



Fritzie Fritzshall was born Fritzie Weiss in 1929 in Klucharky, Czechoslovakia. One of three children, she grew up in a small Jewish community and lived with her mother. Fritzie's father, Herman Weiss, immigrated to the United States before the war to create a pathway for his three children and wife to subsequently follow. By the time Fritzie's father could bring his family over, World War II had begun and Fritzie's mother feared attacks on transatlantic shipping.

In 1944, the Germans invaded Fritzie's hometown, and she and her family were forced into a ghetto. She was only thirteen years old. Two days later, she and her family were deported to Auschwitz – Birkenau killing center in occupied-Poland, where her mother and two brothers were murdered. Based on a tip from a fellow prisoner, Fritzie lied about her age and was selected for slave labor.

Close to the end of the war, Fritzie was moved to a sub camp of Auschwitz where she worked as a slave laborer in a factory. In 1945, she was finally liberated by the Soviet army, while on a death march to Germany. In 1946, Fritzie came to the United States and was reunited with her father. She eventually settled in Chicago, became a hairdresser, and married Norman Fritzshall who was a World War II veteran and Japanese POW survivor. They had one son.

Fritzie is an active member of the community, serving as President of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. Fritzie continues to speak extensively on the local and state level about her experiences and lessons of the Holocaust. In 2015, Fritzie was awarded the Bertha Honoré Palmer Making History Award for Distinction in Civic Leadership from the Chicago History Museum, and in 2020 the Global Citizenship Hero award from the Chicago Red Cross

George Brent – Bio

George Brent was born on August 30, 1929, in Těscö, in an area of Czechoslovakia that was later turned over to Hungary. His father, a pharmacist, was secular, while his mother was quite religious. When the Jewish community in Těscö was forced into ghettos, George's family was able to remain in their home until a non-Jew was brought to the town to take over the pharmacy. George's family was taken to the ghetto on May 21, 1944 and was put on a train to Auschwitz-Birkenau three days later.

Upon arrival at the camp, George and his father were selected to work, while his mother and brother were gassed. With the help of an uncle who worked as a *Schreiber* (office worker in the camp), George was able to avoid selections and continue working. He and his uncle were sent together to a camp in Upper Silesia, where George was chosen to work in the SS barracks shining shoes and doing other chores for the officers. Here, he



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was protected from the winter weather and was able to obtain slightly better rations, allowing him to remain alive.

As the Soviet army advanced in January 1945, George was sent on a death march, then taken by coal train to Mauthausen concentration camp in occupied-Austria. After two weeks, he was sent to a smaller camp in Austria, Ebensee, where he labored inside tunnels and received little food. On May 2, 1945, the SS abandoned the camp, and on May 5, George was liberated by American soldiers. As he was in somewhat better health than other prisoners, he worked as a nurse's aide, which allowed him access to extra food. He was eventually repatriated to Budapest, where he stayed with two of his great-aunts, who had remained in their home throughout the war.

George learned that his father had survived and was in a sanatorium in Germany suffering from tuberculosis. George smuggled himself into Germany in September 1946 and joined his father. In a children's camp, he attended an ORT school and learned to be a dental technician. On October 1, 1949, George arrived in the US, and his father soon joined him. George was later drafted and served in the Air Force Reserves during the Korean War. Upon his discharge, he attended dental school and practiced dentistry until his retirement in 2011.

Photos of George, his father, and other men from Téscö appear in the Auschwitz Album.