

Anthony Chudzik

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Summary

Anthony Chudzik was born April 27, 1927 in Krulwiec, a (German) Colony in Central Poland near Lecajsk to Carolina Valat and Jacob Chudzik. Anthony had three brothers and two sisters. The oldest brother was Josef born in 1910, then Franciszek, Roman, Maria, Stanislaw and he was the youngest. Krulewiec was the new organized village near Powola Zlarczyskaa with new brick houses on large lots. His father built houses and farmed part-time. Their house was made of wood and they had buildings for the farm animals on four hectares. In 1932 the family moved to Kresnez near Tolnopol where they bought seven hectares in East Poland. Josef was an editor in Rowna and Franciszek worked on a railroad in Zloczouf. Roman got married at 20 and had his own house. Anthony's parents did not finish high school but sent the children, who desired it, to higher education in Krakow. The family was religious and Anthony served as an Altar Boy at the daily Mass before school. After school he took the cows out to pasture. The 60 families in the village were mostly Ukrainians and they studied Russian in school. Anthony learned that Germany had invaded Poland on September 1st but he did not see any German soldiers. September 17, 1940 the Russians came on tanks and were welcomed by some of the Ukrainians. The civilians were forbidden to pray and Russians and Ukrainians took over the administration. On February 10, 1941, Russians ordered the family to pack up as they no longer belonged there and they took some food and clothing by horse and carriage to the school. Soon they were taken to the Courthouse in Petcarney and met some neighbors and relatives. Then they were placed on freight trains in Brody and sat or lay down on platforms with straw in the boxcars for about 40 people each. In the middle was a stove and a hole as a restroom. Soon they changed the wheels on the boxcars to match the wider Russian tracks. Anthony's nephews died of pneumonia or starvation and were left on a railroad platform with other corpses. It took about 12 days to reach Archangel District where they stayed at Shenchuga settlement, north of Moscow. There they joined Soviet families who Stalin moved there in 1934 at the time of the famine. Each of the 30 to 40 log houses held one or two families including a wooden box with straw that served as the mattress for the residents. They were given some food and rationed bread in the dining room for the three meals. Armed guards informed them they were to work there until their life ended. No fence was needed as there was no escape due to the nearby forest and river. Men and able women were assigned to cut the timber with a handsaw and float them in the river to the sawmill where they were cut and taken by train to paper factories. Anthony attended school until age 14 and then got authorized to work and was assigned to supply fuel to the steam boilers which operated the machines. He got paid four rubles a day from which he paid for his food. Later he worked as a shepherd. On June 22, 1941 Germany attacked Russia and the Polish prisoners became allies of Russia and permitted to freely travel around the country. They were given a travel document and left in January 1942. When the family was deported, his brother, Josef, was arrested and they heard nothing from him for about two years. He had been in the Kolya Coal

Mine and joined the Polish Army in Russia and then served in Italy. The family took a train through Uzbekistan which they reached a month later and continued to the Caspian Sea and a ship to Persia. His father had died on the train on January 17th and was left on a platform with many corpses with no funeral or religious service. Anthony got sick when they were about to leave for Persia. His brother, Roman, was an administrator in the Polish Army with General Anders and told their mother and sister to go ahead and placed Anthony in a hospital. When he recovered, Anthony and Roman traveled together from Krasnovitz to Pahlavi, Persia in August 1942 with 100,000 travelers. He was happy to be free and happy to go to a tent where he showered and was given clean clothes. His sister and mother had already left Persia for Africa and they had a reunion in England in 1948. Anthony was placed in the Polish Army unit for young people, "Cadets" and attended military and regular school in Palestine and Egypt. He guarded German POWs in Egypt while training for mechanic engineering in the British Air Force. The war ended while he was in Egypt repairing damaged planes and then in England where he was discharged in 1948. He had been writing to his mother and sister and met them upon their arrival in England from Africa. Anthony obtained a degree in mechanical engineering and went to work for the Eveready Company and got married in England. In 1956 he decided to move to the US with his wife as felt England was becoming Socialist. They resided in Chicago where he immediately was hired as an electrical engineer. The family had a reunion in 1962 with all the brothers and their wives and Maria who had been living in Poland since before the war. Anthony and his wife, Teresa, have two children: Eva and Christopher (younger) who were born in the US and now have two granddaughters. Anthony does not understand how people who are nice can become mean and hope his experiences do not happen to others. He believes there should be justice so people who are violent and mean should pay for their actions.