

ORAL TESTIMONY
SAMUEL FRIEDMAN
BORN: LVOV, POLAND - 1920

Samuel Friedman was one of seven children. His parents had a wholesale paper products business. He and his siblings attended school and had private lessons for Jewish learning.

They led a comfortable and cultural life. In 1939 the businesses were nationalized and taken over by the Russians (the city was under their jurisdiction). They stayed in their homes though and tried to lead a normal life. In 1941 the Germans invaded the city and everything changed. They were forced to leave their homes and went to live in the Ghetto in a two room apartment with 30 people and sometimes even more.

Three weeks later his parents were taken away and they perished soon after. He worked for the Germans in airports, cleaning and doing odd jobs. Soon after, he was sent with many other young people in cattle cars to Auschwitz. They tattooed numbers on their arms. They were branded like animals.

In Auschwitz, some worked on construction, others in chemical factories and some converted coal to oil. They worked long hours with very little food and got weaker every day. Some were stronger in spirit and tried to help the less fortunate. They formed groups and literally dragged the less spirited to get washed and cleaned up, thus saving many lives. It was very important never to ask questions, have faith, and never give up -- their singing and dancing kept them alive.

In January 1945 they were evacuated from Auschwitz and brought to Germany near Munich. 28,000 left and only 5,000 survived. They always were cold and hungry, they were eating snow. By then he weighed 90 pounds. He was very weak. In May 1945, he was liberated.

The Americans sent him to Switzerland with other sick soldiers to recuperate and then was brought back to Germany. One of his brothers survived in Auschwitz and made his home in Israel. His sister was working for a German family as a Gentile girl (of course without their knowledge). She survived and lives now in Australia.

He is very proud of the high morality in those trying times. He talked to his children about the heritage and hoped that by listening they had learned something. The smell of the crematoria will stay with him forever. Since then it is very hard for him to throw away food. He will never forget the atrocities, but also remembers the spirit, the hope and faith that somehow they will survive.

Sam is now an investment broker. He has three children and grandchildren. He is a widower.