

Interviewee:	<u>ROJER</u> , Charles L.	Date:	July 19, 1983
Interviewer:	Janice Booker		
Audio Tapes:	1 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Charles Louis Rojer was born in Brussels, Belgium on December 6, 1934. He had two sisters, three and five years older than he. In addition, they were very close to a large extended family. Charles' father, who was born in Poland, was a leather goods maker and merchant and his mother, born in Odessa, Russia, helped in the leather goods store. Charles reports that the family was well-off and that he had a very pleasant childhood. He describes an idyllic life until 1940, going to the theater, taking dancing lessons and visiting the shore in the summer. He does not recall any antisemitism until the war started. He vividly recalls his childhood memories of the German bombing of Belgium and actually watching the planes with his family from the balcony of their home.

Charles discusses his father's decision to take the family to France thinking that he would be able to join his Polish army unit. He describes their expedited departure from Belgium by train, the detainment of the train by German paratroopers, witnessing the German bombing of the town they were in and the chaos that ensued. Eventually the family returned to Brussels. Charles describes being required to wear the yellow star when he returned to school and recalls certain restrictions that were imposed on Jews. After a year, his parents placed him in the Saint Charles Sanatorium for Tuberculosis to hide him. Charles remembers his parents visiting him for the last time in the winter; they were taken by the Germans in February 1942. His sisters were hidden in a convent with help from friends and a count in Brussels. Charles relates how he and a few other children were hidden when the Germans came and searched the Sanatorium. After the Germans left, they were moved around to different houses. He remembers that they were accompanied by one woman, Mademoiselle Andree. For two and a half to three years, this woman stayed with the group of children in various empty houses.

After the war, Charles spent time in several children's homes. He shares a moving story of how he was reunited with one of his sisters and then the other. Charles remained in the children's home of about 150 children, which was supervised by a Jewish agency, and resumed school. His sisters learned that their parents had perished in Auschwitz. Charles relates that 20 to 25 of their relatives were murdered during the war.

In 1947 the three siblings were found by an uncle who subsequently immigrated to the United States. After some months the uncle [see note at end of summary] brought Charles and his sisters here, to Philadelphia, as well. He was 13 ½ when he came to the United States in June of 1948. He went to live with his uncle who had arrived the year before with three small children of his own. His sisters lived elsewhere. Charles describes working for his uncle and his return to his schooling, detailing his scholastic route: from an industrial program in Jr. High School to an

academic track when the teachers realized his potential. From there he went to Central High School, Temple University and Hahnemann Medical School.

See also Dr. Rojer's second interview (GC00426b) and the testimonies of his uncle, Bernard Mednicki, and his cousin, Armand Mednicki, which are also in the Gratz College Holocaust Oral History Archive.