

-TITLE-FELICIA HABERFELD
-I_DATE-MAY 19, 1984
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-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
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-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

- 1:00 Felicia Haberfeld, born, raised, and educated in Kraków. Large family, good childhood, private high school.
- 2:00 Earliest recollection - grandmother - her house, she spoiled her. Left a lasting impression.
- 3:00 Attended University of Kraków - to earn her MS in philosophy. As little girl, had beautiful childhood.
- 4:00 Her uncle was the secretary of an important Zionist organization - she grew up among educated men.
- 4:30 She was inspired by her uncle - he also founded the Polish-Jewish newspaper in Kraków.
- 5:00 She joined her first Zionist organization at 12. At the University of Kraków she joined Jewish Students Organization. It had demonstrations against anti- Semitism.
- 6:00 Because of anti-Semitism the philosophy department was closed so she went to the University of Vienna for 1 year to finish up her NS.
- 6:30 The first thing she saw when she got there was the anti-Semitic insignia of the Viennese students.
- 7:00 Went back to Kraków to finish her thesis and defend it. Met her future husband there.
- 7:30 She was never personally touched by anti-Semitism before she got to the University - she had only read about it.
- 8:00 1933 - got in scuffle with anti-Semitic students and they tore her jacket with a stick.
- 9:00 There were quotas for Jews in the universities and in the medical schools. Her whole family was Zionist oriented.

- 10:00 A friend of hers was a leader of a Zionist organization in Israel and she thought of going there but her parents would not allow it.
- 11:00 She had one brother 10 years younger than herself. They both had a protected childhood.
- 11:30 Her maternal grandfather was one of the oldest merchants in Kraków. He organized the Federation of Jewish Merchants in Kraków.
- 12:00 Her paternal grandfather was a landowner - that side of the family was 'of the earth'.
- 12:30 Her grandmothers brother was a chief rabbi - Dr. Max Engle.
- 13:00 She had a very affluent childhood and lifestyle.
- 13:30 She was mostly aware of anti-Semitism through reading and newspapers in her childhood.
- 14:00 As a child she saw anti-semitic people hurt Jewish market people.
- 14:30 The press and what she saw happening around her made her work harder at Zionism.
- 15:00 Hitler came to Germany when she was a grown woman.
- 15:30 She remembers people saying that Hitler was dangerous - she said he was crazy.
- 16:00 1934 - Polish Jews living in Germany got thrown back over to Poland. She helped to organize help for them.
- 16:30 After she married, she lived in Auschwitz with her husband. It was the first time she had seen Jewish poverty up close.
- 17:00 Her husband was the president of the Jewish community in Auschwitz. She helped the women of the community aid the poor Jews living in Auschwitz.
- 18:00 The majority of Auschwitz's population was Jewish. Her husbands family had been there since the 18 century.
- 19:00 Her husbands family was very active in the Jewish affairs and community of Auschwitz.
- 20:00 Lived in Auschwitz 1936-1939. Didn't feel anti-Semitism but heard it. There was no special place to attack the Jews there.

- 20:30 Her husband was decorated with the Silver Cross of Merit by the government for his social work in the community.
- 21:00 They heard about Nazism in Germany but thought it would be contained where it was.
- 21:30 They never thought that it would get to everyone. She and her husband decided to go to the World's Fair in the U.S.
- 22:00 They left in July 1939 and never got back again.
- 23:00 Her husband exhibited goods at the World's Fair. They left for Poland on their ship, and the war had not yet broken out.
- 24:00 She didn't want to go yet - her husband insisted.
- 25:00 48 hours before they were to reach Poland they were told that the ship was no longer going there - it had been taken over by the British military.
- 26:00 Their 'odyssey' started then. The ship was taken to Scotland by the British, then to Newcastle. The war had already started and they heard bombs falling from the ship.
- 27:00 They were not legally in Britain, and they had to stay on the ship for 6 weeks. No soap, food, money, news. The Kosher supervisors were allowed to get off the ship to get a newspaper.
- 28:00 They finally made a deal with the British authorities that got them off of the ship.
- 29:00 They were allowed to stay in Newcastle with families. Jews stayed with Jews, Christians with Christians.
- 30:00 At first the American government wouldn't let people in but finally a deal was worked out and whoever could go back to the U.S. did.
- 31:00 She and her husband had no money and no family in U.S., so they sold their personal belongings to buy tickets. Finally in December 1939 they made it to Ellis Island.
- 32:00 Ellis Island was a wonderful place if you didn't have anywhere to go. They had Kosher meals and it was spotless.
- 33:00 Met many people there - very interesting. She and husband had nowhere to go. They did know one of her husband's employee's relatives.

- 34:00 They contacted him - Willie Hoffman - and he came to Ellis Island. He got the president of an organization for Polish Jews to come and put bond up for them.
- 35:00 They went to live with the Hoffmans for a while. They stayed in the son's room.
- 36: 00 1940 - they still had contact with relatives in Kraków. She had a postcard from her father dated May 1940 .
- 37:00 She tried to get a job at the N.Y.C.Public Library but couldn't.
- 38: 00 Her husband went to Baltimore to look for work and she eventually joined him there.
- 39: 00 Her husband was a chemist and had been an international merchant. He found a job in a distillery in Baltimore.
- 40: 00 Her husband had several jobs . One of them was at the Overbrook Company.
- 41:00 They decided to have a child. They were sending packages to Poland at this time to their relatives.
- 42:00 When they couldn't send them from America anymore they started sending money to the head of the Jewish community in Lisbon and he sent their packages for them. After a while he told them to stop sending money because her parents weren't responding anymore. At this time she knew it was over.
- 42:30 The packages stopped in 1942.
- 43:00 The letters they had been getting let them know what was going on in Europe, but there was nothing that; they could do.
- 44:00 The SS decided to make their Kraków headquarters in her parents home . They beat her father up, and then took her family to the Ghetto.
- 45:00 Her family stayed in the Kraków Ghetto until it was liquidated. She had left a child there with her parents.
- 46:00 Her child was a daughter. Her mother tried to hide her when the Germans came for them, but they heard her crying and found her. She was also taken to the Belzec extermination camp in 1942 .
- 47:00 Felicia found all this out from friends who had remained. She went to Poland in 1967 and 1976 and found out even more.

- 48:00 Her brother was killed 2 days before the liberation of Mauthausen.
- 48:30 The SS clubbed him to death. She found out from a former colleague at the University.
- 49:00 In 1976 - went with son Steve to London and Poland. Went to Warsaw, Kraków, Auschwitz.
- 50:00 In 1967 - went to Poland with husband to Kraków and Auschwitz to look for places they lived and it, was a disaster.
- 51:00 In 1976 she didn't want to go to Poland but her son wanted to see where he had come from and what had happened and how.
- 52:00 Her son visited Auschwitz and saw his grandfather's tombstone.
- 53:00 They visited their old home and factory.
- 54:00 Her husband had also been in the railroad business - his company built tracks.
- 55:00 The same tracks his company built were used by the Nazis to transport people to concentration camps. Ironic and tragic.
- 56:00 Her first time back to Kraków and Auschwitz both homes were in terrible condition. Auschwitz house had been headquarters for the Auschwitz SS.
- 57:00 The house had been chopped into apartments. Some of their furniture remained. Their old chauffeur lived there.
- 58:00 Felicia showed pictures of her little girl to camera.
- 2:01 When they found out what was really going on they were overcome by guilt because they couldn't do anything.
- 2:02 Met a Danish stewardess who told them she might be able to get their little girl out of Poland. She knew people who might be able to rescue her but it cost \$ 2,000.00.
- 2:03 They were to meet her in N.Y. to give her the money but they didn't have it.
- 2:04 They asked her husband's boss to loan them the money.
- 2:05 He wouldn't loan it to them, and their last chance was gone.

2:06 A woman called on them in Baltimore and invited them to dinner.

2:07 She told them that her husband couldn't work anymore because he was on a visitors visa.

2:08 This woman was president of the Council of Jewish Women. She said that the council would support them. Her husband refused. They had to go to Canada to get American visas.

2:09 All the answers they could give regarding husbands jobs were illegal because he wasn't supposed to be working.

2:10 Their lawyer told them to tell the truth, and they went to the Canadian consulate.

2:11 He questioned her husband.

2:12 It worked out well and they got the visas.

2:13 Their son knew about their experiences at the age of 7. 1939 Club was started by she and her husband.

2:14 They wanted their son to understand so they took him to Israel in 1961. He went with his father to the Eichmann trial. He was 16.

2:15 He heard a Jewish woman testify in Yiddish and he couldn't understand her words but her screams were enough to make him physically ill.

2:16 Steven didn't understand the language but he did understand the tragedy. He was impressed by how people came out of it.

2:17 He couldn't believe that people didn't all go insane.

2:18 When he became a father he understood more fully the war, tragedy, helplessness, losing a child.

2:19 Sometimes she can't believe that it really happened - it seems like it was outside of her.

2:20 What she went through affects how she lives today. She feels that Jews must have a country of their own to take a stand.

2:21 She has dedicated part of her life to the Holocaust. It must never happen again.

2:22 She works for the 1939 Club and they raise funds once a year for Israeli causes.

.END.