

AGJ HS

SEYMOUR MONCARZ

PRE-WAR:

Born in Czyzew, Poland on October 5, 1916
Mother's maiden name was Masfia(?)

WAR: OCCUPATION BY NAZIS

Town they lived in was completely bombed in 1939. At 4 A.M. they gathered everyone together in the streets and shot them. He was too fearful to run. Loaded everyone into trucks except thirty who were left to clean up.. The next day they threw them into trenches and shot them. A town of 2400 Jews was reduced to between two and three hundred. 90% wiped out in four weeks. He worked as a cabinet maker for the arch commissar for a few months. After hearing a death warning he ran away to a farmer who, for pay, hid them in a small cellar and fed them. They lived there for 21 weeks until March 20, 1943. Suddenly one day gendarmes surrounded them. They had been alerted by an informer. They found three boys hiding in a separate place and killed them. They also shot the farmer. Finally they threatened the daughter who told them where everyone was hiding. All came out with hands up. Germans took all 18 by truck and horse into town and put them into jail. Everyone said prayers of good-bye. However since he and his brother knew the commissar since they had worked for them earlier they were saved. Everyone else was shot. Commissar says you must come back and work for us. Moshe Silverstein told guards he had secret things to tell so he was also saved. The three of them - including Seymour's brother stayed together and were saved. Had no food or water for a few days. Finally they were taken to work for the commissar. After one month asked commissar for fresh clothes and a bath - granted. Stayed there 1 year. Gestapo then took them to prison again - beatings as well. Then they were sent to carpenter's shop and all was well until 1944.

WAR: CONCENTRATION CAMP

Didn't know about camps. Always thought Jews were killed on sight and none lived. They were put in a camp with "P" on their arm for Polack. A few days later Germans found documents stating that they were Jews and started beating them up again. Sent them to work in a munitions factory. He and his brother had opposing shifts. Didn't think they'd survive. Were given only 1 piece of bread per day. Could trade cigarettes for bread which he gave to his brother.

In December, 1944 Germans tried to evacuate camp by making prisoners walk. Silverstein and brother could hardly walk. At transfer camp in January had to sleep on floor in mud like herring with no covering. After 10 days sent to Puchenwald. At this time was separated from brother. Russians coming closer. In camp thousands of people were dying. He weighed only 60 to 70 pounds. Took dead bodies to crematorium. Fell sick at Buchenwald. Enlisted in another labor camp called Beesingham. Carried electric poles on shoulders. Received more food and better places to sleep. Saw English planes. Finally put on a train and knew this was the end. Train moved but stopped after a few hours. Everyone prayed to God. The gestapo guards were supposed to kill them but didn't

LIBERATION

Americans reached train and liberated them. Gestapo ran away. Red Cross gave them food, bread and chocolates. After eating he realized he had no family left. Was supposed to reunite at Mr. Kotz's store with his brother. Went to Poland and found that brother was killed. When he returned to Poland he went in disguise. Found that any survivors of the Germans (Jews) had been killed by the Poles. He was the only survivor. UJA helped him find his Aunt, Mrs. Whitman in the United States. Married, lives in Brooklyn.