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MORTON BLUMENSTEIN

Volume 1

Side 1

Watching Holocaust T.V. show triggered Mr. Blumenstein's desire to tell his story; 16 years old in 1939; disbelief of stories about Germans due to WW I stories concerning their kindness; SW Poland small city; restrictions (curfews; assigned jobs covering trenches Polish soldiers dug; no school) thru 1940; 19 year old brother taken to labor camp in Germany; life became harder; move to restricted area for Jews; work in metal factory and clothing factory until 1942; rationed food; hate of Jews in Ghetto; move of factory to another city (Bendsburg); owners were privileged semi-Germans; 1943; 40 people to a basement in terrible living conditions; death of baby by smothering so soldiers wouldn't hear; sent to Auschwitz with mother, father and sister from Bendsburg; Dr. Mengele's decision; father and son go to labor camp; mother and sister die; temporary labor camp conditions (1 quart of soup a day and a little piece of bread; New Year's 1943' taken to showers, change of clothes; first time in three months; assigned to clothing repair shop; lucky to be working inside on prisoners uniforms; Mengele inspects every few months for old and sick; illness in January 1944; bedmate in sick barracks was former Secretary of Polish Socialist Party; became Prime Minister; continued sickness led to gas chamber; after 6 week illness he recovered; January 18, 1945; evacuation due to Russian advance; 45 mile march; arrival at Mauthausen with many deaths from the cold; hidden jewelry pieces and U.S. money from clothing work at Auschwitz; guards were professional murderers; tried to bribe with American money to save himself and two friends sent to death camp Ebensee; American advance seen; S.S. continued

killing; conditions poor; cleaned rooms; arrival of U.S. planes help morale; May 6, 1945 liberations by Americans; Germans sent men to hide in mountains; mountains said to be safe; dynamite was hidden in mountains (end of side 1)

Volume 1

Side 2

American planes bombed the buildings they were in; S.S. quartered in building #20 which planes pinpointed (53 dead, 120 injured); Luckily, was uninjured; liberated May 6, 1945 in poor health; Americans cook large meal to celebrate liberation; weakened bodies unable to cope with food; Many die; return to Poland six weeks later; return to Breslau, Poland where lives well with friends until October, 1945 under Russian occupation; smuggled self to West Germany to be with brother and under American occupation; difficult to cross border from east to west; capture by Russians; held for 48 hours; search for brother at Bergen Belsen; discovery of brother alive in Stuttgart; separation was five years to the day and hour; support by Jewish Committee, a United Nations organization; participation in black market operation; arrived in U.S. March, 1947; Married thirty-five years - two children, two grandchildren; speaks of satisfaction with life; discussion of importance of expressing self; had avoided discussing experiences until now; important for the world to be convinced that the holocaust actually happened.