

Samuel Soldinger was born August 28, 1924 in Krakow. His father was Solomon Joseph, his mother Adele (née Presser), and he had one brother, Jacob David, and one sister, Sabina. His brother escaped to Russia as the war started, but was never seen again, possibly dying of typhus. His mother and sister perished in the camps. Samuel's father died when he was nine.

Samuel witnessed numerous cases of physical abuse of Jews after the Nazis invaded on Sept. 9, 1941. He read a lengthy timeline summary of the Nazis handling the Jews gathered partly from his own and other sources. Some notable ones include:

- Shortly after the invasion, German soldiers forced the opening of many Jewish shops and allowed unrestrained looting.
- On Dec. 5 or 6, Samuel was shot at for the first time as he went to the grocery store.
- When the Germans were systematically confiscating valuables during home searches, an officer became entranced with a stamp album created by Samuel's uncle who had been a German photojournalist. With a tone of irony, Samuel says that the officer offered to buy the stamp rather than just take the whole album.
- On Dec. 11, Jews were no longer allowed to attend school.
- On May 18, 1940, the Germans announced that Jews could leave voluntarily as after August 15, they would be deported.

Samuel, his sister and his widowed mother chose to voluntarily depart for Warsaw, where his mother tried to work as a nurse. They stayed in the Warsaw Ghetto until the day before the Germans closed the ghetto, when they traveled by train via legal passes to a small village near Krakow. He described both friendly and brutal treatment by local Poles. His mother made a meager income from selling margarine. He did some work at the airport for a shipping company called Wilhelm Riegel, and at a furniture store run by Mr. Finkelstein but owned by a George Vashilevsky, whom he considered to be "very nice man," though his wife was a harsh anti-Semite.

On March 3, 1941 the Krakow Ghetto was created. Samuel speaks of knowing the only Pole in the ghetto, named Pankavich, who became renowned for helping the resistance and known as the Ghetto Pharmacy. His mother and sister were selected for deportation to Belzec in June, 1942, but he heard that a German officer von Malotke followed behind the column shooting the prisoners as they walked, including his relatives. Other males were randomly separated sparing those who were given a blue card, which he was given without explanation.

At a time when he was living at a small camp near the airport, not in the ghetto, he was again spared by chance when the Gestapo culled an airport work crew of 600 where he barely made the survival cut. One of his comrades on the crew, Joseph Shamberg, did escape, but was later reported as caught and executed.

Shortly afterward in May, 1943 when they liquidated the ghetto killing 4000 people, he contracted rheumatic fever. His comrades helped shelter him from the guards while gained strength. But, directed by Leo Jones, "a vicious killer," an SS squad began to gather more prisoners for execution. He was able to volunteer instead for a work crew that needed electricians and engineers, which was sent to Oskar Schindler's factory for about a year. He praised Schindler, but also said that he led "a very good life" in order to entertain the Gestapo. He also speaks often of a Dr. Rubinstein while connected with the Schindler operation. While food was "never adequate", Samuel said that at least he was not living in the "devil's mouth."

When Schindler was moving his factory to Czechoslovakia, Samuel was sent to Mauthausen in 1944, where he worked, shoeless, in the quarry. One of the guards remarked that his shipment of prisoners was one of the only ones not sent directly to the crematorium, a sign, said the guard, that the war was perhaps ending. Regardless, the trustees (normally not Jewish) were brutal applying frequent beatings, for example after finding valuables or contraband following anal searches. For a while, he worked in Linz at the Hermann Göring Works, where he was provided new shoes.

On May 5, 1945, the guards marched the prisoners away to avoid the Russians into nearby mountains caves. However, fearing that they'd be sealed into the caves, they escaped, but were lured back to camp by a Polish capo. As they neared the camp, it appeared that nearby SS troops were about to execute them, when a U.S. soldier appeared and disarmed them.

(Part 2 of 2 for this tape ends mid-sentence indicating the likelihood of another segment somewhere.)