

RG-50.120*0298
Eizenshtat, Miriam
Three Videocassettes
In Hebrew

- Abstract:** Miriam Eizenshtat, nee Kirchenbaum, was born on September 3, 1929 and was the youngest of a family of five in Lublin, Poland. When war broke out in 1939, she went back and forth between her aunt's house in Belzice and her family's house in Lublin. She was in Belzice when her immediate family was taken. When the Polish army pulled out, she was sent to the Majdan Tatarski Ghetto and describes hiding during an "action." In May of 1943 she was sent to Camp Butin. She described the evacuation of Majdanek on foot and being forced to march for a week to Tshmelev, Poland. She was taken by train to Auschwitz. After the State of Israel was declared, she went by train to Italy and then by boat to Israel in 1948. She stayed with an aunt in Tel Aviv. Miriam got married to a survivor in 1949 and had children.
- 1:00:00 Miriam Eizenshtat, nee Kirchenbaum, was born on September 3, 1929 in Belzice, Poland, near Lublin. She had two older brothers, Benjamin and Moshe. Her father owned a soap workshop. The family soon moved to Lublin. When war broke out in 1939 her parents sent her to live with her aunt in Belzice for her safety. The Germans entered Lublin in 1939 and began mistreating all the Jews and sending them to labor camps.
- 1:03:00 She describes the Germans entering Belzice, killing Jews on the streets and confiscating their possessions. In January 1940, she returned to Lublin. Her father had lost his business. She describes the situation in Lublin in January of 1940.
- 1:07:00 Her family was expelled from the city but were able to escape and return to Lublin. Again her parents sent her to her aunt's house in Belzice, which was still considered safer. They changed their name to Arbus. She describes Germans killing Jews who were suspected of killing a German.
- 1:11:00 Refugees from Lublin and Germany arrived and were well received by the Jewish population. She was told that in 1941 her parents were sent on a transport. One brother was sent to Majdanek. She was the only survivor in her family.
- 1:16:00 She describes her family life before the war, the difficult economic situations and the primitive living conditions.
- 1:26:00 She describes her father's soap workshop and different areas in Lublin that she frequented.

- 2:00:00 She describes the Jewish holidays at home and life with her aunt in Belzice.
- 2:06:00 Miriam describes her school, her friends and their social life.
- 2:17:00 She describes the close relations between her aunt and her family.
- 2:23:00 In September of 1939, she was in Belzice when she found out about the bombing of Lublin and the withdrawal of the Polish army. Volksdeutsche collaborated with the Germans.
- 2:27:00 She describes the Germans entering Belzice. Jews were chased out of synagogues and were sent to clean the streets.
- 3:00:00 She describes the mistreatment of Jews
- 3:05:00 Miriam describes life in Lublin from 1940 on. Her family was expelled. She was sent back to Belzice.
- 3:10:00 Miriam describes her life in Belzice and her state of mind when she found out that her family had been deported.
- 3:16:00 In 1942 there spread a rumor of an impending “action” in Belzice. Her uncle sent her to Lublin, where there was a ghetto which seemed safer. Miriam describes walking 20 kilometers to Lublin to her uncle in the Majdan Tatarski ghetto.
- 3:23:00 Talks about her relatives who were shot in Belzice.
- 3:25:00 She describes Majdan Tatarski, where she stayed. Miriam hid when there was an “action”.
- 4:00:00 When the “action” in Belzice was over, she returned to her uncle’s place in the ghetto. Describes their living conditions and the hide out her uncle had prepared in the basement.
- 4:03:00 She describes life in the ghetto and the atmosphere of fear.
- 4:12:00 In 1942 there were again rumors of an action and her uncle arranged for her, her aunt and cousins to leave and stay with a Polish family. But the man told the police about them and they had to quickly return to Belzice.
- 4:19:00 In May of 1943 there was an “action” in Belzice. They were taken to camp Kraznik and from there to camp Butin, administered by Feig, a sadist.

- 4:24:00 Miriam describes Butin and the women who were in the camp.
- 5:00:00 She describes the women's block in Butin and the people there. Miriam worked in the kitchen. Kapo Regina treated them decently.
- 5:12:00 She describes the bad conditions for men in the camp who worked in an airplane factory. The guards were Ukrainians and no one who tried to escape survived.
- 5:15:00 She describes relationships in the camp.
- 5:21:00 From May of 1943 to February of 1944 she was in Butin. She describes the sadism of Feig.
- 5:27:00 She was transferred to Butin Kitset, where there was a medical clinic.
- 6:00:00 Miriam describes her work in the kitchen and the laundry.
- 6:05:00 She describes her social life after work.
- 6:11:00 During January and February of 1944 they were locked in their blocks and they thought that they would all be killed. Groups were sent to Plazow and Radom. She remained in the camp for four to five months and could not remember things from that period.
- 6:19:00 Miriam describes being taken in cattle trains to Majdanek. She also describes the arrival and the conditions of the people she saw there.
- 6:22:00 Miriam describes the showers, disinfectants, searches and clothing. She was taken to the women's camp. There she joined a group of twenty to thirty girls, all of whom survived.
- 6:25:00 She describes her work in the laundry and later in a potato field.
- 6:27:00 The front was near and in June 1944 they were bombed. The Germans marched them out of Majdanek.

TAPE TWO

- 7:00:00 Miriam describes again the assembly and killing in Belzice and in Camp Butin.
- 7:07:00 She describes the evacuation of Majdanek on foot. They walked for a week, under Russian bombardment. Polish resistance fighters were killed and burned on the day they left camp.

- 7:12:00 She describes the horrible march and her survival thanks to her supportive cousins and aunt.
- 7:24:00 From Tshmelev, Poland they were taken by train to Auschwitz. Miriam describes their arrival and initiation.
- 8:00:00 Miriam describes initiation in Auschwitz and moving to Birkenau, Block II. She talks about the conditions. Her young cousin was taken to the children's block.
- 8:05:00 Talks about the long hours of assembly. She was then taken to Birkenau Zudfield, near the crematorium. She describes her work splitting rocks and the sadistic guard Maria.
- 8:11:00 Her aunt underwent medical experiments.
- 8:14:00 She describes menstrual periods in the camp.
- 8:16:00 She mentions non-Jewish women in the camp.
- 8:19:00 She describes the arrival of women from France and Holland who were taken to the crematorium.
- 8:23:00 She talks about attempted escapes and suicides.
- 8:25:00 She describes sanitary conditions in the camp.
- 9:00:00 Continues describing hygiene of different groups of women.
- 9:10:00 She describes her escape from the Sonderkommando.
- 9:11:00 She mentions the experiments on women by Mengele.
- 9:12:00 Miriam was extremely weak and was taken to the Block for the sick and "Musulmen" to be later burned. In the meantime she was sent to work in a potato field. She describes being beaten by an SS woman.
- 9:19:00 She talks of her feelings of hopelessness.
- 9:22:00 In November there were rumors of the approaching front. They thought that they would be exterminated. They were taken naked to the showers. Mengele did the selection and she was destined to be burned. She escaped through a roof window and joined a group of women outside. An SS woman noticed her and took her away.

- 10:00:00 She describes the holding room. She saw her cousins outside and called to them in despair.
- 10:07:00 In November of 1944, she was taken back to the Block for the “Musulmen” and the sick. Her cousin succeeded in having her transferred to the children’s block.
- 10:14:00 The crematorium was destroyed. She describes the conditions in the children’s block.
- 10:19:00 She talks about her friendships with ten girls from Radom.
- 10:21:00 The Kapo assigned them younger children to take care of and watch.
- 10:24:00 Plays were performed for the children by adults in Auschwitz.
- 10:28:00 In January of 1945, they were taken out of Auschwitz.
- 11:00:00 Miriam describes her work with the younger children.
- 11:05:00 Talks about leaving Auschwitz and she names the girls in her group. Talks about the week-long death march and then being in cattle trains to Ravensbruck.
- 11:12:00 They were taken to a large tent that also housed Russian women who took over.
- 11:15:00 Miriam was taken to a gypsy tent. She describes her life there.
- 11:19:00 They were taken by train to camp Malchin near Berlin. Miriam describes the conditions in the camp and the children’s block.
- 11:22:00 She spent two to three months in that camp. They received food packages from the Swedish Red Cross.
- 12:00:00 In May of 1945, the SS left and the Wehrmacht took their place. The Wehrmacht treated them better. In May bombardments by the Russians started and the Germans marched them out of the camp.
- 12:06:00 The Germans left them and they continued to walk. In a forest they met a group of former Czech prisoners who took care of them.
- 12:09:00 They were liberated by the Russians. The group was afraid to say that they were Jewish. Miriam’s group of ten girls continued to walk and got to Neubrandenburg. They all went into an empty apartment.

12:16:00 The Russians organized them by countries of origin and they were taken by train to Lodz and from there to Lublin to a special community house. They were not allowed to go to Belzhitse because of the violent anti-Semitism there.

12:23:00 Miriam was taken to a children's home in Lublin when she started to recover and found out that some relatives had survived.

TAPE THREE

13:00:00 Miriam describes the conditions and life in the children's home in Lublin. She tells the stories of some of the children. Her aunt and cousins returned from Terezin.

13:10:00 Miriam's aunt took her to live with them. Seven people lived in one room. She describes life there and fear of anti-Semitism.

13:15:00 Miriam went in a truck to Berlin. She tells of Poles killing Jews who returned to Belzice.

13:21:00 She got to Lampertheim DP camp administered by UNRRA. She describes the accommodations of school and the Zionist groups there.

13:24:00 She describes being ill and still having symptoms of the illness.

14:00:00 She describes her relationship with her family and the Jewish community. She went to school and learned Hebrew.

14:12:00 She talks about her strong wish to go to Israel. She went to Bergen Belsen, to the Kibbutz Nocham. She describes the activities of the kibbutz.

14:15:00 After the State of Israel was declared, she went by train to Italy and then by boat to Israel in 1948. She stayed with an aunt in Tel Aviv.

14:19:00 Miriam describes the difficult economic situation and how she sold ice cream for money. She was still very fragile emotionally.

14:25:00 Miriam got married to a survivor in 1949. She describes their hard life and later their divorce.

14:28:00 Miriam was afraid to upset her children so did not tell them of her war experiences.

15:00:00 She was greatly affected by the Eichmann trial.

15:07:00 Miriam describes how her experiences affected her child rearing and this was why she wrote about her experiences.