

HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

Name of Interviewee	MAX SOLOMON		
Name of Interviewer	Donna Karon Yanowitz	Date	8/10/84
Name of Abstractor	Donna Karon Yanowitz	Date	1/87
	Ed. Michelle Heyer		

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Max Solomon was born in Drahova, Czechoslovakia, a small town in the Carpathian mountains. He was the oldest of four boys and he had six sisters. The family's original name was Slomovitz. Max's father owned a saloon and restaurant, and also rented space to a shoe company.

The Slomovitzes were a religious family and were part of a relatively small Jewish community; of 5,000 families in Drahova, 200 were Jewish. Their only contact with Jews outside the area was a Jewish newspaper from Warsaw.

The war did not affect Max's family until June 1941, when the Germans invaded Russia. At that time, most Jews were deported from the town; those who remained were placed in forced labor.

The Slomovitzes were taken to Kolomyja, Poland and then to Horodenka where they escaped. The women of the family succeeded; however the men were captured, and were massacred by the Germans. Max was able to escape again before the massacre; however he witnessed it and saw his father, brothers and many friends killed.

At that point, Max was passing as a Christian. He then went to Russia, where he lived as an adopted son on a communist co-op. After a flood caused a famine in the area, Max met some people who were looking for food. They told him that many Jews were still living in Drahova.

Max returned home, where he found his mother and sisters. Shortly after his return, however, he was sent to a forced labor camp and his mother and sisters were sent to Auschwitz.

Max again escaped, the time joining the underground. He remained with them, fighting, until the war ended.

After the war, Max was reunited with two sisters who had survived Auschwitz. He went to a displaced persons camp in Egenfelder, Germany where he married in 1945.

In 1949, Max and his wife came to the U.S. He currently lived with his wife and son in Beachwood, Ohio and works as a building. He is an active member of Green Road Synagogue.

ABSTRACT

VIDEO 1 OF 3

CURRENT PERSONAL DATA

Max Solomon is 60 years old. Is a building contractor. Lives with wife and son in Beachwood, Ohio. Son works with him in building business.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Oldest of four boys. Had six sister. Born in Drahova, Czechoslovakia. Father had saloon and restaurant.

FAMILY RELIGIOUSLY OBSERVANT

Rabbi Yehuda Schwartz - rabbi and teacher.

BETAR WEAKLY ACTIVE IN LATE 1930'S

JEWISH COMMUNITY OF DRAHOVA

200 families, 5,000 gentile families.

JEWISH NEWSPAPER FROM WARSAW ONLY CONTACT WITH JEWISH COMMUNITY OUTSIDE DRAHOVA

PARENTS' NAMES

His father's name was Isaac Slomovitz, Mother's was Rose Davidovitz Slomovitz.

MAX HAS SIX SISTERS AND THREE BROTHERS

Three sisters were killed in Auschwitz with mother. Two now live in Cleveland, 1 in Oakland, CA. All three brothers were killed with father on August 26, 1941.

FAMILY RENTS SPACE TO SHOE COMPANY CALLED BATJA

Company had radio. People came to hear about German invasion of Czechoslovakia.

DRAHOVA 600 MILES FROM PRAGUE AT FOOT OF CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS

WAR AFFECTS THEM FOR FIRST TIME IN JUNE 1941

Germany attacked Russia.

NAMES OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AGES AT TIME OF WAR

Moshe - age 12; Simcha; Raphael and Max - age 16; Golda - oldest sister, married to Pinchas Solomon (in labor camp); Ruth - in Belgium; Tova; Chaia; Mariam; Helen.

MAX FEELS HE CAN SURVIVE WITH HARD WORK AND OBEDIENCE

ALL JEWS HELPED EACH OTHER AND SHARED WITH EACH OTHER

ANTI-SEMITISM BY UKRAINIANS

Ukrainian youth organization held anti-Jewish demonstrations - 1939-40. All Jewish businesses taken away.

HUNGARIANS TAKE OVER FROM UKRAINIANS

Jews felt safer under this government.

JEWS NOT CONSIDERED CITIZENS - ALL DEPORTED

Entire family except married sister and sister in Belgium taken by truck 25-30 kms. to trains.

VIDEO 2 OF 3

MAX DESCRIBES LEAVING HOME

MAX ESCAPES

Hid, but returned because mother was distraught.

JULY 1941 - TAKEN TO HUNGARIAN/POLISH BORDER

Housed in old lumber mill.

TAKEN TO KOLOMYJA, POLAND

Guarded by Hungarian and Ukrainian police.

TAKEN BY TRAIN TO HORODENKA

Near Russian border. Rumors of destruction camps in Russia.

SLOMOVITZ FAMILY DECIDES TO ESCAPE

Mother and four sisters escaped. Father and sons caught and returned.

MOVE TO HORINIAN, RUSSIA

About 14,000 people from villages in Max's area and Budapest housed in empty factory. Stayed three weeks.

RUMOR THAT EVERYONE IS TO BE SENT HOME

All marched through Horinian to Stepsharoka to wait for trucks.

GERMANS ARRIVE AND SURROUND THEM

People sprayed with rubber hose from back of truck.

MAX DESCRIBES LAST TALK WITH FATHER

DESCRIBES SCENE OF MASSACRE

People brought to edge of bombed-out tochka, shot and thrown in hole 100 meters deep.

MAX DESCRIBES HIS FEELINGS

MAX TELLS OF HIS ESCAPE

Ukrainian woman helped him.

RETURNS TO HORINIAN

Contacted Jews. There was Judenrat appointed by Germans. Lived with Chaim Holodriga family.

GERMANS DEMAND GOLD, TAKE JEWISH CHILDREN

Max tried to convince friend, Shoima Greenburg, to leave with him. Friend refused. Max went 35-40 kms. away to another village.

STEALS CROSS AND PASSES AS A CHRISTIAN

Took name of Ukrainian friend, Tzil Roocho, and went to Kroznostovchy, a system of communist co-ops. Three co-ops Kalkovmolotov, Leninkolkov, Novatsleok.

MAX TAKES JOB ON CO-OP

Boss was Kanyzki Stefan. Max well-liked, hard worker.

NEW WORLD OPENS FOR MAX

Taken into home of "father" and "mother" of town - David Yavonovich Romanovsky and Franzia Adriana - as their son. Received papers allowing him to stay legally.

VIDEO 3 OF 3

GERMANS BEGIN TAKING ALL MALES FROM KRASNYSTAV

Romanovsky shielded Max

MAX VISITS KOLCHOS - HIS FORMER WORK PLACE

Germans gathered food from co-ops and sent to front lines.

GERMAN MOUNTED POLICE

Germans on horseback took Jewish boys from communist Podolsk to tend horses.

MAX SAVES LIFE OF A JEWISH BOY

MAX BEFRIENDS GERMAN SOLDIER, SAVES HIS LIFE

As reward, received papers exempting him from being taken for work. Could then move about freely.

FAMINE ON RUSSIAN/POLISH BORDER DUE TO FLOODS

People traveled 400 kms. to Max's co-op for food. Max questioned them, found that some people from his town still there.

MAX ARRANGES TO RETURN TO HUNGARY WITH THEM

Max supplied all food. Walked and hitchhiked 1,200-1,500 kms. to Storyabo Harochna. There he left group and traveled

MAX KILLS SOLDIER WHO CAPTURED HIM

MAX REACHES TOWN NEAR HIS HOME

Found girls from his town. Max too weak to walk, so they called his mother.

MAX RETURNS HOME

Mother and sisters home. Stayed a few months.

MAX TAKEN TO HUNGARIAN LABOR CAMP

MOTHER AND SISTERS TAKEN TO AUSCHWITZ

MAX VOLUNTEERS FOR HARD LABOR

Taken from Kurzik to Usik on Hungarian/Polish border. Became foreman, received more food. Many workers died.

MAX SAVES LIFE OF LABORER

Man fell from exhaustion. Max carried him down mountain. Max met this man ten years ago in N.Y. - Rudy Farbenblum.

RUSSIANS PUSH GERMANS BACK

Max planned escape. Asked David Katz to go with him.

MAX ESCAPES TO MUDRANOVA

MAX WORKS WITH YUGOSLAVIAN-SERBIAN SLOVENIAN UNDERGROUND

No other Jews with underground. Stayed until end of war, fighting with them.

RETURNS HOME

Found two sisters who had been in Auschwitz.

WORKS ON FARM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA FOR ONE YEAR

GOES TO DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP IN GERMANY, GETS MARRIED

RUSSIAN TREATMENT OF JEWS AFTER WAR

Max didn't reveal himself as Jew. Russians killed and raped Jews.

MAX LIVES AS A CHRISTIAN UNTIL HE RETURNS HOME

MOST PAINFUL EXPERIENCE WAS HORINIAN MASSACRE

Passing as gentile, he watched as friends marched to Valkova Dalena. Dora Malamud, Max's former girlfriend, was killed.

MARRIES IN DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP IN EGENFELDER, GERMANY

Stayed four years, until 1949.

JDC SUPPORTS THEM IN GERMANY

ARRIVES IN N.Y. - MAY 1949

Worked as an iron worker for \$32.00 per week.

MAX MOVES TO CLEVELAND

Friend got him a job as cabinetmaker.

JOINS MARAMOSH JEWISH CENTER

Was one of builders of, and is active in, Green Road Synagogue.

MAX EXPLAINS HIS FEELINGS ABOUT "SECURITY"

"I don't think that in my whole life anybody can ever make me feel 100% secure." Always has something in the back of his mind.

MAX EXPLAINS HIS SURVIVAL

Feels it was combination of luck and self-confidence, conviction that he would make it.

RELATES HOW HIS FRIENDS COPE

One friend asked Max to break his arm so he wouldn't have to work.

TELLS STORY OF SAVING TWO BOYS BY BEATING THEM

MOST FITTING COMMEMORATION IS KEEPING WITH THE FAITH

DOES NOT FORGET THE HOLOCAUST FOR ONE MINUTE