

Summary of Oral History: David Phillips

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This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer on [03/2022]

David Phillips, interviewed about his father, Jeffrey Phillips (spelling Anglicized slightly by Jeffrey from the original German), born in April 1925 (deceased 2011) in a small coal mining town near Dortmund, Germany, discusses: the local synagogue being burned during Kristallnacht; Jeffrey's grandfather (also named David) being arrested the next day and never being seen again; Jeffrey's aunt being threatened during a search for the synagogue's Torah scrolls, which had been hidden; the aunt urging Jeffrey's mother to place him on a kinder transport; Jeffrey boarding a transport in December and being taken to the UK; Jeffrey being taken to Branford (NFI) and being sponsored by a man named Oswald Stroud, who owned a large textile company; at about age 15 or 16, Jeffrey going to work at the company; not attending high school but being studious and largely self-educated; meeting his future wife; being taught morse code by the company to compensate for the company's very loud weaving machines; this being significant as Jeffrey is placed in a signals unit when he joins the British army; being based in Scotland, then sent to Germany as the war is ending; declining an offer to work on German reconstruction projects because Germans had killed his parents; being demobilized, returning to Branford, and marrying in about 1949; managing a company subsidiary in Ireland, where the family (including David and two brothers) remains; Jeffrey learning that his parents had been taken to a camp in Riga and then to Stutthof concentration camp, where they died about six to eight months before the end of the war; his aunt, Erna, accompanying kinder transports and remaining in London after the last transport; Jeffrey being reluctant to speak about the war years until late in life.