

EVA FEIST
RG-50.150.0005. recorded 1978

Eva Feist was born in 1920 in Eisenach, Germany. This area was strongly Nazi, so her family got the message early; majority of town was antisemitic. Her best friend who was not Jewish abandoned her and she stayed mainly with Jewish friends. When she changed schools, she was the only Jew. It was very difficult and she left without a degree. Her father had a manufacturing firm and firmly believed that the Nazi movement was a passing phase; her older brother did not agree. Eva's home was conservative and kept kosher. Eva moved to Frankfurt to pursue a course in sewing which she felt she needed if she left Germany. After Kristallnacht she moved back to Eisenach. All the Jewish men had been taken, but her house was intact.

Eva's father died of natural causes in 1937. She left for England via Holland after relatives in England vouched for her. She got a job outside London as a maid, she hated that job as the people were mean. She went to live with cousins in Lancashire and became like a daughter to them. She got a visa for the US on the German quota after 8 years in England. During the war she worked with the Land army, replacing men who were fighting. She worked in a variety of hostels and did not get interned. Before she left England, her brother visited from Israel; she hadn't seen him in 14 years. She tried to contact her mother through the Red Cross, but found out later that her mother had died in a concentration camp.

Eva went to the US with her cousins and lived in Washington Heights, New York. She worked in a home for Jewish orphans, then as a housekeeper at the Home for Infirm and Aged Hebrews on the lower East side, where she lived in. After a few years she worked at the Hebrew Home open 106 Street as a dietician. She said she was miserable in America at first but then made friends with other German Jewish people. She thought she was a stricter parent to her son than American parents because she had been brought up with stricter values in Germany.