

-TITLE- ALICE HEMAR  
-I\_DATE- DECEMBER 4, 1983  
-SOURCE- UCLA HOLOCAUST DOCUMENTATION ARCHIVES  
-RESTRICTIONS-  
-SOUND\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT  
-IMAGE\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT  
-DURATION-  
-LANGUAGES-  
-KEY\_SEGMENT-  
-GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-  
-PERSONAL\_NAME-  
-CORPORATE\_NAME-  
-KEY\_WORDS-  
-NOTES-  
-CONTENTS-

4:01:13 She was born in Warsaw, Poland. Her maiden name is Kalvari. She had one sister. They had a close family circle; education was important. Very good family ties. They lived in Warsaw for two years before the war. Then they moved to Krakoff (sp) for family reasons.

4:02:26 The war began in 1939. One of the first bombs was in her city. They went east to avoid the Germans. It was like a blitzkrieg (sp). They then headed to Warsaw to join the rest of her family.

4:03:04 In the winter of 1939 the Germans were constantly visiting, either soldiers or the Gestapo, looking for jewelry, money, etc. They wanted all of their stuff, and they took it.

4:04:27 This moved people and created panic.

4:04:45 In the beginning of the 1940's, they created the ghetto, in a very small area. They had to move within 48 hours. It was not easy; there was constant chaos and panic. The Germans brought more Jews to the smaller towns. It was very crowded.

4:06:28 They built a permanent wall with two gates around the ghetto. Some people smuggled food and supplies for them.

4:07:40 She got married in 1939 in Warsaw. Her dad died of typhoid fever in the ghetto. Her mom was taken during one of

the blockades. She said that when things like this happen you develop courage because you must take the initiative. They tried to contact Polish people to prepare papers for them (polish birth certificates of other Poles).

4:09:50 By the end of 1942, they escaped into Warsaw as Poles. By the end of the war (in 1945) they had moved into a small suburb of Warsaw. They were essentially liberated but the battle continued right in front of them.

4:10:30 They lived 10 miles from the ghetto. They heard of all the uprisings but they couldn't show any emotions to their neighbors. She had no friends in the ghetto because they had been in a very small area. She has trouble remembering.

4:15:00 Once in the ghetto, she was picked in a selection. She tried to run but they caught her. She was taken to the Umschlagplatz (sp), where the transports were, far away from any witnesses. The trains were for cattle, very crowded with screaming people.

4:18:00 Relatives helped her jump from the moving train. It was dark. She made it back to the ghetto.

4:20:10 Her husband became hysterical when he saw her. He called friends in an underground organization that were willing to help; buy them Polish birth certificates and find them a place to live.

4:22:00 She felt very uncomfortable living with Poles, they were their enemies.

4:24:00 In the ghetto, since people smuggled, there were some coffee shops opened at night for people who had some money. The worst thing she remembers once was a man throwing up and four little kids fought to eat it. It was a terrible feeling. She thought she, nor the children, were human. She can't really express this subhuman condition.

4:27:03 The ghetto was crowded and dirty. Many got typhoid fever. There was one hospital. Her dad died then.

4:29:30 They had a 7:00 curfew. Children would be in the

courtyards with rags around them in the middle of the winter. A man ran through the streets yelling 'Robengla' (sp) which means everyone is equal. Many people went insane and the others could all understand why.

4:31:00 When they came to the U.S. with two children they had to constantly tell them that everyone was their friends. It was a big shock when they saw the Holocaust on T.V. Why didn't you fight? They asked. This made the parents very embarrassed.

4:34:00 Her oldest son was born in July of 1944. 4 1/2 years later, her second son was born in Germany, when they were waiting for U.S. papers. After the liberation, they went to Katohista (sp) where her husband's father was very important. Abrahemar was his original name.

4:37:15 They then went to a small Jewish community in Germany. They thought of going to Israel but it would have been too complicated.

4:39:00 After the Holocaust there was much confusion. They changed their name (took the last part). The US was overwhelming, they were so grateful to be accepted. It was a good place for the kids.

4:41:00 But, she returns to stories of the ghetto. When cars were transporting people to prison (outside their window), people were always being shot. There wasn't a day without 10 to 12 victims killed.

4:43:50 They had a small burning place where they cooked. Her husband made some money selling food. He also worked for a group that prepared tracks for the air force.

4:46:20 Every morning at 5:00 a.m. they congregated and were put in order to be counted. They sometimes were taken through Warsaw to clean toilets and other odd jobs. They would see 'normal' women talking and laughing and buying flowers. It was very hard.

4:49:00 Another time, in the dark, a blockade of their block was taken straight to the trains. Her husband insisted that he be taken rather than his wife. The guard hit him with his gun and said "go to hell". He was so close to death.

4:51:00 She is so grateful to have the chance to tell her experiences. She shows her Polish document; an original birth certificate of another woman. She had a Kencarte (sp), a legal document that was most precious. One had to show if anyone ever stopped you.

4:53:50 She has mixed feeling about being 'Mrs. Chebinska' (sp). She was told to never be surprised of anything. To question or be suspicious was dangerous.

4:56:20 When they were in a group, they felt more comfortable. They didn't have to always control themselves. The people in the ghetto became their family. It was a very difficult mentality.

4:58:00 She can't say much about herself because the ghetto says it all. The streets are undescrivable; people fainted and nobody acted surprised. Once she saw her cousin begging for bread. It was a way of life.

5:00:00 She is again grateful for the opportunity to tell someone.

.END.