

Interviewee:	<u>BURK</u> , Rosa Zygmund	Date:	November 12, 1996
Interviewer:	Liesel Loeb		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
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Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Rosa Zygmund Burk, nee Tennenbaum was born on April 20, 1927 in Szydlowiec, Poland, a town of about (90%) 7,200 Jews. She was the daughter of David and Ethel Tennenbaum. Her father was a shoe factory worker and a member of the Bund. Rosa describes their life before the German invasion, her schooling and the Jewish community life. At school they spoke Polish, studied Jewish subjects separately, and at home they spoke Yiddish. She had a large extended family of which only she and two cousins survived.

Rosa describes the German invasion in September 1939: raiding Jewish homes, cutting off men's beards, the beatings and murders. She explains that the Germans and the Polish police completely burned down the towns' synagogues. She discusses the *Judenrat* and how they supplied money and riches to the Germans in hopes of saving the people. She details the creation of the Slovia Ghetto and explains how Jews from Krakow and Warsaw flocked to this ghetto because it was an open ghetto and how the crowded conditions created disease.

Rosa was deported on foot at the end of 1942 to the labor camp, Skarzysko and worked in the HASAG ammunition plant. She goes into great detail about the cruelty of the Germans and the work and living conditions. She also mentions some kindnesses from a Jewish Kapo. In 1944, Rosa was transferred by truck to another ammunition work camp, Czestochowa, where there were constant "selections." Rosa describes in detail the hardships of working in these factories and how she escaped the death march to Buchenwald by hiding in a latrine. On January 16, 1945 she and five other girls walked out of camp and into the town of Czestochowa and were liberated by the Soviets a few days later when they converted the house they were living in to a hospital. They worked as nurses for the Russian wounded.

Rosa did not return to her home town because of antisemitism. She fled to the American zone in Erfurt, Germany and then to Frankfurt am Main. She was in the Zeilsheim Displaced Persons camp run by the Joint Distribution Committee, and there she met her husband (who had been liberated from Buchenwald). After the war they moved to Frankfurt and then to the U. S. on February 2, 1950 with the support of the Joint Distribution Committee.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War, 1939 - 1945 -- Personal narrative, Jewish
Holocaust, Jewish (1939 - 1945) -- Personal narrative
World War, 1939 - 1945 -- Poland
Poland - History -- German occupation 1939-1945
Jewish ghettos--Poland--Slovakia
World War, 1939-1945- Skarzysko: Labor camp
World War, 1939-1945- HASAG: Labor camp
World War, 1939-1945- Czestochowa: Labor camp
World War, 1939 - 1945 --Poland-- Szydlowiec
Refugee camps--Germany--Zeilsheim.Displaced persons camps (Zeilsheim, Germany)
Refugee aid organizations
Survival skills