: "I did visit this lady, I wanted to meet her while I was

[132] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Alex Erichwasser, Reel 237, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

in Switzerland. She was maybe a sixty-year-old lady in a little town called Stäfa near Zurich. I went to Zurich with train, took a bicycle, and visited her. It was a pleasure to see somebody which did so much good."[138] Evidently, Alex and other La Guette children formed a close relationship with Aunt Elisabeth and she became more than a simple intermediary. In Alex's case, this relationship continued beyond his time in France.

Alex says in his oral history that while living in Switzerland he was eager to return to France, and Swiss refugee records indicate that Alex was repatriated to France in April of 1945.[139] Alex ended up working in an OSE home in Fontenay-aux-Roses, and in his position he acquired food for the home.[140] There were children at the home who had returned from concentration camps, and Alex saw the effects of their traumatic experiences in the camps. He explains, "It was a grim picture. You can't describe it. Those kids were just, like somebody comes out of a cave, even hate to say that, the manners, they had to live like animals for several years in order to survive so a lot of that carried over. The food was grabbed like, I can't describe it, it's just you had to have seen it…Some were very, very young when they went in those camps and didn't know what's going on later on."[141] Despite having gone through his own difficulties during the war, Alex helped the children who had survived camps acclimate to everyday life. While working at the home in Fontenay-aux-Roses, he came across La Guette educator Lida Jablonski and was glad to see her. Alex says, "There was also one lady I want to mention, Lida Jablonski. To the latest I know she's still alive. She used to be, when I first came to France, she

[138] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[139] Ibid.; Alex Erichwasser, Reel 237, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[140] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[141] Ibid.

took care of us in the home, education, et cetera. She also worked in that home, she was up in age and did the same thing. So I was happy to see somebody I knew from way back when."[142]

While in France, Alex reunited with his father, who had survived the war.[143] His mother and brother, however, had been killed in Poland during a ghetto liquidation.[144] Alex lived in France until 1953, at which point he immigrated to the United States on the SS *Île de France* in order to join his father and stepmother in Los Angeles.[145] Alex was excited to arrive in the U.S. and remembers his initial thoughts about the country from the ship: "Well, the first impression is I saw a docker strike, which was different. I mean it was showing me that it's a free country, that people could strike if they wanted to…Well, I was ready to kiss the ground because I was always – well, the land of honey, you know, everybody's dream was to come to the United States in Europe so I was very happy to be there."[146]

When Alex arrived in the U.S. he already spoke some English and then continued to learn more in night classes.[147] He worked in a relative's business and then got a job in a French restaurant.[148] Over time, Alex would work as a bookkeeper, sell shoes in retail, and have a career as an employee recruiter.[149] When asked about the impact of his wartime experiences on his adult life, Alex responded, "Well, probably would've changed school-wise that I could've finished the school and gotten more degrees and maybe found a better – also I'm not complaining – I would've found maybe a better occupation or not so much changes in

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA; "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVP8-5XYP : 2 October 2015), Alex Frischwasser, 1953; citing Immigration, New York, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).
[146] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.

occupation."[150] Alex married and had two children.[151] He eventually moved from California to Kirkland, Washington with his family.[152] Alex passed away in Kirkland in 2006.[153]

Alex's story sheds light on the experience of the La Guette children who fled illegally through Switzerland during the war. Like others, he fled across the border illegally with a group of children, and he was only accepted in Switzerland as a refugee when he falsified his papers to reflect a younger age, demonstrating the impact of Switzerland's refugee laws. Alex underwent great danger to illegally cross the border not only once but twice, risking arrest and deportation by German guards. Though Alex's experience in Switzerland appears to have generally been a positive one, he and others who were in the country as refugees were not free; rather, they were under government surveillance and could not move from place to place nor work without permission. Nevertheless, after living in many children's homes and other placements in France and Switzerland, Alex was able to safely return to France and then immigrate to the United States after the war, where he made a new home for himself.

Discovery and Deportation

In August of 1942, roundups of Jews from Vichy France occurred, including Jewish German and Austrian children living in France who were sixteen years old or older.[154] Children under the age of sixteen were exempt from this set of arrests.[155] Eventually, at least eleven of the La Guette children were arrested and deported while living in France (or in one case, while living in Belgium). Nine of these children subsequently died in labor camps or concentration

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] "King County Deaths…Waters," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Aug. 8, 2006, NewsBank.
[154] Hazan, *Rescuing the Children*, 32-34.
[155] Ibid.

camps. However, one individual, Louis Scott, did survive many labor camps and a concentration camp. Another individual, Werner Neuberger, survived work camps through Organisation Todt and deportation. Additionally, other La Guette children were arrested and escaped from internment camps, and it appears that at least one La Guette child was sent to a concentration camp as a political prisoner due to his work in the Resistance.

Six La Guette boys who were in school at École Pratique d'Artisanat Rural in Brive-la-Gaillard (Corrèze) were arrested in August of 1942.[156] The boys were sixteen years old and were either among or were arrested soon after "the first children from the Unoccupied Zone to be handed over to the Gestapo by the Vichy government."[157] Fritz David, Walter Loeb, Herbert Menkes, Georg Reichenfeld, Heinrich Rosenthal, and Ludwig Scheucher were sent to Nexon and then to the internment camp Drancy.[158] On August 31, 1942, the boys were deported on Convoy 26 from Drancy.[159] The boys were sent to Poland, and in Cosel, the boys were selected for forced labor rather than being sent to Auschwitz.[160] Ludwig Scheucher (Louis Scott) was the only one of the six boys to survive, and his story will provide more details about the children's experiences in the labor camps. La Guette child Ellen Rosen was also deported on Convoy 26 with the six La Guette boys.[161] She had been living in the OSE children's home Le Couret when she was arrested, deported, and ultimately killed, most likely in Auschwitz.[162]

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[156] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA; Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 213-217.
[157] Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 391.
[158] Ibid., 213-217, 391-392.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA; Serge Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France, 1942-1944* (New York: B. Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983), 228.
[161] Serge Klarsfeld, *Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France* (Paris: FFDJF, Les Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France, 2012), 548; Serge Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*, 226-235. Note: In this source she is most likely listed as "Helene Rosen."
[162] Ibid.

Another La Guette child, Heinrich Hellreich, was sixteen years old and living in Nice when he was rounded up along with thirty other children.[163] He was sent to Drancy, and from there he was deported on Convoy 60 on October 7, 1943.[164] The convoy included 1,000 people, 108 of whom were children (under eighteen years old) like Heinrich.[165] Convoy 60 was sent to Auschwitz, arriving on October 10, and a description of the convoy follows: "When they arrived in Auschwitz, 340 men were selected and went to Buna, the I.G. Farben synthetic rubber plant at Auschwitz. They were assigned numbers 156940 through 157279. One hundred sixty-nine women remained alive and were given numbers 64711 through 64879. The rest--491 people--were gassed."[166] It is not known whether Heinrich worked in the rubber plant or was immediately was killed, but he did not survive the war.

Paul Stark's story is different from most of the La Guette children because soon after being sent to France he was able to get passage with his parents on the MS *St. Louis*, a ship carrying refugees to Cuba.[167] Indeed, Louis Scott says that some of the children at La Guette were jealous that Paul would be going on the ship, but things were not to go as planned.[168] The *St. Louis's* infamous trip consisted of the refugees on board being turned away from Cuba, and the United States State Department would not admit any refugees.[169] Through negotiations undertaken by Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee with countries in Europe, the refugees were accepted in France, Belgium, Great Britain, and the

[163] Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 300, 408.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*, 455.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Hofreiter, *You Must go Alone*, 50.
[168] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:08:23.
[169] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 77-78.

Netherlands.[170] Paul was sent to Belgium, where he lived until October of 1942, when he was arrested.[171] Paul was sent to the Malines-Mechelen Camp and was deported on Transport XVI, which left on October 31, 1942 and arrived in Auschwitz on November 3.[172] Paul ultimately did not survive and was among 254 passengers of the *St. Louis* killed during the Holocaust.[173]

Werner Neuberger was living and working on a farm under a false identity when one day in 1944 he was arrested by *gendarmes*.[174] He was sent to a labor camp on the island of Alderney (Aurigny) in the Channel Islands.[175] There, he was forced to "make fortifications" and "build bunkers" as labor through the Nazi program Organisation Todt.[176] He states in his oral history that he was with many Russian Prisoners of War and some other Jews.[177] Indeed, there were Soviet Prisoners of War in addition to other Soviet workers at Alderney by the time that Werner was there.[178] By September of 1943, there were 300 French Jews at Alderny, and it is possible that when Werner was arrested he was thought to be a French Jew rather than a foreign Jew of German origin.[179]

After working in Alderney, Werner was sent to Boulogne-sur-Mer in France.[180] He says of that location, "Compared to the island that was really slave labor. I mean they made us get up

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[170] Ibid.

[171] Hofreiter, *You Must go Alone*, 50; Ward Adriaens et al., eds., *Mecheln-Auschwitz, 1942-1944* (Brussels: Brussels University Press, 2009), 63, 363.

[172] Ibid., 446; Serge Klarsfeld and Maxime Steinberg, *Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de Belgique* (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1982), n.p.

[173] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 78.

[174] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

[175] Ibid.; T/D File for Werner Neuberger, 6.3.3.2/101844157#1, 101844160#1/ITS Digital Archive, Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on December 21, 2017.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

[178] Paul Sanders, *The British Channel Islands under German Occupation, 1940-1945* (Great Britain: Jersey Heritage Trust and Société Jersiaise, 2005), 193.

[179] Ibid., 194.

[180] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA; T/D File for Werner Neuberger, 6.3.3.2/101844157#1, 101844160#1/ITS Digital Archive. Accessed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on December 21, 2017.

at four o'clock in the morning and until late at night. We had to unload boxcars and dig holes and made fortifications."[181] From Boulogne-sur-Mer, Werner was deported with other prisoners on crowded boxcars with virtually no food or water, and some people died in the boxcars along the way.[182] After about a week, the train Werner was on stopped and was liberated by the Belgian Red Cross.[183] Werner hid with a Belgian family until the town was liberated not long after, and then he made his way back to France, where he lived safely until the end of the war.[184]

Two La Guette children, Paul Peter Porges and Ruth Schloss, were arrested and sent to the Rivesaltes internment camp, but both were able to escape. Paul Peter Porges was caught when he tried to cross illegally into Switzerland.[185] He was sent to Rivesaltes and was able to flee the camp and make it to Toulouse.[186] Paul Peter lived in France until he again attempted to cross into Switzerland in January of 1943, this time making it across the border and entering the country as a refugee.[187] Ruth Schloss was also arrested when she tried to cross into Switzerland, and the Germans who arrested her sent her to Rivesaltes.[188] Luckily, Abbé Glasberg, a priest who smuggled Jewish children out of camps, rescued Ruth.[189] Abbé Alexandre Glasberg was raised in a Jewish family in Ukraine, but later became a Catholic priest.[190] He was active in Resistance efforts to rescue and hide Jewish children, including in his organization *Direction des Centres*

[181] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.; Paul Peter Porges, Reel 165, RG-58.001M, Jewish Refugee Records, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[188] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Anny Latour, *The Jewish Resistance in France (1940-1944)*, trans. Irene R. Ilton (New York: Holocaust Publications Inc., 1981), 53-54.

d'Accueil and also as a member of the organization *Amitiés Chrétiennes*.[191] Ruth describes how Abbé Glasberg rescued her and other children from Rivesaltes:

> He came to camp, had a pillow in the back, make believe he was a hunchback, and there was Christian people too and he came and he said he was going for the last rites. He used to come where the children's section were and those who were very small and skinny he would try to save. He would take a child in the front, one in the back, one on each side, we used to hold our arms around him, he had a big cape on and he used to say, 'Please do not breathe now. When I cough you stop breathing because I'm going through the barbed wires.' So when he coughed we stopped, and outside used to be a truck with hay and we were hidden in the hay.[192]

Ruth Schloss hid in France for the remainder of the war and survived.[193]

It is reported that in addition to the eight other La Guette children who were killed, Norbert Roth was killed during the war. La Guette survivor Naomi Elath filled out a Page of Testimony in Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, writing that Norbert was deported in 1942 and did not survive, and this was also stated at the 1999 La Guette reunion.[194] No further information about his deportation has been found.

These eleven La Guette children deported during the Holocaust, nine of whom were killed, as well as others who escaped internment camps, demonstrate what was at stake for all of the La Guette children and indeed other Jewish German and Austrian refugee children living in France during World War II. Had others not been able to flee to other countries or hide undetected in France throughout the war, they too would have faced arrest, deportation, and in many cases, death.

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[191] Ibid.

[192] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Page of Testimony for Norbert Roth, Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Yad Vashem; Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:08:21.

Louis Scott's Story

Figure 19: ***Werner Neuberger poses outside with a group of friends from the La Guette children's home*****. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Werner Neuberger.**

Louis Scott was born Ludwig Scheucher in 1926 in Berlin, Germany.[195] He grew up in the outskirts of Berlin until he was sent to France to escape Nazi persecution.[196] Amongst his La Guette peers, some of whom he is pictured with in Figure 19, Ludwig went by the nickname "Lutz."[197] From La Bourboule, Louis was sent to attend school in Brive-la-Gaillard.[198] He and thirteen other La Guette boys attended École Pratique d'Industrie et d'Artisanat Rural, a technical school where Louis studied mechanics.[199] After being there for about a year and a half, Louis and five of his La Guette peers were arrested on August 26, 1942 as part of the first large roundup of Jews in the Unoccupied Zone.[200] Louis explains what it was like when the French police came to get them:

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[195] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[200] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA; Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 258-259.

> It was very early in the morning and we were still in our dormitories. We were not even dressed. And we were selected. The ones, the others that were not sixteen years old were not even taken. It was well prepared so somebody knew about it and would you believe, nobody warned us. For six youngsters, oh, some fifteen policemen came, if not more. One went to the bathroom, three went with you, they didn't let you close the door in order not to escape; it was not possible. Nobody warned us. We wouldn't have been there. We would have run away somewhere in the woods or in hiding, whatever was necessary.[201]

The boys were sent to the assembly camp Nexon, and from there sent to the internment camp Drancy, which was near Paris.[202] From Drancy, Louis and the others were deported on Convoy 26, which left Drancy on August 31, 1942.[203] The convoy went east to Poland, and in Cosel the boys were chosen for forced labor along with "The majority of the able men" on the convoy.[204] Those not chosen for forced labor were sent to Auschwitz."[205] A description of the convoy's arrival at Auschwitz on September 2 demonstrates that most of the people in the convoy who were not selected for forced labor were killed immediately: "At the camp, 12 men were left alive and were given numbers 62897 through 62908. Twenty-seven women were given numbers 18827 through 18853. The rest of the convoy was gassed upon arrival."[206]

Louis and the other La Guette boys started working in labor camps, beginning Louis's journey through a total of about twenty labor camps.[207] During this time, Louis was assigned hard labor in coal mines, in a factory, and in the streets.[208] Louis was likely in the labor camps Fürstengrube, Graeditz, Faulbrück, and Hirschberg.[209] It is difficult to trace the names and

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[201] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[202] Klarsfeld, *French Children of the Holocaust*, 214-217, 391-392.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*, 228; Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*, 228.
[207] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA; "Oral History Interview with Louis Scott," Oral History Interviews of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center (Miami, Fla.), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.

chronology of the many camps where Louis worked, but accounts of some of his experiences highlight what he went through in the camps.

Louis's description of his time laboring in the coal mines highlights the life and death stakes of his work: "Food was becoming a little less already and work was hard in the coal mines. The shovels are big and if you're not used to lift a shovel even without coal, imagine to have to lift it with coal. But if you have somebody standing behind you with a machine gun you're going to lift it; you're gonna learn how to lift it. It was very hard work, then that's when I saw people die already."[210] At this point, he was with his five La Guette peers, as he explains, "We were still with my five friends. I think we all got a little bit weaker though, but we were still – one, Fritz David, he was weak to begin with and he didn't last much longer."[211]

In another labor camp, Louis worked to fill potholes.[212] Louis was also chosen because of his background in mechanics to work in a factory at the labor camp Hirschberg.[213] There, Louis was able to get additional food from other workers and people in charge of the camp who he helped with various tasks.[214] Of one camp, likely Graeditz, Louis says, "And in that camp also we worked in streets and worked in the fields. And construction of buildings. And there was an epidemic of typhus fever. And except for one I lost four of my friends there."[215]

According to Louis's recollections, he was hopeful and remained positive throughout his time in the labor camps, despite the lack of food and oftentimes harrowing conditions.[216] He says

[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.

that his desire to see his parents again was a motivating force for him.[217] Louis recalls that he encouraged others to stay positive: "And the way you mentioned the older people, they came to me, how come you're always cheerful? Most of the time we were the youngest in the camps. How come you're always cheerful? I says, 'Don't give up. Don't give up.'"[218] When asked by the interviewer in another instance how he kept going under such difficult circumstances, Louis replied, "I think that came from my parents. To look at things positively. And then afterwards from the educators we had in the children's home. This is how you succeed. When I was in the camps I knew that my parents were sent from Berlin to the ghetto of Riga."[219]

Louis was eventually forced on a death march, which he amazingly survived despite the bitter cold, miles of walking, lack of food or water, and the deaths of many people around him.[220] He was sent with others to the concentration camp Buchenwald.[221] Louis describes the journey there by saying, "We were eighty in that wagon. I think ten of us got out. Ten or eleven. We made a human shield out of dead bodies to keep us warm. We were breathing in each other's necks to keep us warm, to keep us alive. And believe it or not, as miserable as this was I was singing to keep my friends in good spirit. I didn't give up then either."[222] Remarkably, when the interviewer asked what Louis was singing, he appears to reference songs from La Guette: "Oh, just children's songs, French children's songs that I remember that we had in the children's home. I will always remember those are the thoughts that we had. Oh, let me come back and we go have a good time again together, you know, go on excursions, and go, be together."[223]

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[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.

Whether Louis's memory of the singing is factual or a way of reconstructing his memories of a traumatic event, it demonstrates that Louis viewed the children's home as a place that provided hope and resilience in dark times.

After arriving in Buchenwald, Louis was increasingly sick and weak.[224] He saw another La Guette peer in Buchenwald, Alfred (nickname Hadschi) Mai, who provided him with extra food, likely helping his chances at survival.[225] Louis explains, "Later on, one of youngsters from the children's home was caught in the French Underground. He worked in the Resistance and he was caught not as a Jewish person, but as a Freedom Fighter. And he was then, he had a good position in the camp and he gave me food."[226] Louis became extremely ill and emaciated in the concentration camp but miraculously survived until the camp was liberated in April of 1945.[227] He was sent to the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière in Paris where he had a difficult recovery but managed to beat his illness and regain strength.[228]

Through the Rothschild family and Aunt Elisabeth, Louis was put in touch with his mother, who had survived the war.[229] His father had been deported and killed.[230] Louis and his mother reunited in Sweden, where they lived together for a time.[231] However, Louis was unable to legally work in Sweden, and he ended up returning to France.[232] Then, in 1947 he immigrated to the United States on the SS *Marine Marlin.*[233] He lived in New York City and found work

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.; Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 344-346.
[230] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.; "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:245K-NQG : 16 March 2018), Ludwig Scheucher, 1947;

repairing sewing machines.[234] When asked if he experienced anti-Semitism in the United States, Louis says, "Yes, I was an active ballplayer and I played with one of the tops teams in New York, and I was always the Jew. But I defended myself; there were many blue eyes – I mean black eyes. I even hit a referee and I was banned. What has the soccer field got to do with being of a certain religion? We come here for a sport; we come here for a competition."[235] Louis also encountered segregation and discrimination against African Americans in the United States when living in Georgia: "I went to Macon, Georgia. I learned what discrimination was for the second time around…1951, Macon, Georgia. The hatred towards Black[s]. Unbelievable. To see water fountains 'White' and 'Colored,' bathrooms 'White' and 'Colored,' Colored people on the bus in the back only, I couldn't comprehend…It was very hard."[236]

A few years after he immigrated, Louis's mother also immigrated to the United States and they lived together in New York City.[237] Louis's story is one of a positive reunion between a surviving parent and child, and they had a close relationship after the war.[238] Louis also began a family of his own, marrying and having a daughter.[239] After working in a few occupations, Louis eventually had a career as a plant manager at a factory.[240] By then, he had moved to and settled in Miami, Florida.[241] Louis taught others about the Holocaust by sharing his experiences and volunteering with the Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial.[242] Louis said in his oral history interview, "The message to the world is try to be good to one another. Don't hate, love. And if

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citing Immigration, New York City, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[234] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.; "Death Notice – Classified…Scott, Louis," July 25, 2004, *Miami Herald*, NewsBank.

you see something happen to somebody, to any minority, speak up. Because what's happened can happen again, to anybody, anywhere in this world. Speak up…"[243] Louis passed away in Miami in 2004.[244]

Transports to the United States in 1941

While the La Guette group was still in La Bourboule, attempts were made to send children out of the country. In the United States, American Jewish organizations had been working to aid Jews fleeing Nazism. An organization called German Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) was created in April of 1934 to bring children from Nazi Germany to America and provide for their care in the United States.[245] Starting that same year, Jewish children from Germany were brought to the United States under the sponsorship of GJCA.[246] GJCA would face a number of financial and logistical difficulties throughout their rescue work, such as obtaining visas for children at a time of restrictive immigration quotas.[247]

An attempt to solve this problem was the Wagner-Rogers Bill, which was introduced in Congress in 1939 as way to allow 10,000 refugee children fleeing Nazism in 1939 and then another 10,000 in 1940 to enter the United States outside of the regular quota system.[248] The bill was supported by a variety of prominent leaders and organizations.[249] However, public opinion polls showed that the public was generally not in favor of such measures, and President Roosevelt did not voice any support for the bill.[250] Following amendments to the bill that made it

[243] Louis Scott, interview 8716, VHA.
[244] "Death Notice – Classified…Scott, Louis," July 25, 2004, *Miami Herald*, NewsBank.
[245] Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise*, 16.
[246] Ibid., 18-19.
[247] Ibid., 19-20, 22-23.
[248] Ibid., 27.
[249] Ibid., 27-29.
[250] Ibid., 30-31.

part of the quota system, as well as opposition from Senator Robert Reynolds, the bill was withdrawn.[251]

In June of 1940, a non-sectarian organization, the United States Committee for the Care of European Children (USCOM), was founded to aid refugee children in Europe.[252] Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the leaders involved in the creation of USCOM.[253] Initially, the organization brought British children to the U.S., and later it brought over refugee children from Vichy France.[254] The children from France, including those from the La Guette group, were allowed in the United States through USCOM's corporate affidavit.[255] More than 300 refugee children would be brought from Vichy France to the United States through several transports.[256] The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC, Quakers), American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), HIAS (and their European equivalent, HICEM) and the Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) were also involved in efforts to bring these children to the United States.[257] The JDC, HIAS, and HICEM provided financial support and the AFSC selected children for inclusion on transports and negotiated with French officials.[258] It was eventually decided that USCOM would focus on bringing the children to the United States and German Jewish Children's Aid would be in charge of the children's resettlement after their arrival in the United States.[259]

Thirty-five of the La Guette children immigrated to the United States on two transports of children in the summer of 1941. The children traveled with caretakers through France, Spain,

[251] Ibid., 27-31.
[252] Ibid., 32, 56-60.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid., 38.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid., 60-64, 66-69.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid., 54.

and Portugal and then by ship to the United States.[260] There were twenty-three La Guette children on the first transport that left Lisbon for the United States on June 10, 1941.[261] Thirteen of these children gained entry through the sponsorship of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, and ten had family members or friends who sponsored their visas.[262] Dr. Isaac and Masha Chomski were tasked with bringing the children from France to the U.S.[263] Masha Chomski was originally born in Lithuania and later was a citizen of Palestine, but became a Polish citizen when she married Isaac, who was Polish.[264] Masha worked for the OSE and Isaac was a medical doctor and journalist, and as foreign Jews living in France, they too were fleeing the country along with the children.[265] In addition to accompanying the children from France to the United States, the Chomskis were instrumental in preparing for the trip, including arranging for clothes and toiletries for the children.[266]

Dr. Chomski's writings provide information about his trip from France to the United States with the first transport of children. In the *Contemporary Jewish Record* he writes about his first time meeting the children in a Quaker office in Marseille. He writes, "On their thin, tired

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[260] Ibid., 83-86.

[261] "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-G5NR-9QMK?i=916&wc=MFKW-ZZ9%3A1030114901%3Fcc%3D1923888&cc=1923888 : 2 October 2015), 1941; citing Immigration, New York, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[262] "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24LX-2VD : 2 October 2015), 1941; citing Immigration, New York, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[263] "119 Child Refugees Here from Lisbon," *New York Times*, Jun. 22 1941, Proquest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times; "Masha and Isaac Chomski, escape Europe with 111 orphans under Eleanor Roosevelt plan ...," Reel 2, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[264] "Masha and Isaac Chomski, escape Europe with 111 orphans under Eleanor Roosevelt plan ...," Reel 2, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[265] Ibid.

[266] "Papers and photos regarding orphans": 33-40, Reel 3, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

faces was written a heart-rending tale of suffering and privation. Ragged and disheveled, each child carried a small untidy bundle and a battered valise. The white numbered cards which hung from their necks made them look so much [like] baggage."[267]

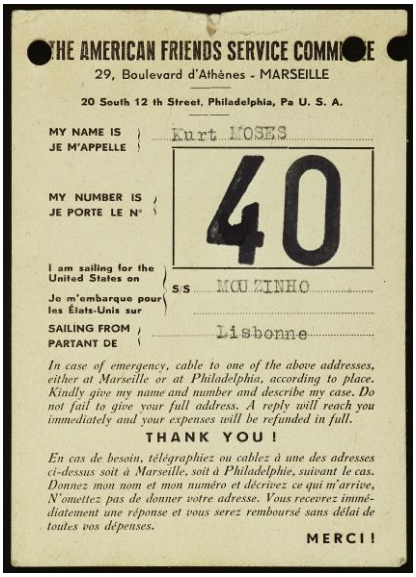
THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
29, Boulevard d'Athènes - MARSEILLE
20 South 12 th Street, Philadelphia, Pa U. S. A.
MY NAME IS / JE M'APPELLE Kurt MOSES
MY NUMBER IS / JE PORTE LE N° 40
I am sailing for the United States on / Je m'embarque pour les États-Unis sur S.S MOUZINHO
SAILING FROM / PARTANT DE Lisbonne
In case of emergency, cable to one of the above addresses, either at Marseille or at Philadelphia, according to place. Kindly give my name and number and describe my case. Do not fail to give your full address. A reply will reach you immediately and your expenses will be refunded in full.
THANK YOU!
En cas de besoin, télégraphiez ou cablez à une des adresses ci-dessus soit à Marseille, soit à Philadelphie, suivant le cas. Donnez mon nom et mon numéro et décrivez ce qui m'arrive. N'omettez pas de donner votre adresse. Vous recevrez immédiatement une réponse et vous serez remboursé sans délai de toutes vos dépenses.
MERCI!

Figure 20: ***Identification tag issued to Kurt Moses by the American Friends Service Committee for his voyage to the United States on board the Mouzinho*****.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Kurt Moses.

The cards that Dr. Chomski is likely referring to are identification tags that the children wore throughout their trip. As is shown in Figure 20, at the top of these cards is written in bold lettering "The American Friends Service Committee" and below are the addresses of the organization's Marseille and Philadelphia offices.[268] Each card has the child's name, a number assigned to the child, the name of the ship that they would be sailing on to go to the United

[267] 23: 1 galley print, five typed pages, "Child Refugees" Contemporary Jewish Record, Reel 6, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[268] Identification tag issued to Kurt Moses by the American Friends Service Committee for his voyage to the United States on board the Mouzinho, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #66449, Courtesy of Kurt Moses, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

States, and the location where they would board the ship.[269] Below is a message written in English and French instructing that "In case of emergency" anyone who came across the child should contact the Marseille or Philadelphia office of the American Friends Service Committee.[270]

A letter to Mr. Robert Lang, the Director of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, details the group's trip.[271] It is explained in the letter that on the morning of Saturday, May 31, 1941, the children and their adult chaperones left Marseille by train.[272] The train stopped at the stations in Montpellier, Toulouse, and Pau, with representatives from the OSE and American Friends Service Committee meeting the group and providing assistance along the way.[273] After staying overnight in Pau, on Sunday, June 1, the group continued on their journey and stopped at the train station in Oloron.[274]

In Oloron, "about a dozen" of the children were scheduled to meet with parents and relatives who were interned at the concentration camp Gurs.[275] The family members were allowed to leave the camp briefly under "police escort" in order to see their children at the train station.[276] In the letter to Robert Lang, this emotional encounter between parents and children is described:

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[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid.

[271] 4: 6 page typed letter in English from A. Kalvin to Lang regarding orphans (June 24, 1941), Reel 4, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Ibid.

[275] Ibid.

[276] 5: 3 page typed letter from Morris Troper to Eleanor Roosevelt regarding orphans (June 7, 1941), Reel 4, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

> The scenes that took place between the children and parents and relatives were extremely pathetic. Everybody, including the gendarmes, wept. We asked the Chief of the Station to keep the train, not 3 minutes as was planned, but 15 minutes. This favor was granted. The children gave their bread rations and their food to their parents and we later learned that all the children collected between themselves the food in order to give it to those who had parents at the concentration camp so that they too might help. The parents were in a very pitiful state, both morally and physically. In spite of the fact that we didn't have enough bread, we had to give a few loaves to those poor people who looked starved.[277]

This moment is also described in a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt.[278] It details the meeting between one child and her mother, saying, "When they met at Oloron, for the last time, for it is most unlikely that they will ever meet again, they were unable to converse for the child had forgotten her native German in the effort of learning the French and English, and they had no common language except tears."[279] Another account of this scene, written by Dr. Chomski in the *Contemporary Jewish Record*, discusses the interactions of a little boy, Klaus, with his father.[280] On the train to Oloron, Dr. Chomski saw a World War I-era military photograph of Klaus's father.[281] Dr. Chomski then watched as Klaus met his father in Oloron, "Klaus' father, formerly the embodiment of elegance and dignity, looks like a tramp. Bearded, unkempt, rags now replacing his once-immaculate uniform, he stands, looking longingly at his son. The boy, who has not seen his father for nearly two years, stares at him as at a stranger and is afraid to draw near."[282] After being asked by his father if he remembers him, Klaus "recoils for a moment, then, as though he had suddenly come to life, he lunges forward blindly and buries his head in his

[277] 4: 6 page typed letter in English from A. Kalvin to Lang regarding orphans (June 24, 1941), Reel 4, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[278] : 3 page typed letter from Morris Troper to Eleanor Roosevelt regarding orphans (June 7, 1941), Reel 4, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[279] Ibid.

[280] 23: 1 galley print, five typed pages, "Child Refugees" Contemporary Jewish Record, Reel 6, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[281] Ibid.

[282] Ibid.

father's tattered coat. 'Papa, papa,' he sobs as he lifts himself up to the unshaven face, kisses the pinched forehead, and throws his small hands about his father's neck. 'Papa, papa, papa,' he shouts unceasingly."[283] All of these descriptions of the meetings between parents and children at the station demonstrate how emotional and traumatic it was for some of the children to come into contact with their family members at the station just before they left France.[284]

After the fifteen minutes at the train station were up, the children had to leave their parents and get back on the train. The children then headed towards Spain. Up until reaching the Spanish border, Andrée Salomon, an OSE worker, accompanied the group.[285] Once the group reached the border she left.[286] After being searched by Spanish guards, the group was sent on "very old and broken trains" into Spain.[287] They arrived in Madrid the next day, June 2, where they were again assisted by someone from the American Friends Service Committee and they spent time eating and resting at a convent.[288] The American Embassy of Madrid had supplied food for the group.[289] The children were also taken on a walk to see Madrid in the afternoon.[290]

That evening the group went back to the train station and traveled on "overcrowded" trains to Portugal.[291] The group then traveled by car to Lisbon, except for two sick children who

[283] Ibid.

[284] Note: Other authors describe the meeting between parents and children at Oloron. See: Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 236-237; Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise*, 84-85; Ostrovsky, "'We Are Standing By,'" 240.

[285] 4: 6 page typed letter in English from A. Kalvin to Lang regarding orphans (June 24, 1941), Reel 4, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid.

[289] Ibid.

[290] Ibid.

[291] Ibid.

went by train with Masha Chomski.[292] While stopping in a "small Portuguese town" the children had a meal, a description of which illustrates the hunger that the children had endured in France:

> As the meal was served, at the beginning the children didn't believe that such food existed. They looked at the white bread and butter as though it was something extraordinary and they did not believe it was for them. When they were told that they could eat it they went at it like little animals and immediately the bread disappeared. They had several helpings of food and devoured everything that was given them. They asked for more, and got more.[293]

Indeed, Gerald Watkins describes his encounter with food in Spain, "And I remember there getting for the first time for more than a year some scrambled eggs and I became violently ill; I remember vomiting all over the place, I couldn't take it."[294] Eva Moore has a similar story, though she was on the second transport of children who traveled to the United States: "When we got to Madrid they fed us and I just went wild. I ate my first pineapple and I ate so much that I vomited. Like we were so starving."[295] A *New York Times* article about the second transport of refugee children on the *Mouzinho* also mentions that some of the children were "ill on the train and in Lisbon when they got white bread and other foods that they had not tasted for years."[296] Clearly, leaving France meant an almost immediate change in circumstances for the children, but it would take time for the children's bodies to adapt to consuming such food.

When they arrived in Lisbon, the group went to stay at a children's colony and the trip leaders state that they were warmly received by the people they met in Portugal.[297] During the children's stay in Lisbon they had a notable day: they went to a resort by the sea, saw the movie

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[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[295] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[296] "45 Exiled Children Arrive on Liner: Many Left Parents Behind in French Internment Camps," *New York Times*, Sept. 3, 1941, Proquest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.
[297] 4: 6 page typed letter in English from A. Kalvin to Lang regarding orphans (June 24, 1941), Reel 4, RG-10.206.01, Isaac and Masha Chomski papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Pinocchio, were given toys, and enjoyed other treats from local hosts.[298] The children stayed in Lisbon until boarding the SS *Mouzhinho* on June 10.[299] They joined other refugee children on the ship, with newspaper reports putting the total in the range of 119 and 132 child refugees on board the Mouzinho, "The largest contingent of European refugee children to come here [the United States] since the westward movement of British children ceased last December…"[300] In addition to the child refugees, the ship held about 600 other passengers.[301]

Figure 21: ***Two uniformed Portuguese policemen stand on the pier in the port of Lisbon as a group of Jewish refugee children wait in line to board the SS Mouzinho*.**
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Milton Koch.

A *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* article says that two well-known passengers on the ship were planning to be involved with the children's experience on board: "Other passengers include Prof. Maximilian Weinberger, former head of the Rothschild Hospital in Vienna, who is supervising the care of the children aboard the ship" as well as, "the painter, Marc Chagall, who

[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid.
[300] "119 Child Refugees Here from Lisbon," *New York Times*, Jun. 22 1941; "132 Child Refugees Due: Group from Central Europe is Expected Here Tomorrow," *New York Times*, Jun. 21, 1941, Proquest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.
[301] "119 Child Refugees Here from Lisbon," *New York Times*, Jun. 22 1941.

has arranged to give them drawing lessons…"[302] Though they do not mention drawing lessons, Alice Samson and Werner Moses (who were on two different transports) both mention that they had good food on the ship.[303] Werner states that they ate second class food even though they were third class passengers, and Alice's account of the voyage seems to corroborate this information: "It seems that American Friends Service Committee, the Quakers, paid for the voyage, and the Rothschilds paid for the difference for the food part of it because they felt we had not too much food there for a while, which we didn't."[304]

Gerald Watkins was one of a few survivors who mentioned in their interviews that there was a fear of being attacked by U-boats during the crossing.[305] When asked if he remembers the voyage, he responds, "Yeah, vaguely, I remember being scared because there were always reports of U-boats in the area, and of course we were, although Lisbon or Portugal was a neutral country you could never be sure; that if they knew there were a lot of refugees on board they might've attacked us, but that never happened."[306] These fears were not unfounded; in September of 1940 a ship carrying British children being evacuated to the U.S. was hit by a German submarine and seventy-seven children died as a result.[307]

The first transport with La Guette children arrived in New York City on June 21, 1941 and docked at Pier 8 on Staten Island.[308] Felix Scherzer was one of the children on the first transport whose visa was through his relatives; his father and brother were in the United States

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[302] "Ship with 700 Refugees, Including 130 Children, Leaves Lisbon for New York," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, Jun. 12 1941, https://www.jta.org/1941/06/12/archive/ship-with-700-refugees-including-130-children-leaves-lisbon-for-new-york.

[303] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA; Werner Moses, interview 7283, VHA.

[304] Ibid.

[305] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA; See also: Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA; Werner Moses, interview 7283, VHA.

[306] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

[307] Ostrovsky, "'We Are Standing By,'" 238.

[308] "119 Child Refugees Here from Lisbon," *New York Times*, Jun. 22 1941.

and his mother and sister would also make it to the U.S. just before he did.[309] Felix remembers being excited to see the Statue of Liberty when arriving in New York City: "I was a kid. How do you feel? I mean the boat docked at six o'clock in the morning in Staten Island. But of course we were up at four; we wanted to see the Statue of Liberty. We knew about that. We knew how to say break-fast. The only English word we knew."[310] Similarly, Gerald Watkins writes in his memoir that "Everyone cheered when they saw the Statue of Liberty."[311]

The Chomski records demonstrate the extent of logistical and organizational work necessary to pull off the movement of a group of 111 children from France to the United States. Such coordination and planning is evident in records about obtaining clothes, toiletries, and food for the group; details about the number of organizational partners in different countries that worked together to make the trip possible; and spur of the moment decisions that adult chaperones had to make about how to transport sick children and how to react to the children's mental and physical states following their time in France.[312]

The June 1941 trip of children from France to Portugal was not the last. Other transports of children also left from France for the United States until November of 1942, when the Germans occupied Vichy France.[313] Two months after the first transport, another group of children, including twelve La Guette children, also migrated through Spain and Portugal and left

[309] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA; "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24L6-V1F : 2 October 2015), Felix Scherzer, 1941; citing Immigration, New York, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[310] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.

[311] Watkins, *A Childhood Lost and Found*, 22.

[312] RG-10.206, Isaac and Masha Chomski Papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[313] Ostrovsky, "'We Are Standing By,'" 240-241, 244; Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise*, 39.

from Lisbon to go to the United States.[314] These children left Lisbon on the SS *Mouzinho* on August 20, 1941.[315] It appears that their journey to Lisbon was similar to that of the children leaving on the first transport based on the accounts of Edith Cohen, Eva Moore, Kurt Moses, and Werner Moses.[316]

The children's experiences on the ship to the United States were also comparable to the experiences of children on the first transport. Werner Moses recalls that it was hot and smelly on board the ship, but the children would play with toys and "…horse around on deck. They had a lot, I believe there were a lot of adult refugees too."[317] Kurt Moses remembers that, "We were put down at the bottom. Other passengers, they were all German refugees, were in various places on this ship. The conditions were not bad, you know. They were not luxurious conditions, but at least we had enough food."[318] Walter Weitzmann provides a more detailed account of the accommodations on the ship in his oral history interview:

> The bulk of us were assigned to what's called a hold in a ship. It was like a troop ship only the conditions were worse. I mean the bunks, the beds, were maybe six to eight inches apart from each other and the conditions were terrible; people were seasick and everything. My sister and myself decided that we can't stay down there. We were fortunate to be able to befriend somebody who had a state room and they let us stay with them up on top and we hung out with the other passengers who had a better passage than what we had. The food was not bad. But it was a rough voyage.[319]

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[314] "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-95NB-94P6?i=296&wc=MFKW-668%3A1030117201%3Fcc%3D1923888&cc=1923888 : 2 October 2015); citing Immigration, New York, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

[315] Ibid.

[316] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA; Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA; Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA; Werner Moses, interview 7283, VHA.

[317] Kurt Moses, interview 36148, VHA.

[318] Werner Moses, interview 7283, VHA.

[319] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

This latter voyage of the SS *Mouzinho* arrived in the United States, also at Pier 8 on Staten Island, on September 1, 1941.[320] Because it was Labor Day, those on board the ship could not disembark until the next day, September 2.[321]

By the time that the La Guette children arrived in New York, they had fled through France, Spain, Portugal, and now the United States in order to escape Nazism. They were finally living in a country that would not be occupied by Germans, but this did not mean that their journey to find home was over – rather, the children were once again starting over in a new country, culture, and soon in new homes. Gerald Watkins writes in his memoir of the arrival in the United States, "We had left Europe with all its memories and its cultural roots deeply imbedded within us, and we were safe. The future, however, was anything but certain."[322]

Alice Samson's Story

Alice Samson was one of the La Guette children who left France on the first transport to the United States. Her story exemplifies the challenges that many of the children faced after arriving in the United States in 1941. Though Alice and the other children in the U.S. would now be free from Nazi persecution, they had to adjust to a new country and culture and find home all over again – oftentimes on their own. Instability and movement from place to place sometimes continued in their new lives in the United States. Though most children discuss some difficult times, particularly soon after arriving in the U.S., there were mixed experiences and some children had more positive home lives than others. Similarly, while some of the children's

[320] "45 Exiled Children Arrive on Liner: Many Left Parents Behind in French Internment Camps," *New York Times*, Sept. 3, 1941.

[321] Ibid.; "Ten Ships Arriving Over the Week-End: Schedule in Harbor One of the Heaviest in Months," *New York Times*, Aug. 31 1941, Proquest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times; Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

[322] Watkins, *A Childhood Lost and Found*, 22.

educational or career opportunities were negatively affected by their status as refugee children, some others point to greater educational, career, or other opportunities after arriving in the United States.

Alice was born Lorle Samson in 1926 in Edesheim, Germany.[323] After living in France at Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais, Alice traveled with the first group of La Guette children on the SS *Mouzinho,* arriving in New York City on June 21, 1941 at the age of fifteen.[324] She spent a brief period in New York, during which time she visited with some relatives.[325] Alice was then sent to a Jewish orphanage in San Francisco where she lived until a Jewish family selected her from the orphanage and took her to live in their home in Sacramento.[326] The family expected her to do much of the housework; Alice took care of the young children in the household, cooked meals, and cleaned.[327] In this way, her experience was comparable to the experience of some young women on the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain who essentially worked as maids in their home placements.[328] In addition to Alice's duties at home, she also attended school, where she learned to speak English.[329]

Alice felt alienated from the Jewish community after her arrival in the United States, and she also alludes to challenges she had with social workers after arriving in the U.S.:

> I have difficulties becoming a member of a synagogue because when I first came to America, especially Sacramento, I was not welcomed in Jewish circles because I was always looked down upon, my classmates who were Jewish. I felt they treated me shabbily. Jewish education was not available to me. There was only for boys, supposedly.

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[323] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

[324] "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24L6-KML : 2 October 2015), Suse Lore Alice Samson, 1941; citing Immigration, New York, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication T715 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[325] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

[326] Ibid.

[327] Ibid.

[328] Fast, *Children's Exodus*, 50.

[329] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

> So it was just a very difficult time. As far as social workers and I have not done too hot, too well.[330]

Alice had a social worker who would talk with the woman she lived with but did not visit Alice separately, thereby not giving Alice a chance to share her side of the situation.[331] La Guette child Eva Moore had a similar experience with her social worker in Minneapolis; the social worker would talk with Eva when she was in the same room as her foster parent and Eva did not feel comfortable voicing her unhappiness with the situation.[332]

Alice's challenges integrating in American life were also present in school. While in France, Alice felt that, "Somehow, fifth, sixth grade just seemed to be for eternal. I don't know if I ever got out of fifth or sixth grade, I have no idea."[333] This lack of progress and instability continued in the United States, as she continues, "It seemed to me I changed classes, you know, it's wild, this turmoil, including when I came to America."[334] Despite the turmoil, Alice graduated as the valedictorian of her high school and she was offered full rides to prestigious schools.[335] She was among other Jewish refugee children in the U.S. who also "achieved a high level of scholastic achievement in both primary and secondary school."[336] Yet, as a refugee without a family to support her, she had trouble navigating the college acceptance process and as a woman she faced barriers to entering the medical field:

> I wanted to go into medicine, however, I was discouraged, one because I had no money, and two because I was female; in those days that was a big obstacle. The third, I had no family to support. So that was pointed out to me over and over again and since I – no one took the time to tell me that a full scholarship didn't mean that I would have to repay. I chose not to accept them, neither Stanford nor Berkeley, because I was afraid I would be

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[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[333] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid.; "Alice Lorle Samson," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Jan. 23, 2010, NewsBank.
[336] Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise*, 97.

> stuck and having to repay the full scholarship. So instead I did go to Berkeley, lived with a family for room and board. But had by that time decided that occupational therapy was probably the closest to medicine that I could deal with.[337]

After beginning her studies at Berkeley, Alice transferred to San Jose State University to pursue her interest in occupational therapy.[338] Throughout college Alice worked to support herself, in the summer typically working more than one job.[339] Alice became close to a couple living in Oakland who she called Auntie and Uncle, and they provided a support system for her in the absence of parents.[340] They encouraged her to seek out reparations for her family's home and business in Germany.[341] Alice eventually received a payment, though Alice says that it was minimal given the value of her family's property.[342] Around this time, Alice also learned more conclusively that her parents, brother, and sister had all been killed during the war.[343]

Alice took a trip around the U.S. after college to visit relatives and interview for occupational therapy positions.[344] She says of choosing a job and place to live, "I didn't make the decision until I came home – home meaning Oakland."[345] Therefore, by this point in her journey she saw Oakland as home, most likely because she had friends and Auntie and Uncle there, and she would later return to Oakland in between positions.[346] Alice accepted a position as an occupational therapist in Naperville, Illinois, where she worked for a few years.[347] She then moved back to California, where she continued her work and studies, eventually earning a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling and later specializing in mental health and chronic

[337] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Ibid.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.

illnesses.[348] Alice had a long career in occupational therapy and rehabilitation counseling, and for many years worked for the State of California in Los Angeles and in Long Beach.[349]

Alice enjoyed getting together with La Guette peers in Southern California and helped organize gatherings of the survivors.[350] Her obituary references her friendships with La Guette survivors and also describes Alice's resilience by saying that in the face of challenges, "…she maintained a warm and joyful disposition with a radiant smile. She was a comfort and friend to many, always eager to help others."[351] Alice passed away in Long Beach, California in 2010.[352]

Alice's story highlights some of the challenges that she and other La Guette children faced after arriving in the United States as child refugees. Alice had to learn English and adjust to a new culture while living in a difficult home environment. She also lacked a financial and emotional support system due to the absence of her parents, and she had to work hard to support herself. Alice did, however, form relationships such as the ones with the couple she called Auntie and Uncle that provided a support system for her to some degree, and she eventually appears to have created a home for herself in Oakland and later in Southern California. Alice also sought out the friendship of La Guette survivors. Though Alice faced challenges after immigrating to the United States, she thrived in school and in her career, and she persevered in the face of her wartime and post-war experiences, a description that characterizes many of the La Guette survivors.

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[348] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA; "Alice Lorle Samson," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Jan. 23, 2010.

[349] Ibid.

[350] Ibid.

[351] "Alice Lorle Samson," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, Jan. 23, 2010.

[352] Ibid.

Conclusion

The La Guette children dispersed during the war, with four common patterns of movement during the wartime period: hiding in France for the duration of the war, fleeing illegally over the border to Switzerland, being arrested and deported, and immigrating to the United States via children's transports in 1941. The children's paths demonstrate the influence of migration to France on their spatial trajectories; if not for the steady increase in persecution against Jews in the country, the children could have remained safely and openly in France for the rest of the war. The geographical position of France also resulted in the possibility of fleeing illegally through Switzerland.

The La Guette children's paths differed from the children who fled on the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain. The children who fled to Great Britain typically moved less often and their paths were characterized by movements such as evacuation to the countryside or internment as enemy aliens, but typically not fleeing persecution through another country during the war.[353] Therefore, the La Guette case sheds light on the experience of Jewish German and Austrian refugee children living in France during World War II and their continued experiences of flight and persecution during the war even after arriving in France. Furthermore, some of the children continued to search for home or face instability even when safely in another country such as the United States or Switzerland.

Throughout these migrations, many of the La Guette children remained in contact with peers and educators from La Guette and others such as Aunt Elisabeth. Sometimes, their experiences in the children's homes and/or people they knew from that time provided them with hope and perseverance in the midst of difficult wartime experiences. The children who survived

[353] Fast, *Children's Exodus*, 61, 68-69; Baumel-Schwartz, *Never Look Back*, 155, 181-182.

the war would continue their journeys to find home in the post-war period and many would continue to foster friendships with other members of the La Guette group.

CHAPTER FOUR:
RESETTLING, REBUILDING, REUNITING, AND REVISITING: POST-WAR MIGRATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF HOME, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND SURVIVOR COMMUNITY AFTER COMMUNAL LIFE IN FRANCE

La Guette survivors continued to search for home in the post-war period and into their later lives. Due to the English-language source materials available on the subject, this chapter particularly, though not exclusively, focuses on the experiences of children who settled in the United States during or after the war. For the children who immigrated to the United States on USCOM transports, their process of resettlement in the country began in 1941. For many of the children still in Europe, however, their migrations continued into the post-war period.

Following the end of World War II in May of 1945, there were millions of displaced persons searching for a future – looking for family, a place to live, and a way to rebuild their lives.[1] This included Jewish displaced persons, many of whom did not want to return to their countries of origin, or when they did, faced violence or saw "their communities erased, their homes appropriated."[2] Studies have often focused on Holocaust survivors living in displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany, where survivors of concentration camps as well as Jews from Eastern Europe lived after the end of the war.[3] However, La Guette children who survived the war in Europe also found themselves displaced but generally searched for home outside of the framework of DP camps. Yet, it was in this context of widespread post-war displacement that some of La Guette children migrated and sought out their futures after the war.

[1] Leah Wolfson, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, vol. 5, *1944-1946* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2015), 111, 161-162.

[2] Cohen, *Case Closed*, 8.

[3] Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-6.

During and after the war, depending on when and where they settled, many La Guette survivors had to once again adjust to new cultures, learn new languages, and/or re-create their lives following their experiences fleeing persecution. Some of the survivors returned to visit their hometowns, at times soon after the war to help decide where to settle long-term, and in other cases much later on in order to revisit their pasts. In the process, survivors grappled with the meaning of "home" and their own identities as related to national boundaries, relationships with family, and the physical sites where they had lived before and during the war.

Some La Guette survivors also visited their previous homes in France: Château de la Guette and/or Hôtel des Anglais. Additionally, survivors reunited with one another and gradually developed a transnational community of "*guettois*" (La Guette survivors and educators). This community came together for organized reunions that fostered connections between survivors who referred to each other as "family," and in the process shaped collective memory of the La Guette experience. At the May 1999 La Guette reunion in France, survivors visited Château de la Guette as a group, demonstrating the home's role as a site of memory for the survivors. What becomes clear from analyzing La Guette survivor networks and survivor reunions is the enduring impact of children's homes on the lives of many Jewish refugee children fleeing persecution.

Post-War Migrations

Leah Wolfson states, "Survivors, refugees, and their families faced a very real conundrum in postwar Europe: where and how to find a home."[4] Patricia Heberer similarly writes of the post-war period, "And then, child and adult Holocaust survivors alike faced the

[4] Wolfson, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, 116.

most daunting dilemma of all: where should they call home?"[5] This was precisely the dilemma that many of the La Guette survivors faced as they continued their migrations and search for home in the post-war period.

After the war was over, many La Guette survivors searched for loved ones, and in some cases reunited with one or more parents, siblings, or other relatives. Others did not have any surviving parents or close family members. Some of the La Guette survivors who corresponded with Aunt Elisabeth learned from her what had happened to their family members, and Aunt Elisabeth undertook efforts to trace survivors.[6] Oftentimes La Guette survivors decided where to immigrate and settle based on where they had immediate or extended family members. Inge Spitz, for example, had been eagerly preparing to go to Palestine.[7] Once she learned that her mother had survived the war and was in Sweden, however, (as had her father in England), she instead decided to go to England with her sister in order to reconnect with her family.[8]

Sometimes it was a difficult process to immigrate even after the end of the war due to restrictive immigration policies and procedures in a variety of countries.[9] Inge explains, "So we started all over again. To apply, it wasn't easy; you couldn't just hop a plane, you had no money, you had to have permission, you had to have somebody to authorize this. After the war, nothing happened. It took three months for us to get a letter from my mother."[10] Amazingly, Inge and her sister Edith were reunited with both of their parents in 1946:

> I always tell this story and it hurts me so. I didn't recognize my father. It had been seven years since we'd seen each other; I was a little kid. I was a grown woman of nineteen. He was a head shorter than I am now, and I'm not very tall, and I didn't recognize him. It

[5] Heberer, *Children during the Holocaust*, 376.
[6] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 340-346.
[7] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Wolfson, *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, 115-116.
[10] Inge Spitz, interview 2818, VHA.

bothers me to this day as you can see. But we were very happy to be reunited. And by sheer chance and sheer miracle, my mother arrived from Sweden on a boat to Hull, by train to London on the very same day, okay. Am I blessed? I consider myself entirely and completely blessed.[11]

Figure 22: ***Jewish girls and teenagers eat outside in a courtyard in a postwar children's home in Feneyrols, France.***
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Ruth Strauss Schloss.

Some La Guette children, including Ruth Schloss, remained in children's homes in France after the war as they figured out what to do and where to go next.[12] Ruth later lived in Paris with friends and did sewing work for a tailor.[13] She got in contact with her uncle after the war, who had returned from a concentration camp.[14] Ruth visited her uncle in Germany in 1945, and then returned to France.[15] Ruth wanted to go to the United States: "My father had a brother in San Francisco and all my friends went to the United States because I don't think so they could have felt well in France, we had suffered so much, and the memories, that I figured I want to break clean and start a new life."[16] Her relatives sponsored her affidavit, and she left for the

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ruth Schloss, interview 2408, VHA.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

United States in August of 1947.[17] It took others even longer to immigrate; it was not until 1953 that Alex Waters immigrated to the United States after living and working in France.[18]

Like Ruth and Alex, in 1946 many of the La Guette survivors were still living in temporary locations before immigrating to other countries. Survivors in France and Switzerland in particular would often move to other countries after the war. A visualization of the countries where La Guette survivors were known to be living in 1946 is pictured in Figure 23.[19] More survivors were living in Switzerland and France in 1946 than are later known to have been in those locations in the 1990s and 2000s, and more survivors would end up in the United States and in Israel later on.

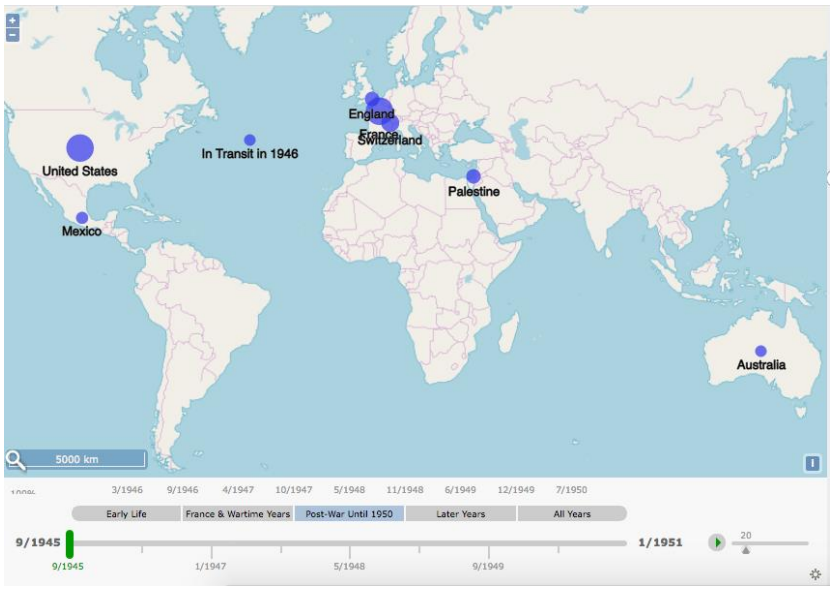

Figure 23: Countries where La Guette Survivors were Living in 1946. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA

[19] Data compiled from: *Les Enfants de la Guette: Souvenirs et Documents*; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; and databases such as FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, and NewsBank.

The La Guette children who immigrated to the United States after the war were among 140,000 Jewish displaced persons who immigrated to the United States in the post-war period.[20] Some of these immigrants entered the United States through the Truman Directive, which gave preference to displaced persons in immigration, though there were still quota-based limits on the number of immigrants.[21] The Directive mentioned children and advised that many visas be given to orphans.[22] As a result, around one thousand Jewish children came to the United States through this policy, and children would also immigrate following the 1948 Displaced Persons Act.[23]

When survivors settled in the (oftentimes new) places where they would live long-term during or after World War II, they began rebuilding their lives. They had a variety of experiences, with the younger individuals in the group often living in children's homes, foster homes, or with family until they were old enough to work or go to school on their own. Many of the La Guette children attended higher education, served in the military, began jobs, and/or married. Some survivors changed their names after immigrating to new countries; for example, Ludwig (Lutz) Scheucher became Louis Scott and Hans Schönfrank became Harry Schoenfrank after they immigrated to the United States.[24] Many of the women in the group also changed their names when they married.

Places of Residence Later in Life

There is extensive data about where La Guette survivors were living by the 1990s and early 2000s, largely due to the efforts of survivors who created detailed contact lists for reunions.

[20] Cohen, *Case Closed*, 9.
[21] Ibid., 12.
[22] Ibid., 96.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 346; Harry S. Schoenfrank, interview 28338, VHA.

Unfortunately, however, some survivors are difficult to trace, oftentimes due to name changes upon immigrating to a new country or through marriage. Therefore, there are gaps in the data and the amount of data available for each person varies (for some, exact addresses are known, whereas for others only the country where they ended up during or after the war is known).

Available data shows the following breakdown of where survivors lived by the 1990s or 2000s: around fifty-nine had settled in the United States, twenty lived in Israel, ten were in France, six lived in England, three were in Canada, three resided in Mexico, two had returned to Austria, one had returned to Germany, one lived in Venezuela, one was in Australia, and one survivor lived in Belgium part of the year and in Switzerland the other part of the year.[25] In some cases, the aforementioned locations were where the survivors were last known to be living or lived before they passed away; not all of the survivors were still living in the 1990s or 2000s.

Figure 24 uses this data to demonstrate what countries were home to the La Guette survivors in the 1990s, 2000s, or in their last known location. Circles sized in relation to the number of La Guette survivors living in each country provide a visual representation of their ultimate dispersion. The survivors therefore lived in at least twelve countries around the world, but the vast majority lived in North America, Western Europe, and Israel.

[25] Data compiled from: *Les Enfants de la Guette: Souvenirs et Documents (1938-1945)*; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; and databases such as FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, and NewsBank.

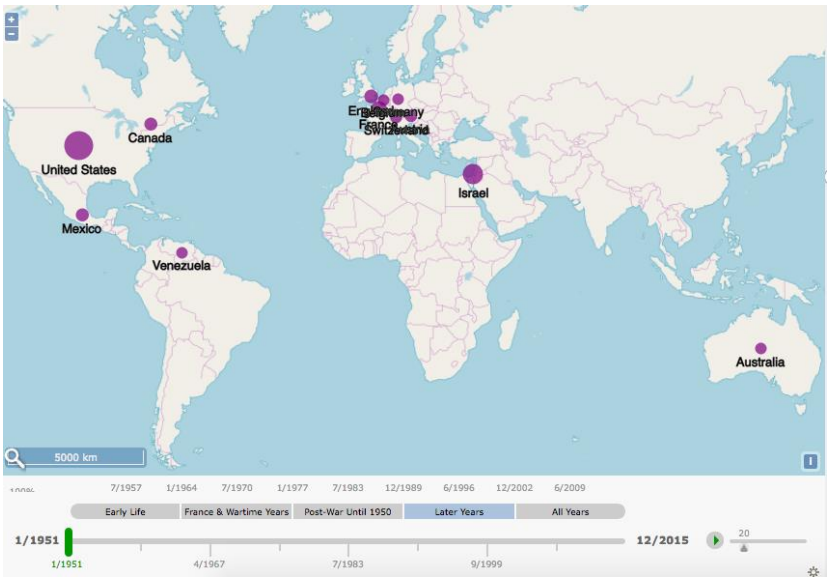

Figure 24: Map of La Guette Survivors' Countries of Residence Later in Life. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

Looking at the geographical distribution of the survivors from a city-level view in the United States (for the survivors for whom such data exists) reveals that survivors in the United States were scattered throughout the country, but predictably found mostly in larger cities and locations with moderate to large Jewish populations.[26] Two large clusters of survivors settled along the coast in California and in the New York City area. However, there were also survivors throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, and clusters of a few survivors lived in other locations such as Cincinnati, Ohio and in Southern Florida. These clusters of multiple survivors (which can also be found in other countries) contributed to the survivors' ability to reunite and maintain contact with one another. Additional survivors resided in a variety of cities and states throughout the United States and around the world.

[26] Data compiled from: *Les Enfants de la Guette: Souvenirs et Documents (1938-1945)*; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC; and databases such as FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, and NewsBank.

Figure 25: Map of La Guette Survivors' Cities of Residence Later in Life. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

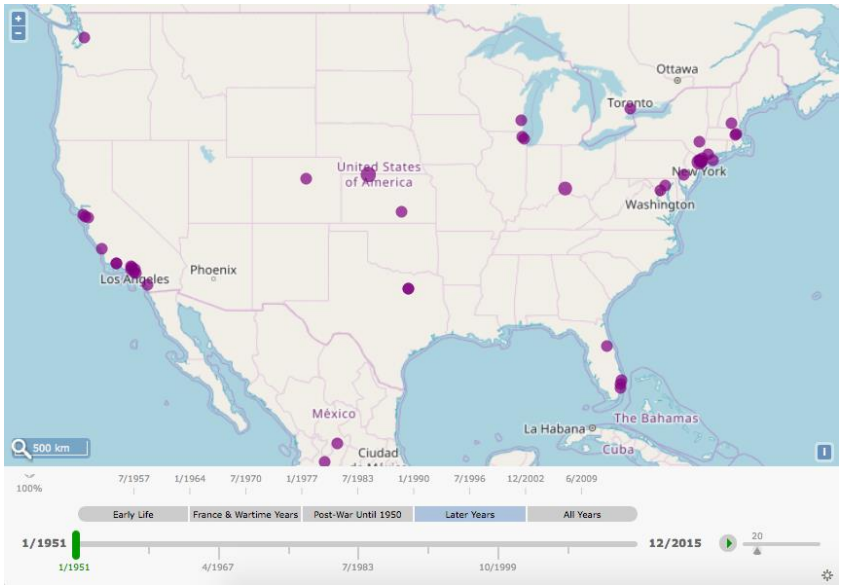

Figure 26: Map of La Guette Survivors' Cities of Residence in the United States Later in Life. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.
Note: The dot near the words "United States of America" on the map denotes survivors for whom city-level data is unknown.

National Identities

Some of the survivors adapted rapidly to the countries in which they settled and felt a strong connection to the countries where they lived. Others felt conflicted about their national identities due to the various countries in which they had lived, and some would live in multiple countries in their later lives.

Frederick Springer explains in his oral history how he felt accepted by England and for the first time after his experience as a refugee felt recognized as belonging to a country. Therefore, his identity was closely tied to his English nationality:

> England is my first real home. The first time that I've called myself British. Because I was nothing. In Austria I wasn't Austrian; I was stateless. When I came to England on my papers it says 'Nationality: unknown.' They couldn't figure out what I really was. Because my parents were Polish, not recognized by the Austrians, and all this kind of business. In England, I felt welcome. And that's how I feel and I am very pro-British and I love the English nation and such. And I'm grateful, really, to be allowed to be of a nationality.[27]

Werner Neuberger also had a strong connection to the country where he settled, the United States. He says, "The other thing I want to say, what we can express over here in this country it's unbelievable because the freedom that we have: we can speak, we can go where we want to, and what we went through, it's – there is no other country in this world."[28]

Beatrice Rubens was a strong Zionist and first immigrated to then-Palestine in 1945.[29] However, she decided to immigrate to the United States in consideration of where her parents, who had survived the war in Shanghai, might best thrive.[30] After living in New York for some time, she later moved with her husband and children to Antwerp, Belgium and lived there for

[27] Frederick Springer, interview 47272, VHA.
[28] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[29] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[30] Ibid.

about twenty years.[31] Throughout her life, however, she felt connected to Israel and hoped to return, saying, "My home is Israel."[32] Beatrice eventually did move on her own to Israel around the late 1970s.[33] Beatrice's national identity was thus tied to Israel, though she lived in a variety of countries throughout her life.[34]

As will be discussed later, Eva and Walter Weitzmann each spent time living in Vienna after the war because their mother still lived there.[35] Eva particularly felt conflicted about her national identity, but both Eva and Walter eventually realized that they had become Americanized and decided to settle in the United States.[36] Alice Berney revisited France in the 1950s but also realized that she had become Americanized and returned to the United States.[37]

Gerald Watkins re-connected with his Viennese identity after immigrating to Australia in 1941 because his mother and stepfather "were part of a group of other émigrés, their whole social circle was other émigrés from either Germany or Austria who had gone to Melbourne."[38] His mother and stepfather were part of a Viennese theater group as part of their connection with other Viennese émigrés.[39] Gerald says, "So all of this brought back memories of Vienna because I got all of this from living at home, you see, because they talked about the old days…So I re-gained my Austrian memories, if you like."[40] He later appears to have had a strong connection to Australia, working as an Australian Trade Commissioner and stating that living in Australia was

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA; Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Alice Berney, interview 23647, VHA.
[38] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

"very beneficial" for his worldview.[41] He also lived in different countries through his work and later in life settled in Los Angeles due to marriage.[42]

Figure 27: ***Peter Watkins greets his stepchildren, Gerhard and Sylvia, upon their arrival in Sydney*****. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Gerald Watkins.**

Remembering and Revisiting La Guette through Survivor Reunions and Commemorative Activities

La Guette survivors organized reunions from 1979-1999 that commemorated their time together in France. These reunions provided an opportunity for survivors to reconnect, reminisce, and revisit wartime homes. A transnational network of La Guette survivors emerged in the course of planning reunions, and reunions often brought together survivors living in different countries. Collective memory of the La Guette group developed and was reinforced over the

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

course of these reunions, and many of the La Guette survivors clung to one another – as well as to their educators and to some extent the Rothschilds – as "family" or close friends.

The La Guette group is not the only group of Jewish refugee children that continued to reunite and build community long after the war. The "Children of La Hille" also held reunions years after their wartime experiences, even revisiting and dedicating a plaque on their children's home just like the La Guette survivors.[43] Furthermore, a book about the La Hille group discusses the "lifelong bonds" that some members of the group shared, much like La Guette survivors.[44] Children living in OSE children's homes also held reunions after the war.[45] Similarly, survivors of the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain held a fiftieth anniversary reunion in England in June of 1989 that led to other reunions, including reunions held in Israel and the United States.[46] Plaques, memorials, and other forms of commemoration were also prevalent in perpetuating memory of the British *Kindertransport*.[47]

It appears that the first organized reunion of La Guette survivors occurred in April of 1979 in Israel and was planned to coincide with the Jewish holiday of Passover.[48] According to Felix Scherzer's interview, Israeli survivors organized the reunion and they decided to make it in the spring to align with the time of year when the La Guette group met in 1939; the reunion occurred forty years after the children arrived in France.[49]

Felix describes the reunion by saying that it took him back to when he was in France: "And we turned fifteen again. We were all fifteen again…And there we were at night, bonfire,

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[43] Reed, *The Children of La Hille*, 240-243.
[44] Ibid., 240.
[45] Hazan, *Rescuing Jewish Children during the Nazi Occupation*, 85; Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[46] Baumel-Schwartz, *Never Look Back*, 229-231.
[47] Ibid., 232-233.
[48] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[49] Ibid.

dancing *horahs*, singing the same songs and new songs and talking about this and who that and what that, and you know, everything, and do you remember this and what happened here and what happened there. And that's how you found out who died, who this, that."[50] Felix felt connected to his peers even after years apart, as he explains, "And again, as if we had seen each other yesterday."[51] Frederick Springer also describes the 1979 reunion in Israel and echoes Felix's statement about the connections between survivors, saying that it was as if they had just been in France:

> We had a reunion in 1979 for the very first time. The ex-La Guette people from all over the world…And so in 1979 somebody called Werner Matzdorff, who is in Paris, who's an ex-architect, did a lot of research and writing letters all over the world, and we all ended up – quite a lot of us – ended up in Israel. And that was kind of, can you imagine, after then, forty years after the event, all coming out, out of two coaches, and embrace all of these wrinkly people. [*laughs*] And calling yourselves by our first names as if it happened yesterday. We were really there as if it happened yesterday except we had no hair or wrinkles. But the feeling is the same; you know the person inside is still a little boy. And I am still – and when we see each other it's an amazing feeling.[52]

As the survivors exchanged information about other La Guette peers and their whereabouts, a larger contact list for future gatherings developed.[53]

Four years after the reunion in Israel, there was a La Guette reunion in Orangeburg, New York over the weekend of July 9-10, 1983.[54] The gathering took place at the home of La Guette survivor Werner Neuberger.[55] At the time of the reunion in 1983, he had contact information for fifty-six of the *guettois* and there were twenty who attended the reunion.[56] The reunion was covered in the local paper, the Rockland County *Journal-News*, as well as by a local radio

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Hilary Waldman, "40 Years Later…Tears and Hugs: Holocaust Survivors Reunited in Orangeburg," *Journal-News* (Rockland County, NY), July 11, 1983.

station.[57] Survivors traveled to the reunion from various places throughout the country and from Canada, including, "Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Miami Beach, Cincinnati, and Toronto, Canada."[58] In Werner's oral history interview he explains that he also invited survivors living in Israel, though none of them were able to make it to the reunion.[59]

Reunion attendees spent the afternoon of July 10 in Werner's backyard, and newspaper coverage of the event emphasized the emotional nature of the interactions between survivors as they reunited and reminisced.[60] *Journal-News* reporter Hilary Waldman writes that the *guettois* "met for the first time in more than 40 years" and she says that they did so with "hugs and tears."[61] Waldman observes that, "the bond between them seemed unbroken" and she goes on to write, "Every once and a while the banter was interrupted as two friends paused and took a long look at one another, almost as if they were afraid to lose each other again."[62] Werner also discusses the sense of community that he felt at the reunion: "But it was unbelievable, and the camaraderie that you have as children is just as great now. It was just a happy family. And this is thanks to Baron Rothschild because what he did with the education that he gave us to be close together like that, it's unbelievable. It was really great. And we looked at pictures, and they brought mementos that we wrote in the school, and it was unbelievable, it was great."[63]

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[57] Ibid.; OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[58] Hilary Waldman, "40 Years Later…Tears and Hugs: Holocaust Survivors Reunited in Orangeburg," *Journal-News* (Rockland County, NY), July 11, 1983.

[59] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

[60] Hilary Waldman, "40 Years Later…Tears and Hugs: Holocaust Survivors Reunited in Orangeburg," *Journal-News* (Rockland County, NY), July 11, 1983

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

In 1989 there was a reunion of Holocaust survivors in Los Angeles.[64] According to a newspaper article in the *Daily News of Los Angeles*, it brought together children who went to France under the sponsorship of the Rothschild family and then went to the United States, but it was not a reunion solely for the La Guette group.[65] The reunion was scheduled for March 25, 1989.[66] It is likely that some of the La Guette survivors, particularly those living in Los Angeles, participated in this reunion.

Nine of the La Guette children and one La Guette educator attended "A Special Celebration of OSE Children Survivors," an Œuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE) reunion that took place in Miami Beach, Florida from April 30-May 7, 1997.[67] La Guette survivor Louis Scott helped coordinate the reunion.[68] A roster from the event lists 179 participants in the reunion from across the United States and around the world, including OSE child survivors, their family members, leaders affiliated with organizations such as the OSE and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and other guests.[69]

Friends and Alumni of OSE-USA and Amicale de l'OSE France were the two organizations hosting the reunion.[70] The reunion included a variety of events, including two films screenings, group roundtable discussions on the subject of "The OSE Homes: How We Remember Them," a *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day) commemoration at the Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial, and a speech by acclaimed Holocaust survivor and author

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[64] "Of Note," *Daily News of Los Angeles*, March 10, 1989, NewsBank.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC. Note: La Guette participants included: Leon Benjamin, Erika Goldfarb, Dr. John Hirschberg, Werner Neuberger, Alice Samson, Louis Scott, Charles Schwarz, Ruth Seltzer, Inge Spitz, and educator Lida Jablonski.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

Elie Wiesel.[71] Some of the speeches from the reunion and the group roundtable discussions were taped, transcribed, and made into a document in order to preserve participants' life stories and experiences in OSE homes during the Holocaust, including some of the La Guette survivors' experiences.[72] La Guette survivors took a group picture at the reunion, demonstrating that they felt a particular affinity to their La Guette peers and educator.[73]

Two years after the OSE reunion, the La Guette group held a reunion in France. When asked in her oral history interview, "Have you had any reunions?" Alice Samson responded, "Oh, yes. We are going to have one next May in Paris to celebrate sixty years of Château de la Guette. One of our friends is putting it together. We'll go by bus from Paris to La Guette."[74] Indeed, in May of 1999, La Guette survivors convened for a reunion to commemorate sixty years since the children had lived together in France. From May 18-20, 1999 about thirty-seven La Guette survivors, one educator, and friends and family members of the survivors gathered in Paris.[75] There were an additional six La Guette survivors (including Alice Samson) who wanted to attend but could not make it, and educators Henri Dybnis and Fred Brauner wished the group well but also did not attend.[76]

The reunion was organized by La Guette survivors, and papers from reunion planning show that there were three main contact people corresponding with the three countries where the largest numbers of La Guette survivors lived: the United States, Israel, and France.[77] Louis Scott

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[75] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[76] La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:06:43.
[77] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

was the American contact, Naomi Elath was the Israeli contact, and Werner Matzdorff was the contact person for survivors in France; organizing the reunion was clearly a transnational effort.[78] There was extensive planning leading up to the reunion, with an itinerary sent out to the group along with several hotel options and information about how much money was requested for group transportation and other costs.[79]

Video footage from the first day of the reunion, May 18, shows Louis Scott speaking to the assembled survivors in English.[80] Louis presented information about other survivors and educators from La Guette, including those who were in touch with the group but could not attend the reunion, the names of *guettois* who were deported and killed during the war, and a list of twenty-one La Guette survivors and six La Guette educators who had passed away prior to the reunion.[81] Louis also shared some of his memories of La Guette and told the story of how his mother found him after the war through communication with the Rothschild family.[82] Louis's comments about the La Guette experience are generally positive and reinforce an upbeat narrative of the children's time at the home:

> I do speak in schools and in universities and when I talk to them about La Guette and I ask them afterwards 'Have you got any questions?' they want to know what kind of orphanage that was. And I explain to them, this was not an orphanage. This was a Children's Republic. We learned freedom. And I don't think any of us – the teachers that they chose, the teachers that we had and have, they were so great, they had an open heart, they helped us, they molded us. I don't think any one of us is envious or has hate in themselves, I don't think so.[83]

[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:06:40.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 00:15:54.
[83] Ibid., 00:14:55.

La Guette educator Harry Spiegel also spoke to the group, sharing a story from La Guette about how he and other educators could tell from looking at the children's toothbrushes that some of the children were not brushing their teeth.[84] He also reflected on how the survivors' existence was an act of resistance, saying, "For me, all of you, you are here…one political word – for me it was, that you still exist is a blow to Nazism. And for that as an old fighter for Resistance I thank you, that you make this resistance possible, and that you are still alive, and for that I want to thank you…And I'm still young enough that I'm waiting that this fight continues. Thank you."[85]

Also during the first day of the reunion the group spent time at the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris.[86] Representatives from OSE and others leaders associated with the children's time in France were expected to join the group.[87] A memorial service was held, including speeches and a solemn recitation of the Mourner's *Kaddish* (a Jewish prayer of mourning) for those who were killed.[88] That evening, the group was scheduled to view the film *Die Reise der Kinder von La Guette*, a documentary film created by Andrea Morgenthaler about the La Guette group.[89]

The next day, May 19, the group took a trip to visit Château de la Guette, which had been converted into a retirement home run by the Rothschild Foundation (*la Fondation de Rothschild*).[90] Video footage of the visit shows a beautiful spring day with survivors looking up at the building, milling around the lawn, taking photographs, and reminiscing about their

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[84] Ibid., 00:24:00.
[85] Ibid., 00:26:29.
[86] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[87] Ibid.
[88] La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:28:35.
[89] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.
[90] Ibid.; "Maison de retraite La Guette," Fondation de Rothschild, accessed May 23, 2018, http://www.fondation-de-rothschild.fr/spip.php?rubrique35.

childhood experiences at the château.[91] Werner Neuberger walked around the site with his video camera and asked survivors how it felt to be back at La Guette.[92] Louis Scott responded, "Great, what an emotion! You know, sixty years, it's a miracle, but we're here."[93] Frederick Springer commented, "It's an amazing feeling, really, to – mixed up and emotional, what can one say? It's quite incredible."[94] A woman whose name is not mentioned on the video says, "Oh, it's nice, it's being young again. It's being eleven years old."[95] After Werner asked about being back at La Guette, Henry Low's response was in the form of a joke about the château: "Well, I'm considering making an offer on this with about ten percent down, and it looks just as good as it ever did."[96]

A few of the survivors shared memories on film or could be heard in the background remembering details of their time at La Guette. A male voice in the background of the video comments on the interactions between boys and girls at the home, saying, "Do you remember passing notes down to the girls?"[97] The camera also shows Henry Low and his daughter Carol Low wearing the t-shirts that they made and gave to everyone at the reunion.[98] The shirts feature a small image of La Guette on the front and a large image of La Guette on the back that was drawn by survivor Paul Peter Porges.[99]

[91] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:22:29.
[92] Ibid., 00:24:29.
[93] Ibid., 00:24:32.
[94] Ibid., 00:32:53.
[95] Ibid., 00:35:02.
[96] Ibid., 00:29:41.
[97] Ibid., 00:28:14.
[98] Ibid., 00:29:55.
[99] Ibid.

The group eventually gathered in front of the château to unveil a plaque and hear commemorative speeches, which were presented in French.[100] A small covering in the design of a French flag was pulled off of the wall of the château to reveal a plaque.[101] The plaque commemorates the children's time at La Guette, specifically mentioning the efforts of Germaine de Rothschild, and honoring the sixtieth anniversary of the children's time in France. The text of the plaque is as follows:

Mars 1939
cent trente enfants juifs d'Allemagne et d'Autriche
trouvent ici un refuge grâce à une association présidée par
Germaine de ROTHSCHILD

Pour commémorer le soixantième anniversaire
de cet évènement, des anciens, venus de plusieurs
continents, ont apposé cette plaque du souvenir.
Mai 1999[102]

Guy de Rothschild, the son of Édouard and Germaine de Rothschild, was in attendance with his sister and niece, and he addressed the group.[103] Following his speech, Robert Jablon, who worked for the Rothschilds and was involved in coordinating the children's rescue in France, also spoke.[104] La Guette survivor Erika Goldfarb then spoke on behalf of the survivors, and her husband read some of her prepared remarks for her as well.[105] After the speeches, group photographs were taken in front of a statue outside of La Guette.[106]

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[100] Ibid., 00:35:50.

[101] La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:41:46.

[102] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[103] Ibid.; La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:42:45.

[104] Ibid., 00:48:49; *Les Enfants de la Guette*, 9-12.

[105] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:38:13.

[106] La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 01:05:25.

After visiting La Guette, the group traveled to Château de Ferrières, which had been the Rothschilds' residence in France.[107] Video footage shows survivors walking around the large estate and enjoying the scenic view of the castle and water.[108] The survivors also gathered that day to sing songs from their time in France. La Guette educator Harry Spiegel led the group in song, conducting as the survivors sat at tables and sang childhood tunes in French and German.[109] A room full of *guettois* sang "Frère Jacques," first in unison and then as a round, and continued to sing other songs from a songbook made for the reunion featuring twenty-one songs from the children's time in France.[110]

On the final day of the reunion, May 20, the group was scheduled to visit other sites such as the OSE and Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme.[111] The group also had a "repas convivial" at a restaurant.[112] Video footage of the group eating in the restaurant together shows continued conversations and what indeed appears to be a "convivial" atmosphere.[113]

The sixtieth reunion of the La Guette group in France highlights the enduring relationships between survivors in the La Guette community and the importance of Château de la Guette as a home for the group. Survivors valued one another and their experience in the children's home enough to plan a reunion filled with memorial and social activities, and in some cases survivors traveled great distances to visit France. Survivors reenacted their childhood experiences at the reunion by singing children's songs as a group and revisiting the château, and

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[107] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:42:26.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., 00:44:00.

[110] Ibd.; Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[111] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:49:42.

in the process, survivors relived what many remembered as a happy time in the midst of dark personal and historical events.

Pierre Nora puts forth the term "*lieux de mémoire*" to describe forms of memory, including sites of memory, that occur because of the "will to remember."[114] A *lieu de mémoire* is "a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community."[115] In this case, as Ruth Schwertfeger also notes, Château de la Guette is a site of memory for the La Guette community, as are other World War II-era children's homes in France.[116] On the one hand, *lieux* "stop time," and on the other they also create new meanings over time.[117] The survivors remember and make sense of the past through revisiting the site of La Guette, which no longer exists for the same purpose but yet evokes meaning and is imbued with new meaning over time.

When the *guettois* reunited they also took part in commemorative and charitable activities as a group. At the 1983 reunion, the group raised $370 to be given to OSE.[118] Additionally, the group pooled resources to plant 130 trees in the Jerusalem Forest in April of 1990 in honor of Baron Édouard de Rothschild.[119] La Guette survivors also contributed to the Miami Holocaust Memorial and had an inscription placed on the memorial in the spring of 1991 in honor of the La Guette children who were killed.[120] Furthermore, as was previously mentioned, a plaque was dedicated at Château de la Guette during the 1999 reunion.[121]

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[114] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past,* vol. 1, *Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 14.

[115] Ibid., xvii.

[116] Ruth Schwertfeger, *In Transit: Narratives of German Jews in Exile, Flight, and Internment during "The Dark Years" of France* (Berlin, Germany: Frank & Timme, 2012), 199.

[117] Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 15.

[118] OSE Boîte XXVII, Reel 2, RG-43.059M, Selected records and publications of the Œuvre de secours aux enfants, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] La Guette 60 Year Reunion, Paris – May – 1999, VHS Tape created by Eric Goldfarb, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:41:46.

The La Guette group's history is also memorialized in the form of a documentary film titled *Die Reise der Kinder von La Guette*. According to Erika Goldfarb, one of the La Guette survivors wanted the La Guette story to be told, and after trying in France and Switzerland, he found a German television station that would cover the story.[122] Andrea Morgenthaler directed the ninety-minute film, which was created in German via Südwestfunk Baden-Baden in 1990 and contains excerpts from oral history interviews with survivors.[123] Erika was interviewed for the film in New York, but she mentions that interviews also took place in other locations. Erika explains, "People were interviewed in France, in New York, Miami; they went even to Israel. So there's a documentary about happenings."[124] This film helped preserve the La Guette story and was likely yet another way in which memory of the La Guette group was reinforced.

These survivor reunions and other commemorative activities demonstrate that many La Guette survivors remained in touch decades after the war and actively sought out the friendship and community of others from the children's home. In the process, the group was transformed into a transnational survivor community that stayed connected despite geographical distances and linguistic differences. At reunions, survivors rekindled friendships and shared photographs, artifacts, and memories. They also engaged in charitable and commemorative events as a group, while reliving and revisiting elements of their wartime experiences. The group found "home" again at the physical site of La Guette and in the familial community of La Guette survivors and relished these relationships and the role that the children's homes played in their lives.

[122] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.
[123] Morgenthaler, *Die Reise der Kinder von la Guette*.
[124] Erika Goldfarb, interview 4024, VHA.

Informal Survivor Gatherings and the La Guette 'Family'

In addition to organized reunions, some *guettois* met up with other survivors who lived in the same city and/or met up with survivors when they were traveling. In his oral history, Felix Scherzer explains how he reconnected with another La Guette peer in the United States:

> Now 1945 when the war ended there began a trickle of *guettois*, as they're called, into America. I met one of my roommates, funnily enough, on the soccer field. When he came here he started playing soccer and I was playing soccer. Became a professional soccer player a little later on, and we bumped into each other on the soccer field. I hadn't known that he had come. He was one of my roommates for two years. And slowly but surely we got to know more and more of what happened to the *la guettois*.[125]

Like Felix, Ellen Bamberger reconnected with La Guette survivors after moving to the United States. Ellen moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where other La Guette survivors also lived.[126] She mentions in her oral history interview that she "had one special friend who was about a year older and came from Vienna. By the name of Helen, at that time her name was Buchholz, now it is Ostrow, and she lives here in town also…And she did have a little sister with her; her name was Rita. The three of us obviously met again when I came to Cincinnati."[127]

Werner Neuberger visited La Guette survivors when he traveled to Israel soon after the 1983 reunion at his home: "And then Nancy and me decided to go to Israel the following year. And I wrote them that we were on a tour, but I said if possible while we are there arrange for the ones that we missed to have it in Israel, and we did. So it was great."[128] Felix Scherzer visited other survivors when traveling for work, as he explains, "I've been in the export-import business all of my life…Not much lately, but I used to do a tremendous amount of traveling. Gave my wife a chance to travel. See friends from the old days. I mean, you know, after this reunion, oh,

[125] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[126] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

you're in London, well next time I'm in London. Oh, you're still in France. Oh, you're in Switzerland, you know. And sure enough, you meet, you get together."[129] Both Werner and Felix reference the reunions as a catalyst for later meeting up with fellow survivors, demonstrating that the reunions played an important role in fostering contact between La Guette survivors.

A group of survivors living in the Los Angeles area would meet up regularly, and Alice Samson was a participant in these gatherings. She says, "Locally, we have about six of our brothers and sisters in the area, and we periodically meet. We chat frequently. It's sort of a bond, a brotherly bond. And then my friends in Miami call quite often and I visit them once a year, once every two years."[130] Eva Moore also spoke about the local survivors in her interview:

> And it looks like we're distributed between Paris, Israel, New York, and L.A., and a few here and there. So we can all get in touch if we wish. I'm told that if I were to go to Paris I'd make one phone call I have brothers and sisters. If I were to go to Israel I would be able to access them. And then the little group here, between Santa Barbara and San Diego there's about six or seven of us that decided also somehow to meet, and we met and we talked, and things were clarified, and I asked questions. And then it turned out that one of our educators also lives here, and he of course had the big view, he saw the big picture, and I was able to ask him questions of things that I never understood. And we've gotten together for like valley, backyard, barbecue things and restaurant meetings and it's been instructive and it's been fine. It was a good resolution.[131]

Gerald Watkins is another La Guette survivor in Los Angeles, and he tells a story about reconnecting with survivor Paul Peter Porges many years after the war:

> I can't tell you why, but for some reason I thought he was either in Chicago or in New York; this is before I got addresses. And so Barbara, who's a wonderful telephone person, just got on the phone; through inquiry we located him. I rang him up, and I said I don't know whether you remember me – this was fifty years later – my name was Gerhard Mahler. And he said sure I remember you, you had a sister called Sylvia and you have red hair. Now this is after fifty years; I mean this is quite an amazing story.[132]

[129] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[130] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.
[131] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.
[132] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

In addition to reconnecting with Paul Peter Porges (whose nickname is P.P.P.), Gerald Watkins also met fellow survivors in L.A. and elsewhere:

> So in the meantime I have met, through the address lists that I got, not only P.P.P. but others that live here in the L.A. area and the girlfriend of my sister's who lives in Canada, and also the ones who stayed in France, many of whom live in Paris, and the ones who immigrated to Israel. And of course a lot of these people had rather horrendous experiences because they didn't get out when we got out.[133]

Though Alex Waters did not keep in contact with some of the survivors from another group, he did keep in touch with La Guette peers: "Not from this group, but I've been in touch with some of the survivors from the Château de la Guette, where my first place is, when I first came to France. The few who did survive, a couple were in French Resistance, others were fortunate like a cousin of mine, Hans Blum, he went to Israel early enough and he still is over there…"[134] When asked if she still sees fellow survivors, Beatrice Rubens responds that she sees them "constantly" and goes on to say that, "Well they were fam—More than brothers, more than brothers and sisters because we chose each other. Of course not all of us, but certain groups, and this is a very, very strong tie that keeps us."[135]

As in the case of the aforementioned comments by Alice Samson, Eva Moore, and Beatrice Rubens that, "six of our brothers and sisters…It's sort of a bond, a brotherly bond," "I have brothers and sisters," and, "Well they were fam—More than brothers, more than brothers and sisters…" numerous La Guette survivors use familial terminology to refer to the La Guette survivor community.[136] Felix Scherzer used such terms when describing life at La Guette: "And life in La Guette became, how should I call it, probably the happiest years of my life with

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[133] Alex Waters, interview 38291, VHA.
[134] Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA; Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA; Beatrice Rubens, interview 34925, VHA.

hindsight. I had 120 brothers and sisters."[137] Paul Peter Porges explicitly made a reference to the familial bond between survivors in his oral history interview:

> Yes, yes. This is my family. Those people are my family really. And all their children and all their people are my family. It's marvelous, it's great, it's one of the benefits of those days, that whoever survived, whoever went through this in my circle has created a bond, a very strong bond. It's like belonging to a clan or a tribe, kind of, even so that there's nothing official. I can pick up with an ancient friend, an old, an *ancien*, that I haven't seen in forty years, like this.[138]

Louis Scott also furthered this idea of a familial bond during his speech at the 1999 La Guette reunion, once stating that the group was made up of "friends that formed a family," and later reiterating, "this is our family, this is our family."[139] Walter Weitzmann discussed his friends as being like family when mentioning how it felt to leave France for the United States in 1941: "Well it was hard because, you know, we spent over two years together and you form the friendship and it's almost like being brothers. And we went through good and through bad together…"[140] A variety of factors likely came together in the La Guette case to create such a communal spirit and collective memory, but the absence of family during and in many cases after the war was one clear reason that the survivors formed such close friendships and grew to see their friends as family.

Despite such strong comments about the familial nature of the group, Felix Scherzer commented in 1995 that over time the group had drifted apart:

> Unfortunately as happens in regular life you get older, you get married, you follow your interests, somebody else follows their interests, and very often you do drift apart and drift apart unless you're very fortunate and you can resume a certain path. And this is exactly what happened to our group. Not intentionally, but everybody has their own. You live in different places, you have different work habits, different work hours, different jobs,

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[137] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[138] Paul Porges, interview 8219, VHA.
[139] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 13:10, 19:18.
[140] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.

> different commitments and whatnot, so you drift apart. But certain stories emerged, some that we could be proud of and some that were not too happy.[141]

It should also be noted that the survivors who conducted oral history interviews were often those who were engaged in the survivor community to begin with; in fact, some of the survivors decided to be interviewed by the Shoah Foundation based upon word of mouth and the encouragement of other Holocaust survivors.[142] Therefore, those interviewed may have already been predisposed to participate in survivor reunions in the first place; they may provide a skewed sample of the impact of survivor networks. There were also survivors who did not stay in touch with the La Guette survivor community after the war, and their voices are not well represented in source materials. Nevertheless, it is clear that for some of the survivors – seemingly for over forty people given how many survivors were in touch with the group around the time of the 1999 reunion – the La Guette community was a meaningful one that lasted for decades beyond when the children lived together in France.

Survivors' Continued Relationships with their Educators, the Rothschild Family, and Aunt Elisabeth

Some of the La Guette children kept in touch with their former educators, the Rothschild family, and/or Aunt Elisabeth beyond when living under the Rothschilds' care. This was another way in which the La Guette community extended beyond the group's time living together, and the adults served as quasi-parental figures for some of the children.

Just as La Guette survivors reunited with one another when traveling, so too did La Guette survivors reunite with their former educators when they traveled or if they lived in the same area. Educator Henri Dybnis visited with La Guette survivors who also lived in the Los

[141] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[142] For example, see: Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

Angeles area.[143] Louis Scott talks about visiting with a former educator in New York.[144] Several survivors remark that some of their educators weren't even all that much older than they were, but yet they still played a quasi-parental role during and at times after the war.

Felix Scherzer immigrated to the United States in 1941 and reconnected with Baroness Germaine de Rothschild: "I did now establish contact with the Baroness and this now became a very personal relationship. I was not just one of 120 faces. I was Felix and *Madame la Baronne* and visited her once a month."[145] Felix stayed in touch with her over time. He says, "She came to my high school graduation and of course the whole school went bananas, had to find her a seat of honor and whatnot. I corresponded with her, even after she went back to France."[146] Felix invited the Baroness to his wedding, and though she did not attend, she did send him what he calls a "lovely" note in response.[147]

Survivors' personal papers also hint at contact with the Rothschilds. Daisy Hermann Kummer had contact with Germaine de Rothschild soon after immigrating to the United States. In September of 1942, Baroness Germaine sent Daisy a letter with Rosh Hashanah greetings.[148] Another La Guette survivor, Ruth Seltzer, corresponded with Guy de Rothschild on two separate occasions in the 1980s.[149] These correspondences may not have been as extensive as Felix's relationship with the Baroness, but they still show the survivors' desire and Rothschild family's willingness to remain in contact.

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[143] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

[144] Paris – La Guette May 17-23-1999, Taken by Werner Neuberger, VHS Tape, Rita Grusd Personal Collection, Cincinnati, OH, 00:10:11.

[145] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Daisy Herrmann Kummer family papers, 2012.333.1, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[149] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Werner Neuberger was in touch with Guy de Rothschild during the war because he lived on a Rothschild-run farm.[150] After he was liberated in Belgium, Werner returned to France and went to the Bank of Rothschild.[151] There, he met up with Guy de Rothschild and was able to get back to the farm.[152] In 1945, Guy de Rothschild visited the farm and talked with Werner about his future, and Werner ended up living with Guy de Rothschild in Paris before immigrating to the United States to join his sister.[153] Werner describes what it was like to live with Guy de Rothschild, "Now I moved into his private home, I won't tell you, I mean he was a Baron, very down-to-earth man, but still, me, I was eighteen by then, eighteen, I was well, you know, how should I behave, here I'm sitting with a nobleman, you know. But he was down-to-earth, he really was. I lived with him for a year."[154]

Eva Moore serendipitously came across Baroness Germaine de Rothschild in Italy in the 1950s and spent time with her there:

> And I did want to say about how I met the Baroness again. I was living in a very charming village on a lake in Italy one summer, back in the '50s, and I went to the hotel – there was one major luxury hotel, and I just went in to meet somebody and suddenly I smelled it, and my nose said the Baroness of Rothschild has got to be here, and she was. I wrote her a note, and I said I was staying in a little one-dollar trattoria, and I left my address and she sent a courier with an invitation. And I went, and I had gladioli, and I presented them, and we talked. And I think I had enough etiquette to thank her for what she did, and I just remember that when she asked me what I had become and what I had made of myself I was pretty ashamed that I couldn't give any kind of brilliant answer, you know, that I just couldn't say I have become, you know, something or other. I just wasn't – I felt I was nobody, but she was very sweet and that was a special little event.[155]

[150] Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

In addition to these and other instances of Rothschild family members' contact with survivors, Guy de Rothschild and his sister and niece participated in the 1999 La Guette reunion in France.[156]

Some La Guette children remained in contact with or re-initiated contact with the Rothschilds, some during the war and others into their adult lives. As is exemplified in Eva's testimony, however, the Rothschild family was often viewed with some degree of reverence not only because of their actions during the war, but also because of their social class. Eva, Felix, Werner, and others speak about feeling somewhat intimidated by with the Rothschild family, even if they thought they were "down-to-earth."[157] Members of the Rothschild family remained in the circle of La Guette contacts and at times were authority figures for the children as they grew into adults.

Aunt Elisabeth also served as an adult authority figure for some of the children even beyond the war years. Susi Guttmann was a La Guette survivor rebuilding her life in Israel.[158] Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt write that Susi had "psychosomatic problems" related to her childhood experiences.[159] Dwork and van Pelt explain that Susi mentioned these difficulties in letters to Aunt Elisabeth in 1958-1959.[160] Aunt Elisabeth provided support during this period: "Throughout all of this turbulence, Elisabeth offered stability and continuity. She wrote letters and sent packages, thus reminding Susi that someone of her parents' generation had cared about

[156] Ruth Salmon Seltzer papers, 2007.421, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

[157] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA; Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA; Werner Neuberger, interview 7905, VHA.

[158] Dwork and van Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 373-374

[159] Ibid., 374.

[160] Ibid.

her since 1938; she was not utterly bereft in that regard."[161] Therefore, Aunt Elisabeth continued to play a role in some of the survivors' lives, and even helped them cope with trauma in the absence of parental figures.

Individual Visits to Sites of Memory in France

In addition to visiting Château de la Guette at the 1999 reunion, some of the La Guette survivors visited La Guette and/or Hôtel des Anglais on their own. The survivors' desire to visit these places demonstrates the powerful role that these sites played in the children's lives. They had become sites of memory, and oftentimes survivors returned not only to revisit their own past, but also to share these places with family and friends.

Edith Cohen visited Europe with her husband for her 25th anniversary.[162] They tried to find La Guette and La Bourboule but were only able to visit Clermont-Ferrand.[163] When asked whether she went to see La Guette, Edith Cohen responds, "No, we couldn't locate it. I did try to call, I did have a card from, I believe it must be a son or daughter-in-law from the Rothschilds who lives in Paris. And I did, one year, in 1945 I got a New Year's card from them, so I had the address and I did try and locate them but when I called they were out of town at another château. I didn't exactly know where it was."[164]

Felix Scherzer had more luck getting in touch with the Rothschilds when he traveled to France, though he did not get to see Baroness Germaine de Rothschild as he hoped he would:

> In fact, in 1963 I took my whole family back to La Guette. The kids were just young. But then we drove over to Ferrières and I wanted to say hello to her [Baroness Germaine de Rothschild]. And her son Guy met us, and he says no, my ma is much too old. And she

[161] Ibid.
[162] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.

> must've been well, well up in her nineties by then. So, you know, I thought maybe my wife and the kids would like to see who was my benefactor when I was a young kid. But they were impressed with everything else they saw. Guy's son kissed my daughter's hand, she was seven years old, she didn't wash for two weeks. [*laughs*][165]

Gerald Watkins returned to La Bourboule on a vacation and asked residents if they knew anything about the Jewish children who lived there during the war: "I just started speaking to them in the street, do you remember what happened to Jewish children in the Hôtel des Anglais? Nobody knew a thing."[166] At that point in time, Gerald was not in touch with other La Guette survivors. However, he got the sense that others might be alive after talking with someone at Hôtel des Anglais during the trip: "And the manager of the Hôtel des Anglais, the current manager who's a young man in his thirties, and the only thing he said to me was you're not the first to be asking these questions. So that gave me the clue that others had revisited and obviously quite a few had survived."[167]

Revisiting 'Home' in Germany and Austria

In their search to find home, some of the La Guette survivors returned to the cities or towns where they grew up in Germany or Austria. The timing and reasons for these visits varied, with some going back to see the places that they used to live, to reunite with family, and/or as part of their military service or work. Some enjoyed revisiting their home countries or hometowns and reconnecting with people who they had known before the war. Some struggled to revisit this part of their past, feeling distraught with how Jewish communal sites had been treated, how their homes and belongings were taken over by gentiles, and/or in witnessing continued anti-Semitism. Some had a mix of different emotions and reactions. Many marveled at

[165] Felix Scherzer, interview 9657, VHA.
[166] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.
[167] Ibid.

how things looked compared to their perspectives as children and gained a new awareness of what their hometowns looked like as adults. In the process, survivors made sense of their pasts, and in the case of survivors such as Eva and Walter Weitzmann who visited their mother in Austria, even determined where to create homes in the future. In some cases, survivors would revisit these early homes several times, keep in touch with people from their hometowns, or otherwise fit their hometowns into their conception of home. In other cases, home decidedly no longer meant the past in Germany or Austria.

The survivors' visits to Germany and Austria were often markedly different from trips to visit La Guette or La Bourboule. While in both situations survivors revisited homes from their past, trips to France and particularly to La Guette were often a reminder of happier times. As in the case of the 1999 reunion, survivors generally expressed positive feelings about being back at the château. In the case of trips back to Germany and Austria, there were some survivors who had positive experiences, but it was often the case that there was at least an element of frustration, anger, or trauma that emerged for the survivors when they returned because of the discrimination that they had faced as children.

In the 1950s, Eva Moore visited her mother, who was not Jewish and had been able to survive the war in Austria.[168] Eva describes the "culture shock" that she felt going back to Vienna, and her decision not to stay there with her mother:

> And then my mother had gray hair and took me home. But by that time I didn't really speak German anymore. I did and I didn't – I understood and I didn't. I was very, very estranged. And I asked my mother if I could go out and look around, and everything looked so small to me. And our street, which had been such a huge, wide street with streetcars, it didn't seem that way at all. And everything seemed small. And my mother was a little critical of me because I was American; I chewed gum, I smoked, I had long hair, I wore plaid pants. My regret is now that I didn't know about what was called, well I

[168] Eva Moore, interview 5707, VHA.

> didn't have anthropology and I didn't know about the culture shock; I didn't know the concept of culture shock, but she was in it and I was in it. I stayed in Vienna six months but I didn't think I could stay.[169]

Eva returned to Los Angeles to live but would visit Vienna and her mother often.[170] She would continue to struggle with where she belonged, as she says, "The thing is I didn't like L.A. it's just that I didn't know what to do in Vienna either."[171] Eva's identity was split between different national contexts due to her refugee experience and particularly because she had close family remaining in Austria.

Alice Samson was another La Guette survivor who had the opportunity to visit her childhood home after the war. She describes the experience of entering the home and seeing some of her family's things in the same place as they had been before she left for France:

> Asked her if I could visit the residence which I was born and lived. She was very hesitant. And finally I put the pressure on her and she said, 'Okay, if you must.' This couple had just returned from church. The apartment, the house was just the way we had left it. I asked if I could take a token for remembrance. She said, 'Oh no, these are mine.' There was a cut crystal; there was the silver, the pictures, the Oriental rug, carpets, the piano all were still in place. I looked at my room and realized how tiny it was. The stairs from which I fell periodically. How much smaller it was; after all I was a child. I went to the garden and looked at the trees that we had; we harvested fresh fruit and almonds and walnuts and grapes and all of the berries – seven, eight different types of berries. All looked very neglected of course. I didn't get to the cellar, she stopped me by then, why I don't know. Because we left the cellar full of very good wines too.[172]

Alice's experience visiting her home is an eerie reminder of how Jewish homes were taken over by gentile neighbors and community members. Edith Cohen points out in her oral history that her family's belongings, too, were likely still somewhere in her hometown: "I mean somebody there

[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Alice Samson, interview 48334, VHA.

has all of our pictures, and all of our silver, and all of our things that I didn't realize they had at the time that we were there."[173]

When Edith returned to Germany, she found that her house was gone and the place where the synagogue used to be was now a playground; Edith speculates that there probably were not any Jews left in the town.[174] Nevertheless, the townspeople were very friendly, and she enjoyed visiting the town:

> It was very interesting. I didn't blame anybody. It didn't affect me as…I wasn't angry at anyone there. It was just something that happened and I wanted to visit and I was surprised; it was a very pretty little town which I didn't think – I thought we'd be there for ten minutes and that was it, but we were there for hours. It's a very pretty little farm town. It didn't affect me badly as far as that goes 'cause I wasn't there long enough to really have an effect.[175]

Though Edith Cohen generally had a positive experience interacting with the townspeople where she grew up, some of whom remembered her and her family, she acknowledges that it was strange that they claimed to not know what happened to her family: "Anyway, they did remember our family but they – interestingly enough they did not know what happened…They didn't know what happened, even though they took, after I had left, they took my family away to the camps and yet they didn't know anything, what happened to my family."[176]

Ellen Bamberger was hesitant to visit her hometown and ultimately decided not to return after trying to track down her mother's gravesite:

> We returned several times. The first time had to do with a business trip of my husband's; I just simply went along. I had some hesitations about going back, and I surely would not want to go back to the area where I came from. But it just so happened that we were in Strasbourg once, and that was maybe forty-five minutes away from my hometown, so I thought I might look up my mother's grave. And when we got to the local cemetery and I asked the flower vender about the Jewish cemetery, she told me they made a parking lot

[173] Edith Cohen, interview 3102, VHA.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.

> out of it. So I told my husband when I came back to the car, I think we're now leaving, and I never looked at Pirmasens or never saw anything about that area, would not go back.[177]

Walter Weitzmann served in the United States Army and hoped to be stationed in Europe and spend time with his mother, who still lived in Austria.[178] He was first stationed in Belgium and was glad to eventually be transferred to Vienna.[179] Walter describes what it was like being in post-war Vienna with his mother:

> Well I had nothing against the city. The city's a beautiful city and still today. It's the people. The people that made the difference. I got very disturbed and I know my mother got very aggravated that if she went somewhere and I started to listen there was some remarks made then I wanted to make a counter remark, you know, and she says 'No, no, don't say anything.' Because I knew that a lot of the people, like the butcher she went to, and 'Don't say anything because they were big Nazis.' She says, 'Don't say anything because I need to get my meat.' So everything was sort of swept under the rug; be quiet, don't speak about it. By that time I'm an American, I'm in the army, you know, I'm big stuff. So it was a totally different story. Now in order to make life palatable for my mother I just had to bite my tongue and keep my mouth shut, otherwise she would've had difficulty.[180]

Walter lived in Vienna for about two and a half years during his military service.[181] Ultimately, he says he felt "totally Americanized" and decided to return to the United States to live when his service ended, just as his sister Eva decided not to live permanently in Austria.[182]

Gerald Watkins had a career as an Australian Trade Commissioner, and he was sent to Germany and his home country of Austria for work in the 1960s and 1970s.[183] Gerald explains how he approached working in this role given his past history in Austria:

> Nevertheless, one of the things that had been impressed upon me in my career as a Trade Commissioner was that wherever you are posted, even if you don't like the politics of the

[177] Ellen Bamberger, interview 10765, VHA.
[178] Walter Weitzmann, interview 6589, VHA.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Gerald Watkins, interview 10603, VHA.

> country that you're posted to, you have a job to do for Australia, and you do that job in the best way you can, you see and that was my attitude. And it was very strange, the first time we got to Bann, my wife and I, it was '68, and there were still quite a few Nazis in the German government; nevertheless, they were people I had to deal with, in the Ministry of Economics or the Ministry of Agriculture and so on. But you didn't have to socialize with them. And of course they didn't know my background, and I was very careful not to reveal it, and there were a number of reasons for that. And the main reason was, I wanted not to be treated differently from my predecessors or my successors; I wanted to make sure that I would be treated like any other Australian Trade Commissioner because they might've felt guilty if they had known my background.[184]

Gerald also reflects upon changes in Germany that he saw over time, and his views towards Germany and German people:

> I had another posting to Germany exactly ten years later and the total climate had changed. These old Nazis were gone, there was a new, younger generation in the ministries. People whom I had met ten years before at much junior levels who were now at more senior levels, and I really didn't feel that animosity. I became convinced that what you have to deal with is people, and there are good people and bad people. And you cannot condemn an entire nation for the sins of some of their people. It's just the way I feel. So I was proud to be an Australian diplomat, and I think I actually worked – had an advantage over my predecessors and successors because I understood the culture, I understood the language, I never needed interpreters when I went to visit ministries and so on.[185]

Gerald's experience returning to Germany and Austria for work was therefore mixed. He chose not to share his background in order to carry out his job, and yet, he felt that his background allowed him to do a good job working as a diplomat because he understood the local culture. Over time he also came to terms with his past and decided not to "condemn an entire nation for the sins of some of their people."[186]

[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

Conclusion

La Guette children continued to search for home in the post-war period, whether in the form of immigrating to new countries, reuniting with surviving family members, visiting hometowns in Germany and Austria, or choosing careers, partners, or cities in which to live. The majority of La Guette survivors lived in North America, Western Europe, and Israel later in life, but survivors were also scattered in other regions. La Guette survivors in the United States typically settled in cities with moderate to large Jewish populations, and maps of the cities where they ended up show clusters of survivor communities, oftentimes where survivors reconnected with one another after the war.

As the La Guette survivors rebuilt their lives after the war, many of them maintained connections with other La Guette peers, educators, Aunt Elisabeth, and members of the Rothschild family. Planned group reunions began in 1979 and continued through the large La Guette reunion in Paris in 1999. These reunions helped shape collective memory of the La Guette experience and solidified relationships between survivors. These reunions and other forms of contact likely led to the sentiments expressed by numerous interviewees that the La Guette group was family. These relationships may have been especially important for survivors who did not have many (or any) surviving family members after the war.

Upon returning to Château de la Guette for the 1999 reunion, several survivors expressed that they felt young again, transported back to their past and their time living with other children in France. Some survivors also revisited wartime homes such as Château de la Guette and Hôtel des Anglais on their own. These places, and particularly La Guette, became sites of memory: physical and symbolic representations of the survivors' experiences as child refugees fleeing persecution. After all, at La Guette and in La Bourboule, many of the survivors found

community and hope in the midst of the traumatic events of the Holocaust and World War II. The La Guette case demonstrates the power of children's homes to provide stand-in homes and "families" for Jewish refugee children fleeing Nazi persecution, providing them with support and friendships that often lasted for decades after the Holocaust.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Jewish German and Austrian children who fled Nazi rule via Château de la Guette children's home in France (and later Hôtel des Anglais in La Bourboule) is a testament to the power of community in the midst of World War II and the Holocaust. The La Guette children experienced persecution in Germany and Austria, changing their experiences of home from those of youth able to engage in typical pastimes, to children witnessing discrimination and violence directed at themselves, their families, and their communities. The children were forced to leave their homes and families to seek out safety. They searched for home again in France, finding home first as a group and then continuing to look for homes during later migrations within and in many cases beyond France. The children's homes where the La Guette children lived provided them with opportunities to learn, express themselves, and build friendships. The group arguably became a surrogate family at a time when the children were separated from their prior homes and families.

The children oftentimes found support and camaraderie amongst their La Guette peers and educators both in their communal life together and then in other migrations during the war. The La Guette community also lasted long beyond the war years for some survivors who maintained contact with the group decades later. These bonds were reinforced by survivor reunions and other forms of contact and commemoration. Some survivors visited their past homes in Germany, Austria, and France to make sense of their experiences and as a way to reckon with the meaning of home and national identities. Other groups of Jewish children who lived communally during the Holocaust in France appear to have also benefitted from their communal experiences in children's homes, and hopefully future scholarship will continue to

detail the pre-war, wartime, and post-war experiences of these children. Hopefully future studies will also include discussions of survivor reunions and the legacy of these children's homes in survivors' later lives.

Migrations of the La Guette children before, during, and after World War II exemplify the multiple paths taken by Jewish refugee children who fled Nazi Germany and Austria via France. They demonstrate the frequent and transnational movements of children in their attempt to flee persecution because of the wartime dynamics of the German occupation of France and the collaboration of Vichy France with the Nazis. Studying these migration patterns adds spatial analysis to studies of Jewish refugee children during the Holocaust. It also shows the contrast between children who fled Germany and Austria via France and children who fled Nazi rule via the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain. Additional mapping and spatial research is likely to occur in the field of Holocaust Studies in the coming years, and hopefully such research will continue to focus on Jewish refugee children and the variety of paths that they took to try and reach safety.

Given the abundance of source materials about the La Guette group in a variety of languages, my hope is that future researchers will discover more about these children and continue to make their story – and the story of other children who fled the Holocaust by way of France – known to the public.

Sadly, the flight of refugee children searching for home is not just history; the La Guette children's migrations and experiences are pertinent to discussions about modern-day refugee issues. There were over twenty-two million refugees and millions more people displaced in the year 2016 according to a report created by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).[1] Memory of the

[1] *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2017), 2, accessed May 27, 2018, http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf.

Holocaust, and particularly the *Kindertransport*, has been leveraged in recent years to advocate on behalf of refugees. Some survivors of the *Kindertransport* to Great Britain have shared their histories while speaking out in favor of Great Britain admitting Syrian refugees into the country.[2] A bill amendment was written by Lord Alfred Dubs, a *Kindertransport* survivor himself, to admit 3,000 Syrian refugee children into Great Britain.[3] After passing the amendment in a different form, the government ultimately brought in 350 children through the legislation, significantly less than the figure 3,000 that was initially recommended.[4]

Kindertransport survivors in the United States, organized by the Kindertransport Association (KTA) in partnership with the refugee resettlement organization HIAS, similarly aimed to persuade the United States government to accept refugees.[5] In February of 2017, there were "over 200 Kindertransport survivors and descendants" who signed a letter to President Trump calling for the admittance of refugees, and in particular pointing out the prevalence of children fleeing violence.[6]

The La Guette group's history is therefore highly germane to modern-day debates over refugee policy. Hopefully history will continue to play a role in these debates so that future children – and adults – can find their way to safety and create new homes.

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[2] Lauren Frayer, "Former Child Refugees, Rescued From Nazis, Urge U.K. To Take Syrian Kids," *NPR*, May 9, 2016, accessed May 27, 2018, https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/05/09/477333139/former-child-refugees-rescued-from-nazis-urge-u-k-to-take-syrian-kids.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Reality Check: Did government go back on its word on child refugees?" February 9, 2017, accessed May 27, 2018, *BBC*, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-38919873.

[5] Lilly Maier, "Kindertransport Holocaust Survivors Make Impassioned Plea Against Trump's Muslim Ban," *Forward*, February 5, 2017, accessed May 27, 2018, https://forward.com/news/362159/read-kindertransport-holocaust-survivors-make-impassioned-plea-against-trum/.

[6] Rachel Nusbaum, "200+ Kindertransport Survivors and Descendants Urge Support for Refugees," *HIAS Blog*, February 22, 2017, accessed May 27, 2018, https://www.hias.org/blog/200-kindertransport-survivors-and-descendants-urge-support-refugees.

APPENDIX A: DIGITAL PROJECT IMAGES

My digital project on VisualEyes5 (**www.viseyes.org**) can be viewed at: **http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848**. The following images are screenshots of select pages of the digital project. The digital project maps the migrations of the La Guette group as a whole as well as the migrations of individuals in the group. The site also includes photographs and written interpretation in order to make the history of this group of Jewish refugee children fleeing the Holocaust accessible to the public.

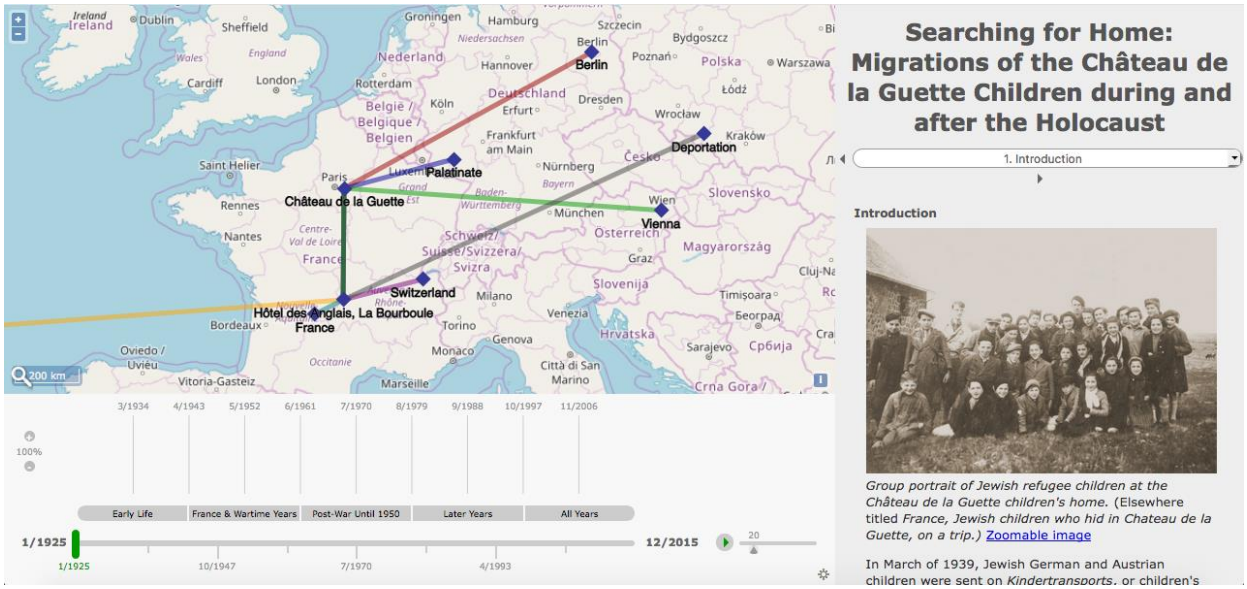

Figure 28: Front Page of VisualEyes5 Digital Project, "Searching for Home: Migrations of the Château de la Guette Children during and after the Holocaust."
Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

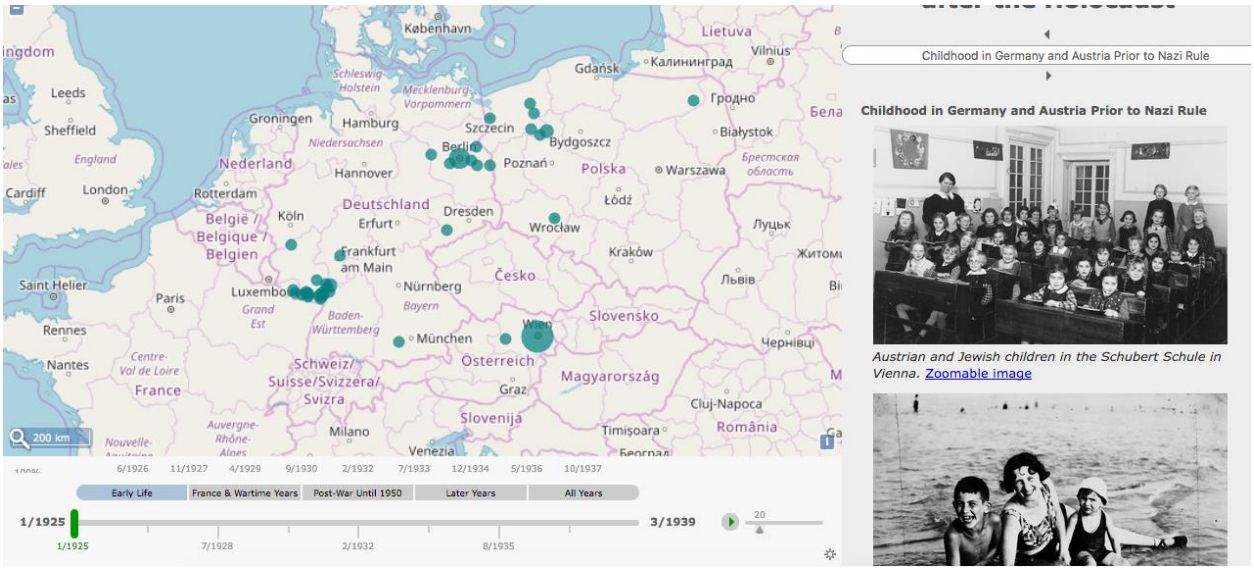

Figure 29: Childhoods in Germany and Austria Prior to Nazi Rule.
Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

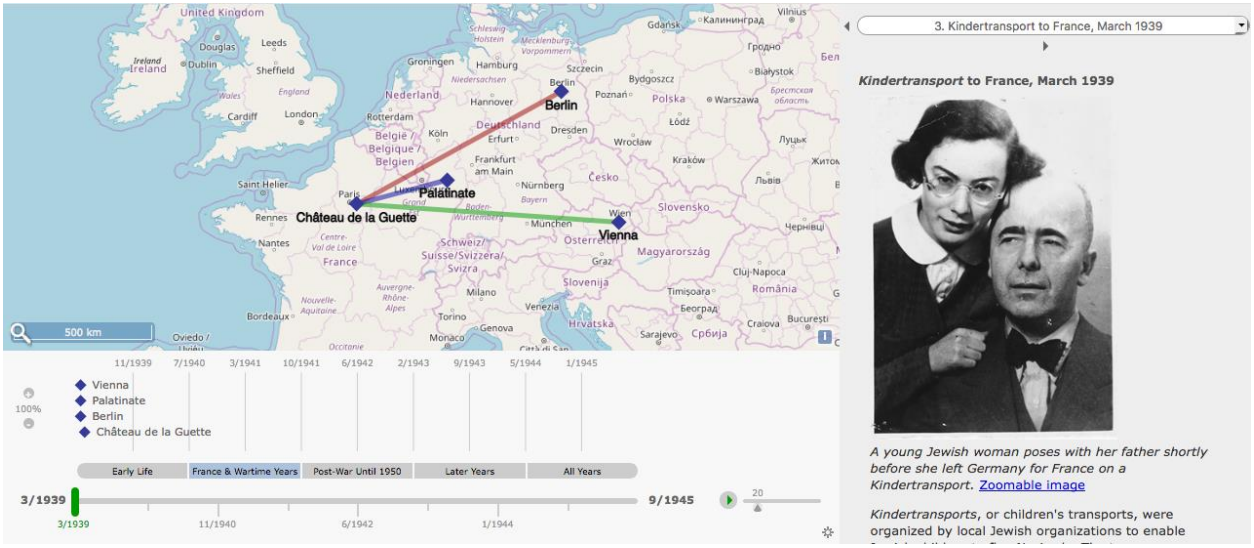

Figure 30: Visualization of the *Kindertransport* to France.
Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

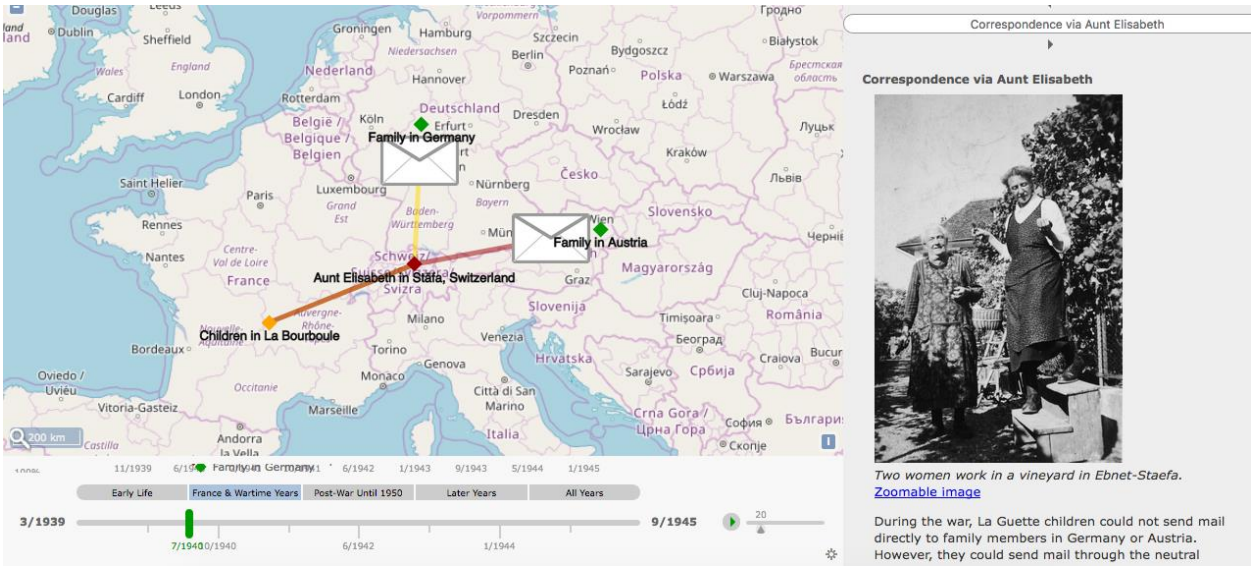

Figure 31: Mail Forwarded between France and Germany/Austria via Aunt Elisabeth in Switzerland. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

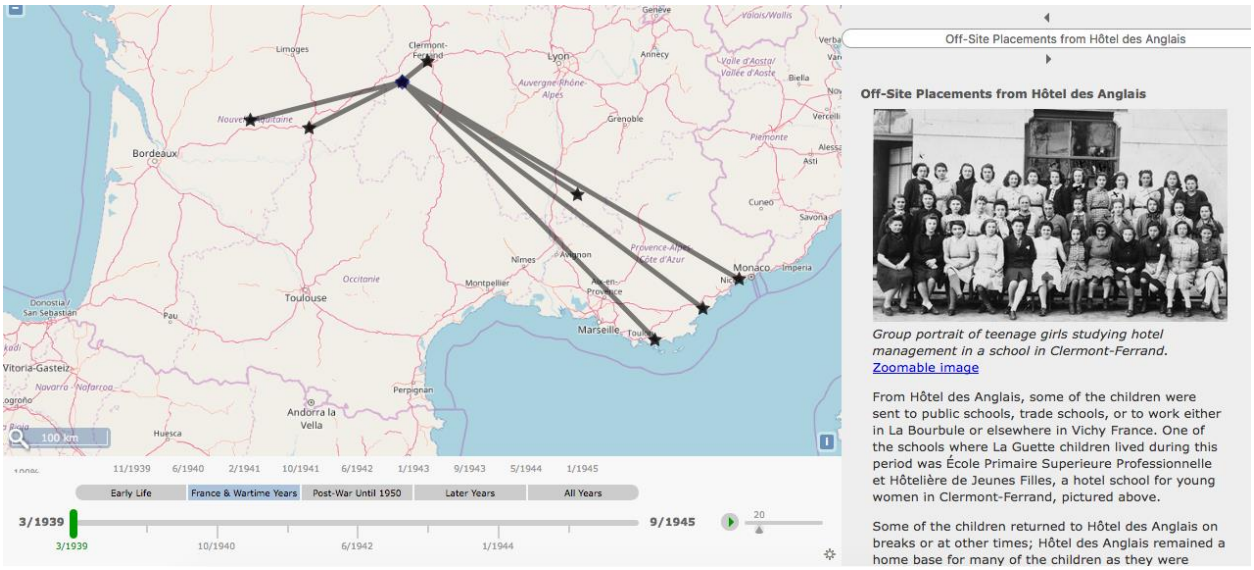

Figure 32: Off-Site Placements from Hôtel des Anglais. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

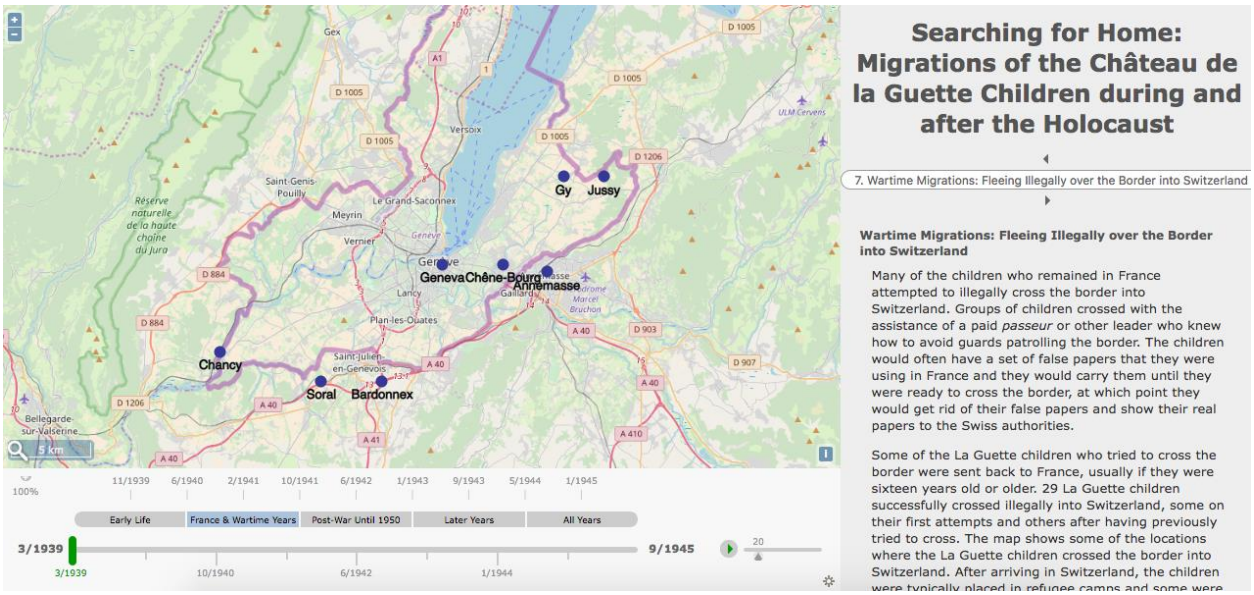

Figure 33: Fleeing Over the Border into Switzerland during World War II. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

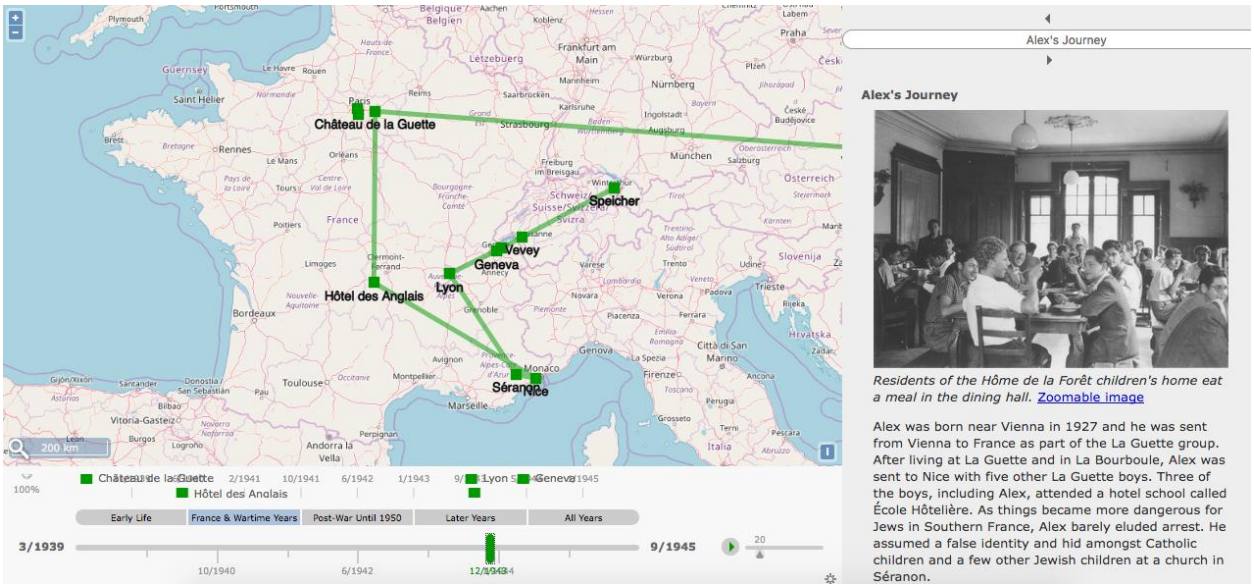

Figure 34: Alex's Journey Crossing Illegally into Switzerland. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

Figure 35: Deportation to the East.
Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

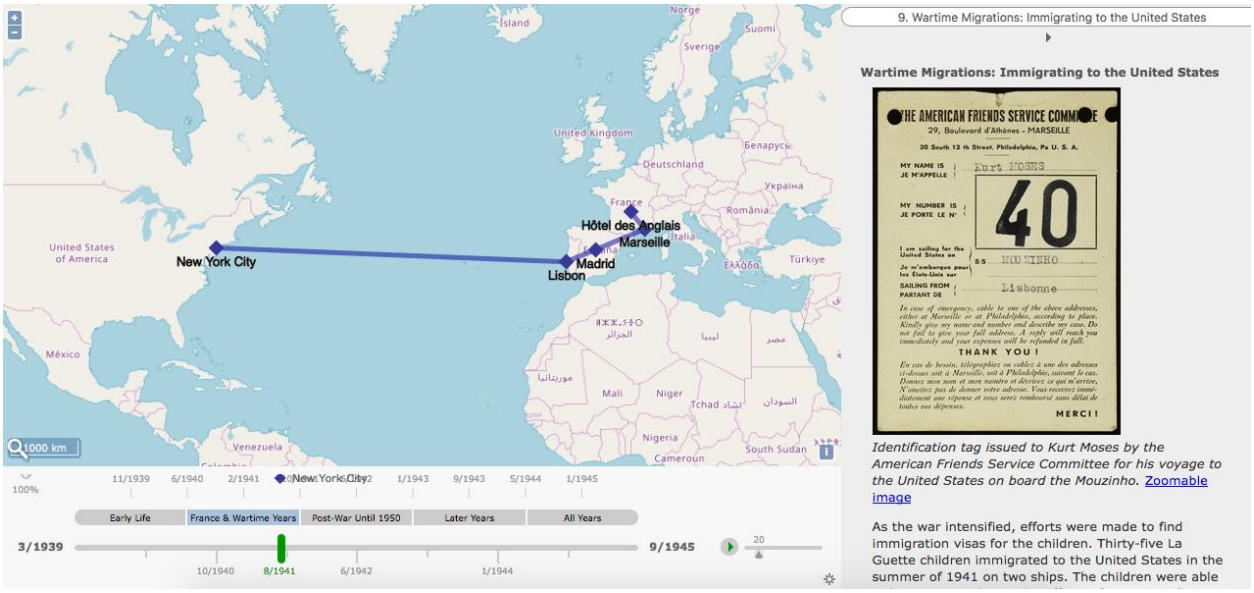

Figure 36: Wartime Migrations to the United States via Spain and Portugal.
Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

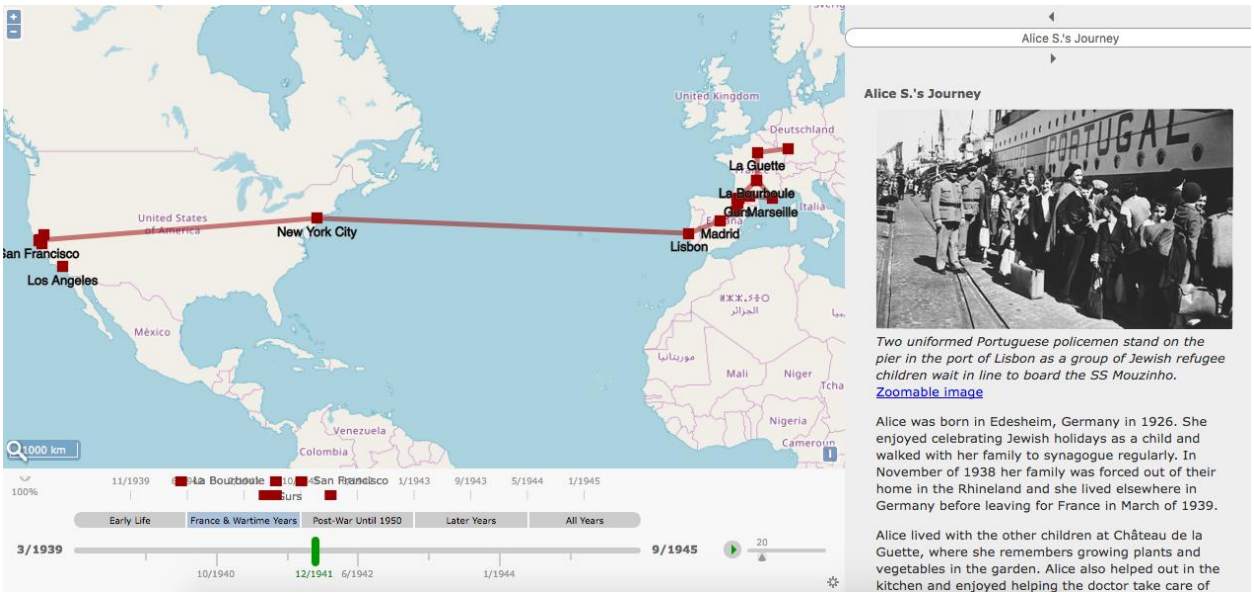

Figure 37: Alice S.'s Journey, including Migration from France to the United States in 1941. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

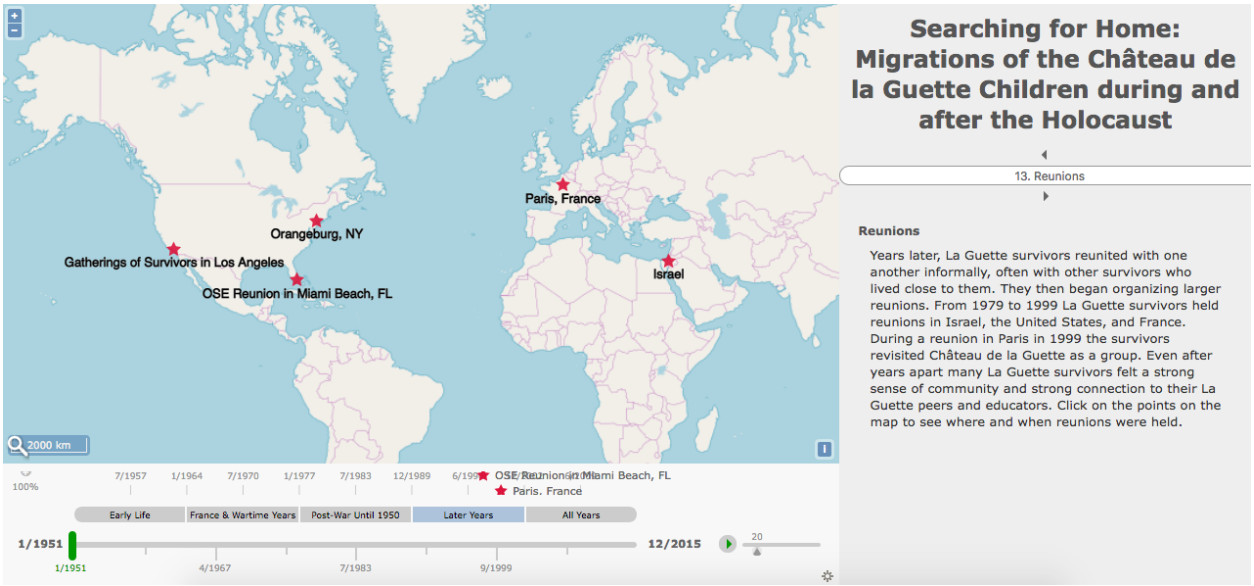

Figure 38: Visualization of Survivor Reunions. Created on VisualEyes5, http://www.viseyes.org/visualeyes/?848.

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Photographs and Drawings

Photographs

A group of girls stand in a line holding flowers in the Chateau de La Guette children's home. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #64090. Courtesy of Rita Grusd. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A group of Jewish refugee girls from the Chateau de la Guette OSE [Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants] children's home dance outside. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #60719. Courtesy of Eric and Erica Goldfarb. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A young Jewish woman poses with her father shortly before she left Germany for France on a Kindertransport. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #60720. Courtesy of Eric and Erica Goldfarb. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Austrian and Jewish children in the Schubert Schule in Vienna. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #64306. Courtesy of Eva Moore. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Children from La Guette children's home pose for a group portrait in a plaza in Pau while on route to visit their parents in the Gurs concentration camp. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #69327. Courtesy of Ruth Strauss Schloss. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Eva and Walter Weitzmann bid farewell to their mother and grandmother prior to leaving on a Kindertransport to France. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #64307. Courtesy of Eva Moore. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

France, The Chateau de la Guette estate. Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Jerusalem. 3983/1.

Gerhard Mahler poses with the children of a family in La Bourboule who hosted his bar mitzvah. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #64109. Courtesy of Gerald Watkins, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #86838. Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

Gisela Edel and another Jewish teenager live under false identities in a convent-operated old age home. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #63618. Courtesy of Naomi Elath. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Group portrait of Jewish refugee children at the Château de la Guette children's home. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #83051. Courtesy of Werner Neuberger. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Group portrait of teenage girls studying hotel management in a school in Clermont-Ferrand. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #66735. Courtesy of Alice M. Berney. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Identification tag issued to Kurt Moses by the American Friends Service Committee for his voyage to the United States on board the Mouzinho. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #66449. Courtesy of Kurt Moses. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Jenny Porges poses with her two sons, Kurt and Paul Peter, at the beach. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #66657. Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Jewish children in hiding study in a classroom of the children's home in Sevres. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #66733. Courtesy of Alice M. Berney. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Jewish girls and teenagers eat outside in a courtyard in a postwar children's home in Feneyrols, France. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #69329. Courtesy of Ruth Strauss Schloss. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Page of a photo album showing Gisela Edel in the Couret children's home as well as a map in the shape of a Frenchman's face, showing where she hid during the war. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #63617. Courtesy of Naomi Elath. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Peter Watkins greets his stepchildren, Gerhard and Sylvia, upon their arrival in Sydney. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #64110. Courtesy of Gerald Watkins. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Residents of the Hôme de la Forêt children's home eat a meal in the dining hall. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #38273. Courtesy of Norbert Bikales. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Two uniformed Portuguese policemen stand on the pier in the port of Lisbon as a group of Jewish refugee children wait in line to board the SS Mouzinho. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #59625. Courtesy of Milton Koch. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Two women work in a vineyard in Ebnet-Staefa. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #66451. Courtesy of Kurt Moses. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Werner Neuberger poses outside with a group of friends from the La Guette children's home. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #99744. Courtesy of Werner Neuberger. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Drawings

This cartoon shows a boy with blonde hair standing in a fire and holding up the flag of France. Below the fire, it reads, “Wir halten aus,” [We last]. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #73042. Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This cartoon shows a mob of boys at a soccer match. It’s called “Meuten Match: Weana – Lyon” [Mob Match: Weana – Lyon]. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #73046. Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This cartoon shows two young boys in blue uniforms each holding flags. The flag on the lett is mostly black and says across it “Leopard’s” while the flag on the left (French-looking) says “Loups” with a small animal’s head in the center. The two boys are shaking hands. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #43795. Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges, Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This drawing shows “Bisons Sangergruppe” or “Bisons Singing Group.” At the bottom is a conductor leading someone to sing “Oh Gott, Oh Gott” or “Oh God, Oh God.” Also in the picture are representatives from the “Loups Sprortgruppe” and the “Aigles Theatergruppe.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #43803. Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This Paul Peter Porges drawing shows a lion to the left, a young boy with a French flag, and three possibly French soldiers at the bottom. In the middle of these drawings is a poem which reads:. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #43793. Courtesy of Paul Peter and Lucie Porges. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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