

HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

Name of Interviewee	ROSE ICKOWICZ	
Name of Interviewer	Doris Laden	Date 9/14/84
Name of Abstractor	Esther Potash	Date 12/28/87

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Rose Ickowicz was born in a small town in Rumania, where she enjoyed a pleasant family and community life as a child before World War II. She was the oldest of seven children, and was raised in an atmosphere of strong devotion to family and pride in country.

In 1944, Hitler invaded Hungary and life changed drastically for Rose and her family. She was taken to a ghetto for three weeks and then sent to Auschwitz. Arriving at Auschwitz near the end of the war, she suffered both the horrible atrocity of the Nazi regime and also the cruelty and jealousy of other Jews who had been imprisoned much longer.

A combination of strong faith, clear values and what she calls "miracles" brought Rose through her ordeals at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. The camp was liberated a year after she entered. She then began a tedious, frustrating attempt to emigrate to the U.S., where her aunts lived. After four years of missed connections, bureaucratic delays, and disappointments, she and her husband were permitted to enter Canada.

Life in Canada was not all that she thought it might be: her husband experienced difficulty in obtaining a job, especially since he would not work on Saturday. They also encountered a hardship with the serious illness of their young son.

Slowly their life began to improve, and they did receive approval to come to the U.S. Once more, the family had to build an economic and social foundation.

Rose retains great pride in America and is grateful for the opportunity to start over in this country.

ABSTRACT

VIDEO 1 OF 2

INTRODUCTION

DISCUSSION OF CURRENT LIFE

Married, husband has fur business. Lives in Beachwood, Ohio. Has a married son.

BORN IN RUMANIA, IN A SMALL TOWN CALLED VICOVUL-DE-JOS, IN STATE OF MARAMURESH

ENJOYS PLEASANT FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Father was a foreman for a wood concern. Mother was a housewife. Rose was the oldest of seven children, of whom two survived. Mother did not survive the Holocaust. Father survived concentration camp, but was killed when the ship he was aboard after liberation was sunk.

RAISED WITH STRONG VALUES, WHICH SHE CREDITS FOR HER SURVIVAL

ADDRESSES IDEA OF ESCAPE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

Most did not try to escape because they did not believe the situation could become so horrible. Also, most did not know where else to go.

ROSE IS VISITING HER COUSINS AT THE TIME THAT HER FAMILY IS TAKEN AWAY

HITLER INVADES HUNGARY MARCH 9, 1944; JEWS TAKEN TO THE GHETTO WITHIN THREE WEEKS OF THE INVASION

ROSE REMAINS IN THE GHETTO FOR THREE WEEKS AND IS SENT TO AUSCHWITZ

INTAKE AT AUSCHWITZ

Prisoners were shaved, given clothing allotment. Rose felt terrible fear at being thrown into a dark cell with standing water and hundreds of screaming girls.

DESCRIBES SHOCKING EXPERIENCE OF WITNESSING SHOOTING OF YOUNG WOMAN

ROSE SELECTED TRANSFER TO ANOTHER AREA OF THE CAMP TO DO MANUAL LABOR; CONDITIONS SOMEWHAT IMPROVED

They dug ditches from 4 a.m. until 2 p.m. each day.

SHE IS TRANSFERRED TO BERGEN-BELSEN

SHE RECALLS INMATES WHO WERE SISTERS AND THEIR COLD
TREATMENT OF EACH OTHER; SHE IS SHOCKED BY LACK OF FAMILY LOYALTY

HER BROTHER, A MEMBER OF THE BUDAPEST UNDERGROUND, ESCAPES FROM
JAIL AND IS LIBERATED BY THE RUSSIANS

SHE DOES NOT WANT TO LEAVE BERGEN-BELSEN AT THE TIME OF LIBERATION
UNTIL SHE HEARS FROM HER AUNTS IN CLEVELAND

DESCRIBES LONG, FRUSTRATING PROCESS OF ARRANGING FOR HER
SPONSORSHIP TO THE U.S.

Remained in Bergen-Belsen until 1949. Immigration
complicated by meeting her husband, bureaucratic procedures, time
delays.

VIDEO 2 OF 2

ELABORATES ON INMATES' SELFISH BEHAVIOR, ESPECIALLY TO FAMILY
MEMBERS

RECALLS YUGOSLAVIAN JEWISH WOMAN SUPERVISOR WHO HAD BECOME
DEHUMANIZED AND WAS VERY CRUEL TO INMATES

STATES THAT THE POLISH WOMEN DESPISED THE HUNGARIAN AND RUMANIAN
WOMEN BECAUSE THE POLES HAD ENDURED THE TERROR FOR SO MUCH LONGER

RECALLS THE POSITIVE SIDE OF OTHERS WHO HELPED HER

SHE DOES NOT CONSIDER SUICIDE BECAUSE SHE CAN FEEL THAT
LIBERATION IS IMMINENT

HER CAMP IS LIBERATED BY THE BRITISH

TELLS OF HUSBAND'S EXPERIENCES IN MAJDANEK, DACHAU, AUSCHWITZ,
AND BERGEN-BELSEN

RECOUNTS OWN RELEASE FROM AUSCHWITZ

Tells of miracle that she was transported out of Auschwitz
on the last train, instead of having to risk her life in the
death march which claimed the lives of 80% of those who began the
march.

ROSE IS REUNITED WITH BROTHER IN BERGEN-BELSEN IN 1946

AUNTS SPONSOR FIVE NIECES AND NEPHEWS TO COME TO THE U.S.

DUE TO VISA PROBLEMS, SHE FIRST GOES TO CANADA

Expresses disappointment with the Canadian people. Husband experiences difficulty in finding work as a furrier.

JUST WHEN ECONOMIC LIFE BEGINS TO IMPROVE, THEIR SON BECOMES VERY ILL WITH NEPHRITIS

Tells of luck in finding doctor who would try experimental drug, which saved their son's life.

REQUEST TO MOVE TO U.S. IS FINALLY APPROVED, BUT SHE IS DISAPPOINTED BY THE LACK OF SUPPORT BY HER FAMILY

Her American family's apathy caused marital discord for her.

SHE IS GENERALLY DISSATISFIED WITH THE LACK OF INVOLVEMENT OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Felt spurned by other Jews. Expected an "introduction to life."

IS PROUD THAT SHE AND HER HUSBAND WERE ABLE TO SCRIMP AND SAVE AND DID NOT HAVE TO BEG

IS THANKFUL TO AMERICA FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD A NEW LIFE
MEMORIES OF FAMILY AND HOME