

## **RG-50.407.0176**

### **Summary**

Chaim Rozenberg born on 23 November 1923 in Mława, Poland; father: Jacob Rozenberg, expert in wheat milling, owned a soap factory; Grandfather: Odanzski; brother Joseph Rozenberg, many relatives; grandfather Rozenberg was from Ciechanow; depression 1929; mid-1930s school in Danzig noticed he was called the Jeuden, had come from northern Poland; brother went to a Polish school in Danzig; spoke Polish at home when they returned to Poland in 1931 or 1932; attended synagogue and Hebrew school, when anti-Semitism started to grow began speaking Yiddish; School sports organization called Alpha in competition with Polish gymnasium, 1937 or 1938 Jewish boycotts began, laws against Jews, pogroms; Polish servant and Polish nanny; full observance of Sabbath; belonged to Shomar Society; government policy to eliminate Jews from Poland; 1926 grandparents returned from Palestine; heard on radio that war was coming; lived in Mława, Friday 1 September artillery and bombs began falling; Mława was ten miles from border with Germany; Polish soldiers running to border; first civilian killed on Saturday and town started to burn; whole town burned on Sunday; went with a few relatives to town of Strzegowo which was a short way; air attack on Strzegowo; Jewish owner of flour mill took them in; stayed there until Thursday; went back to Mława; Mława was only border town that did not fall; Mława was the gateway between East Prussia and Poland; uncle was Mayor of Ciechanow; German army came in and reached Mordine [PH]; schools closed; Germans organized Judenrat (Jewish council); grandfather part of Judenrat; father would not participate; thought Judenrat would collaborate with Germans; first white band, later came the yellow star, around November 1940; lights put on Jewish section and deportations began; went outside Jewish district for the night; heard screams from the Germans in the morning; Judenrat forced to work by the Germans; Jews taken away by trucks taken to Messerich, Germany; remaining Jews put in Jewish district; Judenrat were not touched; terrible living conditions; food became a problem; uses Polish zloty and then later German marks; officer in charge later was director in the Ukraine; ghetto walls came about the end of 1940 or 1941; one gate patrolled by Jewish police and Germans; worked on railway line; Judenrat followed German directions, gave names of people, supplied workers; 10 members of Judenrat; had a jail; no shops, no schools, in beginning contact with Shomar Society in Warsaw but that came to an end; 22 June 1941 Russian war began; read German newspapers; April, 1942 four Jewish people hanged for smuggling food into ghetto; about 6,000 Jews in Ghetto; about 9 people in his room; conditions deteriorated and more cruelty; May, 1942 police executed by the Germans for not following orders, including members of Judenrat; September 1942 Germans arrested 100 people because Jews not behaving properly, 50 were shot and others had to work; November 1942 ghetto liquidated, first transport old people taken to the East, he was in second transport; third transport and ghetto shut; knew being taken to Treblinka or Auschwitz; assembled in the flour mill and taken by German police, about 2,000 people; not cattle car but third class; took photo albums; traveled 2 to 2 ½ days; arrived in Auschwitz station at night; left parcels behind; received by SS guards; selections began immediately; 500 men selected; women and children put on trucks immediately; walked into camp; told to undress; kept shoes and belt; November 1942; haircut; sent to showers; given striped clothing, underpants, shirt, trousers, jacket, hat, socks, and overcoat; number tattooed, picture taken and forms completed; foot and shoulder pressed against the wall, very painful, hit every time you flinched; taken to block 68; given uneatable soup and portion of bread; prisoner in charge of room took bread; in morning congregated in square in front of block, men between 18 and 24 had to come forward and taken away to school for brickmaking (Magenschule); about 50 survived; on top of block 7, former Austrian guards; winter 42-43; liter of soup and piece of bread; 6:00 AM awakened; 3 level bunks, 250 in

room, Alfred Oshevski, a German criminal, guard in charge; Poles sent out of Auschwitz; Germans in top positions but camp run by Poles; few Polish Kapos, Polish intelligentsia were first sent to Auschwitz had arm numbers 1 to 10,000; first 30 numbers were German criminals from Mauthausen; number 1 was Lager Elderstein; number 5 was Kapo at brick factory; became electrician at brick factory; brickmaking school was on top of block 7A; school lasted end of November to April; German was paying for their labor; when Stalingrad fell they got a compete loaf of bread, people became very sick with diarrhea, many died; for sport Oshevski forced them to undress and stand in the cold, if said cold then water was dumped on them; April 1 sent to work outside camp; Lager Elderstein was always after him; two pieces of sausage a week, sometimes liverwurst, margarine twice a week, twice a week jam; among first sent from school to Krupp factory; Kapo was a young German communist; thousands of prisoners working there; patched roof with cement; after two days was sent to another place where number 5 prisoner was the Kapo, building blocks outside Auschwitz for SS, working with civilians; became an electrician; Commander Holtzhof took people away and only Kapo was left; could walk around as an electrician; moved from bloc 7a to block 5; 3 Kapos in block 5; then moved to block 15; electricians were in block 58; block 15 top block in Auschwitz, people delivering food to kitchen, plenty of soup and bread in block 15, 4 days a week got ½ liter soup and ½ liter of potato; 3 days a week got 1 liter of soup; took away hats for punishment; order that there were too many electrician so Jewish electricians were transferred, Poles were kept; sent out of Auschwitz to outside camps; reports men were being castrated 1943; worked on train branch line from Auschwitz to camp; went to work at Kliesbauh group [PH]; symbol on uniform was pink triangle pointed up (post-political) and red triangle pointed down; later red and yellow triangles; then he was transferred by truck to Svetorvitza [PH], a small camp in Silesia; new camp being built ; then worked inside of camp later as electrician; then worked in factory as electrician building anti-aircraft guns; 2,000 people in the camp;

## Part 2

Worked on anti-aircraft guns at a factory near Auschwitz, (at 00:02:19 he named the place).

Arrived in Auschwitz in August or September 1943, until January 23, 1945, prisoners were stealing oil; 12 January 1945 the Russian offensive began and on the 18<sup>th</sup> Auschwitz was evacuated, Germany was cut off, 23 January 1945 was taken from factory to railway station put in boxcars to Czechoslovakia, after 5 or 6 days without food or water, arrived in Mauthausen; Kapos in Mauthausen beat the Kapos arriving from Auschwitz, showered and drank water, had to wait outside in January naked, quarantined in blocks 3 and 1 of Mauthausen, later moved to block 1, two cisterns each with eight faucets, one minute to wash, slept on floor head to foot, some lying down and others seated, packed like sardines, took people with good shoes to bury bodies from hospital, stacking one on another, threw away shoes; a transport to Mauthausen was refused so sent to Dachau, selected 300 and murdered 200, given wooden clog shoes and taken to Dachau, increased from 5 to 8 in a bed, heard rumors that Americans and English had crossed the Rhine, he became sick and was taken to hospital block 11, given an injection felt fire throughout his body, transferred to hospital block 17, a few days later ordered to change position in bed so head was not at the window but feet were, rumor that crematorium was to be blown up, just before noon sirens started to blow, airplanes flying over camp, when siren stopped saw a white flag over the commanders barracks, commander about to be taken away, Americans liberated, came in about evening, little shooting, April 28; Americans gave them food, sick ones got soup, others got half-tins of vegetables and meat, got severe diarrhea and Americans learned how to feed prisoners of war, then food became normal, May 3, 1945, in June taken to (00:40:15); Saw prison commander in a prison

uniform pretending to be a prisoner, prisoners identified him, hanged later, (at 00:43:00 told names of the camps he was in) , stayed there a week or two and then to another place; Decided to go back to Poland to try to build a new life, hoped to find some relatives, travelled through Czechoslovakia, saw Russian troops at Polish border, in Poland realized there were not going to be any Jews, antisemitism, found uncle and auntie, (ghetto named at 00:47:34) only one child survived ghetto; A Polish woman who was hiding a Jewish child; went to different places in Poland, changed to Polish name of Henry Kramer, attended evening high school, end of June went to Sweden, stayed about 6 months, beginning of February went to Amsterdam and boarded a boat, was married; two children, both university graduates, one lectures at university, one is working on master; HIAS paid for passage.

Family photos are shown at the end.