

Summary of an Interview With Mike Jacobs (DMCHS)

Born in Konen ,Poland - 3 brothers, 2 sisters. It was the first Jewish city in Poland 1393.

1939 - Nazis put curfew, 6 PM to 6 AM. They took hostages, all of the intelligentsia --9990 Jewish teachers. They took all of the Jewish memorabilia from the synagogue. They brought the Rabbi and made him put a match to all the prayer books. Miracles happened - it rained for three days and the fires kept burning. There were 3500 Jewish people in the town, they brought 2 people into the center of the town - one jew and one non-jew. They were both shot. people couldn't believe it. They wanted money from elderly people.

The people knew that they were not free anymore. Freedom of religion and movement were taken away. The family didn't discuss it. Mother's father was an old man. He had his own Shtetl. Mike was 11 years old when his grandpa died. Anti-semitism was big in Poland. He had problems in school. In 1937 he had gone to an integrated school. Then he started having to walk to another school, they were called Christ-killers.

War was declared in 1939. His brother was in the army. The Luftwaffe bombed and Germans came into their home.

The Germans told them that they were going to be resettled. They were told to give up all their valuables. At midnight , they marched to the railroad station and children were separated from parents and put on to different boxcars. They travelled three days and three nights, and got to the warsaw ghetto. Then they went to another city.

They were put into two small rooms - 16 people. People died of hunger, sickness, typhus was the biggest killer. Had to wear an arm band . They took it off if they went out of the ghetto. They worked for the Germans so they could give food to parents and relations. His brother gave him a long coat so he could store packages in the pockets. His sister wanted to stay with her parents. The Jewish police wanted his brother to become one, but he did not want to.

The Germans came into the house and told them to start marching

. One brother and one sister didn't go but were caught in the attic. They were selecting people at the square. Mike and his brother snuck away and didn't go to the selection. They went to small ghetto.

His brother became a partisan and was killed when he was betrayed by the underground. Mike had to go back to work. He loaded heavy furniture. He went to where he used to live, and his family had all been taken to Treblinka. They were all killed there.

He and his brother ran away. The rest were to be killed. They made a quick decision to run, waved goodbye to parents. Their parents left infants in their cribs hoping that Polish families would find and take care of them . Any Jewish person hiding was shot. They took a baby into a tall building, thinking they had saved it. The SS threw babies out of the windows and smiled and laughed about it.

80 members of his family were killed, only 2 cousins survived. He always had the hope that he would be free someday. His mother was not worried for him, she thought he would survive.

He took towels and ran , seeing his parents for the last time when he was sixteen..SS-men stopped him, and he said he was going to visit his aunt. He saw a friend and wanted to join him, but the friend said it was too crowded. Someone was shot at the ghetto, and people thought it was him . he went to another family in the forest and he stayed there for four weeks.

He worked for the underground, he bought weapons from German soldiers . They were hiding, and this got them sent to Birkinau. In 44 he saw smoke coming out of a chimney. He was chosen to go to the right, and told to undress. They stepped into a small pool and they were given clothes. He went to a quarantine camp and was given a tattoo on the arm. They were told that they were being dehumanized and that they were now just a number. His friends were pushed into the crematorium. He always believed that he was going to live. People must know what happened. Women's hair was cut off and gold was ripped from teeth. There were twenty barracks. Each had it's own commandant. They worked 10 to 12 hours a day and were beaten and kicked.

Roll call selected people to go to the gas chambers. The orchestra always played when people came and went. People were screaming. Children were singing and dancing when their parents were burned. Then, children were thrown into pits. When German planes

were shot down , they were taken apart and the aluminum, copper, and steel was taken to a mill. He worked in a scrap yard with Russians and an Austrian. The Russians were caught when they ran away and were sent to a German camp. They made small guns for the underground . Guns were hidden in loafs of bread.

They found out that they were going to die on the tenth of the month. They started an uprising in Birkinau. Two members of the underground were caught. They were tortured but they did not talk. His friend was beaten and he died a few hours later. Mike survived because he was a dreamer and he fantasized. Freedom is the most precious thing you can have.

On May 5, 1945, he became liberated. In January of '45 the Russians were closing in.They were marched 35 kilometers a day. Those who couldn't walk were shot. Then , they were packed into open coal cars. It was snowing when they came into Malthausen - very hilly.They were marched into the barracks naked. He told them he was a machinist, and they put into a factory to build a plane. He mixed things so that the plane would come down, because he was a part of the underground. On May 5, he saw tanks rolling in with a white star.

He saw Germans marching without weapons and he went out to see what was going on. The americans were there and he was given a chocolate bar. He was told to stay around because he spoke both Polish and German.When the americans came closer the SS guards left - they did not want to be the prisoners of the americans. He went to the barracks and his friends died. He was 19 1/2 years old and 70 pounds. He had waited 5 1/2 years to be free and he decided to leave the camp. He didn't even look back, he just kept going.

He is an honorary member in the 11th army division. They tried to build a center so that people can learn about what happened . So people can hear what happened. He is partially responsible for a center in Dallas.

He applied to go to the U.S. - most people went to New York. He was active from the time he was liberated.. He put a sign in [Linz] to find relatives. He was the youngest member of the Displaced Persons in Munich on physical education. He was sent to cities and camps to show how to exercise and build body. He was convinced by a displaced person not to go to New York, but to Texas. He changed his papers to go to Dallas - to Jewish Federation.

He couldn't stop crying when he found out about his parents - he always dreamed he would come out a winner. It was a very close family. he has a scar on his face from the time he was whipped by a guard in Auschwitz. He told another guard he slipped. He wiped blood from his face and it started to clot. He went to a friend who was a pharmacist and he got his face clamped. Luckily, there was no selection for a few days. the crematoriums were so busy.

Working on the road, he made a large pile out of rocks. His friend was hit by a bull whip. Then, a guard was shooting people and he passed Mike up. He felt God was watching over him.

He wants people to know - people who say that there never was a holocaust are the most dangerous.

69% of the Germans were different.