

How beautiful we were, survivor says

By MARGERY MEYERS, Chronicle Staff Writer

After more than 40 years, Marga Randall will finally close a chapter this summer. Next month, she and her sister Hilda, will return to Schermbeck, the town in Germany where they lived as children.

During their stay, a stone will be unveiled at a cemetery in the center of the town where many of the branches of the Adelsheimers are buried. That stone, which will be placed near their great-grandfather Solomon Sternberg, will memorialize "a wonderful family," says Marga. "The Adelsheimer family, I lived with and loved, all murdered in four different camps."

The stone, she continues, states, "We will always remember those who perished. It will list all the names of those family members who died during the Holocaust, and it will spell out how they were murdered and in which camps," Marga says.

Marga and Hilda came to Pittsburgh in 1941, narrowly escaping the fate of many in their family. "This," she remarks, "is where the Adelsheimer family chose to settle." Her cousin Harry lives here, as well as her brother, Herb Silberman. Her aunt, Bertha Kann, is the eldest family member living in Pittsburgh, and the only immediate member of the Adelsheimer family still living.

"I'm sure that some of my family is so bitter that they don't like what I'm doing. But I think my mother would be proud," she says. "I've done something to keep the reminder strong. I bring the past forward when I speak to a group, so that it won't happen again."

The unveiling will take place on a Sunday. Marga expresses her hope that members of the town's two churches will attend the ceremony after their services are over that day, and that school children will also be present. The press will be at the ceremony, as well.

Wolfgang Bornebusch, a minister Marga met some



TOGETHER in Pittsburgh, Marga, left, and her brother Herbie and sister Hilda, right, will honor their family with a second memorial stone.

time ago, has been "largely responsible for keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive among the non-Jews in that area. He has overseen the arrangements for the unveiling on that side.

"This time," Marga adds, "I'm going to interview people in the town who were there, to find out what it was like for them. I want to ask them, 'How strong was the Nazi hold over you that you could have been unable to help us?'"

"To walk through the center of town," she continues, "you'll have to walk past that stone. Once there's an everlasting memorial to my family, those who walk by who had strong feelings of friendship for the Adelsheimers will feel sorrow. Those who didn't help--let the guilty live with their guilt."

Officiating at the ceremony will be Rabbi Hochwald, a "landesrabbiner,"--a rabbi who travels to areas with no rabbi of their own--sort of like a circuit judge. In an area where a Jewish community once thrived, Marga says, "There won't be enough men for a minyan."

In Pittsburgh, after the trip, however, there will be a

minyan when a similar unveiling takes place at Beth Shalom Cemetery, and, "there we'll be able to say Kaddish, and my whole family will be brought together--the three remaining children of my immediate family, my Cousin Harry and my Aunt Bertha."

Marga has been back to Schermbeck four times, during the last several years. Some family members will never go back. For Hilda, it will be the first time.

Marga recalls, "she was very sick two years ago, and I visited her and showed her slides of one of my trips to Germany. She said, 'If I live long enough, I'd like you to



UNVEILED directly across the path from Solomon Sternberg's grave, right, will be a memorial to Gustav and Emma Adelsheim and the Kann, Silberman and Randall families.

take me back home.' So, it's a very exciting moment for her.

"We'll be very busy while we're there, talking to the young people. I'm putting together an album with photographs of my family--some of them have never seen a Jew--so they can see what beautiful people we were, and that we were prominent in the community."

Of Reverend Bornebusch and his family, Marga says, "he's made the difference between being totally forgotten to a Jewish community being remembered visually and emotionally. He gives

me hope for the future, and he thinks and behaves like a Jew."

Why isn't he Jewish, then? Marga explains, "We need him the way he is."

Speaking about her family in Germany and arranging for these two unveilings are "all I can do. It will probably be the last time I go to Schermbeck," Marga says, "but there's one more thing."

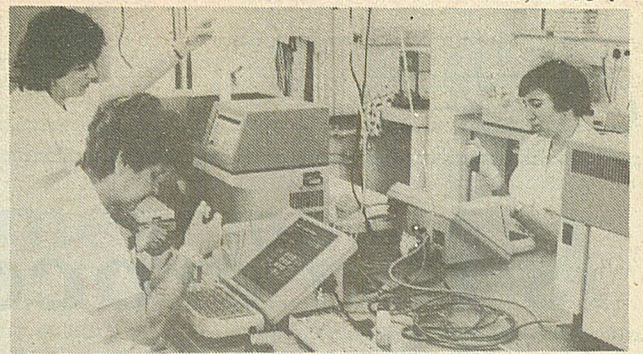
During the last Yom Hashoa, she met with Mayor Caliguiri briefly. "I asked him what we were doing to rededicate the Statue of Liberty in Pittsburgh. He hadn't really thought about it yet.

"As a result, I'm putting together a short talk about

the immigrants who came to Pittsburgh, and a chorus will sing 'America the Beautiful' and 'God Bless America,'" she says.

"Pittsburgh is made up of so many different traditions, including our own, and it will be a nice tribute to every ethnic group and minority in our city," she concludes.

The program will take place July 4, noon, at Point State Park.



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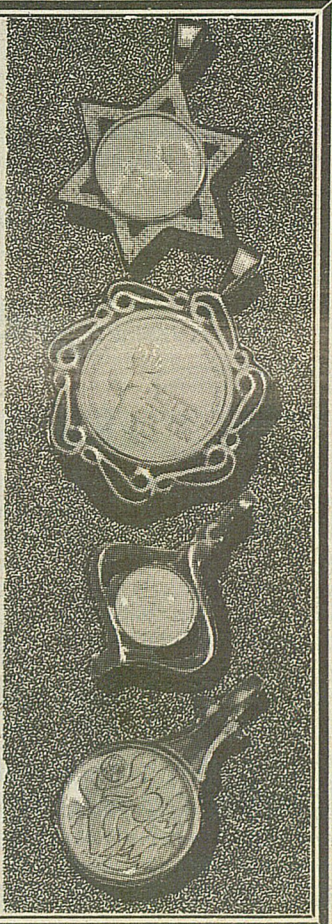
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