

DAVID E.

David was born on October 26, 1926, in Gherla, Romania, to an Orthodox Jewish family. His parents had five children. When things improved economically after the Depression of the late 1930s, his family moved to a new home in Bistrita. David began to experience antisemitism when the area came under Hungarian occupation in 1940-41. After David was forbidden to attend school, he trained as a furniture maker.

In the spring of 1944, the Germans were retreating from Russia via Transylvania. A ghetto was established in a large field near the town. After spending a month in the ghetto, David's entire family was transported in cattle cars to Auschwitz. David, along with his two older brothers, was selected for labour, but his mother, grandmother, father, and baby brother were taken away. The next day, David was selected to work as a cabinetmaker in a furniture factory outside of the Camp.

In January 1945, as Russian troops were advancing, Auschwitz was evacuated. David was transported to Mauthausen and then east to Melk, where he learned that his brothers had died in an air raid the previous day. He worked in an underground munitions factory hauling cement bags and drilling rocks. In an effort to evade the Russian troops, David and the others were then marched over 160 kilometres to Ebensee. In early May, the Germans abandoned the Camp, which was soon liberated by American troops and the United Nations Relief Agency.

David went home to Romania in June 1945 and found his sister and brother-in-law. He then moved to Paris and came to Canada as a war orphan. In 1947, David arrived in Winnipeg, where he met his wife. He eventually settled in Vancouver with his wife and three children.

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