

FRANK ADLER



Frank Adler, author of the Temple B'nai Jehudah history *Roots in a Moving Stream*, was born Franz Julius Schwarzadler in 1923 in Germany. The family took its name, which means "black eagle" from the signpost of their house in the Frankfurt ghetto in the 1600s.

Frank's father, Paul Schwarzadler, a commercial realtor, was 45 when he married his office manager, Dora, 31. Frank was their only child. A non-observant Jew – like the majority of Frankfurt's 30,000 Jews – Paul Schwarzadler set foot in a synagogue once for his wedding, the second time for his son's bar mitzvah. The family lived in an eight-room apartment on the city's west side. Household help for residents lived on the fifth floor.

Frank's father left in a chauffeured car each morning, came home for the main meal and a nap, and returned to work at 3 p.m. Dressed in his morning suit, gloves and walking stick, Paul Schwarzadler enjoyed spending Sundays showing his son the city or going to horse races.

Frank started first grade at a public school for boys in 1930. When Jews were barred from public schools in 1934, he went to a Jewish school founded by the Rothschilds and joined a Zionist youth group. When Jews were barred from the movies, he went to the opera, which would have folded without Jewish patrons.

Dora Schwarzadler took Frank with her to lectures at the Lehrhaus, one of the great Jewish adult education institutions of the 20th century. Frank never missed Shabbat services and sang in the choir.

As for Hitler, Paul Schwarzadler thought he was nonsense. After all, there had been a half-dozen failed German governments since World War I. But Hitler's menace hit home on *Kristallnacht*, November 9, 1938, the "night of broken glass" when the family's synagogue went in up flames.

While the Schwarzadlers waited for permission to immigrate to America, a family friend in Scotland arranged a temporary residence permit for Frank. His parents followed him there on the last train out of Germany before the war began.

A third of Frankfurt's Jewish population died in the Holocaust.

Frank and his parents arrived in Chicago in April 1940 with \$2. Frank worked as a clerk and went to Northwestern University and the University of Chicago for eight years. German Jews who came to America in this time believed that their main task was to become Americans.

After serving in the army as an acting chaplain, Frank Adler returned to Chicago to become a temple administrator. He was married in 1950. Three years later, he accepted the administrator position at Temple B'nai Jehudah. Lois and Frank Adler have two sons, Dan and Paul Adler, and four grandchildren. Since his retirement in 1991, Frank has pursued avocations in history and genealogy.

"The Jewish people interest me a great deal," he says. "The ethical concepts of Judaism are terribly important to me, as are the customs that tie me with my people."



Portrait by David Sosland
Excerpt from *From the Heart: Life Before and After the Holocaust ~ A Mosaic of Memories*

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