

## **RG-50.285.0021**

### **Summary**

Eduard Moritz, was born March 17, 1925 in in the Austrian state of Burgenland in Deutschkreutz, (Hungarian: Sopronkeresztúr; Yiddish: צעלעם/Zelem). He describes life during and after the 1938 German annexation of Austria, concentrating on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in Deutschkreutz. For example, he remembers that although he didn't know many Jewish children in elementary school, he knew one boy, Bruno (SP), from the third grade. He recalled that relationships between Jews and gentiles were generally good, and that Jewish neighbors purchased dairy products from his family, who in turn frequented Jewish-owned businesses. In particular, he remembered his family having a good relationship with the Blaukobis (SP) (possibly the family of Jakab Blau).

However, Moritz also recalls ill feelings between the two communities. For example, in secondary school, he says that gentile students were envious of the many Jewish girls there. The girls were rewarded for their studiousness by being allowed to go on excursions, which their families could afford. Less gifted and poorer children; however, were unable to participate. He also remembers that Yeshiva students, arriving by train from other areas, were pelted with eggs and that local Jews escorted them to their lodgings in order to protect them.

He remembers that Jewish merchants in Deutschkreutz worked together for their mutual success. Being unable to find a shirt in the Figenstocks' store, Moritz recalls the proprietor sending an employee to a rival Jewish merchant, who supplied the required item. Moritz also remembered that the rabbi and the Catholic priest got along well, even celebrating their birthdays together. He also describes Jewish merchants decorating their stores and their street fronts when the Catholic Bishop visited. Asked to remember the family names of local Jews, Moritz recalled name like: Dux, Hacker, Brüder, and Zollchan.

Prior to the German annexation, Moritz describes how poor Jewish families employed girls from the nearby Croatian-speaking town of Nikitsch, (Croatian: Filež; Hungarian: Füles) as maids. The girls came to Deutschkreutz to improve their German. Sometimes, the girls were accused by their employers of stealing small items and were not paid for their labor. After the annexation; however, men from Nikitsch came and intimidated the girls' Jewish employers, even engaging in fisticuffs with them.

Moritz describes the German annexation, including people yelling "Jewish-pig" at departing Jews, the plundering and take-overs of Jewish-owned businesses, and the 1941 destruction of the synagogue. He admitted his own initial enthusiasm for the new regime, especially the activities of the Hitler Youth. Moritz became a Hitler Youth leader and eventually enlisted in the Tank Corps of the German Army. He stated that he did not hear about the concentration camps until he was a POW after the war. He also stated that he knew nothing about the fate of the Deutschkreutz Gypsies.