

Interviewee: Carlos Heyman

May 25, 2010

Interviewer: Jimena Hinzpeter

Carlos Heyman was born (by accident!) in Vienna in 1920. He lived with his family in Czernowitz, Rumania. 60,000 Jews lived there. He was an only child. He spoke several languages: Ruthenian, German and Yiddish. Although he is not now a believer, family observed the main holidays by going to the synagogue. His childhood was pleasant. He went to state schools. Student associations organized activities in the town and hikes in the Carpathian Mountains. He also had a horse and loved to ride. He lived in Czernowitz until the age of 19 when he completed the first year of Medical school. He was warned that bad times were a-coming for Jews, and decided to stop his studies.

First anti-Semitism remark he heard was from a teacher at the age of 13-14. Anti-Semitism had been prevalent even before Hitler.

Carlos decided to immigrate to Chile, the only place where he could get a visa to. He could not withstand the anti-Jewish laws and was afraid to be inducted into the army. Family had a factory in Rumania and was overburdened with special taxes.

Carlos emigrated in 1939 without his parents. The most expensive part of the immigration was not the visa (provided by a part-time consul of Chile in Rumania, but the passage on the ship. Parents stayed in Rumania. They had also suffered under the communists during Russian occupation. Under Hitler, parents were allowed to stay in Czernowitz.

His father's factory was of powdered milk, which the Nazis needed for the army. They stayed in their apartment, guarded by a Jewish officer who told the father: "take a sip of water when you leave the house, and spit it out when you return" so that he did not speak during the day.

The Jewish women were recruited to go to work in the copper mines and the young men to the army.

To keep in touch with his parents in Europe, Carlos would send his letters via Vienna.

War broke out when Carlos was already in Panama, on the way to Chile.

Carlos first job was as a peddler. He married at age 22, in 1942. Parents immigrated to Chile later on. They immediately started a new factory like the one they had in Rumania.