

Ida Henig

File 1 of 1

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Abstract

Ida Henig was born Ida Markowicc on November 6, 1924 in Lodz, Poland where she lived until age fifteen. Her father died young. When the Germans came, the family was thrown out of their apartment and they rented a room in her mother's sister's house. Since her mother had property in Chestidrover (?), they took a bus to live in her grandmother's two-bedroom apartment with an uncle and other relatives. Ida worked for nuns at Flakahenhover (?) Monastery, an hour's walk each way. To prevent deportation, Ida and her family hid in the apartment's cellar. They were liberated on January 16, 1945 by the Russians. Then she went to Germany where she studied pharmacy for three years to get her degree. She lived in Bergen-Belsen, a refugee camp, where she had a cousin and met her future husband. Ida and her husband immigrated to the US in the 50s to Worcester, Massachusetts. Later they had a son, Harold. Her mother died in Treblinka but she has two brothers, both survived the Holocaust.

Summary

00:00 **Tape 1, Side A.** Ida Henig was born Ida Markowicc on November 6, 1924 in Lodz, Poland where she lived until age fifteen. It was a large Jewish community, a prosperous city mostly dealing with the textile industry. The textile industry was in the hands of the Germans and the Jews. Gentiles were servants and mostly lived on the outskirts of the city. Germans were invited to start the textile industry. The Germans were financially well-off and had their own school and spoke German. Her father was a textile manufacturer and was well-off. When he died they received a large sum of money as he was heavily insured. The family lived in a nice part of Lodz. Her father was heavy and short and died in 1934. She has two brothers and they both survived the Holocaust.

05:00 One brother was in the military and taken prisoner by the Russians. He fought on the Eastern Front. When the Germans came to Russia, this brother worked in the coal mines as he did not know the language. Ida attended Hebrew School across the way from her apartment house, completed grammar school and attended high school after the war. She was liberated in Poland and continued to attend a Polish school. There were few Jews left. She studied Hebrew and Polish history. Ida was 12 years old when the war started. When the Germans came, they were thrown out of their apartment and had no place to live.

- 10:00 Her mother had property in another city so decided to go there. Up until then, they did not experience anti-Semitism because they lived in an area which was heavily populated with Jews. When Poland was beaten, the resident Germans put out their swastikas to welcome the oncoming Germans. The Jews could not go out on the street or they would be taken to false labor. They were given dirty work to do such as sweep the streets. One day they took apart their Grandfather clock to clean it and the Germans got angry and kicked her brother down the stairs. Ida was not present on that occasion. They rented a room in her mother's sister's (her aunt's) house,
- 15:00 They lived in one room and took over the aunt's business. Her mother's property was in Chestidrover (?) so they decided to take a bus to get there. When the bus could not get up the hill, the Jews had to get out and push it. It took them six months or more to get there. Along the way, her mother sold their belongings for food. They got bread and potatoes but no meat. Kosher food was expensive and forbidden by the Germans so lived on bread and potatoes. They lived in her grandmother's two-bedroom apartment with an uncle and other relatives, 12 people in all.
- 20:00 They stayed there until 1942. They lived in an open ghetto at first. Later, deportations forced people out of the oldest part of the city. Ukrainian guards surrounded the ghetto and shot people. First the Jews wore stars on armbands and later sewed it to the front and back of their clothes. They only had bread and potatoes to eat. At first she did not work as was only 14 years old. Later she worked for nuns at Flakahenhover (?) Monastery, an hour's walk each way. The nuns only gave food to the men, not to the women.
- 25:00 Her duties were cleaning the monastery. She worked in 1942 for six months. On January 16, 1942 there were deportations. She felt they were lucky as they remained in the same city. The Ukrainians searched for those in hiding. A man who escaped from a concentration camp told them about undressing and taking a shower of gas and they did not believe him and thought he was crazy. She did not think to leave as she looked Jewish.
- 30:00 Ida worked 12 hours a day in the Hassock (?) factory cleaning shells from the Front. They had two shifts. She worked until 1942. Deportees were put in wagons and sent to Treblinka. They returned empty and got more people who were sent to Treblinka where they were emptied. She thought the people who were deported were being sent to work in Germany. She hid in the cellar so she would not be deported. She felt that she had no money so had no choice but to go into hiding. There were 13 people from her family hiding together. When they left the cellar, they could not walk. They made no preparation to go into hiding, just suddenly went.
- 35:00 They hid for three or four weeks. They had little food and used a bucket for sanitary purposes. When they ran out of food, they would search for food in the ghetto at night.

There were no Jews left in the ghetto, just a few Jewish policemen cleaning up. **Tape 1, Side B These** Jewish policemen cooperated with the Germans by reporting Jews but did not report her. She would grab food remaining from the deported Jews and returned to the cellar.

- 40:00 They were in the cellar about six weeks. There was a hole in the wall where her brother would look out and see what was happening. One day he saw a group of Jews going to work so they, too, went to work for the Nazis and cleaned the street. After the ghetto was liquidated, the Nazis paraded through the streets. They were liberated on January 16, 1945 by the Russians. They were in the cellar and her brother looked out through the hole and saw them so they went out. The Russians were rough and indifferent. Her brother was roughed up several times by the Russians.
- 45:00 They had some gold coins left and they had to sell them to obtain bread and potatoes. They decided to go to Germany because of the anti-Semitism in Poland and there were few Jews left so it was depressing. She thought of going to Israel as she spoke Hebrew and taught it to others. On her way, she got stuck in Germany and studied pharmacy there. She stayed several years as it took three years to get a degree. Again, she thought of going to Israel but the English did not permit it. Ida lived in Bergen-Belsen, a refugee camp, where she had a cousin and met her future husband. She was about 18 or 20 years old at the time and did not have much money so went to work and received food from the DP camp and from UNWRA. Ida immigrated with her husband to the US in the 50s to Worcester, Massachusetts.
- 50:00 Women came and gave them food. Later she had a son, Harold. She did not know the language so worked in a shoe factory in Worcester. Two of her brothers survived. One survived in Russia and the other one was with her. Her mother was deported to Treblinka in 1942. She has some cousins who survived. Ida returned twice to her hometown and once visited Treblinka. Her mother owned property. Ida's husband was in seven concentration camps and wanted to visit Poland. His family was completely wiped out.
- 55:00 Her husband had a younger brother and a sister. His father died young. (Ida admits having a bad memory. Some facts are repeated many times.)