

1989.0039.0041

CYCOWICZ

Giselle Friedman

Volume I

Side I

Born in Czechoslovakia; Half of town was Jewish; Father sold wine and liquor and mineral waters. Population composed of Jews, Hungarians and Ukrainians; Attended Czech schools; Had good life; Local population was antisemitic; In 1939 their area became Hungarian; Hungary was part of axis and took away licenses to practice their business; Had to have private tutoring as unable to go to school; Young Jewish men were taken to work behind lines, many killed; Trainloads of Jewish people of Polish origin transported away; Some escaped came back and told others; Very frightening; Father was beaten by police because he secretly sold mineral water after store was taken over by Hungarian man; Lived like that for five years until 1944 when Germans came in; One sister lived in Budapest and was caught; Pass-over Eve father didn't come home; Shaved beard and shed Hasidic robe and hat; Created two ghettos; Two families slept in one bedroom; Sister ran out and returned with horse and buggy to take out all of their material belongings; Father said only "Let us all just be alive;" Took them to Railroad station on May 23; Father carried small pair of shoes for daughter who had been taken away; Seventy people in one baggage car with one toilet and no protection; Traveled two days and arrived in Aushwitz; Father felt it was the end; Doors were opened and people were hustled out; Impossible to stay together; Were separated and undressed; Gave them ill-fitting clothes; Used material to cover heads and protect from cold; Barracks had dirt floors with mud puddles; One thousand people in one barrack; Ate bread which tasted like sawdust; Each barrack was 100 yards by 20 feet wide; Compartments were 8 feet by 5 feet with 16 people in each compartment with no blankets; Slept this way for six months - cold and hungry; Under roof was a slit which they used as a window; Could see men being taken away; Saw her father being taken but was unable to get to him and never saw him again; Mother became ill and couldn't eat; Tried to keep her away from soldiers; Knew she would not survive selection; Rains came and caught dysentary; Roll call line for hours with nowhere to go to the bathroom; People fought for bathrooms; Much thirst and deprivation; Selections took place five times a day when Germans realized that Russians were coming; Selection is described and how they hid their mother behind a cupboard;

Father didn't survive but mother still alive today and living in
Brooklyn, New York