

My name is Leon Braun. I was born in Metz, France on August 14, 1934. My father was named Jaques my mother was Hanna (née Wagman). Together they owned a beauty shop. He was a barber my mom was a beautician. I had a brother named Bernard, he was born in 1927. My few memories of early childhood are happy ones. When I was five years old, I recall my father becoming very anxious as he listened to the news on the radio. I recall being carried on his back into big crowds where we heard a lot of speeches and where bond fires with scarecrow like effigies were blazing. One day, my mother my brother and I were walking on a street in Metz when countless German soldiers on motorcycles with side cars passed by us. I understood from my mom's panicked response that our lives had suddenly changed. Sometime later, we moved to the Southern part of the country called Vichy France, it was considered a safer place to be. We lived on a farm, I recall my dad helping with the wheat harvest. One night in 1942, French policemen came and arrested my mother and father. My brother had escaped through a window. For a long time I was left on my own. I can't give an exact chain of events but in the next couple of years, between the ages of eight and ten, I found myself in people's home. Either from just walking up to someone's house and begging or in some organized way, being picked-up and taken to folks that were expecting me. Sometime there were other children in my same circumstance living in these homes. I remember living in many such places. Mostly the people took good care of us. Occasionally we were mistreated and sometime beaten and molested. Somehow, my brother and I were reunited in one of these homes, only to be separated again when he decided to travel to Paris and attend a technical school. He wanted to become an electrician. I later learned that he and all the students of the school were arrested and deported. Near the end of the war, I was living in a children's home called La Marc in Paris. My most vivid memory of that place is of the day the German soldiers came and took all the Polish kids away. At the end of the war I was living in Moissac in Southern France. I have very good memories of that lovely town. It was the first time I attend school for more than a few days at a time. In 1947 I immigrated to America. I came to live with my father's sister and her family in Rochester New York. They soon moved to Los Angeles and I came with them. My relatives treated me so badly that someone at the school I was attending made a complaint and I was sent to live at Vista Del Mar Child Care Services in Los Angeles. That was the best thing I could have hoped for and it was the place I met Marsha. She would become my wife seven years later, then the mother of our three children and then the grandmother of our four grandchildren.

Jacques Braun and Hanna Braun were deported by train on the 11th of November 1942. Convoy number 45. 350 men, 391 women, 106 children under 17, 63 children under 12. Destination Auschwitz

Bernard Braun

Deported by train on the 30th of June 1944. Convoy number 76. 600 men, 550 women and 162 children under 18 years old. Destination Auschwitz.