

Interviewee:	<u>ADLER</u> , Myer	Date:	November 10, 1982
Interviewer:	Josey G. Fisher		
Audio tapes:	4 English (some Yiddish)	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None	Libr. Catlg. #:	D 810.J4 G7 no. 27

SUMMARY

Myer Adler was born September 2, 1914 in Rudnik, Austria, which became part of Poland after World War I. He gives a vivid description of his pre-war life. From age 14 to 21 he attended several *yeshivot* in nearby small towns and developed his artistic talent along with religious studies. Gradually he became less religiously observant. In 1938 he worked as a bookkeeper in Krakow after graduation from a private business school. After the German invasion, September 1, 1939 he returned to Rudnik to be with his mother. He witnessed organized and individual brutality by German soldiers and Polish civilians against Jews. Shortly thereafter, Germans forced Myer and other surviving Jews across the San River to Ulanow in Russian territory. He mentions formation of a Jewish militia to protect Jews from local Poles. Local Jews helped the refugees.

Myer spent the next six years in Russia and describes his experiences in great detail. He lived in Grodek until summer of 1940, hiding in the woods with other young men to avoid being sent to the coal mines. After he gave himself up he was deported to Siberia with his family and others who refused Russian citizenship. He lived in Sinuga and Bodaybo (Siberian villages) until 1944, when he was shipped to the territory of Engelstown to work in a government owned farm (*sovkhos*).

A detailed picture emerges of his coping skills in various jobs: laborer, stevedore and farm worker, as well as descriptions of living conditions, black markets, relations with Russian bureaucrats, behavior of Russian exiles towards Jews, and attempts to practice the Jewish religion. He married in September 1945. He was repatriated in Poland in April 1946, and he and his wife went to Krakow. He mentions continued antisemitism and violence by local Poles, and help from the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

In August 1946 Myer and his pregnant wife were smuggled into Czechoslovakia, through Austria and to a transit camp in Vienna, helped by the *Haganah*, then to Germany. He gives an extensive description of life in the displaced persons camp in Ulm Germany where he stayed for 3 years, supported by UNRRA (United Nations Relief Rehabilitation Association). He mentions Bleidorn a displaced persons camp for children, also in Ulm, where he located his niece and two nephews. Myer, his wife and two sons emigrated from Czechoslovakia to the United States in 1949. There are several touching vignettes of his early life in the United States. He describes several instances of help from Jews during his early years in Philadelphia.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Rudnik (Poland)

Krakow (Poland)

Poland - History - German occupation 1939-1945

Antisemitism (Poland)

Siberia: Exile 1940-1944

Siberia: Labor camps

Life skills

Religious observance (Jewish)

Displaced persons camps (Ulm, Germany)