

**Interview with Josef Beischer  
in St. Ottilien by Cyrill Schäfer OSB on May 31, 2018.  
The text version was read and corrected by Josef Beischer**

Josef Beischer, a retired conductor, was born in 1927. He grew up in St. Ottilien as the son of the local innkeeper who had rented the restaurant and hotel of the monastery. The family had been living here since 1909 and managed the restaurant until 1967 when the building was torn down and rebuilt at the outer edge of the monastery compound.

At the end of WW II, Josef Beischer was recruited for the air defense. Like all soldiers, he became a prisoner of war when the American troops occupied Bavaria. After a few days, he ran away from the prison camp and returned to St. Ottilien. When he arrived on May 13, 1945, a part of the restaurant was occupied by a small American army detachment. They lived in the part of the restaurant to the right of the entrance. They stayed here for several months and the relations between the soldiers and the Beischer family became quite friendly, especially because the American cook used the restaurant kitchen for the preparation of the army provisions. When Beischer arrived at his home, his mother presented him to the commander as an escaped soldier. Since Beischer wore only shorts and a shirt, he looked quite young, and the American soldier simply said: "We don't fight against children." Beischer noticed little antipathy against Germans among the American soldiers, especially because they thought that the war would continue against Russia. He especially remembers a Latino American soldier who often silently cried because of homesickness.

The restaurant was divided as follows: On first floor to the left, the Beischer family, and on the right, the American soldiers and the bar. Second floor: on the left, guest rooms and on the right, the grandfather and his daughter and her husband, whose house had been confiscated by the occupation forces. On the third floor under the roof lived two Jewish families. Beischer thinks that among them was a rabbi because he often prayed loudly at the open window. Between the restaurant and monastery was a large beer garden which was used once for a big Jewish wedding party. At the end of 1945, the American soldiers withdrew and were replaced by Jewish DP police. They worked in shifts and three or four were always in the big room to the right of the entrance. The others served as guards in small wooden booths which were placed at the three entrances of the monastery compound: at the exit to Windach, at the exit to Geltendorf, and at the train station. These guards had to check the passports of all people who entered the hospital area. Sometimes conflicts ensued as a result of those controls because people from the surrounding villages wanted to attend church services but had forgotten their documents. In some cases, the policemen even arrested people who were suspected of being connected to the Nazi regime. The everyday language was German.

Beischer knows of the beginning of the hospital only from hearsay. According to these rumors, the head German doctor had first refused to accept the Jewish patients, but finally had to give in when pressure was put on him. The monks slowly arrived in the following years from prison camps or exile.