

Harry Iticovici

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Summary

Harry Iticovici was born Harry Ithzekovicz at birth on June 2, 1922 in Romania. He took his father's first name, Neuman, as his middle name when he became a naturalized citizen in the US. He has a brother who is five years younger. Harry's father sold shoes and his mother was a housewife. They lived in a rented apartment. Harry studied many languages – French, Italian and English as they would be needed if he became a profession that required travel. He read the newspaper and was aware of the antisemitism. Harry attended a state high school where half the students were Jewish and he had mostly Jewish friends. Though the family was minimally observant, Harry became Bar Mitzvah so also studied Hebrew. In high school he played soccer, volleyball and basketball. He attended a Jewish School when not permitted into the state school and passed the baccalaureate. The family had citizenship through the father's serving in World War I. After graduation from high school in 1941, Harry had to work with other adolescents in a day camp moving mounds of earth to enable target practice for the soldiers and shoveled snow in the camp in the winter. The Iron Guard started picking up people in the street and Harry desired another life so wanted to leave but his father did not. Harry attended a meeting of a group that was planning their departure. The group of about 11 people bought a sailboat and hired a captain and a sailor. Harry refused to take his 14-year-old brother as did not want to be responsible for him. He took the train to Constanta and boarded the boat, the Euxim. There were three married women and their husbands and the rest were men. They went down the coast of Turkey and near Cesme had an accident. A Turkish boat rescued them and took the mast so they could not move and remained for four months near Smyrna. A man, perhaps British, supplied them with food. The Captain left as he was afraid to go south and remained in Turkey. There was a collection of money, perhaps from the Jewish community of Istanbul, which enabled them to get the mast back. They hired an Arab Captain who took them to Beirut, Syria, where British security came on board. The passengers wanted to go to Palestine and the British wanted to send them to Cyprus. Their boat was hooked up to another boat and towed to Vernica (?) where they were placed in quarantine. After about a week they were sent to Pedola, a hotel resort in the mountains. They remained about a year and were given English lessons and took part in a play, "The Barretts of Wimple Street." Harry was admitted to the American University of Beirut Medical School. There he completed an accelerated college program in three years and entered Medical School. Three evenings a week he worked as a translator and radio announcer. In January 1948 the Jewish students were told their safety could not be guaranteed and most returned to Palestine. Harry got admitted into the University of Utah through his anatomy teacher, Maxell Winthrop, a hematologist who became Chairman of Medicine in Utah. First Harry went to Paris but food was scare so he went on to Utah. After two years of schooling in Utah, he went to Chicago to complete his education. He received scholarships from the Salt Lake City Jewish community and a Colorado businessman which he paid back and was sponsored by

Baltimore eye doctors to enter the US. Harry had his internship in St. Louis where he made a friend from New York. He visited his friend and met his future wife in NY where he had a residency in chest and surgery and was in group practice for 15 years. Then Harry moved to Houston and took a Post-Clinical in Heart Surgery and had a two-year Fellowship at the Texas Heart Institute. His wife was a psychiatrist and obtained an MA in Public Health Administration and worked at the University of Houston. They moved to New Orleans and, after Katrina, Harry worked in a clinic in the Charity Hospital in addition to being Clinical Associate Professor in Surgery at Tulane Medical School. Harry's wife died in 2004 and he moved to Washington, DC where he is associated with George Washington University Hospital for their Grand Rounds and Library. His parents remained in Romania and he never saw them again. His brother moved to Europe and he visited him there. The war affected Harry as he thought becoming a doctor would help people and give himself stability. Harry hopes this interview is useful.