

## **Oskar Schindler**

Oskar Schindler was born a Catholic, but grew up to be a gambler and fast talking womanizer. This far from perfect man went on to save over 2,000 Jews from death in Nazi concentration camps. He is a champion of resistance because he has shown that an ordinary man can do extraordinary things.

He bought a bankrupt factory from the Court of Commercial Claims, the main group selling Jewish property. He turned this factory into an establishment that served as a lifeboat for Jews that would have been exiled. No workers were beaten or killed. All were fed at this “oasis of humanity.” Schindler referred to his workers as “Schindlerjuden” or “my children.”

In 1944, Polish Jews began to be liquidated. Schindler recognized this and set up a branch of his factory in Zablocie. 900 Jewish workers were sent here and made up his now famous list. This factory made defective bullets for German guns and parts for the V2 bomb that did not work. The work of the factory greatly hindered the German war effort. Schindler’s “children” at the first factory numbered 1,098 (801 men and 297 women). He spent his own money to keep them alive. There are now 6,000 people that owe their existence to Oskar Schindler because he saved their ancestors that lived through this horrifying ordeal.

No one knows what possessed Oskar Schindler to do what he did. He was later quoted as saying, “I am the conscience of all those who knew something, but did nothing.” Oskar Schindler proved that if one so flawed can help those around us, we can and should be willing to help also. He gave those he saved the greatest gift – life.