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Summary

Gary H. Philipp (born Horst Louis Philipp) was born November 6, 1927 in Hamburg, Germany to George and Lore Emma (née Wolf). He was an only child. His father had worked for his father's furniture store in Rathenow, where the family had been for generations, and later as a furniture buyer for the large department store, Karstadt, while living in Hamburg.

Gary describes the increasing restrictions on Jews during the 1930s. He also witnessed Hitler pass by him during a street march. In 1941, his family was deported by "third class" train to Minsk where they were transferred to a "special" ghetto building for German Jews; the Russian Jews, who had been in the building, were killed shortly before his arrival. Eventually 12,000 German Jews were housed there; Russian Jews were quartered nearby. He was assigned to cutting trees. His family remained there for two years until September, 1943 when he was separated from his family and sent to Lublin concentration camp. He did not learn until the 1970s that his parents had been shot and burned.

He was accompanied throughout by a Hamburg acquaintance, Edgar Cohn. Gary was transferred to a number of other camps, including Flossenbürg, Sachsenhausen and Neuengamme. At Sachsenhausen, he came under the protection of a gay capo. In early May, 1945, he and Edgar were placed on a ship that was intended for sinking, but they were liberated by American troops. They were quarantined in a Swedish camp. A Swedish family in Helsingborg took him in for a few months.

After arriving in the U.S., he met Anton Asl, a former political prisoner under Tito from Slovenia, with whom he lived for 46 years much of that time in San Francisco. Gary relates how his homosexuality awareness grew during the war. He concludes with pictures of him and his family.