

HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

Name of Interviewee	MIMI ORMOND		
Name of Interviewer	Minda Jaffe	Date	1/30/85
Name of Abstractor	Michelle Heyer	Date	8/12/88

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY MISSING

ABSTRACT

VIDEO 1 OF 2

PRESENT LIFE

59 years old. Has been in U.S. since 1946. Has been in Cleveland for 25 years. Has just retired from Nursery School Education. Has one grandchild, three daughters. Is still active with children, helps in pre-school organizations. Skis, does sculpture.

MIMI IS FROM MARIENBAD, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

It was a spa town in Czech mountains. Main population was German.

GERMANS IN MARIENBAD ARE SYMPATHETIC TO FASCISM

After Kristallnacht in Germany, they attacked Jewish business in Marienbad.

MIMI TRANSFERS FROM GERMAN SCHOOL TO CZECH SCHOOL

The day after a German teacher saluted a Nazi leader in class, she changed to Czech school.

MIMI'S FAMILY FLEES MARIENBAD

The day after the Kristallnacht uprising, teachers sent children home from school early. Mimi's parents were already packed to leave. Tension was high - railroad station very crowded.

FAMILY SITUATION BEFORE WAR

Mimi had one older brother, away at college. Family had lived in Marienbad for many generations. Owned a fancy linen shop.

LIFE IN MARIENBAD

Town of 10,000 residents. Population tripled with summer tourists. Had many theaters, concerts.

JEWISH POPULATION OF MARIENBAD

1,000 Jewish residents. Orthodox. Jews lived in one section of town. International Jewish conferences met there.

THE FAMILY HOUSE

Lived in a large house owned by grandmother. Grandmother and her sister lived on first floor. Grandmother's brother had home and law office on second floor. Mimi's family occupied the third. Fourth floor was for servants.

MIMI IS VERY CLOSE TO HER BROTHER

She spent most of her time with Her governess and her brother. She adored him.

MIMI AND HER BROTHER BELONG TO A ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

Her parents were more assimilated, not interested in Zionism. Younger people seemed more Jewish than her parents' generation.

JEWISH CHILDREN MEET WITH A RABBI WHILE OTHER SCHOOLCHILDREN HAVE RELIGION CLASS

FAMILY LANGUAGES

Main language is German. Father also spoke Czech. Mother spoke French and English.

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

A lot of books, art, music in Mimi's home. Parents often met friends in coffee shops. Mimi was active in sports.

MIMI LIVES A FAIRLY SHELTERED LIFE

SHE IS SLIGHTLY AWARE OF ANTI-SEMITISM, WANTS TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

Several times she wanted to join in Nazi salute so she would not be different. Felt isolated when entire school said Catholic prayers together. She was disappointed that she couldn't go on Nazi-sponsored outings.

MORE ON FLEEING MARIENBAD

Found an apartment in a small town called Kolin. Main concern was getting in touch with brother.

MOTHER NARROWLY MISSES BEING ARRESTED

She went to Marienbad every day by train to retrieve belongings. One day she didn't go. That day, Jewish women were arrested, disappeared. Mother did not go back to Marienbad again.

GERMANY INVADES CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1939

Sky was black with planes. Germans were also in Kolin, but this town was more anti-German than Marienbad.

BROTHER COMES TO LIVE WITH THEM

THEY TRY TO GET PERMITS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY

Father was also socialist, so he was in even more danger.

MIMI GETS A PERMIT TO GO TO PALESTINE

FATHER IS ON A NAZI ARREST LIST. SOLDIERS COME TO THEIR APARTMENT, BUT LANDLADY SAVES THEM

They lived over a bar. When soldiers appeared, owner told them Mimi's family was not at home, offered soldiers beer. They never went upstairs, where the family was hiding.

MIMI LEAVES ON A CHILDREN'S TRANSPORT TO PALESTINE, VIA ENGLAND

Parents felt they'd never see her again, but she was more optimistic. Traveled by train through Germany. Felt relieved when they arrived in Holland.

THEY GO TO ENGLAND TO PREPARE FOR LIVING IN PALESTINE

They lived on a farm from May through September. There were many children of all ages. Permits to Palestine were continually delayed. In October, hundreds of children arrived. It was so crowded they had to live in railroad cars.

MIMI IS SELDOM IN TOUCH WITH HER FAMILY

After war began, she received only Red Cross postcards.

THE CHILDREN MOVE TO UNOCCUPIED CASTLES, 1940

British lords donated them to Zionist movement. Children learned Hebrew, agriculture. Dug bomb shelters.

MIMI RECEIVES A CARD NOTIFYING HER THAT PARENTS WERE ON THEIR WAY TO PALESTINE

They got permits, traveled through Italy the day before it joined the axis. Mimi was happy, but also sad for children whose parents were still in Europe.

THEY ARE VERY ISOLATED AT THE CASTLE

Got a few news reports, but were really cut off from the world.

BRITISH AUTHORITIES DECLARE JEWISH REFUGEES OVER THE AGE OF 17 TO BE "ENEMY ALIENS." THEY ARE SENT TO AUSTRALIA

YOUNGER CHILDREN ARE LEFT ALONE AT CASTLE. JEWS FROM NEARBY CARDIFF COME TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.

Zionist movement eventually sent replacement leaders.

THERE IS A LOT OF NIGHT BOMBING BECAUSE AN AIRPORT IS LOCATED NEAR THE CASTLE

Mimi looked up one night, saw a spot-lighted plane painted with a swastika.

MIMI MOVES TO ANOTHER CASTLE, JOINS AN ORTHODOX MIZRACHI LABOR GROUP

She was 15 years old at this point.

MIMI HAS AN UNCLE IN LONDON. GOES TO LIVE WITH HIM IN ORDER TO IMPROVE HER EDUCATION

Had a private tutor for one year, then went to English school.

MIMI STUDIES EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT A UNIVERSITY

SHE MEETS HER FUTURE HUSBAND, AN AMERICAN SOLDIER

Mimi was only 18, needed parents permission to marry. Mother hadn't seen her since Mimi was 12, but consented to marriage. They had a temple wedding performed by an army chaplain who was a rabbi.

MIMI GOES TO PALESTINE, SEES PARENTS

IN PALESTINE SHE RECEIVES PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE TO U.S. HAS HER FIRST CHILD SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL

SHE AND HER HUSBAND LIVE IN ANN ARBOR, MICH., THEN INDIANAPOLIS

Because of American husband she felt isolated from other Europeans.

THEY MOVE TO CLEVELAND. MEETS SURVIVORS FROM HOME TOWN

There are five others in the world. A cousin who is a survivor also lives in U. S.

VIDEO 2 OF 2

MIMI FEELS GUILTY ABOUT SURVIVING. THIS IS ONE MOTIVATION FOR HER TO BE INTERVIEWED

WANTS PEOPLE TO REMEMBER THAT HOLOCAUST HAPPENED TO A CULTURED, EDUCATED SOCIETY

MIMI HAS ALWAYS BEEN A ZIONIST. FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT ISRAEL