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Summary

Allan Hall (b. Adam Janusz Horowitz) was born on April 12, 1935 in Krakow, Poland into an upper middle class, assimilated family. During the Nazi occupation he also used the name A.Y. Horsky but changed it to Allan Hall when he later came to the United States. His mother Maria (Hahn) had been a professional violinist but stopped playing when she married. Her family had lived in Krakow for several generations. Hall remembers his maternal parents fondly as warm and loving before the war. His maternal parents and a sister of his mother were killed in the camps. Hall's father's family was from near Lvov where Hall's father Edmond grew up. His father was an insurance agent but because of Polish antisemitism had to get a job with an Italian firm. He was one of six children. Two older brothers emigrated to the United States before the war. A sister survived and went to Argentina after the war, and her mother (Hall's paternal grandmother) followed her. Two siblings of his father were killed. Hall also had a younger brother who was born in 1944 during the war. He survived and immigrated to the United States with the rest of the family in 1946. The family was not religious and even converted to Catholicism after the war for a short time because of antisemitism but converted back shortly after. At the time of the interview (2020), Hall identified as a Jew and belonged to a synagogue but did not attend. As a young child he experienced some antisemitism, but he believed that there were good Poles and bad ones. Polish was the family's native language, though the parents spoke German when they did not want Hall to understand.

Hall and his family were able to survive the war because of a combination of his father's resourcefulness, luck, and some help from Polish Catholics. When the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939 Hall's mother wanted to stay in Krakow, but his father insisted on going to Lvov where he grew up. This turned out to be a fateful decision because Lvov was in the Russian Zone until the Nazis invaded in June 1941. When this happened, the family was put in the ghetto living with several other families. Because of his father's connections they were able to escape the ghetto. Hall's father was able to get a job as a building contractor working on a theater and Hall's mother and Hall stayed there until discovered. Later, they were able to stay in a very small space in the top floor of a building his father was working on. While there in 1944 Hall's mother gave birth to a second son who Hall initially resented out of fear that the baby would give them away. As it turned out the baby became ill, and a Polish doctor sent the two children and the mother in bandages to a hospital in Warsaw where they were saved. All this time Hall's father continued to work on the outside while checking in with his family. His father had false papers and died his hair and had plastic surgery to create a more aquiline nose. After the family went to Warsaw, Hall's father managed to rescue his son from an orphanage with the help of a Polish Catholic despite the presence of the Nazis.

The family welcomed the Soviet liberators, and for a time all was well. But for unknown reasons Hall's father was arrested and threatened to be sent to Siberia. Meanwhile, Allan and his brother were sent to Palestine. His mother had gone to Paris. Hall's mother found her sons in Germany, and his father escaped from prison. In 1946 they received diplomatic visas with the help of one of his father's brothers and came to the United States. They eventually ended up in

Miami where Hall said he changed his name when getting his law degree because of antisemitism. Hall emphasized the difference between his own upper middle class, assimilated family in Poland and so-called shtetl Jews who spoke Yiddish and who his family looked down on. Hall has visited Poland with his mother and children and has spoken to groups about his experiences. (He was ten when liberated.) When asked how the Holocaust affected him, he said that he did not know what he would have been like if he had not experienced it. But he said that he was very determined and never gave up.