

**RG-50.493.0015**

**Henry Palmer**, Interview 11 September 1992

**Interviewer:** Howard A. Rosenberg

**Summary**

Henry Palmer (Belcman), born in 1913 in Ostrog Nae Horyien, Poland (now Ostroh, Ukraine near Horyn River); father died during World War I from dysentery in 1919 when he was 6 years old; lived with mother and two younger sisters; conditions were not very good as there were many poor people; attended both Hebrew school and local Polish school; at around the age of 10-11 began at Polish gymnasium (high school) and became tutor; after graduating became a teacher; continued teaching after Russians invaded in 1939 because he could speak Russian; felt the Russians treated them and other Displaced People well; in 1941 he and his wife, daughter, and son fled to Russia due to antisemitic threats to his life; moved to Czelabinsk (Chelyabinsk); was given citizenship immediately; 1941 he and family moved again to Uzbekistan where he was a teacher again because he could speak German; was a bookkeeper but also had plot of land which he and family grew rice on; stayed in Uzbekistan all 5 years of the war; work was hard but overall were happy; 1946 agreement was made that Polish Jews could return to Poland; Henry chosen to be director of orphans sent back to Poland; there was lots of antisemitism and numerous returning Jews were killed; A United States organization "The Joint" took Henry, his family, and Jewish orphans to Paris, France; worked for Jewish Agency for Palestine, Department for Children which helped moved children in Europe to Israel; Lived in Paris for 8 years; Had third child (son) while in Paris; Moved to Detroit, United States in 1954 to be near his wife's brother-in-law; last name changed to Palmer due to difficulty of last name spelling; became a bookkeeper with help of Joint organization; attended college and became an accountant; Retired in 1978 at age 65 and moved to California.