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Summary

Alfred Spitz, aged 79 at the time of the interview (1984), describes growing up for 35 years in Vienna, Austria before Hitler came to power; his dad passing away in 1925; helping his mother with her liquor store as a child; his mother having 6 sisters and 5 brothers; having two brothers (Alfred being the oldest), one was sent to Poland by Hitler, fleeing to Russia, receiving one letter in 1940 and never hearing from him again; the youngest brother going to Belgium and then onto Israel; his mother and sister-in-law fleeing to Hungary in 1940 to never be heard from again; marrying his wife on 31 May 1939 in Vienna; being sent to Dachau in April of 1939 and building barracks for SS while there; after six months being sent to Buchenwald to prepare barracks after Kristallnacht; being released after his mom and wife purchased a ticket to Shanghai for him which he sold to a friend in Buchenwald; traveling to Italy on the last train from Vienna to Italy before the war broke out there; being interned in Benghazi; returning to Naples where he was united with his wife and spending five weeks in camps in Southern Italy where the men and women were separated; serving coffee, tea, and pastries and charging individuals for showers as a business venture; traveling to a small village between Florence and Rome called Cotona and being freed by the Summer of 1942/1943 by Israeli Jews serving with the British; traveling via truck and then train to Rome and then onto Cine Cippa, a refugee camp in Rome; his second child contracting Diphtheria in his belly button and then dying; his mother-in-law died in Theresienstadt; his cousin sending an affidavit on his behalf and never receiving it; working in Rome in a maintenance department; flying to Rio De Janeiro (with the help of an organization) then onto San Paulo where he stayed for five to six weeks; flying to Sucre in Bolivia; opening a dry cleaning business, selling liquor as a salesman; working as a waiter; flying from Panama City to Miami, Florida before taking a Greyhound to Atlanta and onto Cleveland in 1951; his first job in America working on a drill in a factory and his wife working as a dressmaker; working for 24 years as a warehouse manager for Cook United before retiring in 1977 at 72 years old; suffering a heart attack in 1961; being married for 45 years; volunteering for the JCC, and the Cleveland Heights Senior Center; retiring at the age of 72; having a 41 year old son and 2 grandchildren, Eric (age 13) and Daniel (age 14) at the time of the interview; being married for 45 years.