

HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

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| Name of Interviewee | ILEEN GREEN | | |
| Name of Interviewer | Peggy Nathan | Date | 11/8/84 |
| Name of Abstractor | Peggy Nathan/Michelle Heyer, editor | Date | 1/28/87 |

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Ileen Koslov Green was born Chaia Koslovsky on Sept. 23, 1926 in Holszczaly, Poland. She was the middle child of three daughters in an orthodox Jewish family. Her father owned a dry goods store and the family lived in 13 rooms located behind the store. In addition to Ileen, her parents and her sisters, Ileen's grandmother, aunt and cousin lived in the home.

In 1938, her father left Poland to live with his brother in Cleveland. The rest of the family was to follow later, but the war broke out before their papers were processed.

During the Russian occupation in 1941, the family's store was closed, as were all Jewish businesses. They survived by trading merchandise for food with local farmers.

Immediately after the Nazis arrived in 1941, Ileen and her mother and sisters were sent to a ghetto. Gentile friends supplied Jews in the ghetto with food. Ileen's sister was sent to a labor camp in Lithuania, and in 1941 Ileen was sent there as well. Her mother and her other sister arrived at the camp the next year.

Ileen was later sent to Dunjeje in Estonia, and then to Kaiserwald in Lithuania. From there she went to Stutthof, near Danzig, and finally, to Dresden, where she inspected bullets in an ammunition factory.

After the factory was bombed in March 1945, Ileen and the other prisoners were forced to march to Prague. In May they were liberated by French and Russian soldiers.

Ileen returned to her home, however only ten Jewish families remained there. She went to the Fahrenwart displaced persons camp and a Jewish organization helped her contact her father in the U.S. In 1948 she was granted permission to emigrate.

Ileen currently lives in South Euclid, Ohio. She has a son and a daughter and five grandchildren.

ABSTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

Born Chaia Koslovsky in Holsczaly, Poland, near Vilna. Born in 1926. Now lives in South Euclid, Ohio. Has a daughter and a son.

EARLY LIFE/FAMILY BACKGROUND

Family had dry-goods store. Ileen was middle child, one older sister, one younger sister. Grandmother and father's sister and her son lived with them. House was in back of store.

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN HOLSCZALY

Town not split along religious lines. Family had gentile and Jewish friends and neighbors. Family was orthodox. Two synagogues in town. Some people went to Israel, but Ileen doesn't recall a Zionist movement.

ILEEN'S FAMILY SPEAKS YIDDISH AND POLISH

AT THIS POINT ILEEN SHOWS A PHOTOGRAPH OF HERSELF AND FAMILY TAKEN DURING HER CHILDHOOD

HAS MANY RELATIVES IN HOLSCZALY

ILEEN GOES TO PRIVATE HEBREW SCHOOL

Had mostly Jewish friends.

FIRST MEMORIES OF ANTI-SEMITISM

1936/37 some people stopped patronizing Jewish businesses. Also recalls that when she was younger a Jewish house was torn down because it was too close to a church.

FIRST NOTICES WAR IN 1939

People were drafted. Cousin's husband drafted, never came back.

FATHER EMIGRATES TO AMERICA

His brother had gone in 1914. Visited Poland, convinced Ileen's father to come to America to start a better life. Closed store. Planned to bring rest of family later.

THEY HAVE PAPERS TO LEAVE IN 1939 BUT WAR BREAKS OUT

Told they could leave from Lithuania, but couldn't afford it.

AFTER 1939 THEY DON'T HEAR FROM FATHER ANYMORE

Mother very upset - has psychosomatic rashes.

RUSSIANS OCCUPY HOLSCZALY, 1939

Life not bad for Jews. Sister went to work making starch from potatoes.

GERMANS TAKE OVER, 1941

They appeared one morning. Family is asked if they are Jewish.

CONDITIONS UNDER RUSSIAN AND GERMAN OCCUPATION

Russians had closed Jewish businesses. Gentiles often helped Jews. Traded dry goods for food.

RABBIS AND SOME JEWISH MEN ARE DEPORTED

A few escaped. Others were killed.

JEWS IN HOLSCZALY ARE GHETTOIZED

Ghetto built around synagogue. Lived three families per house. Ileen's family lived with two childless couples.

GERMANS DEMAND SUPPLIES FROM GHETTO

Occasionally came in, demanded soap, other essential items. Judenrat organized collection from those who could give it.

150 PEOPLE, INCLUDING OLDER SISTER, ARE TAKEN TO WORK IN LITHUANIA

SIX MONTHS LATER ILEEN IS ONE OF 50 YOUNG GIRLS TAKEN TO WORK CAMP. SISTER IS ALSO THERE

Ileen worked building streets. Lived in ghetto around a synagogue. Fed from community kitchen. Worked six days a week.

MANY GET TYPHUS, INCLUDING SISTER

Had Jewish doctor, but no medicine.

GUARDS ARE GERMAN CIVILIANS

Were fairly kind. Didn't force sick people to work.
Allowed workers to come inside to warm up in winter.

THEY ARE ABLE TO EXCHANGE LETTERS WITH MOTHER

MOTHER AND YOUNGER SISTER MOVE TO GHETTO IN LARGER TOWN

Stayed with her brother who lived there.

GHETTO IS LIQUIDATED. ALL PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN SENT TO WORK CAMPS

ILEEN SENT TO WORK CAMP. MOTHER AND SISTER ARRIVE IN 1942

Mother peeled potatoes in kitchen. Younger sister cleaned
barracks. Ileen was building a railroad.

FAMILY MOVED TO LABOR CAMP IN DUNJEJE, ESTONIA

MOVED TO KAISERWALD IN 1943

Upon arrival, all hair was cut off. Allowed to keep only
what they could carry. Taken to showers. Everyone afraid - knew
about gas chambers disguised as showers.

ILEEN RECALLS SELECTIONS IN OTHER CAMPS

They put things inside younger sister's clothes to make it
appear she had breasts - to make her look older.

TAKEN TO BARRACKS IN KAISERWALD

Didn't recognize each other without hair. Stayed one month.
Left barracks only to get food and for roll call.

GRANDMOTHER AND AUNTS KILLED

Had been killed earlier - shot, thrown in mass graves.

ILEEN, MOTHER AND SISTERS SENT TO STUTTHOF, NEAR GDANSK

First real concentration camp experience.

VIDEO 2 OF 3

ARRIVAL AT STUTTHOF

Met by SS. Told to form lines. Saw electric fence. Slept on wooden floor with no blankets. Met a cousin who had been in another camp. Saw uncle working in men's side of camp.

CONDITIONS AND LIFE AT STUTTHOF

Stayed in barracks all day. Given a spoon and bowl. Got coffee and bread in morning. Soup at 3 p.m. Water and toilets in barracks but not allowed to use them at night.

WHOLE FAMILY CHOSEN TO HARVEST VEGETABLES

Could steal food.

ILEEN BEATEN FOR STEALING FOOD

Lost a tooth.

ILEEN AND OLDER SISTER VOLUNTEER TO GO TO FARM TO WORK

Mother too weak to go. Younger sister wouldn't leave her.

CONDITIONS VERY GOOD ON FARM

Other workers - Polish and Italian - slept in house. Five Jewish girls slept in barn. Given good food, able to wash.

TAKEN BACK TO STUTTHOF THREE MONTHS LATER

Mother was very weak. Sister was all right.

ILEEN AND OLDER SISTER TAKEN TO DRESDEN TO WORK

Worked in ammunition factory. Very easy work.

MARCH 1945 FACTORY BOMBED, DESTROYED

PRISONERS ARE EVACUATED

50 remained behind to clean up. The remaining 150-200 began marching. Marched two to three weeks. Slept in barns, stole food. Many died, left where they fell.

LIBERATED BY FRENCH AND RUSSIANS IN PRAGUE MAY 5, 1945

Heard Russian being spoken outside one morning. Germans taken prisoner.

TAKEN TO A PRIEST'S HOUSE

Lived there with five other girls. Given Czech ration cards. Russians wanted the girls to go with them, but they wanted to go home. A Jewish Russian soldier found new clothes for them.

THEY TRAVEL HOME BY TRAIN

Trip took one week.

ARRIVAL IN HOLSCZALY

Ten Jewish families already there. Ileen and older sister went to the family's house, but a gentile family already living there. Jewish families took them in.

ILEEN LIVES WITH THREE JEWISH MEN IN HOLSCZALY

Kept house for them.

AFTER RUSSIANS TAKE OVER POLAND, ILEEN GOES TO DRESDEN

SHE AND SISTER GO TO MUNICH IN 1946

THEY HAVE AN UNCLE IN FAHRENWART DP CAMP. THEY GO THERE

Had been in contact with father. He sent food, clothing. Knew by this time that mother was dead.

YOUNGEST SISTER ALSO DEAD

She had been liberated from Stutthof and put on a refugee ship. It sank in Mediterranean and she drowned.

FATHER WORKING TO BRING THEM TO U.S. RABBI ROSENBERG FROM CLEVELAND VISITS WITH MONEY, SOAP AND FOOD

ILEEN ALLOWED TO GO TO U.S. IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE SHE IS UNDER 21 YEARS OLD. SISTER MUST WAIT FOR PAPERS

ILEEN STAYS IN FAHRENWART UNTIL 1948, MEETS FUTURE HUSBAND

VIDEO 3 OF 3

LIFE VERY GOOD IN FAHRENWART

EARLY IN 1948 ILEEN GETS PAPERS TO GO TO AMERICA

Sister must wait.

ILEEN LEAVES FOR AMERICA MARCH 29, 1948

Had boat ticket from father and \$20 spending money.

MET BY COUSINS IN NEW YORK

COMES TO CLEVELAND BY TRAIN

Arrived at wrong terminal, took cab to father's house.

ILEEN LIVES WITH AUNT AND UNCLE

Took her to beauty parlor, bought her new clothes.

SISTER ARRIVES IN 1949

ILEEN GOES TO NIGHT SCHOOL

BOYFRIEND ARRIVES IN 1949. THEY MARRY IN 1951

MOST DIFFICULT TIME DURING HER EXPERIENCE

Few months in concentration camp were worst. But never felt she wouldn't survive.

JOINS TAYLOR ROAD SYNAGOGUE AFTER ARRIVAL IN CLEVELAND

GOES TO NIGHT SCHOOL, WORKS IN A SHOP DURING THE DAY

ILEEN TALKS OFTEN OF HER EXPERIENCES

Father encouraged her to talk about it immediately, so she doesn't have difficulty with it now.

ILEEN OCCASIONALLY HAS NIGHTMARES

Dreams of her mother as she looked in the camp

SISTER MARRIES A MAN SHE MET ON THE BOAT TO AMERICA - 1951

ILEEN'S HUSBAND'S FAMILY ALL KILLED IN HOLOCAUST

FEELS SHE APPRECIATES LIFE MORE BECAUSE OF HER EXPERIENCES

DOESN'T THINK SURVIVORS ARE ANY DIFFERENT - "JEWS ARE JEWS"

HER SURVIVAL DUE LARGELY TO SISTER'S SUPPORT AND TO GOOD CONDITIONS ON FARM WHERE SHE WORKED

SHARES HER EXPERIENCES TO LET THE WORLD KNOW WHAT HAPPENED SO IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN