



Tell Us Your Story

William Sneierson

Through genealogical research I found that my ancestors were Litvaks, or Lithuanian Jews, and had lived there for centuries. The family began emigrating to the Boston area in the late 19th century. My father Samuel was the last Sneierson to make it here (barely) in January, 1939 just prior to WW2.

In 1939, the U.S. had a quota system that allowed only ten immigrants from Lithuania. Samuel and his sister, Althea, applied and was placed on a waitlist. Due to the work of an uncle and Congressman Thomas Flaherty of the 11th District, my father was allowed into this country. Althea was not and as a result, died in the Holocaust. Along with Althea, my grandmother Yenta-Leah and uncle Hershel were also murdered by local Nazis during the German invasion of June, 1941.

In June, 2014, my sister and I visited my father's hometown of Kupiskis, Lithuania. We stood at the very spot where the atrocity occurred and where my martyred family lies in a mass grave. There we recited the Kaddish which is the appropriate prayer honoring the memory of the deceased.

Without the work of Congressman Flaherty and the goodness of America which he embodied, I and my thriving family would not be here today. I can only imagine what a wonderful, productive and loyal citizen my aunt Althea would have been had she been allowed U.S. entry. My father Samuel Sneierson proudly served in the U.S. Army during WW2 and was a member of "The Greatest Generation". He enjoyed the blessings of liberty and freedom from persecution for the rest of his life in Lynn, Massachusetts.

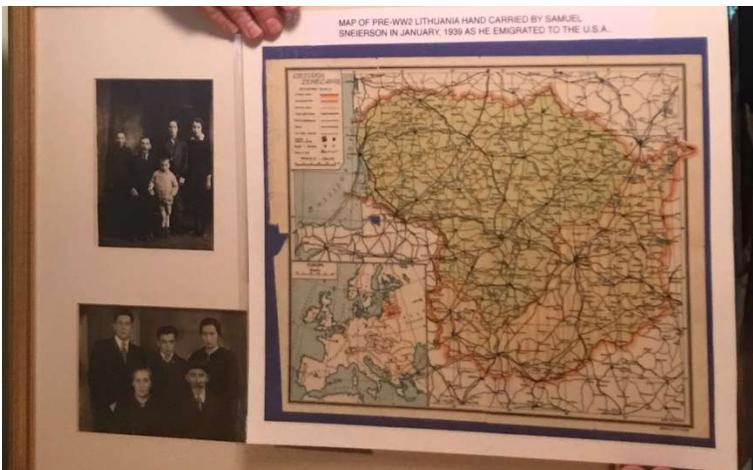


Photo: The map Samuel Sneierson brought when emigrating and pictures taken in late 1938 just before he left for America. Seated from left are my grandmother Yenta-Leah and my grandfather Lazar. Standing from left are my father Samuel, uncle Hershel, and my aunt Althea.

