

Questions to Consider When Viewing Video

1. How large was Hal's immediate family?
2. What were the conditions that forced his family to move from their first home to another?
3. What were some of the ways in which the Nuremberg Laws changed life for his parents as well as for himself and his brother?
4. What special task was he given by his mother before the Sabbath? What problems did he face in doing this task by 1938?
5. Why did he want a pair of black corduroy short pants?
6. Where did his sister Ruth go in 1938? What was the name of the program?
7. Describe some of the scenes that Hal witnessed when Hitler was going to visit his town.
8. What did Hal see on Kristallnacht?
9. Where was his father taken during Kristallnacht? How did this experience change his father?
10. What were some of the instructions that Hal and his family were given when they were being deported in October, 1940?
11. How did the Quakers help the children in Camp Gurs?
12. What miracle took place for both Hal and his brother?

Holocaust Survivor Hal Myers (Hans Siegfried Hanauer)

Filmed on March 8, 2007



"There was no way to concentrate or to know what the future would hold."

- Hal Myers

Face to Face
A Holocaust Education Program at
Congregation Shaarey Tikvah
Beachwood, Ohio

Hans Siegfried Hanauer, later to become Hal Myers, was born in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1930. In 1935 Hal's father lost his job as a traveling salesman as a result of the Nuremberg Laws against Jews. The family had to move to a less expensive neighborhood. Hal remembers the other boys chasing him, yelling, "Run, dirty Jew, run!"

Hitler sometimes visited Karlsruhe and attracted excited, enthusiastic crowds of townspeople. Hal observed some of these spectacles and was frightened by the behavior of the crowd.

On Kristallnacht, a night of organized violence against Jews, synagogues, and Jewish-owned businesses, Hal awoke at 3:00 a.m. He and his brother Dieter saw men with cans of gasoline go into the nearby synagogue to set it on fire. They watched the men carry out Torahs and holy books to be dumped into a bonfire. Their apartment was vandalized. Soon Hal's 12-year-old sister Ruth went on the Kindertransport, a program which took children to England without their parents.

Hal's father was standing across the street between two policemen. Hal stood next to his father, who hissed at him, "Get away. Run now. Go to Tante Anna's (Aunt Anna's)." He obeyed and ran to his aunt's house. Hal's father was sent to Dachau and returned in March, 1939, "a changed man, afraid of his shadow, a shell of a man."

In October, 1940, Nazis arrived at their door, ordered the family to pack one bag per person, take food

for at least three days and no more than ten marks per person, which was not much money. The Nazis gave no explanation and refused to answer questions. After one hour they returned to march Hal's family to the railroad station. As 900 Jews joined the deportation procession, their non-Jewish neighbors watching from their windows made no attempt to help. After a wait of several hours at the train station, the Jews were loaded onto fourth-class carriages.

On the train ride, the Jews were given nothing to drink, and sanitary conditions were very poor. Armed soldiers prevented the Jews from leaving the train at stops. After a three-day train ride, they arrived in France and were trucked to Camp Gurs.

At Gurs the prisoners were divided into groups and sent to separate enclosures surrounded by barbed wire. Men and women were separated. Hal was put with his mother, his brother, and his Aunt Anna. Living conditions were primitive with little food, deep mud, open bathroom facilities, and no privacy. Fortunately, Hal's mother was able to get extra food by working in the kitchen.

In January, 1941, Quaker women from a relief group were allowed to remove 50 children, including Hal's younger brother, from Gurs. Hal was on the second and final transport to leave, a group of 48 children. In August, 1941, Hal was sent to the United States. He arrived in the U.S. in October 1941. Hal and his brother were adopted and raised by David and Inez Myers.