



Biography of Matt & Anneliese Yosafat

Anneliese (nee Leopold) Yosafat

Anneliese Yosafat (nee Leopold) was born in Leipzig, Germany in 1937. After being notified of deportation on September 18, 1942, her family went into hiding, when Anneliese was five years old. Only able to take a few personal items so as not to look suspicious, Anneliese took her favorite doll and her mother's baby spoon with her into hiding. Over the course of the war, the family would hide with 13 different families. They took on false identities and had false papers; Anneliese's name was now Annie Friehele. One of their hiding places was bombed, during which Anneliese was so frightened, she bit the fingers off one of the hands of her doll. Following the bombing, the family fled to Bludenz, Austria and began passing themselves off as Christians, hiding in plain sight. Anneliese's father Walter, using the false name Kurt, invented a story that they were Christians from Mannheim who had lost all their identification papers in a recent bombing. Because of their false identification papers, Walter got a job with the local government from September 1944 through the end of the war. Once the war was over in 1946, the family revealed their Jewish identities. The town was not happy that they had lied, and the local clergy urged them to leave the town. The family decided to come to the United States in 1950. In Cincinnati, Anneliese met Matt Yosafat, a Holocaust survivor from Greece, whom she later married.

Matt Yosafat

Matt Yosafat was born in Katerini, Greece (near Mount Olympus) in 1936. In 1942, the Nazis occupied Greece. The family went into hiding after hearing the Jews were going to be deported. The family hid in various places including a cave and a tobacco shelter. Not all of the family's hiding spots were safe, nor were they always able to hide together. Often the family experienced horrible treatment by those who had agreed to help them. Eventually, the family reunited back in Katerini, Greece where they were liberated. Almost immediately after the end of World War II, Greece experienced a civil war (1946-1949), which the Yosafats were once again caught in a dangerous, war-torn territory. As soon as they could, the family decided to come to the United States in 1951.

Anneliese and Matt met in 1955 through a mutual friend. They spoke on the phone for quite a while before meeting face to face. The two felt that their meeting was fate when they discovered that they had both been in hiding during the war. The two got married in 1959 and today, the couple has three children, seven grandchildren, and one great grandchild.