

Interviewee:	<u>SARNE</u> , Fred	Dates:	September 16, 1981
Interviewer:	Nora Levin		October 6, 1981
			November 13, 1981
Audio tapes:	7 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

## SUMMARY

Fred Sarne was born on May 24, 1906 in Bernburg-Zur-Zalle, Germany and was educated in a boarding school in Brattenstedt am Harz. He describes antisemitism in 1929-33 as the scapegoating of the Jews because of the Depression and of the boycotting of Jewish stores. He worked in a raincoat factory in Hamburg and his mother ran a men's clothing store, which she had to give up in 1934. Fred recalls the 1935 Nuremberg Laws which forced the sale of Jewish businesses, increased restrictions, and limited immigration. Fred describes *Kristallnacht* in Hamburg, as well as the 1939 war preparations and the impossibility of resistance to a superior armed force. His mother, who had moved to Breslau, was deported with her five sisters to Auschwitz in 1941 and gassed there in 1943.

Fred describes the deportation of the Jews of Hamburg to Lodz, Poland on October 21, 1941 and gives detailed descriptions of continued efforts to survive there despite the deaths, burials and hunger. He also discusses the *Umsiedlung*- "resettlement" of elderly Jews to the gas chambers of Chelmo in March, 1942 and briefly mentions Rumkowski.

He describes forced labor in the Posen-Gutenbrunn camp working for German business firms: the brutality, poor food, and death by hanging for escape attempts. In 1943 Fred was deported further East to Auschwitz where he worked in a coal mine. He became an indispensable record keeper for the camp. He recalls seeing-- in November, 1944-- Himmler's secret order to destroy the crematoria and evacuate Auschwitz before the Russian advance. On January 16, 1945 Fred, with thousands of others, was sent on a forced march from Auschwitz through Poland to Gross-Rosen. Fred describes this death march as a "wandering funeral procession". They were marched 20-25 km a day, in the cold, without adequate food or clothing. Many of the prisoners died from exhaustion, starvation and from shootings by German soldiers. In the Eifel Mountains they endured more hard labor and witnessed the burning of corpses and further transports.

Fred was liberated by the Americans on May 1, 1945, then spent quite some time recuperating in a German hospital. In August, he was reunited with friends from Hamburg and they hitchhiked to Hanover and Hamburg to discover the sad fate of family and friends. Fred emigrated to the United States in 1950.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>His personal history sheet indicates this fact, though Fred does not discuss it during the interview.

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## SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War II 1939-1945 Personal Narrative- Jewish  
Lodz Ghetto, Poland  
Auschwitz  
Death March  
World War II - Hamburg, Germany