

-TITLE-LEO NEUHAUS
-I_DATE-MARCH 1, 1983
-SOURCE-CHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS ATLANTA
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-FINE
-IMAGE_QUALITY-SLIGHTLY DARK, BUT CLEAR
-DURATION-1 HOUR 17 MINUTES
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

1:02:40 Leo was born on January 22, 1921 in Linchislen (ph) Poland and was liberated at the age of 25. Before the war, he lived with his father, mother brother, and two sisters. They were an upper-class family. Leo attended public school, and went on to a Business Administration school.

1:03:40 Leo did not have much contact with non-Jews before the war. He had a few non-Jewish friends, but not many. He didn't feel very much anti-Semitism. Leo was 17 1/2 when the war started. His first memory is of bombs being dropped and the killing of 200 horses.

1:05:55 The Nuremburg Laws affected Leo greatly. His house was burned and his family had to move into the Ghetto. They slept on the floor in one room. There wasn't enough room for his whole family. Then the Germans started making new laws just for Jews. Their non-Jewish neighbors didn't help them, but didn't hurt them either. They were also in trouble. Leo describes when his father was put in jail for ten days, and his family had to pay a lot to get him out.

1:08:40 Leo and his family felt that they had no options. Leo sold all his things and ran away to Belzec Russia where he was told he would have to join the Russian army, so he returned home. He lived in an open Ghetto and worked for the Germans until August 1940. Then Leo was chosen along with 300 others to go work in p&d in a factory. They stayed there for ten days and then went to work in a labor camp at Posen for six months.

1:10:30 At Posen, they were divided up into groups of fifty. They worked on the highways. Leo felt that he couldn't do anything about his situation, so he made the best of it. His family was still in the city, but he was able to maintain communications with them for two or three months.

1:13:10 After Posen, they were sent to Lichau where they continued to work on the highways. Then they were moved to Zehaufen (ph), a village through which the highway went. At the end of 1941, they went to Buchenhof - a labor camp. All their money was taken and contact with their families was ended.

1:16:35 Leo left Buchenhof in 1943 and went to Auschwitz... He had very little contact with the outside world. When he got to Auschwitz, he didn't know where he was. Someone told him not to worry because tomorrow he would be dead. They gave up everything they had and got uniforms. Then they went through selection where Leo first saw Dr. Mengele. The first few days in the camp, Leo was scared to death. Many people committed suicide. At 22 years old, Leo felt he was too young to die and was convinced to live through it.

1:19:20 Every day Leo woke up, went to a big square where he got soup, bread, and coffee and worked all day, then went home and slept. Sometimes he built electronic things, and sometimes he loaded the bread that came into the camp. Leo describes a time when he was accused of stealing, and punished.

1:23:13 Leo remembers that some tried to escape, but were caught and hanged in front of the rest of the camp. Leo did as much as he could to survive. In November they were sent to the punishment commander where their shoes were taken, and they slept five to a bed. Leo volunteered to go work in coal mine.

1:28:23 Leo arrived in Jaworzno, a division of Auschwitz, in the end of 1943. He worked there for 18 months. They got more food, but it still wasn't enough. Leo describes a time when he stole a shirt to sell, but was caught and punished. His shoulder was broken, but he was not allowed to go to the hospital and he didn't want to because after three days in the hospital, one was sent to the crematorium, so he went to work with a broken shoulder.

1:30:51 In 1945, when the Russians came, they were taken on a march. They walked 120 kilometers, all night and all day. One of his friends was killed right in front of him. At Blechmah (ph), Leo, his two cousins, and another man managed to run away into the forest.

1:34:55 Leo was in three labor camps before Auschwitz. Not many people in the camp helped each other because they didn't have anything to give each other. Only two of the original 300 survived. Everyone was scared to talk out loud. People were killed for nothing. In Jaworzno, 30 to 45 people were killed every day. Leo remembers once in a while laughing because of their troubles, but never from humor. They were treated like dogs-like slaves.

1:38:18 No one ever tried to sabotage the operation because they were scared of endangering the whole camp. They didn't have any personal contact with the SS and no one in the camp talked about what was happening to the Jews. Leo remembers that there was a band in Auschwitz to block out the screaming from the crematoria.

1:44:18 Leo believed, because of what was happening to the Jews, that there was no more God. Before the war, Leo was very religious. He recalls practicing as much as he could in the camps.

Auschwitz was the worst. Once Leo was hung by his hands for trying to get extra soup. Leo never got sick otherwise, and if he did, he went to work anyway.

1:49:43 Leo did not see a woman from 1943 to 1945. He worked the night shift and got fed once every twenty-four hours. He was hungry all the time. At the time of liberation, Leo weighed only ninety pounds.

1:53:53 Leo was never involved in killing during the war, but after the war he killed a man for calling him a "dirty Jew." Finally Leo saw signs of the end of the war when he saw Russian planes dropping bombs in December 1944. Otherwise, he was unaware of what went on outside the camp.

1:16:33 When Leo and the others escaped to the forest, they were finally found by Russian soldiers who gave them a place to stay. The first time they ate, they got dysentery. On February 1, 1945, Leo returned to Łódź.

1:67:18 Leo went to Chelno to look for his family. He did not locate them, so he returned to Łódź where he started a business. In December 1945, he moved to Munich, where he got married. Leo recalls that there was still a curfew at that time. In 1951 Leo went to Baltimore. He still gets sick and weak every day from his experience.

2:02:04 Leo is still proud to be a Jew. He feels that the camps made him stronger. He never felt bad about taking the checks from the Germans because they have to pay for something. He hopes nothing like this will ever happen again, but he thinks it is possible. He still has nightmares about the war.

2:04:04 Once Germans came into his town and robbed his family. Hitler killed six million Jews, including Leo's family. Leo hopes that the second generation doesn't forget what happened.

2:07:14 Leo has only been back to Dachau. He says that visit didn't help him deal with his experience any better, it just made him remember. He says that he has no desire to return to his birthplace because there is no one left there. In 1987, Leo was called to testify in a trial in Germany and identify the Germans who had rounded him up.

2:08:14 Leo relates what happened at the trial. He was asked questions and he answered. People he knew were on trial.

2:09:39 Leo believes Israel is a good place for the Jews if there is peace. He feels that Hitler couldn't live with the Jews, no one else cared.

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