

Interviewee: LEVEY, Daniel  
Interviewer: Patricia Rich

Date: April 14, 2008

Audio tapes: 2 English  
Restrictions: None

Transcript: 1 vol. (unpaged) English

## SUMMARY

Daniel Levey, born April 24, 1925 in Sarajevo, was one of eight children in an impoverished Sephardic family who spoke Ladino at home. His father was a tailor and served in WWI under the Ottoman Empire. Daniel shares his childhood memories of their poverty and pre-war life. They lived in a Muslim neighborhood, where Daniel was assaulted by street gangs. His family attended the Sarajevo Synagogue, in a community of 15,000 Jews, who were forced into a ghetto after the German invasion in 1941. They had to wear an armband with the letter "Z" for *Židov*, the Croatian word for Jew. He did forced labor briefly in a military work crew, having been assigned to a skilled labor brigade because of his electrician experience. He evaded Nazi registration and stopped wearing his star.

After he escaped from a roundup, he passed as a Muslim with an assumed name of Gerald Levvage [phonetic] and a false ID. He joined partisans fighting Germans and Russian Cossacks near Mostar, which was occupied by Italians. In 1942, he was captured and imprisoned at Boka Kotorska. He describes humane treatment by the Italians. He got himself a job on kitchen duty and helped other prisoners by bringing them food. After Italy surrendered in 1943, the prison became a hospital where Daniel worked as a cook until he emigrated to Canada and then to the United States in 1948. He credits the Italians for saving him and other Jews from the brutal Croatian prison guards at Rab concentration camp. All of the Levey family, except for Daniel and one brother, who settled in Israel, perished in German camps.