

MANFRED SIMON (originally Zemon)
RG-50.154.0025 (rec. 1986 in Florida)

Manfred was born around 1923 in Frankfort where his father's relatives had lived for many generations. His mother came from Memel, then in Lithuania. He had his bar mitzvah in Memel and in 1936 the family decided to leave Germany. Manfred got an Internet from Sweden, and while there his parents fled to Kovno. He went back to Kovno to train as a confectioner since it was easier to emigrate with a skill. He met his wife in night school while learning English. They married in 1944.

The area went back and forth between the Germans and the Russians, both of whom were bad for the Jews. The Germans set up a ghetto in Slabotka in June 1941. Dr. Elkes was the head of the Judenrat. Manfred worked in a factory and was able to smuggle some food on his walk back to the ghetto. There were several selections in the ghetto during this time for older people and intellectuals. Manfred became a policeman in the ghetto, a position not well liked by other Jews.

When the ghetto was liquidated (his father was already killed) the Jews were loaded on a cattle car. The women were taken off at Stutthof and the men continued to Dachau. Manfred describes the terrible conditions, lack of food, lice, etc. He said first the Germans took their pride and then their cleanliness. Manfred got sick and was put in the hospital. Elias Friedman, a man for whom his grandfather had worked, worked in the kitchen and was able to give Manfred some extra food until he recovered.

As the war near its end and they could hear the Allies planes, they were marched out of camp for 7-8 days to another camp He describes being liberated by some very nice African-American soldiers. The camp was quarantined because of disease, but Manfred escaped because he wasn't ill and went to Munich, where he states he took revenge on Germans by killing and plundering. He found out his wife was alive and was in Vienna Manfred went to Bergen Belsen to look for family. At this time, it was all women and they were happy to see that a Jewish man had survived. He found that his mother and sister had survived and were in a sanitarium in Munich. He found his wife in Vienna and they went to Frankfort. He describes meeting General Eisenhower and having Eisenhower help him get a house in Frankfort.

Manfred worked in Frankfort with HIAS. Much of his family emigrated to Israel, but he and his wife went to the United States in May 1946. He now has two children and grandchildren.