

CHAPTER 19

A NEW BEGINNING

The people where we stayed had connections with the city mayor of Braunschweig and helped us lease a farm which was owned by the city, in the village of Dibbesdorf just 4 km from Braunschweig. We considered this **another miracle**. The Lord was continuing to look out for us. The house had 14 rooms but lacked a working bathroom! We had to use the outhouse connected to the barn which was nothing new to us—we'd been using the great outdoors for weeks! In a few short months each room of our house was filled with relatives. Even without mail, news circulated by word of mouth that we had a place to live. Relatives came from all over. Mom's brother Willy and his family took over one room. Dad's sister Meta with three children in another room. Dad's youngest brother Otto came and a son, Hugo, of another brother. Ursel, dad's oldest sister Amanda's daughter who was on the flight with us, and her three children took over one of the rooms. Hilde, who was also with us, took a room. That still left rooms for my parents, brother Wini, and also one for me and Karin. It was a

time of joy having the family together under one roof, even though crowded, but we also remembered all that we endured. We thanked the Lord first of all that we were alive and for everything He had given us.

During the day we all worked in the field. Evenings were filled with playing games, conversation or just sitting back and relaxing. That first Christmas in 1945 was so very special. Dad cut a beautiful Christmas tree from our woods. Since we didn't have any ornaments, we made stars and other decorations out of paper. The children recited poems around the Christmas tree and all joined in singing carols. Everyone received a plate with an apple, nuts and cookies and homemade gifts. We made all kinds of things by hand. Mom spun yarn from string which we tied around bundles of wheat. She knitted lots of socks--she could even knit them in the dark. I knitted and crochet sweaters. I made a rag doll for Karin—she was a happy little girl carrying her doll with her all the time. I made a coat for myself from a navy blue blanket; also a coat and cap to match for Karin out of an old coat of mine--just used it inside out and it looked like new. My Dad taught us how to weave baskets and make brooms from horses hair. He had learned to do that during World War I when he was recuperating after being wounded.

In all the festivities, the thing that was missing—I didn't hear a word from Herbert. The Red Cross was searching for him but to no avail. My joy over the holiday season was dampened by his absence.

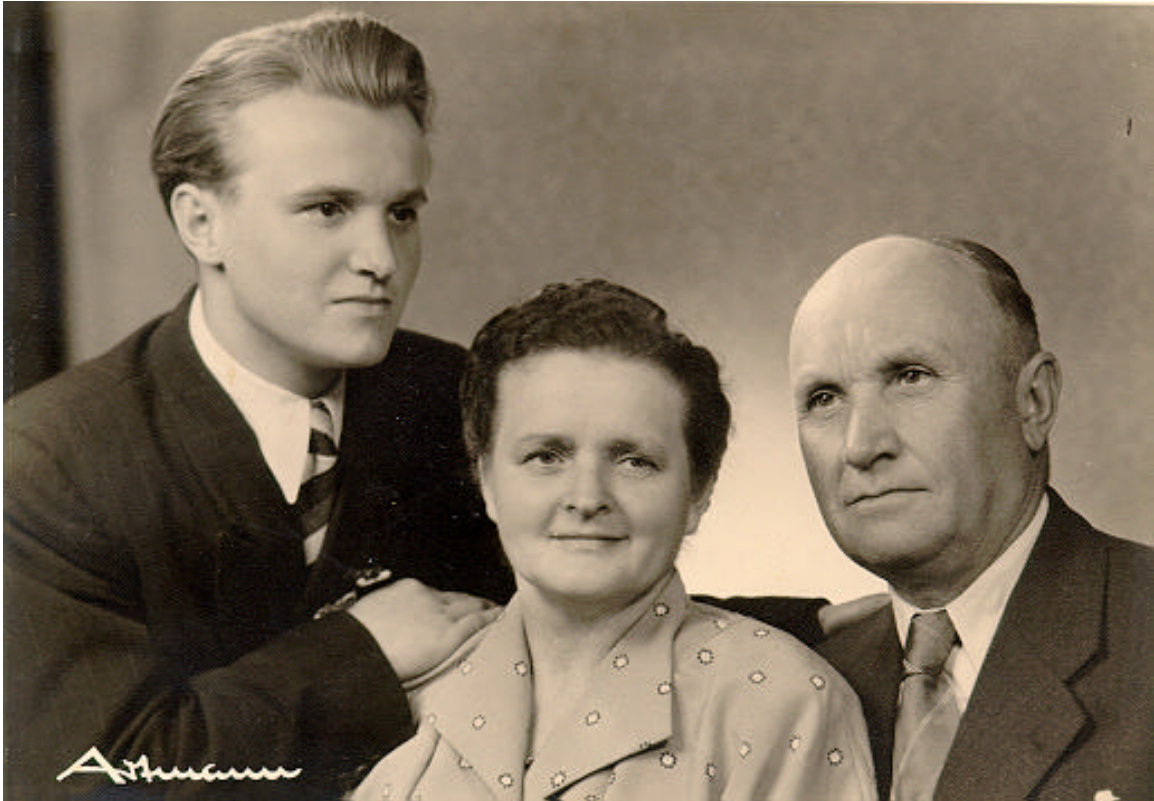
Everyone worked together and we were thankful that we were self sustaining. We made our own butter. We planted rape and poppy seeds to produce oil. A friend made us the oil press in exchange for oil. It was hidden in the barn behind hay bundles.

We planted sugar beets and in return received the processed sugar from the factory. Also we cooked the sugar beet juice down slowly until it thickened and became a delicious bread spread. There were endless things we learned to do living on the farm.

I had saved 10,000.00 Reich's mark which I carried with me on our trek to safety. Herbert and I planned to open our own Beauty Shop with that money. My bank book was used as collateral in leasing the farm. However, when the Reich's mark was replaced by the Deutsche mark, we lost all our money, it was of no value. In place of that every person was given 50.00 Deutsche mark. Big deal! What was 50.00 DM when you lost every thing you ever owned!

The black market flourished in Germany and soon made some people very rich. The stores had very little to sell. City people traded their treasured possessions for food: bed sheets, tablecloths, silverware, whatever they could spare. It was heartbreaking when you saw them come begging. I remember one time my mom gave our last potatoes to some one needier than we were. She said, "***THE GOOD LORD WILL PROVIDE,***" and he always did as we had enough to eat. People were reduced to stealing--nothing was safe. We had a big dog running around the house and barn at night. He came with the property and kept our possessions relatively safe. But he was a mean one—nobody but my Mom could feed him, he'd bite even us who were living there. My cousin's daughter got too close to him and was bitten on her face and needed stitches.

These are some of the reflections while living on the farm near Braunschweig. My brother Wini and his wife Christa remained in this area and to this day still reside in the city of Braunschweig.



Parents(Eltern) Lydia, Assaph Krebs & brother(bruder) Winfried 1952



Edith & Karin in 1947



Karin in Dibbesdorf 1946-49