

Interviewee:	<u>MANDEL</u> , Cantor Yehuda L.	Date:	February 18, 1982 March 17, 1982 June 4, 1982
Interviewer:	Nora Levin		
Audio tapes:	4 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
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Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Yehuda Mandel was born in Csepe, Hungary, March 3, 1904, into an orthodox family, describes Jewish life in Csepe, before and after World War I, relations with non-Jews, his education, and occupation by various countries, until Csepe became part of Czechoslovakia.

He served in the Czech army from 1924 to 1926. He was a cantor in Vienna, Austria in 1928; Novisad, Yugoslavia, 1928-1934; in Riga 1934-1936, and in Budapest in 1935 at the Rombach Temple while also serving as a chaplain in the Hungarian army. He was offered a position in London but chose to remain in Hungary. He describes Jewish and congregational life in each location. He cites anti-Jewish feelings in Austria and talks about the implementation of anti-Jewish laws in 1939, and mentions a mass grave where Jews were killed and buried in Kamenetz-Podolsk.

Cantor Mandel was in various labor battalions, escaped, and returned to Budapest in November 1944. He stayed in a house protected by the Swiss consulate, served as a messenger "*Eilbotenausweis*", participated in rescuing 300 Jews from a prison; and made illegal trips to Czechoslovakia. He describes his experiences with Russian occupiers, and the desecration and reconsecration of Rombach Temple. His wife and children, who were in Bergen Belsen as part of a *Sondergruppe* organized by Dr. Kasztner, went to Palestine after the war. He gives a very detailed account of his illegal passage to Palestine in May 1946, aided by the Haganah. He was reunited with his family in *Kibbutz Shar Hamakkim*, served as a cantor in Haifa until he moved to the United States in 1948 and became a cantor at Beth Judah in Philadelphia in 1950.

Collateral Material available through the Gratz College Tuttleman Library:

Original typed testimony from Emanuel Mandel, son of Cantor Mandel, obtained on June 6, 1980, describes the 1944 transfer of the Jews from Hungary.¹

Photocopies of documents:

- Travel documents from Czechoslovakia to Hungary, 1945

- Czech Passports

- German Certification Employment

- Document from the Central Council of Hungarian Jews "Spezia"

- Copy of Original Music about the town of Spezia, Italy from which he made Aliya, 1946

- Work Papers From Israel, 1946

¹This additional testimony is included as an addendum to the typed transcript.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War 1939 – 1945 Personal narrative – Jewish
Post and pre-war Jewish life
Jewish community of Csepe, Hungary
Jewish community of Vienna, Austria
Jewish community of Novisad, Yugoslavia
Jewish community of Budapest, Hungary
Forced labor
World War 1939 –1945 – Jews rescue
Palestine – emigration and immigration
Aliyah