. They bought gasoline at Cascade Locks the day they disappeared.
e was found abandoned east of Cascade Locks. (Story on page 1.)

Visitor Recalls Perils Of Persecution by Nazis

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Picture on Wirephoto Page

Herman Reese was worried, but he should have known better.

His sister, Rosi Hoffman, was en route by plane from New York on the last leg of a trip from Germany to Portland —without her tickets. And although he hadn't seen her in 24 years, he should have known she'd come through on time and smiling.

She did. In fact, her plane landed 10 minutes early on Christmas Eve, to complete the newest but by no means the most remarkable in the personal Tales of Hoffmann of a woman who for years lived in constant danger.

She told her story Sunday, sitting close to her brother and sister-in-law, Martha, and it was hard to believe that this bright-eyed, cheerful little widow of 60 was one of only a handful of Jews, Catholics and other anti-Nazis successfully hidden by the German underground during World War II.

Friends Risk Death

In two years, she had to move 23 times, sometimes openly with false passports, at other times almost buried in an oxcart carrying coal. She hid in the homes of friends—dear friends, she emphasizes, because they risked their lives by hiding her—in tiny railroad stations, in a flour mill.

Discovery and death were always near. She recalled, half in German, half in English, that once the storm troopers suddenly pounded on the door. She barely had time to leap into a pile of dirty clothes.

Her late husband, a doctor and not persecuted by the Nazis, used many devices to keep her hidden. Once, when soldiers raided the town, her native Weiden in eastern Bavaria, she waded into a brook till the water was mouth deep. Her husband watched from a bridge above.

"They asked him, 'What are you doing, Doktor?' He told them, 'I'm fishing', and they went on."

She had no ration stamps for what little food there was available and at times had to live on roots and berries.

But at last came April 24, 1945, the liberation, and she was ready for it. While hiding, she studied and recalls that "when the CIC soldiers came, they asked me how I spoke English so well. I told them I knew they were coming so I had to improve my English."

Times were not easy after the war. There still was little food. The Americans made her husband director of all medical services in Bavaria, but the strain of hiding her told on him and he was ill frequently until his death in 1957. Then came packages from her brother, who, with his wife, had long been in Portland, where they operate a gown shop. By 1948, conditions began to improve until now she enthusiastically describes how Americanized Germany has become.

Living Standard Raised

"The standard of living is much higher. There is no longer the stigma attached to being debt and so there is much installment buying — for refrigerators, washing machines, and cars." She pronounced it "cares" and smiled brightly in apology when Reese corrected her.

Now, still living in Weiden, she spends much time reading, both in English and German. Often, she sees her friends, including those who helped her hide, and she'll go back in March.

A particular bit of Americanization is the presence of Elvis Presley, now training at an Army post in nearby Grafenwoehr. "I haven't myself seen him—I'm a little too old to be interested—but, oh, the girls in the town are so excited when he comes on weekends."

Her flight from New York was her first and she enjoyed it in spite of the mixup in which a New York cousin forgot to give her the tickets.

"After all," Reese said proudly, "she's been through too much to let something like this faze her. When her husband went to the flour mill to bring her home after the liberation, he told her, 'Rosi, we've lost everything.' 'Oh, no', she said to him, 'I've still saved some shirts.'"

Portland Act

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