

Excerpt from Oral History Interview with Henry Slucki

Henry Slucki was interviewed by Sara Moskowitz for the Child Survivors of the Holocaust project in the 1980s. Slucki was born in 1934 in Paris. He and his parents moved to Vichy France after the Nazis invaded in 1940, then fled to Lisbon before Henry came to the United States as a child refugee. In this clip he discusses preparing for the Nazi invasion as a child and growing up in Vichy France.

Transcript:

HS: I remember, for example, being fitted with gas masks, prior to the Germans coming in, and ah, our windows being painted blue and with strips of tape to keep the glass from scattering, and all the preparations for war, which in a child's eye looked very much like ah, kind of an adventure rather than an impending doom. Now, perhaps it was because ah, I felt relatively secure in the house, but in retrospect I remember, for example, that not only were we issued gas masks, prior to the war, but, that is prior to the actual fighting, but when the Germans came we were issued the yellow patch, and I remember, ah, wearing that.

SM: The yellow star of David

HS: The yellow star of David, right, with the French word "Juif," meaning Jew, and ah, curfews, and air raids, and well, the whole thing. Getting up in the middle of the night and rushing off to the Métro to seek the ah, shelter. But that had occurred, of course, even before the war, there were air raid drills.

SM: So you went to the South of France. To join your father.

HS: Yes

SM: Where exactly were you?

HS: We were in a city called Montauban, which is also not very far from the larger city of Toulouse. It's a town where the Spanish refugees who had come from the Spanish Civil War had emigrated, and there were, they were referred to as concentration camps, they were gathering places for the Spanish emigrés that were located there, and in fact, I have on a later visit I took a photograph of the house that we rented. And ah, in ah, from 1940 to 1942 we lived there, and those were some of the most pleasant years that I recall. We, ah....by contrast with what was happening elsewhere in Europe we were having just a marvelous time. I was growing up, going to school, enjoying life. My parents were there, working. We had just...

SM: You were doing very well in school, I understand.

HS: Yes.