

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Archives

Oral History Interviews of the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center

**Interview with Martin Radley
December 17, 1992
RG-50.002*0001**

PREFACE

On December 17, 1992, Martin Radley was interviewed on videotape by Joseph J. Preil on behalf of the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center. The interview took place in Union, New Jersey and is part of the Research Institute Archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies.

Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center created a summary and time-coded notes for the interview. The reader should bear in mind that these finding aids attempt to represent the spoken word in the recorded interview, yet have not necessarily been verified by the interviewee. The finding aids should not be used in place of the interview itself.

Rights to the interview are held by the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum houses a copy of the interview as a result of a contributing organization agreement with the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center. Details concerning the Museum's rights to use and reproduce the interview are contained in the contributing organization agreement.

Summary of the
Interview with Martin Radley
December 17, 1992

Martin Radley (Kleczewski), was born in Beuthen, Germany (Bytom, Poland), on July 7, 1924. He lived in Beuthen with his parents, two brothers, and his maternal grandparents. Only Martin and his brothers survived the war. Seventeen other members of his extended family were killed by the Germans.

Martin remembers experiencing Antisemitism as early as 1933. When Kristallnacht came on November 9, 1938, he was sent to check on his grandparents. Martin saw the smashed stores and was identified as a Jew. After hiding in a public restroom, he returned home to find his family home a mess. After Kristallnacht, Martin's father could not make a living as a tailor. His older brother emigrated to Palestine in 1938. Martin and his younger brother traveled to England as part of the Kindertransport. He lived in London's West End. His host family taught him the glass business. Martin's brother stayed with distant relatives.

In 1943, Martin was inducted into the British Army and was assigned to the Pioneer Corps which consisted of German and Austrian Jews. During his service, Martin changed his name to Radley upon the advice of his commanding officer. When the war ended he became an interpreter and met many other Holocaust survivors. Martin met his first wife, a Czech Holocaust survivor in Germany. He adopted her son and together the couple had two more sons. They emigrated to the United States in 1951. In 1961 Martin's wife passed away. He has since remarried.

Time-coded notes of the
Interview with Martin Radley
December 17, 1992

01:00:00

Martin Radley (Kleczewski) currently resides in Westfield. Martin was born in Beuthen, Upper Silesia, Germany (Bytom, Poland) on July 7, 1924. He lived with his parents, two brothers, and his maternal grandparents. Martin's 20-member extended family lived in Beuthen, a city of 100,000 with about 5,000 Jews. His older brother went to Palestine in 1938, and his younger brother went to England two weeks before war broke out in 1939. Martin went to England in May, 1939. His parents were murdered in the Holocaust. Martin displays papers indicating his parents were shipped away in June 1942, along with the remaining Jews of Beuthen.

01:05:00

Martin's name was changed for his protection from Kleczewski to Radley upon advice of his British commanding officer. Fifteen other members of his extended family are also on a list, indicating they were all murdered. He describes his Beuthen Hebrew Day School. He experienced Antisemitism as a youngster as early as 1933, when he was nine years old.

01:10:00

Martin describes Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938. He was sent by his parents to check on his grandparents. He saw smashed stores and heard someone say: "There goes a Jew." He hid in a public toilet for two hours. When he returned home he found the house a mess. After Kristallnacht, his

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father could not make a living as a tailor. Martin's 15-year-old brother had been in Ha-Koah, a Zionist youth organization. This helped his brother's emigration to Palestine.

01:15:00

Martin and his younger brother were part of the Kindertransport to England. Martin reads from a paper describing their undertaking. He arrived in London at age 15. Martin was placed with a couple in the West End of London. The husband was in the glass business and trained Martin in that business. His brother lived with distant relatives who were in the grocery business. At age 17, Martin got a job. Martin shows the registration papers for this change and for his induction into the Army on September 12, 1943 at the age of 19. He was in the Pioneer Corps, a unit of all German and Austrian Jews.

01:20:00

Because they were Germans, these Jews were placed in one unit for security reasons. When the war ended he was in Bremen, Germany. Since his entire unit spoke German, they were all separated and served as interpreters. This assignment lasted a year. He spoke to many Holocaust survivors during this time.

01:25:00

Martin was in the vicinity of the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in Germany. He spoke to survivors who were on the march from Auschwitz, Poland, to Bergen-Belsen, a distance of approximately 500 miles. He assisted the Rabbi-Chaplin officiate at funerals. Many died

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immediately after the war. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid and Sheltering Society (HIAS) provided help at this time.

01:30:00

Martin tells about Friedrich, a friend, who connected with his sister in Brazil through Martin. Martin knew Friedrich's family in Berlin, Germany. Martin has returned to Germany for visits. His wife was invited by the German government. Some of her family members live there.

01:35:00

Once a year, Martin's brother who lives in Israel, goes to Jerusalem to watch a parade. One time, he met a wealthy German from Oberhausen, Germany, the town where the mother of his brother's wife lived. The German factory owner then arranged for the German-Israeli couple to visit the mother every year for the remainder of her life. The sister-in-law was not Jewish.

01:40:00

Martin returned to Bloomsbury House in London to study a list of survivors. He discovered that the brother and son of his landlady in Hannover, Germany, had survived. Martin returned to Europe from leave in London, and went quickly to Hannover to their former address on Knochenhauer Strasse, and found the German family intact, a remarkable story of survival. The Hannover family, (the landlady's father, brother, and three sisters) then settled in Israel.

01:45:00

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Martin married his first wife, a Czech survivor, in Germany. He adopted her son from a previous marriage. They had two more children. He came to the United States in June 1951 with his wife and three children. They came to New Jersey, where he bought a glass store in Newark, New Jersey. Later, he moved his business to Cranford, New Jersey. His first wife passed away in 1961.

01:50:00

Martin indicates that he has always talked about the Holocaust. His children, though, do not want to hear these stories. He feels he is as religious today as he was as a youngster in Beuthen. Martin describes an incident in Bergen-Belsen when a group of survivors beat a Kapo so badly that the Kapo was hospitalized. Martin has mixed feelings regarding the roles of Jewish policemen and Kapos. "It wasn't wrong, it wasn't right ... I don't know what I would have done," he says.