

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN KENTUCKY INTERVIEW PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION

Fryda Haber

Residence: Lexington, KY.

Length of interview: approximately 2 hours.

Date(s) of interview: 5/17/00

Related resources:

- Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation video interview, conducted 9/16/96 (see summary below)

Evaluation/further information about interview:

Fryda's interview was conducted first; then we had lunch and conducted the interview with Oscar, her husband. We clarified some sketchy information about Fryda's pre-war and wartime experiences, and then focused in on her life in Lexington, her relations with the Jewish community there (almost non-existent; she does not feel that she has received a warm reception), her friendships with non-Jewish Poles and her devotion to Poland, and her family, as well as her reflections on her own life.

Summary of Shoah interview:

Grandson, Roy Joseph Haber, is invited to sit before camera for a moment before interview formally begins.

Life before the war in Cracow, Poland, where Fryda was born, was good—she loves Cracow to this day. As a Jewish girl, she never felt different—she had Polish friends, and spoke only Polish at home. Her family was relatively assimilated. Father owned a furniture shop. Fryda was a serious student, made good grades, never missed school. Never experienced antisemitism. Had one younger brother.

When war started, Fryda went to the Oscar's home village, where it was safer. They were engaged at this point; married in 1940. Oscar's family accepted her, and the villagers were wonderful. Tells story of priest who wanted to save her and Oscar (as described in summary of Oscar's Shoah interview, below).

While living with the priest's brother, Fryda worked as a servant, and gave religious and French lessons to children. Went every week to church. They moved to another house, where they were staying with a woman who was "a terrible antisemite"—and someone tipped them off to Gestapo. She and Oscar escaped to the woods. (See Oscar's summary, below, for more details.)

Three years ago, Oscar and Fryda visited Muscha and his family, who had saved them during wartime, for the first time since then. They were sending him money for years, but he asked them to stop, said he had enough.

After liberation, returned to Oscar's village, and then to Cracow. Reunited with father after a few months, who had survived Auschwitz, and they all lived together.

Then they moved to Belgium, where they stayed for 5 years. Fryda liked it very much, but Oscar thought Israel was the place for Jews, so they moved. Their son was born in Belgium. In Israel, they had a wonderful social life; lived near Tel Aviv.

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In all their moves, from Poland to Belgium to Israel to Kentucky, they adapted well. “My husband never heard me say ‘I must have,’” says Fryda. “When I have, I’m OK, and when not, I’m OK, too. And I am happy, and thankful to God.”

Fryda’s father stayed in Belgium when she and Oscar moved to Israel. Of course, this was hard for her.

Pictures of family shown.