

Interviewee:	<u>LEVY</u> , Edith R.	Date:	May 9, 1995
Interviewer:	Gloria Schwartz		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Edith R. Levy was born in Vienna, Austria February 21, 1930 and describes her family as middle class and religious. Her father was a kosher butcher. She had an older brother. She briefly recalls her pre-war childhood, schooling and her early education. She describes her childhood memories of how things changed for her family after the *Anschluss*-- Jews were not permitted in the local park, were ejected from schools, Jewish children were not allowed to wear certain Viennese clothes anymore. She describes an incident when her parents were beaten up by Hitler youths and how Edith's yelling attracted the attention of people in the local tavern who came to their aid. She also recalls her childhood memories of *Kristallnacht*, visceral memories of Torahs burning and how the father of her brother's classmate told the S.S. that her family was not Jewish. She recalls several instances of abuse by *Hitlerjugend* and her father being hauled off to the police station. She details their journey to Antwerp with smugglers who extorted the families for more money at every turn.

Edith describes a harrowing journey when the family tried to flee to southern France and their train was bombed. They were forced to return to Antwerp. In January of 1941 they were deported to Waterschei (in a coal mine region) near the German border. The Nazis told the townsfolk that they were criminals but some townspeople did not believe this and helped them. In June 1941, the Nazis suddenly decided to release the women and children. Her father was sent to forced labor, but her mother got him released by attesting that they would leave Antwerp. They moved to Brussels and her father followed soon after. Her younger brother was born in March 1942. She describes that they had to wear the star and were under a curfew. A few months later, her father received papers to "work". The mother beseeched him to go into hiding but the father felt that he could secure his family's safety if he worked. He was sent by train to "work" in France; they never saw him again. They found out after the war he was deported to Auschwitz and perished after 2 months.

Edith details the harrowing experiences of living in hiding in Brussels, the scarcity of food and assistance from a Jewish woman who helped her mother get eggs to sell. She details an instance when they were denounced to the Germans, but one German soldier gave them 30 minutes to get away. Her non-Jewish neighbor helped them reach Elizabeth Hoolmann who found them a place to hide for the rest of the war. Ms. Hoolmann was designated Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem in 1996. Edith describes how -- aided by the Jewish underground-- they would buy used sweaters, unravel and wash the wool, buy dye and knit sweaters to sell at the market to survive. Edith emigrated to the United States in 1956.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Holocaust Jewish 1939 - 1945 - Personal narratives

World War, 1939 - 1945 - Personal narratives, Jewish, female

Vienna, Austria

Belgium

Aid by non-Jews

Hiding

Hitlerjugend

Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust

Survival skills