

South Carolina Survivors

Rebuilding their lives



*“When I was four we went into hiding.
My parents didn’t explain what was happening,
and it was very confusing.”*

Dientje Kalisky Adkins
Netherlands native

Soon after Germany invaded Holland in 1940, both Dientje’s grandfather and aunt were sent to a concentration camp and never returned. Her family moved from one hiding place to another, always fearful of sirens and paddy wagons. They hid in the attic of a nun’s house from 1943 to 1945. Dientje had only her blanket, pillow and a little doll. She and her family rarely left the attic. The confinement led to abuse by this nun who beat her and often would not feed her. Even though Dientje’s doll was everything to her, this nun was compelled to throw it away.

To this day she suffers from claustrophobia brought on by her long confinement in the attic. In spite of her brutal childhood, Dientje immigrated to South Carolina and has led a productive life.



Dientje Kalisky Adkins, Charleston, SC resident, and her husband Roscoe Adkins, deceased.

Max and Trude Heller, 1942.



*“Everyone saved from the Holocaust
will tell you, ‘It was a miracle.’
Well, we too had our miracles--and we
believe in them (but don’t depend on it).
America is a heaven to all.
We are Blessed.”*

Trude Heller

On March 11, 1938 Max M. Heller left work and witnessed the Nazi take-over of Austria. Jewish synagogues and Jewish property were being vandalized and burned.

After Max lost his job and his family were forced to sell their silverware and jewelry to survive, Max and other family members were sponsored to come to the U.S. by Shepherd Saltzman, a Jewish man who owned Piedmont Shirt Company in Greenville, SC.

Leaving his Nazi-occupied homeland in 1938 , Max came to Greenville to work as a stock boy at Piedmont Shirt Co. Trude and her family members fled to Belgium, then Holland, and finally on to England, and then Greenville, SC.

Max founded Maxon Shirt Company in 1948 and retired in 1969, devoting his time to public service. In 1971, after two years on the Greenville City Council, he was elected and served two consecutive terms as mayor of Greenville. He was a candidate for the United States House of Representatives in 1978.

A former chair of the State Development Board, he has played a leadership role in civic and community organizations. Furman awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1975

Max and his wife, Trude, who received an honorary degree from Furman in 1999, have 3 children, 10 grand-children, and 5 great-grandchildren.



Trude and Max Heller on Main Street, Greenville, S.C.
The street’s renovation was accomplished between 1971 and 1979,
when Mr. Heller was mayor.



Trude and Max Heller’s extended family.

*“Where will we end up?
We often felt guilty when we made it and others didn’t.”*

Hugo Schiller,
native of Germany

Hugo grew up in Nazi Germany, where his family had lived for generations. But his parents were forced to sell their business by decree, since they were Jewish. Hugo’s father was arrested in 1938, and then Hugo was forced out of public school by Nazi decree, and into a Jewish school. Then in 1940, he and his parents were deported to a Jewish concentration camp in France, without any idea where their final destination would be. They were later transported to Auschwitz, where his parents died. But Hugo survived to witness the liberation. Eventually, Hugo found his way to South Carolina, and resides in Myrtle Beach.

Eleanor and Hugo Schiller, winter 2008.



Hugo Schiller, 1936 or 1937,
age 5 or 6.

