

## **RG-50.462.0128**

### **Summary**

*Note that the recording includes silent gaps at two points. Part one stops at 00:31:00 and does not continue until 00:38:00. Part two stops at 30:23 and begins again at 01:04:45.*

This is an audio only tape with G.B. who was born in Vienna, Austria on April 23, 1922. G.B. was raised a Catholic by his mother (Margaret Mehrer), an assimilated Jew, and his Catholic stepfather. His mother came originally from Teplice in the Sudetenland where her mother continued to live. As a baby, G.B. lived for two or three years with his grandparents, who did celebrate Jewish holidays, while his mother was between marriages. His mother was a pianist and a music teacher and had many Jewish and non-Jewish friends but barely identified as a Jew. When G.B. returned to live with his mother sent him to a boarding school where he was treated very well. He was not aware of his Jewish roots until he was 14 (1936) when his headmaster neglected to give him a silver medal for his near victory in an "Olympics" at his school. Instead, the headmaster announced that Herr "G.B.-inski", giving G.B. a Jewish sounding name, had come in second. From then on, he had fights with his classmates. When the Nazis marched into Austria in 1938 the headmaster told G.B. that he had better leave, so G.B. rode his bike back to Vienna to stay with his mother, now divorced again. G.B.'s mother had little interest in raising him so G.B. just enjoyed himself. One time a Nazi checked his papers and saw that he was Jewish. He was taken to a place where older Jews were cleaning the streets with toothbrushes. G.B. was given a regular brush to do his duty for the Reich but was later released.

Soon after G.B.'s biological father, who was now in the United States, sent him papers to come and live with his father and his second wife. He did so and lived with them for a couple of years while he attended the last year of high school. When his father and wife moved to Detroit to join the Detroit Symphony (he played the cello), G.B. went with him. After high school he attended Wayne University majoring in languages and literature. He said that his schools were a snap because of his superior education in Austria. Meanwhile, G.B.'s mother, who had had a daughter with her now divorced second husband, was able to escape to England and later to the United States when G.B.'s biological father also got her and G.B.'s half-sister visas. But his mother's second husband, a Nazi, would only agree to let his daughter leave if he were given a substantial amount of money, which G.B.'s mother did. In his family, only G.B.'s maternal grandmother died at the hands of the Nazis, in Theresienstadt. Her husband had died before the Nazis invaded.

After he graduated from Wayne University G.B. continued to have intermittent contact with his mother and father and stepmother. He also joined the army but was later stationed with the OSS. On three different occasions he parachuted into France to work with French Partisans. The last time was at the end of the war in eastern France where he then followed U.S. troops into Germany. He also tells some interesting stories of missions by a few of his fellow soldiers in the OSS.