

Schneur Rachlin
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Summary

Schneur Rachlin, born on February 27, 1936 in Kaunas, Lithuania, discusses Jewish birth name traditions and his Hasidic given name; his family not being very religious; his parents' home in Kybartai, Lithuania; his great-grandfather's horse export business; his family's origins in Ukraine; growing up speaking German, the only common language shared by his parents; his mother's birth in Liverpool, England before moving to Copenhagen, Denmark to stay with family; his grandfather's death and grandmother's remarriage to a Jewish man from Rostov-on-Don, Russia; the history of Copenhagen's Jewish community and the assimilation of most Jews; the Russian Revolution's impact on his father's family; his father's childhood and education at German schools; his parents meeting in Copenhagen while his father was traveling there on business and their marriage in 1935; growing up in Kybartai, Lithuania; visiting Germany, Denmark, and Sweden in 1939; traveling to Riga, Latvia after the start of the war in September 1939; the arrival of the Soviet Army in 1940; his parents and siblings; antisemitic propaganda; soldiers taking his family and Lithuanian families by truck to a train station in summer of fall 1941; Mrs. Bauer, a German Jew, who brought the family some items as they waited on the train to be deported to Siberia; arriving in the city of Biysk with other Jewish and Lithuanian families; meeting the family of artist Aharon April; his parents' work; attending a Russian-language kindergarten; his grandmother's reactions to the deportation and living in Siberia; sharing a house with other families; being deported further east in 1942 and his father and other men using a geography book to determine where they were and where they were being taken; crossing the Lena River; surviving winter in Siberia; his father's work ice fishing; attending a school with the children of a Polish deportee; remaining in that camp in Siberia for one year before moving to another camp in 1943; his grandmother's death; traveling to Prokrost (????), Russia in Siberia in 1944 and living there for nine years; life under communism; his brother's birth during the Soviet famine of 1946–1947; finishing Gymnasium and taking the Arbitur in 1953; learning about what happened in Kybartai and Kaunas only after the war; a neighbor in Kybartai who informed on people to the Germans during the war and later to the KGB afterwards; gaining USSR citizenship in 1954; the Hungarian Revolution of 1956; living and studying in Irkutsk, a city in Siberia; receiving visas and the family's move to Denmark in 1957; his reflections on his deportation to Siberia and others' experiences during the Holocaust; and the book published by his parents about the family's experience's in Siberia during the war.