

Interviewee: Jack Miller

March 15, 2012

Interviewer: Ilana Solowiejczyk

(This interview consists of vignettes. It is hard to establish a time-line. Mr. Miller had forgotten his Spanish, and apparently preferred English. He was given the chance to speak English, but did not accept it.)

Jack Miller was born in 1928, in Slovakia. His family was perhaps the richest there. They possessed forests, lots and even a medical clinic. His name, at birth, was Muller. At home they spoke Czech, Hungarian and, the home language was German. Mother had been born in New York.

20 people hid in a "bunker" (or some kind of large construction the family built.). The one who was bringing food to the family gave them away while drunk. There were over 20 people there and two were over 85. The Germans took only those 2 to the gas chambers. One of them was Jack's grandparent. They were in hiding for 9 months. Originally, since the Russians were nearby, they thought they will be hiding for a shorter time.

After a Slovakian revolution, the man who was in charge was a priest, Dr. Josef Tisson. The Nazis would pay him for every Jew he would turn in.

Jack's brother was not in hiding. His father took him to relatives in Roznava, a section of Hungary/Slovakia that had been in conflict for 200 years. The brother was blond.

The family was transported to Ravensbruck in cattle cars. Jack saw through the window that they had passed Auschwitz without stopping, and arrived in Katowice. Jack was happy that they were not going to an extermination camp. Ravensbruck was indeed an extermination camp for women (where 100,000 of them perished), but not for men. The men who died there was because of hunger. The train did not stop in Auschwitz because there had been a malfunction in the crematoria. Jack and his parents arrived in Ravensbruck. (Jack talks about death by Zyklon B-which lasts 6 minutes. He says that when Himmler visited Auschwitz, he vomited while observing those deaths.) Inmates would have preferred to be killed by bullets, but those were considered too expensive by the Nazis. Jack was with the father in the camp. Jack was in the camp from October to May. for 13 months(?)

The Canadians came to liberate the camp. Jack spoke English with his liberators. He pretended to be dead in order to go to the hospital. After 2-3 days of eating, he could even ride his bicycle. Riding it, he arrived in a German home and put on some Nazi uniforms to keep warm. (The story of the widow of the German officer who had been raped by 7 Russian soldiers.) Returning to his town, Jack found out his mom had survived, but had been sent to Prague. Jack says he wasn't liberated from Ravensbruck but from Ludviksvust(?)

Jack worked for the Gillett Company, in Boston. They paid for his psychological treatment after the war, but nothing helped.

Jack came to Chile to retire.