

Interviewee:	<u>WALDNER</u> , Alfred	Date:	May 28, 1989
Interviewer:	Edith Millman		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

## SUMMARY

Alfred Waldner was born August 20, 1913 in Cieszyn<sup>1</sup>, Poland into a religious Jewish family. He briefly describes pre-war life, education, joining his family in their restaurant business and in philanthropic work. He never experienced antisemitism until the German occupation on September 1, 1939. Their home and restaurant were taken and given to local *Volksdeutsche*. Alfred was forced to work for the Germans, cleaning streets and military barracks. In 1941, in Tarnopol, and in 1942, in Janówka, he was a driver for *Sturmführers*. He describes witnessing atrocities. He also shares some incidents when he was able to help people to escape. He describes a narrow escape after being slated for death. In July, 1943, he was sent to Birkenau to work in Buna Monowitz in the IG Farben chemical plant where he describes a selection, sleeping on floors and being near starvation. He recalls that a gentile Polish neighbor from his hometown used to leave him food scraps from his rations.

Alfred survived a forced march in December 1943 to Gleiwitz and then sent to Dora-Nordhausen where he worked in an underground factory producing V-1 and V-2 rockets, together with Russian POWs and Poles. He describes rampant illness, near starvation and abominable conditions. He also describes Russian POWs being hung daily for sabotaging the equipment. Alfred was transferred to Bergen-Belsen, where he describes the horrific conditions as the Germans tried to kill off as many Jews as possible. He gives a detailed description of contamination, typhus and dysentery and how they realized that this might be the end to the war. He was liberated in April 1945 by the British Army and then spent several months recuperating in a hospital in Celle. In Prague, he met and married a widow with a six-year-old son. Jailed for smuggling American dollars on the black market, he was freed by a sympathetic judge.

He emigrated to the United States in 1946 and worked as a farmer in New Jersey. He moved to Newark in the 1950s, where he acquired a high school diploma and an engineering degree. He became manager of the third largest toy factory in the United States. After retiring to Miami Beach, FL, he organized a small synagogue and helped needy Jews, committing his life to the practice of Judaism.

See also interview with his sister, Elsa Turteltaub.

<sup>1</sup>Also spelled Teschen.

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## SUBJECT HEADINGS

Teschen (Poland)

*Volksdeutsche*

World War 1939-1945

Atrocities

Birkenau – arrival and tattooing

Buna Monowitz – Auschwitz

IG Farben chemical plant

Death march

Dora-Nordhausen

Bergen-Belsen

Aid by non-Jews

Survival skills