

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

## **Archives**

### **Oral History Interviews of the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center**

**Interview with Ann Shatz  
1984  
RG-50.002\*0057**

## **PREFACE**

In 1984, Ann Schatz was interviewed on videotape by Sidney Langer on behalf of the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center. The interview took place in Union, New Jersey and is part of the Research Institute Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies.

Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center created a summary and time-coded notes for the interview. The reader should bear in mind that these finding aids attempt to represent the spoken word in the recorded interview, yet have not necessarily been verified by the interviewee. The finding aids should not be used in place of the interview itself.

Rights to the interview are held by the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum houses a copy of the interview as a result of a contributing organization agreement with the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center. Details concerning the Museum's rights to use and reproduce the interview are contained in the contributing organization agreement.

**Summary of the  
Interview with Ann Schatz  
1984**

Ann Schatz was born in Brody, Poland (now in the Ukraine) on March 3, 1922. Her father was a merchant and there were five children in the family. Out of forty or fifty family members in Poland, she was the only survivor. In 1939 the Russians came and her family had to move from their home to an apartment nearby. Once she was captured by a German soldier and taken to a large house. Ann and other Jews were ordered to clean up and pick up broken glass. A mentally retarded Jewish boy who could not answer questions was killed immediately. Ann was released the next day. Her father and many others were taken away. He was released a few days later, but he had been beaten and his beard was shorn. A ghetto was set up in Brody in 1942. Ann's father became ill with typhus. Her brother tried to escape but was caught and killed. The Germans killed Ann's father in 1943.

When Ann's mother was taken to a train to be sent to Majdanek concentration camp in Poland, Anne hid in the cellar for two days with some others. A Polish fireman offered to help by sending them to a labor camp. They were liberated by the Russians in 1944. She married at the end of 1944. They went to Cordova and to displaced persons camps in Frankfurt, Germany. She emigrated to the United States in 1948. Her daughter was born in 1950.

**Time-coded notes of the  
Interview with Ann Schatz  
1984**

01:00:00

Ann Schatz was born in Brody in the Polish section of Galicia (now in the Ukraine) on March 3, 1922. She came from a nice "yichus family." Her father was considered a tzaddik, a righteous man. Her mother was wonderful and for the Sabbath always accepted the three to six guests Ann's father brought home from Synagogue. There were five children in the family, two older brothers born in 1912 and 1914, an older sister, and a younger sister born in 1924. Sally estimates there was a population of about 20,000 Jews in her town.

01:05:00

Ann's brothers were scholars of Talmud and sacred writings. They were also Zionists and joined the Mizrachi movement. Her father was a merchant. Ann started public school near her home at age five, a young age for her town. Her siblings started at the same school. Her older brother then went to a gymnasium. All three girls received private religious lessons from a Rabbi who would come to their home.

01:10:00

Ann joined B'nei Akiva as a young girl. Her older brother went on to Hachshara. Two of her cousins went to Palestine in the 1930's while in their twenties. In seventh grade she went to a commercial school for four years.

01:15:00

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Ann finished this commercial school in 1938. The Russians came in 1939 and her family had to move from their home to an apartment nearby.

01:20:00

The two-year Russian occupation was nothing like the German occupation that began in 1941. Some of those who could escape from German Poland came to Brody between the years 1939-1941.

01:25:00

During 1939-1941, some Jewish residents of Brody went to Russia. Most were afraid to leave their roots and their belongings. They remained in their homes. One day, Ann disobeyed her mother's request and walked one block to a friend's house. While ringing the bell, a German soldier saw her and took her to a large house.

01:30:00

Ann and other Jews were ordered to clean up the house and pick up broken glass. The next day a mentally retarded Jewish boy who could not answer questions was immediately killed. The following day, she and others were released. Shortly thereafter, her father and many others were taken away. Her father's beard had been removed and he was beaten badly, but he was released four days later. Many other men were never released.

01:35:00

Then there were many Aktions. "You wake up in the morning and you discover this one was taken and that one, etc." says Ann. "When you look back you just cannot believe that such

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things could happen in a civilized place," she adds. The ghetto had been instituted in Brody in 1942. Living conditions were terrible. Her father was a leader in the ghetto.

01:40:00

Ann's father visited the hospital daily. This is probably how he became ill with typhus. Some Polish people brought them food because they admired her father. A Jewish butcher in the ghetto brought them meat to distribute because he had also been helped by her father.

01:45:00

There was a minyan every morning for religious services in the ghetto. Her brother and a group of boys determined to escape to Russia rather than be killed in the ghetto. They reached Vilna (Vilnius, Lithuania) and were killed there. Ann's father was killed in bed while suffering from typhus in 1943.

01:50:00

Ann's mother and brother were taken away to the train, supposedly to Majdanek concentration camp in Poland. She and her two sisters and seven to eight other people were down in the cellar. When they came up the house was empty--no father, no mother, no brother. They had been in the cellar for two days. After two days, a Polish fireman came down and said "Oh you're still alive?" He took their jewelry and arranged for them to go to a labor camp because he owed it to their father to help.

02:00:00

They were liberated by the Russians in 1944. They stayed in little Galician towns (Dubocz, Glenitz) almost a year. The war ended in 1945. Ann wondered where to go. Israel and

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the United States were possibilities. Ann had married at the end of 1944 and her husband had a brother in the United States.

02:05:00

They went with a whole group to Łódź, Poland. The war ended. Then they went to Cordova and to displaced persons camps in Frankfurt, Germany. She came to the United States in 1948. It was the time of Shevuot (Spring) holiday. Her husband had to tell his brother that their entire family had been killed. Then her family came. Of 40-50 family members in Poland, she was the only one left. Her daughter was born in 1950 an event that was crucially important to her.

02:10:00

Ann couldn't tell her children what had happened to her "My children brought life back to me," she says. "I guess I had to live to give life to my children. . . or to tell you my story," she adds.