

RG-90.105.0003

Summary

Henry Kronberg was born in Germany, but moved shortly thereafter to Katowice in Silesia, Poland. His father was a watchmaker, his mother a hat-maker; they were not well-off. He had one older sister, Lala. Henry started working at 14 years old in a textile store in 1934. He learned both German and Polish in school.

When the war broke out, he and his father went to Kraków, while his mother, sister and her husband went to friends in eastern Poland. But they were unable to reunite and lost contact. While in Kraków, the Germans assigned them to manual labor (e.g. shoveling snow, cleaning the street). In 1941, they were moved to a ghetto with bad conditions. Henry was able to join a painting work crew at a Gestapo Headquarters which provided two meals a day, and a permit protecting him from harassment by other authorities. His father was able to work as a watchmaker. The ghetto was liquidated in 1943 by killing everyone in the hospital and orphanage, and sending the rest to concentration camps. Kronberg's crew was able to remain, but was housed in a prison for about two years. He was able to arrange the return of his father, but he was executed after contracting typhoid.

The night before the Russians entered Kraków in January 1945, the Germans sent him to Gross-Rosen concentration camp, and then on to two other camps, one of which was Mittelbau-Dora where V-2 rockets were made. On April 11, he was liberated by American forces. Prisoners from Belsen-Bergen were released nearby, where he met a woman he had met previously, who then became his wife in 1946. They came to Newark in 1946, where Henry worked at a jewelry wholesaler, his wife at a dressmakers. He then became a housepainter, then a baker.

Henry attended a Bar Mitzvah in Montreal in 1960 where he met a number of survivors and learned that his sister was still alive in Las Vegas. He decided to move to Las Vegas and bought into a pawn business. A large portion of the recordings is devoted to his life in Las Vegas.