

-TITLE-MARVIN CRELL
-I_DATE-
-SOURCE-FORT WAYNE JEWISH FEDERATION
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-VERY GOOD
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-2 HRS. 23 MINUTES
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-
Childhood-1940

0:01:13 Marvin was born on March 4, 1932 in Khotin, which was in Romania when he was born, but part of Russia by the beginning of the war.

0:01:23 Marvin has a mother, a father, and one brother in his immediate family. He also had a paternal grandfather living at the beginning of the war. His grandfather was an early Holocaust victim-- he was very old and died in the first marches after the expulsion.

0:02:14 Marvin's parents owned a dry goods store in Khotin.

0:02:29 Marvin went to school in Khotin for four years. It was a Rumanian school prior to the war, but it was run by the Russian's during WWII. During the period of the Concentration Camps there was no school. This period began about 1941. Marvin was eight and a half years old at this time.

0:03:35 Marvin's town had a large Jewish population. There were 200-250 Jewish families living in Khotin prior to the war.

0:04:00 After school every day, Marvin and his brother went to religious school for 2-3 hours. In the summer, they attended religious school all morning. Before this education became very intensive, though, the war began.

0:06:16 There was a degree of anti-Semitism in Holin before the war. Yiddish, regularly spoken throughout: the Jewish community, was forbidden by the government. The Jews were only allowed to speak Rumanian.

0:07:29 Marvin first sensed that something was not right around 1938-39. At this time, the adults began keeping their conversations secret from the children. These conversations included "horror stories" that had been heard from travellers. They began to sense that conditions were going to change drastically.

0:08:54 In 1939, without fighting, the Russians took the province of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina back from the Romanians. Marvin's town was in that territory.

0:09:31 After the Russians took over, all of Marvin's classes in school were taught in Russian.

0:10:35 The townspeople did not realize that Russia and Germany were at war until they saw German bombers flying overhead. The Beginning of the War-Liberation (1944)

0:14:00 Within months of the first bombings the Russians were in retreat and the Romanians (allies of the Germans) returned.

0:14:24 In the fall of 1940, the "real" problems began. "Special Decrees" were issued for Jews, saying where they could go, when, etc.. Soon after this the deportation orders came.

0:15:47 Several days later the convoys started, and they headed off towards the Ukraine. At first there were horses and carriages, but after a day or so the Jews had to walk. They were permitted to keep only what they could carry. The rest of their belongings were left at the side of the road, to be looted by local villagers.

0:16:48 When the marches began, the old and sick amongst the Jews began to die by the side of the road. Marvin's grandfather, like many others, could not keep up and collapsed. When Marvin's father tried to go back and help him, he was severely beaten. He was able to rescue him, however, and the old man lived for another five months.

0:18:57 When the convoy reached the Ukraine, they were settled in a concentration camp. About 30% of the convoy had died along the way.

0:19:45 Marvin and his family remained here for four years. Many people died during this time, mostly from disease. The most common disease was Typhus.

0:20:46 The march from Khotin to the camp in the Ukraine lasted about three months.

0:21:11 If Jews were out of line during the march they were shot by passing German soldiers.

0:22:45 The section of the Ukraine in which Marvin's camp was located was not under German administration, but Rumanian. It remained this way until Liberation.

0:23:07 The camp was a huge warehouse with barbed wire around it.

The prisoners slept on the floor with straw mats. Every morning they woke up and went to work. Marvin's father and his brother were in a road construction work crew. Marvin, being only ten or eleven, performed various menial tasks such as: cleaning the barracks and tending to the animals.

0:24:35 The prisoners acquired extra food by performing special tasks for the soldiers and the local peasants. Some, for example shined shoes or mended clothing.

0:25:26 Marvin recalls that life in the camp made adults of children very quickly. Surviving and having enough food until the next day was everyone's main concern.

0:28:50 In the later years of the war, groups of Ukrainian partisans formed in the woods around the camp, but they needed healthy people-- not sick and tired Jews. The people in the camp made no attempt at escape, for there was nothing to escape to.

0:29:35 Marvin saw no overt resistance by the people in the camp.

0:20:30 Marvin thinks that there was no resistance because they were experiencing something that was inconceivable. They made themselves think that it was only temporary and that they would be allowed to return home soon.

0:32:37 People in the camp often fabricated stories for themselves that the front was moving closer and that they would soon be liberated. This gave them hope, which they relied on in order to survive.

0:34:18 Marvin knew that he was in the camp because he was Jewish, but he never lost faith or became bitter about his heritage. Religious leaders in the camp helped by giving examples from scripture of how Jews had overcome hardship in the past.

0:35:10 The prisoners tried to maintain religious traditions in the camp. One man prepared Marvin for his Bar Mitzvah Marvin's parents paid this man with their bread rations. Marvin's Bar Mitzvah took place secretly in the camp.

0:37:20 There are times during religious periods today, when Marvin recalls holy days in the camp.

0:38:09 Marvin thinks he is more religious and optimistic because of his experiences in the camp.

0:39:10 All four of Marvin's immediate family survived their time in the camp. They marched behind the advancing Russian Army and returned to Khotin.

1944-present

0:39:40 From 1944 to 1946 Marvin and his family lived in Khotin.

In 1946 they moved to Paris.

0:40:45 Marvin describes his return to Khotin as sad. The group of Jews that returned were in very bad shape physically, and the village was all bombed out. His house had been destroyed during the war, so that he and his family were forced to live in a neighbors house with five other families. His father got a job and he and his brother went to school for a year.

0:43:04 There was still anti-Semitism in Khotin, though. The Jews were not welcomed back into the village by those that had stayed behind. No one seemed happy or relieved that Marvin and his family had survived. There were many reminders of the horrible past.

0:44:30 Much of Marvin's extended family perished in the camps, so there was really nothing left for him in Khotin.

0:46:18 Marvin and his family then left Russian- occupied Khotin for another part of Romania where Marvin's father had family. They stayed there for only one year.

0:47:20 In 1946 the family moved on to Paris with the help of a Distribution Committee. They stayed in a hostel with other survivors for two years, awaiting immigration to the U.S.

0:49:40 Marvin's mother had a brother and sister living in Fort Wayne, Indiana who were willing to help them immigrate.

0:51:56 In October, 1948 Marvin and his family came to the United States.

0:52:40 When Marvin arrived in Fort Wayne, he was happy to have family and excited about starting over.

0:53:40 Marvin had very good experiences at North side H.S. in Fort Wayne. He recalls that everyone was very kind to him.

0:54:47 Marvin graduated high school in 1950 and got a job at General Electric. At night he attended Indiana U. at Fort Wayne. After two years of this he moved away to attend IU full time in Bloomington, IN.

0:55:50 Marvin graduated IU in 1954 and got his law degree in 1957. He then got married, and by 1958 he was a father.

Tape 2

1:00:20 Marvin talked to his children about his Holocaust experiences. In 1975 he took his oldest son with him to a meeting of Holocaust survivors in Israel.

1:01:50 Marvin believes Holocaust survivors are reluctant to tell others about their experience because they fear that no one will be able to relate. Also, they have difficulties describing an

experience which was so degrading and filled with self hatred.

1:03:11 Marvin feels that survivors have a duty to tell the world about what happened. They owe this to those who did not survive.

1:03:44 Marvin thinks that something like the Holocaust will probably be repeated. The only way to prevent genocide, he says, is to strike fear into the hearts of the would-be perpetrators. He thinks that the N renberg Trials were more effective in deterring than any education could be. These trials showed that there would come a day of judgement for those who committed the crimes.

1:05:17 Marvin often had fantasies of revenge while in the camp.

11 Marvin has not lost his willingness to believe that people are basically good.

52 Marvin thinks that in his lifetime Jews will always be victimized and blamed for the ills of the world.

1:13:55 Marvin believes that by remembering, we honor those that have fallen.

1:17:02 Marvin feels no guilt for surviving. He wants to make a difference by relating his experiences to others and hopes that he can change the way others think.

1:19:40 Marvin feels that the U.S. is unique in allowing survivors to speak out and normalize their lives. This, be said.
.END.→