

RG-50.120*0296

Fuks (nee Arbus), Devorah – 3 Tapes

- 1:00:23** Devorah was born in Poland in 1932 in the small village of Belzyce. She was seven and a half years old when the war started. She had two sisters and a younger brother. Some of her extended family lived in the same city and some lived in Lublin.
- 1:01:12** Devorah's father had a large coal and lumber business in another village, Niedrzwica. He also made beer and had a building section. He supplied lumber for construction to the entire area. Germans took over the business immediately after their arrival.
- 1:01:36** Devorah's was Zionist home. All kids learned in the Tarbut School, which was maintained by a few wealthy families. The family wanted to go to Israel and waited for the two-year old to grow a little before they left. His name was Yirmiyahu. The sisters' names were Lola and Yaffa. Lola was born in 1928 and Yaffa in 1923. Yirmiyahu was born in 1934.
- 1:03:38** Devorah's parents also had a home in Niechcice, where her father spent the week. The family spent their two-month summer holidays there.
- 1:03:51** Relationships with local Poles were non-existent.
- 1:05:10** Mother conducted some sales of coal and lumber to the locals. They had a live-in maid. Parents were very active in the community. House was traditional but not very orthodox. They did observe the holidays.
- 1:07:29** Language at home was Yiddish. Polish was learned as a foreign language.
- 1:09:26** Describes Shabbat at home.
- 1:10: 35** Paternal grandparents lived nearby. Maternal grandparents died in the cholera epidemic during WWI when Devorah's mother was only 14. Her father had only one sister, who also lived in the same house.
- 1:12:00** The house and father's business was 7 to 10 km from their primary residence. Describes visits to Lublin.
- 1:14:43** Describes the day the war broke out.
- 1:16:50** As the Germans passed the first measures against the Jews, the Poles also became dangerous.

- 1:17:24** At first Devorah and her siblings studied with a private tutor after the school was closed. Her father's business was taken away too. Anti-Jewish measures included shootings and deportation.
- 1:22:06** Non-Jewish neighbors hid them underground in exchange for money, but they were discovered.
- 1:23:27** During the great deportation, Devorah's family managed to buy their survival by paying a folk-Deutch. After that, the place was encircled with barbed wire, and the survivors of the town and of neighboring places were confined in this camp.
- 1:27:34** Life in the ghetto was fraught with fear, since every now and then the Nazis would take out a group of people – women and children – and shoot them in the cemetery. Devorah's family used to hide in an underground opening under their house. In May 1943, the ghetto was totally liquidated.
- 1:28:12** Describes life in the ghetto.
- 2:06:37** Liquidation of the ghetto. Devorah's entire family was saved and transported to Krasnik.
- 2:12:27** Father stayed in Krasnik as a carpenter. The family is sent to Budzyn.
- 2:15:00** Describes life there.
- 3:04:03** They were transferred to Budzyn II for another half a year.
- 3:06:00** In the beginning of June they were taken to Majdanek, where women and children were to be exterminated.
- 3:08:54** They arrived in Majdanek. Stayed there for six weeks. Crematoria were no longer working. Exit from Majdanek on the way to Auschwitz.
- 3:18:44** On the way, they spotted their father who was being transported by train. This was the last time they saw him.
- 3:20:07** Describes arrival at Auschwitz.
- 3:25:00** Describes the children's block in Lager A.
- 3:29:00** Mother and sisters are taken in a transport. Devorah is allowed to say goodbye to them.

- 4:01:50** Mother and sisters' departure. Mother tells Devorah that her cousin, who was practically a muselman, was taken to the gas chamber. Devorah bitterly mourns her.
- 4:05:24** Her cousin Miriam, who was like a sister, resurfaces. Tells the story of how she was saved from death.
- 4:11:00** Describes life in the children's block.
- 4:20:20** She was transferred to the gypsies' lager.
- 4:29:28** Rumors arrive that the Germans want to bomb the camp and kill the old, infirm, and the children. Devorah and her cousin (12 and 14, respectively) stand on their tiptoes to appear older. They succeed in leaving the camp for the famous march in January 1945.
- 5:00:40** The Russians immediately liberated those who stayed.
- 5:01:44** Describes the march.
- 5:02:53** Names the ten girls who left on the march together.
- 5:08:00** Describes the bathrooms in the camp.
- 5:12:05** Arrived at the cargo train that took them to Ravensbrück.
- 5:12:57** Not only were they hungry, but they were bullied by older Russian women residents. Devorah and her cousin interceded for the entire group of ten girls to be moved to another tent. The request was granted.
- 5:13:48** Six weeks in Ravensbrück. Describes life in camp.
- 5:18:20** Transfer to Malchow. The ten girls were housed together in some kind of room. There they met a kitchen worker from Lublin, who gave them some extra food.
- 5:20:23** Describes the camp.
- 5:21:00** Transferred by foot to a different location. One morning, after a rest stop, they noticed that the Germans had fled. The ten girls felt abandoned and ran after them for protection. Explosions could be heard. The adults knew it was the front approaching, but the girls felt helpless. It was dark now, and they feared the locals more than the Germans. They met a group of women from Czechoslovakia who were waiting to be taken into the forest by men from their country (they were not Jewish). The girls said

they were Polish, not Jewish, and were taken and protected by the group. They moved several times.

- 5:26:00** Finally, a Russian told them that they were free.
- 5:29:52** Refugees from all over Europe were gathered in a huge camp in Germany, from whence each nationality was sent back to their country. The ten girls were attached to a Polish family, who escorted them back home.
- 6:03:18** Describes arrival in Lodz from where each of the ten girls was given a ticket to return to their hometowns. Devorah and her cousin Miriam went to Lublin. They intended to go back to their village, but the list of survivors did not include any member of either family. They were sent to an orphanage for girls. As they were being processed, the director noticed Devorah's last name, and recalled that a boy with that name was in the boy's section of the orphanage. The encounter with Yirmiyahu (her brother) and Devorah is described. Two days before Devorah's arrival, a young man was sent to Terezin (Terezienstadt) to bring survivors there. He met Devorah's mother and sisters and told them that Yirmiyahu was alive. Planned to return to Lublin. Sisters contracted typhoid fever, and it took them a while to make their way to Lublin. They hadn't known that Devorah and Miriam survived. The surprise, the encounter. Waiting in vain for their father who was killed in Terezin (Terezienstadt).
- 6:20:25** The entire orphanage is taken to Silesia for the summer, to Pieszyce. Devorah stays there in the meantime because her mother could not afford yet to support them.
- 6:21:05** Describes studying after the war and how life returns gradually to normal.
- 6:21:56** Devorah left the orphanage and moved in with her mother.
- 6:22:35** There was fear of local Poles. They prepared to leave Poland. Their first stop was near Frankfurt, in Lampertheim. Devorah and Miriam finished elementary school there and then went to Bergen-Belsen for high school, in preparation for their immigration to Israel. They had legal certificates. Devorah's middle sister arrived in Israel in 1954 with Aliyat Hanoar; her mother and brother arrived in 1947; Devorah and her cousin arrived in April, 1948, and her oldest sister, who had married in Germany, arrived in 1949 with her husband and six-month old baby.
- 6:24:00** Describes studying in Bergen-Belsen and activities there.
- 6:27:00** Describes the family in Israel.

6:29:00 Devorah told the story to their children.

6:30:00 The entire family got together to tell their story to the young generation.