

RG-50.156.0021

Summary

Henry Harvey, born 6/6/24 in Breslau, Germany, although family lived in Warsaw. Name was Henry Gurman. Father, a manufacturer of military embellishments, named Moshe ben Litman Gurman. Mother Miriam (Habergritz). Both born in Warsaw. Secular family, although Yiddish spoken along with Polish. Went to a Polish school early on but was only Jewish student in class. Singled out for abuse. Parents moved him to a Jewish school after 4th grade. 400,000 Jews in Warsaw at the time. Aware of problems in Germany and about Kristallnacht. Father contributed to Gemeinde charity for help for German Jewish refugees prewar

Warsaw bombed 9/1/39 and every day thereafter. Older married sister on way back from NYC and boat turned around and she went back to the US. Family fled Warsaw for the Russian border. Went by car and later in a horse cart. Ended up in Pinsk which had been occupied by the Russians. Stayed until 12/39, and then went on to Lvov in Galicia. Stayed until 6/28/40 when Russians deported them to a labor camp, Oshla, halfway between Moscow and Sverdlosk in the Maryskaja Autonomous Region. Had own room in the barracks. Camp had Poles and Jews, both of whom were considered "Socially Dangerous Element." Harvey in a satellite camp with 50 others working as a lumberjack. Camp run by NKVD. When Germany attacked Russia, Harvey and others freed in 7/41. Family went to town of Yoshkar-Ola. Other Jews went to Kazakhstan. In Yoshkar-Ola 2 years working in metal fabricating plant making parts for military skis. Joined Polish army in 1943. One Polish division set up by Polish Government in exile (Menachem Begin in division) went to Palestine after disagreements over Katyn massacre. Harvey joined 2nd division set up by Polish Communists, called the Lublin Committee. Saw combat in eastern Ukraine and became an officer. Division moved through Poland south of Warsaw to German border and stopped to avoid joining up with American forces. Discharged postwar and met up with parents in Lodz. Agreed to go to U. of Warsaw to become a technocrat to get discharge. Instead, got false papers and a Russian uniform and went to East Berlin. Discarded papers and uniform and used a new name along with parents. Joined a convoy from East Berlin intended for repatriating German Jews. Got to Nordhausen and walked across into the British Zone in West Berlin. Sent to a DP camp for 8 months. Sister in NYC brought Harvey and parents to US on 8/30/46.

Now (1984) lives in Woodbury, MN. Distrusts non Jews as antisemitic. Gave Holocaust presentation at Woodbury HS along with Henry Oertelt and Felicia Weingarten. Has 2 daughters, unnamed.