

RUDOLPH YERAHMIEL LOEBEL
RG-50.005.0039. (recorded 1984)

Rudolph was born in 1927 in Saxony Germany-in Plauen, about 70 km from Leipzig. He had a traditional home and his mother was very religious; there were 4 sisters and one brother. He remembers the family thinking about going to US but they still thought Germany was a pleasant place to l've There were only about 150 Jews in the town so there weren't many Jewish neighbors. He recalls his experience in school where he was bullied and beaten; the principal often wore his Nazi uniform. He states that the teachers' incessant talk about the inferiority of Jews ruined his self-image. He talked about being a poor student but happy in the synagogue. He describes in detail his early life.

On November 10 the Gestapo came to their door and arrested his father. He remembers seeing the temple burn. Then Gestapo came once again and destroyed the whole apartment. His father was sent to Buchenwald. His mother escaped to Belgium and then smuggled the children into Belgium. Rudolph reminisces about his life in Antwerp. His father was released from Buchenwald when his mother managed to get a visa for him to some South American country. His father put the family on a train to south France, to La Roque.

He states the people there were very nice but the Jews were all trying to get out of France

When France capitulated to the Germans the region fell into the Free French area. The family went to Bagnères-de-Luchon and all Jews there were put on a train to Clairfonds camp. Rudolph then tells about a series of moves from camps. He ended up with his sister Liba and her husband in Lyon. There he met Chameau, who was head of the French Jewish resistance. Chameau was helping to save children by putting them on a farm, which Rudolph describes in detail. Much of their activity had to do with forging papers and getting paramilitary training.

At the urging of his mother he got a smuggler to get him to Switzerland. If you were under 16 and were caught, the Swiss let you stay in the country, and he spent the rest of the war in Switzerland. After liberation he went to Israel and joined the Haganah and then spent two years in the army. He says he still has emotional scars.