

**DRIMMER AND GRUBER FAMILIES PAPERS, 1929-1960**  
**2011.143.2**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
Tel. (202) 479-9717  
e-mail: [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org)

**Descriptive summary**

Title: Drimmer and Gruber families papers

Dates: 1929-1960

Accession number: 2011.143.2

Creator: Drimmer (Family : Drohobych, Ukraine)

Additional creator: Gruber (Family : Drohobych, Ukraine)

Extent: 10 folders

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The collection primarily consists of pre-war and post-war photographs of the Drimmer and Gruber families of Drohobycz, Poland (Drohobych, Ukraine). Included are childhood photographs of Marcel and his sister Irena, along with their parents Jakob and Laura (née Gruber) Drimmer, and relatives in the Drimmer and Gruber families in pre-war Drohobycz and post-war Walbrzych, Poland. Also included are photographs of Rywka Gruber who was killed in Lvov, Poland (Lviv, Ukraine) in 1941, and depictions of Jan and Sofia Sawinski, who hid members of the Drimmer and Gruber families in their barn in Mlynki Szkolnikowe, a small village near Drohobycz, from 1943 until liberation by the Red Army in 1944. Additionally, the collection includes Marcel's post-war report cards and identification and employment documents, along with two clippings in Polish.

Languages: Polish

**Administrative Information**

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Drimmer and Gruber families papers (2011.143.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Marcel Drimer in 2011. Accretions were donated in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016. The collections previously numbered 2011.143.1 and 2012.31.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related archival materials: The following collections at USHMM are related to the Drimmer and Gruber families.

1996.A.0560/RG-50. 106.0056 Oral history interview with Marcel Drimer  
2012.312.1 Fake diamond ring bartered to save the life of a Jewish family  
2012.152.1 Irena and Manes Wysoki papers

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at [collections.ushmm.org](https://collections.ushmm.org) for further information.

Processing history: Adam Fielding, June 2019

### **Biographical note**

Marcel Drimmer (later Drimer) was born on May 1, 1934, in Drohobycz, Poland (Drohobych, Ukraine) to Jakub and Laura Lea Gruber Drimmer, who were also from Drohobycz. Jakub (1904-1976) was born on January 10, 1904 to Izak, a foreman in the oil refinery. Jakub had four siblings: Ryfcia, Syma, Mirka, and Abraham. Laura (1904-1994) was born on November 6, 1904, to Osjasz and Sara Gruber and had three siblings: Ryfka, born 1916, Abraham (Bumek, 1910-1998), and Josef. Jakub worked as an accountant in a lumber factory and Laura was a seamstress. Jakub and Laura married in 1933. Marcel's younger sister Irena (Mila) was born on July 4, 1936. The family lived comfortably and were near their extended family.

In September 1939, Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany. A few weeks later, the Soviet Union invaded from the east and per the German-Soviet Pact, Drohobycz fell under Soviet authority. On June 22, 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. In early July, German killing squads, assisted by local Ukrainian groups, launched a pogrom and 400 Jews were killed in the streets. Marcel's maternal grandfather Osjasz was among those killed. Jakub was in Lvov with his sister-in-law Ryfka. An order was issued for Jews to report for forced labor, but Ryfka insisted that Jakub not report because of his poor health. Ryfka was killed in Lvov in July 1941. Jakub returned to his family in Drohobycz. Jakub's brother and two sisters, Mirka and Syma, fled east to the USSR.

In March 1942, the Germans forced the Jewish population into a ghetto. The Drimmer family was crowded into one house: Marcel, Irena, their parents, Sara, Izak, and Ryfcia and her two children. In August, Marcel contracted whooping cough and his prewar nanny, Jancia, now pregnant, came to take him to her house. Irena begged her mother to get her brother back, so Laura took Mila went to Jancia's. As they entered her home, Jancia went into early labor. Laura helped save Jancia's life, but the baby was stillborn. Jancia's husband returned from work and reported that an Aktion against the Jews was to take place soon. He told them that if the Germans found Jews in his house, they would all be killed. He gave them some bread and asked Laura and her two small children to leave. Laura and the children ran through the rain to the nearby wheat field. They huddled there, covered with Laura's raincoat, getting

colder and wetter. German SS and Ukrainian police entered the field and started to capture hiding Jews. Marcel and Irena remember hearing screaming, praying, shouting and barking dogs. This went on for hours, but the children did not utter a sound. When night fell, Laura decided to return to Jancia's. As they were leaving the wheat field, they saw a single German soldier standing guard. He saw them, and then turned his back and let them go. Jancia fed them, dried their clothes, and let them spend the night.

The next morning, Laura and the children returned to their ghetto house. All their relatives were gone. The house had been plundered by the neighbors; feathers were everywhere, as they had ripped pillows and covers searching for hidden valuables. Fifteen hundred Jews from this roundup were deported to Belzec killing center. Jakub had been at the lumberyard during the Aktion and ordered to stay by the Germans. Aktions became more frequent and each time the Drimmer family hid in a different place. The Germans took the furniture from their home, so they slept on the floor. Jakub and Laura made a hiding place under the floor, covered by a mattress.

In August 1943, Jakub arranged for his family to escape the Drohobycz ghetto. First, he hid his wife and two small children in the lumberyard. For a few weeks, they sat in a shed and Jakub brought them food at night. A Polish woman at the factory noticed this, and decided to get proof so that she could denounce him. She confided her plans to another woman who told Jakub. Before the woman could report them, Jakub, assisted by a Jewish physician who pretended to be an SS officer, wrote an anonymous letter accusing this woman of spreading venereal disease. She was taken away by the SS. Jakub then went to nearby Mlynki Szkolnikowe, a native village of the Gruber's, and contacted the Sawinski family. This Polish-Ukrainian family, Jan and Zofia, and their four children, agreed to take Laura and Irena, but not Marcel and Jakub. At the last moment, Mrs. Sawinski felt unable to leave the small boy behind and the Sawinski's hid all four.

That fall of 1943, Laura's brother, Bumek Gruber, arrived at the Sawinski's farm. A butcher by trade, he had been assigned as an essential worker in the oil refinery camp Galizien. His wife Blimka and daughter Liba had lived at the camp as protected family members of an essential worker. Recently, the Germans had taken the protected families and executed them in the Bronica forest. Bumek had planned to give himself up in the next Aktion. But he met a 4 year old Jewish girl Fela and her mother Tusia Szindler (d. 1973) and changed his mind and decided to save them. Bumek had made a false diamond ring and warned of an upcoming Aktion, escaped Galizien for Mlynki where he offered the ring to the Sawinski's in exchange for hiding him and his new family. When the Sawinski's later wanted to sell the ring to buy livestock, Bumek told them it was a family heirloom and convinced them to wait until after the war, when he would buy them a new cow. The Drimmers, Grubers and about six other Jews first were hidden in the stable, and later, during the winter, in an underground dugout.

The Soviet Army liberated Drohobycz and the Boryslaw area on August 7, 1944. Only about 600 Jews, from a population of nearly 50,000, were still alive. Marcel, now ten, was unable to stand on his own feet, due to malnutrition and the lack of movement. It took months for him to walk again. In the fall of 1945, the Drimmer family moved to Walbrzych in western Poland, as eastern Poland, including Drohobycz, was annexed by the Soviet Union. Marcel and Irena graduated from high school in Walbrzych and then obtained graduate degrees in engineering at the University of Wroclaw. Marcel married Ania Sadowski, a pharmacist, and in 1961, they immigrated to the United States and settled in Virginia. In 1963, Irena and her husband, Manes Wysoki, who survived the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, accompanied by Irena's parents, Jakub and Laura, immigrated to Israel. Jakub died in 1976 and Laura in 1994.

Jan and Zofia Sawinski and their four children, Edward, Muzyka, Paulina, and Tadeusz, were honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous among the Nations.

Marcel is currently a volunteer with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Biography by Kate Cooper

### **Scope and content of collection**

The collection primarily consists of pre-war and post-war photographs of the Drimmer and Gruber families of Drohobycz, Poland (Drohobych, Ukraine). Included are childhood photographs of Marcel and his sister Irena, along with their parents Jakob and Laura (née Gruber) Drimmer, and relatives in the Drimmer and Gruber families in pre-war Drohobycz and post-war Walbrzych, Poland. Also included are photographs of Rywka Gruber who was killed in Lvov, Poland (Lviv, Ukraine) in 1941, and depictions of Jan and Sofia Sawinski, who hid members of the Drimmer and Gruber families in their barn in Mlynki Szkolnikowe, a small village near Drohobycz, from 1943 until liberation by the Red Army in 1944. Additionally, the collection includes Marcel's post-war report cards and identification and employment documents, along with two clippings in Polish.

### **System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged as two series.

Series 1. Documents, 1945-1960

Series 2. Photographs, 1929-1953

Folders are arranged alphabetically and documents are arranged chronologically.

### **Indexing terms**

Person:

Drimer, Marcel, 1934-

Drimmer, Jakob, 1904-1976.

Drimmer, Laura Gruber, 1904-1994.

Wysocki, Irena, 1936-

Corporate:

Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust.

Topical Subject:

Jews--Ukraine--Drohobych.

Holocaust survivors.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Ukraine--Lviv.

Hidden family.

Geography:

Drohobych (Ukraine).

Walbrzych (Poland)

Genre/Form:

Photographs.

Clippings.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series 1. Biographical material, 1945-1960

Folder	Title
1 of 10	Clippings, circa 1948
2 of 10	Drimmer, Marcel: identification and employment papers, 1953-1960
3 of 10	Drimmer, Marcel: report cards, 1945-1953

### Series 2. Photographs, 1929-1953

Folder	Title
4 of 10	Drimmer, Jakob, 1929-circa 1938
5 of 10	Drimmer, Laura, 1929-circa 1938
6 of 10	Drimmer, Marcel, 1937-1953
7 of 10	Drimmer family, 1930-circa 1953
8 of 10	Gruber, Ryfka, circa 1930s
9 of 10	Gruber family, 1933-circa 1948
10 of 10	Sawinski family, circa 1930s