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Summary

Herman Roszler was born in Transylvania, Romania Nov. 16, 1929 to Meyer and Theresa (Kahn). He had two brothers and one sister. His father trained as an Orthodox rabbi but owned a lumber wholesaler. His town had about 6-700 Jews. Secular schools were compulsory, run by Romanians until 1940 when Hungary took over the country. Herman describes rampant antisemitism in the schools. Outside news was sparse as Jews were not permitted to own radios after 1940. He describes the household preparations for Shabat.

All non-Romanian Jews were arrested on Hungary's take over. While Romanians were not kind to Jews, they were open to bribes; the Hungarians were not. In 1942-43, all students age 12 and older had to train for several hours of national service; Jews were usually assigned to the "dirty", hard labor work. Older Jews were drafted to do hard labor alongside German/Hungarian troops on the Russian front. In 1943, Herman's father was accused of violating business laws and temporarily imprisoned. He also describes the harassment of Jewish businesses under Hungarian rule.

In March 1944, Germans took over all administrative functions from the Hungarians. Herman's mother cut off his *peyot* side curls to minimize harassment by soldiers. After Passover, rumors of a deportation began circulating encouraging many to hide valuables and prepare to evacuate, though no one knew of the concentration death camps. All Jews were gathered in the town square, ordered to surrender their valuable, then marched 12-15 miles to an open field designated as a ghetto that ultimately held thousands. After four weeks, they were marched towards a rail line and sent by cattle car to Auschwitz. Prisoners were separated by age and gender. Herman's mother, younger brother and sister were sent to their deaths. A few days later, he was sent to Mauthausen, then onto Ebensee. He describes the brutal work and living conditions. At one point, he was set up in a barracks for children 16 and younger, which often provided inside work and an extra soup serving. He could see constant overflights of Allied planes and knew Liberation was coming. The day before liberation, the Germans announced plans to hide Jews in the caves, but prisoners successfully resisted, rightfully fearing execution. The next day U.S. tanks liberated the camp.

Herman underwent a chaotic trip back to his hometown. He found no one there except a cousin that he traveled with. He stayed in Romania until November, 1945 when they went to Arad (?) near the Hungarian border. He joined a Zionist group in Budapest with which he went to Vienna, Austria, then on to DP Camp Feldafing for about a year. He was able to gain a visa to New York City, attended high school, and became a rabbi in upstate New York. After three years he met his wife and became a rabbi in Duluth, MN. Herman then had a position in Los Angeles, ultimately running day care businesses. In the late 1980's, he and his wife re-visited his Romanian hometown and found no Jews there.