

ISRAEL STARCK



Born: July 19, 1929 (Podhorany, Czechoslovakia)

Interview Date: January 2016

Israel “Izzy” Starck was born in July 1929 in Podhorany, Czechoslovakia. He and his three sisters grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and Izzy received both a secular and religious education. His youngest sister passed away before the war. Initially under Hungarian occupation, the Nazis took control in spring 1944 and the Starck family was forced to live in the Munkács ghetto before they were deported to the Auschwitz camp complex. There Izzy was separated from his sisters and mother and lied about his age to be selected for labor and remain with his father. They were transferred together to the Mauthausen camp complex where they were separated. Both of his parents were murdered. Izzy was sent from Mauthausen to a subcamp, Melk, where he was forced to dig tunnels for the German air force. In early 1945, Melk was evacuated and Izzy was sent to Ebensee concentration camp where he was liberated by the American Armed Forces on May 8, 1945. After the war, the American Army took Izzy back to his hometown of Podhorany, where he reunited with his two older sisters. In 1948, Izzy and his sisters immigrated to the United States and he settled in Chicago, Illinois where he started his own diamond cutting company. In 1957, he married Ethel and they had seven children. He and his family remained Orthodox. This interview took place in January 2016 in Los Angeles, CA.