

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Geldman, Abraham

Date of interview: 7/25/1991

Summary: Abram Geldman was born in Lublin, Poland on May 4, 1922 as Abruchaim Geldman. His early memories of life in Poland are very clear. He remembers everything about the houses he grew up in, the schools he attended, and the way his life was before the war. Abram remembers anti-Semitism in his town starting in 1935. He remembers that Poland and his town were protected from anti-Semitism because of one of the members of Parliament who protected the Jewish population. However, in 1935 this member of Parliament died.

On September 1, 1939 the war began. Abram remembers on the first day of war, a Friday, his mother went to the market to do her weekly shopping for the upcoming Shabbat. As she returned home from the market she was crying because she was aware that the war had begun. On September 2, 1939, Abram's town of Lublin was bombed. The Germans bombed the suburbs of the city because a factory that assembled warplanes was located there. On September 7th or 8th, 1939 the Germans got on the local radio and announced that they had captured Breslow. Actually they did not capture Breslow and the government of Poland had escaped to Lublin.

On September 9, 1939, Lublin was bombed. Abram remembers lots of fire and destruction in his town. That day his family went to the store to buy bicycles to escape from the city, but the plan changed. His father decided that Abram should leave the city with other young adults, because he was still young and capable. His family gave him some food and he never saw them again. Abram began his journey to the Russian border. He walked 250 miles to a town near the Russian front.

On April 16th, 1939, Abram and the other young men arrived at Rovna, Poland. Abram described this event as a bad time. The town was very close to the border of the Soviet Union. On April 17, 1939, the town of Rovna was taken over by the Russians. In Rovna, Abram was able to live and go to school. In June of 1939, Russian officers approached his door and asked to see his documents. He did not have any because when he left Lublin he believed that he would only be gone for two weeks. The officers took him from his home to a train that would take him to Siberia. Abram remembers thousands of people on the train. During the train ride, he was able to get off the train to get a drink of water. While getting water, Abram fell, and the train left without him. He then walked back to Rovna, and went back to his same home. He was able to get a passport from the Soviet Union, which did not allow him to go to school or to leave. On September 25, 1939, as he was walking by the train station he saw that a train was leaving for Lublin. He was granted permission to get on the train. He had nothing to eat. On

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September 28, 1939 the train was about 14 km from Lublin, and the train conductor announced that Lublin had been taken over by Germany and was now a German state with only German citizens. The train turned back to Rovna.

When he returned to Rovna he went to a KGB officer to ask for permission to go back to school. The KGB officer looked at his passport, which said it was for prisoners of 10 years. The KGB officer issued him a new passport that allowed him to study at a university. He studied in Rovna for a year.

On June 22, 1940 Germany attacked the Russians and the town of Rovna was bombed. Abram then went to Kakus to the Krasender University. He then went to Mahachkala because the front approached Kakus and was able to board a ship that took him across the Caspian Sea to Tashkent the capital of Uzbekistan. He remained there for 10 days.

On December 9, 1940 Abram went to Semerkand (not sure about spelling). In Semerkand he was able to study for four years at a university and graduated in 1944. He was alone during the four years at Semerkand and worked as a woodcutter to make some extra money.

In July or August of 1944 he was sent to Kishinov (did not say why), which was occupied by the Germans. From October 1944 until 1987 Abram worked at the same organization as a main merchandise expert for a commercial company.

In 1987 he emigrated to the U.S. from Poland. Abram did not talk about when he met his wife or when he had his children. He did mention that this wife was killed on July 1, 1988 in a car accident. Abram remembers the details of his early life very vividly. Despite his search for his family and what happened to them, he does not know where and how they died. He is very interested in the events of World War II. He has done much research and newspaper article writing on the subject.