

ANNA KOENIG

Phoenix

Born: Bialystock, Poland

1925

Father: Yona

Mother: Russia

Siblings: Leah, Sprinza, Meah

No other survivors from her family besides

Anna

- 01:00            At the beginning of the war, the Germans came into the city, tried to burn the famous temple; Russians then captured the city; young people found brutalized by Germans; city lived under Russians for 2 years
- Germans returned, 1941, torched the temple, threw in 2000 live Jews/ children, women and men
- 01:02            Family fled to home of an aunt, home, all possessions burned, no clothes or food, laid low and tried to survive for 4 weeks
- Germans create ghetto, 60,000 crammed into small area.
- 01:04            Hunger in the ghetto terrible, no water for bathing, spread of typhus
- 1:05             There were a few places to work, family members shared one pair of shoes; bodies became swollen with water drunk to stave off hunger; she worked in a factory making uniforms - got one loaf of bread as pay for the whole week
- 01:06            She would sneak out of the ghetto to get food, even though many children were shot doing that.
- 01:07            At the outset of the ghetto formation 5,000 men were taken from the ghetto and never heard from again, including two of her uncles.
- 01:08            In Feb. of 1943 the Germans decided the ghetto was too crowded and took people away; Anna's family hid in a basement-attic with about 40 people; babies smothered so as to not give the hiding place away.
- 01:12            In August 1943 Germans liquidated the ghetto; while marching she was separated from her parents and never saw them again; stayed with Aunt and two cousins for awhile . Forced to march to Piatrashov, then kept for 24 hrs. no food or water, just standing, beaten by soldier.
- 01:16            SS man came for the selection, she was pulled to the right, people were separated by sex; she was carrying 1 yr. old cousin, her uncle told her to just put the baby down and walk away and try to save herself.

01:17

Some family members took poison

01:18

Taken to Majdanek, people slittin throats; saw crematorium, during trip in cattle cars, mothers threw babies, little children out the window hoping someone might save them, but soldiers shot at them.

AnnaKoenig

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01:19 In the cattle car for 2-3 days, no food or water, as people died the bodies were pushed away. On arrival women went to showers

01:20 Those who lived were not necessarily fortunate, it means a lifetime of day and night nightmares

01:21 They were made to run like cattle, treated like animals. after the showers they were put into barracks like sardines, laying on boards

01:22 Made to get up at 4:30 for work, food minimal - some "soup" and a piece of bread, many passed out and were beaten

01:23 After 10 days there, they were asked who had skills and they picked 150 women with sewing skills to work in sewing blankets; she got typhus while there but she didn't go to the camp "hospital". Stayed there 11 mos.

01:24 Worked 36 hrs. at a time to be able to be in the kitchen and get an extra piece of food; feels that is what enabled her to survive.

01:25 Moved to Auschwitz as the Russians got closer; left with permanent leg injury where SS man beat her; leg swelled

01:26 Mengele came for selection process- she survived that and stayed there for 5-6 mos.

01:27 Moved to a munitions factory in Chopow (ph) , hardly conscious - as if mentally doped up; worked in tool and dye factory

01:28 As front got closer they were moved to Theresienstadt; 7 days in a cattle car without food or water; like skeletons when they arrived; Russian advance saved their lives; many people died soon after, some from trying to immediately eat; liberating armies were not equipped to deal with inmates of the camps

01:32 Worked at a hospital helping other survivors; all SS denied who they were, supposedly the SS had a tatoo under their left arm.

01:34 They were liberated May,1945 and a group went together to Lodz, traveling on the tops of trains; found a cousin through the Jewish Organization

Registry

01:38 Returned homebut home and everything had been destroyed, accosted with anti-semitism everywhere, married and went to American-occupied section Germany, after two years came to U.S. because of relatives in Chicago. Difficult adjusting at the beginning but now have two daughters and 3 grandchildren. The world knew what was happening and didn't care -

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it didn't even care about the suffering of children.