

Interviewee: KAUFMAN, Ernest  
Interviewer: Natalie Packel

Date: May 25, 2004

Audio tapes: 1 English  
Restrictions: None

Transcript: 1 vol. (unpaged) English

## SUMMARY

Ernest Kaufman was born in Drove, Germany, a small town with about 25 Jews. His father served in the German army during World War I and was a butcher and also a *shochet*. They had no problems with gentile neighbors but Ernest could not complete his education or his apprenticeship because he was Jewish. During *Kristallnacht* a local police man refused to arrest his father, but Ernest was arrested and transported to Buchenwald. He describes the terrible conditions and brutality in Buchenwald. The prisoners arrested during *Kristallnacht* did not have to work, but were forced to watch other prisoners being tortured and killed. Ernest explains how he managed to get an affidavit that enabled him to be released from Buchenwald after four weeks. He got a visa for the United States on April 20, 1939 and arrived in New York two weeks later. Ernest describes his unsuccessful attempts to get his parents out of Germany and into Cuba. His parents did not survive. Ernest describes how he lived and supported himself in New York and later in Philadelphia.

After Pearl Harbor, Ernest enlisted in the U.S. Army, became a naturalized citizen and eventually an officer. He served in England and Germany in 1943 and relates many of his experiences as an intelligence officer on an interrogation team. He discovered that Christian neighbors in Drove smuggled food into a house where local Jews were assembled before they were deported. In July 1945, he was wounded and sent to England General Hospital in Atlantic City. After he recovered, he was assigned to the European Command Intelligence Center in charge of the document section. He describes his intensive but futile search to discover what happened to his parents. After two more years in the service, he bought a poultry farm in Egypt, N.J. where he and his wife Minna lived for 30 years.

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## SUBJECT HEADINGS

Holocaust, Jewish 1939-1945-Personal narratives-male  
World War, 1939-1945-Personal narratives, Jewish  
Holocaust survivors - Jewish  
Buchenwald (Germany: Concentration camp)  
Drove, Germany - Aid by non-Jews  
Emigration and immigration processes  
United States Army - Intelligence - Interrogation Team 1943  
World War 1939 - 1945 - army service in England & Germany  
United States Army - Postwar service - Europe