

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Blane, Maurice

Date of interview: 4/1 & 4/14/1993

Summary: (Deceased)

Maurice was born in 1922 in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. His parents were Polish-born immigrants who stayed in France after WW I and struggled to make a living. At 14 years old, Maurice was placed in a strict apprenticeship to be trained as a baker and pastry chef. He reports that the long hours of hard disciplined work as well as the skills he learned paid off later in preparing him to survive harsh conditions and having a way to make a living.

Maurice worked as cook in Kijon. In 1942, he joined the French army, and tried to stay in non-occupied France, with the hope of eventually getting to the front line in Africa, but he was picked up by Gestapo and sent to Drancy, a camp outside of Paris. In 1943 the Nazis took him on a harrowing journey to Buna Monowitz, one of the camps of Auschwitz, and later to the concentration camp Dora. Maurice speaks of friends he made in the camps, including one man who would share food with him, and his two bunkmates, a Russian and a Greek man. The three would communicate through the Greek man, who spoke French and Spanish and would translate Maurice's French into Spanish, which the Russian man understood. Maurice was on "Death March" to Germany in February of 1945. His group was deserted by German guards, and then liberated by the Americans.

After returning to France to find out that his parents and some of his siblings had been murdered, he immigrated to the US in 1947.

Maurice continued to work as a baker and pastry chef, and owned shops in New Jersey and San Francisco. He has worked to get restitution for his imprisonment from the French government.

This is an in-depth interview, but Maurice jumps around in discussing his experiences before the war, in the army, and in the camps. The end of the interview is without sound.