

Max Krautler
Slate 1349-006
Interviewer-Richard Schellhammer

10:00 a.m. Recording Date 8-22-91

Max Samuel Krautler
Born - September 4, 1917
Krakow, Poland

10:00 a.m. Recording Date 8-23-91

Father - Storekeeper - Operated a business best described as
hardware and possibly small appliances, ie, "irons".
Mother - Homemaker
Siblings- 1 Brother - 2 Sisters

- 2:14 Attended school, played sports.
- 2:24 Employed distributing supplies to schools.
- 2:46 Experienced anti-semitism, canards, slurs.
- 3:07 Near University (Krakow) he observed people being beaten.
- 3:17 Prior to the war, he heard about Hitler, also read about Nazis in newspapers.
- 3:50 Heard about Hitlers rise to power and the vehement campaign against the Jews who Krautler remarked, "could do nothing"
- 4:28 September 1, or 2nd 1939; Heard planes flying overhead.
- 5:05 Military tanks were visible on the streets, Krautler remarked, "they could do nothing".
- 5:45 "Everything changed", Restrictions were imposed, curfews, shortages of food. Jews were only permitted to shop at specified times.
- 6:18 People were rounded up off the streets for questioning at police headquarters, "that was only the beginning".
- 6:50 Krautler was picked-up several times and forced to work at heavy labor, ie; gathering wood.
- 7:20 Jews were compelled to move to the ghetto. Krautler and family also, activities and living conditions were even more tightly restricted.
- 8:10 In the ghetto they were strictly policed by the German and Jewish police.

- 8:21 Krautler had no idea or knowledge of how the Jewish Police were chosen or appointed.
- 8:51 He had to be especially watchful not to get into trouble with the Germans
- 9:26 The ghetto was in the city of _____.
- 9:59 Sent to Gross-Rosen concentration camp near the town of Stiegau (Polish:Strzegom). Later sent to work camps.
- 10:24 Recalls- concentration camp - 2 years previously;
- 10:53 When the ghetto was shut down they were moved by truck to the camp _____
- 11:25 His Father was taken away by truck, Krautler never saw his Father again.
- 11:33 The Brother was taken alone to ^{BUCHENWALD} _____.
- Krautler used his brothers papers (identity) so by adopting his identity he could remain in town to be with the Mother.
- 12:05 At a later date Krautler sent his Mother to _____ to his Brother.
- 12:54 Germans discovered Krautler's brother and mother hiding in a bunker, both were shot to death. He learned later from friends of the murder.
- 13:58 Krautler remembers desolation, constant fear, perpetual hunger & tormented by lice.
- 14:30 At concentration camp he was forced to work carrying wood and perform other menial tasks.
- 15:06 Systematically the camp was emptied of prisoners and closed. He was then transferred to Gross-Rosen.
- 15:44 Discusses Daily Life:
- Arose early. Prisoners were given a single chunk of bread which had to last the entire day. The bread weighed $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound per chunk. Lunch consisted of a watery soup, the same meal for supper.
- 17:03 Remembers when they arrived at Gross-Rosen there was music being played by the Germans and while the music played on. Prisoners were being beaten.

- 17:43 "Life was scarey"
Gross-Rosen was a labor camp where he worked at manual labor carrying bricks. Occas ionally he went outside the(gate.)
- 18:48 Taken to Klausen Bierick, also a camp. They were taken by wagon to the train, the train was a boxcar, there were no windows Krautler saw many people die, many more became sick.
- 19:48 Forced Marches, Were forced to march several days
- 20:12 (Referred back to Gross-Rosen) Krauter describes a forced march. He was ill and feverish, he could hardly walk, he was unable to keep up with prisoners. A frieng helped Max by draging and carrying him,
- 21:08 His friend also became ill. Max tried to help him but he was so debilitated and weakened he was told to abandon his frriend which he did.
- 21:33 Flossenberg
- 21:53 Also did heavy labor, remembers beatings by German guards. Went to other camps - Buchenwald was the last camp he was in.
- 23:16 In camp in Selesia - He delived coal to townspeople. Some were kind enough to give them food.
- 24:07 Krautler feel that the majority of Germans had knowledge of the camps.
- 24:25 His arrival at Buchenwald was met with music and beatings.
- 24:48 Deathmarch (sometime 1945)
- 25:21 Were marched day and night, never knew the destination or where they were.
- 25:37 Destination: ,Bavaria
- 25:59 They were allowed to rest at a farm house. They were put in a room (barn) floor covered with straw, they tried to pick through the straw to fine some crumbs to eat.

- 26:48 He had reached his limit of endurance, he refused to go further. He hid in the straw. The Germans sent dogs in to the barn to sniff out loiterers and those in hiding. Max had his arm crooked to protect his face from the dogs. By sheer accident he turned and hit the dog on the nose, the dog became frightened and ran out of the barn. After several hours the Germans left with other prisoners. Max remained behind.
- 29:05 American tanks were already in the town. The Americans gave them packages of food and brought them to the farmhouse. The Americans transported them to the hospital the next day.
- 29:54 Max considers himself lucky. He remained in the hospital for "several weeks or months",
He remained in the town where he rented a furnished with a private family.
- 31:12 The family introduced him to their daughter who later became his wife.
- 32:13 Remained in the town of Falkenstein in the City of Regensburg.
- 33:32 Opened and operated a textile store and remained there for several years.
- 33:43 Came to the U.S. in 1956 because he "wanted a better life". He registered with two organizations (JDC and) He worked in a club and later got a better job at Hotel Pierre; New York City.
- 35:34 In Recollection Max said. In Germany after the war, he was not aware of the Anti-Semitism.
He never discussed the Holocaust with his wife who he felt knew about it, He was unable to speak of it.

Had to learn to speak English when he came to U.S.
- 37:13 He feels that the German people knew about the holocaust. He feels that no one could understand the nightmare of the times unless they were personally involved.
- 38:23

38:40

Glad to be an American.

No one from his family survived! He knows of no living relative
All perished.

39:39

He returned to Krakow, Poland for a few days, after the war.
Everything had changed, everything was new, he did not like it.
Then he decided to come to America.

Various times throughout the interview he would ruiminate
and repeat "He was lucky".

Note Taker: Lenore Sherman