

Holocaust Survivor Biography: Michael Herskovitz



Michael Herskovitz was born in Botfalva, Czechoslovakia in 1929 to hard-working, happy parents. In March 1944 he noticed German soldiers in the village and learned that Germany had invaded his country. Within weeks, Michael's father lost his grocery store. Forced to wear yellow Jewish stars on their clothing, Michael, his parents, and 4 siblings were transported to the Uzhorod ghetto for their "protection."

In April 1944, the Nazis placed 15 year old Michael and his family on cattle cars to camps with "better facilities." Always kept in the dark about their future, the family reached its destination, Auschwitz-Birkenau. Michael's family, along with other families, was separated into trucks: men from women, children from parents, old from young. "All you could hear were soldiers hollering, dogs barking, gunshots, and people screaming and crying."

In late 1944, Russian troops advanced on Poland. After six months in Auschwitz, Michael was transferred to Mauthausen and Gunskirchen, concentration camps in Austria, where the facilities and degradation were the worst he experienced.

Michael lost all will and hope until one day in May 1945 when he awoke to gunshots. When he looked around, his German guards had disappeared and British troops were giving out food. Michael survived mal-nutrition and Typhus fever. He re-connected with an uncle who told him that the Nazis murdered his parents and younger brother.

Michael moved to Israel where he lived, worked, and fought for the Israeli Army. Michael then married and moved to America in 1959 where he now resides.

Michael Herskovitz wrote two books about his experiences and survival: *Early One Saturday Morning* and *Our Cherry Tree Still Stands*.

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Witness to History Project:

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.

Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center

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