

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Archives

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

**Interview with Margit Feldman
January 30, 1990
RG-50.002*0003**

PREFACE

On January 30, 1990, Margit Feldman was interviewed on videotape by Bernard Weinstein and Daniel Gover 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 Margit Feldman
January 30, 1990**

Margit Feldman was born on June 12, 1929 in Budapest, Hungary. Her only sibling, a brother, died in childbirth. Margit's family lived in Tolcsva, Hungary (near the Czech border) as of 1939. In April 1944, Hungarian gendarmes gathered the Jews in the center of town. Taken in railroad cars by Germans, 15,000 Jews were transported from the ghetto to a labor camp. Of the 15,000, only 250 survived. Of 68 members in Margit's family, two survived.

Margit was taken to Auschwitz, a concentration camp in Poland. Along with other, Margit's mother was killed immediately. By claiming to be 18 years old, Margit was eligible to do work in the camp and able to avoid immediate death. She remembers a "game" played by the Germans: counting the Jews and murdering every tenth person. Margit also recalls the miserable conditions in Auschwitz. She was transferred to Gruenberg, a subcamp of Gross-Rosen in Germany. Margit was then taken on a death march through the snow with others, including Gerda Weissman Klein, to Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp in Germany.

After being liberated by the British, Margit went to Sweden. She had intended to go to Palestine next, but an aunt and uncle in the United States arranged emigration papers for her. Margit arrived in the United States in August 1947. She married in 1953, has two children and is very active in Holocaust and communal work in Bound Brook, New Jersey.

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**Time-coded notes of the
Interview with Margit Feldman
January 30, 1990**

01:00:00

Born June 12, 1929 in Budapest, Hungary, only surviving child of Joseph and Theresa Buchalter. Brother died in childbirth. Lived in Tolcsva, near Czech border. Describes Hungarian anti-semitism of her childhood. Describes Tolcsva and father's business.

01:05:00

Describes family life with parents and maternal grandparents. Jewish mew were taken into forced labor groups in 1943. Her world stopped in April 1944 during Passover when Hungarian gendarmes gathered all Jews into center of Shtetl.

01:10:00

All of region's Jews gathered into one ghetto. Miserable conditions in ghetto. Met her agreed upon future husband in ghetto in May. The young man did not survive. 15,000 were transported from ghetto by Germans to a labor camp in railroad cars. Of 15,000, 250 survived. Of 68 in her family, 2 survived.

01:15:00

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Describes miserable railroad transport cars on way to Auschwitz...then the entrance into Auschwitz. Hell began after that iron gate. Division of labor between Germans and Poles...Mengele.

01:20:00

Her father was beaten when he left his line to come to Margit to bless her. Her mother and others were murdered immediately. Margit was advised to say she was 18, not her real 14. This made her eligible for labor and survived. She received the Auschwitz uniform.

01:25:00

After a few weeks, was sent to Cracow to work in a quarry. Germans played a game. Lined up the Jews in a line in the dark morning, counted...and killed every tenth prisoner. Back to Auschwitz after six or eight weeks. Describes "food." Received her tattoo number - 8 23 029. Saw a mother and daughter run to each other near the barbed wire, and both were electrocuted. Germans conscripted girls for prostitution.

01:30:00

From Auschwitz, she was sent to Gruenberg. Life was more bearable there. Met Gerda Weissman Klein there. Was on death march in snow from Gruenberg. Then to Bergen-Belsen, which was "really the pits."

01:35:00

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Describes miserable Bergen-Belsen. Lice, diphtheria, etc. Liberated by British. All alone from her family, aunt and others died. Her rabbi's daughter survived in Bergen-Belsen also. Cannot forgive free world or U.S. for lack of action.

01:40:00

Liberated by British soldiers, moved into German barracks, went into town of Bergen-Belsen. Describes explosion at their fire which put her in hospital. Was brought to Sweden...the Swedes were wonderful. At 16, she was determined never to return Hungary. Learned that both her parents and others had been murdered.

01:45:00

Intended to go to Palestine. But then discovered she had an aunt and uncles in U.S. Her family met her aboard ship, which meant she did not have to go through Ellis Island. Lived in Bronx with family. This adjustment was a most difficult emotional period. Resumed her education, but had to work also. Became quite ill (lung), was hospitalized. Met her future husband there. [Arrived in U.S. in August 1947.]

01:50:00

Married Harvey in December 1953. Both of them worked in health field. Gave birth to children. Her question: Has the world learned anything from the Holocaust? Her answer: "No, Hatred is all around us."

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01:55:00

Her children are named for her parents, her granddaughter for Margit's aunt. Relates story of Torah she dedicated in her Bound Brook Synagogue.

02:00:00

Describes why and how she began lecturing on Holocaust...Her own faith never waived. Finally did return to Hungary in 1972 to visit her father's brother. A very emotional experience.

02:05:00

Continues description of visit to her home town with her children and husband. Visited Synagogue, cemetery, other familiar locations.

02:10:00

So overcome by emotion, she could not enter her former home. "You can never come back home, never." Feared being taken away again. The hysteria diminished when they returned to Budapest.

02:15:00

Went to Dohany Synagogue on Sabbath. This was a ten-day visit followed by a twelve-day visit to Israel. This helped her return to sanity.