

WILLIAM J. LOWENBERG

William Lowenberg survived Auschwitz-Birkenau. and Dachau.

"I don't know what kept me going. The past was gone. There was no future. I wanted to live so badly, and be able to go back and tell my story"

William Lowenberg was born in 1926, in Westphalia, Germany. His ancestors had lived in Germany since the 15th century and were merchants and cattle dealers. He lived with his parents and his sister Erika.

In 1936 the family fled to be near relatives in Holland in what they hoped would be a safe haven from the Nazis. They was arrested there in 1942 with the rest of the Jewish Community and sent to the transit camp Westerbork where they remained for several months. From there William was separated from his parents and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. No one else from the transport he was on survived the war. His parents and sister were deported to Auschwitz a few weeks after William and were murdered in the gas chambers there.

William remained in Auschwitz-Birkenau until the spring of 1943 when he was sent, along with 300 other men, to Warsaw to demolish the ghetto and to dispose of the bodies of the Jews murdered there. In 1944 the ghetto was liquidated. There were 3,600 Jews left out of 12,000 and only 240 survived the brutal Death March to Dachau. William remained in Dachau until April 30, 1945, when he was liberated by the U.S. Army.

William returned to Holland hoping in vain that some of his family had survived. In 1949 he immigrated to the United States where he enlisted in the Army and served in the Korean War. He settled in San Francisco where became a prominent member of the real estate business establishing the Lowenberg Corp, a major industrial real estate firm.

William married and raised a family and was very active in the Jewish community. He served as President of the Jewish Community Federation, President of the Jewish Home for the Aged and the Bureau of Jewish Education. He served on the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel and was appointed by President Reagan to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Council and later becoming the Vice Chairman of the Museum.

The book William is holding in his portrait, a section of the Torah, belonged to his father. It was kept by Catholic neighbors and returned to him after the war.