

PAUL BELLER  
RG-50.755.0002

Paul was born in 1932 in Vienna and was one of the 50 children brought to the United States by Mr. and Mrs. Kraus, a wealthy couple from Philadelphia. Paul's first memories were about living in a mixed neighborhood in Vienna on Shtumpastrasse. His father worked for his uncle Max Tennenbaum who owned a plywood business Paul was an only child of a conservative Jewish family. Paul's parents both came from Poland after WWI, fleeing programs and the compulsory service in the Russian army. They met and married in 1928.

Paul remembers the looting and burning of synagogues after Kristallnacht. His father was very worried about not being an Austrian citizen, and even once had unnecessary surgery so he could be in the hospital and avoid the Germans looking for him. His father then fled to a warehouse in Pressburg. He tried to get to Palestine in 1940, but the boat was turned back and he ended up in Mauritius for the duration of the war.

Paul's mother encouraged him to go with the 49 other children when he was selected, and told him it would be like a vacation. He remembers traveling from Vienna to Berlin and then getting on the USS President Harding in Hamburg. He remembers having a good time on the boat; he enjoyed all the new foods, especially Jell-O, and remembers English lessons. He doesn't remember the Krauses.

Upon landing, the children went to Brith Shalom camp in Collegeville, Pennsylvania. He was paired with Philip and Emily Amram of Pennsylvania, who had a farm and other children. He remembers liking the family. He stayed almost a year until his mother and grandparents arrived in February 1940. He moved with them to Washington Heights. There he went to Stuyvesant High School and City College. He was in the army for 2 years and after that got his Masters from NYU.

His father was able to write letters from Mauritius and finally arrived in American in 1946; all his family in Poland were killed. Paul spent over 40 years working for the federal government. He discusses how his parents decided to send him to America and how hard the experience was for his mother. He stated she remained bitter, but he thinks he was too young to feel bitter. He does attend reunions of the 50 children (his wife found the information about the Brith Shalom group). He talks a lot about things happening to him with the number "3,"