Biography of Murray Kenig

Murray Kenig was born in 1930 in Lodz, Poland. When he was two years old, the family moved to Budapest, Hungary. Murray's father was interned in 1940 and his mother was very sick and could not look after him, so he was sent to a Jewish boarding school in Szeged. Soon after the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944, Murray was sent to the ghetto of Szeged and from here he was deported to Auschwitz in June 1944.

Upon arrival, an older inmate advised Murray to lie about his age and make up a trade for himself. Murray auditioned to join the Auschwitz camp orchestra, even though he had no musical training. The conductor took pity on him and took him on as snare drummer.

In the camp, there was very little food and Murray and a few boys organized schemes to steal food and survive. Once he was caught stealing vegetables and he had to stand between two electric fences for several hours.

When the Soviet army began to liberate Poland at the end of the summer of 1944, the Germans started to evacuate the camp. The prisoners were forced on a death march to the camp of Gross-Rosen. From here they were transferred to Dachau and in mid-April of 1945, they were again loaded onto trains but they could not go far due to Allied bombing.

They disembarked by a river and when Murray awoke the next morning, he found that with the exception of a few prisoners everyone had disappeared. They hid on a mountain on the other side of the river for three days, until they were liberated by the Americans.

After liberation Murray spend three years in the Feldafing Displaced Persons camp. He immigrated to Canada in 1948 as a war orphan, sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Congress and finally settled in Vancouver. Of his entire family he was the only one who survived. He died in 1997.