

RG-50.407.0252

Summary

Part 1.

Werner Hirschfeld, born June 20, 1922 in a small town, Küstrin, halfway between Berlin and the old Polish border, describes: a good life in a historic town; a very small Jewish population; having no trouble until about 1932-1933; having only gentile friends; his father owning a textile business; a brother, Ludwig, ten-years older; his father, Arthur, and mother, Henrietta (née Bukhovsa [PH]); weekly Jewish education sessions; moving to Berlin in 1935 after his father could no longer run a business in Küstrin; being subjected to antisemitism by teachers but not classmates in Berlin; living under growing anti-Semitic laws but not being personally subjected to abuse; his family wanting to emigrate but finding it impossible to find a destination; his brother being able to immigrate to Australia in 1938; leaving Germany with few possessions on Kindertransport to London in August 1939 and never seeing his parents again; discovering after the war that his parents had been taken to Riga in 1942 and separated; his mother used for slave labor and dying in 1944; [responding to question] having no memory of Kristallnacht; being taken to Leeds and well cared for.

Part 2

Experience of being interned in England early in the war; volunteering to go to Canada with his group; being treated roughly by British soldiers in Liverpool; being transported in dismal conditions on an overcrowded ship; discovering the ship was headed for Capetown, South Africa, not Canada; nearly being torpedoed; having all valuable possessions stolen by ship's British guards and crew; the ship going on to Australia; arriving in Melbourne; being taken to a desert Hay internment camp; daily routines in the camp until release after the war; not knowing about events in Germany; being in contact with his brother; having difficulty after the war discovering the fate of his parents; marrying and establishing a good life in Australia; being happy to be in Australia and away from the strife in Europe. Shows several photos.