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Interview with: Elly and Ben Kamm

Interviewer

Date:

Place:

Transcriber: Mary T. Herman

1 INTERVIEWER: First of all, I'd like  
2 to know your names.

3 MR. KAMM: My name is Ben Kamm. I  
4 reside in Los Angeles, California.

5 INTERVIEWER: And your name?

6 MRS. KAMM: My name is Elly Kamm and  
7 I'm married to Ben.

8 INTERVIEWER: And so you're--

9 MRS. KAMM: And we live in  
10 California, yes.

11 INTERVIEWER: Right. And I guess  
12 what I really want to know generally is your  
13 experiences in the war, the--anything, the things  
14 that--

15 MR. KAMM: Yeah.

16 INTERVIEWER: --where you were.

17 MR. KAMM: Mine--I come from Poland,  
18 from the city of Warsaw, the capital of Poland, and  
19 I was in Warsaw till 1941. I spent first few months  
20 in the Warsaw ghetto and--

21 INTERVIEWER: What was it like? What  
22 was life like in the ghetto?

23 MR. KAMM: The beginning wasn't too  
24 bad. I mean, was bad, but wasn't what happened  
25 later because, after this, after being few months in

1 ghetto, I run away in 1941 and joined Polish  
2 partisan groups who were forming in eastern Poland.  
3 Our main work was to stop letting train go--trains  
4 go from Germany to the eastern front--supplies,  
5 German supplies. And I spent almost four years in  
6 the forest fighting the German army.

7 INTERVIEWER: And how were you--like,  
8 if you were stopping the train, would you--how would  
9 you do it?

10 MR. KAMM: We dyn--put mines on the  
11 railroad track and stop the train and mine roads and  
12 mine warehouses, destroy warehouses--very seldom  
13 made attacks on the Germans. This all was done  
14 behind the German lines.

15 INTERVIEWER: How old were you at  
16 that time?

17 MR. KAMM: I was--I was born 1921.  
18 This was 1941, so I was 20-years-old.

19 INTERVIEWER: 20-years-old.

20 Mrs. Kamm, are you from Warsaw also?

21 MRS. KAMM: No, I was born in Germany  
22 and I was 15-years-old when the Germans gave us the  
23 orders. There was my mother and a little brother.  
24 We were sent to Riga Latvia and put there into a  
25 ghetto. But before we were surrounded and shipped

1 out to Riga Latvia, the Gestapo arrested my father  
2 and two brother and they were sent to Sachsenhausen,  
3 Orgnienburg and later on to Auschwitz.

4 So here I--January, 1942, they took  
5 my mother and little brother, myself, and we were  
6 sent to Riga into the ghetto. From the Riga ghetto,  
7 we were sent to Kaiserwald concentration camp and  
8 from there we were shipped to Stutthof extermination  
9 camp.

10 MR. KAMM: Well, your mother was--

11 INTERVIEWER: Well, then how many  
12 moves in the course of a year would you have--did  
13 you make?

14 MRS. KAMM: Well, moves were made all  
15 the time, but before the ghetto was liquidated and  
16 everybody was either exterminated, shot and killed,  
17 they took my mother and my young brother away, and  
18 we found out later on that they were sent to  
19 Auschwitz and then exterminated. And I was  
20 16-years-old and was left an orphan then.

21 From there they sent me to Riga--  
22 Kaiserwald, as I said, and there we worked. Riga  
23 was extremely cold. It was unbearable. It was way  
24 below zero. You don't have proper clothing. We had  
25 to do extremely hard work. Food was not available,

1 as little as there was.

2 INTERVIEWER: What kind of work were  
3 you doing?

4 MRS. KAMM: Well, when we arrived in  
5 the Riga ghetto, they made us pick ice.

6 MR. KAMM: Clean the streets.

7 MRS. KAMM: Cleaning the streets,  
8 carrying railroad tracks. There was no restroom  
9 facilities, no food. It was so bitter cold that  
10 your breath would turn into icicles. You didn't  
11 have clothing. We were beaten up. We were reduced  
12 to the size of an animal.

13 MR. KAMM: I have to interject also  
14 that I had four brothers who perished.

15 MRS. KAMM: We were a family of six  
16 children. Three survived. And, as I said, from  
17 Riga, when the Russian front came closer and closer,  
18 the Germans surrounded us and sent us to Stutthof  
19 where--Stutthof by Danzig, Gdansk--where this  
20 whole--

21 INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes. I know.

22 MRS. KAMM: --thing is going on.  
23 This camp was not a working camp. This was a  
24 strictly an extermination camp and there you could  
25 not go to work. They were from early in the morning

1 'til late at night counting. You were not a name  
2 any more; you were a number. In rain or shine,  
3 below zero cold, you were standing what we called  
4 "upheld," constantly counting, and by the time they  
5 finished that session of counting, right then and  
6 there people would die next to you. Then they let  
7 you go back into the barracks and a few hours, maybe  
8 an hour later, counting again. And people there got  
9 very, very ill. I got typhoid--typhus, and don't  
10 remember a lot of things that happened to me because  
11 I was delirious.

12                   And then I--when I came back to  
13 myself, the Russian front was closer and closer  
14 again and they shipped us to Troyle, (phonetic)  
15 another area. There again I got sick. I got so  
16 sick that the barracks were burning that I couldn't  
17 move. It was already--not knowing that it was the  
18 end of our era in the concentration camp, I couldn't  
19 even move because I thought, "Any second I will burn  
20 to death too." And by the sheer luck, somebody  
21 found out that I was still left in that barrack on  
22 the bunk bed and he carried me out. Otherwise, I  
23 would not be here today after all these years that  
24 we were incarcerated.

25                   MR. KAMM:     But then another thing--

1 as a partisan, we not only had to fight the Germans,  
2 but we also had to fight the nationalist Ukrainians  
3 who were killing Jews and also the fascist Polacks  
4 who killed the Jews. Because a lot of Jews were  
5 hiding in the Polish forest.

6 Poland has tremendous forests and  
7 people could have been saved. I would say 25 percent  
8 of the Jews in Poland could have been saved who went  
9 to the forest to hide, but some of the Polish  
10 population were so anti-semitic, they hated the  
11 Jews, that they went to the forest--and the Germans  
12 made a price for each person who gonna bring a Jew  
13 to the Germans; they give a bottle of whiskey and a  
14 pound of jugar--so they went to the forest and took  
15 the Jews out and found them and brought them to the  
16 Germans. And I personally, I, I--

17 MRS. KAMM: Oh, yes.

18 MR. KAMM: --condemn them so much for  
19 it, what they did. It's--I had four friends who  
20 were killed by the Polish people after the war in  
21 1945 when we liberated a town in--a southern Poland  
22 town. My friends were killed there and one friend,  
23 who was shot in both hands, lives in Israel today.  
24 And this, this what--I just can't forget this.

25 INTERVIEWER: I'm wondering now, now

1 that you're here and all--

2 MR. KAMM: Yes.

3 INTERVIEWER: How do you--are you  
4 still a resistance fighter--

5 MR. KAMM: In heart, yes.

6 INTERVIEWER: --in other ways?

7 MR. KAMM: At heart, yes. Yes.

8 INTERVIEWER: And what--

9 MR. KAMM: I cannot--

10 INTERVIEWER: --sorts of things?

11 MR. KAMM: I cannot forgive. I'm a  
12 successful businessman today in Los Angeles. We  
13 have a lovely family. We have two daughters,  
14 married. We have two grandchildren.

15 MRS. KAMM: Two lovely son-in-laws.

16 MR. KAMM: And we live a nice life  
17 and, you know, we live a normal life.

18 MRS. KAMM: But this is very exciting  
19 to us here.

20 MR. KAMM: Because we met a lot--

21 MRS. KAMM: It's really--this is  
22 really a celebration of life. In spite of  
23 everything, we survived the holocaust We are here  
24 to tell the world about it. We are here to meet  
25 people that we have not seen in years and it's a



1 most exciting moment for us. Already I have met  
2 some people tht were with us in Riga--with me, in  
3 Riga, Latvia, and I understand tomorrow we have some  
4 more people coming, to talk to each other, to look  
5 at each other and talk about the past. And it's  
6 very exciting.

7 MR. KAMM: I'm all--all shaken up.

8 INTERVIEWER: Yes. Why, I should  
9 think, to come from Los Angeles it means that you  
10 want to be here, you must be here.

11 MRS. KAMM: Yes. We planned it.

12 MR. KAMM: There's a group of 500  
13 people from Los Angeles here.

14 INTERVIEWER: Did you travel  
15 together?

16 MRS. KAMM: No, no, but we traveled  
17 with another couple and just seeking to see that  
18 we--

19 MR. KAMM: You see, we have a club in  
20 Los Angeles of all the survivors, the 1939 Club,  
21 where we do a lot of charitable work. As a matter  
22 of fact, two years ago we established a chair at  
23 UCLA--you heard about UCLA in Los Angeles?

24 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Oh, sure.

25 MRS. KAMM: Very prestigious

1 university.

2 MR. KAMM: --for the study of the  
3 holocaust. We endowed a chair for \$300,000 and we  
4 have a class of 200 students. It's really  
5 wonderful, just wonderful. We do lot of charitable  
6 work in the Los Angeles organization. And we meet  
7 and it's nice.

8 MRS. KAMM: Well, the aim of this  
9 particular chair that we established, we find it is  
10 most important for Jews and non-Jews to study about  
11 the holocaust and we have the most prestigious  
12 professors from all over the world that serve  
13 several terms. The interest is tremendous and we  
14 feel that we survivors will not live on forever and  
15 the only way we will prevent another holocaust is by  
16 education, by telling people what had happened and  
17 to be aware.

18 And being that we do not live  
19 forever, at least there will be some people that  
20 studied about it and it's history and try to prevent  
21 it because of the knowledge of it.

22 MR. KAMM: As a matter of fact, a  
23 couple weeks ago, Elly and I made some video tapes  
24 for UCLA--

25 INTERVIEWER: Oh.

1 MR. KAMM: --about our story during  
2 the war. And I understand my wife's tape was so  
3 good that they send to Yale, to the archives there.

4 MRS. KAMM: And it also will be in  
5 the archives at UCLA.

6 MR. KAMM: At UCLA.

7 MRS. KAMM: Yes, yes.

8 MR. KAMM: For posterity.

9 INTERVIEWER: Well, that's very good  
10 to know.

11 MR. KAMM: Matter of fact, we gonna  
12 have two tapes for our kids

13 MRS. KAMM: So they will remember  
14 what we had gone through.

15 INTERVIEWER: I, in thinking about  
16 this, I have thought, what were some of the things  
17 that kept you going from day to day--

18 MR. KAMM: Who knows.

19 INTERVIEWER: --what kind of faith or  
20 what to look forward to?

21 MRS. KAMM: Really, nothing. We did  
22 not know what the next minute would bring us. Just,  
23 I would say, sheer luck, maybe because I personally  
24 was younger, had more, maybe, stamina or maybe  
25 somebody was able to slip me an extra piece of

1 bread. Because of my age, that helped me to keep a  
2 little bit more strength than maybe somebody else,  
3 and just sheer luck. That's about all.

4 MR. KAMM: Yes. I would say--

5 MRS. KAMM: The will to live, the  
6 determination.

7 MR. KAMM: No.

8 MRS. KAMM: And also to, to survive.  
9 That's what kept us.

10 MR. KAMM: I think this is--this is  
11 true to everybody. Nobody even thought about going  
12 to--

13 MRS. KAMM: Survive.

14 MR. KAMM: --live, survive, because  
15 every minute there was danger of being killed. In  
16 my particular case, we were killed by the  
17 Ukrainians. We were killed by the Polish, by the  
18 Polish people, or you got killed by the Germans.

19 INTERVIEWER: And what about just  
20 your faith in God? Did that leave you or--

21 MRS. KAMM: Well, we--we believe in  
22 God again. At the time, I don't think--we were  
23 praying and hoping to God, "Please God, let us  
24 live." My mother particularly was very optimistic  
25 and she thought that God is with us and this will

1 not last too long and with God's help we will  
2 survive this and see my father and my--the rest of  
3 the family again.

4 She was much more of an optimist than  
5 I was. I don't know why I was less of a--being that  
6 I was much younger than she was. Unfortunately, she  
7 was gassed with my youngest brother and she did not  
8 survive. My father did not survive. I have another  
9 brother that was hung in front of another brother in  
10 Auschwitz--

11 MR. KAMM: Who's here.

12 MRS. KAMM: --who's here today.

13 MR. KAMM: He was hanged.

14 MRS. KAMM: Just about--

15 MR. KAMM: Three months before the  
16 liberation.

17 MRS. KAMM: --three months before the  
18 liberation.

19 MR. KAMM: He was hanged in front of  
20 ten thousand people.

21 MRS. KAMM: This was his resistance.  
22 He tried to liberate Auschwitz, which is--

23 MR. KAMM: He was in Auschwitz.

24 MRS. KAMM: --a big story by itself.

25 MR. KAMM: He was in underground in

1     Auschwitz.

2                   MRS. KAMM:    So, I don't know.  We  
3     were wondering many-a-times that the people that you  
4     knew around you, we would reminisce and say, "If we  
5     ever survive this, will we act like human beings  
6     again?"  Would we--

7                   MR. KAMM:    Yeah.  This was the main  
8     talk all the time--if, if we survive.

9                   MRS. KAMM:    Will we, will we be able  
10    to, to behave like a human being, to sit at a table  
11    and hold a fork and a knife and eat like human  
12    beings?  Will we, will we, in other words, be normal  
13    people again?

14                  MR. KAMM:    In my case, one time I  
15    didn't take off my clothes for eight months.  I had  
16    ten million lice on me.  It was--you couldn't wash,  
17    you couldn't--slept on the ground for four years.  I  
18    didn't see a bed for four years.  So it was  
19    really--really awful.  You know, my youngest brother  
20    was killed was 6-years-old.  My other was 9.  My  
21    other brother was 11 and my other brother was 15 and  
22    my parents were 42-years-old, so--

23                  MRS. KAMM:    So we both lost our  
24    parents at a very young age, and brothers, and--

25                  MR. KAMM:    You see, I'm a realist.

1 You talk about faith in God. You know, we belong to  
2 a temple. There came--was times that you wonder.  
3 Because my mother was a very religious person. She  
4 wouldn't do anything without asking the rabbi what--  
5 if she could do things, you know. But she was  
6 killed. She was gassed. Nobody helped.

7 MRS. KAMM: There is no answer for  
8 what has happened.

9 MR. KAMM: How can you answer? How  
10 can you--who knows.

11 MRS. KAMM: But we survived and,  
12 unfortunately, Ben is all by himself. He does not  
13 have any parents or brothers that he grew up with.  
14 I found two brothers. The rest of the family was  
15 gassed. And we met--

16 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I was going to  
17 ask you how you met because 37 years--

18 MRS. KAMM: We met after and--

19 MR. KAMM: I liberated her.

20 MRS. KAMM: But we fell in love. We  
21 married and we lived in--

22 MR. KAMM: --in Danzig.

23 MRS. KAMM: --in Danzig, where it was  
24 occupied under Polish--

25 INTERVIEWER: What were the

1 circumstances of your meeting? I mean, how--

2 MRS. KAMM: We were--I was liberated  
3 with three other girlfriends. There is a story by  
4 itself, how we were liberated. And we needed food,  
5 so two of my friends were from Poland who spoke  
6 Polish and they would go to the head of that town at  
7 the time that occupied Danzig and would speak to  
8 him.

9 MR. KAMM: Like the mayor, you know?

10 MRS. KAMM: Like the mayor.

11 MR. KAMM: Like a social service was  
12 there.

13 MRS. KAMM: And asked them if he  
14 could supply us with food, because it was chaos. I  
15 mean, things were not normal. And he did and he  
16 found out that we were survivors from a  
17 concentration camp and he allowed us to come twice  
18 or three times a week and he would give us baskets  
19 of food so that we can get back to ourselves again.

20 And as we were going up to this  
21 office one day, he came down with two friends. And  
22 on the stairway, we--

23 MR. KAMM: Met.

24 MRS. KAMM: We stopped and we met and  
25 so Ben came and visit us girls.



1 MR. KAMM: You know, it was a time  
2 when--excuse me. At that time--are you Jewish?

3 THE INTERVIEWER: No, I'm not Jewish,  
4 but any way, it's okay.

5 MR. KAMM: We were afraid to even say  
6 that we're Jews because the Polish population, for  
7 centuries, was so anti-semitic. They hated the Jews  
8 so badly that you can just imagine. You just  
9 can't--even after the war, when you came they hated  
10 you because--it was awful, this guy is alive again,  
11 you know. So we used to have a word between us, a  
12 Hebrew word, "an-ruch."

13 MRS. KAMM: If you saw somebody in  
14 the street--

15 MR. KAMM: And he looked Jewish.

16 MRS. KAMM: --and you thought it was  
17 a semitic look of some kind, you were just passing  
18 by, by saying "an-ruch." That means, "Are you one  
19 of us?" And so you would stop that person and he  
20 would answer you, "yes," and then you would talk.  
21 "Where were you?"

22 MR. KAMM: "Where you coming from?"

23 MRS. KAMM: "Where you come from?"  
24 Perhaps, did you meet, did you know my mother, did  
25 you know my sister or cousin, because maybe they

1 were in the same camp.

2 MR. KAMM: Everybody was looking for  
3 everybody. Because everybody lost people in their  
4 family, so we were looking for brothers, for  
5 sisters, for uncles, for cousins, and we were all  
6 the time looking--for months, looking and looking  
7 and looking.

8 MRS. KAMM: Well, anyway, Ben and I,  
9 we had met at that staircase, as I said, and he came  
10 to visit us every night and one day he asked to  
11 marry me. He asked me to marry him. And we did.  
12 And about two months later, my brother came to  
13 Danzig.

14 MR. KAMM: Her brother looked for  
15 her.

16 MRS. KAMM: He had been looking for  
17 me for months.

18 MR. KAMM: All over Germany.

19 MRS. KAMM: All over Germany and  
20 somebody told him that I was alive and that I lived  
21 somewheres in Danzig. So he went to Berlin. There  
22 were no--

23 INTERVIEWER: My hands are shaking  
24 because, you know.

25 MRS. KAMM: You cannot get--

1                   MR. KAMM: Yeah. It was a rough  
2 year.

3                   MRS. KAMM: You cannot get--you  
4 weren't able to purchase any railroad tickets.  
5 There were no scheduled trains and--but he went to  
6 Berlin and he figured he needed some form of  
7 identification to get to Poland. Being that he  
8 doesn't speak Polish or Russian, it was not that  
9 easy for somebody that only spoke German, the German  
10 language, to travel because they could have taken  
11 him for a German, too, and again interrogated him or  
12 throw him somewhere in jail.

13                   But anyway, when he went to Berlin,  
14 he went to the Jewish--

15                   MR. KAMM: Community.

16                   MRS. KAMM: --community and they told  
17 him--and he asked to get a pass. He wanted to go to  
18 Danzig. And they said, "Oh, wait a minute. There  
19 is a transport from--half Jews came from Danzig.  
20 Maybe they know your sister or maybe your sister is  
21 among them." So he went to the leader of that  
22 transport and he says, "No, she's not with us, but I  
23 just married them a month ago." He was the one that  
24 performed our wedding ceremony. So anyway, so my  
25 brother was joking and says, "How dare did she get

1 married without my permission," because he is three  
2 years older than I am--two years older. Better  
3 don't say three.

4           So anyway, they gave him some sort of  
5 paper and he came to Danzig. And how he found us,  
6 that is a story by itself and it's too long even to  
7 go into. And we--naturally, he rang the bell and  
8 when all I heard is just the voice, "Is Elly  
9 Diamond"--because my maiden name was Diamond--"Is  
10 she here?" And Ben answered the door and as soon as  
11 I heard that voice, I screamed from the other room,  
12 "That's my brother." And I heard--then, of course,  
13 he heard my voice and he ran wherever the voice came  
14 from, and we embraced and so on and so forth. And  
15 the next question was, "Where is my father and where  
16 is my other brother?" And so, after a while--so  
17 anyway, he was with us for a few days and then we--

18           MR. KAMM: We had to smuggle  
19 ourselves out from Poland.

20           MRS. KAMM: From Poland to get back  
21 to Germany so that we can apply for papers either to  
22 go to Palestine, Israel, or to come to the United  
23 States.

24           MR. KAMM: It wasn't easy to get out  
25 of Poland. So what we did is, we went to a town on

1 the way to Berlin, to Germany, and we stopped a  
2 truck, a Russian truck--well, I took with me a  
3 couple bottles of Vodka I bought and I gave the  
4 Russian officer the Vodka and took me to Berlin.  
5 And that's how we left Poland, went to the west, and  
6 we--we lived in Stuttgart. From Stuttgart, we came  
7 to the United States.

8 MRS. KAMM: Well, when my brother  
9 came, that was just about a month and a half after  
10 we had--or two months--after we had gotten married.  
11 And it was a thrill to meet Ben who also was--he was  
12 proud of him because he was in the underground and  
13 working against the German and he felt he did his  
14 deed.

15 And so my husband, being that he had  
16 nobody--and, at the time, I didn't know that my  
17 brother was alive; I had nobody--he wanted to  
18 establish a family. And this to him was extremely  
19 important and I used to say--afterall, I was  
20 19-years-old. I was still very young and naive and  
21 he would say to me, well, he wants a family. And I  
22 said, "Where would you go with an infant, with a  
23 child? We are not going to stay here. We want to  
24 go and leave Poland, go to Germany and establish  
25 ourselves. Where will you go with a baby?" He said

1 to me, "Instead of carrying a suitcase, I would like  
2 to carry a baby," and he did. He did.

3 He has been the most wonderful  
4 husband and father, father-in-law and grandfather,  
5 and a good friend. So somehow, somewhere, God was  
6 with us and in spite of everything, we survived.

7 MR. KAMM: And they told us it  
8 wouldn't last.

9 MRS. KAMM: And we will be  
10 married--in September, it will be 38 years.

11 INTERVIEWER: That's just wonderful.  
12 I think I ought to stop this. There are other  
13 things I'd like to say.

14 MRS. KAMM: Okay.

15 MR. KAMM: Sure.

16 MRS. KAMM: Go ahead. Ask us  
17 questions.

18 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well, I guess,  
19 like now, have you noticed any rise here in  
20 anti-Semitism in the United States?

21 MRS. KAMM: Yes.

22 MR. KAMM: Yes, yes.

23 INTERVIEWER: In what ways?

24 MR. KAMM: You've seen this swastika  
25 painting on synagogues?

1 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I've seen it.

2 MR. KAMM: You see this--how you  
3 call, the Historical Review? They say that this  
4 never happened, this is all talk, this is--the  
5 Germans never killed 6 million Jews. And this is  
6 just a lot of baloney.

7 MRS. KAMM: I feel they have the  
8 nerve to come now and say that the holocaust was a  
9 hoax. There are still the survivors, thousands and  
10 thousands of survivors that can tell you the story,  
11 and how dare do they say that that didn't exist. So  
12 that's why we are gathering, to show the world we  
13 were there and it did exist and that those are  
14 lunatics that write these stories--and try to  
15 educate the people around us that another holocaust  
16 should not happen again. You have to be aware. And  
17 I think only through education can we tell the world  
18 to prevent another holocaust.

19 MR. KAMM: As a matter of fact, Elly  
20 and I have--we go to high schools and talk to  
21 classes. As a matter of fact, two weeks ago, I  
22 talked to two classes of boys and girls 17-years-old  
23 about my story in the holocaust. And Elly talked--

24 MRS. KAMM: Last Wednesday, the ADL,  
25 in conjunction with the 1939 Club, sponsored an

1 all-day conference where they had two high schools  
2 come to various place where there were movies shown  
3 and lectures. And they had a group of survivors  
4 talking to individual classrooms and the response  
5 was very favorable and the questions and the form  
6 that they filled out were very rewarding. And no  
7 matter how painful it is for us to talk about it and  
8 be reminded of our past, it has to be told. And  
9 only by education, as I said before, can we prevent  
10 another holocaust.

11 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well, I want to  
12 thank you so much. I just feel that there must be a  
13 million things more.

14 MRS. KAMM: There are a million  
15 things more. You cannot talk and put it in one  
16 little capsule because--

17 MR. KAMM: When we made the--

18 MRS. KAMM: The story, first of all--  
19 you keep forgetting what really is happening and  
20 then an hour later, you talk about it and other  
21 things pop back into your mind. So it is a story to  
22 be told over and over and over again.

23 MR. KAMM: Yeah. I always--we talk  
24 with our children about it and I have a nice article  
25 I wrote a few years ago about my story. I have it



1 in my hotel room. If I would have known, I would  
2 have brought it to you.

3 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

4 MR. KAMM: You can write to me. I'll  
5 send it to you.

6 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Sure.

7 MR. KAMM: I can send it to you.

8 It's about five pages. You're going to have a good  
9 story.

10 MRS. KAMM: Is there anything else  
11 you would like to ask us? We would be glad to  
12 answer.

13 INTERVIEWER: Well, I think that some  
14 of the things that--just the daily experiences, that  
15 sort of thing, is some of what makes it so real when  
16 people listen to you talking.

17 MR. KAMM: I tell you, the daily  
18 experience is a story by itself. You will really  
19 have to sit down or write down if you remembered  
20 things because so many things happened every single  
21 day. Every single day in my case because we used to  
22 go on operations almost every--daily, to mine roads,  
23 mine bridges, mine all kind of things, or make  
24 ambushes of the Germans on the roads. It's every  
25 day happen.

1                   MRS. KAMM: With us the same. Every  
2 day, other things. We didn't know what the next  
3 minute would bring us. Then there would come an  
4 order, "Everybody out," and people go into a truck  
5 and these trucks already were equipped with gas. By  
6 the time they reached wherever they were taking  
7 them, they were dead already. They had to make  
8 constantly room for more Jews that they had  
9 surrounded from different countries or cities.

10                   The time I came to the Riga ghetto,  
11 there were already several cities from Germany sent  
12 there a few months earlier, but when the first ones  
13 came, the streets were still. Instead of water  
14 running in the gutter, the blood was running in the  
15 gutter. The food on their table was still hot.  
16 During their meal they were surrounded and shot,  
17 women and children. And mostly the Latvian Jewish  
18 men were alive. There were very few Latvian Jewish  
19 women and children alive--very, very few--to make  
20 room for more Jews.

21                   And how would they do that in a  
22 hurry? By killing them--one, two, three. So, you  
23 see, daily life, every day was something different.  
24 Every day you were facing different things and you  
25 just were lucky to survive or you were alert or

1 somehow, somewhere--

2 MR. KAMM: I ask one question. I  
3 cannot understand it. Why the Jews? Why, through  
4 centuries, the Jews? Why? Why? They're just  
5 people like anybody else. As a people, they  
6 contributed more to the scientific world, to  
7 culture, to music, to poetry, to writing, more than  
8 any other people. Why the Jews? Why persecute?  
9 Why kill them? Why?

10 MRS. KAMM: Where was the world?  
11 Even America knew what was going on. Nobody was  
12 there to help us. Nobody was there to help us.

13 MR. KAMM: I just--it boggles my  
14 mind. Why, why us? Why us? Why don't you pick  
15 somebody else? Why pick the Jews?

16 THE INTERVIEWER: I don't think  
17 anybody should be picked on.

18 MRS. KAMM: Why should you pick  
19 anybody? Nobody--

20 MR. KAMM: You're right. You're  
21 right. But why, through centuries, the Jews? In  
22 Spain, the Jews; in Poland, the Jews; in Germany,  
23 the Jews--all over, the Jews. What did they do?  
24 They didn't kill anybody. It's--especially in  
25 Poland. I come from Poland. It's absolutely

1 ridiculous. There's no Jews today in Poland, but  
2 before the war it was--you couldn't walk the street.  
3 People were--pickets were picketing my grandparents,  
4 who had a butcher shop, picketing so that they  
5 shouldn't go and buy in the Jewish store. At the  
6 university in Warsaw, a Jew couldn't sit in the  
7 class, had to stand in the left corner. In--

8 INTERVIEWER: When did that start?  
9 Was that always that way?

10 MR. KAMM: Always.

11 MRS. KAMM: Always.

12 MR. KAMM: In spite of it, the best  
13 doctors came out from the Jews in Poland, the best  
14 lawyers, the best physicists came out from the Jews.  
15 In Jewish life, education and charity are the two  
16 most important things in Jewish upbringing. And I  
17 think that all the people are jealous because of the  
18 life we lead.

19 INTERVIEWER: I don't have the  
20 answer. I can't tell you.

21 MR. KAMM: Well, that's how I feel  
22 about it.

23 MRS. KAMM: Is there anything else  
24 you would like to--

25 INTERVIEWER: I think that that is

1 just--what you've said is just--I don't know what to  
2 say. I don't know what to say, but thank you very  
3 much.

4 MRS. KAMM: Okay.

5 INTERVIEWER: It's been an honor  
6 talking to you.

7 MR. KAMM: Look, if you want an  
8 article I wrote, you can write to me and I will be  
9 happy to send you a copy of it.

10 MRS. KAMM: And also, my brother has  
11 an article that he wrote about the other brother  
12 that was hung in Auschwitz.

13 MR. KAMM: I can send you both  
14 articles.

15 MRS. KAMM: We can send you both and  
16 that would give you a little bit more of an insight  
17 into--

18 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well, thank you  
19 very much.

20 MR. KAMM: You're very welcome.

21

22

23

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25