

Interviewee: STAMM, FRED  
Interviewer: Nora Levin  
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Date: June 1980  
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## SUMMARY

Born in Wrexen, Germany, in 1919, Fred Stamm was one of four children. Their father was a poor cattle dealer. Fred describes his limited early education in a Jewish school in Warburg and in the local *Gymnasium*, from 1930 until 1933, when a Nazi decree forced Jewish students out. His two sisters were transferred from Jewish to Catholic school, protected by the nuns.

He illustrates the effect of pre-war Nazi influence in Wrexen. His grandmother befriended villagers with clothing and bedding after a disastrous flood, but at her funeral in 1934 her casket was stoned by village youths. Fred served as an apprentice with a cabinet maker until 1938, when he was forced into a Jewish labor unit.

During the night of November 9, 1938, strangers broke into the Stamm house, ransacking the ground floor while the family, in bed upstairs, was unmolested. The next morning, Fred and his brother were advised to leave town and ride the railroads for several days. When they returned they found all the males in the town, except their ill father, were taken to a concentration camp. Most of them later returned home.

Within the next few months, both brothers left Germany for the United States, sponsored by their cousin, a gynecologist in Philadelphia where Fred quickly found work repairing furniture.

In 1942, Fred and his brother served in the United States Army even though they were considered German enemy aliens. He served in the Air Force as an aircraft mechanic, and refused European duty until granted American citizenship. He was sent to China with a fighter squadron to bomb Japanese-occupied territories. Fred returned to Philadelphia, married, raised two children and became a student of Jewish history at Gratz College.

See also the testimony of his wife, Ilse Stamm RG-50.462.0550.

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### SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War – 1939 – 1945 Personal narratives, Jewish  
Holocaust, Jewish (1939 – 1945) Personal narrative  
Wrexen, Germany (1919 - 1938)  
*Kristallnacht*  
Antisemitism  
Aid by non-Jews  
World War (1939 – 1945) Military service U.S. Air Force