

Interviewee:	<u>LUSTIGER</u> , Mina	Date:	February 20, 1987
Interviewer:	Eileen Steinberg		
Audio tapes:	1 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Mina Lustiger, nee Bochner, was born July 30, 1929 in Bielitz, Poland. Her father was in the scrap metal business. She shares childhood memories including frightening antisemitic attacks. She describes the commotion and uncertainty after the German invasion, first sent with her siblings to her grandfather in Kęty, to avoid the Germans but then having to return home. After finally reunited with her parents in Bielsko she witnessed Jews being harassed and her family experienced the plunder of their silver by Germans. The whole family then fled to Kęty because it was a smaller city where they hoped to avoid harassment. When her mother was jailed in Kęty for trying to send a package of food and her father was sent to a labor camp, the four girls were left alone. Mina describes the Kęty Ghetto and her subsequent deportation to the Neudorf Ghetto in 1941. They were warned¹ not to be in the area during a selection and fled, posing as Aryans, to their uncle in Chrzanów. She describes the harrowing journey, travelling alone as a 12 year old, and then being joined by her sisters. Subsequently, they found out that some of the family had survived the selection and were then in Wadowice and the sisters again made a dangerous journey to join family. Mina describes the gated Wadowice Ghetto and how they had to sneak in with a labor brigade. Soon after, she and her sisters were deported to Sucha labor camp where they did hard labor regulating water near railways. She describes being sent to a distribution center at Sosnowiec and again being deported with her sisters to forced labor, this time in a spinning factory in Freiberg, Germany in 1943. She speaks about slightly better treatment there, but still long working hours and the scarcity of food. They were deported to Röhrsdorf labor camp and describes harsh working conditions, with little food and much suffering from disease. She mentions fasting on Yom Kippur.

In 1945, as Russian forces approached, they were sent on a death march to the Sudeten in Czechoslovakia, walking for several days, without food and sleeping in the snow. At Kratzau concentration camp, they joined inmates from many other countries. They finally were incarcerated at Gross Rosen, where she experienced the most brutal conditions. She describes beatings, many deaths from typhus and exhausting work in freezing weather.

On May 8, 1945, she was liberated by the Russian Army and then re-united with her family in Bielitz. In 1946, she went to England with a group of 100 other children and attended an ORT school. In 1951, she married Samuel Lustiger and they emigrated to the United States in 1952. They have a family of three children.

¹Mina does not indicate whether these were Jews or Gentiles who warned them.