

Rose Weissfeld

Tape 1, Side A

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Abstract

Rose Weissfeld was born Rose Freedman (?) on March 28, 1914 in Radom (?), Poland to a family with two older brothers and two younger sisters. After completing 7th grade at age 15, Rose went to work making garments in the factory where her father worked. A week after the War started, her foot was injured by the bombing and she was laid up for a year. In late '41 the seven of them had to move to one room in the Ghetto and a kindly German brought them bread every morning. Her father died after being kicked by the Germans and three siblings disappeared after working for the Germans. When the Ghetto closed, she was transported to Auschwitz where she passed selection (at least once by Mengele) eleven times. Every morning she had to walk a few miles to an area where she filled two pails with stones. After seven months, she was transported to Ravensbruck which was soon liberated by the Swedes. She only weighed 32 pounds and was placed in a Danish hospital for a short time before being placed in a Swedish hospital. A Jewish family, the Shines, took her out of the hospital and cared for her. When she recuperated, she went to work in a factory and met her husband and they married and had their first child. Then they moved to the US and had another child and became grandparents. Her husband recently passed away.

Summary

00:00 Rose Weissfeld was born Rose Freedman (?) on March 28, 1914 in Radom (?), Poland. Her mother was a housewife and her father worked in a shoe factory. There were five children and she was in the middle. The oldest brother was Lipson or Muttel (?) who is still living. Next came Benjamin. Rose was six years older than her two younger sisters. In 1941 Benjamin went to measure a German for shoes and he never returned. Her two sisters washed floors in a German nunnery and never returned. Rose completed 7th grade at age 15 and went to work making garments in the factory. Her public school was mixed with Jews and non-Jews. She had both Jewish and non-Jewish friends and they got along. Her neighbors were also mixed with both Jews and non-Jews. There were about 50 apartments in her building with 8 to 10 high school students. Rose's family was observant but not extreme orthodox.

05:00 They kept kosher and the Sabbath. Her father attended services every Saturday and the children were educated in Judaism. The boys attended a special school and a Rabbi came every day for an hour to teach the girls. He got paid for his work. Public school was free

but the books cost money. Her father worked in the same factory as she did. He cut the soles of shoes. Rose worked there ten years until the bombs fell. She felt her family was nice and stayed together except when they got married. When the War started, her brothers were taken away by the Polish military. The War started on September 1st and a week later she was injured in her foot and hand.

- 10:00 Rose was in the hospital for six weeks. Her sister and brother were also injured and were in the hospital for four weeks. Her brother had injured his leg while serving with the military. When the Germans took over the hospital, they went home. Her mother used the money that she earned to pay the Polish doctors. The Germans wanted to amputate her leg but she refused. She had to stay home for a year because of her leg. In late '41 they had to leave for the Ghetto in Radom (?). The seven of them lived in one room. Both brothers had returned from the military. There was only one bed so most of them slept on the floor or on chairs. A German gave her a piece of bread when he saw she was injured. She told him that she had got hurt from a sharp nail. She was worried that they would be killed if she told him the truth. He brought bread every morning. He was nice. Her family suffered until they were destroyed. It was summer and they worked in the fields with the flowers and at noon got a bowl of soup. They worked from 8 to 4 or 5.
- 15:00 In 1940 they took her father for work and he came home and died from kicks that he had received. He was in his 50s. Rose went to a factory where she slept and got food. She remained until the Jews were removed. Once she said she was sick and was taken to the Ghetto. When the Ghetto was closed, her brothers and sisters were all sent to different places. Many Jews were killed there but her siblings were killed later. She was in the factory for four or five months when the Ghetto closed.
- 20:00 Then she was transported to a concentration camp in occupied Poland and then to Auschwitz by train. At selection, she stood in the middle of three people and Mengele did not notice her leg. Mengele was a little man and he did not talk, just motioned with his finger whether you should go right or left. Eleven times she went through selection and was always lucky. After seven months, she went to Ravensbrücke. In Auschwitz, they went out every morning and walked about three or four miles to a place where they picked up stones and put them in two pails. Every morning at Appel (attendance), she got two pails to fill up with stones. She was three weeks in '44 in Ravensbrücke and the girls said to one another, "Hold on, don't die, we will soon be liberated." She weighed 32 pounds at liberation. They thought the Americans were going to liberate them.
- 25:00 She had no friends since when you could steal a piece of bread, you did so. She did not feel like a human being. At first when they were liberated, she did not realize it as they were frequently taken out and were moved from place to place. She was liberated by the Swedish who took her to Denmark. The Swedish people gave them life. They gave them a shower, soup and bread. No amount of food was enough. They were taken to a

hospital in Denmark and some people broke down the kitchen door at night. They ate too much and died later. The doctor told them that they survived and can just eat a little at a time so they should not steal and will be given more food. Then they went to a Swedish Hospital for two weeks. The Swedish Jews came and tried to find her family.

- 30:00 A Jewish man wanted to see her so a nurse brought her and he thought she looked familiar. He thought she might have relatives in Sweden. His father had been a shochet (kills meat in the kosher manner) in Poland. A few days later he came and said he wants to remove her from the hospital and his family, the Shines, will take care of her. She could not go out to the public for three months and just stayed home. Then she met other survivors, some were working in factories. Mrs. Shine gave her friend some clothes. Rose felt ready to work in the factory. She wanted to make money to buy her own clothes. She remained with the Shines and worked in the factory.
- 35:00 She wanted to buy a dress and shoes for herself. She lived with the Shines for a year and 8 months and helped with the housework. She met some survivors. **Tape 1, Side B.** Eight days after meeting her husband, they got married. He was also a survivor, lived in Boss (?), a nearby city, and liked her. He also worked in a factory. Rose visited him where he lived with his cousin who now lives in Toronto. It was vacation time for all of Sweden. Her future husband said he wanted to make a home with her. Rose had to tell her factory that she wanted to get married.
- 40:00 Her fiancé gave her a ring and they were married by a Rabbi. About nine months later, they both acquired the necessary documents and got married officially in Sweden. Her husband died a year ago. They were married for 48 years and had two children. (Shows a photo of her family.) Her daughter, Toby, has two children and her son-in-law is a scientist in computers. Her son, Max, has two boys and a girl. Rose and her husband worked in a factory in Sweden and she gave birth to her son. She stayed home a year and then put the baby in daycare and returned to work. After three months, he lost three pounds so she stopped working. Though they needed the money, she felt that she had to raise the baby. They went to the movies but knew it was important to have a home. Little by little, they bought things for the home with the money earned at the factory. They spent six years in Sweden.
- 45:00 The Red Cross found the husband's two sisters in the US. It took the Red Cross four years to find her brother. They decided to go to the US as it seemed like a good place though Sweden was a beautiful and nice. One brother had survived in Germany and his wife had a brother in the US so they went to the US. It was hard to make a new life in the US when you have a little child as it is hard to work. They got some help but it was still hard to make the adjustment. They settled in Sweden as the people were nice to them. They thought life in the US would be better, especially since the husband's two sisters were there.

50:00 Rose still practices religion the same way as in her youth and teaches her children the same. Her War experiences did not change her religious ideas. She would have given up her religion for bread if it was necessary and later she would have returned to Judaism. She does not belong to any formal survivor groups but many of her friends are survivors. She also has American friends. After a year, people accepted her here. She was raised by a beautiful family though not rich or poor. It was a nice family until Hitler split them. They settled down again and returned to their same ways and raised the children as Jews. Her children have nice families. She made a home out of nothing and is proud of it. The children are proud of her. She has nice grandchildren.

54:00