

BENJAMIN HIRSCH
RG-50.323.0006. (recorded 1986 in Atlanta)

Benjamin was born in 1932 in Frankfurt-am-Mein in Germany to Matilda and Herman Hirsch. His father was a dentist and there were 7 children; Flora, Asher, Sarah, Jack, Ben, Vernon and Rosalina. The last two died with their mother in Auschwitz. His father died in 1943 of natural causes. Ben said the family was very observant, orthodox. His mother had wanted to end the children away but his father didn't. He vividly remembers Kristallnacht. His parents then sent the 5 oldest children on a children's transport to Paris. This was the last time he saw his parents.

A Dr. Papanek formed a caldrons home network in France. At first Ben stayed with a friend of the family in Paris, then in 1941 sent to the suburb of Manmarseille. After that the children went to Cleurs. Every time they were trying to send them to a safer area. Dr. Papanek published the names of all the children in a New York newspaper and asked if any had relatives who could claim them A cousin of his mother in Rome, Georgia took in Ben and his 4 siblings. Ben was supposed to go on a ship with his brother that was leaving from Lisbon, but he was thought to have appendicitis and was sent to his sister in Vichy. He didn't have appendicitis and eventually went with his sisters on the SS Muzzino from Lisbon. That was the last ship that took children from the port of Lisbon since the escape route was blown. Many years later Ben met a woman who took his place on the first ship and thus saved her life; she would have turned 16 by the next ship and children over 16 had to be reported to the Germans.

Ben was sent to Atlanta to be with his brothers and sisters. They were all put in a variety of foster homes. They got some letters from their parents as later as 1942. His father was able to travel up to 1941 and did a lot of community work, but he died of an ulcer in Oranienburg. At 16 Ben moved in with his married sister Sarah for 4 years. He was in the US Army for 2 years and finished college at Georgia Tech. He is married and has 3 children. He and his family remain Orthodox.