

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Braude, Iosif

Date of interview: 2/14/1996

Summary: Iosif was born 1919 in Sebish, Russia. His father was a rabbi, mother a housewife and he had 7 siblings. His family was killed in the Holocaust: older brother, Haig, died in the Finland War.

When Iosif was very young, his father died of tiff, a bacterium. Since his father had been a rabbi, his mother was not allowed to work and had difficulty supporting the family. They had to depend on people they knew from the city to bring over food until his siblings were old enough to work. At the age of 18 in 1942, he was drafted into the Russian army and sent to the Ukraine, fighting in the artillery division and traveling on foot. The commander of the battalion became a father figure to him. Iosif recalls not sleeping on a bed or drinking from a cup in 4 years. He remembers being given deadly poison to administer to himself in case the German army caught him because they would torture Russian soldiers. Iosif saw many of his friends die. Every 3 months, a group of new soldiers were brought into the army.

He left the army in 1946 due to a wound on his foot. He reunited with his mother and continued his studies at the University in Leningrad, where he became a forest engineer. He met his wife in synagogue in Sebish, where her father was a rabbi, and married her at the age of 34. In 1981 he and his wife moved to the United States, glad to leave Russian anti-Semitism. They had 3 sons together. Iosif is very thankful to this country for giving him the opportunity to live here where he has freedom.