

MURRAY WEISMAN

Born 1929 or 1930 in Lodz, Poland. He was youngest of two brothers and two sisters, one of whom survived. Father a teacher. Very religious. Family spoke Yiddish and Polish. Lived in a mixed neighborhood. Went to public school through third grade and Cheder. Often had fights at school with Polish children. Poles stirred up by antisemitic Catholic clergy. Father Chechaek tried to eliminate ritual slaughter in city. The Germans occupied Lodz early 9/39. Polish residents happy as they looted Jewish stores. Weisman and 1 brother and father fled east toward Warsaw and Russia but returned after a week. "Might as well be killed at home." Lodz ghetto created 9-12/39. Jews started disappearing. In town, SS men speaking Yiddish ordered Jews into the square and "hoodwinked" into boarding trains. He was picked up on the street and sent to Gleiwitz. Never saw family again as all but one sister killed. At Gleiwitz he did road work and saw people shot "left and right." Some prisoners committed suicide by running into the electrified fence. Whole camp sent to Auschwitz 8/42. He went to Buna, a satellite labor camp in open railway cars with no food. He unloaded coal and lost an eye from the coal dust. In 1944, sent to Dura and then back to Buchenwald in 3/45. At some point he worked for I. G. Farben. He was bayoneted in Dura by a guard and he saw people thrown into pits and burned. Five prisoners, 2 of them Jews escaped. The Poles killed the Jews but were caught and hung in the camp. The Russians bombed around Buna but not the camp itself. At the end of the war, he hid in a hole as the Germans killed inmates in advance of the liberation by the US Army. He saw carloads of children taken to the gas chambers. In the camps he identified with Jews but lost his belief in a God who would allow this massacre. He was liberated by a Jewish major 4/14/45 and was taken to Paris with a group, the "orphans of Buchenwald," and stayed at the Hotel Lutetia. Then he went to a camp at Aigues for 3 months. He was able to contact his sister and found that she was in Lodz until 1/45 and then was sent to Auschwitz. Parents apparently deported and killed around the same time. He moved back to Paris and into Robespierre's hotel and went to school to learn dentistry. He remained in France until late 1949. He tried to go to Israel as he was a Zionist. He was sent to Italy to train to go to Israel and got to Herzelia but refused entry by the UK and sent back to France. His sister made it to Israel but later came to Minneapolis. He never returned to Poland as returning Jews were being killed by the Poles.

In 1949, he made it to NYC where he stayed for 6 months working in a factory. Then a Jewish teacher offered to drive him across the country. In Minneapolis, he ran across Gabi Shulman, a fellow inmate, and decided to stay. He entered the U. Of Minnesota and got a BA in business administration and an MA and a PhD in social work. He worked in the domestic court system, ending up staying in MN for 10 years and then decided to go to law school. He met his wife on a trip to NYC and moved back to Cincinnati and ultimately to Dayton. He works in the legal department of the Logistics Command at Wright-Patterson AFB. He is the only Jew in the legal office. He was Bar Mitzvahed along with his daughter at Temple Israel, now (1980) Temple Beth Or (Reform). He is on the Board of Jewish Education and the Board of Health. He gives presentations on the Holocaust, although his children are not particularly interested. He feels that the Jews did not resist because they were conditioned against violence. He was always fearful of being killed. After coming to the US he worried that the McCarthyites would go after the Jews after the Communists.