

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

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Name of interviewee: Felson, Stan

Date of interview: 2/12/1989

Summary: Stan Felson was born in a town in Poland, Glubokoye, which is now part of Belarus. His father was a merchant/business man. He was the oldest, with two brothers. All of his mother's family fled before the war started so he never met them. Stan's childhood was really quite normal. He remembers helping his dad run his business. He went to both public school and private school for 1st-7th grade, then graduated and attended a business school for one year. At age 14, his job search began.

In 1939, the Russians came in and his father was forced to sell his business. He remembers his mother getting a feeling of danger and knew things were not right. He went to work everyday at this point and was just happy to come home alive at the end of the day. In 1941, they were given the Star of David and forced to wear it. In June 1942, 2,500 Jews were killed in his town, fortunately he and his family stayed in their attic because they had a feeling something bad was going to happen. Stan believes his instinct played a crucial role in his survival.

His family lived in a village, which was made into a ghetto. He said everyone in the ghetto had a lot of faith and hope for a miracle. Prayers were always being said and faith was what kept them alive.

In the winter of 1942, Stan met a partisan and decided to leave the ghetto with him and 25 other partisans. Stan's parents did not want him to go but he said he had to get out and fight. He wanted to be involved. So, they left in the middle of the night on horse and in wagons. They were given bread from rich farmers. Stan loved being out of the ghetto. He said he felt like a free man in the forest even though it was very dangerous. He lived in these forests not too far from the villages until 1944. In 1943, Stan was given permission to go to back to the ghetto; this was a very hard thing to do. He went to get his father, mother and younger brothers. His mother and father were too afraid to leave. His youngest brother stayed with his mother. They were killed soon after Stan left to go back to the forests. They were killed because some farmers reported them, so they were shot. Only 15 people, made it out of this ghetto.

The Russians liberated them in 1944. Stan went back to Poland on a mission to get to San Francisco. In 1947, at the age of 24, he was able to reach San Francisco and find his relatives that left in 1904. He works in real estate and has a wife and three sons. He says he sometimes goes through times of depression, but the best way for him to feel better is too keep busy. He does experience some feelings of guilt and has nightmares sometimes. He also mentions how he has trouble making decisions now even if they are small, because before he had to make so many life and death decisions.