Holocaust Survivor Biography: Gunter Hauer

Gunter Hauer was born in Berlin, Germany in 1919. His father worked at a department store and his mother was a homemaker. In 1929, when Gunter was a teenager, he heard Adolf Hitler speak on the radio from a Nazi Rally and he could not believe what he was hearing. Then in January 1933, Hitler came to power and Gunter’s life began to change. Within a few short years, he was no longer allowed to sit on a public park bench or go to the movies.

During Kristallnacht, November 9-10, 1938, Gunter’s schoolteacher sent Gunter home for the sole purpose of being Jewish. Gunter, then 18 years old, tried to convince his parents that they had to leave Germany. His Aunt worked in the travel business and was able to obtain passports to leave through Russia. However it turned out to be a scam and they remained stuck in Nazi Germany.

By sheer luck, his Aunt was able to get eight spaces aboard the Terukuni Maru, a Japanese ship that sailed from London, England. On September 1, 1939, the start of WWII, they were sailing through the Suez Canal and away from the impending tragedy that soon befell Europe.

Gunter survived the war, got married, and made his way to California and eventually to Philadelphia in 1947 where he worked in the music industry working his way to becoming an executive at Atlantic Records promoting concerts and events.

This educational program has been supported by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.
The Witness To History Project is designed to further the message and lessons of the Holocaust by direct interaction between students or interested adults and Holocaust survivors. Participants "adopt" a survivor by learning his or her unique account of via listening to the survivor tell his/her story, asking questions, writing a biography, reviewing a videotape, and memorizing and re-telling the story to others. Ultimately, the participant will have the lifelong job of educating others about the Holocaust by sharing this personal narrative. Contact the Holocaust Awareness Museum to participate.

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