

# With My Own Eyes: HOLOCAUST. GENOCIDE. TODAY.

# PART THREE

This is the third in a three-part series featuring testimony from three local Holocaust survivors. In this article you will read an interview with Henry Friedman.

This series supports the Holocaust Center's recently re-released film, "With My Own Eyes: Holocaust. Genocide. Today." which weaves testimonies of local Holocaust survivors with contemporary issues of bullying, bystanders and world genocides. Watch the film online or order a copy of the DVD (with bonus features) at [wsherc.org](http://wsherc.org).

## Henry Friedman, Holocaust Survivor



Friedman on bicycle, 1945

Henry was born in Brody, Poland. In 1941, when Henry was 14, Nazi Germany occupied Brody. Under the Nazis, life for Jewish people was oppressive and dangerous. The Nazis frequently rounded up Jews in Brody and other parts of Eastern Poland and deported them to camps. Henry's family found a place to hide with a Christian family.

could no longer go to school or teach. My father didn't want me or my brother to fall too far behind, so he invited a Jewish teacher to live with us.

In approximately May of 1942, the Germans started ordering Jews to move to a special part of Brody, which we called the ghetto. The Nazis constantly took Jews away to concentration camps. In those days, we knew things were very hard in those camps.

### Where did you hide?

**HENRY:** My father found a hiding space with a Christian lady. She did not tell her husband or her two sons she was hiding him. He hid in a small space above a chicken coop. My mother, my brother, the Jewish teacher and I found space with the Symbchuk family. They risked their lives to take us in.

The Symbchucks were not the elite. They were poor people. We were hidden in the barn above the animals. Our space was about the size of a queen size bed and we were surrounded by hay. It was almost completely dark, even during the day.

There were cracks in the plywood boards, and from those we got a little light. I had a little knife and I started working on a knot in one of the boards. After a few days, I made an opening about the size of a silver dollar. That opening gave me a view of the outside. When I looked through my "window," I could see boys playing football, screaming and laughing. All I could do in my space was



Friedman as a small boy, 1936

either lie down or sit up because there was not enough room to stand.

When I was in hiding, I feared I would be the only Jew who survived. A terrible empty feeling came over me after the loss of so many cousins, and I felt as though I were standing all alone in a huge stadium.

For 18 months, the Friedmans remained in hiding, freezing cold and slowly starving as food became scarce. Brody was liberated by the Russians on March 14, 1944. Of the 9,000 Jews who lived in Brody before World War II, fewer than 100 survived.

### Why do you share your story?

**HENRY:** For years I couldn't speak about what happened to me. But how will the world know what happened if I don't speak? It's important to learn about the Holocaust in order to avoid discrimination against other human beings. The Holocaust didn't happen because of one person. Each of us makes decisions and each of us has the power to help someone. I believe that one person can make a difference.

