

Interviewee:	<u>HAMMEL</u> , Fred. L.	Date:	May 9, 1995
Interviewer:	Meta Joy Jacoby		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

## SUMMARY

Fred Hammel was born on Friday, May 13, 1921 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. His father was a successful leather goods manufacturer in Offenbach. Fred had a very comfortable childhood living in a villa with maids in Sachsenhausen, southern Frankfurt am Main. He attended public school and though the family was a non-observant Jewish one, they belonged to a synagogue.

After 1929 and later in 1932 his situation changed drastically. The depression hit and Nazi storm troopers wearing brown coats arrived. Fred described the mass unemployment, and how the rise of the Nazi party and Nazi youth infiltrated German society. He described the growing isolation of the Jews, and the 1933 boycott of Jewish stores as Nazification grew. He also claimed that Henry Ford financed many of Hitler's early programs. By 1935 Jews started to leave Germany and Fred was apprenticed to a tanner.

Fred lived through *Kristallnacht* and provided vivid details. His father was incarcerated by the local police and many of his relatives who were sent to Buchenwald suffered a great deal before being released. By 1938 his mother decided to get him out of Germany to the relatives in the United States via England. Fred was almost 18, the cutoff age. But just in time, his mother arranged for him to join the *Kindertransport* to England on April 19, 1939. He gives details about the *Kindertransport* journey. He traveled by train to Zevenaar and Cologne in Germany and to Hoek van Holland, and by boat to Harwich, England and then by train to Victoria station in London.

Fred worked one year in a tannery in Northampton, England, and then in May 1940 he received his visa to the United States. He met the woman who would become his wife in Massachusetts shortly afterwards. In 1943 Fred was drafted; he served in the US army in the Pacific in Okinawa. After the war Fred and his wife were able to start a family; they have two children and currently three grandchildren.

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## SUBJECT HEADINGS

*Kindertransport*

*Kristallnacht*

World War II-1939-1945 England

World War II- 1939-1945 Jewish personal narratives

World War II- 1939-1945 Frankfurt, Germany