*Georgia in World War II: The Bell Bomber Plant*

Profile #1

- What was this person’s experience of the Bell Bomber Plant during the war?

- What emotions does he/she associate with his/her work during the war? Why do you

think this is?

- What are the main events and experiences that he/she speaks about? Why do you

think he/she focuses on some aspects and not others?

- What was the most surprising piece of information you learned reading this oral

history and why?

- Are there any pieces of information that you would want to ask a follow-up question

about? What would your follow-up question be?

Profile #2

- What was this person’s experience of the Bell Bomber Plant during the war?

- What emotions does he/she associate with his/her work during the war? Why do you

think this is?

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think he/she focuses on some aspects and not others?

- What was the most surprising piece of information you learned reading this oral

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- Are there any pieces of information that you would want to ask a follow-up question

about? What would your follow-up question be?



***Profiles***

 

**Henry Friedman**

Henry Friedman was born in Oradea Mare in Romania, which was later called Nagyvarad when that area came under the control of Hungary. Rural Jews were concentrated in Budapest, and Henry was rounded up to work in a war factory pouring molten lead out of a large bucket. Henry remembers a guard hitting him in the back with a steel pole, causing sparks to burn him all over his body.

Later, Henry was taken to the Front to distribute food to German soldiers "from foxhole to foxhole." Henry was badly wounded in one leg by shrapnel from an Allied shell. He and three other Jews were put in a wagon along with four German corpses and driven to a cemetery. There, the four were put in front of a firing squad. "They aimed, and that was the last thing I remember. I woke up at four or five in the morning, and I wasn't able to breathe. I felt that two of the fellows were laying over me, bleeding. They kept me from not freezing. We were not useful as workers anymore, so they shot us."

As Russian troops closed in, Henry was put in a line of German and Hungarian POWs being marched toward Siberia. He escaped and went into hiding until liberation. After the war, Henry discovered that his brother, sister, father, mother, grandparents, uncles and aunts were all murdered.

**Separation From and Finding Family (excerpt)**

“...And very shortly after, I read in a bulletin that Steve Friedman is on the way home. So, I was very much excited. Steve Friedman, he’s my brother. He’s only two years older than myself. He was my, the main hope that I’ll have someone to share the future. And I made arrangements in the hospital, the bed next to me to be evacuated, to be freed up. “Because my brother’s on the way home. I don’t know mentally or physically what shape. We have lots of things to discuss, so please make the bed clear for my brother.” So I had an empty bed next to me, and was very excited. The evening came. Someone approached me that, “I don’t want to burst your bubble, but the Steve Friedman is on the way home is not your brother, because I was with him when he died. It must be a different Steve Friedman.” I took it very, very hard. I was crying incontrollable. I don’t know how long. That was my last hope that anybody would be alive, at least if not him, who?

**Leaving Europe**

And I made up my mind that I cannot stay in Nagyvarod; I cannot stay in Hungary. If I can, I cannot stay not even in Europe. I want to go as far as I can. I was able to get as far, ‘til, to Italy. And I recall something, about two years later, in 1947, I was in Milan, Italy, and I recall that in two Italian movies simultaneously, is a big, in marquees advertisement, American film, Via Con Vento – in Italian, Gone With the Wind, is playing in two movie houses. The marquees all decorated, flames toward the sky, flames that Atlanta is burning. I went to see the movie. And everything was dear to Scarlet O’Hara, the main character in the Gone With the Wind. The life almost came to the end, she lost everything. Everything burned. That kind of reminded me that my life is kind of parallel. Everything that was dear to me went up in chimneys in Auschwitz, is all burned up. I don’t have anyone.

**Remembering and Legacy**

And during the urban renewal they unearthed two big metal cans, like a five-gallon milk can and was unearthed. I read it, that article in some paper, or whatever it was. And the can was like a time capsule, full of little notes, where the people who lived in that ghettos, they put it in those cans. And the biggest fear at that time was not that they’re dying. The biggest fear at that time was, in ‘42, ’43, whenever the Warsaw ghetto was, at the height, the biggest fear was that no one will ever know that Jewish people lives or died, because they know that the Germans will be victorious. And reading that made something, made something, that I cannot just stand by. Just like I mentioned at the beginning, that I was put in ‘44 with a blessing, I was put here, and I was blessed, and I know that it was a shield of protection, because I faced the firing squad, I got a free passage from Wallenberg, I went, so many things that I volunteered against my better side, to volunteer in the army. And something kind of pushed me. And I said that blessing, that shield was put on me for a purpose. I cannot stay quiet. I have to share my story and bring back, somehow tie in the six million innocent victims who not here today, who cannot speak about it, because they was liquidated. And they died with the knowledge that no one will ever know it, and everything will be swept under the carpet.”