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**Oral history interview with Dimitrios Tsilividis**

**Summary**

Dimitrios Tsilividis, born in Volos, Central Greece, in 1927, describes his experience as a Christian during the German occupation. His family house was on Thoukididou street, in "old town", close to the Jewish neighborhood (not a ghetto!). He became a Dentist, and later, at 60 yrs, he went back to the University, and got a degree in Theology. His father was a coppersmith and had a small industry and shop making and selling copper kitchen utensils.

He had 2-3 close neighbors, Sterina (Esther) and Zakinos (Isaac) Cohen, his brother Haim Cohen (doesn't remember his wife's name) and daughter Palestine, classmate Martha and her brother Leonikos (doesn't remember their last name). Almost half of the students in his Elementary school were Jewish. His best friend was Albertos Politis. His father had a store with glass items and the family was well off. They both went to the University of Athens. Dimitrios became a Dentist and Albertos a Medical Doctor (Psychiatrist). They served together in the Greek Navy. Dimitrios returned to Volos. Albertos went to Athens and later immigrated to the United States. Albertos had a sister, Luna who married to a Jewish man, last name Avdelas. Dimitrios remembered other students: Pepos (Joseph) Farantzis, Matathias, Sabethai, and Alegri (doesn't remember last name). He was a boy scout. The Jews formed their own troop. Although they were well integrated in the overall Volos community, they tried to maintain their own national identity.

Hermou Street was the main shopping street at that time. There were a lot of Jewish stores there. Some notable ones were of: Avdelas, Frezis, Ambastado, Daskalakis, Cohen, and Iosif (Joseph) Samouil. Other well known Jews were Elias Cohen OB-GYN Doctor with his own clinic; Isidor Varouh, Banker; and Anselmos Mourtzoukos, who had a large textile factory. The Jews were considered good merchants; as a result, there were envied by others. They were very quite and law-abiding citizens. They were indistinguishable from the other citizens of Volos.

When the Greek front fell, the Germans entered Volos in April, 1941, but left after a short period. The Italians then occupied Volos until Sept. 8, 1943. On Sept. 12, 1943 the Germans returned. They took all foodstuffs for their troops. Hunger dominated and a number of people died. Shortly after, the Germans asked Rabbi Moisis (Moses) Pesah, to produce, within 24-48 hours, a list of all the Jews in Volos. Pesah went to his friend, Archbishop Ioakim, asking for help. Ioakim consulted the then German philhellene Consul Helmut Scheffel as to what was going on. Scheffel sent secret word for the Jews to leave immediately. Rabbi Pesah spread the word, and almost all the Jews left. They went to Athens or the surrounding villages. The Germans did not take any other

measures. So, all was quite, and some people, specially the ones who could not afford to stay away, returned. The majority remained out. Nothing happened until March/April, 1944. Then the Germans quietly picked up and sent to concentration camps about 130 Jews. 75% of the Jews of Volos were not captured. The national Resistance movement protected them and forced the villagers, with the penalty of death, to hide them. A number of young Jews participated in the Resistance. Elias Cones was one of them.