

On Untold Narratives: The Story of Regina Victor

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WRITER'S COMMENT: I spent Fall Quarter 2017 studying at the Freie Universität Berlin. While I was there, I not only had the opportunity to pursue my academic interests in Jewish and Holocaust History, but I had the privilege of exploring the lives of my family members who experienced the Holocaust—both those who survived and those who did not—in the homeland that was taken from them. I grew up hearing my grandparents' stories of survival, and in preparation for studying in Berlin, spoke often with my mother and grandmother about those relatives who did not survive or whose stories were unknown. My great-great grandmother, Regina Victor, lived in Berlin and perished in the Holocaust, but little else was known about her. I decided to conduct preliminary research into her story in order to have a Stolperstein memorial placed in front of her former residence in Berlin. The professor of my Jewish Life in Central Europe course was instrumental in guiding my search. What began as a search for general historical information developed into an extensive archival research project and the discovery of a very rich and textured family history.

INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENT: Exchange students use their leisure time in Berlin differently; what Micah did is remarkable. Throughout Germany one finds Stolpersteine ("stumbling stones"), brass bricks inserted into the pavements in front of the homes of Holocaust victims. The stones' inscriptions contain only brief information about the persons, usually the date and place of birth and death. But an online database gives the full biographies of the individuals. Micah Lesch began

researching the life of Regina Victor in order to dedicate a stumbling stone to her. Stolpersteine are placed in front of the last residence in which the individual lived in voluntarily and the Nazi's discriminatory measures make it difficult to investigate the address. But Micah managed it. He spoke to scholars and local advocates, visited libraries and museums, and conducted research in three Berlin-based archives. In the course of his investigation he had to learn German very well, which he did astonishingly fast.

In the end Micah wrote an investigation about his findings that would make a professor of history proud. He was able to evaluate all the data he so carefully collected and put it all into context. For me his work is proof of his compassion for these victims of a murderous crime as well as his ability to adapt to the skills of a professional historian in a very short time.

—Christoph Kapp, Freie Universität Berlin

In 1943 my grandmother went to sleep each night in a small makeshift shed tucked behind a farmhouse, hearing the sounds of bombs spread destruction on her home city of Hamburg, Germany, and wearing shoes under her covers in case she needed to run. After emigrating to the United States in 1951, my grandfather often mused that the best exercise he ever had was digging mass graves at Neuengamme. Upon being liberated from Buchenwald, my great-uncle waited by the radio to hear if his girlfriend's name was among the few who had survived the terrors of Dachau.

For the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, hearing these sorts of harrowing testimonies fundamentally shapes one's identity in myriad ways, the most profound of which is the pride one comes to have in one's heritage, having descended from those who were resilient in the face of these insurmountable atrocities, along with a constant sense of gratitude that those same people are able to share those experiences today. Yet, equally significant is the tendency of such testimony to instill in one the universal obligation of descendants to fulfill what renowned author and survivor Elie Wiesel termed the necessity to "bear witness" to the lives and memories of the seven million people who were murdered in the Holocaust. In my own attempt to begin to fulfill this obligation—and perhaps more significantly, to bring to light, to remember, and to

“bear witness” to the yet untold stories of those of my ancestors who did *not* survive—I began to engage in further research on a family member whom my family and I knew virtually nothing about. I wanted to uncover her story.

The relative I have been researching was named Regina Victor—her last name, which is also my middle name and the last name of my mother, was changed from Friedenthal upon marrying her husband, Simon Victor, my great-great grandfather.¹ My specific goal in conducting the preliminary research into Regina’s life, particularly into her last place of residence in Berlin, was in an effort to arrange for the placement in front of her home of a *Stolperstein*, or “stumbling stone”—a Europe-wide network of small, golden plaques often placed in the ground in front of the former living places of those persecuted, deported, and/or murdered by the National Socialists. Each *Stolperstein* contains basic information on the former tenant, including when and where they were born and killed, a subtly powerful memorial of the victims of Nazi terror.² I began to search for information to answer my first set of basic research questions in order to fulfill this goal. These questions included when and where Regina was born, where she lived in Berlin, and when and where she was deported and murdered.

Prior to looking into which of the multitude of archives and collections—both within and outside of Berlin—contained information on victims of the Holocaust, I first collected information concerning any and all familial testimonies and recountings of Regina, the majority of which I gathered from my mother and grandmother during their respective visits to Berlin. From brief stories I had heard growing up, as well as from discussions I had with both of them in preparation for writing this paper, the two of them collected brief, remembered fragments of her life in order to piece together a picture of Regina as a likely middle-class, friendly and loving, single, and later, widowed, feminist, socially rebellious woman (she is recalled as having worn pants,

1 “Regina Victor.” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_view.php?PersonId=1483998.

2 “Stolpersteine in Berlin.” Stolpersteine in Berlin | Stolpersteine in Berlin, www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/de/projekt.

rather than a dress, on occasion, which was considered scandalous for a woman in her day). She is also remembered on this side of my family as identifying as a secular Jew who lived somewhere in the Berlin district of Charlottenburg, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood at the time, and who was taken from her home by the Gestapo in 1942 and later died in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Such personal details, or fragments thereof, of Regina largely were passed down through various stories from her grandson and my grandfather, Walter Victor Jr. When speaking on these familial recollections of Regina, it is important to note that Walter Victor Jr., who was born on March 25, 1925 in Zwickau to his parents Walther Victor Sr. and Cecilia Schönfelder Victor, was a young, secular Jewish man living in Hamburg at the time Adolf Hitler assumed Germany's Chancellorship and the National Socialists came to power in the German government.³ After engaging in forced labor in a Nazi prison camp in Hamburg and being denied entry into the United States until 1951, Walther was understandably scarred and reluctant to share information on his life prior to emigrating, including, perhaps, some of what he remembered of his grandmother during her years in Berlin. He did, however, according to his wife and daughter, occasionally mention how he enjoyed visiting his grandmother, Regina, in Charlottenburg when he was a boy, and he intermittently shared a smattering of other recollections of his brief time in Berlin—a span of time most likely between the years of 1932 and 1935.⁴ The only other personal account of Regina passed down through familial testimony was from Cecilia Schönfelder Victor, Walter Victor Jr.'s mother, who, prior to her divorce from Walther Victor Sr. in 1935 and his emigration to Switzerland that same year, is remembered as saying how fond she was of Regina and how much she enjoyed visiting her—also most likely referring to a time when she and Walther Victor Sr. lived together in Berlin before their divorce and her return to her hometown in Hamburg.

After mentally summarizing these personal accounts, the next step in answering my preliminary, biographical research questions was to access the Nazi census of all Berlin residents in 1939 to inquire into

3 Fritsch, Helmut. "Chronology of the Life of Walther Victor" [Personal Manuscript]. Akademie Der Künste, Sept. 2011, Zur Biographie W.V. Familie bis Hamburg 1923].

4 Ibid.

whether Regina's name corresponded with any existing street addresses—information which now exists in the archives of the Central and Regional Libraries of Berlin.⁵ In addition to accessing this first resource, and with the extensive help from those more familiar with the process of accessing Berlin's academic archives, I used a collection of research databases provided by the *Stolpersteine* Organization—a resource primarily used by families conducting similar investigations, entitled “Research Options for Parents and Other Interested Parties.” Unfortunately, I was initially unsuccessful in finding Regina's name in the census records of 1939—a lack of record which I believed at the time could have been the result of a number of factors, including that she may have been simply attempting to maintain a low profile considering the barrage of widespread and stringent regulations which the “SA,” (*Sturmabteilung*) or the paramilitary police in charge of carrying out Nazi policies against Jews, had enforced by 1939.⁶ A similar theory was that as a fully Jewish woman according to ethnicity and heritage, as well as being single and living alone, she would, according to the “Reich Citizenship Law” (which was introduced as part of the infamous Nazi Nuremberg Laws in September 1935) “not have been approved for Reich citizenship,” and may have therefore been excluded from the official census.⁷ Finally, without exact information on the nature of where and how she lived in 1939, I considered that she could have also been living as a sub-tenant of a non-Jew, or sharing a living space—a theory which seems especially plausible given the series of persecutory laws passed in 1938 which were intended to severely impoverish Jews, including “The Decree on the Exclusion of Jews from German Economic Life,” which forced the closure of all Jewish-owned businesses and “The Decree on the Confiscation of Jewish Property,” which codified the transfer of assets from Jews to non-Jews in Germany.⁸

5 “Zentral- Und Landesbibliothek Berlin.” The Berlin Telephone and Address Directories - Zentral- Und Landesbibliothek Berlin, digital.zlb.de/viewer/cms/82/.

6 “Sturmabteilung.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Nov. 2017, de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturmabteilung.

7 “Nuremberg Laws.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 12 Nov. 2017, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuremberg_Laws.

8 General. “About Us.” History—Jewish Community of Berlin, Jewish Community of Berlin, www.jg-berlin.org/en/about-us/history.html.

After my failure to track down her address with my initial set of resources, I arrived at my first “crack in the case” when I came upon a death certificate in an online archive based in the Czech Republic entitled “Database with Records of those Deported to Theresienstadt,” which included exact information about when and from where Regina was deported to the Ghetto, how she was killed and on which date, biographical information on her marital, occupational, religious statuses, and what I assumed then was her permanent address in Berlin—Halensee, Eisenbahnstraße 6, Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg.⁹ While it was later made clear to me that this address was one she was either taken to by the Gestapo prior to her deportation and forced to live in on account of the seizure of her former property, or because of her inability to pay her rent following the series of Nazi regulatory financial decrees, the information provided in this death certificate, along with dates and details I had already acquired from the online databanks at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Israel and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., allowed me to add the following important biographical information to my collections of data thus far: “Regina Victor was born as Regina Friedenthal on February 23rd, 1873 to her parents Salomon and Sara Friedenthal in the Polish city of Poznan. Regina was deported on August 20, 1942 to the Theresienstadt Ghetto (Terezin) under the transport number “I/48,” in a deportation group of 5,044 people, from the “Gleis 17” platform of the Berlin Grunewald Train Station. Regina died, likely from a deadly disease such as tuberculosis, in Theresienstadt on September 4, 1942.”¹⁰

I was simultaneously amazed and taken aback by the reality that such specific information about a member of my family was lying just a few clicks and searches away on a computer screen—a sensation which would reoccur as I dug deeper into Regina’s story. Despite feeling initially successful in finding an address in Berlin connected to her name, there were a few peculiarities that I immediately observed, including

9 Nux s.r.o. “Victor Regina: Oznámení o Úmrtí, Ghetto Terezín.” Holocaust.cz, www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/81451-victor-regina-oznameni-o-umrti-ghetto-terezin/.

10 Nux s.r.o. “Victor Regina: Oznámení o Úmrtí, Ghetto Terezín.” Holocaust.cz, www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/81451-victor-regina-oznameni-o-umrti-ghetto-terezin/.

the fact that while the death certificate was filled out by authorities at Theresienstadt entirely in a dark pen, her address, other than the word “Berlin,” was scribbled in pencil and in handwriting different from that of the rest of the document. Additionally, upon researching the address, I was informed that a *Stolperstein* memorial for a man named Dr. Georg Hamburger—an ethnically Jewish lawyer and notary who was deported to Theresienstadt on August 30, 1943, almost a year after Regina—was already laid at this address.¹¹ In fact, upon further search for the tenants of this address in the Berlin address books of 1941, I found that her name was not listed, and that the family or others conducting research into Dr. Georg Hamburger had moved the *Stolperstein* commemorating him from a different address in 2010. Along with this information, which was found in the Municipal Records of the Berlin District of Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg, I was informed that the former building at the address had been destroyed during the many bombings of Berlin between 1940 and 1945.

Ultimately these answers left me with a new set of specific research questions: Could this be her real address? Although it is listed as being in the Charlottenburg district, as my grandfather often recalled, why is her name not listed in any other official database alongside the address? Who was Dr. Georg Hamburger? If this building was a series of apartments, and not a “house” as my grandfather sometimes referred to it, could he and Regina have lived there together, perhaps in a forced collection space where SA prisoners were held prior to deportation? There were also peculiarities which arose after I had more carefully examined the contents of the death certificate, specifically concerning the cause of death and when she is recorded to have died. The certificate, likely filled out by the Nazi doctor working at Theresienstadt, whose name appears as “Friedrich Klinges,” scribbled the words “*Enteritis Marasmus*” under the column labeled “*Krankheit*” (“illness”)—a severe medical condition involving the inflammation of the small intestine due either to the contamination of one’s drinking water or to extensive malnutrition. However, under the following column labeled *Todessursache* (“Cause of Death”), Klinges wrote

11 “Denkstein Für Dr. Georg Hamburger.” Berlin.de, 30 Nov. 2014, www.berlin.de/ba-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf/ueber-den-bezirk/geschichte/stolpersteine/denksteine/artikel.233828.php.

“*Adynamia Cordes*,” literally meaning “heart weakness.”¹² Despite these short yet immensely disturbing phrases being difficult to read, they raise another number of questions: Why is Regina recorded to have died due to heart failure after suffering from a disease of the stomach? Similarly, why is Regina recorded to have died just 15 days after she was deported, as compared to others in her deportation group who survived closer to a year? Could the answer to both questions be because she was 69 years old by the time she was deported and likely had already been imprisoned in horrendous conditions at Eisenbahnstraße prior to her deportation? Or could the information on the death certificate have been falsified?

These and myriad other questions which arose from these first discoveries motivated me to enhance my collection of information from familial, rather than bureaucratic resources. I was informed that there existed a wealth of information on the life of Regina’s son and my great-grandfather, Walther Victor Sr., who was a renowned author, publicist, and political journalist, both in Hamburg and Berlin prior to World War II, and again in the East and Soviet territories of Berlin, Potsdam, Dresden, and Weimar during and following the Cold War.¹³ While I had learned growing up that Walther Victor Sr. was among the generation of Jewish Communist authors and artists which dominated the intellectual sphere of the Soviet territories of Western Europe, I did not realize the extent of his influence and fame until reading the documents of his personal and professional archive at the Akademie der Künste von Berlin (Academy of Arts in Berlin). In this archive exists a massive collection of materials which, among many of his articles, op-eds, and other public writings, includes every personal correspondence Victor Sr. made with fellow writers, politicians, and leaders in the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (in which he became an active member in 1947 upon his return to Berlin), all of whom were living in the Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) at the time. Among these correspondences are conversations with prominent artists, authors, and politicians such as

12 Nux s.r.o. “Victor Regina: Oznámení o Úmrtí, Ghetto Terezín.” Holocaust.cz, www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/81451-victor-regina-oznameni-o-umrti-ghetto-terezin/.

13 Fritsch, Helmut. “Chronology of the Life of Walther Victor.” [Personal Manuscript] Akademie Der Künste, Sept. 2011, Zur Biographie W.V. Familie bis Hamburg 1923].

Bertolt Brecht, Johannes Becher, Lion Feuchtwanger, Richard Friedenthal (no relation), Ernst Busch, Victor Klemperer, Christa Wolf, and Victor Mann.¹⁴ Hearing about and now seeing, firsthand, the extent of the information which was preserved of the life of Walther Victor Sr., I was sure that some initial answers to my questions concerning Regina's life in Berlin—specifically whether the address on her death certificate was her genuine place of residence, or with whom she lived and corresponded with her in final years before deportation—would be uncovered in the folders on Walther Victor's family.

Unfortunately, as I have come to realize, one rarely finds exactly what one is looking for when engaging in historical research, and because there was quite a lot of information on Victor Sr.'s articles, political activism, and every book and newspaper article he wrote, I realized that one often discovers more information which, in turn, presents the opportunity to ask more questions rather than find definitive answers. While I was nevertheless enjoying the opportunity to take in an immense amount of information on another family member, I focused on gathering what I could concerning any relevant documents Walther may have written on his mother, and was able to uncover the following detailed family tree, written by one of Walther Victor Sr.'s biographers, Helmut Fritsch, which clarified that Regina was one of five children, the other four being Carl, Michel, Martha, and Clara Friedenthal.¹⁵ I found evidence that while Regina was married to her husband Simon Victor, who, according to a series of letters from authorities in both the American and Soviet sectors of Berlin, killed himself in Hamburg in January 1945 just before he was to be taken during the last deportations to the concentration camps. I also recovered confirmation that Regina had two other children along with Walther Victor Sr., affirming the structure of our family tree. Among these siblings were his brother Ernst Victor, who is recorded as having emigrated to Argentina in 1933 (where, upon arrival, he changed his name to Ernesto de Victor in order to conceal his Jewish identity) and Ilse Victor, who shortly after marrying her husband Erich Meißner, committed suicide on February 26, 1940 in Zurich—for unspecified

14 Fritsch, Helmut. "Chronology of the Life of Walther Victor." [Personal Manuscript] Akademie Der Künste, Sept. 2011, Zur Biographie W.V. Familie bis Hamburg 1923].

15 Ibid.

reasons, though possibly to escape arrest and the terrors of the camps.¹⁶ The personal section of this archive also contains pictures of Ilse and her husband Erich in Hamburg, along with a collection of small photos of Cecilia Schönfelder Victor with Walther Victor Sr. walking through Tiergarten in Berlin, likely during the years when they both lived there. In this section, I also came upon a letter written by Walther Victor to his mother, containing no address, after having received word, through an unknown source, that his mother was being held by the Gestapo and awaiting deportation to Theresienstadt.¹⁷ Among a number of memories of his childhood, this letter expresses immense regret for not having done more to prevent her arrest, and describes her as a “beautiful and gracious woman” as he looks at a picture of her and recalls how proud he was when he discovered that she wrote under a pseudonym for an unnamed but prominent newspaper in Berlin, bringing light to the first and only mention of what Regina’s occupation may have been prior to deportation.¹⁸ Could this have been why there was no occupation listed on her death certificate—because she wrote under a pseudonym for fear of not gaining recognition as a Jewish, woman writer? Continuing to search through the archive with these and other questions in mind, I came across what I believe to be the perhaps two most significant findings in the archive that were related to my research. The first was a “100 Quittung Mark”—a bill of the currency distributed by the Nazi-controlled “Judenrat” or “Jewish Government” of the Ghetto to prisoners—along with a somewhat indecipherable letter which I translated partially as “Letter to Theresienstadt, where my mother was deported, attached is my allowance of Gold”; Walther attempted to send this letter to Regina via the authorities in Theresienstadt in 1942.¹⁹ The second finding was a series of addresses attached to a document featuring a different family tree, illustrating that the address where Walther and Cecilia lived

16 Fritsch, Helmut. “Chronology of the Life of Walther Victor.” [Personal Manuscript] Akademie Der Künste, Sept. 2011, Zur Biographie W.V. Familie bis Hamburg 1923].

17 Fritsch, Helmut. “Chronology of the Life of Walther Victor.” [Personal Manuscript] Akademie Der Künste, Sept. 2011, Zur Biographie W.V. Familie bis Hamburg 1923].

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

in Berlin was also in the district of Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg at Sybelstraße 67, just a 10-minute walk from Eisenbahnstraße 6, where I had theorized Regina had lived at some point in the early 1940s prior to her deportation. In addition to the information I gathered from the Walther Victor Sr. Archive, I gleaned passages from a small collection of his books, especially two of his autobiographies, *Ich kam aus lauter Liebe in die Welt* and *Kehre wieder über die Berge*, in which he discussed familiar fond memories he had of visiting his mother while they were both living in Berlin, as well as brief correspondences he had with her following his emigration to Switzerland in 1935 and prior to her deportation in 1942.

Thus far I knew that Regina lived in the Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg district of Berlin, but had no answer to the question of why the address that corresponded to her name was not featured in the appropriate address books. I now knew that Walther Victor Sr. stated that he enjoyed visiting his mother at her home “nearby” while they were in Berlin, but I was unsure if he was referring to her time living at another address or if the address on Eisenbahnstraße was genuine. At this point, I had reached out to a number of relevant archives and sources in order to acquire any and all information on Regina, including the Bundesarchiv and the Office of the *Stolpersteine* Organization in Berlin, both of which had access to the various *Gedenkbücher* or Commemorative Books, as well as the Landesarchiv to find out more about the tenants, such as Dr. Georg Hamburger, who lived at the Eisenbahnstraße address. I soon received word from the Stolpersteine Initiative Office of Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg that the *Gedenkbuch Berlins der Jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, which compiled the actual former living places of Berlin Jews, listed Regina as having lived at Sybelstraße 19 as a subtenant of a lawyer and a merchant named Erich Mamelok.²⁰ This finding was supported by the same listing found in a similar publication entitled “Jews of Charlottenburg: A Memorial Book,” which featured a list of every tenant of the apartment building at Sybelstraße 19 and the locations and dates of their deportations. The list shows the names of 14 tenants, all of whom were deported between 1941 and 1943, Regina having been both

20 *Gedenkbuch Berlins der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (hrsg: Freie Universität Berlin, Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung) , Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1995.

the oldest tenant and the only one to be deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto.²¹ Could this have been entirely due Regina's age at the time she was taken and the fact that the reputation of Theresienstadt as a transit camp to the death and concentration camps in the East was made covert due to the transfer of majority elderly people there? I pondered these questions as I combed through more material. The researchers in the *Stolpersteine* Office in Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg theorized that perhaps Mr. Mamelok—a name which sounded distinctly familiar to “Menzel,” which Walther Victor Sr. mentioned in his autobiographies as someone who knew and may have even been deported alongside Regina—may have also been arrested, emigrated, or killed. I was also informed that if any of these instances occurred just before Regina was deported, which could have prevented her from maintaining residency if this was after the passage of the “Reich Tenancy Law” in 1939, she could have been stripped of her property, as Jews were not allowed to own any at the time, or could have also succumbed to the significant financial burdens placed on the Jewish Community by the Nazi regulatory laws.²² Although this groundbreaking information has allowed me to confirm Regina's definitive place of residence, I continued to propose more questions to myself to answer those beyond those I asked during the initial steps of my research as more information came flooding in. For example, I was informed that Dr. Erich Mamelok did, in fact, emigrate to Los Angeles with his wife Margot, according to the archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and is recorded in the *Aufbau*—a newspaper which chronicled Jewish exiles from Germany as they arrived in the United States during WWII—as having come to Los Angeles on October 11, 1940.²³ Could Mr. Mamelok have been able to acquire someone in the United States to sponsor him for emigration from Berlin? If so, did this leave all of his Jewish tenants at the mercy of the strict Nazi tenancy regulations? Perhaps the address on Eisenbahnstraße was a *Judenhaus*—a collection point established by Nazi leadership in 1941 after the infamous Nazi architect Albert Speer began work on his

21 Ibid.

22 General. “About Us.” History—Jewish Community of Berlin, Jewish Community of Berlin, www.jg-berlin.org/en/about-us/history.html.

23 “Family Search: Dr. Erich Mamelok.” Family Search, www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-G5G3-9ZBQ?i=525&cc=1916078.

reorientation of the Third Reich's capital city, necessitating the selling and demolition of the majority of Jewish-owned real estate.²⁴ By what logic had my contact at the *Stolpersteine* Organization Office in Wilmersdorf-Charlottenberg concluded that there was not a *Judenhaus* at this address, when the lists of *Judenhäuser* in Berlin are still being documented by Holocaust historians? Why is Dr. Georg Hamburger the only name which rests in front of the former site of this building? These and other questions concerning both details on the chronology of Regina's life in Berlin prior to her deportation, as well as information on the people (family and otherwise) who may have lived nearby or with her during this period, bring to light those who also may have played an important role in the last years of her life.

The story of Regina Victor—that is, the segment of her story which I have managed to piece together—is characterized by constant movement, assimilation and hiding, and enduring the stringent, prejudice, persecutory, and murderous policies of the National Socialists. But perhaps more significantly, it is characterized by the story of a woman who, according to an assortment of personal accounts, was kind, loving, prideful in her “Berliner” identity, and as her son Walther Victor Sr. expressed in his letter to her prior to her deportation, “represented her last name” Friedenthal. The name is derived from the German word *Frieden* (“Peace”)—something Victor Sr. proclaimed the world was exceptionally deprived of at the time of his writing. This story, like those of other survivors and their families, will continue to be built upon by me, as well as others in and outside of my family, as the lingering questions are hopefully answered. It is decidedly difficult to research such a topic, as one must digest the atrocities a member of one's family had to endure; yet, is also deeply meaningful, knowing that both the distinctive experiences of Holocaust survivors, as well as my family's identity, are comprised of stories which define my personal identity as a descendent in the context of our history. Those stories, while still incomplete, are now no longer untold.

²⁴ “JudenHaus.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 12 Nov. 2017, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judenhaus.

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