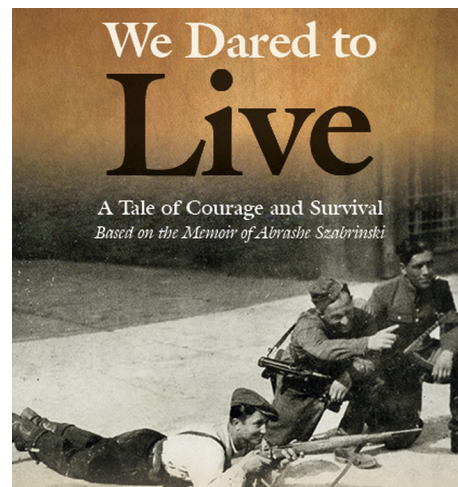


Joseph Sabrin: How I survived the Holocaust as a baby

By Linda Chase
Contributing Editor

When I visited Joseph Sabrin in his Delray Beach home, he shared his life story that began in a ghetto during the Holocaust.

"I was born December 21, 1942, in the Vilna Ghetto. The ghetto was established and operated by Nazi Germany in the city of Vilnius located in Lithuania. During the Holocaust, the creation of ghettos like Vilna was a key step in the Nazi process of brutally separating, persecuting and ultimately destroying Europe's Jews. My father's name was Abrashe Szabrinski (Abe) and my mother was Luba ((Libby). My father, a native of Poland, joined a partisan brigade and made his way to the Vilna Ghetto after hearing that a group of Jewish partisans (the Fareynikte Partizaner Organizatsye) was organizing in Vilna. My father met my mother in the ghetto. As the Nazis' liquidation of the ghetto and extermination of Vilna's Jews escalated, my father escaped into the forest where the partisans renamed their group The Avengers and fought against the Germans and their local collaborators. Since I was an infant, my mother remained in Vilna caring for me. As the conditions in the



"We Dared to Live: A Tale of Courage and Survival" follows Abrashe Szabrinski's journey. COURTESY

ghetto became even more horrendous, my mother entrusted me to sympathetic Polish farmers who agreed to care for me. My mother reunited with my father in the partisan camp where she cooked and performed other daily

duties. After Soviet forces liberated Vilna in July 1944, my parents returned to the city and found out that I was being cared for in an orphanage. I was reunited with my parents after my mother identified me by describing my birthmark."

Joseph recalled moving to Germany with his parents after the war ended.

"My family moved into a Displaced Persons camp in Türkheim, Germany and my brother Murray was born there on my fourth birthday. Although I hid my Jewish identity and attended a Catholic school, the German children assumed I was Jewish and threw stones at me. After living in the DP camp for three years, my family moved to New York City. My father's cousin secured documents for us to immigrate to America."

Joseph reflected on his family's move to New York.

"When we arrived in New York, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) provided some aid as we settled into our new life. We became US citizens and changed our name from Szabrinski to Sabrin. We moved to the Lower East Side in Manhattan where I attended school and learned to speak English. My youngest brother, Max, was born in 1953 and

my family moved to the Bronx. We lived in the apartment vacated by my cousins after they moved to Colorado. I later attended college, but left in 1961 to join the US Army. After my service was over in 1964, I was 21 and worked several jobs to make ends meet. In 1968, I married my wife Sandy, who is also a child of Holocaust survivors. In September Sandy and I will celebrate our 55th wedding anniversary. We have two children, Marcie and Ben, and three grandchildren. As a businessman, I owned two companies: Data Executives and PC Etcetera."

Joseph recalled a birthday gift he gave his father.

"For my father's 60th birthday, I gave him a Yiddish typewriter so he could share his memoirs. The result was a book I published years after his death titled, 'We Dared to Live: A Tale of Courage and Survival'. Like many Holocaust survivors, my father did not divulge the entire story of his survival to me and my younger brothers. It was only after my father's death that I discovered the extent of his exploits as a leader of the partisans who fought the Nazis in the forests of Lithuania. My father's words of wisdom are the ones I abide by today: 'Stay tough and be tolerant'."

Palm Beach County principals attend D.C. Holocaust study trip



The school district in Palm Beach County, an insight through education, sponsored a field study of the Holocaust to Washington, D.C. for district principals on June 6 through June 8. Seventeen principals had the opportunity to travel with two Holocaust survivors and hear their testimonies. They visited the African-American museum and the Holocaust Museum, in order to do an in-depth study of these histories. Principals shared their feedback survey that this trip was life-changing for them and has changed how they will prepare their teachers for the upcoming school year. Many have decided to use the quote of the museum, "What you do matters" as their theme for the upcoming year. COURTESY