REALTIME FILE

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
FIRST PERSON: CONVERSATIONS WITH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
FIRST PERSON MARCEL DRIMER
JULY 3, 2018

REMOTE CART CAPTIONING PROVIDED BY:
HOME TEAM CAPTIONS
www.captionfamily.com

* * * * *

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility. CART captioning and this realtime file may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

* * * * *

>> Bill Benson: Good morning, and welcome to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My name is Bill Benson. I am the host of the museum's public program, *First Person.* We are in our 19th year of the *First Person* program. Thank you for joining us. Our First Person today is Mr. Marcel Drimer, whom you shall meet shortly.

This 2018 season of *First Person* is made possible by the generosity of the Louis Franklin Smith Foundation, with additional funding from the Arlene and Daniel Fisher Foundation. We are grateful for their sponsorship.

First Person is a series of twice-weekly conversations with survivors of the Holocaust who share with us their firsthand accounts of their experience during the Holocaust. Each of our *First Person* guests serves as a volunteer here at this museum. Our program will continue through mid-August. The museum's website, www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming *First Person* guests.

Marcel will share with us his "First Person" account of his experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If time allows, we will have an opportunity for you to ask Marcel a few questions. If we do not get to your question today, please join us in our online conversation: *Never Stop Asking Why*. The conversation aims to inspire individuals and new generations to ask the important questions that Holocaust history raises and what this

history means for societies today. To join the *Never Stop Asking Why* conversation, you can ask your question and tag the museum on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram using @holocaustmuseum and #AskWhy. You can find the hashtag on the back of your program, as well.

A recording of this program will be made available on the museum's YouTube page. Please visit the *First Person* website listed on the back of your program for more details.

What you are about to hear from Marcel is one individual's account of the Holocaust. We have prepared a brief slide presentation to help with his introduction.

Marcel Drimer was born in Drohobycz, Poland, a small town now part of Ukraine. The arrow on this map of Europe from 1933 points to Poland. Marcel's father Jacob, worked as an accountant in a lumber factory while his mother raised Marcel and his younger sister, Irena.

In this photo we see Marcel and his mother Laura in 1934.

Germany and the Soviet Union attacked Poland in September 1939 beginning World War II. This is an historical photograph of German troops parading through Warsaw after the surrender of Poland.

On June 22, 1941 Germany violated the German-Soviet Pact and attacked Soviet territory. Within a few weeks Drohbycz was occupied by German forces.

In 1942, members of Marcel's family, including his grandfather, whom we see here, were deported to extermination camps where they were murdered.

In the Fall of 1942, Marcel and his family were forced into the Drohobycz ghetto. This is an historical photograph of Jews being forced into the Drohboycz ghetto.

Before the liquidation of the ghetto, the family escaped to a small village. In August 1943, Marcel went into hiding with a Polish-Ukranian family. Here we see photos of Jan and Zofia Sawinski, the family who hid Marcel and his family.

Marcel's family is seen in this photo taken in 1947 or 1948. From left to right, we see Marcel's uncle Abraham Drimer, his parents, Laura and Jacob, and Marcel's uncle, Abraham Gruber.

In 1957, Marcel earned a degree in mechanical engineering. He immigrated to the United States in 1961 where his wife, Ania, joined him in 1963. Soon after arrival in the U.S. he was hired by the U.S. Post Office Department to work on the design of mail sorters and conveyors. After a very successful period with the Post Office Department, Marcel transferred to the U.S. Army as a civilian in 1972. He then worked as a mechanical engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers. Although Marcel officially retired from the Army in 1994, he remained a consultant with the Army until 2010. He is now truly retired.

Ania trained as a pharmacist in Poland and continued her profession after her arrival in the U.S. and is now also retired. Marcel and Ania have a son, Adam, who lives in Richmond. They have two grandchildren, Mary, age 16, and Jack, who is 18. Jack just graduated from high school and will attend Virginia Tech this fall. Mary will start the 11th grade in the fall.

Although officially Marcel and Ania are retired, they both do considerable work as volunteers with the museum. Marcel and Ania translate documents written in Polish. They translated portions of Emanuel Ringelblum's Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto, a 25,000-page collection of diaries and other documents detailing the events and lives of those who lived in the doomed Warsaw Ghetto. They also recently translated personal memoirs by two Jewish young women who suffered terribly during the war. In appreciation for the translations, the families of these women donated generously to this Museum.

Marcel and Ania also worked on the Museum exhibit titled, "Some Were Neighbors:

Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust," which ran from 2013 to 2017. To help with the exhibit, they reviewed and transcribed several filmed testimonies and made recommendations about their potential significance to the exhibit. They are quite a team. I am pleased to note that Ania is here today with Marcel in the front row to my right.

Marcel speaks publicly about his Holocaust experience in many settings including at numerous schools and military installations. Just last week he spoke to Marines at the Quantico Marine Corps Base.

Marcel recently donated to the Museum photographs of great significance to him as well as a ring which played a role in his survival, which we will hear more about today. And we hope to hear about a trip Marcel and Ania took to his home town of Drohobycz in 2016.

Please join me in welcoming our First Person, Mr. Marcel Drimer.

>> [Applause]

>> Bill Benson: Once again, Marcel, thank you so much for joining us and your willingness to be our *First Person* today. You have so much to share with us and we really have a short period so we'll go ahead and get started right away, I think.

World War II began in September 1939, when Germany attacked Poland from the west quickly followed by the Soviet Union attacking Poland from the east. Early in the war you and your family lived under Russian occupation. Before we talk about that time, before we talk about the war, tell us a little bit about your family and your community and you before the war began.

>> Marcel Drimer: My father was an accountant in a lumber factory. My mother was a housekeeper and took care of me and my sister.

Drohobycz was a small town of about 60,000 people. 20,000 were approximately Polish and 20,000 Ukrainians and 20,000 were Jews people lived in peace. They had their churches, synagogues, and Ukrainian churches. There was sports clubs. In general, everything was ok.

One of my uncles was a soccer player. He was a very, very good soccer player. So that's about all. Oh, Drohobycz was -- it's ok. It was a good town to live. Yeah.

>> Bill Benson: Marcel, on September 17, 1939, Russia attacked Poland. And as we mentioned, as a result you were living under Russian occupation until June of 1941. Tell us what that time was like when you were under the Russians in that period until 1941.

>> Marcel Drimer: The Russians very quickly wanted to make Drohobycz a part of the Russian country. They nationalized the factories, buildings, and stores. But they did not pick on the Jews. Everybody was equally taken care of.

The Russians also deported people that they considered enemies of the state. The intelligentsia, the rich people, and so forth. So among those that were deported to Russia were my wife's parents. They were deported to Siberia. And Ania, my wife, was born in Siberia. Later on it turned out that those deported to Russia would be a good thing because about 90% or 80% of these people survived and the rest that didn't -- that weren't sent to Russia were killed, about 10% survived.

>> Bill Benson: You had some family members, some uncles who joined the Russian Army. Is that right?

>> Marcel Drimer: Well, they did not join. They were taken.

>> Bill Benson: They were taken.

>> Marcel Drimer: During that time that we were under Russian occupation, on the western part of Poland the Germans already started doing their devil's thing. They started ghettos.

Somehow we knew about it. As a matter of fact, there was a gentleman that managed to run away from Poland, western Poland, and he stayed with us. He told us what was going on. So we were aware that it was a bad thing going on in the west.

So when the Germans attacked Russia, several -- my father was the oldest of five siblings. My mother was the oldest of four siblings. There were young men that the Germans -- that the Russians took to the Russian Army. Some of the wives managed to go to Russia with their husbands that were taken to the Russian Army.

So this uncle survived. Well, two of them were killed in fighting the Germans and three of them survived.

>> Bill Benson: Marcel, soon after Germany turned on the Soviet Union in June of 1941, German troops occupied your town, occupied Drohobycz, and, of course, life for Jews then changed dramatically and tragically. What happened when the Nazis came into Drohobycz? What happened to you and your family?

>> Marcel Drimer: The first thing -- this is a little too bright. Can I?

>> Bill Benson: Maybe they can turn it down a little bit. We'll look out into the center part here if it we can.

>> Marcel Drimer: I'll look at the middle.

>> [Laughter]

>> Bill Benson: So when the Nazis --

>> Marcel Drimer: When the Nazis came to Drohobycz, they contacted the Ukrainian nationalists that they could do whatever they wanted to with the Jews; that they could beat and kill and rob. So when the Germans came, in the beginning of July 1941, the Ukrainians attacked the Jews in Drohobycz. They came to my grandparents' house. They beat up my maternal grandfather so bad that he died within a few days. They robbed what they could take away with them. Among others were albums and photos. They took the photos, the albums, and they shook out the photos into mud and took the albums.

Well, after the war my father went to see what was left from the house of the grandparents. It was gone. But a neighbor of my grandparents came out of his house and handed my father a stack of photos, about 100 photos. All of these photos are here in the Holocaust museum. And some of these photos that you have seen here are from that.

>> Bill Benson: And they were rescued.

>> Marcel Drimer: Rescued from the mud.

Now, the Russians sent my father for education. I don't know what kind of education. It was a big town near Drohobycz. My father was there with my aunt. So their aktion -- in Drohobycz, about 200 people were -- 5,000 people were killed in the first few days of the German occupation. And one of those were my Aunt Rivke. So in the first few days I lost a grandfather and an aunt.

After the beginning, the Germans had rules that applied to the Jews. The Jews were not supposed to walk on the sidewalks they were supposed to walk on the middle of the street. They would have to wear arm band with the Star of David. Radios, telephones, arms if anybody had any, was all taken away from the Jews. Jewish children were not allowed to go to school. Because they were all to be killed. The Polish and Ukrainian children could get about four grades education because they were supposed to be the slaves, be able to read and write.

They started with the rationing food and something called raus aktion. They killed people whenever they felt if they wanted to come to a Jewish house, they would come and

take whatever they wanted.
>> Bill Benson: And they were called aktions.
>> Marcel Drimer: In German, aktion. The start was very, very bad.
>> Bill Benson: Tell us about your nanny and when you went to visit with your nanny. You had had a nanny before the war. Tell us about her and what happened.
>> Marcel Drimer: Her name was Jancia. I don't remember her last name. She loved me very, very much. So she would come to our house and bring some food, played with me. She was a wonderful person.

In our house, there was four of us: My parents and my sister. And also the grandmother whose husband was killed and the grandfather who was a widower. You saw him there in the photos. And my father's sister and two of her children. The sister's husband was taken to the Russian Army. So it was nine people. It was very, very crowded. So Jancia took me to her house, you know, to ease it.

Now, what happened is when I was at Jancia's house and my sister started bothering my mother that she wants to play with me, she's missing me and so forth, so my mother decided to go to Jancia. She took off the arm band with the Star of David. And the Germans, anything that the Jews were doing or not doing, they could be killed for no reason.
>> Bill Benson: So taking off your arm band --
>> Marcel Drimer: Taking off the arm band you could be killed. My mother and my sister were both blond. They looked -- didn't look very Jewish. So my mother went to Jancia. When she came to Jancia's house, I was sitting in the corner and Jancia was on the bed -- she was giving birth to a baby. There was no doctor, no nurse, no nothing. And I was there. I was 8 years old. And I was just sitting there.
>> Bill Benson: You were the only one there?
>> Marcel Drimer: I was the only one. So when my mother came, she boiled some water and did whatever she could do. And the baby came out. The baby did not survive.

But in the meantime, it became already night so Jancia suggested that we stay in her house, not go to the house in Drohobycz. So we stayed there. And the next day, in the morning, Jancia's husband came from work. He worked in a night shift. So he came there and was very surprised that he saw us there.

One of the rules that the Germans had is that if a Christian person gives a glass of water to the Jews, they could be killed. They could not help the Jews.

So he said, you know, if the Germans would come here and see you here, then we all would be killed. The problem with me was -- only Jewish men were circumcised. And if the Germans suspected somebody to be Jewish, then they would just say drop your pants and if you were circumcised, you were a Jew and you would be killed. And if anybody would give us hiding, they would also be killed.

So he said so you have to leave the house; it's very dangerous. So he gave us some bread and said to leave the house. We left the house, crossed the road, and came to a wheat field. It was August 1942. And we started going towards the woods. We came about 2/3 of the field and my mother found an indentation in the ground. So she decided that we will try to hide there. She had a raincoat the color of the wheat and covered us, and we were waiting. As we hid there, we heard Germans screaming "raus," "raus," "shnell." That means get out and hurry up. And we heard shots and we heard people screaming and begging for mercy. It was 10 and 15 minutes. And then it stopped for a few minutes and then started again. It was like -- after death, we called it a symphony of death. So it lasted maybe three, four hours. And then it

stopped.
>> Bill Benson: And this was an aktion that was going on.
>> Marcel Drimer: This is an aktion -- this is when Jancia's husband came, he said there is a big aktion going on in Drohobycz so you have to get out. So this was a part of the aktion.

When it quieted down, we waited another 15 minutes, half an hour, and then good out up and started going to Jancia -- toward Jancia's house. As we came to the road, there was, on the right side, a German soldier with the German dog. He just looked at us. So we stopped. And he looked at us. We looked at him. We thought this is the end of our life. But he just turned around and walked away.

The Germans, the Jews, they would never go by one person. They always was two of them because they were afraid that somebody could have a human feeling and let the person go. And he was by himself. So this is perhaps that he had that moment. He just turned around and walked away.
>> Bill Benson: Seeing a woman with her two little kids.
>> Marcel Drimer: Two kids. And maybe he thought, they were blond and blue-eyed, it also helped.

So we came to Jancia's house again, slept another night. And the next day our father came to pick us up. He was, at that time, in the dormitory, laborer, in the lumber factory. Before the war, you worked there as a laborer. So he slept there and came to take us home. We went to our house and when we came to our house, the door was broken in and it was empty, the furniture turned over and nobody was there. Everybody was gone.

My one grandfather, one grandmother, my one aunt and three children, they were all taken umshatz platz, several days without food, several days without sanitary requirements and they were taken to a Belzec concentration camp. Actually, it was not a concentration camp. It was a camp -- extermination camp.

There were two kinds of camps at that time, the concentration camps like Auschwitz, they would bring people and they would kill them slowly by working them to death. They would get always new people and kill the ones that were already too tired to work. But extermination camp killed the people immediately.
>> Bill Benson: That was Belzec?
>> Marcel Drimer: This was Belzec, the closest to Drohobycz. So part of my family was killed there.
>> Bill Benson: Marcel, that was August of 1942. In the early fall of 1942, the Germans created a ghetto in Drohobycz. You and your mother and brother and sister were forced into the Drohobycz ghetto. Tell us what it was like once you were in the ghetto.
>> Marcel Drimer: In the ghetto, we were given one room in an apartments of three or four rooms. Each family would get one room. We had one mattress for all four of us, slept. The Germans took the furniture away so it was only one mattress.

The aktions then were very frequent. The food situation was critical. The rations were very, very small. We lived in the ghetto and my father worked at the lumber factory and so he went with a group of people under police -- with the Polish police guiding them. He decided that things are not important; that life is important. So my father bartered with farmers. For example, he would take a ring off his hand and for two loafs of bread. So this is how we provided enough bread that we could survive.

And aktions then were quite frequent. There were children running around the ghetto that their parents were killed. It was just a terrible, terrible situation.

>> Bill Benson: If I remember right, your father created a hole under the mattress where when an aktion was taking place, you would go and hide in this hole under the mattress.
>> Marcel Drimer: Right. Right. There was one aktion -- we all got there under the mattress. There was another woman that lived nearby. She said -- we heard about the aktion. She said, "If you don't take me with you there, then I will give you to the Germans."

So there was several -- my family, this woman, and my uncle, who was sick -- he was working but that day he was sick -- so he got with us in that hole. We heard people coming and going. We heard -- my uncle -- he couldn't stand being --
>> Bill Benson: Claustrophobic?
>> Marcel Drimer: Right. So we heard the door close. So my uncle lifted the mattress and put his face out and there was a Germans and Polish policemen. And the policeman says get out and we will take care of you, get out. My uncle got out. And luckily for him this Polish officer was his schoolmate. They knew each other. So my uncle negotiated with him how to make it so that you don't have to take us out.

So my uncle lifted the mattress and says to my mother, "Give me your ring" and everybody else who had anything gave him. And the Polish policemen let us be. Just didn't take our life but took our things.
>> Bill Benson: You would spend almost a year in the ghetto. I know we don't have time for you to tell us a lot more about that time. You were every single day in constant fear of being taken and the conditions were horrific. So your father, who was forced to work in the lumber yard, decided to get you out of there and really did, I think, from what you shared with me, just an amazing thing. Tell us about that.
>> Marcel Drimer: For an accountant, he was a very, very brave man, really. He was a hero. He was a wonderful, wonderful man.

So in the lumber factory, he prepared the place for us to hide. The people from the ghetto were under the police, taken to the places where they worked. There were different place that people worked. So my father bribed the policeman that guided us and father took me under his arm and my mother took my sister under her arm, dressed like a man, and we walked to the places where the men worked. When we came to the lumber factory, my father put us behind some bushes. He took my mother and my sister and he said, "I'll take them to the factory and I'll come back for you."

And after my father walked away -- my father said to me, "You're the man. You have to stay here and don't make any noise." So after father walked away, I was terribly scared. I was scared that he would leave me there and I would be dead. Because I heard stories that some parents would leave the children and look for hiding. I don't know if it was true or not. But I was scared. So I ran after father and said, "Daddy, daddy, daddy." And another policeman saw us and told my father you can't do it. Father had something else to bribe him. So we came to the factory.
>> Bill Benson: And so he had constructed inside this factory a hiding place for you in the midst of lumber, if I remember right. Just ingenious.
>> Marcel Drimer: There was a building that was wood was drying for furniture. So father took us to that building, on the attic, we got on the attic there and we were hiding there. In the middle of the night father would bring food. We had a string and we would put down the string and take down.
>> Bill Benson: Because your father, he slept in the dormitory. So he was officially in there but you were hidden.

>> Marcel Drimer: We were hidden. Right.

So he would come in the middle of the night and give us some food and took the waste down. And it lasted like a week or 10 days.

A friend of my father's, a young woman, came to my father and said, "Jacob, there is this young woman, Theresca, and she thinks that you are hiding somebody. She told me if she will find out if it's true that you are hiding, she will do what she thinks is right, which is report you the SS." The Germans give a kilos of sugar or a kilos of --

>> Bill Benson: Vodka, right?

>> Marcel Drimer: Vodka, for hiding the Jews. So she's going to do that.

So father was flabbergasted. He didn't know what to do. So he had a friend -- there was a clinic in the factory and there was a doctor there. So my father talked to that doctor, who was educated in Vienna. When my parents were born, Drohobycz was Austro Hungary. And all the doctors were from Vienna. This doctor was from Vienna. He had an idea. Father and the doctor discussed. He wrote an anonymous letter to SS and stated there that he was a sexual encounter with this Theresca and she gave him syphilis.

>> [Laughter]

>> Marcel Drimer: That's not a joke.

>> Bill Benson: [Laughter]

>> Marcel Drimer: So the next day, the next day, a couple of SS men came to the factory and took her away. At first they took her to the clinic to ask the doctor if she really has syphilis and he said, of course she has syphilis. So she disappeared until after the war. So it wasn't very ethical for a doctor to do.

>> Bill Benson: But it saved your life.

>> Marcel Drimer: But he saved the life of my family.

>> Bill Benson: So from there, your father clearly knew he needed a better hiding place. So that's what ended up getting you to the Sawinskis. Tell us about that.

>> Marcel Drimer: Father would go to the villages nearby, near Drohobycz. There were people that knew our family. And father would go there and ask if they wouldn't take us to save us. And some people were very, very nice and said, well, we cannot do it but the others were not so nice and they would say: oh, you have a nice watch; you better give us your watch because we will report you. Because the Germans would know that he was walking around without the arm band, he would be killed. So they were not so nice.

But finally he went to the farm of the Sawinskis. We saw the Jan Sawinski and Zofia Sawinski. So they agreed to take my mother and my sister. Because the situation that I explained before, you know, they can always say that they were from another village family. So father was willing to let my mother and sister survive and us not survive.

So Mrs. Sawinski came one night to the dormitory where my father was living at that time. And we started to say goodbye. Of course I was still 8 years old and I was crying and my mother was crying and Mrs. Sawinski was crying. And then at one point she says, "I can't take it anymore. I have children of my own. We'll take Marcel with us."

So we didn't have anything to carry with us. We were just what we had on us. So we went, the same night, we went through the woods and the rivers and we got to the Sawinski farm.

>> Bill Benson: So tell us about life in the Sawinski farm.

>> Marcel Drimer: The food situation was very bad because the Russians -- if somebody would all of a sudden buy more food than there is people in that house, they would be

suspicious that the people were hiding somebody.

So the youngest son would go to one of the refineries where my uncle, you saw here, Gruber -- he was a butcher. He would take a container to where my uncle worked. So he got the scraps from the tables for the pigs. And my uncle, every once in a while, would give him a loaf of bread or a piece of meat. Which, also, if the Germans would find out, they would kill him. So this was the food for pigs. We had the first choice. Whatever was still edible, we ate that.

We would bathe once a month. The children would bathe first. And the parents would bathe later. And my sister would look out on the yard and there were chickens running around. She would say, "Why can I not be a chicken? I would be safe." And she was also bleeding from her nose and we were worried how will we bury her so as not to make somebody know that there are people hiding there.

>> Bill Benson: So you couldn't go for medical care.

>> Marcel Drimer: Absolutely no dental, no medical care.

Oh, I forgot. Somehow my father convinced the Sawinskis to take him. And this uncle --

>> Bill Benson: That was the butcher.

>> Marcel Drimer: They loved him very much. Because they were neighbors he was a tremendous guy, really. So his wife and child were killed before but he lived with another woman, with a child, a 6-year-old child. So they accepted him, too. And then there were some people, family hid, and also the Sawinskis.

>> Bill Benson: And the Sawinskis were very poor.

>> Marcel Drimer: Very poor.

>> Bill Benson: Dirt floors. It's not a big farm. Eventually how many of you were living on their little bit of property?

>> Marcel Drimer: There was about -- there was 13 of us. And the Sawinskis and four children.

>> Bill Benson: And their four children.

>> Marcel Drimer: It was a miracle that we survived.

>> Bill Benson: You said that there was a shed where you could sleep in and then there was a little space over their cottage where people could sleep.

>> Marcel Drimer: Oh, yes, yes. Some of us would sleep in the hole under the bed or under the --

>> Bill Benson: The cottage?

>> Marcel Drimer: Right. And some would live in the attic. The attic, there was not a chimney but it was --

>> Bill Benson: Smoke from where they cooked.

>> Marcel Drimer: Smoke would go through the attic. So those that were hiding in the attic were smoked. Really, our eyes and -- and the others that were underground, we couldn't straighten our legs. We couldn't talk loud. We had to talk whispering. We would all lay down and couldn't stretch our legs.

>> Bill Benson: And this went on for such a long time. As you said, you bathed once a month. You said the hygiene conditions were horrible. People have lice and boils and all of these people living there. What were the Sawinskis like to do this? I mean they did this at tremendous risk.

>> Marcel Drimer: They were very religious. And they liked my mother very much.

>> Bill Benson: 12 people who were close.

>> Marcel Drimer: They were just decent people.
>> Bill Benson: They took you in.

I was struck when you shared, if I remember correctly, that even though they had some chickens and pigs, that the Germans for bade them from killing any animals without their permission which was their way of keeping track of what was happening to food. So it wasn't like they could kill a few extra chickens.
>> Marcel Drimer: They could not kill pork or a chicken or anything because the Germans would know about it and it would be very dangerous.

So we would get out of hiding in 1944 when the Russian front and the western front was close and the planes would come and bomb the refineries. Everybody would hide and we would come out and stretch the legs and walk around a little.
>> Bill Benson: While the bombing was going on.
>> Marcel Drimer: That was the only time that we dared to get out.
>> Bill Benson: Tell us about your liberation.
>> Marcel Drimer: Well, the liberation -- the Russian Army liberated us on August 5, 1944. We got out of hiding and I couldn't walk. My muscles were atrophied and I could not talk loud because we were whispering all the time. We had absolutely nothing, just rags that we came nine months before so the Sawinski's. We went to the middle of the town. There was some organization that helped the Jews. And there was about 400 Jews that survived.
>> Bill Benson: Out of 20,000.
>> Marcel Drimer: Out of 20,000. There were a few more -- like my uncle that survived in Russia, some partisans, and some that hid farther away. Anyway, it was about 700 that survived Drohobycz from the 20,000.

The Russians started -- well, my father was -- made the director of the lumber factory. And he, you know, provided the lumber for Russian Army. And he was sitting in the office there. So the Russian general came and he said how can this be that [Inaudible] and my father says, "Well, I don't have any shoes." So he got him military boots and also got some military boots for me. I almost killed my feet.
>> Bill Benson: And Marcel, as you said earlier, your legs were so atrophied you could barely walk. That really created difficulties when you started to resume -- go back to school under the Russians. What would happen then?
>> Marcel Drimer: The teacher told my parents that your son is sort of strange: doesn't play, doesn't run, doesn't talk.

Oh, and another thing what the Russians did. They called my father to the KGB, the police, and they said: You must have been a collaborator with the Germans because your family survived. That never happened. So my father said: I wasn't a collaborator. There were some people that were also survivors and people that he worked with came and certified that my father was not a collaborator.

So can you imagine after all that hell that we got through, they would accuse my father that he was a collaborator? It wasn't easy.
>> Bill Benson: Marcel, we're about to run out of time. There's just so much more you could have told us if we had had the time. But I do want you to just say a bit about the visitor you will have in a couple of weeks, if you would. I would appreciate that.
>> Marcel Drimer: The great, great granddaughter of the Sawinskis lives in Drohobycz. She is doing her Ph.D. in history. And she found out that her great, great grandparents hid some Jews. Some great grandfather mentioned that there was a boy there, a young boy, a

10-year-old boy, Marcel. So she Googled and she found my address. So she sent a letter to the University of Virginia and to the Holocaust, introduced herself. They sent it to me. And I said absolutely. I want to contact that woman. I want to meet her. And we started communicating. She invited us to come to Drohobycz and meet her.

So two years ago we went to Drohobycz. We went with a group of people from Israel that they were from Drohobycz. And we met -- her name is Maria. We went to the places. We spent there a week. We went to the places where people were killed. We went to the places where we were hiding. The biggest impression that I had was to go to Mrs. Sawinski's grave and put some flowers on her. She was the one that was very important in our lives.

So we were contacting her. Somebody here in this museum, some Ukrainian Jew, donated some money for Ukrainian teachers. So she was invited to the Holocaust Museum. And in a month from now she will come here and spend two weeks teaching -- learning how to teach about the Holocaust. It's just an amazing, amazing story. She's a wonderful girl. Young lady.

Drohobycz had a beautiful synagogue. That synagogue was in terrible shape. The 17th of June that synagogue was opened and it's beautiful. There were some photos of me and other Jews that came from there. I'm just -- oh, and she was there -- her photo was there, holding a list of righteous from that area and the Sawinskis were there.

If you go and visit the museum, you can Google Sawinski and you can see right there, called Righteous Among Nations.

>> Bill Benson: Marcel, we're going to close our program in a moment. We didn't even begin to touch the fact that Marcel and his family then stayed in Poland. They were there under the communists. It took a long time for him to be able to get out but eventually did get out. And Ania followed him. And then they began their new lives here in the U.S.

We're going to -- I'm going to turn back to mar shell to close our program in just a moment. I want to thank all of you for being with us; remind you that we'll have programs twice a week until the middle of August. If you can't come back, all of our programs are available through the museum's YouTube page so we hope you can watch some other paths as well. And this one will also be on the YouTube page as well.

When Marcel finishes, because we didn't have a chance for you to ask him some questions, Marcel will remain on the stage here. We invite you -- and we mean this -- we invite you come up here on the stage, say hi to him, get your picture taken with him, ask a question if you want to. Marcel will be here as long as you're willing to do that.

It's our tradition at *First Person* that our First Person gets the last word. So with that, I'm going to turn back to Marcel to close today's program.

>> Marcel Drimer: I just want to say that if you would like to read some of my stories, just Google Marcel Drimer. And there's about 10 pages of links.

This is last word. I am talking to you and others who want to listen to me because there are people and organizations who claim that the Holocaust is a hoax; that it never happened; that the Jews made it up to get money from the Germans. I am a witness that this did happen. By listening to the stories of my childhood you become witnesses also.

Our good friend said that we have to fight the four I evils: intolerance, injustice, ignorance, and indifference. Those are the roots of men's moral corruption that allowed Hitler and his mass to raise helpers to come to power and torture and murder millions of people he considered not worth living; not only Jews but people with disabilities, gypsies, homosexuals, and many other groups. Changing these behaviors is what this Holocaust is all about.

And also another short -- when Pastor Martin Niemoller was liberated from Dachau, he said this:

"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me."

So this is all.

>> [Applause]