

## **RG-50.156.0014**

### **Summary**

Henry Freier, born Tzvi Hersch (Hebrew name) 7/22/14 in Lodz Poland. Father, David born in Kutno and mother Rachel, born in Sgersh, Poland. She died in 1917. Had 8 brothers and sisters, not named. Observant Jews, going to services on Fridays. Went to cheder and 2 years of Yeshiva. He experienced antisemitism from non-Jews as a child. Left Poland at 17 and spent two years traveling around Europe with 4 friends. Went to Czechoslovakia and stayed with grand rabbi in Prague, Professor Liebig. Went to Germany and heard Hitler speak in Munich. Then to Austria, Italy and Trieste where he was arrested and held for 7 days. Then on to Paris. Returned to Poland in 1934. Freier was a boxer, along with Mushka Lieberman and belonged to Hachau and Maccabi.

After war started, Jews chased into ghetto by Nazis and many killed along the way. Family put in ghetto except for brother, Shmuel Drory who somehow escaped and now lives in Israel (1982). Family taken to Majdanek where all perished. Freier in the ghetto with wife, Ann and child. In ghetto until 1944. Dug ditches and prepared potatoes for winter storage. Chaim Rumkowski ran the ghetto. Freier managed to open a store on the corner of Melinarskaa and Zherjiska Streets selling smuggled goods. Kriminalpolizei caught him and gavem him lashes. Rescued from custody by David Gertler, a friend of his who had connections with the Gestapo. Lived in one room with wife, baby and three others. Women and children, including his wife, taken to Chelmno and killed. Saw the Chief of the Gestapo, Alfred Stromberg kill a woman and her daughter and another girl. Stromberg went to the hospital (where Freier's future wife was trying to save children) and opened fire with a machine gun. After the war, he recognized Stromberg on the street and, along with others, beat him and then turned him over to Nuremburg investigators. Also, Stromberg ID'd as the killer of Melich and Osher Kohn.

Taken to Auschwitz. At Birkenau he saw Mengele watching selection process. As a healthy male, he was taken to the Ziegenlager, the Gypsy camp. Stayed until most gypsies gassed. Sent to Grossrosen after several months and given the number 18091. Given a job by a kapo he knew of preventing inmates from running into the electrified fence to commit suicide. Later selected to be a butcher although he had no experience. Worked in the kitchen with 18 others. Beaten frequently by Jewish Lagerelderster Schmiel Radig who worked there. As Russians approached 19 1945, Freiel marched with 600 from Grossrosen and 7400 other prisoners into Germany. Only 5000 survived the trip. Bodies taken to crematorium. Each barrack had 700 prisoners, 4 to a bunk. Fleier bribed the Stubeneldster with a platinum dental plate to give hem and Benno Latarus dishwashing jobs. Also had job going through clothes for valuables. Other Jews called them Verfluchte Juden, rotten Jews. April, 1945 guards fled and Fleier, suffering from typhoid fever, along with others hid in a barn in Lebenau. Liberated by Americans. Fleier and several other killed 7 SS guards. After liberation, Fleier worked for the American government apprehending war criminals and smugglers. He set up the Jewish Committee and

established a Jewish cemetery. Stayed In Germany until 1949 helping Jews in DP camps in Einring and Lebinau .

Came to the US as he had an uncle, Ephraim Freier, a rabbi in Minneapolis. Had earlier married his second wife, his former sister in law's daughter. Has 2 children, Sara and Danny and two grandchildren. Belongs to Temple Israel.