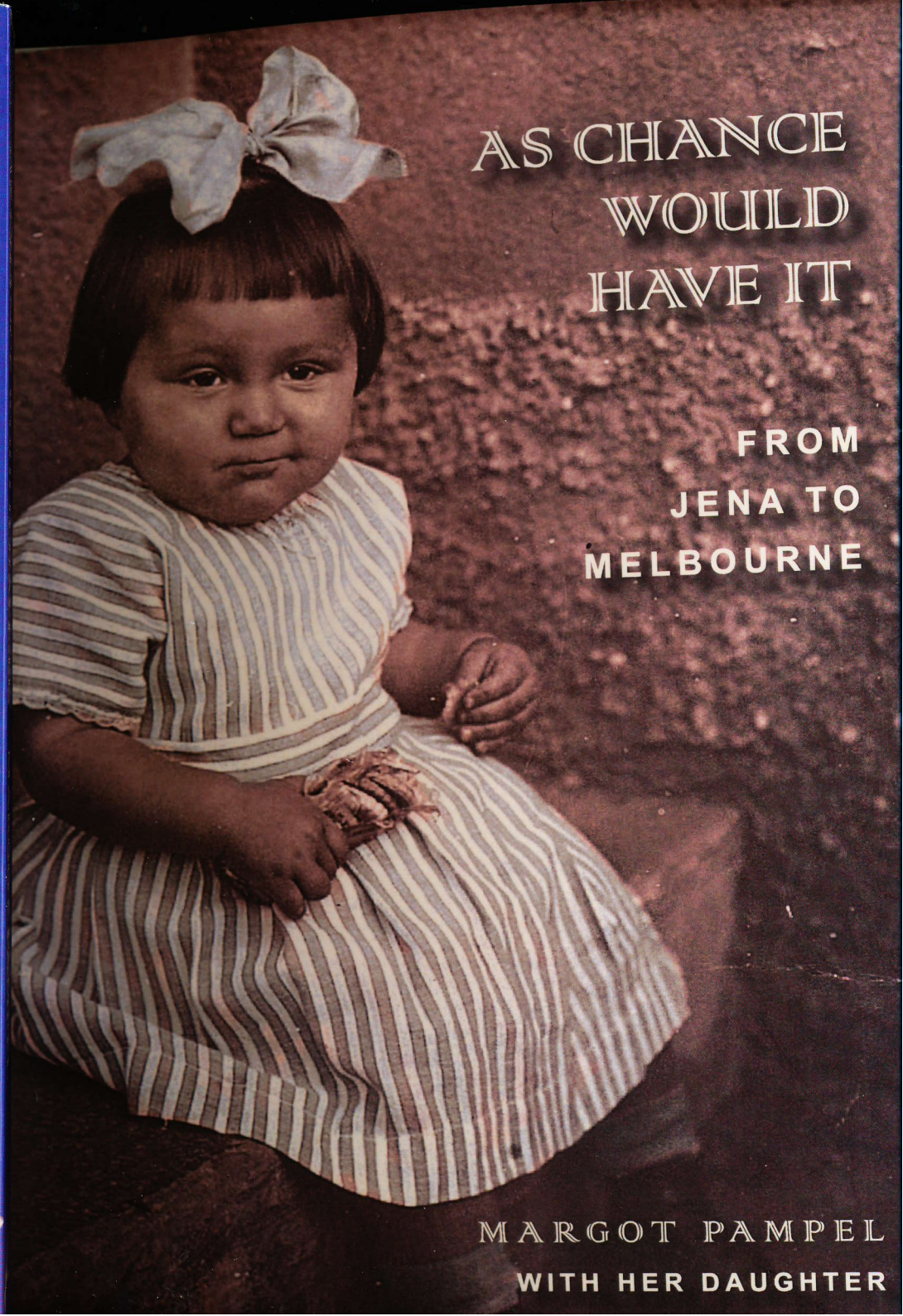


Margot Pampel's memoir tells a most uncommon story – that of a Jewish girl living and working under her own name in Germany throughout the Nazi era. Born of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father, Margot's early life in post-World War I Jena was filled with the simple joys of family, friends, holidays and the excitement of being part of a progressive, egalitarian school. When Margot was eight years old, her father died suddenly. Her widowed mother struggled to provide financially for them both, a task that became increasingly difficult after Hitler rose to power.

In 1933 Margot's mother was persuaded to have her daughter baptized in the hope of protecting her from the Aryan laws. Margot was not, however, protected from the fear of discovery, which haunted her life as long as she remained in Germany. In late 1942, her mother was arrested and sent to Auschwitz, where she died the following year. Through plain good luck and resourcefulness, Margot worked until the end of the war, escaped from East Germany and later met and married her husband Horst. In 1953, with their baby son, Michael, Horst and Margot migrated to Australia. Their daughter Felicity was born in Melbourne in 1956. As with most immigrants, their early years in Melbourne were difficult, but as Margot writes: 'I didn't need to make too many adjustments to cope with getting by on very little.'

Margot told her story in German to her daughter, who then translated and transcribed it. Nonetheless, her voice comes through with clarity and reflects the determination which characterized her life. In addition to her life story, the book is enriched by Margot's later reflections on her life, a tribute to her mother and insightful pieces by her daughter. There are many lessons to be learned from this book, while at the same time sharing the unique experiences of a very courageous woman.



AS CHANCE
WOULD
HAVE IT

FROM
JENA TO
MELBOURNE

MARGOT PAMPEL
WITH HER DAUGHTER

ISBN 978-1-876733-36-0



Lamm Jewish

CONTENTS

© Margot Pampel 2017

Published by Makor
at Lamm Jewish Library of Australia
304 Hawthorn Road
Caulfield South
Victoria 3162 Australia
www.ljla.org.au
Email info@ljla.org.au

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be
reproduced in any form or by any means,
electronic or mechanical, including
photocopying, recording, or by any
information storage and retrieval system,
without permission in writing from the
publisher.

ISBN: 978-1-876733-36-0

Production: Inklinc ~ 0407 825 316

WRITE YOUR STORY is a cultural activity begun
in 1998 by the Makor Jewish Community Library,
now part of the Lamm Jewish Library of Australia

Foreword	ix
Prologue	xvii
PART ONE	1
Earliest memories	3
Turning point	24
PART TWO	35
Difficult times	37
Mutti	58
More difficult times	69
War's end	81
Over the border illegally	100
<i>(Schwarz über die Grüne Grenze)</i>	
PART THREE	111
A wedding and a baby!	113
Australia, here we come	118
Fifty years in a nutshell	130
Uli	136
Reflection	140
Of Blessed Memory	145

PART FOUR	147
Felicity's Reflections	149
In Memoriam	154
Epilogue	158
Chronology	168
Family Tree	

DEDICATION

This memoir is dedicated to the memory of my loving parents,
to my children, Michael and Felicity,
and to my beloved grandchildren,
Tristan, Sebastian, Liesbeth, Oliver and Alexander.

Our last week in Germany was to be the visual highlight of our trip and a good antidote to the intense emotional experience that visiting Jena had been. We were off to Stuttgart to begin a cruise along the Neckar, Mosel and Rhein rivers. It was a balm for the senses and our first opportunity to sit back and relax – if only there hadn't been so much to do and see! The meals were frequent and delicious, the staff good-natured and attentive, and the scenery breathtaking. Our most anticipated stop was to be at Trier, where my mother wanted to view the amazing Roman relics of nearly two thousand years ago. Porta Nigra in Trier was one of many well-preserved and remarkable pieces of architecture in the area. But sadly, my mother only saw it briefly – a serious angina attack meant she had to resign herself to a drawn-out visit to a modern German doctor's surgery instead, before getting back to the boat just in time for its departure for Saarbruecken. No matter, overall, it was a wonderful cruise for her and a gift for Chris and me to be able to spend quality time with her in such pleasant surroundings.

On a rainy Saturday morning our fairy tale meanderings past extensive vineyards, ancient forests and medieval villages concluded rudely in the modernity of Saarbruecken. Our consolation was to be visiting with the Witzleb family in the Hegau, close to the Swiss border. Dietmar and Rajele Witzleb are friends from Melbourne who spend several months a year visiting Dietmar's mother, Irmgard, and her partner, Werner. Irmgard, Werner and my mother had become firm friends during many visits over time and this last occasion to see one another was an unexpected bonus. We also met my cousin Axel when we drove to Schaffhausen, Switzerland, to spend a day. Despite the frequent spring rains, we enjoyed the lush scenery of the Hegau, the spectacular play of the waterfall at Rheinfall in Schaffhausen, and the rather too-picture-perfect medieval township of Stein am Rhein.

Exactly one month after we arrived, we departed from Munich Airport aboard our Qatar Airlines flight bound for Melbourne. Before we had even arrived at our stopover in Doha, my mother pronounced

the trip a success and wanted to know where we would be going next. The trip had surpassed her expectations. More than sixty-five years ago, she had left a war-ravaged Jena by stealth, taking only what she could physically carry without attracting attention. There was no-one to wave her off, no-one on whom she could call if things in the West did not work out. The only things which had offered her any stability were a job and a room of her own back in Frankfurt. Whatever she made of her life would be entirely in her own hands.

Though she had been back to Jena a few times before, she had not felt a strong connection. After the war it had become drab and had lost its character. But for this last visit she had come back to a vibrant Jena and a very different social climate. Her school had remembered and embraced her. The doors of the *Hotel zum Schwarzen Bär* had swung open. And not only that, the *Oberbürgermeister* himself had sat next to her and bid her welcome.

Felicity Zwalf, September 2016

Australischer Gast besucht Jenaplanschule

Margot Pampel lernte als Kind an der damaligen Universitätsschule von Peter Petersen

JENA. (red.) „Mein ganzes Leben lang hatte ich ein gutes Gefühl, wenn ich an meine Schulzeit zurückdachte, denn hier wurde meine Liebe zum Lernen und Lehren geweckt“, schreibt die

94-jährige Margot Pampel, die aus Australien nach Jena gereist ist, um den 25. Geburtstag der Jenaplanschule mitzuerleben. Margot Pampel, geborene Reinhardt, war von 1929 bis

1935 Schülerin an der damaligen Universitätsschule. Noch heute ist sie Professor Peter Petersen dankbar, dass er sie unterstützt hat, obwohl ihre Mutter Jüdin war. Oberbürgermeister Albrecht Schröter (SPD) begrüßte die ehemalige Jenaerin, die an der Festveranstaltung zum Schuljubiläum am Freitag im Volkshaus teilnahm.

Margot Pampel ist die Tochter von Gitta Reinhardt (1891 bis 1943), die aus einer jüdischen Familie stammte. Zuletzt wohnte Gitta Reinhardt mit ihrer Tochter in einem kleinen Gartenhäuschen in der Brauhofstraße 5. Dort wurde im Jahr 2011 ein Stolperstein gesetzt, um an das Schicksal der Jüdin zu erinnern. Denn im Dezember 1942 kam Gitta Reinhardt von einer Vorladung bei der Polizei nicht zurück. Sie wurde am 2. März 1943 nach Auschwitz deportiert und dort am 2. Mai ermordet.



Margot Pampel wanderte 1954 nach Australien aus.

Tochter Margot heiratete 1953 in Frankfurt am Main und wanderte ein Jahr später mit ihrem Mann nach Australien aus.



„Stolperstein“ für die Mutter von Margot Pampel, Gitta Reinhardt, die in der Brauhofstraße wohnte. Fotos: Barbara Glasser