

ABE STINE

Summary

Born 1920 (or 1917—unclear) in Zabkowice, Poland, eldest of 8. Father a butcher. Grandparents went to Palestine in 1936. Mother, also a Stine—very distant cousin—had 8 siblings and father had 9. All relatives but one killed. He had 5 years of education in public school and Yeshiva. Spoke Yiddish and Polish. Family very religious and he was bar mitzvahed. Poles treated Jews badly after WW I, urged on by the Catholic church. Life worse after Hitler came to power, but Jews did not think he would last, a “false sense of security”. He became a Zionist in 1935-6. He was rejected by the Polish army for health reasons. Zabkowice occupied 9/39 and Jews pulled into the street and taken to the RR station to clean it. Jewish Committee organized for the 70 families in town by the Germans who also made the Jews cut their beards. The Poles cooperated with the Germans. In May, 1940, Stine taken to Niederkild, a work camp where he worked on the autobahn 12 hours a day 6 days a week with little food. He was there until 8/42. Kapos were Jewish “tough guys.” When the camp closed he was sent to Markstadt where he worked the night shift at the Krupp ammunition factory 8 miles away. One Kapo, Morris Martinberger, was vicious and beat up prisoners and was later killed by the prisoners. In 1944 he was transferred to a concentration camp at Funfteichen with 2000 other prisoners. There he saw hangings and other executions. In 12/44, he was marched to Gross-Rosen camp where he stayed until 4/30/45. There, he was aware of cannibalism by the prisoners. He knew of people who ran into the electrified wire there to commit suicide. More punishment given on Jewish holidays. Non-Jews got Red Cross packages. He worked in the stone quarry. Three days before liberation many Jews were taken out of camp, shot and buried in a mass grave. Stine laid on top of a pile of dead for three days until US Army liberated camp on 4/11/45. Inmates killed many of the Kapos who were left. Stine weighed 85 pounds. He spent 3 months in a hospital recovering. After discharge, he went to Weimar for a month and then on to Zabkowice where he stayed only a day. He went to Regensburg, Germany in the American zone where he sold goods on the black market. Says Germans in town claimed to “know nothing” about Buchenwald. He met and married his wife Judy, who had been in Auschwitz in 1946. He ran a taxi service in Regensburg until 1950. His son was born in 1947. He says he lost his belief in God and was only interested in survival.