



Geschichten, die man nicht vergessen sollte

Vom Erzählen der alten Menschen



Karl Heinz Völker (Biesdorf)

In the year 1957 I decided, against the wishes of my mother, to go to West Germany. It was me and four other guys that decided to leave their home Thüringen in east Germany, the German Democratic Republic (DDR) with 18 years. My sister Doris has gone to the golden west 2 years ago. So I made an application at the authorities in the next city Arnstadt to visit my sister Doris. Then I took the train from Erfurt to Frankfurt / Main. But from there I was not allowed to go directly to my sister. They send me to the transit camp near Gießen. For one month I had to work as helper in a stone pit.

In the transit camp the people of the authorities asked me, in which German federal land I want to go. I said, "I want to go to Rheinland-Pfalz. But it doesn't work as I liked. For a short time I could live by a cousin of mine that lived in Dahlen. The other guys that had left home with me went to Bayern, but all of them returned home again because they had homesickness.

Although I had homesickness, too, I stayed. Away from my cousin I settled in Niederkassel for the time I worked in a paper factory named "Dialekta" in Köln-Porz. When I left the paper factory I began the work at a building company. Here I met my new friend Helmut. He was from a small village of the Eifel. One day he told me of a really pretty girl and he invited me to visit this girl. She lived in a little farm outside a small village. And the name of this little settlement was "Hasenknopp" which means "eye of a bunny".

Directly I fell in love with her, Maria. This was in 1962 and only one year later I asked her and to marry me. We became two boys, Lothar and Artur, and later we build a house in this small village, Plütscheid.



Manfred Mertes (Biesdorf) Opa Manfred

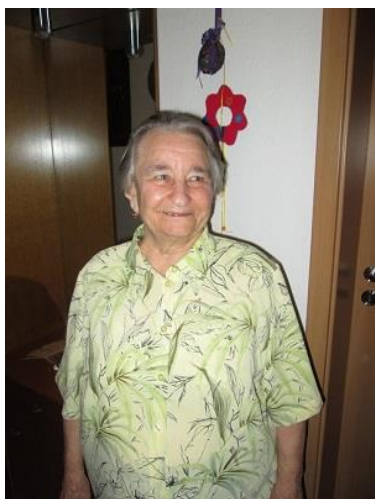
1959 mit 19 Jahren war ich in meiner ersten Band. Wir waren vier Männer und nannten uns „Kylltal Echo“. Das war der Moment in dem mir klar wurde das Musik für mich zum Leben gehört. Obwohl ich niemals ein Instrument gelernt hatte, fiel es mir leicht Saxophone, Orgel oder Gitarren bzw. Bass zu erlernen.

Ich brachte mir alles selbst bei. Nachdem sich unsere erste Band getrennt hatte gründeten wir eine neue. Dieses Mal mit 5 Mitgliedern. Erst hießen wir „Edelweiß“ später dann „Die Harlekines“.

Obwohl ich die Musik liebte erlernte ich Industriekaufmann und nahm auch einen Beruf als solcher an. Einige Jahre vergingen ohne Musik, doch als ich schließlich in Rente ging entdeckte ich wieder meine Freude an der Musik.



Ich wurde schließlich zu einem Alleinunterhalter, mit Orgel, Keyboard und Gesang. Auch heute noch trete ich regelmäßig auf. Die Musik hält mich im Alter noch mobil und fit.



Grandparents from Mönchengladbach

These are my Grandparents on the left my grandma Gisela and on the right my grandpa Otto, both told me some interesting stories.

They wanted to be on one photo because they said " Our valuable thing is to have each other" also they wanted to be in the living room because there they made a lot of memories with their family and friends.

My Grandma talked about a meeting with two famous persons. When she was in her first holidays alone with her brother Peter in 1960 , they went to Pfronten (a little village in the Allgäu). On one day they made a trip to Obersdorf where a big icerink in. So they went in an met Marika Kilius and Hans-Jürgen Bäuml which were both famous german figure skaters, german masters and also winners of the world championship. For here it was a really exciting day because it was the first time she met someone famous.

My Grandpa talked about some serious topic, the second world war. In 1942/43 there were bombs in Mönchengladbach so my grandpa an his family fled to Ilsenburg (which is in the Harz). They lived there under American occupation till the end of 1944 but then the Russians came. They had a lot of guns killed a lot of people especially in a Lazareth they killed a lot of wounded solidiers. My Grandpa and his family left this place in the middle of the night and came back to german territory but had to do a new beginning because they had nothing



Grandparents from Ukraine

The story, my Grandpa told me, starts on the 9th of May 1945 in Nikolaev, Ukraine. At this moment my Grandpa was 15 years old. As he begins to talk a smile appears on his lips. On this day everything turned to the best.

“The second world war is officially over.” The man on the radio declares. Everyone jumps off their seat. The whole town jumps off and leaves their houses. No one hides anymore and without any arrangement the people meet at the big place in the city center.

Everyone dances, sings and cries out of joy. The place is full of laughter and happiness. There are no worries anymore and the people can't stop to celebrate. They don't leave the place the whole night. No one is able to sleep. That's how happy they are. At night they fire up pyrotechnics. The whole town is full of pure happiness. They don't know what will happen next, but it doesn't matter, because the war is over. And with it the fear and the starving stops and a real life begins.

This was a significant day for my Grandfather. After that day, there are more happy days coming, he says. He continues his story in 1948. The second significant time in his life. My then 18-year old Grandpa was graduating and moving to Odessa, Ukraine to study engineering.

It is autumn, when they first meet. But to him she brings back the spring. Love at the first sight. At the first date they visit the Opera. All they know that it's "Carmen", but they don't remember a single aria, because all they could hear was their loud and steady heart beating. All they know is that there are happy to be there together.

That is how my Grandmother and my Grandfather met. After that, they studied. My Grandma became a doctor and my Grandpa an engineer. They worked hard and passionately. Sometimes there had been problems, but they always found solutions. The life after the war wasn't easy but they managed it. They got married and got three daughters. Happy times followed. The girls were good at school, work was hard but fair and every year they went for holiday to Crimea. Then the grandchildren came and life was even better.

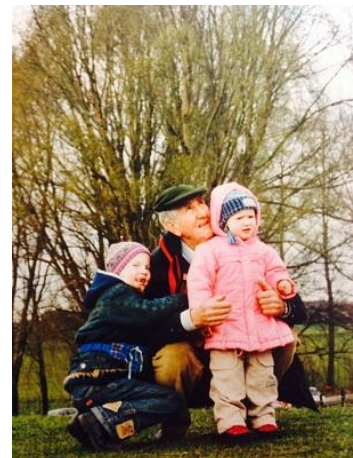
Nowadays my grandparents live in Mönchengladbach, Germany. My Grandmother is 84 and my Grandfather is 83.

"Love at the first sight exists and we are the living proof. 66 years of marriage and we are happy." My Grandfather ended the story, smiling.



Grandma from Diekirch

In 1935 my Grandmother Ulla was born in Eisenach in Germany. She was 4 when the second world war started. Her father had to participate as a doctor in the war. So her mother was alone at home with three children. A housekeeper helped her. My grandmother's mother was always looking for groceries, which were very seldom. Sometimes she was standing 6 hours in a queue just to get a cabbage. They always housed refugees. Sometimes there were 12 people in the house. My grandmother also underwent some air aid warning. In school they sometimes had to hide in bunkers. 1953 my grandmother graduated from school and made an apprenticeship for getting a dressmaker. 1957 my grandmother escaped illegal over the frontier with a train. She went to Hamburg and worked there for a dressmaker's shop called Horn. Then she studied fashion-design. She met my grandpa in 1959 and they married in 1962. The parents of my grandma who were still living in Eisenach weren't allowed to go to their wedding. My grandparents moved to Africa, because my grandfather was working there. In Kongo, where they were living, were many riots. That's why my grandparents had always organized an escapism. In 1966 my mother was born and in 1966 my uncle. In the same year they moved back to Germany.



Grandparents from Neerpelt

50 years ago, my grandfather visited my grandmother's house for the first time. My grandmother was quite nervous. So my great-grandmother told her daughter to calm down. She (my great-grandmother) would open the door, so my grandmother and her sister sat down on the stairs next to the front door.

Because my grandfather is a real gentleman, he brought a big bouquet of flowers. When he rang the bell, my great-grandmother rushed to the door and opened it. She only saw the bouquet and a little man standing behind it. So she took the bouquet, thanked the little man and closed the door. She thought it was a flower-guy.

My grandmother and her sister couldn't stop laughing anymore and my grandfather was still standing outside. So my great-grandmother figured out what was going on. She immediately opened the door again and she apologized her. The rest of evening contained lots of jokes about my great-grandmother's mistake.



My grandparents got married in 1966 and they went on a honeymoon together to grand duchy Luxemburg. At that time it was quite an adventure to drive all the way to Luxemburg. Booking your holiday online or even visiting a travel agency wasn't a possibility yet. Hoping for the best they drove off to Echternach in a Fiat 500. At the local tourist department they asked for lodging. They went to Hotel Helvetia in the Hospitaalstreet, ran by a nice Swiss couple.

Because my grandparents retained such good memories of their trip to Echternach they set an example for a lot of friends and family members. Some of them even went to the same hotel. Ghislaine, my grandmother's youngest sister, also wanted to go on

a honeymoon to Luxemburg with her straight from church husband Tiny. Unfortunately they didn't dispose of a car and a honeymoon by train wasn't their trick. So they asked my grandparents to join them... Romantic!



The morning of departure Ghislaine brought two big trunks to take with her. She didn't take the size of the fiat 500 into account. With four people in the car it is already tightly filled so there was no room for two big trunks. Eventually they left with one little sewingtrunk and a dozen of fabric bags with the rest of the clothes in it. Once arrived in the hotel they emptied that one trunk in the hotel room upstairs and went to the car downstairs to refill it with clothes and other

stuff from the fabric bags. After running up and down about ten times everything was upstairs and unpacked.

It was a fabulous honeymoon!

I was shopping an afternoon with my friend Fien. After shopping, we went to a bar. We were drinking wine. After a long night, we went home. It was dark and cold outside. I drove with my new car along the river. Suddenly there jumped a rabbit in front of my car. I turned my steering wheel to dodge the rabbit and I flipped with my car. I ended up in the river but I knew how to save myself. I had opened the door the moment, I was flying in the river. So I swam out of the car and to the edge of the river. A sailor helped me out of the river. I called my husband. He was very worried and he has spoiled me the next day.

My grandparents have a little pond in their garden. My grandpa had bought some fishes and he was observing them. I think he was observing them too well, because he fell into the water! My grandpa is already 80 years old, so he couldn't climb out the water himself. My grandma was in the shower at that moment, so my grandpa had to wait until she was ready. My grandpa was lucky that the weather was okay that day.





Kim from Zeist



In a Cologne, Germany recording studio in May 2014 with violinist Michele Gazich, working on poems and music for an Albert Camus exhibition at the Bonn art museum this June.

Hello. My name is Eric Andersen. I am an American writer and musician who is living in Holland. I've recorded 26 CDs of my songs and tour all over the world. I am a young seventy-one years old, but once, years ago, I was a young twenty-four year old. Anyway, twenty-four is the age I was when I will begin my story. As a musician living in the Netherlands I am still writing, singing, and performing my own songs now the same as I did then when I started out in New York living as a kid trying to get a record deal. I have always wanted to be an artist, I am an artist, and I've always done what I wanted to do for my art.

I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved to New York at age nineteen after two years of college. I wanted to be a scientific research doctor but the call of music was greater. I heard too much Rock 'n' Roll. I left college and traveled west to San Francisco but then later moved to New York because that was where the action was. I hitchhiked east to New York. My parents weren't too happy about that. But very soon after arriving, my real professional roots became planted in the 1960's NYC Greenwich Village folk scene that included people like Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. This brand-new musical universe soon gave birth to the singer-songwriter movement that

eventually spread all over the world like a wild fire. People began writing songs about anything and everything.

The story:

It was in the chilly winter of 1967 when I played at an underground club in New York called The Scene. This was a celebrated New York rock real club because a lot of famous musicians use to gather there late at night to hang out and play together when they weren't touring all over the world: mostly guitarists like Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, and Jimi Hendrix, the world's greatest rock guitarist. The jam would start at midnight every night. The jams created thrilling music every night and were exciting moments for both the musicians and the audience.

Before the midnight jam sessions great groups would come in and play. I had my little band and we played for six nights in a row. In my band I had piano, guitar, bass, and drums. And of course, I played guitar and sang my songs. We were good and the crowds were good too. After a few days I found out that a very famous person was coming down to see me every night, He came from London and his name was Brian Epstein. He was the manager of the Beatles. He was very shy but after the sixth night he walked up and said hello and introduced himself.

He asked if we could talk sometime. I said sure. He told me he loved my music. We met again several times and one evening he asked me if it would okay if he became my manager. I said sure, of course, it would be okay. We met often during the next year and he made plans. He invited me over to London to meet the Beatles and we had some very high times going to clubs and visiting Beatle's recording sessions. John Lennon was kind enough to lend me his Gibson guitar. Soon, as he was with the Beatles, he began to feel like family to me.

Then, the next summer, a very sad thing happened. I got the news in Philadelphia playing a folk festival. A tragedy happened the on the day before he was supposed to fly back to America to help me with my new record deal. Brian suddenly died. It was a heart attack.

He was only thirty-two years old.

But the experience taught me it's okay to feel sad but not BE sad. It also taught me that you can never become overly attached to things in this life because like it or not, life will keep going on and always finds a way of living itself, and being sad can leave you feeling behind.

I missed Brian Epstein a lot. One great thing he taught me was to always believe in yourself and to never give up. It's okay to be different and don't waste your time worrying about what other people think.

He once reminded me to follow my dreams and keep *shooting for the stars!*
And I do – every single day. I wake up and keep shooting for the stars.
And maybe you should too!!

By Eric Andersen

Driebergen-Rijsenberg, May 2014

Nellie Steeman (Zeist)

My grandma was 3 years old when the war started. And she lived on a farm.

On a day when she was 7 years old, she was playing with a friend. Her friend was in the same time her neighbour. Suddenly there was a lot of noises in the sky. A German car stopped at their neighbours' house. The Germans fled into a haystack near the farm. The hard sound came from Tommies, British fighting planes. The planes started shooting and shot the car but the Germans were not there anymore. But the planes hit the people on the street, people from Amsterdam who came to the countryside to get food. So there were victims but not the Germans. My grandma saw everything from behind a window. First it seemed like a movie, but then she realized there were real people on the street, dead or wounded.

When the war was over there walked a lot of German soldiers on the street. They were going back to Germany. At their farm there were 2 Canadian soldiers looking after the German soldiers, so they could not escape. My grandma's family gave the Canadian soldiers coffee and food. Then the tanks of the Canadians came and the children could look inside.



Old Lady from chateau (Žerotín – Šternberk)



The building of an old mansion is ramshackle, but still beautiful. Enormous hall with stairs seems royal. In the end I found the right door to Mrs X's flat. Mrs X looks elegantly and genteelly in spite of the fact that she is 91 years old.

She is the beginning of talking about her life story.

She was attending a classical urban school then she studied at girly high school in Olomouc. She learnt English, German and French there. She likes to think about years on high school and she remembers her director. "He was a man with sexy voice and he was really genteelly ." she said. After high school she studied chemistry at the Carl's university in Prague. "I liked walking through the Prague and getting information about historical parts of Prague."

A young girl became a chemist and a wife of a successful goldsmith. They moved to a flat in Olomouc and she started to work in a pharmaceutical company. Three children have come but hard years of totality too.

Mrs X received a decree to move away and everything they had got with their flat was confiscated by officials. " I don't know if it was a luck or destiny, but in the end we could move here and not so far from our family." said Mrs X, but their problems didn't end up with this. A husband of Mrs X was hunted by men of SNB unit and then by men of unit StB so he couldn't work as a goldsmith. He was in a camp of hard labour in Jachymov for 2 years and then he had to work with hard iron. Mrs X was living with her parents in a mansion but she lost the job and couldn't work as a chemist, a feeble woman had to work hard like men with iron. „It started with chocolate from a bassinet of my little baby, then it was our nany's lether coat and then they grabed our car and even our van“ said Mrs X.

The following years were cruel terror. A few years later she found an interesting advertisement and got a good job. She could work as a chemist again. She worked in Brno for 2 years.

Her husband died because of consequences of hard work and Mrs X went to pension and stayed in mansion.

Today she is a great-grandmother and still lives in mansion, but just in a few rooms.

„The life was hard before, but people were polite and there was a morality, that is not today.“ A lady who didn't want to declassify her name finished our conversation.



Emilia Ďurajková (Šternberk)

My name is Emilia Ďurajková born Kozmová and I was born on 21th October 1948 in Mojmirovce in the district of Nitra in the Slovak Republic. My parents worked as laborers, but my father prevented the attacks by Nationalists before I was born after the end of World War II. Besides me, my parents still had ten children. I was born as the eighth children, but my three older siblings and one younger sibling died on children diseases.

I only have basic education, because our family built a little house, on which it took a lot of money. My four older siblings had had his family and did not live with us, so I'm with her parents and three siblings have moved for work to village Ondrášov in the district Bruntál in 1964, to raise money for construction. We all worked in agriculture, the work it was very difficult especially for me since I was 15 years old and I was very small. We pulled up large stones, large acres of beets we had to hoe.

Then we had enough money to built the little house, so my parents moved back to Slovakia, but I stayed in Ondrášov about the next two years, where I worked in a factory for mineral water Ondrášovka . In 1967 I returned for the parents' request back to Slovakia. With the ability to participate in the seasonal brigade we moved to the village Roudno in the district of Bruntál.

When working in the field, found me a boy with whom I was married. We got married with Mr. Kaluza in 1967 after a very short acquaintance, it was just a great love. Together we moved to Mikulov, where we thought that we would be better off. We rented a little flat and I went to clean the castle and my husband worked in a factory. We stayed here briefly because the apartment where we lived in owner needed, so we went back to Roudno. After a short time we moved to the Moravian Beroun and since 1968 I've been living here. We lived in a large apartment and gradually were born three children. The first-born was Jan in 1969 after that Roman in 1970 and the youngest Miluška was born in 1974. We lived normally, but we had to work hard, after maternity leave I joined the Granitol company where I cooked in a large dining room, which was also very demanding job. After 17 years I left Granitol and I started to work in the nursery and I was really happy that I could work there. My both kids grew gradually and they went to primary school in the Moravian Beroun and then Jan studied Agricultural School, the Roman masons and Miluška the Textile School in Krnov. In 1985 marital discord began and a year later we were divorced.

After the divorce, I stayed alone with three children, so I ran from work to work, I did a variety of cleaning jobs to sustain us, so it also was not so easy. Four years later, an older, cute gentleman named Ďurajka found me and we were married about six months later. Our relationship looked very beautiful from the beginning, five years we lived well, but then marital discord and alcohol began destroying our relationship and I divorced for the second time.

In 1989 I underwent three operations that were serious and the most difficult was the last. I started to have problems with the spine and in 41 years I went to a full disability pension. Despite these problems, I continued to try to do something or work.

Children grew, began to hold weddings, brought me grandchildren and I moved from a larger to a smaller apartment, where I still live. When the grandchildren were sick I looked after them, I took them on holiday, I went with them for walks.

I am now 65 years old and I have a loving family, which I think is one of the most important things in human life



Grandmather from Bělkovice – (Šternberk)

It's old habit which welcomes spring. It is only in Haná the village called Bělkovice Lašťany. Legend says that the habit established countess called Alžběta from Račkoun, because this procession was opposed the plague. This event started in the 15th century but it was discontinued in 1968 because the communist regime banned it. The event is on the White Saturday. It's about two girls and two boys going to the other villages and they wear location traditional dresses. The first girl is holding a candle and the other one is holding a Jesus on a cross. The boys carry a flag with pictures of saints. They're going to the church in near village called Bohuňovice. During the procession beautiful music is playing. After visiting the church they're going to a house of one of the girls and there is some food. My great-grandma has organized this habit for 20 years. For her this habit wasn't perish. She said: „ I love the habit and I don't have power anymore to continue, but I would like to help my successors“. I love my great-grandma, because she is very hard-working and she has got a gold heart- She is very clever and she likes older events.





Josef Dokoupil (Šternberk)

He was born in 1932 in Svatý Kopeček in family of workers. He entered an elementary school in Svatý Kopeček when he was 6. He told me several stories about *second World War* which he lived in. Well, in one of his stories he told me, how he remembers that They deleted paintings of Masaryk and Beneš and instead of them They hanged paintings of Hácha. Cities, institutions and also factories, everything had to be in Germany (Svatý Kopeček was called Hajligenberg that time). The Germans took communists and Jews at a first and They escorted them to concentration camps (where They were usually killed.) There was a card system for food, clothes and cigarettes. There only was a little food and poor families with kids sustained with deficit. The Germans escorted his dad to the Soviet union. During the time he was gone, his mum had to take care of him and of his two-year old brother. It was very difficult for them, because They didn't know if their dad will return or not. Luckily after six years, when the War was over he came back home. Mr Dokoupil also spoke about last days of War, when They had to be in cellar during school. Lessons were taken to cake shops and were really often chopped with aero alarms. Even at home They had to be hidden in cellar, where They had to sleep but of course boys were looking out what was happening out there. One spring morning year 1945 the Soviet soldiers came to Svatý Kopeček. Seeing that Svatý Kopeček was the first Czech village after Soviet barrier, the boys ran out and joyed and welcomed soldiers. That's how he remembers about Second World War, which was very very difficult for them, The war was over when he was 13, dad was home and the happy family started a better life.

Immediately when the second World war was over They all moved to Moravský Beroun during two months, because their dad wanted to have a big farm. But there came a problem, Mr. Dokoupil got asthma from the bad air in Moravský Beroun. It is known that in those times all boys had to go to the military service and Mr. Dokoupil went there though his asthma (he had to). Immediately at first lesson in gym he cracked up so They took him to hospital. They told him it is an unhealable problem and They can't do anything but although he had to stay in army. But luckily They found out that he didn't have to do any physical difficult work but he was something like „lil office worker“.

After high school he went to work to Bílovec where he worked until 1989, then he had a big problem. In year 1989 he got irritation of pith, his body was paralyzed until 3 days so he ended up in the hospital. I just want to suggest that 80% of people who gets this illness won't get out of it and stay paralyzed. BUT Mr. Dokoupil was a fighter. With his own energy and his volition he started to move a little. At first he couldn't move with anything and doctor assistants had to fed him. After two months of ambition results came. Really after TWO MONTHS he could be on a wheelchair, which was absolutely amazing. After two more months while he was still oushing himself he didn't even need the wheelchair and he had just crutches. Well and two months later he was walking along without help. And these all things he did just with his own volition and hard work of course. During six months he „diggered out“ from such illness which most people will never get over. HE'S A FIGHTER. Other 12 years he worked as security guard in a factory.

