

BOB OBUCHOWSKI (BOB ROBERTS) 5

NAMES .

GRAND FATHER - SHMUEL ELIASZEWICZ
MOTHER - RIFKA (ELIASZEWICZ)
FATHER - ICEK MAYER OBUCHOWSKI
SISTERS - GITAL & MALKA
BROTHER - JANKEL

I have photographs of my family - given to me by some cousins.

I think my grandfather, parents and one sister were gassed at CHELMNO.

My children are SUSAN and IVOR. I have 5 grand-children

My wife is MARIK (Born in Belgium)

My son is 33 years old IVOR.

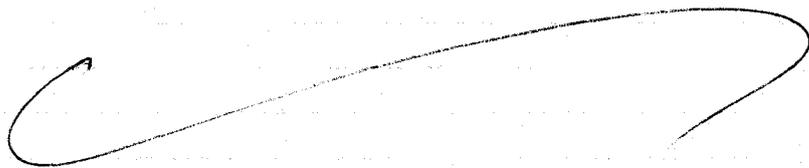
My daughter is 39 years old SUSAN.

I came to England on 14th August 1945 from Czechoslovakia. I was at Wendeness for about 3 months. I did not ~~not~~ know what to expect and was pleasantly surprised. I had lost 5 years of my life when I decided I would go to Gateshead to learn about JUDAISM. I spent 2 years in a hostel at Gateshead, and then moved to London, where I chose to live with a Jewish Orthodox family in Stoke Newington London. Since I came from a small town in Poland, I found life in London very exciting, with many people and a new busy way of living, and another language to learn.

It was suggested to me at that time that I could either be apprenticed to a tailor or an upholsterer - I chose the latter, and went to work for a large furniture company. I learned the upholstery trade for a number of years, and in 1953 I opened my own business, which became very successful.

I met my wife in London in 1950 and we married in Belgium in 1951. We bought our own home in 1966 when we moved to Ilford Essex where we are to this present day. We have two children, Susan and Ivor, We now have 5 grand-children from the ages of 2 to 16 years old.

I am now semi-retired and enjoy my life with my family and friends.



In September 1944, my sister, some cousins and I, were transported to BIRKENAU/AUSHWITZ, when we arrived on the platform in BIRKENAU, I was taken with some men & boys behind a tall wire fence on the platform into a field, where we were told to sit down by the Germans, after a few hours they picked out 25 young boys like myself, we were taken to a hut, and made to undress completely for inspection to see if we were fit enough for work. I was in a fearful state of terror as the defect I had was in my right buttock, a part of which had decomposed when I was in a coma for 6 days, and had been lying in my urine all that time without attention, the flesh had deteriorated and fallen out leaving a large gap to the bone, which of course was very obvious, the other boys immediately and automatically came to my aid, by standing behind, in front and at the side of me. The moments passed and I am here to tell the tale. - From the platform at BIRKENAU - I never saw my sister again, or my cousins.

From Auschwitz I was transferred to BABICE - a sub-camp - for a little while; then we were sent on a death march to BUCHENWALD - GERMANY in the middle of winter. When we arrived we had to undress and walk through a tunnel to be de-boused. I was again afraid that my defect would be noticed, but I was again saved, and not noticed. I was sent to REHMSDORF where I found HELL ON EARTH. While there, I broke my foot and was sent to a shed that was used as a "hospital". They put a cast on my foot. The following morning, one of the inmates dragged me out of my bunk, and made me go to work. I managed to force off my cast so I could work, and at the end of the day, I made my way back to the "hospital" shed, - all the patients had gone - they were sent to the gas-chamber. Apparently the inmate had overheard that the hospital was to be "cleared", MEYER HOCHMAN who now lives in Canada - had saved my life. In April 1945 I was again on a death march to TEREZIN, of the 2,775 persons at the outset - 75 survived. I was liberated by the Russians at TEREZIN on 9th MAY 1945.

In August 1939 we heard rumours about the men having to enlist in the army, as there was war coming. Within 2 weeks, we were hearing planes and bombings, and very quickly OZORKÓW was occupied by the Germans. Restrictions were being imposed, and I could not go to school, and my father was not allowed to sell goods. We were not allowed to walk on the pavements, and were treated as inferiors, because we were Jewish. My brother ran away with a friend and a cousin to BIALYSTOK. This cousin now lives in Israel, and informed me that my brother died in Bialystok soon after he got there.

In April 1942, the Germans gave an order for all the Jews of OZORKÓW to gather in the main school. We were all forced to undress completely, and were stamped on our chests, either with the letter A or B. We were very perplexed, not knowing what it meant. Two days later after being allowed to go home, we had to return to the school, where we were separated into two groups - A and B. 80% of the people were in B group - young and old (all ages) including my grandfather, parents, and one sister. They were all taken away and I never saw them again. My other sister and I were immediately sent to the ghetto in OZORKÓW with the people stamped with A's. We were there for only a short period - about 6 weeks I think, when we were transferred to ŁÓDŹ GHETTO. at the end of MAY 1942.

In Łódź I was forced to work by the local authorities digging pits for refuse & sewage. Our lives there were very miserable and hard, people were dying of starvation & disease. After about a year I was given a job to distribute potatoes and swedes, it was winter time, I was extremely hungry and ate anything I could. I then became very ill with typhoid, and a very high fever, and as there was no medication I developed meningitis, and was in a coma for about 6 days; my sister would come and see me after work, but each time not expecting to find me, except on a death lorry. When I regained consciousness, she cried for joy. But I was left with a physical defect, and could not walk for some time, and had to shift along on my bottom, as I could not stand either. This continued for some weeks.

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FEBRUARY 1996.

BEREK OBUCHOWSKI (BOB) BORN. 28TH JANUARY 1927.
(ROBERTS)

I was born in OZORKÓW - POLAND about 15 miles north of LODZ. The Jews were approximately 20% of the population. It was a small town, we lived in the suburbs, the street was named NOWE MIASTO. I attended the local state school. The Jewish children were about 10% at school. I went to Cheder 3 times per week after school. Yiddish was the spoken language at home.

I lived with my parents, grandfather (maternal) and my two sisters & a brother. I was the youngest. Our house was on one level, with an orchard at the back with apple & pear trees, & gooseberry & red-current bushes. We had a couple of horses & carts also sleds which my father owned, and hired out as transport with two drivers. We also had a shop attached at the side, where my father sold groceries & hardware. We also owned some further accommodation at the side of our house which was rented to 4 families, each of them renting one large room. In the summer season, we had a Kiosk - 7 Kilometres away in a summer resort between OZORKÓW and ZGIERZ where my mother & older sister would go to sell provisions by the roadside - I would go there in my summer holiday from school to help out.

On Saturdays, the men in our family including myself would go to services at a STEIBL, which was in the same road where we lived. We used to make a succuth each year in one of the sheds attached to our home. We were moderately religious, and my mother would make her own cholass & lockshen for Shabbas.

At school I remember one incident when I intervened in a fight between a couple of bullies punching a Jewish boy - and I dragged one of the bullies into the River BZURA and held him there with his feet in the freezing ice. I was quite tough as a youngster, and from that time at school, I was never bullied, although the mother of the non-Jewish boy, came the next day and abused me verbally. I remember getting a belting once from my father; we had a deep well in our yard, I was climbing over it, and my father was terrified that I would fall in and gave me a hiding instead. I remember a happy childhood - apart from the anti-semitism - we did get on with our non-Jewish neighbours & customers. I also played with non-Jewish friends.

B. Oluchowski
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IG5 0PM.

4/3/96.

Dear Mr. Gilbert,

I trust I am not too late - my story is enclosed herewith regarding my teen-age years during the war in Poland and Germany.

I hope you will be able to use it, and if there is any further information you may require please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

With very best wishes for the future success of your book upon publication.

Perhaps we shall all have the pleasure again of seeing you at our next Re-union of the '45 Aid Society.

Your sincerely

B. Oluchowski