

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Margaret Jastrow Klug  
March 13, 1990  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Margaret Jastrow Klug, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on March 13, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

**MARGARET JASTROW KLUG**  
**March 13, 1990**

Q: Good afternoon. Would you please tell me your name, your date of birth and your place of birth?

A: My name is (cough) my name is Margaret Klug, born Jastrow. Born June 8, 1923 in Rogazin, Province Posen. \_\_\_\_\_ little girl, very little, mine...mine parents adopted Germany for their homeland. And so this why we are in Germany.

Q: Can you tell me your parents names?

A: My father's name is...Father's name was Willy Jastrow, and my mother's name is Urika Jastrow.

Q: What did your father do?

A: My father, my father got a butcherie \_\_\_\_\_ in Germany. My mother doesn't work.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit about your childhood memories before the war?

A: I was a very happy child. I was the youngest from...from ten children and everybody was fine. Everybody was alive until Hitler came.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit about your schooling, your hobbies?

A: Well, I went to school. I went eight grade to Folich (ph) School, to the \_\_\_\_\_ School, and then I went three years for the uh to the uh this high school. What else?

Q: Could you tell me a little bit about your hobbies, your interest in \_\_\_\_\_ and things you did when you were a little girl?

A: Well, when I was a little girl, I was a tomboy. I liked everything. I was very spoiled from ten, you know, all grown-up brothers and sisters; and I was very spoiled.

Q: Any sports in school?

A: Yes. \_\_\_\_\_. I like, I was in uh in uh I I I was running (ph) running (ph) and I was in a club, in a club like uh like Maccabe. I don't know what, yeah, and I did a lot. I did a lot.

Q: Did you go to a community (ph) school or a \_\_\_\_\_?

A: Nein. Nein. No, it was good. It was...my parent's wasn't really religious.

Q: Could you tell me the names of first \_\_\_\_\_ brothers and what you remember of what happened to each one of them?

A: Well, my oldest brother, his name is Alfred Jastrow. He got married in Berlin; and uh 19...1939, he went to Scotland. Because the Hitlerjugend, uh really he got this, he...he got scared in...in Berlin, he did. So he went to Scotland and lived, learned already... He was like a manager in in in uh big uh company and he could go to Scotland with this occupation, so he learned uh uh (pause) ....

Q: That's...that's OK. That's alright.

A: So he...he went to Scotland; and after Scotland, after '45, he came back, he entered the United States from Scotland. And I got ...

Q: Maybe it might be easier for your approach to what happened to your family after Hitler came into power. You know, if you just talk about your family as...

A: Well, I just can talk about one brother. Everybody else was gone and living. And I got one brother, Max Jastrow. He was the first one what the Gestapo called him to come over to...just to come over. And he came over. He didn't come back. So (cough) we didn't know what happened. However, you couldn't talk to nobody. My mother did everything, everything to...to know what happened to him. So after six months, they called...they sent my mother a letter to send some money. He went to Sachsenhausen and he died. So my mother said...asked them what he died from. He said, "Well, he did have an infection." If she want the ashes, she have to send five hundred mark; and then she can get the ashes. So I don't know what ashes we got; over my mother sent the five hundred mark, and got the ashes from somebody, at least. So we buried him on the gra...grave of my father. The other...other brothers, and my youngest brother with his wife--he picked up his wife and then he begged them him to send \_\_\_\_\_ where they send her. So they did. I don't know where he went. When I was in jail, I saw a scarf in the...in the win...on the window. I saw her name. When the the warden came, I said, "You know, I saw the name here...Eleanor Jastrow. What happened...what happened with...?" So, she..., "Well, she was here, and we sent her off with her husband." That's all they told me. So the other brothers and sisters, I have no idea where they went or what happened to them. My one sister, Grete Mikelatz (ph) by her name--she was married already. They called me into her apart...in their apartment; so they sent her off right away. I don't know where.

Q: Can you tell me about what happened when you went to jail?

A: Alright. When I...I went uh to uh (pause)...when I went to jail, I don't know why they.... First of all, they picked me up from my sister's house; because somebody got my address. And they came over there in the nighttime, and knocked on the door. And my sister said, "Who is it?" They say, "Open the door! This is police." So when they opened the door, they came in and asked my name; and they said, "We look for you." So then I got dressed, and they took

me to the police station. When I came to the police station, they asked me if I know someone name from people what live illegal. So I say, "Yes, I do. But I don't think so that I will tell you one, because you got me and this is enough." So they say, "Are you stupid? You know somebody got you in here as..." And I didn't know it. I didn't know. So she...I said, "Well, who did?" So they showed the the the handwriting from this girl; and they said, "Did you know her?" I said, "Yeah, I know her." And they told me the whole story; how she got...how they got my name. And I said, "Well, this is OK." So then from there, from this--this were a police station, not far away from my sister's house--they brought me and brought me to the big police, where the jail is. They put me over there in the jail. I don't know why. And they left me over there. I think, months and months I was sitting in that jail house. I don't why. But I was sitting there. So then one time, this... the warden comed and said, "Just come with us." So I went with him and they brought me over there to the Jewish lag...camp in... in Berlin for the... So I said, uh, "What did you do with me?" He say, "We're..." He didn't say, "I send you to Auschwitz." He say, "I...we are send you to Poland." I say, "OK." So I went in there. And then I said--I was together with two girls. They want all Jewish people what after a while going on the transport to Auschwitz. So my transport took out the next day. And I said, "Not me. I'm not going out of here." So I...I got out. My mind was made up. I didn't want to go. So the two girls went up in the morning. I said to them, "Did you went already to along that you washed yourself?" "No." I said, "Go ahead, go ahead. I went already." So I was by myself in the room, and this were the second floor; and uh the...the...uh I saw the...the police going down on the bottom. Up and down looking, you know, up and somebody ran away. I \_\_\_\_ they were, so I was uh looking and I saw him going in...in the house. Next, somebody comes out and...and changed. I just saw him going in this house. I opened the window and I jumped out. I jumped out--it's the second floor. I don't want to die. I just thought I could ran away. And uh I broke my arm and I broke my hip, and I couldn't walk anymore. I thought, "Well, I hope they take me..." Across the street was a hospital. I thought, I hoped they take my...in into the hospital. They didn't. From outside, from inside came somebody else, and brought me in; and in that camp, and their own SS man was over there. He took me in. He said, "Did you...did ...did you want us to send somebody just jumped the window? Did you want me to send her off transport?" So the man said, "No. If it is, if you have to bring her to the hospital." So I got... I got lucky. So they brought me to--this was in Berlin, it was a Jewish hospital. However, it was a police station. You know, the hospital was with police. So I was laying there over there for nine months, because a hip you can put in a cast. You know, you have to lay straight. So...and so uh I was laying there nine months. After nine months, the SS came; and they thought that they want 39 people what they took, they assorted in for camp. They brought me back in this...in this uh Jewish camp; and they said, "Don't give her this room again. She jumped from the window one time. Give her a room with the uh...with uh..."

Q: Bars?

A: Yes. So...so I got this; and the next day I went on transport. I went to Auschwitz. From 39 people that came to Auschwitz, the Auschwitz I came in the you know the wagon, and uh you know where you...where you carry the animals. And the...was packed full with...with

people, and I came to Auschwitz...

Q: Can you describe the actual trip a little bit? Can you talk about what it was like being in one of those cars?

A: Well, I will tell you, people got...people...people got smashed in the...in the...in the...in these wagons. And uh to let...to let wasn't air. And the SS, some was sitting in there, and they were on the door; and everybody was standing up. Nobody was sitting. And this was a transport, I don't know, maybe from ...maybe two days, I don't really remember. It was like sardines packed, this...this...this wagon. And one station in front, before Auschwitz, somebody...the door was opened, and some a girl touched my hand and she wanted to take me out. She was...she was running away, and wanted to take me out; and I was scared and I left her. I let her go, and she ran away. And I was again in this...in this uh...and I came to Auschwitz. When we came in Auschwitz, he was counting. He said, "If this girl...if this..." They got the name on the...on the list. "If she didn't show up, you get killed. All of you here." Well, nobody said something; nobody said her name or nothing. And a few days later, I... somebody told me that she fell, ended up in Berlin. And well, I came to Auschwitz; and in Auschwitz, when the 39 people, they got...they choosed three girls, and I was one of them three girls. I don't know why. I was plain lucky, I guess. And uh we came and...inside, we came...we came inside; and uh the...in the shower. First we came in the shower. Then they cut our hair, and then they they gave us clothes to wear. Before when we were...when they said, "You, come." You have to bring clothes. So we didn't have any; so this what I got, what I wore. So then they gave us clothes. I always was a little...I was never skinny; and you know what they gave me to wear. I got a dress... uh, a knitted dress she gave me. No bra. No underwear. Just this dress I got on, and the coat--a coat I think a twelve year old girl could wear. And a pair of shoes--size 15, I guess. Wooden shoes. Wooden shoes. And they took us in in the block. It was standing uh bucket full of water. And I couldn't walk in these shoes. And I fell in in that bucket water. That were the first thing when I got...when somebody came over me and they hit me. She hit me there good, because I...I...I did water fall on the floor. So then I came in the barrack, and uh it was uh some ...uh in this barrack was uh full of people where we slept. You know, it was like the sardine. One person got this way, one person got this way. And a few \_\_\_\_\_ but you got on your shoes you have to take under your head, because in the nighttime some will \_\_\_\_\_ came in and stole this from under your head and then ...and then the next day they came and sold it to you for your bread when you get some bread. Well, I was together with a lot of people from Holland. And they died. They died so fast; because they wasn't used to this, all this. When we was drink, when we got this soup, we got one bowl; and we were sitting all of this...of this place and we everybody was drinking from this one bowl. It wasn't like water. It was more like...like jelly, so this soup; because they cooked it with soda. They put soda in and that got so jelly, jelly. It was terrible. Everybody got on with his mouth. Nobody got enough, and nobody did. Well, if you didn't get your shoes in the morning, you have to stand for "appell" barefoot. And five o'clock, you have to get up. It was "appell;" and then you have to stay until you went out, until you went of the of the uh to work. And I went to work one time, the the Wehrmacht...the Wehrmacht was standing and...and watched us all. There were two soldiers with dogs runned after...after

every...after every uh group what marched, marched out. So the two soldiers, one soldier got a bull dog and he put some glasses on. And the girl told me this, and I looked; and I thought this is funny. So when I came to the to the uh front, this Irma Grese was standing there, and she hit me. I lost three teeth. That's how she hit me. She was maybe not even five foot tall. She was maybe four-eight, whatever; and that dog was almost as tall like she was. She was mean. And Mengele was standing there. Dr. Mengele; and watched us marching out, and we have to sing. We have to sing happy songs when we are marched through this door, through the door. And uh when I...I...I worked in uh in uh potato...uh in the fields, I worked with potatoes. Where I worked, and uh...and uh...and uh like a truck it is; and it is a six wheeler, and on every wheel was a girl. And this was February, and this were a mess. In Poland, it was this mud and uh and uh we all have to take out the...the wheels to...to wheel this to the...to the fields. It was in there from the...you know, junk and dirt and everything; from the hospitals and from the... It was very heavy, you know. When I went...we never should tell them that we are sick; because when you're sick, you're dead. You are...then, when they cut our hair, the three girls were \_\_\_\_ (ph) in this...in this camp inside. You know, one got a long face, one got a round face--we were standing and to each other and we were laughing like crazy. You know, how you look, you know. And uh when I came home at night, I was sitting in front of my bed and I saw...I saw the...the six \_\_\_\_ (ph) oven working from the morning 'til the night. This went twenty-four hours a day. The skies run red, and I was sitting there. I was I was really thinking of nothing. I was closed out my whole thinking. \_\_\_\_ that one thing: "If I can, I will not. I will not. I have to get out of here." From there, I never will get out; because nobody came out of there alive. And uh one, after two or two, after three years I \_\_\_\_ I got into friends of mine; and I said to them, "Well, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go and stop this SS man on the...on the street. I heard this...he sent some people to Germany to work. And...and from German, they...they bring in...the German bring into Poland." And I say I used to; and this girl said, "Don't do this. They going to kill you. They going to kill you." I say, "Well, what is the difference? I'm here so long. If I am...get killed today, it's OK. I'm dead anyway." So I went on the...on this street. You know, Auschwitz is a big...uh big...uh uh complex. It's a whole city, you know. And the SS was going around them with...them with the motorcycles. And so...so I stopped him. I stopped this SS man. I say, "You know, I heard that you..." In German. I'm better in German than in English, you know. I said, "I heard that you send German girls to...to uh ...that you send some people to Berlin. Can you...do you send them to Europe and to work. And I'm a German, and I speak German." And I said, "I worked already in...in a company like this." So he say, "OK. Come on." I said, "Can I bring my two friends?" He said, "Yes." And the next...he ordered me the next day to come in his barrack. I came in his barrack; and there was a table what the doctors have, where... Everybody was scared. So I was by my...I said, "I'm going first." So I come over there. I said...he said, "I take some blood." I said, "Blood? Why did you take blood?" He say he took blood from me. I say, "Why did you take blood?" He said, "Well, you do a good deed." I say, "Why?" He said, "This is for German soldiers." I say, "German...Ger...soldiers? I am Jewish," I said. So he preaches the...the...the blood is no good, and the Jews are no good. He take this blood for you do a good, you do a good deed. And so he took from them three girls; and then he...I went \_\_\_\_ (ph) the the later when we...I don't know. Then he took us in another block. In the dark, this maybe uh maybe he

were going to gas us or whatever. And when he took us, they sent us to Czechoslovakia. When they sent us to Czechoslovakia, we came over there, and held on for...I think it was on \_\_\_\_\_ and this was on the bottom \_\_\_\_\_ and the top was where all they have to eat, all the people were sleeping there. And as so we this was like uh like a vacation. I got a step, you know, towards the one day I saw...I looked outside. And this where the SS was watching them. One day I see...look outside; and I say, "Golly, the people running around over there. What happened?" So I said to him, "Why do they people running around there? Why are the doors open?" He said, "Well, you want to go? You can go, too." I said, "Yeah, I want to go." And I went. This was the first \_\_\_\_\_; yeah, the first of May in 1945. So this were mine...this were when I...I got freed until Russian came there.

Q: Can you go back a little and tell me how you go to the ...Auschwitz ?

Q: Can you tell uh a little bit about the work that you did there in the factory?

A: Yeah. The...I don't know what did. I don't know anymore. Oh, I think they...yeah, did...did, you know, the the telephone but you but you uh got in the...in the combat. Yeah, what they handle. This what we did over there.

Q: OK. Can we go a little bit from the liberation? How, from when you left the factory, how you got back to Berlin?

A: Well, I walked back to Berlin with my...with two of my feet. I went; and if somebody, the Russian came with the trucks and wanted to take me, I say, "Not me. I'm walking. I'm walking." I didn't trust nobody anymore. And so I walked. I don't know how long it took me. And in nighttime, I was sleeping in uh...in by...by uh people I went, and uh not in the house. And uh well, you know, where the food for the the and \_\_\_\_\_(ph) and everything. And this...this how I, this how I slept. And at five o'clock, I went up and walked, walked, walked to Berlin. I didn't want to wait. I didn't want to wait. There were trains didn't go then. All the...all this was walking you know. Uh, so I didn't want to wait 'til...til the trains uh got fixed, or what. And I didn't have no other place to go.

Q: Did the Russians, did anyone stop you or ask...

A: Yes.

Q: ...where you were going, what you were doing?

A: Yes. Well, I told them. I showed them where I had a number. You see, I showed them. Got my number, and uh so uh they said \_\_\_\_\_, and for me to come up and uh they would take me. I said, "No, I'm not going."

Q: What what did you find when you got back to Berlin?



A: Well, I just found my brother. I just finally looked for my brother. And he was married with a non-Jewish girl; and I found him. Everything else was...I didn't look for nothing else to find there. I knew that I didn't have no relatives in there, because I don't think that...that my relatives would go back to Berlin.

Q: When you found your brother and your sister-in-law, what...how did they survive in Berlin?

A: Well, my sister-in-law was a dressmaker; and she survived... Well, like I told, my sister-in-law went...uh wore a Jewish star; and she just could go shopping uh for groceries from four to five like all the Jewish people. My brother could just work uh uh uh jobs not in his field; uh but, you know, in in uh uh - I don't know how you say it - uh where the \_\_\_\_\_ jobs whatever it gives, what they gave him, the all or nothing. So my sister-in-law, she uh uh did all the...all the...did all the... make the living.

Q: Your sister-in-law, she was not Jewish?

A: She was not Jew. I remember they was was already married before Hitler.

Q: And your brother stayed in Berlin through the war?

A: Through the war, yes. Yes.

Q: OK. Can you tell me what you were able to find out from your brother about your other brothers and sisters?

A: Well, my brother said he...he...he wrote to the Red Cross and everything, and he looked up and there's nobody. Nobody lives anymore. Just he got uh uh my brother from Shanghai, and they everybody wrote already to him. And this brother in Scotland. And he didn't know then, he didn't know that I was alive.

Q: So there was just three....

A: I am the only one from the concentration camp that came home from my whole family. I got twenty-four people that I lost.

Q: After you went back to Berlin, uh how did you uh come to uh emigrate to Israel?

A: Well, we lived in the Russian section; and my husband had a sister what she lived this time in Israel. And she didn't stay a long time. When you couldn't emigrate no where from East Germany. So I told...my husband speaks Russian; and I said to him, "Go. Maybe we get a visa to go to Israel." So I came to... so he went, and we really did get a visa. We went to Israel, and my daughter was born in Berlin. She was a year old. In 1949, we went to Israel.

Q: What was it like when you got to Israel?

A: I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand the climate. And uh people didn't like me either. People didn't treat me as a Jew. I was a German.

Q: Why did you leave Israel?

A: Because I was sick. I couldn't stand it. I got...I got uh climate...I can't stand this climate.

Q: And then you went back to Germany?

A: I went back to Germany and to Nuremburg. We went there in a camp. Well, no. I went back to Switzerland. I went back to Switzerland. From Switzerland, I went illegal over the border with my daughter. I went to Nuremburg. And in Nuremburg, they put me in a...in a camp. So I said (cough), excuse me, I said... they said, "You're not a German." I say, "Well, I am not a German. I were, I...I did have this... Before I came in concentration camp, I was a German." So they said, "You married a man what doesn't have no...no..." Uh, he was without a...without...

Q: Citizenship.

A: ...a country, yeah. "And this, and you married him and you're the same." So I went in this camp with him for a year. Then mine husband got a cousin here in United States, and he made us the paper to come over here. That's why I came. We came over here in 1955.

Q: So you...how long were you in a camp in uh Nuremburg?

A: A year. A year.

Q: A year in Nuremburg. And how long did you remain, stay in Israel when you went there?

A: Four years.

Q: Four years. (Pause) After you came to the United States, uh where did you settle and what did you do?

A: Atlanta. First we settled in Atlanta. My husband was working, and my husband was a week here. My husband was here two days, he started working. And I worked. My daughter couldn't speak English. My husband spoke a little English, because my husband was working in Nuremburg in an army camp. So he spoke English; and I...I... You know, I learned English in school; but if you don't talk, you forget, you know. You have to come into it again. So I...they were very nice people where my daughter went to school. The principal gave her a girl from the eighth grade, and uh she was sitting with her one hour after school; and she taught her German and she taught her English. And this is my daughter now in Miami.

Q: What kind of work did your husband do?

A: Well, where? Here?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, my husband was everything. My husband were...my husband take one time he never give him back. My husband is a workaholic. My husband worked in...in...in here, in uh...he make tables. He never did this before. Kitchen, kitchenettes he did. It was one company, a Jewish company, took in all the Jewish people what just came in Atlanta. And I was in a...in a brassiere factory. I was working piece work. My husband made \$38 and I made \$44; and when the Friday came and we got our first check, we jumped. We danced in the house, both of us. And then (cough) after...after we're...we're stayed one and a half year in in uh Atlanta, so mine my brother that's from...from Scotland, he lived in New Jersey. So I went to New,...went to New Jersey to visit; and somebody saw my husband over there, and they gave him as a welder. He went to get the welder's job; and when five o'clock when he came home, he went to other job \_\_\_\_\_. So we worked over there. Then my...this were one and a half year. Then my husband, when...yeah, my cousin from Atlanta called to my husband. Said, "Come over here, come over here." Says, "Come over here to see our business." So we went over...we went over there to visit Atlanta, and he didn't came back anymore. We are packed and we went back to Atlanta; and my husband bought a business, owned a property. And as for my money what I saved, when I came to the United States I got in New York. They gave me \$10. With \$10, I went to to Atlanta; and thank God, we bought-- now eighteen years ago--my husband got a deli...delicatessen. Eighteen years we have a delicatessen in Atlanta. We just sold it, because my husband had open-heart surgery and a stroke and he still work in the same deli.

Q: Thank you very much, Mrs. Klug.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION