

-TITLE-AVRAM PODBER
-I_DATE-AUGUST 27, 1984
-SOURCE-CHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS ATLANTA
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-POOR
-IMAGE_QUALITY-POOR
-DURATION-1 HOUR
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-

1:01:00 Abe was born on September 9, 1919. His family of six children lived in a small town in Poland called Veshneva (ph). At the time of liberation Abe was 26 years old. He describes life in the small town as good and simple with strong family structure in religion and business.

1:03:05 Abe describes his childhood as one of simplicity of good education through Hebrew School. He states that there were never any trouble with the gentiles in the town.

1:03:30 Abe's first memories of the war were when the German's came into the Russian-occupied half of Poland in 1939.

1:04:04 Abe had no knowledge of the 1933 Nuremburg laws. he describes how the Germans came into this town, taking food, clothes and all luxuries. They had to smuggle food into the house, and when the Germans wanted to take his father and mother to the police station, Abe stood in their way and was taken in their place.

1:06:19 While in the police station, he saw ill-clad and naked Jews being brought in and arrested. The prisoners were to dig graves for the murdered Jews. Abe was one of these. During the night he escaped back to catacombs of the town.

1:09:04 In 1941 he remembers living in the ghetto for a couple of months. No-Jews were unable to help for fear of their own arrest and punishment. The Germans killed anyone who attempted to help the Jews in the ghetto. Whenever they received anything from the outside, it was confiscated and they were either shot or severely punished. The Germans would come to the ghetto and order young people to do labor tasks.

1:10:29 The average day in the ghetto started at 5:00 a.m. so that the Jews would always be aware of what was going on. they lived in a small run-down house, they never had enough food, and they feared going outside during the daytime. They lived like scurrying rats trying to scrounge up food. The Germans surrounded the ghetto, and all escapees who were caught were shot immediately. Work orders continued and no business or education took place.

1:12:19 In the summer of 1941, Abe met up with his family in a parking lot of a deserted synagogue to see what was happening. Twenty trucks were brought in. People were told to get on the ground with their heads down. Those who looked up were shot right away. They many more trucks came to the parking lot to take others to be killed in the woods. Abe describes a time when they put hundreds of people in a meeting hall, locked it, barred all exits, and then lit it on fire with kerosene. he and one other boy were the only ones to escape, and they were shot at as they fled the burning building. They played dead in order to escape to the woods.

1:17:09 The two stayed in the woods for about two weeks. Others came but then they were all captured and sent to Literow (ph). They were put in a working camp for a year and they brought to Germany. Apart from his family, he knew that some of them died in the fire.

1:19:59 They had a sort of government through committee in the ghetto. The leaders would come and tell the group the needs of the Germans in terms of work orders and then attempt to figure out who should go. Resistance was minimal. There were no newspapers or media. Out of 600-700 people in his original town, Abe believes only twenty survived.

1:22:14 Abe recalls some religious ceremony during the night as they got books together and had minions and services. He claims the Germans never knew.

1:22:44 In the forest with five or six friends in 1942, they were captured and taken to Stutthof. He recalls that there were thousands of Jews given uniforms with Jewish stars on the front and back. He remembers the guards striking the prisoners with forks and spoons while they were eating. They never really rested.

1:23:59 Abe knew that they were in trouble when they go to Dachau. They slept in beds three stories high on hard wood. He worked carrying cement, and he remembers people dying all around him everyday.

1:25:44 Abe was in Stutthof for 5-4 weeks and then sent to Dachau in deep Germany near Munich. Abe thought he was definitely going to die. He still had faith in God but there was so much death and sickness. He knew that if he ever went to the doctor because of illness he would be killed right away.

1:27:34 If there was any resistance in the camps, or any food or clothing stolen, the people were killed immediately.

1:28:14 Abe worked as a locomotive driver, which was a good job because it was much easier than carrying cement. This only lasted for about three or four months. He states that there was never enough food or water and there was not much of a support system since everyone had the same amount of everything.

1:29:59 Abe recalls that the Polish people in the camps that were not Jewish had the best jobs in the kitchen because they were always around the food.

1:32:19 The Non-Jews and German criminals had different facilities than the Jews. The German criminals were treated much better than the Jews. There were many Russian prisoners from the takeover of Poland that were sent to the work camps as well.

1:34:59 Abe never talked to the SS troops. He says there was never any time for religion in the camps, they were constantly searched, and if anything was found, they were instantly killed.

1:36:09 Abe felt that his prayers were not being answered, yet he believes now that he survived because of God's will.

1:36:59 Abe never got seriously ill and if he got any cuts or bruises he tried to cover them up so that the guards did not send him to the doctor.

1:38:00 In 1945 they were told that they were going to be marched to the Torola Hills(ph). Abe thought that this was surely going to kill them all. They marched to an old German camp called Wolfenhausen (ph) and they were told that the Americans would soon be there. They ate better here.

1:40:40 The Jews were put in a house with Russian prisoners, the total amounting to about 500-600 people. The Commander Morde (ph) came in and told all the Russians to exit the building. They were carted off to the wood and all shot. Abe heard the shooting and crawled up the chimney in order to hide. He remained high up in the chimney from about 11:00 p.m. until about 7:00 a.m. the next day.

1:44:20 He then heard a lot more noise coming from downstairs and when he peaked his head out the chimney, he saw that the Jews were all eating like animals at a number of different tables. The Americans had come. One spoke Yiddish with Abe. He remembers that about half the people died from eating too much that day.

1:45:20 He went to a DP camp and was registered. He had a job in the kitchen and was given an American uniform. He remembers Eisenhower coming to the camp.

1:46:25 He found that two brothers of his were still alive. One went to Israel and the other went to the United States. Abe did some business for a few years and then went to the United States as well.

1:48:45 The worst memories were knowing his parents were dead. He refused to file for war reparations for ten years and then he decided to do so. At first he could not stand the thought of taking their money.

1:49:99 Abe does not think that another such Holocaust is possible because of his faith in the United States. He wants the new generation to know about it and he especially wants the Germans to know what they did. he never wants to visit Europe again.

1:53:25 He believes that the founding of Israel has a direct relationship with the Holocaust and he believes that Israel will someday be the strongest nation in the world.

1:55:15 Abe remembers the bodies in the ditches and the atrocities that the Germans did to the small children. He relies on his family to keep him going.

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