

Holocaust Survivor Biography: Manya Frydman Perel



Manya Frydman Perel was born in 1924 in Radom, Poland, one of ten children. As a teenager she attended a public school and hoped to go to college. However these plans were obliterated in September 1939 when the Nazi army marched into the city and confiscated homes and businesses, and eventually imprisoned all the Jewish people.

In April 1941 she was imprisoned in the Radom ghetto and then later deported to several concentration and death camps including Ravensbrück, Plaszow, Rechlin, Gundelsdorf, and Auschwitz. She performed hard labor and nearly starved to death. Despite the horrible living conditions, scarce food rations and the constant threat of the gas chambers and death, Manya risked her life to save others. Her bravery, in the face of such destitution, is an inspiration to others.

In 1945, Manya and a friend escaped a death march from Auschwitz by fleeing into a forest where, on May 5, the Russians liberated them. In July 1945 she was taken to a displaced-persons (DP) camp in Stuttgart, Germany where she was reunited with the remaining members of her family. She recuperated here and waited for her turn to leave Europe and immigrate to Montreal, Canada.

In 1958, she moved with her husband to Philadelphia and raised a family and is now a proud grandmother. Her family has promised to take over her task and carry on her legacy from generation to generation. She says, "I hope that my life will be an example for others not to take life for granted, not to be prejudiced toward others, and to respect one another. After all, we only have one life to live."

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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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