

-TITLE-SOL PRENGLER
-I_DATE-DECEMBER 15, 1985
-SOURCE-DALLAS MEMORIAL CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-3 HOURS
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH WITH LITTLE POLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

2:15 Sol was born on December 13th, 1907 in Luków Poland. When Sol was 17 his Aunt left for the United States and his parents, who owned a brickyard, bought the aunt's hardware housing material store for Sol, he was extremely successful. Sol also expressed the importance of friends, he said that without the friends that he made he wouldn't be here to tell the story today.

1:02:45 Sol said that others had more money than him, but he was rich in friends. He told about a ethnically German woman who was born in Poland named Stenson(ph) who also owned a brickyard, she told him that if he ever had a problem to come to her for help.

1:06:00 When Sol was 18, in 1925, he was set up by his grandfather (the town matchmaker) with his 25 year old second cousin. They got engaged the first day they met, Dec. 25 and got married in March of 1927. A year later his first daughter Helen was born. At the same time his business was growing and he was commissioned to build barracks for Polish soldiers.

1:09:00 Sol then began to tell about his town. The town was 120 kilometers from Warsaw and 100 km, from Lublin, the population was 44,000, and the city was 800 years old and had it's own culture, and was a very religious town. Sol described the Jews and Gentiles of the town as being close, especially when Plsudski was in power nobody expressed anti-Semitism at all. When Plsudski died in 1926 people began to express anti-Semitism.

1:11:15 After Plsudski's death anti-Semitism started to build, and anti Jewish organizations began in 1927. There were new laws not

allowing kosher meat, or kosher butlers. In 1937 the war started, he talked about Kiblentrotch(ph) (the Polish foreign minister) and Von Ribbentroph being good friends, and expressed resentment about this.

1:13:15 Sol talked about how Polish anti-Semitic youth groups grew, they blocked off stores and boycotted all Jewish businesses. Sol spoke about not being able to get paid for his building because he was Jewish. Sol said that Poland was glad for Hitler to be there to kill the Jews, that the Polish were anti-Semitic, but it took Hitler to carry out the wishes of the Poles.

1:15:30 In Sol's private life from 1930 onward, his business was booming, between 1930 and 1938 he had five children, Helen, Isaac, Benny, Abraham and Hershel.

1:18:30 On Sept. 1, 1939 Sol knew that something was going on, but didn't know what. Luków was a railroad transfer point and people started to gather there from all over in order to get away from the borders. There was panic all over the city and absolutely no leadership.

1:21:30 On Sept. 6 Sol closed his store and left Luków, with his wife and children, he stayed with a blacksmith he knew in the country until Sept. 16th. During the time he stayed in the country two of his brother, Nathan and Abram with their 13 children also went to stay with the blacksmith. When the city seemed clear Sol and his family returned. When Sol got back to the City he was appointed a member of the Jewish portion of the city council along with 11 other men.

1:25:15 In 1939 a fellow council member wanted Sol to go to the town square with him to see what was going on. Sol's wife told him not to go, but he sneaked out. The Germans made everybody congregate out in front of the church (there were 4 or 5 thousand people) and killed most of them.

1:28:15 On Sept. 19th the city was freed by the Russians who came in as a result of a change in the Russo-German treaty. They gave

food to the people and Sol described them as friendly. On Oct. 5th the borders changed again and the Russians left, anybody who wanted to could leave with the Russians, many left but Sol decided to stay because his business was there, and he was rich under a capitalistic system, and didn't believe in communism.

1:30:45 On Oct. 6th a German military government took over the city. The Germans went to a Jewish leader and ordered him to have 500 people in the square the next day, they got only 300 people, the Germans shot them and then anybody else that they could find. The next day all Jews were told to wear the star of David, which Sol says he wore for 13 years.

1:33:00 Sol described how the Germans came to stores and took whatever they wanted and gave the owner a piece of paper to be redeemed at the town hall, but Sol couldn't collect the money because he was Jewish. The shooting at the square continued and each day a different number of people were demanded.

1:37:15 On Nov. 15th the Gestapo came to Luków, and set up their headquarters 24 kilometers away in Ritsing(ph). Sol remembers the Gestapo going around to restaurants owned by Jews and destroying everything. On Nov. 17 Sol went to the square to check on his bills and he saw the Gestapo taking people away, he was also taken away to jail together with 10 Gentiles (8 of which were priests) and 9 Jews.

1:41:15 Sol remembers being taken about 10 miles away, they were taken out and beaten and Sol was sure he was about to die, but then he was put into a cell. Sol saw an old friend in jail and found out that a list of the richest people had been made up and they were rounded up and brought to jail.

1:42:30 Two doctors in the group were taken away and never returned. Sol and the remaining 17 were released after a relative of Sol's paid huge amounts of gold for their release.

1:46:00 When Sol returned home his house was filled with refugees, he got scared to stay a home so he moved his family to a building he had built with living quarters upstairs. At this point Sol decided that he wanted to go to the Russian side, that it had to be better, but his brothers and sister who had been there came back and said it was horrible there.

1:49:00 Despite his siblings warnings Sol decided it was time to go to the Russian side. Sol left, but when he got there he got scared and it seemed worse then the German occupied territory. Around this time the Germans took the store and gave it to a Polish teacher, the teacher's wife used to give Sol money but stopped after a short while. Sol remembers how many people there were all around because of the huge refugee populations, he remembers how hungry everybody was, but there was no food. He described people as dropping as flies.

1:52:00 Soon after Sol was kicked out of his house, which became a hospital. He remembers people dying every day, and there not being enough to bury everyone. The Gestapo continued to come and demand a given number of people to die in the square each day.

1:53:00 Sol told how the Jewish council had to give the Gestapo whatever they wanted, if they failed to supply the Gestapo, they were killed.

2:02:00 Sol was appointed as one of 12 people who had to supply the Gestapo, he remembers them coming in and shooting people even before they had asked for the supplies that they wanted. In June of 1940 Sol and the other council members were ordered to get everybody out.

2:04:00 Sol and the others got 1,000 people out, he remembers people having to dig ditches, and 50% of the Jewish population dying, he said, "Jewish life was cheep like a fly."

2:06:00 Sol described that in Jewish tradition there was the hope for a Jewish nation, he remembers this hope lasting down to the last minute. He tells how Jews were stopped on the street and had to show a card giving them permission to be out, he said if he was asked for a pen he gave the German 10 pens.

2:09:30 In the Ghetto the Gestapo took over the synagogue and burned everything. Sol remembers the soldiers would go into houses in the middle of the night and randomly kill between 30-50 people. Sol had to go out and clean everything up before 6am and bury the people that had been killed, getting rid of evidence of the occurrence.

2:14:00 These occurrences happened until the beginning of the war

with Russia. When the war started Sol remembers that everybody was required to give their coats and blankets to the Germans because they were not used to the cold winter. On May 9,10 of 1942 (the first and second day of Shavvot(ph)) Sol was ordered with other Jewish officials to go to the railroad to pick up refugees, all these refugees were killed in his town.

2:18:00 In June and July of 1942 Sol remembers the Nazis demanding 40 kilos of gold before Rash Hashanna.

2:21:30 Sol told about one night when the Gestapo came to the door, he went to answer it, but his wife told him not to, and to hide instead. Sol hid on the roof and his wife told the Gestapo that he had gone to help the refugees, the Gestapo didn't believe her and so took her with them. The Gestapo then went to another house where three boys were hiding in the attic, and found the boys and killed them.

2:24:30 While the Gestapo were killing in the other house, Sol's wife hid behind a open door and then behind a pile of cement blocks. The Gestapo got so excited about the others hiding that they forgot about Sol's wife, and she survived.

2:27:00 From that night on Sol hid with the refugees every night, each night sleeping in a different place, his wife did the same so they wouldn't be at home if the Gestapo came for them at night.

2:29:00 Starting in 1942 the Nazis began to make the Ghetto smaller and smaller. Sol remembers having to work on building the new Ghetto during the day and hiding out at night. In Oct. of 1942 Sol knew that something was happening, it was a train coming to deport the people in the Ghetto. Sol remembers that until people were content, and even happy about the transport, never losing hope that things would get better.

2:30:15 At 6am on a Sunday morning the Gestapo began to clear out the Ghetto. Sol said that he never trusted the SS, so he hid his family and 12 other people in a hole in his basement, and they stayed there until Thursday. The 2,059 people that had been in the synagogue were all killed, and many others deported.

2:33:15 Sol was then given the job of sorting through all the belongings of Jewish refugees brought into the Ghetto from neighboring towns. Again the Gestapo came for Sol, again, after

this Sol was hiding in a wagon, and then hid in a barn and the kids were still hiding in the basement.

2:38:00 A few nights later he took his children and hid out at a friend's house outside the Ghetto until December 15th. One day Sol threw out a bucket in the back and was seen by a neighbor, Sol pleaded with him not to turn his family into the Nazis. After this incident Sol told the man he was staying with that he would leave.

2:40:30 A few days later the Gestapo came for Sol and his family, the youngest of his children was shot. Sol clearly remembers some people being upset that a child had been shot, he also remembers some anti-Semitic people being happy that he was caught.

2:42:00 Sol spoke about being taken to the police, the police took the money that the whole family had stashed on them. Sol's son Benny managed to sneak away, after this the whole family was taken back to the Synagogue.

2:45:15 Sol spoke about his baby bleeding this whole time, and how helpless he felt, he knew that his child was dying in his arms. After being detained in the Synagogue the family was allowed back into the Ghetto.

2:49:00 Sol told about how the Ghetto got smaller and smaller and at night everybody was crammed in together. The people needed to secretly dig graves for the dead.

2:52:00 One day the brother of one of the 12 fellow councilmen that Sol was "in charge" with, was killed. All 11 other councilmen stood up in his defense and were killed, Sol thought about joining in but de decided it was more important to be with his family.

2:55:00 Sol talked about how he had to gather potatoes and any food that he could find, he described that winter as the worst time yet. He also told about a group of Jewish boys who tried to organize resistance, they felt if we're going to die we're going to bring some Nazi's with us, they refused to go like sheep to the alter. These boys killed a policeman, and were killed.

3:04:00 On May 3rd, 1943, Sunday morning, there was a revolt in the Ghetto. Sol hid with this wife and children in the hole in the basement during the revolt.

3:07:00 That afternoon things quieted down, and soon after the Gestapo came. A chimney sweep who knew the house was one of the Gestapo, he knew the house were, as a result Sol's father and nephew were taken away. Sol could see this all because he was on the top, and just had to stay still and quiet.

3:08:00 Sol tells about how he came out and everybody in the Ghetto was gone or dead, and the polish police had taken the Ghetto over. A Polish man who had known Sol's sister told Sol to leave the Ghetto and that he would help Sol to survive.

3:00:00 Sol tells how he brought his family out of the Ghetto through the sewer into town. There he hid in the barn of a friend of his. Two of Sol's brothers also came to the friends house a few days later. They had all been on the train to Auschwitz and Sol's brothers jumped off, and made it to safety.

3:13:15 Sol and his family stayed there for four week, then the friend got scared because there were so many people there (14 including Sol's wife, children and his siblings and their kids), and it was hard to feed them all without arousing suspicion. The friend knew that people had begun to talk and suspected something. Sol told how the friend said that he didn't care about his own life but wanted Sol to be safe.

3:17:45 After this Sol went to a German women who owned a brickyard who had offered him help years ago. Sol tells how he and his family hid in her barn until July, but then people had begun to suspect something so he built a hiding place in a large chimney in the brickyard.

3:19:15 After Sol had finished the hiding place he was showing it to his wife when Polish boys came over and started to scream that there were Jews there. Sol explains that he became frightened because of this and went with his brother in law to the country to see if he could find a place for his family there.

3:21:15 Sol tells how he went to a farmer that he knew, when he got there he found out that 2 days ago 15 people had been killed and that it was very dangerous there so Sol returned to the brickyard. When Sol returned Nazi soldiers were doing exercises in the yard.

3:24:15 Sol tells about how he had to get his family out of there because of the Nazis, so they hid in a barn (also owned by the German woman) so that they lived right under the Nazis' noses for a month. During this time period it was obvious that the Russians would triumph and the German woman told Sol that she thought she should leave because the Russians hated Germans. Sol tells that he convinced the woman to stay by telling her that the Russians surely wouldn't do anything to her because of all the good that she did for Jews. The woman stayed and took care of Sol and his family.

Post war Period

3:27:15 Sol spoke with sadness about how when the Russians came and set up a government he gained his freedom on July 23, 1944, but the German woman was taken away and he never heard of her again, he wished he could have thanked her.

3:29:45 After the war was over Sol told how again he was a leader, people came from all over to ask him for food.

3:32:45 Sol explained that after the Russian invasion things continued to be bad. The Poles that had gone to Russia, came back, and Sol got his store back from the Gentile woman. However when the Russians came in they started to kill the upper class. It was so bad that his house (which housed a few Jewish families) had a militia every night. On May 1, 1945 the town mayor came to see Sol and told him that he should leave because the anti-Semitic movement was planning something.

3:35:00 Following this warning Sol took his family and went to Catabity(ph) for a year, from there he went to Munich to wait for his papers to the U.S. to come through. In 1949 Sol and his family finally made it to the U.S. he went to Dallas because he had family there.

3:41:00 When asked to reflect on why he survived Sol explained that he survived because all is ruled by God and God gave him what he needed to survive and that was friends. Sol said over and over that he survived because he was rich in friends. His is the only family from his town that he knows of that the whole family survived. He said that he survived by his heart and by a miracle.

3:43:20 Sol's advice for generations to come was that he wants family to stick together, that if families stick together and work

together anything can be accomplished.
.END.