

JOSEPH MORTON

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



Joseph Morton was born Joseph Mortkowitz on July 11, 1924, in Lodz, Poland, to Chaskel and Zisla Mortkowitz. He had five siblings: Abraham, Sarah, Samuel, Lazar, and Jacob. Joseph's father worked as a

contract tailor for a manufacturing company. Joseph went to public school and had only Jewish friends. Life began to change for the family after the Nazi occupation of Poland when anti-Jewish legislation forced Jews to wear yellow Stars of David on their clothing.

In May 1940, the Lodz ghetto was created and all Jews were forced to live in a confined area of the city. Joseph's father became a member of the ghetto police and early on was able to save one of Joseph's aunts from being deported because of his position. Joseph and his family were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau when the ghetto was liquidated in August 1944.

When the family arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Joseph's sisters, mother, and brothers Lazar and Jacob were killed in the gas chambers. Joseph, his father, and his brother, Abraham, were selected for forced labor. A couple of weeks later, the three were transported to Dachau. Joseph performed various construction jobs at Kaufering, Lager IV, a sub-camp of Dachau. He was only there for a couple of months before he and his father and brother were transferred to Landshut, another concentration camp in Germany.

The camp was later closed and the three were sent to Mühldorf, a satellite camp of Dachau. There, Joseph caught typhus and in the Spring 1945, was transferred back to Kaufering without his father and brother. Although he was very ill, Joseph was forced on a death march to a different satellite camp of Dachau, München-Allach, where he was later liberated by the United States Army in early Summer 1945.

After liberation, Joseph was taken to a hospital in Allach, Germany. His brother and father found him there and they all went to Feldafing, a displaced persons' camp nearby. Joseph and his brother registered with Jewish youth refugees to immigrate to Canada. In June 1948, Joseph and Abraham immigrated to Montreal while their father remained in Germany to wait for an immigration visa to the United States. Joseph met his future wife, Janet Bartman, while living in Montreal. Within a few months of arriving in Canada, Joseph and Abraham immigrated to the United States to be with their father who had recently emigrated there from Germany.

In May 1950, Joseph's fiancée, Janet, joined him in Chicago and the couple was married. They had three children: Leo, Fred, and Ann. Joseph worked and owned his own barber shop in Chicago. At the time of Joseph's interview in 1997, he and his wife had five grandchildren: Jeremy, Amanda, Michael, Carly, and Brandon. ■



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