

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Archives

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

**Interview with Lotte Baum
March 5, 1987
RG-50.002*0062**

PREFACE

On March 5, 1987, Lotte Baum was interviewed on videotape by Bonnie Kind and Phyllis Tobin 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 Lotte Baum
March 5, 1987**

Lotte Baum-Zwaab was born in Essen, Germany on August 9, 1915. Her parents provided a loving and comfortable home. Lotte's father died in 1931 and her mother died in 1936. Lotte describes the destruction that took place on Kristallnacht. Synagogues, homes, and businesses were destroyed. She left for Holland in 1941 where she married. Her husband's factory was confiscated in 1942, and in 1943, they were moved into the local barracks. At the end of 1943, Lotte and her husband were sent to Westerbork, a concentration camp in the Netherlands, where she worked in the laundry. They paid gold to be able to stay there, but they were eventually sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, a concentration camp in Poland, on the last transport in September 1944. Her husband was killed in Auschwitz. In January 1945, Lotte was sent to a munitions factory in the Sudetenland in Germany. She was later liberated by the Russians. Lotte remarried and came to the United States in 1947.

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**Time-coded notes of the
Interview with Lotte Baum
March 5, 1987**

01:00:00

Lotte Baum born on August 9, 1915 in Essen, Germany. Went to a public school, also secretarial school. Brother was one year older than she. Her father was a salesman. Mother was a homemaker. They were not extremely religious though they followed traditional observances. Mother was born in Germany. Father was born in Holland. Lotte Baum had Jewish friends in school. She spoke German at home. There was a Dutch community in Essen. She went to work for a Jewish lawyer.

01:06:00

Felt rumblings of anti-semitism. Father could not do business any more. The lawyer for whom she worked for was persecuted and died shortly after 1933. She then worked in a Jewish department store until Kristallnacht. She describes the destruction of Kristallnacht when Jewish synagogues, homes, businesses were destroyed. Then she worked for the Jewish community till May of 1941. After which she emigrated to Holland and got married. Her

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father had died in 1931, mother died in 1936. Her brother moved to Holland in 1933. Later deported, she never saw him again.

01:11:00

Her husband had a factory which was taken away in 1942. In 1943, they had to move into barracks. At the end of 1943, they were sent to Westerbork, a concentration camp in the Netherlands. While there, she was able to stay with her husband. She worked in the laundry. They paid in gold to stay there, but they were sent with the last transport to Auschwitz-Birkenau, a concentration camp in Poland, in September of 1944. No anticipation of what to expect in Auschwitz. SS stripped the prisoners from head to toe. She was separated from her husband. She later found out, he was killed there.

01:16:00

In Auschwitz, she had to carry sand from one place to the next, seemingly without purpose. Ovens were working day and night. She didn't know what was going on. In January 1945, she was sent to an ammunition factory in the Sudetenland, Czech Republic. Transported from there to Leipzig and Holland. After liberation by the Russians, her brother-in-law got the factory back and

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rebuilt. She remarried. Her second husband was in the German underground during the war years.

01:21:00

Came to the United States in 1947 with husband and his sister, who had lost two daughters in the Holocaust. Lotte Baum's daughter was born in 1948. Her son was born in 1952. Always physically affected by the experiences. Receives social security from Germany. A cousin of hers who had lived in Freiburg came to the United States in 1946. Lotte Baum felt her life made a change for the worse at the height of her youth when she was 18 in 1933.