

## From the Testimony of Carl Mergenroth About Emigration From Nazi Germany

I was born in 1924, June 14th, 1924 in a town Plowen in the state of Saxony which today is in East Germany and throughout my early years when, I still remember all the Nazis marching through the streets and the violence, street violence became more and more. So finally Hitler became Chancellor - I believe it was January 31<sup>st</sup>, or thereabouts and things started to go badly for us as Jews. So my father decided that we should leave Germany and the logic at the time seemed to be to go to Vienna, Austria because we have relatives living there. So in September of 1933 we left Germany for Austria. And things were not too bad there for a while of course. Came 1938 and the Nazis in Germany, they followed us to Austria in one day. When the so-called "Anschluss" took place, I was living in Vienna at the time and I was there to see the Germans march in. I would like to add that the Germans marched in to the jubilation of most of the Viennese. They went wild with joy, some of them, many of them, perhaps the majority, So then things started to get very badly for, turned for us again, which is common knowledge what, when the Nazis took over that the Jews started being persecuted in Austria as well as in Germany. Then came the so-called Kristallnacht, when they smashed all the synagogues and stores, Jewish-owned stores. Our neighbourhood synagogue, which was a good-sized building - I saw it go up in flames myself. The fire brigade stood by, just to make sure that no adjoining structures would catch fire and the whole building, the roof collapsed and it was, just was completely gutted. And this took place all over Vienna. So we had applied for admission to the United States some months prior to that and...but before I could leave - we were supposed to leave as a family, but the...we had registered as a family with the American Consulate for our visas to the United States, but due to the quota system, immigration quota system of the United States had in effect at the time, we were separated. My brother and I born in Germany fell under the German quota. My parents, who were born in that part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire which became Poland after the end of World War I, fell under the Polish quota which was much smaller and the

number, the immigration number for my brother and myself came up much quicker. So my brother and I were ready to leave for the United States when World War II broke out and couldn't leave the country. A couple of months went by and the Germans marched into Poland and I had to read of the victories in the Viennese newspapers, but about five days or a week or so after the outbreak of the war, one morning, about seven o'clock in the morning, a group of stormtroopers, SS men, came to our apartment and arrested my father and took him away and eventually he wound up in Buchenwald concentration camp. My mother was then, before we knew what really happened, finally my brother and I were able to leave the country, my brother and I by ourselves. That was in the end of November, 1939.

**Source: Yad Vashem Archives O.3-8251**