

Holocaust Interview
Record Date: 9/12/91
Margot Freudenberg
Jania Sommers/Interviewer
Slate #1349-017

00:00-08:00=Family background and childhood. Margot Freudenberg. born 8/8/07 in Hanover Germany. One sister, 3 1/2 years older. Mother explains that Jews a minority in Germany, upsets sister. Both schooled in Hanover. Sister marries, moves to Heidelberg. Margot marries, moves to Essen. Family originally from Westphalia. Grandparents retire to Hanover. Father a successful doctor in Hanover. Family very influential in Hanover's Jewish circles. Many friends, Jew and non-Jew. Small Jewish population in Hanover, mostly academics and professionals. Lived in back of an apartment. Father had office in front of the apartment.

08:00-10:30=Climate changes in Germany. Margot felt there was much underground anti-semitic feeling even before Hitler attained power. When Hitler comes to power in 1933, most Jews ignored it feeling Hitler was a flash in the pan. Those who did leave were ridiculed for not loving their fatherland

10:30-16:10=1934. Margot tries to get family to leave Germany. Family refuses. Were German and wished to remain in Germany. Margot's husband "As German as German could be." WW I veteran. Decorated (Margot show medals). Would not leave his fatherland. Margot relates her education in Munich. Graduates in 1927. Becomes a physical therapist.

16:10-19:15=Increasing anti-Jewish pressure in Germany. Father only allowed to treat Jewish patients. Husband's business taken. 1936 Olympics. Had to have I.D.s at all times. Photos w/ left ear exposed.

19:15-24:00=Margot's son needs neck operation, Nov. 1937. Difficult to find a doctor to treat him. A new doctor agrees to perform operation in secret. Done at night. Son recovers.

24:00-40:30=Krystalnacht. Margot hides her son everyday. Told to say nothing or "I don't know." Sent home from synagogue on Krystalnacht. Only Margot returns next day. All others commit suicide. Her son prevents Margot from doing same. Margot taken by Gestapo. Questioned. Made to scrub streets w/toothbrush. Kicked by SS men. Let go. Synagogue burned. Firemen only offer token help for the press cameras. Husband now wishes to leave Germany. Got affidavit from head of Standard Oil in U.S. to help them get to America.

40:30-45:20=Leaves for England, June 1939 w/husband and son. Only allowed to take 10 Marks and 1 suitcase. While boarding ship to leave Germany, called out of line and roughly searched by guards. Last ones to board the ship. Kiss ground when arrive in England.

45:20-54:10=In England 9 months. Supported by family members. Volunteer as air wardens. Son struggles to catch-up in school. Receive letter from U.S. Consulate, permitting them to leave for America. Leave March 13, 1940. No protection from U-boats. Ship very crowded. Not permitted to bathe. Margot sneaks two baths. 13 day journey to Halifax, then to New York. Tells how son glad to finally be allowed to speak in England and America. Son sent to English countryside with other children. Very well taken care of, but dirty.

54:10-1:00:45=In America. Lived in N.Y., then moves to Charleston, S.C. Love America and the freedom. People very good to her and her family. Very poor. In Charleston, a woman in synagogue tells Margot she is not wanted. Margot later makes the woman feel very ashamed. Never revealed the woman's identity.

1:00:45-1:10:20 (end)=Parents arrive in U.S. 6 months after Margot. Sister arrives in 1937 via Cuba. Dies when 41. Leaves 3 sons. Margot considers sons as her own; his sister's requiem. Margot finds work as a therapist in Charleston. Husband gets store on King St. Forced to give it up because of very poor health. Dies, Margot feels, of a broken heart. Left a part of himself in Germany. Crushed that his fatherland no longer wanted him. Margot feels she owes this interview to all holocaust victims.