

## **RG-50.054.0011**

### **Summary**

Edith (née Herz) Pagelson was born in Worms, Germany; she also was named Lucas from a first marriage. She was in a family of four. Her family ran a wholesale and retail hardware business and were religious. She experienced little anti-Semitism until Hitler came to power, but then lost her gentile friends and was expelled from public school in 1934. Her father had earned an Iron Cross in WWI and felt that nothing would be done to them, but then began to explore emigration options in the U.S. She describes her childhood school experience.

Edith expressed vivid memories of the personal destruction and persecution of Kristallnacht in 1938, during which the SA seized her father, ultimately sending him to Buchenwald for 4-6 weeks. Her mother sent her younger sister, who was having a break down, to live with two aunts in Frankfurt, before she was sent to England via a Kindertransport. They moved to Duisburg in 1939 to stay with friends whose residence had been less damaged. Edith was able to resume school, graduating at 14. She commuted to school in Cologne every day, enjoying her studies. Her father worked as forced labor in a burlap factory. She praises Rabbi Neumark of Duisburg.

As part of all remaining Jews in Duisburg, including Rabbi Neumark, her family was deported July 26, 1942 to Theresienstadt. Edith worked in an office for a youth group. Her mother was active in helping others. Her father fell ill with a bladder condition and died in October; Rabbi Neumark presided over the funeral. She described the camp conditions. In 1944, she and her mother were sent to Birkenau and diverted to the family camp. Edith persuaded Mengele to keep her with her mother after they were marched to Auschwitz. Both of them survived a trip to the gas chamber as it wasn't working that day.

At the end of August 1944, they were transferred to Danzig and then by boat to a camp at Stutthof. She reunited with the man who would become her first husband, who had been originally transferred to Riga. Conditions were brutal. She was on a work crew digging tank traps. They were marched off but abandoned then the SS fled overnight in the face of advancing Russians, who liberated them.

She eventually went to the United States in 1947. Before that they had stopped in Berlin and Worms on their way to Duisburg. She lost her first husband in an accident and subsequently remarried.