

Letter Translation, ca. 1984

Dear Shlomi,

As per your request on the telephone, here are the details of my parents' lives, as written by my father.

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My original last name is Lichtblau. I changed it to Leskley in 1945. From 1942-1954 I signed my work with the name Eli, which is an acronym of my name Erich Lichtblau.

I was born in 1911 in xxx, Czechoslovakia. After I finished elementary and high school, I studied window decoration. After that I went to a professional school to learn window decoration, sign design, and placard design.

I got married in 1937 to Elza(?) from Poland. We lived in xxx and I worked in different positions.

After the Nazi invasion, my wife and I moved to Prague. All of our attempts to escape from the Nazis were futile, and when the Americans declared war on Germany it became impossible to leave.

In the beginning of 1940 we left Prague and worked with a group of young Jews (called Hachshara) doing agricultural work near Pisek (?) in eastern Bohemia.

In November 1942, when they put the Jews in Terezinstadt, I also ended up there. In Terezin I worked making signs and painting. I painted things that I saw in the camp.

In August 1944 I was sent to xxx, Germany. I was part of a work detail that built secret bunkers (?) in case the Nazis were captured in the war. Our group was called Barackenbau. During this period while I was in Germany I began to draw in secret.

On February 2, 1945, after 10 days journey, I returned to Teresinstadt. I was reunited with my wife who had remained there along with my close friends.

While I was in Germany I had a small pad that I hid and I continued to draw in secret. I also continued to draw on my journey back to Terezin, right under the noses of the SS guards.

In April, 1945, before the SS fled, they conducted a search for drawings that were “evil.” Finding these drawings would mean a definite death sentence, so I destroyed some of the drawings. The others I was able to hide, and thus they were saved.

After liberation, I collected my paintings, and I arranged them in an album with accompanying explanations.

At the end of the war we returned to Pisek. In 1946 our daughter Mira was born and two years after that our son Rami was born.

In 1949 we left Czechoslovakia and went to Israel. I have worked doing graphic design from then until now and have painted in my free time.

Finally, I have turned to the paintings that I have from the time of the camp liberation, and over a number of years I turned those early drawings into complete paintings.

Currently we are living in Givatayim. I fill my days painting, and spending time with my children and grandchildren.

Elza Leskley – maiden name Silbiger, was born in Poland and lived with her parents and sister in Einwald (?) near Yadoff(?) until she was married in 1937. Then she left with her husband Erich (Eli) for Czechezlovakia. Together they went to Terezinstadt. In Terezin she worked doing different thigns.

She risked her life to hide her husband’s paintings. After liberation she went with her husband to Pisek. In 1949 she and her husband and children moved to Israel.