



In the Torments of the Shoah

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Melvyn George Fishel



Courtesy: M. Fishel. Photo: David M. Fishel, 2011.

Over the years I assembled bits of family information, scanned shoe-boxes and albums full of old photographs and built a simple family tree. There were periods of intense involvement followed by long periods of reduced activity. A new flurry of activity was triggered by my son David's school-trip to Auschwitz and by requests for information from family abroad. Family members who could answer my questions were ageing. The resurgence of extremism also added urgency to the task.

It was clear I needed to focus on those family members who had suffered during the Holocaust. I realised how little the younger generation knew about the fate of our family during the holocaust. They knew generic that, like the 6 million victims of the Shoah, they also knew some names but they had few specific names. Telling the story of our deported family members became a priority project.

Though I wasn't an actor myself, I felt that if I didn't compile my notes soon, nobody else or probably would or could. Some of the names of deported made little to the young ones in the family because they never got to know the deportees. The few remaining survivors in our family were getting very old and soon I would be the oldest. I also needed the family stories to answer many of the questions I had. It was high time to scribble down some notes and throw in documents and the identifiable photos I could find. That's what I did, and here they are.

To complete my notes I used our family tree and existing family pictures as a starting point. I then visited Kazerne Dossin (previously known as the Jewish Museum of Deportation and Resistance) in Mechelen, Belgium in 2011 to obtain additional information. The museum's research centre is housed in Kazerne Dossin itself (the Dossin Barracks, la Caserne Dossin), the very place

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