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Summary

Warner M. Linfield was born on January 8, 1938 in Hannover, Germany and immigrated to the United States in the summer of 1938. His father was a banker, and the family was well off. His family was thoroughly assimilated though it did belong to a synagogue and he and his father attended regularly. Linfield also had a Bar Mitzvah. However, he complained of very poor Hebrew training and could barely read Hebrew and did not understand it. He had an older sister who left for England once Hitler came to power and later immigrated to the United States. His paternal and maternal grandfathers died of natural causes before the deportations. Before Hitler came to power, he was able to finish elementary school and enter high school with few antisemitic incidents. His family had many non-Jewish friends, though Linfield's friends came mainly from the synagogue and the attached Jewish community center. Once the Nazis arrived, his high school was closed for several months. When he returned there were only two Jewish students in his class, and several teachers and the principal had been replaced by Nazis. In school and after school Linfield experienced antisemitic taunts and threats, but he was spared physical violence because a student who sat next to him and was in the Nazi youth protected him, as long as his Nazi classmate could copy assignments from Linfield.

After the Nazis came to power, Linfield and his family believed that Hitler would not last and that the "civilized" Germans would come to their senses. His family was little affected by the anti-Jewish laws because his father was a banker, though Linfield does remember the early boycotts against Jewish businesses. In 1937, Linfield's attitude changed. For some reason he was called into the Gestapo, and though he was released he had heard them beating Jewish prisoners. From then on, he was determined to leave Germany, which he was able to do in the summer of 1938. As things worsened in Germany, and with their two children having immigrated to the United States, Linfield's parents also decided to leave for the United States. It was not made clear who sponsored the Linfields.

While Linfield's mother's brothers and sisters all got out of Germany to Palestine or to the United States, and his mother's parents died of natural causes in Germany before the deportations, his father's side was less fortunate. His father's mother died in a cattle car on her way to a concentration camp. His father's brothers, a brother's wife and two daughters, a sister, her son, and his father's cousin were all deported and killed. Another sister made it to Great Britain, but her son and husband were deported. Linfield and his father tried to get them documents to come to the United States, but the State Department refused.

Linfield did not talk much about his experience in the United States, but, apparently, he became quite successful. He finished undergraduate and graduate school. He also continued his Jewish education and religious observance. Wherever he moved he joined a synagogue, kept kosher for a number of years, and considerably improved his Hebrew. He bemoaned the fact that there was little information about the Holocaust until the end of the war. Even Jewish sources, he claimed, were mostly silent. Only at the end of the war did he hear about the extermination

camps, and the first documentary film about the camps that came out was a Russian film. (The tape ends suddenly at minute 00:35:00 during the second tape).