

ABSTRACT

Interviewee: Regina Fleischer
Interviewer: Rhea Adler
Date of interview: Spring, 1981

Length of time in Wilmette
Birth in Bidgoszcz (Poland) - Germany - Life 1928-1933 - An only child - Father in wholesale leather business - Anti-semitism forced move to Warsaw
Explanation of Hasidic Jews - Mother's background vs. Father's background (more worldly)
Life in Warsaw compared to the Depression years in U.S.A. (through Joseph Fleischer's experience)
Childhood reaction to antisemitism - Wish to come to States began early - Conflicts within parents at thoughts of leaving friends and family to reestablish themselves in a new country kept them in Warsaw
German occupation - Formation of "Judenrat" and Ghetto - Life in the Ghetto - Concentration camps
Move to factory apartment for safety - Mother picked up by police, Father obtains her release - Move from factory - Father walks out and never returns
Maid arranges for Regina to live with a Polish Catholic family - Unsuccessful - Returns to Ghetto and Mother - Leaves Ghetto shortly before its burning - Lived with Catholic family - Not familiar with religious ritual practiced in family so eventually returned to hiding place with Mother, complete wiping out of the Ghetto, people in hiding "turned in" when money ran out - Polish uprising against Germans - Becomes courier for Polish Resistance - Poles overcome by Germans - Decision to be caught
Caught and placed on a cattle train with 150 people to a car - Taken to Ravensbruck, Germany in N.E.
Worked as slave labor for Siemen's Electrical - Describes life in concentration camp, "life was hell," kept hair at great cost
Decide to be taken on transport and were put under Red Cross care - Used as camouflage for movement of German troops
Arrival in Copenhagen after much delay and illness from food from American Red Cross packages - To Malmö - Lived in Sweden for a year and a half waiting to come on Polish quota
Came to U.S.A. at age of 18 years - Expression of strong emotional pull then and now - Present philosophy
Came to New York City on "Gripsholm" - Met by uncle - First impressions of New York and Chicago - Mother employed

in garment district, lived in small apartment, begins school with no English at Roosevelt High School, dropped out, starts business college, finished and goes to work for chemical jobbers

Meets Joseph Fleischer, marries and goes to New York as he goes into Navy in Korean War - Returns to Chicago, pregnant with daughter Janice while husband still in service - Baby born at Great Lakes Naval Hospital - Mother has remarried so she and baby take a furnished apartment at 6106 University on the Midway - Joe returns, gets employment and they move to a larger southside apartment with very good friends across hall - Baby-sat for each other - They also sensed her potential and encouraged her to go to night school

Becomes pregnant second time - Has a son and remains a homemaker 20 years

Return to college after Janice entered New Trier and Marc is in junior high school - Equivalency test finds her in 98 percentile - Encouraged to enroll at Roosevelt University in CLEP Program which University of Chicago and Princeton developed - Tested and entered as a college junior, graduated with honors, graduate school at Rosary prior to Roosevelt graduation - Graduated Rosary with honors 1972

Job hunt, Wilmette Library opening under Helen Siniff - Works part time with graduation following year, hired full time as reference librarian and cataloguer under Mr. Freiser and Dorothy Hasse - Upon her retirement became Assistant Director under Dick Thompson

Library system goes on computer - Lack of security - Community attitudes change regarding respect of library property

Takes computer course at Oakton Community College - Wilmette Public Library goes on computer, placed in charge of conversion

Future of libraries - Various kinds of library users - Changes in needs of readers as changes in communications occur