

Provenance:

We fled Antwerp, Belgium, May 1940 in the hope of securing passage to Surinam, a Dutch protectorate, by way of Marseille, France. We had visas for this voyage.

However, circumstances beyond our control left our family stranded in Vichy, France. We settled in Lamastre, a village in southeast France.

My father, Nathaniel Prins, was warned by the French Resistance that men who were not French and who were Jewish would be rounded up by the gestapo. He was provided with false papers and a permit allowing him to work and live in the Pyrenees Mountains. But shortly thereafter, he was arrested and jailed for posing as a Frenchman.

My mother, with the help of people in the village and especially our neighbor, Mr. Chambron, collected money which was sent to the prison to release my father from jail. On the very same day he was again arrested because he was Jewish. He was sent to Drancy, and then to his final destination, Auschwitz.

This letter was written in jail by my father to our neighbor, Mr. Chambron. A postscript was added in pencil while awaiting transport to Drancy. Someone was kind enough to post this letter.

In 1976 on a return visit to Lamastre, the daughters of Mr. Chambron gave me this letter which they had saved.

Betty Prins-Hyatt