

KARL S.

Karl was born in 1928 in Łódź, Poland, in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood. His father was a pharmacist. Karl attended the local public school, where most of his classmates were Jewish.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and Łódź was occupied within days. Three weeks later, the first anti-Jewish regulations were announced and SS officers began forcing Jews to do humiliating work. Karl was forced to clean the army stables. On November 11, 1939, the Nazis rounded up the intelligentsia, including Karl's father, who was shot. In the spring of 1940, Karl's family was forced to leave almost all their possessions and move into the ghetto. Karl was sent to work in a factory that produced wooden clogs.

In the summer of 1942, the Nazis removed all the children under 16 years of age from the ghetto. Karl hid underneath a rain barrel in which his mother had put a false bottom. Of 25 cousins, only Karl and one cousin remained after the roundup. In 1944, the Nazis liquidated the ghetto, and Karl's family was sent to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, Karl was chosen for labour, and he was separated from his mother, who he never saw again. Karl volunteered to work in a mountainous area where he dug trenches.

The group of workers was to be executed, but Karl and another prisoner escaped. Despite being shot in the leg, Karl made it to a farm. He was returned to the Camp, however, and then transported to another camp where he was again made to work as a forced labourer. He maintains that conditions in that camp would have killed him if the end of the war had not come quickly.

The camp was liberated on May 9, 1945. After recovering in the hospital, Karl returned to Łódź and went back to school. He learned that only one of his cousins had survived the war. In 1948, Karl decided to leave Soviet-controlled Poland rather than join the Communist party. He escaped to France and obtained a Canadian visa.

Karl moved to Toronto where he was welcomed by his aunt and uncle. He worked as a travelling salesman and eventually moved to Vancouver. He married in 1960 and has three daughters. The family used to spend part of each year together in Israel.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORD OF [KARL S., 1983](#) IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.