

Home in Hunters Hill are not evoked here as they are described in his earlier book, *The Boys from Bondi*. It is amazing that with such a childhood and adolescence Alan Collins became a successful adult, journalist and editor of the *Sydney Jewish News* then advertising executive, author of several best selling books for teenagers, and with a happy adult family life in Melbourne.

Sophie Caplan.

## IN HINESIGHT

by Hilde Hines

*2006, self-published through Inkling Advertising Pty Ltd, Adelaide, pp.290, including family photographs and three family trees.*

**H**ilde Hines was born in 1917 in Nuremberg into a family which had dwelt in Germany for many generations on both sides. Her father fought in the German cavalry during World War I and her future husband's father also served in the German army. She states that she lost as many cousins fighting for the Kaiser in World War I as she lost during the *Shoah* in World War II. She and her young husband, Gus, emigrated from Germany in early 1938, eventually arriving in Australia, where they became pillars of the Jewish and the general Australian community.

Hilde was born Guckenheimer, a name apparently linked to Guggenheim. Her family was not at all religious, but kept Jewish social and familial links and went to *shule* on Yom Kippur. Several of the men in her family were active in Jewish welfare organisations. Hilde and her elder sister Sophie (always known as Gogo) were members of German Jewish youth movements Kamaraden and later Habonim. The family's fancy letter-writing paper factory was lost in the economic downturn of the 1920s, and her father went into insurance. They continued to enjoy holidays as well as a rich social and cultural life.

Once Hitler came to power in 1933, Nazism became supreme at Hilde's high school and she left school at the age of 16 instead of matriculating and studying medicine as she had intended. Both she and Gogo each spent over a year looking after the children of a Catholic French family in Algeria, until their father became very ill with atherosclerosis [sic] and Hilde had to return to Germany. Max Guckenheimer and her maternal grandfather both died in the same week, and her mother Liesel was widowed and orphaned at the age

of 38. Hilde decided to become a kindergarten teacher and to enrol in a Jewish kindergarten seminar in Berlin. Entry at the seminar was only at 18 and she filled in the time volunteering at a Jewish old age home in Nuremberg and doing a cookery course.

On her return from Algeria she had met Gus Heinsfurter, who was five years older and a youth leader. He had lost his father before the age of thirteen, and had been offered an apprenticeship in metals, identifying metals for the scrap metal trade. They started going out and became engaged once his older sister married. The political situation in Germany made them desirous of emigrating as soon as possible, so they married in January 1938. Gus came from a more traditional family, which kept a strictly kosher household. The only immediate emigration possibility was to live in Holland near the Dutch-Belgian frontier and to work in Belgium, as Holland would not let refugees work there.

Fortunately Gus's new brother-in-law had non-Jewish family connections in Adelaide and they sponsored his brother-in-law for an Australian landing permit to Adelaide, and also agreed to sponsor Gus and Hilde and his mother Minna. Due to Minna's reluctance to leave Germany, they only left Holland on the last Dutch passenger ship to sail after the war started and arrived in Adelaide in mid-January 1940. They were hoping to sponsor Liesel and Gogo who were in London, but this was not possible until after the war ended. Both Hilde and Liesel kept the letters they exchanged during their separation, and this helped Hilde to recall many of the events and feelings during that time, as well as conditions in 1940s Australia, such as cheap prices of meat, fruit and vegetables, expensive prices of clothing, and six o'clock closing of liquor outlets. Gus and Hilde were young and enthusiastic and loved Australia from the first moment they arrived.

Gus went looking for work and by chance found that a company he had looked up in the telephone directory had just opened a Metal Trading Company. They hired him and, finding him both honest and knowledgeable, paid him far more than the basic wage. Within a few months he was put in charge of the Metal Trading Company, and he stayed with the firm for eighteen years. Metal was necessary for the war effort and Gus's knowledge and hard work were appreciated. Eventually he was sent interstate by railway, and later by air, which was much slower than now.

Hilde was also able to find a job through the Kindergarten Union, and then they were able to rent their own flat. Gus's mother, Minna, chose to live with them for the remaining nineteen years of her life, rather than with her own daughter, on condition that their home was totally kosher. She did the cooking.

On arrival in Australia they changed their surname to Hines. Gus and Hilde joined the Air Raid Precautions organisation in which Gus was chosen to lecture to groups from other districts, although they were still classed as 'enemy aliens', and only later as 'friendly aliens'. Hilde describes the life of new German Jewish immigrants, which had its difficulties although she also emphasises how well Australian non-Jews treated them. Among their friends in Adelaide was the recently appointed Rabbi Dr Alfred Fabian and 'his shy young wife Ilse'. Gus became vice-president of a Jewish Welfare Society Migrant Consultative Committee. He said that at their first meeting every family was represented, even those they never saw again in calmer times.

The local Jewish community was not welcoming, perhaps because it was previously made up of people who came from England, but whose families were previously from Russia or Poland. They did not have much in common with the German and Austrian Jewish refugees. Nevertheless, by the 1970s, Gus and Hilde had become the leaders of the Adelaide Jewish community. Gus served as president of the Jewish National Fund in South Australia from 1943 to 1956, Life Trustee of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation from 1948 and president from 1955 to 1964. Later he became president of the South Australian Jewish Board of Deputies from 1968 to 1982 and also a Foundation Member of the committee for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts, and on an Australian Broadcasting Commission music body because he supported the ABC orchestra. Hilde was vice-president and then president of a revived South Australian WIZO, and later head of the United Israel Appeal as well as the first president of the Adelaide branch of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society. She wrote stories on her family history research for the *Kosher Koala*.

As they moved up the socio-economic ladder, they were able to improve their lifestyle. They had a daughter, then a son, each of whom married well for love, and have four bright grandchildren. They kept in touch with dispersed friends and family. The son of a good friend from their time as refugees in Holland who went to USA and married there to another refugee, is Malcolm Hoenlein, currently one of the three great leaders of American Jewry.

The autobiography was published for the benefit of WIZO. Hilde Hines passed away peacefully on Saturday 3 February 2007, when she was nearly ninety years old, two days after the official launch of the story of her life. Gus Hines had died on 3 January 1987. Each of them was an outstanding human being.

Sophie Caplan