



Photo courtesy of Atlanta Jewish Times

*After Auschwitz, how does someone
start a new life?*

MURRAY LYNN

Over 75 years later, Murray Lynn still remembered those knocks on the door that changed his family and his life, forever. Murray, then known as Alfred Leicht, lived in Bilke, Hungary with his family, his mother, Rosa, father, Abraham, and three younger brothers. After Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany in 1933, the Hungarian government allied with Nazi Germany. Beginning in 1938, Hungary passed laws which took away the rights of its Jewish population. Many Jewish men were sent to forced labor battalions.

Late one night, in 1942, Murray remembered a pounding on the door of his family's home. Two Hungarian officers had come for his father. No pleading would stop them. Murray's father was dragged off into the night. For two weeks, the family knew nothing of his fate. Then, they learned that he had been shot, along with other men from the community, into a mass grave.

From that moment on, the family was terrified of what the future would bring. They had barely enough food to survive. Sometime later their fears were realized; there was a second knock on the door of the family home. This time, it was a Hungarian policeman who attacked his mother. Murray, who tried to protect his family, was threatened with death if he persisted.

The third time the Hungarian soldiers came to their door, it was to deport the family. They were given little time to pack and appear at the train station. Their destination was a ghetto, where they stayed in the open air for days. Soon they were deported again, in cattle cars, destination unknown. There were over 100 people in the small space, with no food, water, fresh air or sanitation.



Photo courtesy of Yad Vashem

Upon arrival at Auschwitz, they were separated into two lines: one for those who could work and the other for those who could not. That was the last time Murray saw his mother and three brothers. He later learned that they were murdered in the gas chambers. Murray was sent to forced labor where he barely survived the horrific conditions.

As Germany's defeat appeared close, Murray was sent on a death march towards Germany. His captors were trying to conceal what they

In spring 1945, Murray was liberated by American troops. He was 15 years old, sick and alone. After recuperating, he returned to Hungary but found no family members left. Murray decided that he was going to make a new life in America.

"I couldn't control Hitler, I couldn't control my destiny... in Auschwitz. But I could control the rest of my destiny. And I took full charge..."



Through the efforts of a British rabbi, Murray traveled to London, and then to Dublin, Ireland. There he lived in a castle, pursued his education and made friends. In 1948, Murray left Europe for New York, attended university, and then came to Atlanta, where he married and had a successful career. Murray and his wife, Sonia, had two daughters and a son. Murray Lynn passed away in January 2021.



Map courtesy of US Holocaust Memorial Museum

