

FREDERICK SPIEGLER
RG-50.005.0050 (recorded 1983 in LA)

Frederick was born in 1894 in Slovakia and moved to Vienna at age 15. He served in WWI and said after war times were very difficult and you had to leave the city to find food. He had a short first marriage and then married his second wife in 1932. Daughter was born in 1937. Frederick was a sign maker. He and his wife were big athletes. One day 2 Nazis came to his house and took him to a barracks and he was made to wash the floor. He was released and said it was a mistake not to get out of the country at that time. He was repeatedly harassed and humiliated.

He was first sent to Dachau where there was little to do, and then in the Fall (no date) he was transferred to Buchenwald. He was so hungry he ate soup off the floor. Frederick said this camp was much worse than Dachau and he speaks about life in the camp and how they avoided hard work. He could write one letter a month and receive one. He was put to work carrying bricks back and forth and other types of hard work. He describes the hunger and the way they put paper inside their clothes to help shield them from the cold. A gentile man gave him cigarettes and was so surprised when Frederick paid him back that he gave him some extra food. He talks about spending Kristallnacht in Buchenwald.

Frederick was released in February 1939 and went back to Vienna. His wife and child had already gone to the US. He was reporting to the Gestapo headquarters every day, but eventually was able to go to the Kitchener camp in England. He waited to get on the Czech quota for US; his wife had gone on the Austrian quota. He then went to the US where he found a full-time job with a friend who had emigrated 20 years before. His wife worked in a dental clinic.

His mother and 3 sisters disappeared into the camps. His other sister went to Israel from Hungary. Frederick feels very fortunate.