

BEN ROZENZWEIG

Born Poland 1922(?). Had seven siblings. Only younger brother survived. Parents (unnamed) traded horse and clothes. He left home at 12 and spent 3 years training as a tailor, then on to Katowice. War started and much of Katowice destroyed, including the synagogue. Poles took the bricks from the synagogue to rebuild their homes. Jews put in a ghetto. Rosenzweig and younger brother taken to labor camp to work in ammo factory and some tailoring. Workers sabotaged the ammunition. There 1939-42. He was briefly separated from his brother who went to another camp but were reunited when another prisoner traded places. In camp 1942-44. Saw men shot for no reason. He knew Jews in the Warsaw ghetto killed because clothe covered with blood brought to the camp. Parents and others in family taken at High Holidays 1940 (?) to Treblinka and killed. In 1944, he and brother taken to Buchenwald by train. Saw smoke from crematoria. Says it was a "slaughterhouse." To survive, he sewed shoes for Gypsy kapo and got extra soup. He thought God lived in America because He didn't want to see what was happening in Europe. He saw Ukrainians (worse than Germans) kill truckloads of Jews. He ended up in the hospital in early 1945 as Americans and Russians approached. Gestapo took off uniforms to hide identity—"Just obeying orders." They were taken to Thereseinstadt where they were liberated by the Russians 5/7/45. Given food, but some ate too much and died. Rosenzweig and brother returned to Katowice and he worked as a tailor for 8 months. Afraid of Poles who had sold out Jews for 10 lbs. of sugar during the war. He knew of a Polish pogrom in Kielce in 1945. They went to Germany to be with some surviving cousins and stayed until 1949. Rosenzweig and brother came to Minneapolis in 1949. After 6 weeks, he moved to Fargo, ND where he stayed for 8 months, taken care of by Jewish families from Mount Sinai Temple. Then back to Minneapolis. He married in 1955 and has two sons, 19 and 22 (1982). Oldest son often asks why he didn't fight back. He says he did what he had to do to survive even though he felt he was dead already. Fearful of repeat Holocaust because Poles, Russians and Arabs blame Jews for everything that happens. **Brother lives nearby.**