

## Survival by Devotion

*A brief bio of my father, By Gayle (Frankel) Sokoloff*

Samuel (Schmul) Frankel was born in Gombin, Poland on August 1, 1922, 2<sup>nd</sup> son to Isadore Frankel and Sasha (Puro) Frankel. The Frankels were a hard-working, but poor family, consisting of 7 brothers (in order of birth) Ben, Sam, Henry, Jack, Morris, Herschel and Michael. Only three of the brothers survived the Holocaust, Sam (my father), Henry and Jack.

The remaining 4 brothers, along with their parents, were transported to Chelmno, one of the first camps to experiment with annihilating Jews with gas chambers. They were never heard from again.

In 1942, Sam, along with other Gombiner Jews, were seized and taken to Gostinin, where they were transported to freight trains and taken to Konin.....Some of the Jews, the Frankel brothers among them, were taken by train to the Guttenbrum camp in the Poznan region, followed with an "assignment" to Zbonshin, where they performed irrigation work, and fortunately received adequate food. This did not last long.....In the fall of 1943, they were deported to Auschwitz, where Sam was separated from his brothers, Henry and Jack, whom he did not see again until after the liberation.....Sam was placed in a group that was sent to the Buna coal fields to work.....He remained in Auschwitz, miraculously escaping the "final solution" until he was once again transported to Bergen-Belsen and eventual liberation there in 1945.

After the liberation by British troops, Sam reunited with other Jewish Gombin survivors, among whom were Ben Guyer, Avram Mastbaum, Michael Ber and the Lasky Brothers. The young men formed a tight group of newly liberated survivors, who worked and played together in the aftermath of war. They lived in Zaltzheim, Germany, a displaced person's camp for a while, and, in addition to working, spent their time searching for lost friends and family.....One day, a friend mentioned to Sam that a beautiful young survivor by the name of Rose Frankel, was also living at the camp. She was a roommate and friend of Annette, who was Ben Guyer's girlfriend, and soon-to-be wife. Perhaps Sam and Rose were cousins?

An introduction was made.....Frankel was a common name among the Polish Jews, and no, they were not related, but started to spend quality time together.....Sam was very quiet and shy, but devoted in his love for the charming and beautiful Rose. He wanted desperately to marry her, but Rose was not sure.....she had health issues, but most of all, wanted to re-unite with family members from Lodz.....Her attempts to find them had not been successful, until Sam, through his efforts, was able to locate Helen and Morris, Rose's sister and brother-in-law, who had escaped to Russia during the war and had returned to Poland to find their loved ones. Sam single-handedly, in his devotion to Rose, traveled through dangerous territory to retrieve her sister, Helen, and bring her to Germany to be reunited with Rose.

This act of bravery and kindness won the heart of Rose, and she agreed to marry Sam in early 1946.....By that time, Henry and Jack, who had been in Italy waiting for transport to Palestine, changed their plans, once they heard of their brother's survival, and also returned to Germany.....

One by one, the Frankel Brothers emigrated to the U.S.A.....By 1949; they were together again, living in Newark, New Jersey with Sam, Rose and their daughter, Gayle (who was born in Frankfurt, Germany in late 1946). Isadore, who was named for Sam's father, was born in 1959.

Gayle is a Realtor in Palm City, Florida, and is the proud mother of Adam and Christy, parents of Jessica Ashley, Samantha Rose, and Maxwell Alexander Sokoloff. Shara, Gayle's daughter, is married to Harry Cunningham, and are expecting twins, who are scheduled to arrive in early 2009.

Isadore (known as Issy) is married to Shelley, and are the proud parents of Danielle Frankel, a freshman at the University of Arizona.

Eventually, the younger brothers married and had families of their own, but the pact that they made when the Holocaust began, always held true.....All for one, and one for all.....Sam's devotion to his family, especially his brothers, stayed with him until his dying day, in January, 1990.