

**Mania Jonas Mayer**

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### **Summary**

Mania Jonas Mayer was born in Sanok, Poland on December 15, 1924 as the youngest of seven children of Rose and Herman Jonas. The children were Avram (the eldest), Josef, Esther, Shulman, Hilda, Paul and Mania. Each were about two years apart. Her father owned a bank and a lumber mill due to financial help from his brother, Max, a builder in the US. Her family was religious and very charitable. She started public school around age six or seven where the girls were separate from the boys. She heard the Germans were bringing Jewish children to Poland and killing them. When her town was occupied by the Germans, there were new laws daily and her father left with the boys for Tyrawa Wołoska. The Germans chose some Jews to remain and others must leave before 8 AM the next morning. They were picked to leave and the aunt convinced them. Luckily, a Polish man came along and offered to take them by horse and buggy to join the family in Tyrawa Wołoska. They were bombed by the Germans along the way and the oldest brother disappeared. Years later when living in the US they read in the NY Times that he was killed by the Germans throwing him into a fire. The Russians occupied Tyrawa Wołoska where they were required to register as Russians and remain or return home. They chose to return home and placed on a cattle car to Novosibirsk Oblast in Siberia. The family was required to work in the woods where it was cold and snowing and were given a slice of bread daily. At 15, Mania was not considered old enough to work so she starved but sometimes ate berries and onions found in the woods. There were many wolves and snakes outside so she did not like to go out. When she requested work again, she was given a long knife to slice planks of wood to build a house. She wounded her finger and could no longer work but was given bread daily. They received mail from home indicating that the Germans were killing the people. After four years, the family was freed so went to the closest town, Novosibirsk. There were no jobs there for them and they only had sufficient money to get to Karmine (?), Ukraine. After the war, they took the train back to Poland but found significant antisemitism so went to Salzburg, Austria. They stayed a short time at Ebensee where there were dead bodies on the ground and left for an Army Loggia in Halline. When Truman signed a peace treaty, they were permitted to go to the US as her cousin (father's brother's son) sponsored them. Her future husband was living in Columbus, Ohio and seeking survivors from Sanok. He had known Mania when they were children in Sanok. He had just come for a two-week vacation but now remained with Mania in Brooklyn. It is hard for Mania to talk to her children about her experiences and is not sure if her great-grandchildren should learn about them. Mania feels it would have been better to die than to go through such experiences. She is still worried that her husband will be harmed when he goes outside as he wears a yamache. Mania did not have such worries in Russia, just worried about being cold and hungry.