

DONOR: SAMUEL LICHTMAN  
INTERVIEWER: EDITH KIMELMAN  
DATE: JULY 21, 1988

approx. running time - 1 hour

Tape Footage: Background

1-307 Samuel was born in Zamosc, Poland. He had four brothers and five sisters.

Beginning of the War

At the beginning of the war when the Germans came, Samuel and his brother left Zamosc for Rudlow. His brother was four years older.

In Zamosc there were 17,000 Jews out of a population of 35,000.

308-678 When Samuel left Zamosc in September, 1939 he thought he would be coming back soon. He and his brother walked 70 miles to Rudlow.

Samuel grew up very poor, but his parents always managed. His father had a little store and was always satisfied with what they had.

Samuel's oldest sister was married and had five children. His older brother was married but did not have children. The rest of the siblings were unmarried and lived at home at the start of the war.

The war began with the Germans, and then the Russians came in.

As a child Samuel attended school and cheder.

Rudlow

In Rudlow Samuel managed little by little, wandering around. He was 25.

679-793 There he met a former neighbor who found him a place to stay. This was the home of his future wife. Then the Russians told them they were too close to the border and they had to move back. So Samuel spent January to April deep in Russia, returning to Rudlow in the spring.

In Rudlow they were asked to sign up if they wanted to go over to the German side. Samuel signed up, because he had no life where he was. Then the Russians captured all those who signed up to go to Germany and sent them to Siberia. Samuel hid, and was left behind. His brother and two sisters were sent to Siberia. Samuel made his way to the German side.

794-1052 In June, 1941 Samuel was taken to the train station to unload 500 pound bombs from the cars. He worked from daybreak until one in the morning. The work was very hard. At this point Russia was at war with Germany.

Samuel signed up as a carpenter with the Judenreit and was assigned work.

Once he was on a list of people to go work in the city of Kovo (Kowel). Samuel paid 300 marks to be taken off the list. But his name appeared anyway. He was told if he didn't go, everyone in his house would be killed. It was supposed to be for 14 days, and ended up being for six months.

There were pogroms there.

1053-1546 At this time there was not a ghetto in Wladimir, where he had been living. When he returned from Kovo, there was a ghetto.

### Pogroms

There were three pogroms in Wladimir. On August 31, 1942 12,000 Jews were taken and killed by the Germans. On November 13, 1942, 3,000 Jews were killed, and on December 13, 1943 another 2,000 were killed. Two Germans named Keller and Schutt stood and shot the Jews.

Samuel was taken to dig what he was told were airport storage tanks. About 1,000 people were working digging. Some returned home at night, others slept overnight at a farm. The hole they dug was 50 metres by 30 metres, and three feet deep. It was a mass grave.

The Jews were brought there, stripped and shot.

One 15 year-old girl named Weinstein was brought there at five in the afternoon. She was grazed by bullets in three different places and left for dead. She fell asleep with bodies on top of her. In the morning she was discovered by a farmer covering up the hole, and taken to the ghetto hospital. She was in hospital four months, and survived the war.

1547-1702 After the war, Samuel's mother-in-law met a 10-year-old girl who had been in hiding and then set free. She had no one left and nowhere to go. Samuel's mother-in-law took her in for a while and then Samuel took her to an orphanage in Lublin. Eventually she was taken to Israel.

Samuel was married after the war.

In the ghetto they lived in assigned places. In the Kovo ghetto there was a high fence all around. It was liquidated quickly.

1703-2236 After the first pogrom there was food left behind in people's houses. The Judenreit was in charge of rations.

The Germans would take people to work and they would disappear. Once they asked the Judenreit for 5,000 people, and the Judenreit refused. So the Germans took even more.

When Samuel returned from Kovo he was working as a carpenter. One morning the Jewish police took him to the Judenreit. There were about 40 others who were caught as well. The Germans told them they were going to work and sent them home to pack with a police escort. Samuel asked the Judenreit president why he

was being sent away again, and the president told him, 'maybe it will be better in this other place.' Then Samuel asked the vice-president the same question and the vice-president gave him the advise that saved his life. He told him to be the last one to go out. Samuel was, and because the Germans wanted 40 people and had caught 42, Samuel was left behind and was saved.

### In Hiding

2237-2637 Samuel worked for the Germans as a carpenter. After the December pogrom he hid underground with four others on a farm. Some nights they slept there, and sometimes they came out at night, depending on the danger. They hid there from December 25, 1943 until July 22, 1944.

The last six days in hiding were the worse. The Germans had left and taken the farmer with them, but Samuel and the others did not know. When the Germnas met the Russians the farmer returned home. His daughter opened up the hiding place, but didn't say anything. so none of them moved. She came back three hours later and asked them why they were still hiding. The Russians, she told them, had arrived six days before.

Even when they came out at night they could not see anything.

2638-2934 Samuel's future mother-in-law went into hiding at this place on December 13. The next day his brother-in-law went into hiding. Samuel and his future wife left the ghetto around seven in the evening on December 25. and arrived at the hiding place around midnight. By then the others thought they were dead already.

This farmer was Czech, and his wife was Polish. They had a big farm. Three of their children were killed during the war.

Before they went into hiding, Samuel would sneak out of the ghetto every night to prepare the hiding place. The farmer was poor, nervous and afraid. In hiding the food situation was very bad. The farmer gave them some potatoes.

2935-3184 When Samuel was doing his carpentry work there was no overseer. The Germans came to the Judenreit for workers, and the Judenreit sent people out on the jobs. The Judenreit did everything.

In Kovo Samuel received a little payment for his work, but not in Wladimir.

The Germans he worked for did not give him anything.

Everything that happened to him he just accepted.

On July 22, 1944 Samuel was liberated by the Russians.

His wife's aunt, who had lived in Canada for years, arranged for them to come here.

Samuel did not find many members of his family after the war. His two brothers and two sisters who had been in Russia survived. Samuel's older brother moved

to Australia after the war, and has since died.

Samuel's sister and brother-in-law came to Winnipeg too. His other sister settled in Chicago.

3185-3459 Samuel went over to the German side when the German-Russian war broke out.

### Canada

After the war Samuel and his wife stayed in Wladimir until moving to Canada in 1948. In Winnipeg, Samuel worked as a carpenter for many years and then owned a grocery store.

Samuel has two sons, one daughter and five grandchildren. His wife died ten years ago.

Samuel and his wife came out of Poland with the Bricha, crossing the Czech border illegally. They stayed in Czechoslovakia a few weeks, then crossed illegally over the Austrian border. Their oldest son was born in Salsburg, where they stayed for a short time. They were looked after by UNRA.

After the war Samuel had no family left in Zamosc. By 1942 it was free of Jews.

Samuel's mother-in-law's sister in Winnipeg knew a farmer who agreed to sponsor Samuel to Canada as a farmer.

Samuel had lived in Winnipeg since arriving in Canada. His family lives here too.