

A Tombstone in Writing

Moses Lazerowitz · Moshe ben Aharon Shmuel

Brooke's grandfather · Lazerowitz line · 1907 – 2000



A master tailor from Sosnowiec, Moses Lazerowitz survived Auschwitz, the Warsaw camp and Dachau, used his needle to keep others alive, and later wrote down his murdered family's names night after night.

Moses Lazerowitz was born in Sosnowiec, Poland, on 3 July 1907, the date in his birth registration and his Dachau records; from 1946 he used 1908, which the family follows. His father, **R' Aharon Shmuel Lazerowitz**, came from Wodzisław near Kielce; his mother, **Sarah**, was the daughter of **Kalman Potok**. Moses was the youngest of her children, and after she died her brothers took him to their village farm, with about a hundred apple and pear trees. He became a master tailor, studying fashion in Paris and earning a diploma at Katowice, and served as a corporal in the Polish army. In 1931 he bought a fine-coat store at 16 Modrzejowska Street, ran a workshop of ten tailors, and with his brothers bought a one-third share of uncle **Zelig Potok's** manor farm at Gluzy, near Działoszyce.

In September 1939 he survived a German roundup in which every tenth man was to be shot, and watched the synagogue burn. For a time the farm was a 'small paradise' that sheltered relatives and sent food to the city. Then the great deportations of 1942 took his step-mother and young sister; his brother **Yerachmiel**, with his wife **Rivkah** and their children **Sara'la** and **Eliezer Yosef**, hid in the straw at Gluzy through the winter before being lured to Nowo-Radomsko and murdered. On 1 March 1943, answering a Gestapo summons, Moses gave himself up so the Germans would free his brother **Kalman Shlomo** and his wife. Months later word came that the Środula ghetto had been liquidated, killing Kalman Shlomo with his wife and two boys, and his sister **Esther** with her husband.

He survived the labour camps of Ottmuth and Łaziska Górne as the commander's tailor. In November 1943 he was sent to Auschwitz-

BORN	3 July 1907, Sosnowiec, Poland (1908 in his later papers)
DIED	5 April 2000; buried Wellwood Cemetery, West Babylon, New York
HEBREW NAME	Moshe ben Aharon Shmuel
TRADE	Master tailor
CAMP NUMBERS	Birkenau 160183; KL Warschau 4455; Dachau 88797
LIBERATED	1 May 1945 (Lag b'Omer), Buchberg near Wolfratshausen

MARRIED	Regina Olshevsky, Munich, Lag b'Omer 1947
PLACES	Sosnowiec; Bayreuth; Cincinnati; Brooklyn; Deal, New Jersey

Birkenau and tattooed 160183; in December he was among a thousand men sent to KL Warschau, prisoner 4455, clearing the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto, where he kept a secret Passover seder with the Klausenburger Rebbe. Marched out in July 1944, he reached Dachau on 6 August as prisoner 88797 and was sent to the Kaufering camps near Landsberg. There, as a tailor, he won potatoes and soup for the prisoners, brought weak men into his warm workshop, and saved two Hungarian Jews from execution. After a death march toward the Tyrol he was liberated by the US Army at Buchberg, near Wolfratshausen, on Lag b'Omer, 1 May 1945.

At Feldafing he found his half-brother **Lazer** alive and learned that his sister **Rushka** had survived. His fiancée, Rivkah bas Gershon Shimonov, had been murdered. With his cousin **Hinda**, the only survivor of Zelig's nine children, he fought in the courts of Miechów and Kraków to recover the Gluzy farm, and failed; in December 1945 he smuggled himself and his young relatives out of Poland. In Bayreuth he ran a lumber business and found **Regina Olshevsky**, daughter of **Yakov Olshevsky**, once a seamstress in the family business. They married in Munich on Lag b'Omer 1947, and their son **Jack** was born in July 1948. In October 1949 they flew to New York and on to Cincinnati, where he went to work as a tailor; they were naturalized there together in 1956, and later lived in Brooklyn and Deal, New Jersey.

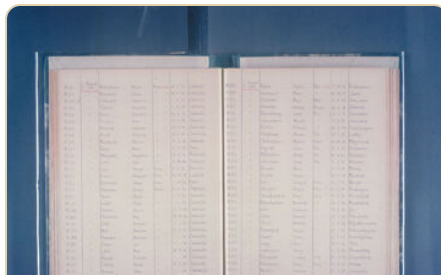
Night after night he went down to the basement and wrote out his stories in Yiddish. He finished in 1972 and signed it 'Moshe ben Aharon Shmuel and Sara Lazerowitz', calling it a tombstone in writing for his murdered family. Years later Lazer read the Yiddish aloud, it was translated into English through a service arranged by his grandchildren, and a grandson bound it as Zeidy's Book. In 1997 he also recorded his testimony in Yiddish for the USC Shoah Foundation. Moses died on 5 April 2000 and is buried at Wellwood Cemetery, West Babylon. Alongside his own words stand the records: the Dachau personal file he signed 'Mojsze Lejzerowicz', his displaced-person registration at Bayreuth, and the 1949 passenger manifest.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Konzentrationslager *Dachau* ... Am 1. März 1943 ... 88797

Name und Vorname: *Lejzerowicz, Moshe* ... *Pol.*
 gch: *3.3.1912* in *Sosnowiec* ... *Pol.*
 Wohnort: *Sosnowiec*
 Beruf: *Schulmeister*
 Staatsangehörigkeit: *Polen* ... *Polen*
 Name der Eltern: *Schmul und Sura geb. Potok* ... *Polen*
 Wohnort: *Sosnowiec*
 Name der Ehefrau: ...
 Wohnort: ...
 Kinder: ...
 Abfertigung: ...
 Vollendung: ...
 Abfertigung: ...

Dachau Personalbogen (personal file), prisoner no. 88797: arrested Sosnowiec 1 Mar 1943, admitted 6 Aug 1944; parents Schmul & Sura née Potok; signed by Moses (Arolsen 1.1.6.2, doc 10173794)



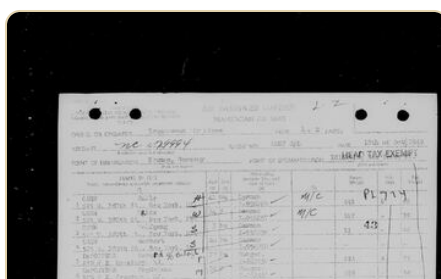
Dachau entry register, 6 Aug 1944, transport from KL Warschau: 88797 Lejzerowicz, 88798 'Richter' (Hershel) (Arolsen 130432081)

A.E.F. DP-2 REGISTRATION RECORD
 Original ☐ Duplicate ☐
 Family Name: *LEIZEROWICZ* ... *MOSES*
 Date of Birth: *1908* ... *SOSNOWIEC*
 Place of Birth: *POLANA* ... *POLANA*
 Religion: *JEWISH*
 Last Permanent Residence on 1 January 1945: *PALESTINE* ... *SOSNOWIEC*
 Date of Entry: *15-2-46*
 Remarks: *CONCENTRATION CAMP DACHAU*

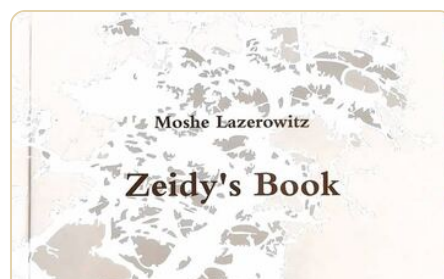
A.E.F. DP-2 registration, Bayreuth, 15 Feb 1946: Mozes Leizerowicz, parents Szmul & Sura Potok; remark Concentration camp Dachau (Arolsen 3.1.1.1, doc 68011110)



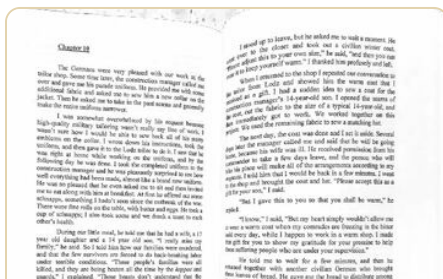
Moses & Regina's ketubah / marriage certificate, Jewish Committee Munich, Chief Rabbi B. Leiserowski (shown by Moses in his USC Shoah Foundation testimony 27036, tape 5, ~20:35)



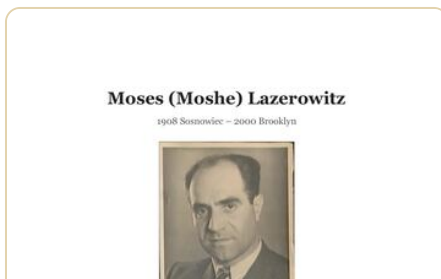
Air passenger manifest, Transocean Air Lines flight from Bremen to Idlewild, New York, 13 Oct 1949, lines 17-19: Mozes, Regina and baby Jakob Lejzerowicz, bound for 1430 Central Parkway, Cincinnati



Zeidy's Book, part 1 (pp.1-199): his diary from 1939 through the camps, including the Potok farm at Gluzu (PDF)



Zeidy's Book, part 2 (pp.200-303): liberation, the fight for the farm, Bayreuth and emigration (PDF)



His testimony in English: full translation of his USC Shoah Foundation interview (27036, 1997, in Yiddish), all six tapes, with timestamps to the video (35-page PDF)

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