

IDA HENIG
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Interviewer: Esther Toporek Finder

Tape 1 Side A

Ida Markowicz was born November 6, 1924, in Lodz, Poland. There was a large Jewish community in Lodz. It was an industrial, textile city and there were jobs there. The textile business was controlled primarily by the Jews and the German nationals in Lodz. Her family was a textile manufacturer and they were financially well off. When her father died, in 1943, her mother got insurance money. She used this money to buy property; apartment house. She had 2 brothers and they survived. One brother survived in Russia. As a child she went to Hebrew school. She did not experience anti-Semitism before the war. Things changed quickly when the Germans invaded. Men couldn't go out on the street without being subject to being taken for forced labor. When the Germans came ethnic Germans wanted their home and threw her family out of their apartment. The apartment was in a nicer part of town. They tried to go to be with her mother's sister but that did not work out. They rented a room in a Jewish home. The family decided to go to where they owned property in Czestakowa. They traveled there by bus and when the bus couldn't get up a hill, the Jews were kicked out of the bus and forced to push the bus up the hill.

They bought food along the way; mostly potatoes and bread. When they arrived in the town they lived with her maternal grandmother. Other relatives (from Silesia) also had to move in there, so it was very crowded. They stayed there until 1942. There was a ghetto in the town which was guarded by Ukrainians. Jews had to wear an armband and later, a star of David. The Jews were hungry; bread and potatoes were luxuries. She had to work in the ghetto. Her job had her working for nuns in a monastery. The nuns gave food to male workers, not to female workers. The food she did get was from the ghetto; thin soup, mostly. Her job for the nuns involved cleaning up after painters. She was working there for some months. Then deportations started.

January 16, 1942, the deportations and selections began. Ukrainians searched to find people in hiding. At first the Jews did not know where the deportations were taking people. One man escaped and came and told them stories of what happened to the Jews on the transports. The

Jews in the ghetto did not believe the stories. Another job she had in the ghetto was cleaning shells that were retrieved from the front. During the deportations she and her family went into hiding in a cellar in the ghetto. They were in the cellar for a few weeks. When she got out of the cellar she could hardly walk. There was not much food. A bucket served their sanitation needs.

They had no communication with others above the cellar. At night they went out to look for food. There were a few Jews left in the ghetto who were there to clean up the ghetto.

Tape 1 Side B

The Jewish police cooperated with the Germans by pointing out where other Jews were hiding. She and the others in hiding went out and joined the work details cleaning the street. She was liberated in January, 1945, by the Russians. The Russians would sometimes rob them. They did have some gold coins left which they sold in order to live. After the war was over she went to Germany. There was anti-Semitism in Poland and there were very few Jews left. She had wanted to go to Israel. She got stuck in Germany en route to Israel. While in Germany she studied pharmacology. She got stuck in a refugee camp but she does not recall the name of the camp. She met her husband in Bergen Belsen. She had a cousin in Bergen Belsen and she went there to get some work. It wasn't until the 1950's that she came to the US. She and her husband went to Wooster, Massachusetts. The Americans made her welcome. She got a job in a shoe factory. They have one son, Harold. Her brothers survived but her mother was sent to Treblinka in 1942. Her husband is also a survivor who lost his family.