

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Gustav Speder

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Immigration Stories Oral History project

Interviews # IM-A-L-2011-050

Gustav Speder, an immigrant from West Germany, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Immigrant Stories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: October 7 & 17, 2011

Location: Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Robert Sharpe, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: Susan Burke, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Cheryl Wycoff & Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 75 pgs Total Time: 1:38 + 1:24 / 1.63 + 1.4 = 3.03 hrs

Session 1: Speder's early life in Germany during WW II & emigration to U.S.

Session 2: Review of life in Germany, and adjusting to his new life in Illinois

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 16, 2012.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Gustav Speder

Immigrant Stories

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Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Gustav Speder was born in 1941 at the Rummelsburg transition camp in Rummelsburg, Germany (now part of Poland). His family had moved to the camp after their homes in Lithuania were sold by Germany to the Soviet Union as part of the political pact between the two nations. After his father was drafted into the German army in 1943 and sent to the Eastern Front, the family moved about as the battle lines shifted. After the war, from which his father never returned, the family lived for a time in East Germany. Due to the economic distress of post-war Germany, his grandfather died of starvation and Gustav contracted typhoid and tuberculosis. The family escaped to Burgsteinfurt, West Germany, where Gustav lived with his mother, grandmother, and older brother until they immigrated to Springfield, Illinois, in 1956. Gustav has lived in Springfield since that date, served in the U.S. Army during the 1960s, and taught history and German at Springfield High School until his retirement. He married his wife, Katherine, in Springfield and has three children born and raised in Springfield.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Rummelsburg, Germany transition camp; post-war transition camps; escape from East Germany; tuberculosis; TB sanitarium; Bergsteinfurt, Germany; post-war munitions widespread and available to children; immigration sponsor; assistance by Catholic Charities; teacher at Springfield High School, Illinois.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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