

-TITLE-LILLY RUBENSTEIN
-I_DATE-6/13/90
-SOURCE-SAN FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-GOOD
-IMAGE_QUALITY-GOOD
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

0:00 - 5:00 She was born on February 13, 1923 in Germany. Her father was a grain merchant and her mother descended from a wealthy family in Poland. She attended regular, public school until 1938 when Jews were no longer allowed. As a child she had not felt much anti-Semitism. In March of 1938, when she was 15, Lilly opened the door for the Gestapo man. At first she was happy because there would be no school but her father was taken away and sent to Steinback (?).

5:00 - 10:00 At first she did not feel the impact of what was going on. Her mother kept her in the dark about political happenings. Her father was let out of concentration camp after three months because he was a World War I veteran decorated for bravery. Her parents sensed the danger and sent her and her brother to England through a Jewish refugee assistance group. In England, she was taken care of by three mentally unstable old Jewish maids. This is when she first felt fear. She never knew about her parents and was never checked up on.

10:00 - 15:00 Her brother was nine years old. He attended school in England, but she wasn't allowed. Her family's ancestry dates back over three centuries in Germany. In Germany she had been the only Jewish girl in the class. Her teacher when she was 13, taunted her with obscene gestures. She then moved to a Jewish boarding school (The Hongius school?). She was taught by 2 Jewish maids along with 100 other students. They all respected their wonderful teachers. There was no discussion of events in Germany.

15:00 - 20:00 Her mother was very nervous about her father being taken away. She gave her mother medication. All the mothers used to gather at town police stations and wait for news of their husbands. The children were told "Don't answer the door" and "Don't play in the streets." While in England, she learned that her mother and father were planning on going to England aboard the St. Louis. Her and her brother cried about being abandoned. Her mother went to her country house and got drunk on a half bottle of champagne.

She then convinced her husband that they couldn't go until they saw their children again. The old maids in England kicked her and her brother out because a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany.

20:00 - 25:00 Her family was reunited in England. They moved to Newcastle-on-Thames. They could not work because of their Visas. Her Polish grandmother's schoolmate lived in the United States so they decided to go. Her father wanted to go to Nebraska because of the wheat and grain. They wound up moving to a flat on Staten Island. She worked at the beach for \$ 1 a day in the summer. She took classes to finish her high school education. She then attended N.Y.U. at night. Her mother and father bought a candy store. She was the only refugee in her class. The local Jewish Community Center was too full of cliques for her liking. The local Catholic priest in her all Catholic neighborhood referred to her family as "Christ Killers" and would not patronize the store; yet he sent altar boys to the store to buy the Italian cigars he liked.

25:00 - 30:00 She only had one relative, a younger cousin who survived the war in Europe. She was released from Treblinka concentration camp in 1945. Lilly had always spent Passover in Poland with her whole family. Her first Passover in the U.S. was quiet and sad. Her family was not Orthodox but they celebrated all the high Jewish holidays.

30:00 - 35:00 She became a peace activist and a trade union activist. She believes that to keep a god democracy you must be an activist. Her brother graduated high school was drafted. He was rejected for high blood pressure but enlisted after being told that Jews always get out of those situations. As an 18 year old boy he was sent to Germany to help teach democracy. He visited old friends. She has never been back to ? Germany. Her father died of cancer in 1953 and her mother ran the candy store until 1965. Her brother became a successful pharmacist on the GI Bill. She has tried to convey the fear she had in England of never seeing her parents again to her children, but they can not understand. Lilly Rubinstein has a guilt complex. She is willing to fight for any cause she believes in but not for herself.
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