

Interviewees:	<u>GOLDENBERG</u> , Benjamin ¹	Date:	February 17, 1988
Interviewer:	Nora Levin		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Benjamin Goldenberg was born June 21, 1910 in Tekova, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time of his birth, taken over by Czechoslovakia when he was a boy.² He was one of four children and his parents owned a store and land. He describes his pre-war town: schooling (public and Hebrew school), Zionist organizations, the diverse population that lived in that area and relations between Jews and non-Jews. When he was about nine years old the family moved to Selvus, the county seat. In 1934, he left Selvus hoping to reach Israel by bicycle with a group of Zionist friends (Betar movement). The lack of visas to cross the necessary countries forced them to back track toward Western Europe, landing them from Austria to Italy. Finally Benjamin settled in Antwerp in 1939 because of the prospect of finding work.

Benjamin and his wife lived in Antwerp, Belgium from 1939–1940. Benjamin relates that on May 10, 1940, when the war broke out in Belgium, the government gave an order to flee the country and go to France. Benjamin left with his pregnant wife and a large group of people to Paris and then he and his wife headed south to Bordeaux. There he was recruited into the army and sent to the Czech unit of the French Army stationed at Agde. The unit was moved through southern France and finally disbanded (1940/1941). After a series of sojourns in various cities of Provence, he settled in Lyon in January 1942. Benjamin describes their many different residences and how they avoided deportation to internment camps in France. Benjamin and his wife lived in hiding posing as Christians thanks to help from the Joint Distribution Center in Nice and the Czech government in exile who secured them false papers.

Benjamin narrates the many near disasters that befell him, his wife and children and the often miraculous escapes he managed thanks to his savvy and his dealings in the black market which allowed him to survive financially and helped him give succor to the other displaced Jews around him. He was also helped with some connections to the Resistance, the *Maquis*. Benjamin and his family stayed in Lyon and Paris after the war³, emigrated to the United States in 1947 and settled in Vineland and Philadelphia.

¹Benjamin's wife, Rose Goldenberg also shares some experiences during the interview.

²This area changed nationalities multiple times during the first fifty years of the 20th century.

³Their daughter was born in Paris in 1945 according to his personal history sheet, but he does not discuss this in the interview.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Aid by non-Jews
Agde, France
Lyon, France
French Army
Holocaust Jewish 1939-1945 - France
In hiding – posing as Christians
Joint Distribution Center
Resistance Groups, France - *Maquis*
Refugee Aid Organization
Selvus, Czechoslovakia
Tekova, Czechoslovakia
World War 1939-1945 Personal Narratives, Jewish, Male