

## Manor Farm, Tingrith The Anker Family Home and Hachshara



Manor Farm 1955

### Introduction

What could a chemist from Germany, a piano-playing medic from Vienna and an electrician from Czechoslovakia have in common? It is time spent at Manor Farm in the bucolic village of Tingrith, Bedfordshire, which belonged to Leo Anker, my grandfather. Dozens of young Jews were brought over to England under the auspices of the Jewish Refugee Agricultural Committee and various other organisations to train on a Hachshara, a farm that would teach them agriculture skills, so that they could then settle in Palestine. They left their families behind at a time when Europe was convulsed by the rise in Nazism and found refuge here in Tingrith.

Then and now, the small village of Tingrith nestles some 30 miles north of London, with a population of about 150. It's set in fertile, undulating countryside, unremarkable but prettily English. The 15th-century Church of St Nicholas, with its beautiful stained-glass windows, is barely used and the village pub is now closed. From 1939, Manor Farm in Tingrith is where Leo Anker decided to make his home, among people with different backgrounds, outlook on life, culture and world experience.

The farm was where the wider family would often meet. Our cousins John and Peter Gugenheim spent much of the war living there and the Michaels and Gugenheim families visited on a regular basis until Leo died. It was the spiritual home of the Anker children and grandchildren. It was our place to roam free, to be with our cousins, breathe the country air and truly

understand the meaning of family. So many of our relatives spent time on the farm, being embraced by Leo and his wife Lisel's warmth and hospitality.

## **Who was Leo Anker?**

Leo was born in Wormditt in East Prussia in 1878, the fourth child of Simon Anker and Henriette Meyer. Simon and Henriette had 12 children, of whom eight grew up to be adults. Simon traded grain, initially riding through the fertile hinterland of East Prussia buying produce from local farmers. He opened shops in Heilsberg and Wormditt, and at the age of 34 relocated his growing family and business to Danzig. Within a short while he had created possibly the largest business in the city. Simon's four eldest sons – Arthur, Leo, Heinrich and Paul – became partners and eventually the owners of the business. The company S. Anker possessed a dozen warehouses, including the massive concrete silo on Neufahrwasser, just outside the centre of Danzig, as well as the largest commercial bakery in the city.

Leo was responsible for finance, legal matters, relationships with banks and outside authorities as well as the family's two farms. He was the gregarious, charming face of S. Anker, travelling to London, Warsaw and Berlin to arrange finance on which the growth and survival of the business depended.

In 1912 Leo married Lisel Pfeiffer from Landau, where her family had been long established. They had three children, Marianne, Charlotte and Martin. Until 1933 Jews like the Anker family were well integrated into life in Danzig. All of Leo's brothers fought for Germany in the First World War and his sister Rosa was a volunteer auxiliary nurse.

## **Rise of the Nazis in Danzig and the impact on the Anker family**

After the First World War the Free City of Danzig was created as a legal entity under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles: with its own government, passports, postal system and currency. In 1933 the Nazi Party came to power in the Free City of Danzig. Despite being under the protection of the League of Nations, the lives of the Jewish community was upended forever. Jews lost their jobs, were thrown out of schools and organisations, were subject to humiliating racial laws, imprisoned on trumped-up charges and stripped of their assets. The general population were told not to have any dealings with Jews and to boycott their businesses. Leo was forced out of the Danzig sports club<sup>1</sup> and the German Automobile Association<sup>2</sup>. The local newspaper "Zwischen Weichel und Nogat" in June 1937 wrote an article about him headlined: "How much longer will the Jew Anker be the owner of a farm!" It

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<sup>1</sup> Letter 10 October 1933 advised Leo that he was no longer a member of the Danzig sports club as he was not Aryan.

<sup>2</sup> Letter 3 March 1934 advised Leo that he was no longer a member of the Deutsche Automobil-Club as he was not Aryan.

goes on to say “that it is typical Jewish cheek... that our indigenous, soil rooted farmers are being deprived by racially foreign elements...”

Lucky or farsighted Jews left Danzig and Germany as soon as they were able. Marianne and Charlotte emigrated to London in 1934 and 1935; Martin was sent to school in England in 1937 and Leo and Lisel followed in 1938, just before the Kristallnacht pogrom. They spent more than a year trying to work out what they wanted to do and where they wanted to live. Leo’s brothers Arthur, Heinrich and Paul had emigrated to California with their families.

Leo’s other siblings and relatives desperately tried to get themselves and their families out of Germany. Most countries did not want Jews, and even where they were allowed in, there was either a serious financial cost or a quota or both. Leo helped to get his three siblings, Georg, Trude and Rosa, and their families out of Berlin. Trude joined her son Walter in Palestine. Rosa was married to a successful doctor, Sigmar Karplus. In February 1939 they were so desperate that they put their two children on a Kindertransport train to England.

Leo’s brother Georg also put his three daughters on a Kindertransport to England. It is difficult to imagine how fearful Rosa and Georg must have felt to send their children unaccompanied to a foreign country in the knowledge that they might never see them again. Unfortunately, most Kindertransport children did not see their parents again. However, Leo was already in England to vouch for the children and look after them. He also was able to purchase visas for Rosa and Sigmar, and later Georg and his wife Gertrude, to come to Britain.

Leo and his brothers in California provided money and guarantees for many family members, but sadly more than 100 of their cousins, second cousins and members of their families were murdered<sup>3</sup>. But in 1939, when Leo bought into Manor Farm, he had no idea of the true extent of the tragedy to come.

### **Creation of the Hachshara at Manor Farm**

In pre-war Germany and elsewhere there developed a movement known as Hachshara, Hebrew for ‘preparation’, which trained young people in agriculture in readiness for going to Palestine and working the land. This was a Zionist organisation created to help fulfil the dream of settling the land and making the desert bloom.

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<sup>3</sup> Family records maintained by Dick Plotz

On coming to England, Leo became friendly with Simon Beloff, born Semion Rubinowicz, a wealthy trader, who had emigrated from Russia in about 1912 and who had family in Danzig. Simon and his brother Arkady Rubin were deeply concerned about the fate of the European Jews and had been involved in providing support for refugees. Between them they decided that the best way to help would be to join forces and together with Leon Oks, originally from Poland, created a company, Tingrith Farm Ltd. This was to become the first agricultural training establishment for refugees in Britain.

To start the Hachshara, the company bought Manor Farm in Tingrith on 13 March 1939, with Leo as a significant shareholder. At the time the farm was heavily mortgaged to the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation. One can well imagine that Leo thought that spending some of his money this way would be a wise long-term investment. He too was deeply concerned about the fate of European Jews and clearly understood the dangers that the community faced. He also felt that getting young Jews out of Europe was not enough. They needed more; they needed a helping hand to move on to a new life. This use of his funds would have satisfied both objectives.

## **Young refugees arriving in Britain**

With the arrival of so many Jewish refugees in Britain, initially from Germany but later from other German-speaking lands, committees were formed to support them. The Central Council for the Jewish Refugee Agricultural Committee was created to assist in setting up and funding the Hachshara. From the minutes of meetings, it would appear that the capital costs were born by the Central Council but the running costs and feeding the trainees was the responsibility of Leo and his partners.

In 1933 after Hitler came to power in Germany, the Central British Fund for German Jewry was established to support German Jewish refugees. Over time it succeeded in bringing to Britain about 65,000 refugees<sup>4</sup>. They were processed at Bloomsbury House in London and the records of these applicants are still retained by World Jewish Relief, the successor organisation to the Central British Fund. It was there that young refugees aged between 17 and 22 were allocated to homes, education or to agricultural training centres: the first such centre being Manor Farm. The process was to a large extent self-selection as youngsters who had been members of a Hachshara in Germany or Zionist youth organisations in Czechoslovakia or Austria were keen to be trained in preparation for going to Palestine.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: The Association of Jewish Refugees

In May 1939 the minutes of the committee reported that 36 refugees who had come from a Hachshara outside of Hamburg in Germany were now resident at Manor Farm. At the time it was thought that this number could be increased to 50. By July 1939 there were as many as 100 and Manor Farm was by far the largest refugee agricultural training centre. This was a huge increase in just two months, requiring a massive logistical exercise.

## **Refugee stories**

In 1995, my sister Juliette Overlander decided to track down hachsharot, trainee farmers, to record their memories of that very particular time in their lives. She realised that if she didn't record their stories, the history would be lost. Much of what follows comes from her research. Many of the young people, particularly those from Czechoslovakia, were fresh out of school; the German contingent was a little older and some already had a trade. All were ardent Zionists, fired up by socialist ideals and enthusiasm for what lay ahead – or just glad to have escaped countries where the circumstances of Jews were becoming increasingly perilous. “I was just a few days past my 18th birthday and at the time it was a tremendous adventure and the world was ours and we were ready to conquer all difficulties,” recalled Edith Wesley, who came to England from Czechoslovakia with a group of eight others. She landed at Croydon Airport on the 9th of March 1939. “We were very lucky,” she told Juliette. “We beat Hitler by a few days.”

After being billeted with Jewish families for a week, Edith and her comrades were driven to Manor Farm, singing socialist songs along the way. They disembarked on Tingrith High Street and walked through the gates of Manor Farm to find a white, well-proportioned farmhouse surrounded by barns, stables and storage rooms. Beyond was a sizeable farm of 204 acres, with tracts of arable land, working horses, a rather taciturn pony called Joe, five cows and hundreds of chickens. They were greeted by the group of young Germans who had arrived a few months earlier.

The starry-eyed youngsters from Czechoslovakia had largely escaped the assaults of the German SS, but that was not the case for everyone on the farm. A young German girl, Henni, who had experienced a severe beating by the SS, seemed depressed and mostly wanted to be alone. Edith herself was in a belated state of shock and grief – her mother had died shortly before she left for England and she left her father behind in Czechoslovakia. He was later murdered by the Nazis.

There must have been a fair amount of trauma among the young people, who sought solace in each other's company. "Being at the farm, you feel free that you weren't in Germany," recalled Alex Marks, who in 1937 at the age of 16 had been sent from his home in Magdeburg, Germany to the Hamburg Hachshara. "The psychological aspect alone, that we had a government that incited people to hate you and to hurt you... that is a very terrible feeling." The young people considered themselves lucky to find themselves at the Hachshara, and their suffering led them to form strong bonds. "We tried very, very hard to make the best of the circumstances," added Alex. "We looked to the future and we had to build something; we had to try to experiment at least."

The most significant memory of Nora, Simon Beloff's daughter, of Manor Farm was very sad. In her verbal testimony she recorded: "I knew the horror of what was going on... but what struck me with a tremendous force, like a mallet over my head, was when one of them committed suicide."

The young Zionists must have been a peculiar addition to the small village and were warned by the German-Jewish Aid Committee not to speak German in the streets and in public places and not to raise their voices. Indeed, it must have been hard for locals to fully fathom the difference between Germans, who were the enemy, and German Jews who had escaped Nazi tyranny. Overall, though, the young trainee farmers recall the British treating them fairly. Lord Max Beloff, Simon's son, wrote "I remember... that there were problems explaining to the local community – enemy aliens etc."

These Hachshara youngsters had lost home, language and culture. Some were academically educated but unskilled, others had a trade or agricultural training. They did not know it then, but the majority would lose their families in the Holocaust. By September 1939 the National Census showed that there were 124 hachsharot living on the farm<sup>5</sup>. It seems a staggering number to be trained, educated and fed.

Indeed, it was like feeding a small army: an invoice from the Toddington baker E M Clifford showed that the Tingrith Training Centre purchased almost 900 loaves during the month of January 1940. An invoice in Leo's papers from Lipton's for January 1940 showed about 7kg of loose chocolate, 120kg of sugar, about 40kg of semolina, 3kg of butter, more than 50kg of margarine, about 35kg of jam, 50 litres of frying oil, 100 small cans of anchovies, 25 litres

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<sup>5</sup> The purpose of The National Census of 29 September 1939 was to gather important information about the population of Great Britain, including details such as age, sex, occupation, and place of birth. The three pages of the census showing the residents at Manor Farm is shown as an addendum.

of pickles, two dozen cases of peas and 7kg of Bovril, a thick salty beef extract paste used as a warming drink or a flavouring for soups or stews.

Alex Marks recalled: "In Germany they cut us off from a lot of food; I remember eating dry bread with jam and we would add water into the jam to make it go further. We didn't complain, because when you are really hungry, you will be surprised what can satisfy you." Having said that, his abiding memory of lunches at the farm was of sandwiches with pilchards (anchovies) that he ate every day for three months. Suffice it to say, pilchards lost their appeal rather quickly.

### **Life on the farm**

By all accounts, the farm buildings, hedges and fences had seen better days, so the arrival of so many enthusiastic young people, between the ages of 17 and 22, must have been rather welcome. The Hachshara worked much like a kibbutz – and after settling in, the trainees were allocated jobs, which were frequently rotated between them. The girls were in charge of domestic duties while the boys were taught how to work the land, drive tractors, bring in the harvest, make barbed wire and tend to the animals. The work, especially at the beginning, was harder than they were used to. Edith, for instance, was asked to take on the washing of all work overalls. Conditions were primitive, to say the least, and that March 1939 was particularly cold. "I was given a scrubbing brush, a pail with washing soda, a cake of soap and a tin bath," she recalled. "Of course, there was no warm water and no rubber gloves. It was victory of mind over matter." Life got a little easier when she was "promoted" to the milking barn where she was taught to milk the cows, and later to work in the kitchens.

Cooking was done in the farmhouse, but it was a struggle to feed so many hungry youngsters as there was only a simple fireplace with a hook for the pot or kettle. Soon enough, workmen arrived to build a new kitchen block and a washhouse behind the farmhouse, followed by a hut with bunk beds that served as dormitories for the boys. The girls lived in the farmhouse.

The walls of their huts were decorated with pictures, messages and slogans. Chajim Mechner, the piano-playing shoemaker, had typed the camp newspaper, which was then pinned to the wall for all to read. When the huts were finally demolished, there was Hebrew script found on some of the wooden slats. One said, "We will build for ourselves in our land" and another, "Chaim Veitsman", referring to Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader and later

first president of Israel<sup>6</sup>. These youngsters were Zionists with ambitions to be part of creating a land for Jews in Palestine.

After the day's work was done, there were meetings, which concerned the running of the farm, how best to organise communal living, as well as Hebrew and English lessons, music, singing and the inevitable discussions of the future. A highlight was the arrival of a piano, which created a major stir. That evening Chajim Mechner (later Fred Barnard) played for hours while the trainees danced, sang and cried. One of the Hachshara doctors, Fritz Arnholz, was an excellent classical pianist. The other medical officer, Dr Heinrich Schorr, later Henry Shore, an Austrian like Fritz Arnholz, was a classical violinist. Together with Chajim they gave concerts for the trainees and also for the farm owners – the Beloffs, Ankers and Oks.

A letter, shown at the end of this booklet, found in the Bedfordshire County archives from Dr Schorr, requested the loan of books for the men and women on the farm from the local library. "The need for serious English and German literature and for standard political and philosophical works is keenly felt," he wrote. I'm sure that was a rather unusual request for a Bedfordshire County librarian! The letter had been written on the notepaper of The Tingrith Training Centre Committee chaired by Colonel E.J.Skinner, who was an important local bigwig.

There were various different levels of management and supervision at Manor Farm. Leo Anker, the Beloff brothers and Leon Oks took a close interest in the farm's management. Erwin Scheier, a professional Hachshara manager, trained the young refugees in farming and Mrs Ruth Scheier helped with feeding and cleaning. Leo's son Martin lived and worked on the farm when he was not at school. He was popular but was ribbed for being one of the "bourgeoisie". Charlotte is remembered as being "quite a beauty, who brought an air of the elegant city"

The government provided a supervisor, Mr Dyer, whose main role seems to have been the morning roll call to ensure that no one had run off. It couldn't have been easy managing a group of highly excitable young men and women who had little command of English.

There were committees of trainees who allocated the work and deep discussions about how the community was to be run. There were debates about whether the trainees should receive pocket money; it was eventually decided that everyone should receive two pence every three weeks. It was also decided that all clothing was to be shared, but this was abruptly stopped

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<sup>6</sup> A picture of a slat is shown in the photographic section at the back.

when one day Edith saw one of her friends wearing her best dress carefully kept for special occasions.

There was a hierarchy in which some of the older, longer-serving members assumed leadership roles. These could be challenged. In early 1940, leading Zionists including David Ben Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, and Moshe Sharett, the second prime minister of Israel, came to London for a conference. The Tingrith Hachshara was invited to send a delegate and the "leadership" wanted one of their number to attend. But the trainees wanted Edith to be their representative and the majority won the day, much to Edith's delight.

Sometimes the refugees were sent to other local farms to help with the harvest and other activities, as many agricultural workers had joined the Armed Forces. There were mixed reports about how well they were treated by outside farms. In some cases, with the utmost kindness, but in others as skivvies.

Any money earned was paid into the Hachshara general fund. The refugees lived frugally, although from time to time a chicken was "found" to have a broken leg and therefore needed to be slaughtered and eaten. Like the Anker family, those who had access to the milking shed occasionally took cream off the top of the stored milk.

The main evening on the farm was Friday night, the beginning of the Jewish sabbath. White sheets were spread as tablecloths. As far as possible the boys and girls wore blue trousers or skirts and white blouses. They lit sabbath candles, blessed the bread and sang songs, reminders of the lives they had left behind and the futures they were hoping for in the Promised Land. They entertained themselves with concerts, singing and listening to classical records.

An important event in the life of the Hachshara was the visit to Manor Farm by Hermann Rauschning, the first president of Danzig under the Nazi regime. Although Rauschning had been a Nazi, having been appointed with the blessing of Adolf Hitler, he does not appear to have been an anti-Semite in the Nazi sense. He had been a friend of the Anker family, and despite the exclusion of Leo from much of Danzig society on account of being Jewish, Rauschning personally appointed him to the Economic Council of the City of Danzig on 4 September 1934. This was well after the Nazis had come to power and after Leo had been excluded from many of his clubs. Due to his soft attitude towards the Jewish question, Rauschning was forced out of office and was exiled from Danzig.

Despite their many difficulties, there were also many moments of joy – Ferko (Frank) Pollock and Hanna, had been friends since childhood decided to marry: the ceremony took place in the nearby town of Ampthill and was celebrated with gusto and merriment at the farm. Their first daughter Leah was born there.

Having read through letters and documents it was clear that the number of youngsters reduced substantially from May 1940 when the German refugees, as enemy aliens, started being taken into internment camps and most of the others, who were “friendly” aliens, were slowly moved to other locations. It seems that there was a policy to relocate these young people to where they could be more useful to the economy and the war effort.

In the course of the general internment of these enemy aliens in 1940, more than 500 mainly Jewish agricultural workers were taken away from farms, many without having the opportunity to make arrangements for their luggage. This included Gerd-Julius Herrmann, the son of a cousin of Leo, who arrived in England penniless under Leo’s recognisances and worked on the farm for about a year until he was interned in Canada by the British government.

In May and June 1941 Gerd-Julius wrote to Leo from the camp in Ottawa, asking for news about the farm and the family, but also complaining that he had heard nothing from Leo and his letters went unanswered. He had been receiving weekly letters from his parents who were still living in Königsberg. These ceased around mid-1942 when Hans and Margarete Herrmann were deported to a concentration camp and killed.

Gerd-Julius was not the only one to lose touch with his parents. Yaakov and Sonia Koch, who knew one another from Jewish youth camps in Czechoslovakia and were both 19 when they arrived in England, only learned after the War that neither of their parents survived. They had profound feelings of guilt that they did not do more to save them. Sonia’s father, a butcher, wrote to her asking if there wasn’t just one Jewish butcher in London who wanted an assistant. For the rest of his life Yaakov had a guilty conscience about not having done more to save his mother and sister. But what could they have done? They were a long way from London, they had no money and had no idea of the processes, if any, that were available to get their families out. When telling this story to Juliette, which was similar to that of so many other refugees, they were clearly distraught.

### **After the Hachshara**

By 1 October 1941 the agreement with the Central Council for Jewish Refugees to run the Hachshara on Manor Farm ceased and the remaining trainees came under the War Agricultural Executive Committee. Leo bought

the farm from Tingrith Farm Ltd and ran it as a mixture of arable land and animal farming. It seems that some refugees were still at Manor Farm in July 1943 as a letter in German to my mother congratulating her on my birth was written in German and signed off "Die Boys and Girls der Manor Farm". I don't think this needs translating!

Towards the end of the war, in a peculiar twist, the farm housed German and Italian prisoners of war. I remember a photograph of about a dozen prisoners eating in the hut behind the house in the company of a policeman. There was no great fear that the prisoners would escape. The war was nearly over so these prisoners were used as cheap labour. Cousin Peter Gugenheim remembers that Italian prisoners caught rabbits, which they gutted and cooked, and used as sandwich filling. Two of the German prisoners stayed on as agricultural workers and Martin, who by then was running the farm, had houses built for them and their families.

My sense is that Leo's role was that of a farm manager, rather than a practical farmer out in the fields on a combine harvester or milking the cows. I do not recollect that he ever sat on a tractor; he was either walking the fields or sitting in his office by the farm entrance. It was his son Martin who did the physical labour involved in running the farm. Martin was happiest out in the fresh air driving the equipment or in the milking shed or chicken houses tending to the animals. On inheriting the farm, he turned it into a profitable enterprise, more than doubling its size with astute and farsighted land purchases. He was intelligent and played a skillful game of chess. For him the life of a professional farmer was rather isolating, and one wonders whether he would have been more intellectually satisfied if he had been dealt a different hand and had other opportunities.

From the early 1940s until his death in 1960, Leo lived exclusively on the farm. Lisel, on the other hand, had a home in London – initially a small house in Hendon and later a rented room in a boarding house in Belsize Park. My memory, however, is that she lived mainly on the farm, where she busied herself with growing vegetables and looking after her garden. Among the large variety of vegetables, she grew were some which she had learned to grow in Danzig. Kohlrabi, sometimes called the German cabbage, was virtually unknown in Britain. Her asparagus was white not green. As the asparagus heads poked through the soil, she would surround the exposed asparagus shaft with earth so that the sun's rays were blocked out, thus preventing photosynthesis, which turns the spears green. Lisel was a wonderful cook, baking cakes she learnt to make in Danzig, which was one of the more special memories of our childhood. Walking the meadows in March and September were devoted to finding mushrooms. It was with her that I learnt to identify *Steinpilze*, the common mushroom, by sight, feel and smell.

As children we called Leo and Lisel by the old German name for grandparents: Opa and Omi. Affectionately Lisel was called Alte, meaning the old one, by Leo and her children. I have no idea how it came about, nor do I know whether she was bothered by the sobriquet. Most evenings Leo and Lisel would play sechs und sechzig (sixty-six), a German card game that my mother often played with her children and grandchildren.

Very sadly, Lisel found life very difficult in England. Her change of status from a well respected and wealthy lady in Danzig to a farmer's wife in Tingrith was very challenging for her. In Danzig, she enjoyed the leisured life of couture clothes, week-long stays in spas and a very large and comfortable home maintained by staff<sup>7</sup>. Coming to England as a refugee was a shock to her system. The language and culture would forever feel foreign to her. She missed her friends. Consequently, she was very unhappy and found little in life to boost her spirits. She spent time in residential care and died in a care home in Northampton. When we think of the horror of the Holocaust, we think of the six million who died, but we also know the damage and the lasting effects the Shoah<sup>8</sup> had on survivors as well.

I often wonder if Leo was happy. In Danzig he was an important citizen with direct access to the highest in the state. He was a respected member of the Jewish community. What did he do in Tingrith? I doubt that he had real friends there. But everyone speaks of him not being unhappy with his lot. I remember him as a wonderful grandfather – interested and interesting. A smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye.

Did Leo look back and think he could have done more, rescued a few others? Did he ever wonder why he and his immediate family were the lucky ones? Somewhere in the back of his mind might have been a nagging feeling of guilt, of the unfairness of having survived, and survived so comfortably when others perished or were severely traumatised by their suffering. In the aftermath of the Holocaust the condition of survivor's guilt is well documented, not only in the lives of the immediate survivors but also in the next generation, many of whom are obsessed by their history.

But Leo could certainly take pride in his achievements of rescuing so many young people from the fate that befell the majority of European Jewry, including the five Kindertransport children of his sister Rosa and his brother Georg. There were many that he and his brothers in America funded to escape, innumerable letters written to authorities and affidavits given for individuals, as well as the hundreds of youngsters who were trained at Manor Farm. Many of the trainees created successful lives for themselves in

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<sup>7</sup> Evidenced by considerable correspondence from Leo to Lisel 1918 to 1932

<sup>8</sup> Hebrew term for Holocaust

Canada, Britain, Israel and elsewhere and that their experience at Manor Farm provided them with an education and training. But most importantly, it gave them new families where they had lost their own.

## **Epilogue**

In 1995, my sister Juliette Overlander decided to find out more about the history of Manor Farm as a Hachshara and placed advertisements in a British refugee magazine, the Jewish Chronicle and an Israeli English-language newspaper. She received about a dozen replies and interviewed four people in England and Israel. She meticulously recorded and organised the correspondence and transcribed the interviews. This was a huge labour of love and the invaluable basis of this research, for which I am exceedingly grateful.

Manor Farm was home to Martin Anker's four children: David, Mark, Carrie and Lou. This is where they grew up. David manages the farm and Mark built his home in the grounds. They have provided an immense amount of help in putting this story together, sharing memories and finding letters and documents stored in old boxes in cupboards and lofts. A special thank you to Carrie's partner Mike Ash who drew up the family charts and helped with the photographic layout.

The Anker family network of first, second and third cousins is held together by George Fogelson and Dick Plotz who are unfailingly generous with their time, knowledge and insights.

The archivists at Bedfordshire Archives Services, Thomas Lerner, Kirsty McGill and Helen Bates, were most helpful in finding fascinating sources of information. World Jewish Relief, which still does such wonderful work supporting Jews and others throughout the world, holds many documentary records from the days when it was the go-to place for refugees during and before the Second World War, which it has been happy to share. My friends Toby Simpson, Howard Falksohn and Christopher Gilley at the Wiener Holocaust Library have been hugely helpful in finding sources and public records. Michael Newman at the Association of Jewish Refugees responded quickly to requests and was very free with advice and introductions. I am grateful to Dr Joe Cronin, lecturer in modern German history at Queen Mary University, friend and collaborator, for all his helpful advice.

Sonia Zhuravlyova has been hugely helpful in reviewing this document and helping make it readable and coherent. She has been my collaborator and sounding board and made sure the story was driven through to completion.

I apologise for any mistakes and errors, for which I take full responsibility.  
And finally, a big thank you to my wife Lesley who has supported my efforts  
to record the memories of our families for the next generation.

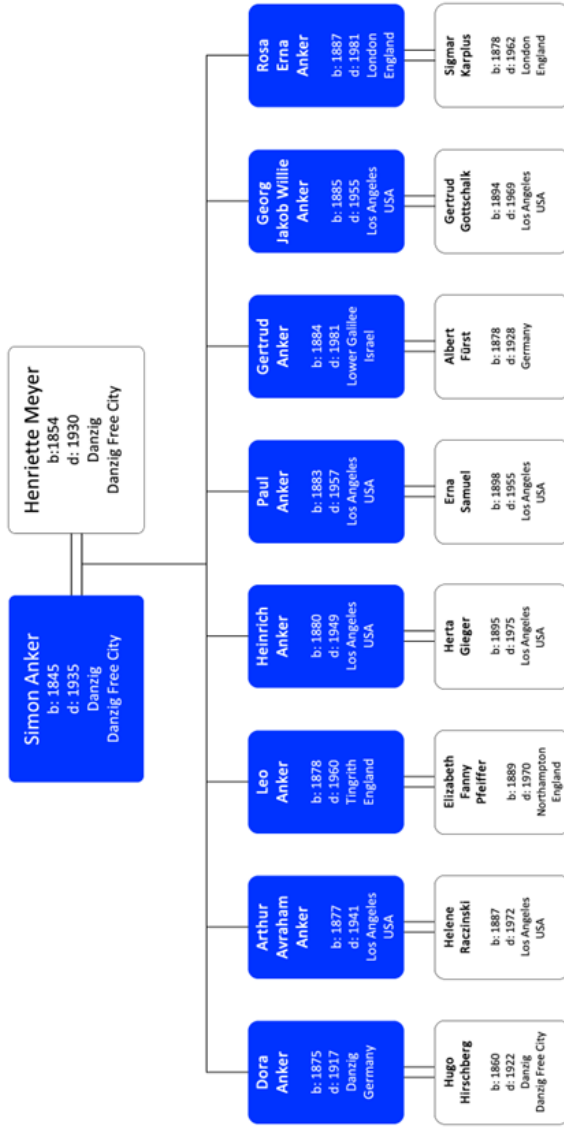
Leslie Michaels  
May 2023

## **Addendum**

### Key dates/ timeline

1878 September	Leo Anker is born in Wormditt, East Prussia
1879	The Anker family moves to Danzig
1912 May	Leo marries Lisel Pfeiffer – in Landau
1913 June	Marianne Anker is born
1917 March	Charlotte Anker is born
1920 November	Free City of Danzig created
1924 September	Martin Anker is born
1933 May	Nazis come to power in Danzig
1938 October	Leo and three brothers leave Danzig for the US and UK
1939 March	Leo buys into Manor Farm, Tingrith. Hachshara created.
1939 September	Second World War starts in Danzig on 1 September
1940 October	The Hachshara on Manor Farm begins to be wound down
1941 May	Leo buys out other shareholders in Manor Farm
1960 May	Leo Anker dies

## Children of Simon Anker

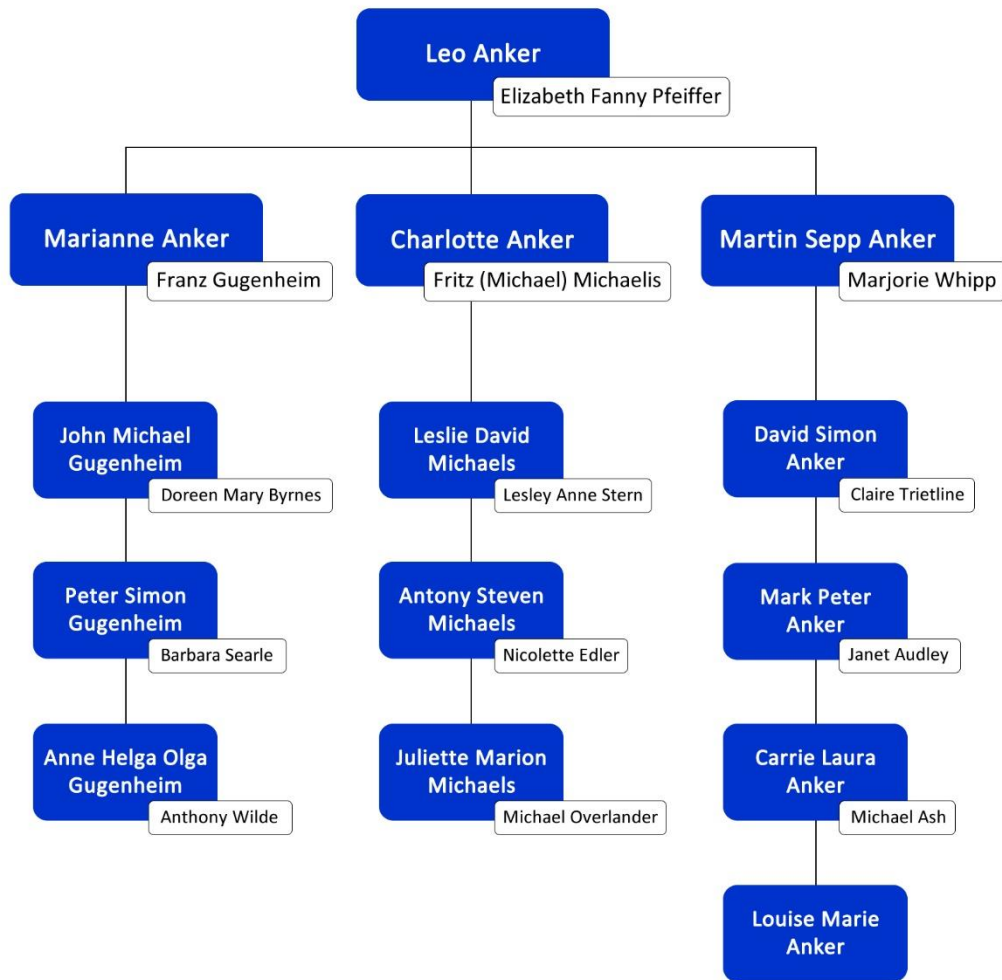


In addition to the above, Simon and Henriette also had four children (Selma, Max, Bertha and Elise) who died in childhood.

Everyone in the chart was born somewhere in German speaking North Europe.

The Free City of Danzig was created as a city state under the protection of the League of Nations in 1920 with its own passports, government, president, currency and postal system. It had previously been part of Germany and became German again by occupation in 1939.

## Children and grandchildren of Leo and Lisel Anker



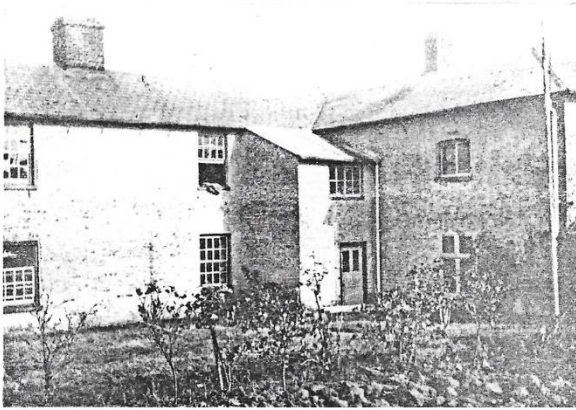


**Top row left to right:**  
Lisel Anker, Leo Anker, Franz Gugenheim, Marianne Anker Gugenheim, John Gugenheim.

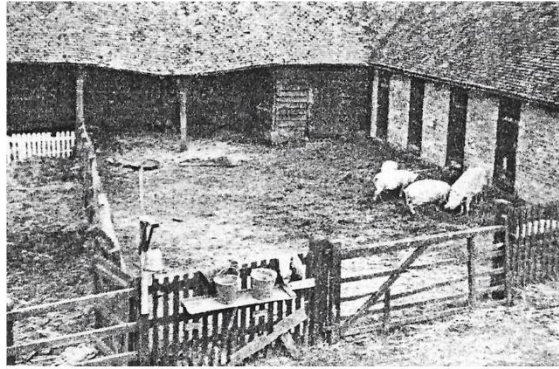
**Bottom row:**  
Peter Gugenheim, Michael Michaels, Tony Michaels, Charlotte Anker Michaels, Leslie Michaels,  
Martin Anker, Marjorie Anker

About 1951

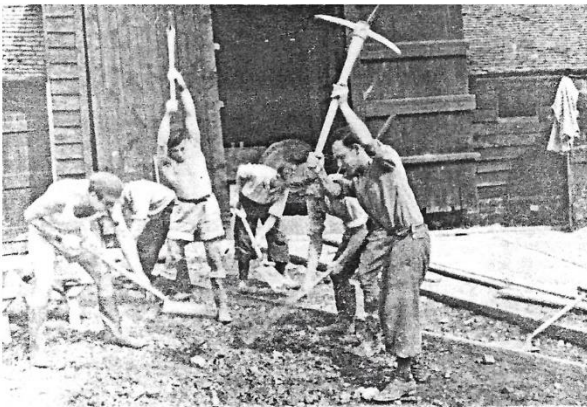
Manor Farm 1939



Rear of the farm house



The pig sty

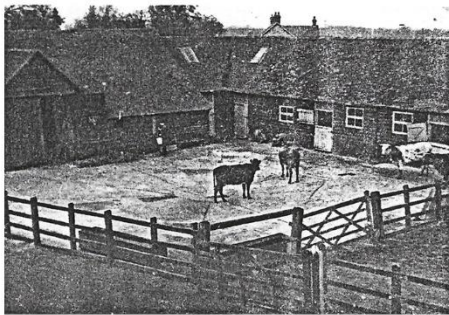


Farm yard

Manor Farm 1939



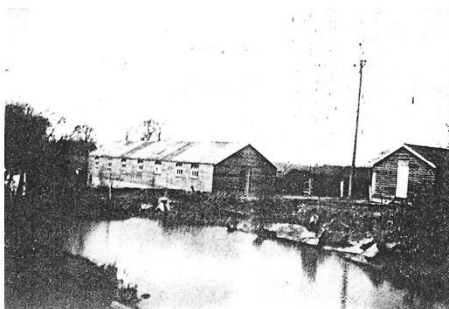
Feeding the chickens



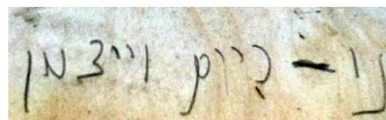
The farm yard



Trainees on a tractor



Trainees' hut



Hebrew script found on wooden slats taken  
From the huts of the refugees saying:  
"Chaim Weizmann", who was the first president  
of Israel.  
There were many other examples of Hebrew  
writing found.

Tel. No.: TODDINGTON 276.  
Station: HARLINGTON (BEDS.) L.M.S.

Postal Address:  
MANOR FARM,  
TINGRITH,  
Nr. BLETCHLEY.

**THE TINGRITH TRAINING CENTRE COMMITTEE**

ASSOCIATED WITH  
THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL FOR GERMAN JEWRY

CHAIRMAN: COLONEL E. J. SKINNER  
HON. TREASURER: S. BELOFF  
HON. SECRETARY: D. SEEBOHM, M.A.

*Manor Farm,  
Tingrith,  
Bedfordshire.*

July 18th, 1939.

G. E. Glazier, Esqu.,  
The County Library,  
Marpur Street,  
Bedford.

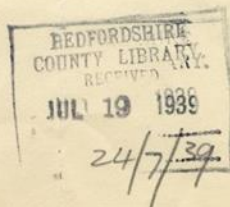
Dear Sir,

I have been told of the County Library service which supplies books to Bedfordshire villages, and wish to know if it would be possible for the men and women here to borrow books also. The need for serious English and German literature and for standard political and philosophical works is keenly felt, and whatever facilities you could offer would be much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

*Dr. Seebohm*  
Secretary

For TINGRITH TRAINING CENTRE COMMITTEE



Letter to Bedford library 1939

Extract from 29 September 1939 national census showing 124 refugees living at Manor Farm on that date.

Photo 1 of 3

E.D. Letter Code		Borough, U.D. or R.D.		Registration District and Sub-district		PERSONAL OCCUPATION		See INSTRUCTIONS.
ADDRESS.		SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.		BIRTH.		10
1 15 5 43 D.P.A. 1911 Ch. Savoy, Tenants		No.	Sub. No.	O. V. S. P. or L.	M. or F.	Day.	Year.	
		1	1	BRINKLOW, 4	F	5 Sept	1908	W.V. House. Keeper.
This record is officially closed.								
		3		Fountain Leslie W.	M	11 Jan	1916	Public Work Labourer.
This record is officially closed.								
Manor Farm Tenants		2	1	ARNHOLZ, Fritz R.	M	12 Oct	1897	S. Doctor of Medicine, Agri.
" " "		2		Pardfeldt Nathan	M	14 Dec	1912	S. Agric. Trainee
" " "		3		Bchar Gadik	M	20 July	1910	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		4		Borlovitz Eva	F	25 March	1922	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		5		Borlovitz Ruth	F	19 January	1920	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		6		Bettelheim Walter	M	25 Dec	1919	"
" " "		7		BINGEL, ELLI Blau Sarah	M	16 Oct	1921	"
This record is officially closed.								
" " "		9		Brandt Siech	M	11 Nov	1920	"
" " "		10		<del>Buchner</del> Herta	F	20 Sep	1920	"
" " "		11		Buchbaum Anton	M	14 June	1915	S. Bicycle Mechanic
" " "		12		Burger Alfred	M	19 Aug	1916	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		13		<del>Centauer Franz</del>	M	17 Feb	1921	"
" " "		14		<del>Chambers, Paul</del>	M	12 Aug	1921	"
" " "		15		Cohn Moritz	M	5 Jan	1919	"
" " "		16		Cumann Emil	M	5 May	1919	"
" " "		17		Garnes Sarah	F	25 June	1920	"
" " "		18		Grubert Cilli	F	25 July	1912	S. Domestic Worker
" " "		19		Sjoberg Hilda	F	1 Oct	1916	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		20		ELLIS, STEPHEN	M	6 Jan	1922	"
" " "		21		Epstein Martin	M	7 Mar	1922	"
" " "		22		Feldmann Imogene	F	22 March	1922	S. Unpaid Domestic
" " "		23		Fischer Kats	M	5 Oct	1921	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		24		Frenkel Juente	M	12 June	1916	"
" " "		25		Frenkel Heinz	M	27 Jan	1916	"
" " "		26		Friedmann Julius	M	11 Aug	1906	S. German Char Accountant
" " "		27		Friedmann Joel	M	8 Feb	1918	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		28		GUPERT, Ludwig Fischgold Polly	F	26 May	1906	S. German Shorthand Typist
" " "		29		Grisman, Siech	M	17 Aug	1922	S. Agricultural Trainee
This record is officially closed.								
" " "		31		Gruckstein Haim	F	25 Dec	1920	S. Unpaid Domestic Worker
" " "		32		Gross Franz	M	13 Jan	1921	S. Agricultural Trainee
" " "		33		Gromowski Daisy	F	12 Dec	1921	"
" " "		34		Gross Gokar K.	M	24 Aug	1915	"
" " "		35		BERG, Frieda Grossmann	F	12 Oct	1915	"
" " "		36		Hars Arnout	M	14 May	1921	"
" " "		37		Hamburger David	M	27 Nov	1921	"
" " "		38		Hauschild Herta	F	5 Jan	1922	"
This record is officially closed.								
" " "		40		Hilberg Isaac	M	11 Feb	1915	"
" " "		40		GRYNBERG, LEVI	M	9 Jan	1917	S. Agricultural Trainee

Extract from 29 September 1939 national census showing 124 refugees living at Manor Farm on that date.

Photo 2 of 3

E.D. Letter Code		Borough, U.D. or R.D.		Registration District and Sub-district		PERSONAL OCCUPATION					
ADDRESS.		SCHEDULE		SURNAMES AND OTHER NAMES.		BIRTH		S. M. W. or D.		PERSONAL OCCUPATION	
		No.	Sub No.			Day.	Year.				
		2	3			7	8				
Manor Farm Tisbury		2	41	Holyoake Gerhard		M	10 Aug 1921	S		Agricultural Trainee	
" " " M			42	Hornby Helene		F	6 Aug 1922	S		" " "	
" " "			43	Humberg Roll		M	16 July 1920	S		" " "	
" " "			44	Hussel Paul		M	14 Nov 1921	S		" " "	
" " " JAMES M			45	Koenig Hildegard		F	25 Sept 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			46	Kern Dora		F	10 May 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			47	Kessel Abraham		M	5 Dec 1917	S		" " "	
" " "			48	Kessler Hans		M	27 Oct 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			49	Koehn Otto		M	13 Nov 1919	S		" " "	
" " "			50	Koenig Charlotte		F	1 Feb 1913	S		Agricultural Trainee	
" " " M			51	Koenig Hanna		F	29 April 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			52	Kollmann Wilhelm		M	13 Oct 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			53	Krieger Dietrich		M	10 Jan 1921	S		" " "	
" " " M			54	Kroemer Thelma		F	16 Nov 1919	S		" " "	
" " "			55	Kronberg Leo		M	13 May 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			56	Kuehn Hans		M	24 May 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			57	Ladenheim Jacques		M	3 Feb 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			58	Lampstein Peter		M	4 Sept 1920	S		" " "	
" " "			59	Lederer Karl		M	4 April 1918	S		" " "	
" " " M			60	Lerner Helena		F	6 Nov 1921	S		Agricultural Trainee	
" " "			61	Lery H.		M	13 Nov 1913	S		" " "	
" " "			62	Lewens Henry		M	15 July 1913	S		" " "	
" " " NR230-81A			63	Loewenstein Hing		M	30 May 1923	S		" " "	
" " "			64	Loewenthal Edmund		M	15 Oct 1920	S		" " "	
" " "			65	Magnus Jost		M	8 Sept 1922	S		" " "	
" " "			66	Maisy Walter		M	8 Feb 1920	S		" " "	
" " "			67	Mastinger Herbert		M	20 March 1920	S		" " "	
" " "			68	Mazzy Rudolf		M	12 July 1920	S		Czech Dairy Worker	
" " " NR230-1310-17			69	Maly Ernest		M	25 Jan 1913	M		Agricultural Trainee	
" " " DMW CR230-159-81			70	Maly Annette		F	14 March 1911	M		" " "	
" " "			71	Mannenberg Alexander		M	10 Aug 1921	S		" " "	
" " " CR230-302-69 SY			72	Markensky Boris		M	20 July 1923	S		" " "	
" " "			73	Mehnerd Beatrix		F	30 Jan 1921	S		" " "	
" " "			74	Meier Gerhard		M	22 Oct 1917	S		" " "	
This record is officially closed.											
" " "			76	Meyer Jar. H.		M	10 Aug 1907	S		New York Bank	
" " " CR230-14/62			77	Mormulstein Samuel		M	20 Dec 1912	S		Agricultural Trainee	
" " "			78	Mokras Martin		M	7 July 1912	S		" " "	
" " "			79	Muller Ulrich		M	14 Dec 1914	S		" " "	
" " "			80	Neubeck Heinz		M	27 June 1919	S		" " "	
" " "			81	Nikolic Kurt		M	16 Feb 1913	M		" " "	
" " "			82	Nussbaum August		M	1 Aug 1920	S		" " "	
" " "			83	Pfeiler Moses		M	8 Feb 1921	S		" " "	
" " " CR230-302-69 SY			84	Philip Gustav		M	25 Feb 1921	S		" " "	

Extract from 29 September 1939 national census showing 124 refugees living at Manor Farm on that date.

Photo 3 of 3

ADDRESS.		SCHEDULE.		SURNAMES AND OTHER NAMES.		O. V. S. P. or I.		M. of F.		BIRTH.		S. M. W. or D.		PERSONAL OCCUPATION.	See INSTRUCTIONS.
		No.	Sub No.			S	6	7	8	9	10			11	
Manor Farm, Tarpaul		2	85	Polak, Franziska				M	15	Feb	1920	S		Agricultural Trainee	H
" " "			86	Polak, Henry				M	20	Aug	1921	S		"	"
" " "			87	Rosenfeld, Edith				F	25	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			88	Rosenstock, Sarah				M	16	May	1918	S		"	"
" " "			89	Rosenthal, Fritz				M	12	Sept	1912	D		Refugee Clerk	
" " "			90	Rosenthal, Hannah				M	7	May	1917	S		Agricultural Trainee	H
" " "			91	Rosenzweig, Wilhelm				M	27	Nov	1908	"		Secretary of Refuge Agric Comm	
" " "			92	Rosenzweig, Paul				M	17	Oct	1920	S		Agricultural Trainee	H
" " "			93	Rachnik, Mathias				M	17	Aug	1920	S		"	"
" " "			94	Salomon, Rudolf A				M	20	July	1910	S		"	"
" " "			95	Sanderly, Henry				F	26	July	1921	S		"	"
" " "			96	Sandberg, Ernst				M	28	July	1921	S		"	"
" " "			97	Schoer, Maxime				F	25	Oct	1921	S		"	"
" " "			98	Schoer, Heinrich				M	20	Nov	1911	S		Austrian Medical P. Assoc Trainee	
" " "			99	Schulman, Feli				M	26	Oct	1920	S		Agricultural Trainee	
" " "			100	Silberstein, Edith				M	14	Nov	1919	S		"	H
" " "			101	Silberstein, Edith				F	26	June	1917	M		"	"
" " "			102	Silberstein, Wilhel				M	5	Aug	1916	M		"	"
" " "			103	Simon, Werner				M	7	April	1906	S		"	"
" " "			104	Steiner, Paul				M	20	Nov	1920	S		"	"
" " "			105	Stenochain, Hubert				M	10	Nov	1917	S		"	"
" " "			106	Steylitz, Bertha				F	22	Aug	1918	S		"	"
" " "			107	Stebitz, Alexander				M	23	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			108	Stubitz, Helen				M	20	June	1917	S		"	"
" " "			109	Symonson, Dora				F	21	July	1921	S		"	"
" " "			110	Tessely, Edith				F	4	March	1921	S		"	"
" " "			111	Vogel, Rudolf				M	8	Feb	1913	S		"	"
" " "			112	Wachsmuth, Bruno				M	1	Dec	1918	S		"	"
" " "			113	WINDENBERGER, Edith				F	8	Feb	1909	S		"	"
" " "			114	Wessely, Karel				M	12	Dec	1921	S		"	"
" " "			115	Welf, Kurt				M	3	Feb	1919	S		"	"
" " "			116	Witten, Herbert				M	4	Aug	1921	S		"	"
" " "			117	Zacharias, Walter				M	27	Jan	1922	S		Refugee Clerk	
" " "			118	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		Agricultural Trainee	
" " "			119	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			120	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			121	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			122	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			123	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		"	"
" " "			124	Zachmann, Gertrude				F	3	Sept	1921	S		"	"
Tarpaul, Tarpaul		3	1	Jones, Elizabeth				M	18	May	1893	M		Roadman, Bath. C.	
" " "			2	Jones, Ellen				F	25	July	1905	M		Domestic Duties at home	
" " "			4	Jones, John H W				M	15	Sept	1903	S		"	"

This record is officially closed.



Leo Anker