

## **Nikolaos Theodorou**

**RG-50.855\*0011**

### **Summary**

Nikolaos Theodorou was born in 1929 in Thessaloniki (Salonika) in the North Central part of Greece. He describes his experience as Greek Christian during the German occupation (1941 -1944). His family comprised of his parents, grandparents and his mother's sister. They lived on Karpoula 6 Street, Thessaloniki. His father was a Government employee at an agency responsible for draining swamps and turning them into cultivatable farms. He maintained his employment during the occupation, because the Germans were afraid of malaria and were interested in draining mosquitos' breeding grounds. Nikolaos went to the University of Salonika in 1948 and graduated as a Chemist.

In his neighborhood, around the intersection of Filippou and Elefteriou Venizelou Streets, there were a lot of Jewish families. He had a number of friends and playmates as he was growing up. He remembers some by only their first names: Leoniko, Ino, and Jacko. His mother was friendly with Ino's mother, who lived in the back of their house, and a "madam" Allegra, across the street. Also, his father had a lot of Jewish acquaintances through his work. The only whole name he remembers is Andreas Sifiha, who was his classmate in high school after the war. Andreas was saved because he was a Spanish citizen. He returned to Salonika and eventually became the President of the Jewish Community there. He remembers a Jewish owned store on Venizelou Street, between Filippou and Olimpou streets, where they used to buy candy, magazines and other novelties. Very few Jews returned from the Holocaust. Nikolaos remembers that the Molho Bookstore, one of the best in town, reopened

Salonika was bombed by the Italians at the beginning of the war, on October 20, 1940. There were two bombs fallen in the neighborhood. The families living in his building used the basement as a shelter. The family who stayed on the floor above actually left because they were scared. On about April 20, 1941, German soldiers moved in the empty apartment above. They caused no problem, to the contrary, they were rather sensitive to the other families. Only one of them was rough, especially towards the Jews. The night before the Germans left for the Russian Front, they had a party and were very emotional. The day they were leaving, they gave chocolates to the kids in the neighborhood.

The first thing he noticed was that all the Jewish homes and stores were marked with a yellow star and the Jews were made to wear a similar star on their breasts. Then, they were not allowed to move outside their neighborhoods, then, they were gathered in

ghettoes, and finally, were taken away. Their Christian friends were worried, but never imagined that they will be taken to concentration camps and exterminated. After the Jews left, their houses were pillaged and eventually were given, primarily, to Christian Immigrants from Asian Minor, and their stores to collaborators and people with connections.