

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Archives

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

**Interview with Sally Chase
February 19, 1987
RG-50.002*0060**

PREFACE

On February 19, 1987 Sally Chase was interviewed on videotape by Bernard Weinstein and C. Schaffer-Koros 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.

USHMM Archives RG-50.002*0060

2

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 Sally Chase

February 19, 1987

Sally Chase was born on November 28, 1928. She spent her childhood in Radom, Poland. She was eight years old when World War II broke out. Eight days after the war began, she was sent into the ghetto along with other Jews in Radom. She volunteered for work at the Wehrmacht Alpha A Labor Camp near Radom because her mother believed it would be safe for her there.

On August 28, 1942, the Germans evacuated most of the ghetto. This was the last time Sally saw her parents. Her older sister escaped on January 13, 1943, when the Germans came to fill a quota. Two of Sally's brothers were taken by the Germans on that day. In August 1942, her oldest brother and his family were taken away.

In June 1944, the labor camps were liquidated and Sally was sent in a cattle car to Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. Sally and her sisters survived the selections conducted by Nazi Doctor Josef Mengele.

After spending six months in Auschwitz, Sally and her sisters were sent to Gebhartzdorf, Germany to work in an aircraft parts factory. They then moved on to another camp where conditions were better. After an unsuccessful escape attempt by Sally and her sister, the Russians liberated the camp.

Sally and her sisters took the train to Radom. From there they travelled to Czechoslovakia, where Sally spent three months. She emigrated to the United States in 1947.

USHMM Archives RG-50.002*0060

1

**Time-coded notes of the
Interview with Sally Chase
February 19, 1987**

01:00:00

Radom, Poland had a Jewish community of 30,000 out of a total population of 150,000. Sally had a joyous childhood, in which traditions were important. She was eight years old when war broke out. She could not attend school because of the war. Eight days after the German invasion, the Jews were sent into the ghetto. When she was sent for bread, she was identified by another child as a Jew. Jewish police were set up to control people; later Jews had to wear a white armband with a star of David.

01:04:00

The Germans began aktions, arriving at dawn and selecting from a list of intellectuals that they feared. The Jews had no weapons, but believed nothing would happen to them. Many were taken by truck to outside of Radom. There were nine people in their home. In the middle of the night the SS arrived searching for a neighbor. The husband was not at home so the soldiers took his wife and shot her in the street.

01:07:00

Sally was 11 years old at the time. Many Jews were resettled in another city; she volunteered to work for Wehrmacht-Alpha A Labor Camp, loading blankets and beds for the Army. Her mother thought she would be safe at the camp, which was three miles from the city. Twenty-five girls worked 12 hour shifts and slept in one room.

USHMM Archives RG-50.002*0060

2

01:11:00

On August 28, 1942, the Germans installed big lights and had the ghetto pack. She went to visit her parents. This would be the last time Sally would ever see them. The youngest brother escaped to Eastern Poland when the war broke out. The Germans took everyone out, searched all of the rooms and shipped 28,000 people to Treblinka concentration camp in Poland. People were put in cattle cars and their cries were heard for miles. Those arriving in Treblinka were sent to the "showers," and were gassed. Live children were thrown into pits.

01:14:00

Two thousand Jews remained in the ghetto. In January 1943, Jews interested in leaving for Palestine were asked to register. On January 13, 1943, in order to fill a "quota" the Germans took away a number of Jews, including two of her brothers, both of whom were in their 20's. An older sister escaped, even though police shot after her.

01:17:00

Sally's middle sister remained working with her in food supply. In August 1942, her oldest brother, his wife and four children were taken away. In the same month, the Germans tried to liquidate the ghetto in fear of the advancing Russian Army. Three hundred Jews remained in the ghetto, 300 were sent to Austerlitz, Czechoslovakia and 300 to a munitions factory. A one-year-old niece was saved by a Jewish policeman, and then cared for by two sisters of the mother.

01:20:00

In June 1944, the labor camps were liquidated, and the Jews were shipped toward Germany. Sally was sent in a cattle car to Auschwitz concentration camp, Poland, where she thought the shower would be a gas chamber. Three hundred women had their heads shaved, but after

USHMM Archives RG-50.002*0060

3

threatening suicide, she only had to have her hair cut short. She was given a dress without underwear, her shoes were immersed in water, and a number was tattooed on her with a pen. Each of them was given one slice of bread daily and a bowl of potato peel soup.

01:23:00

Fifteen girls slept in each bunk, in poor sanitary conditions, facing hunger and lice. Every few days Dr. Josef Mengele selected emaciated, sickly people. Sally and her two sisters withstood the selections. Her two-and-one-half year old niece arrived; and after fighting between the sisters over the child's care, one sister went to her death with the child. The other sister fell sick of scarlet fever and was sent to the infirmary. When she was there, Dr. Mengele gave a five-year old girl candy and then sent her to the gas chamber.

01:26:00

Sally and her sisters spent six months in Auschwitz. A friend of the family gave them bread and Sally exchanged honey for bread. Sally went to the kitchen to bring a barrel of soup but hungry women attacked and spilled it. At the end of the year she was sent to Gebhartzdorf, Germany, to an airplane parts factory.

01:29:31

Sally became a welder working from eight o'clock to eight o'clock. With the Russians advancing, she had to walk three days and nights to another work camp where conditions were improved. She, her sister, and her friends tried to escape, but were returned to camp. That night the SS disappeared and Wehrmacht guards took over. When these guards fled, the prisoners found Russian liberators coming to "Geborgeton."

USHMM Archives RG-50.002*0060

4

01:32:34

Many of the Jews returning to Poland were killed, including Sally's old neighbors, but Sally and her sisters took a train to Radom. They then went to Czechoslovakia. Three of her sisters were asked by the Red Cross to work as hospital aides. Her brother survived Dachau, Germany and later married his first wife's surviving sister. Sally spent three months in Prenamkinze.

01:35:00

Sally took the *Ernie Pyle* American troop transport ship through a stormy crossing and arrived in the United States on January 13, 1947. She stayed with her sister and attended evening school in Brooklyn, New York, finishing High School in one and one-half years. She worked as a file clerk with Chubb & Son. After nine and one-half years, she got her degree in accounting.

01:38:00

Sally's happy childhood helped her find the strength to survive. In 1953, she went to Israel to visit her sister. She felt self-conscious about her tattooed serial number and had surgery to remove it. She feels strongly about revisionists denying the existence of the Holocaust. She believes it is difficult to understand German behavior considering its history as a cradle of culture.