

RG-50.156.0026

Summary

FELIX KAMINSKY

Born 9/15/13 Sendzeszow, Poland, a town with 100 Jewish families. Father, Joseph, a grain wholesaler, and mother Shifrah. Had 2 brothers and 6 sisters. Only one sister survived in Brazil after leaving Poland in 1927. Spoke Yiddish and Polish at home. In 1936, he went into the Polish army for 18 months. Also went belonged to Hashomer Hatzair and went to camps run by Hachshara in various places. Prepared to go to Palestine but could not get to the kibbutz he wanted. After the army he went into the leather business. Called back into army in 9/39 but war over in two weeks. Kaminsky and two others ran away and obtained priests garments and went to Tarnow. After their horses were stolen, he traveled 200 miles back home. Town taken over by Germans. He was put to work on railroad tracks. Lost his right eye in an accident. Women in town taken to Cracow airport to work. Niece, who later died, told him to sneak into the airport through a hole in the fence and thereby avoided the round up in Sendzeszow. Sister, 8 months pregnant killed and two other sisters put in gas chamber, but latter's two sons survived and ended up in Brazil. Kaminsky worked at the airport for 18 months. Taken to a factory in Cracow on Lipova 4 along with 80 others. Factory run by Oskar Schindler who took it over from a Jew. Claims Schindler his "best friend." Asked by Schindler to raise geese to feed visiting Germans from Plaschau. He took leftovers to the barracks. In early 1945, as the Russians approached, Schindler prepared to move to Brno, Czechoslovakia. Gave Himmler a list of his 1100 Jews he had to have go with him as vital workers, including Kaminsky. He worked in kitchen until liberated by the Russians 5/8/45. Schindler had bought up material for man's suits from Czech Manufacturers and told the Jews to take it. Kaminsky did, and later sold a bag full in Cracow. The Russians let Schindler go after the inmates told them what he had done. The inmates apparently killed remaining German guard and some "bad" Jews who had collaborated.

Kaminsky went to Sosnowiec where he ran into his soon to be wife who had been in another camp. She was a cousin. Married 1/27/46. In 2/46, they snuck across the border into Germany, to Bodenwalhof. Subsequently, they went to Munich where they lived for several years. Son born in 1947. They ran a store. Emigrated to NYC in 1951 and worked in leather goods. Brother in law went from NYC to Stewartsville, MN where he bought a farm. Kaminsky moved to Rochester, MN and bought a trailer park in 1959 which he kept until 1983. Served as a translator for South/Central American Jews who came to the Mayo Clinic. Son is a lawyer with 3 children. Belongs to Knesset Israel Synagogue and the B'nai Brith.

Kaminsky saw Schindler after the war. He feels Schindler played both sides because he was "smart" but necessarily good. Feels Schindler's List is inaccurate.