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Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: Keith Rosen

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(Signature)

Date: 12-6-89

Oral History Collection

Lore Price

Interviewer: Keith Rosen **Date: December 9, 1989**

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Mr. Rosen: **This is Keith Rosen, and I'm interviewing Lore Price for the University of North Texas Oral History Collection. This interview is taking place on December 9, 1989, in Dallas, Texas. I'm interviewing Lore Price to hear her experiences during the Holocaust and how they affected her life and why she believed she survived.**

Mrs. Price, please tell me some autobiographical information about yourself. For example, state your full name, when and where you were born, your education, and occupation.

Ms. Price: **I'm Lore Price, born Lore Sass. I was born in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on November 1, 1921. It's in West Germany today. It is better known as the coal mining district of West Germany today. It's**

in the Ruhr Valley, close to Essen. I attended school in Gelsenkirchen--only Jewish school--for eight years. It would be equal to the education here of completing high school.

Rosen: Tell me something about your life growing up.

Price: I have a brother who has lived since 1936 in Israel. My parents both perished in the concentration camp in Riga.

Rosen: Describe what life was like growing up in the 1920s in Germany.

Price: Well, my parents had a beauty shop for men and women. My father was a barber. My mother helped him. We had employees, and in that time it was usual that the employees would eat at the master's house. They did not live with us, but they would eat with us.

Rosen: How large a business was it? How many employees did they have?

Price: Well, I would say he had about four chairs in the men's shop and about three chairs in the women's shop. So it was a pretty good-sized beauty shop.

Rosen: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Price: I have only one brother.

Rosen: At that time?

Price: I have only one brother, period.

Rosen: What about your extended family, as far as aunts and uncles, etc.?

Price: The family from my father’s side had two brothers and two sisters, and the one family went to the United States in 1935. His other brother, with his family including two children, a boy and a girl, also evacuated there in Riga at the same time. Oh, they came first. Their transport was actually before us to Riga, and we followed them in January of 1942.

Rosen: You mentioned your father’s side. What about your mother’s side?

Price: My mother did not have any living relatives that I knew of.

Rosen: When you were growing up?

Price: That is correct--when I was growing up.

Rosen: You mentioned that your parents had a barber shop that served both men and women. Could you describe a little about what life was like as a child growing up in Germany during the twenties?

Price: We didn’t know anything else. We were growing up in Germany--normally. Religion was not a question at the time I was a child.

Rosen: You mentioned religion was not a question. I was wondering if you could describe what your religious background was at that time.

Price: My religious background was Jewish. I went to a Jewish school, and I attended synagogue every Friday night and Saturday. So my upbringing was very much Jewish.

Rosen: Would you say that your parents were proud of being Jewish?

Price: Well, my parents actually did not really observe the Jewish religion as much. My father was raised by my grandmother, since his father had passed on--my grandfather had passed on--and there was actually no question of religion because most kids at the time when my father grew up had to work. There was no time for anything else but work, staying alive. They were not wealthy.

Rosen: What was your perception of the Jewish faith? You mentioned you went to a Jewish school, and you went to services on Friday night and Saturday.

Price: Right.

Rosen: It obviously was a part of your life. What awareness did you have of it at that time?

Price: Well, actually, we did not emphasize religion too much in those years when I grew up. Really, the first

awareness of being called “Jew” started after 1933 when Hitler became very much in force.

Rosen: In those years before 1933, before Hitler came to power, can you describe your childhood friends? What kind of playmates did you have?

Price: Well, we actually had a lot of playmates, and most of them were the children from the neighborhood. There was no difference. We didn’t know--we never heard--the word “Jew.”

Rosen: You mentioned children in the neighborhood. Would these be children who were Jewish, or would they be children who were Christian?

Price: Mostly Christian children. We never lived in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood.

Rosen: I was curious about that. The neighborhood you grew up in, was it mixed?

Price: Mixed neighborhood. Like I said, it was not predominantly Jewish at all.

Rosen: Before 1933, did you see any problems between the different ethnic groups?

Price: No, not at all.

Rosen: Let’s pick up, then, with 1933, since that seems to be a turning point. Can you describe some of those changes you saw in 1933?

Price: In 1933, actually, where I lived in the industrial part of Germany, the change came very gradually. As long as the coal mines were producing, there was not much change, with the exception that maybe the Nazi Party, tried to get the better hand of everything in the coal mine district with all the working people. After 1939 all this propaganda started from the Hitler *Jugend*, the *B.D.M.*, the Nazi party itself. People were laid off. Times started to get bad, and this gave fire to the propaganda of the Nazis.

Rosen: Now you mentioned in 1939...

Price: Yes, from 1939 on.

Rosen: Actually, those years between 1933 and 1939...

Price: This was the point when a small flickering flame came to full blast--in 1939.

Rosen: Ms. Price, I want you to tell me a little bit about life during the late 1920s, 1930s, going up to the Holocaust.

Price: Now when the stock market crashed in 1929, it also was felt in Germany. During this time my parents nearly lost everything. We were forced to give up the big shop. We could have only a very small shop. Business had gotten quite bad, until at the end--I would say it might have been 1931, 1932--my father

frankly had to give up the shop completely. As the Depression got worse--small coal mine towns are never very prosperous, really, not as prosperous as bigger cities--the Depression started to be felt in many places. After my father lost his possessions, lost his shop, my mother was forced to go to work, and she worked as a sales lady in a huge department store.

Rosen: I'm curious at this point. When your father had his own barber shop, were his clientele mostly Jews or mostly Christian?

Price: Mostly Christian.

Rosen: So the Jewish and Christian communities, at least as you described them as you were growing up...most of your friends were Christians.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: They seemed to mix rather well together. Did you see any changes with that affiliation between the Jewish and Christian communities after the Depression hit?

Price: No. The rapid change, I would say, would come after, oh, 1938 or 1939. Then it was really felt. Hitler was there, and it was really felt. Then the persecutions started here and there against Jewish people. But before then, no, we did not feel that much of changes

in the life together with the Christian people--not at all.

Rosen: When Hitler came to power in 1933, he made no secret of his dislike for the Jewish people. What was your perceptions or feelings when he came to power in 1933? How do you feel about the anti-Semite propaganda?

Price: Actually, in 1933--at the beginning--we did not feel too much of it. The onslaught actually would start in 1936-1937-1938, and then, of course, in 1939, before the war started. We knew what was going on. At least I knew that in 1935 they had started already in planning for the war.

Rosen: Now when you say “they,” you’re referring to...

Price: The Nazis started to plan for the war.

Rosen: Did you have any idea in 1933 what the future might hold?

Price: No, not at all. I was only twelve years old.

Rosen: Did you ever hear your parents or friends or people you knew talk about what the future might bring?

Price: Not so much because you have to understand that we were brought up actually no different than the German people were. My father was in World War I, had his medals to show, so he did not feel any difference between Jew and German. There was no difference. We

did not know anything else. We were growing up in Germany, we lived under the German people, and we didn’t know anything else. Many times we felt that maybe we were Jewish only when on high holy days we would go to the temple and things like that, but otherwise, no.

Rosen: You mentioned a little earlier that your father lost his business and that your mother had to go to work. That was in 1931?

Price: I would say 1931-1932.

Rosen: What did your father do after that?

Price: My father tried to sell equipment for beauty shops at that time for a short while. Then later on, when it came to be that the Jewish men could not visit the barber shops anymore where they used to go, then my father would go to their homes and do the barbering there.

Rosen: When you say the barbering, you mean that he...

Price: Cut their hair and shaved them.

Rosen: So, from what I understand, he was working as a salesman to the shops, but he was also working as a cutter in people’s private homes.

Price: Right.

Rosen: When did that discrimination begin? Do you remember when that began, when your father could no longer sell to merchants?

Price: I would say it was very much from 1938 on that more discrimination showed up here, where you couldn’t do this and you couldn’t do that, and Jewish people were not welcome anymore in certain restaurants or what.

Rosen: You mentioned a little earlier that you felt discrimination beginning probably about 1935-1936-1937. I was wondering if you could describe your first remembrances of discrimination based on being Jewish.

Price: Actually, it is very hard for me to remember because, see, in 1935 I was fourteen years old. Looking back, I can remember that we would find out through the propaganda slogans in the newspapers that in the bigger cities, where before the Jewish people were also welcome, they now had big signs out: “*Fuer Juden verboten*.”

Rosen: And that means?

Price: “Jews not allowed.”

Rosen: You mentioned that you had an eighth grade education earlier.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Do you remember what year that came to an end?

Price: My education came to an end...let's see. I started school in 1927, and my education came to an end, actually, in 1935.

Rosen: Was there any particular reason why it came to an end at the eighth grade?

Price: In Germany you would go four years to grade school, then to the *Gymnasium*, and from the *Gymnasium* to what you call here high school for four years. But at that time, the schooling was not more than eight grades with the exception that actually we learned in those eight years as much as would be compatible here with high school.

Rosen: You went through the eighth grade. At the end of that time, you did not continue, but was there any discrimination involved?

Price: Yes, there was discrimination. My brother attended junior high school. From 1935 on, he couldn't go anymore. That was already not allowed for Jewish students.

Rosen: In 1935.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Which is also the same year that you reached eighth grade.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Would you have continued in school if possible?

Price: I would have gone to *Gymnasium*, but it was not allowed to us anymore.

Rosen: At that point, then, you obviously did realize that there were different standards for Jews.

Price: Absolutely! At that point I found out, naturally, that we were discriminated against. We couldn't pursue higher education. That was one thing--no universities would allow us to attend.

Rosen: What did you think about that?

Price: Well, it was shocking, needless to say. First, we were baffled. Why? There was no answer, except you were Jewish and you were not allowed.

Rosen: In the absence of going to school, what did you do during those next few years?

Price: In 1935-1936, I started to work, and then there was another thing. We could not even pursue any profession. They said you could not learn anything. In Germany it's a little different than here. Here you attend beauty school, and in six months you are a beautician; or you go and learn to be a tailor, and that takes a six-month course and things like that. In Germany it's different. You go and are taught by a master. He must have a master's *Brief* [document]

which he has attained in school, and he would take you on as an apprentice. The first year you had to pay your master; the second year he would maybe give you a small allowance when you worked for him; and the third year you might get a small salary. After three years, you had to take an exam to be an apprentice. Then if you wanted to pursue your profession, you had to go again to school for a least three to four years to earn your master's *Brief* in this particular profession. So it was a little bit different, and I still think it still holds up today, that you must learn a profession really from the bottom up.

Rosen: **Well, your education was obviously limited to the eighth grade.**

Price: **Yes.**

Rosen: **What did you do in those remaining years?**

Price: **Well, in the remaining time, since I was not able to learn anything or go pursue a profession, I would work as a maid in Jewish households.**

Rosen: **And this is at the age of...?**

Price: **Fifteen.**

Rosen: **Fifteen?**

Price: Yes. From the age of fifteen to the age of nineteen, I was working for several Jewish families in different cities. I was not home anymore. In the meantime, my brother had already left for Israel--he left in 1936. In 1940, there was a possibility for me to go to a Jewish *Seminar* in Berlin to work in a kindergarten. Now this lasted from August of 1940 until December of 1940, when the Nazis closed the school--no more learning. By that time, of course, the war was going on, and war material was needed. Everywhere they could, they hired people for work in factories. By that time, I did not want to go home. I didn't want to go back to the small town, and I stayed in Berlin and went to work.

Rosen: You went to work in...

Price: In a telephone and telegraph factory. We made telephone relays.

Rosen: I want to go back here for a moment to fill in some gaps with some questions I have. You said your brother left for Israel in 1936?

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Why did he leave for Israel at that time?

Price: Well, my brother also had no possibility, really, to learn what he wanted to. He was working in Dusseldorf

with a gardener to keep a cemetery. He was to learn gardening, since that was the only possibility open to him.

Rosen: Did he want to learn something more than gardening?

Price: Right. He would have gone on with his education, but there was no possibility to do that. Then in 1936, he had a possibility to go to Israel, and he definitely said, “I am leaving,” and he did.

Rosen: Was there any desire on the part of you or your parents to also leave the country at that time?

Price: I believe today, looking back, that my father never believed or fathomed that things what followed could happen to him.

Rosen: What about you? What did you think?

Price: Yes, I had my doubts. But in Germany you were raised that you couldn’t talk to your parents, and you couldn’t make your stand that, “I will not stay here! I will be leaving, also!” The parents told you what to do, and you’d better do that. My brother was a boy. He was not home, and he came home and said, “I am going, and that’s that!”

My father’s brother had left in 1935 for America. My mother had told him, when she said goodbye, “I will see you in the mass grave.” But my parents never

talked about it at home. They never expressed their fear, so actually I was kept in the dark!

Rosen: Did you feel any fear during those years?

Price: Yes and no.

Rosen: Explain please.

Price: I'll explain it plainly. Day to day living was going on. People were not talking about their feelings. Those who had enough money could buy their way out and would leave everything. They wouldn't think of sharing with people who were not that fortunate. They would say, "All right, we can sponsor this family; we'll take them with us." So we were left--the old and the poor. The young ones had no work. The parents would tell you, "You shut up!" In other words, you don't have nothing to say. You can't express what you feel. I had a possibility in 1937 to leave, also. I would have had to leave my parents behind. There was so much objection from my parents that there was no way that I could leave.

Rosen: How long did you live at home with your parents?

Price: I left in 1940. When I went to school in 1940, I left and went to Berlin to school. I was living off and on with my parents. I worked in another city, but then

usually over the weekends, or every second weekend--on Saturday and Sunday--I was home.

Rosen: **When you mentioned you went off to school, were you talking about the Jewish...**

Price: ***Seminar*** **in Berlin.**

Rosen: ***Seminar*** **for children?**

Price: **Kindergarten.**

Rosen: **I want to come back to this in just a moment, but I want to go back to when your brother left in 1936. You said that he left because he had limited job opportunities.**

Price: **Correct.**

Rosen: **At that point, did your brother talk about any feelings or fears of...**

Price: **Yes, my brother talked to me quite often when he came home, and we'd talk about what was going on. For instance, he was in Dusseldorf, and the Nazis had underground factories where they would make war material.**

Rosen: **This is already happening in 1936?**

Price: **In 1936, right. This started actually from 1933 on. The workers in the factories were sworn to silence. They could not talk. As a matter of fact, my brother told me about one incident where one worker apparently**

had a little bit too much to drink and talked to his wife about what he was working on. Well, the wife couldn't keep her mouth shut, and the worker was eliminated. This was Nazi tactics.

Rosen: I assume that when you say "eliminated," you mean he was killed.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Well, then at least you knew in your family, and your brother knew, that the Germans were preparing for war.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Did you have any idea that this war would involve persecution of the Jews?

Price: As I mentioned before, we were not that much aware that this actually would happen. As the war was going on, more and more people left. So all of sudden, like, overnight, came the transportation of the Jewish people to Poland. That was 1939 when the war started.

Rosen: You mentioned that in 1939 the Jews relocated to Poland. You knew about this in 1939?

Price: Yes, we knew this. I knew it in 1939 just for the plain reason that my mother's ex-sister in-law...her first husband died in World War I, and she had married a man that had been born in Poland. Now the children of my aunt were in Holland. They had already left

Germany and were in Holland, and she was visiting her children in Holland. In the meantime, they deported my uncle to Poland. My aunt heard of it, came back, left everything behind, and joined him in Poland.

Rosen: Do you mean to say that your aunt asked to be deported so she could be with her husband?

Price: Correct. She came back, and they deported her, also. Then at that time, the children were safe. They were in Holland.

Rosen: What did the deportation mean to you?

Price: We did not, really, fathom what this would mean to us at that time because we didn’t understand: “What right do they have to come to your house and tell you you can take one suitcase with you and what you have on you, and then you go and leave everything behind--what you work for all of your life?”

Rosen: Did the Nazis give reasons for the deportation?

Price: No, they really did not. They told you--at least they told me or my parents--that we had to be at such-and-such place at such-and-such time, and that was that. No explanation, no nothing. We had already heard about the deportation of the Polish people. Then, at the time I was in school in Berlin, they started, also, to evacuate people from the middle of Germany.

Rosen: So you're saying the first deportations that you heard about were Polish people?

Price: Correct.

Rosen: And then the later deportation...

Price: In 1940-1941, they started with the deportation. Mainly, in fall of 1940, they started then with the deportation of the German Jewish people.

Rosen: You say that the Germans did not give a reason for the deportation. Did they give any explanation, or did you have any understanding of the conditions at the camps that the people were being deported to?

Price: At that time we didn't have any information or even any notice of where the people were, where they deported them to. This was all, really, anticlimactic after 1939, when the ***Kristallnacht*** took place in Germany. Then after the ***Kristallnacht***, everything really came to a head, where they tried to make Germany ***Judenrein***. That means cleanse them of all Jewish people.

Rosen: To rid Germany of Jews.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Now that was in 1939. When you were aware of ***Kristallnacht***, the night of the broken glass, what were your feelings?

Price: We were *terribly* afraid! It was horrible! You have to understand that in the small town where I lived, the main street had at least six or seven Jewish businesses. The front windows were broken, the merchandise was stolen; if they found the owners, they beat them, took them to jail. They did things like that, so naturally we were very frightened. We did not know what would be next.

The next thing came very fast. They started to arrest all Jewish men.

Rosen: How did that happen after the *Kristallnacht*?

Price: Very, very fast after the *Kristallnacht*. It was only several days afterwards that they started to arrest the Jewish men. They took them to jail. Now my father was very unfortunate. He could not shave with a safety razor. He had his straight razor, and anything else wouldn't do. When my father came back home, frankly, when they released him...

Rosen: Let's back up there for a moment. Was your father one of those arrested?

Price: Yes, my father was also one of those arrested, and that was very comical. My father had a date supposedly to go and see one of the Jewish men for a shave and a haircut. Where they lived in the apartment house,

we were the only Jewish family, but nobody paid any mind to that because they knew us for years. My father walked downstairs, and the policeman came upstairs. Instead of my father going and walking out, he came back up. The policeman didn't know who he was or what.

Rosen: So they passed each other?

Price: They passed each other, and my father walked back up and came home so the policeman would take him.

Now we had very good friends, German friends, who could have hidden my father. They offered many times to hide us.

Rosen: Now you're talking about Christian friends?

Price: Christian friends who would hide us--what very many had done during the war. My father would not yield.

Rosen: Why not?

Price: He said, "I'm German. I have my medals from the war, and I can prove that I am a good German, and nothing will happen to me." He had nothing good happen to him. He is in a mass grave in Riga.

Rosen: How long was your father arrested for?

Price: I would think that might have been about a week or ten days.

Rosen: During that week or ten days, do you know what charge was used against him?

Price: Well, the charge that was used against all of them was that they were Jews--they were dangerous people.

Rosen: So during this week or ten-day period, you were living at home with your mother?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Now we're talking about 1939?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: How did you feel about the loss of your father during this time period?

Price: Frightened, not understanding, questioning what would happen--what would we do? I got no answer.

Rosen: Do you remember your mother's feelings?

Price: Fear.

Rosen: Did you know if you would see your father again?

Price: We had hoped that we would see him again. Now my mother was allowed to see him, or go visit him, in jail. But the question was still, "What will happen? Where will we go?" We didn't have money to buy our way out and come to the United States. We had to have people here to vouch for us that we would not leave the state, etc. So there was no way out.

Rosen: By 1939, then, they had arrested your father, he lost his job, the *Kristallnacht* and so on had occurred. Was your father then of the opinion that it might be

best to leave, or did his still maintain that everything would be all right?

Price: **Yes, but who could he voice his opinion to? There was nobody there. More and more of the rich people who really had the wealth had already left.**

Rosen: **What was the economic condition of your family during this time period? You said earlier that your father was just cutting hair at home.**

Price: **Correct.**

Rosen: **Now was he still selling to merchants?**

Price: **No, by that time not anymore. That was not possible by that time anymore because he was known to all the barbers that he was a Jew. A lot of them, even if they did not show it then to him, had turned and were now members of the Nazi Party.**

Rosen: **Your mother, during this time period, was she working?**

Price: **My mother did work until the time of the *Kristallnacht*. Then they took the businesses away from the Jewish people.**

Rosen: **You mentioned earlier that when your father lost his business, your mom worked for a Jewish department store.**

Price: **Correct.**

Rosen: And that this came to an end at the ***Kristallnacht***. Your family's financial resources, how were they as time moved on?

Price: Very bad.

Rosen: You mentioned earlier that, as time went on, those who had money, the wealthy, often escaped by buying their way out, but those who did not have the money were compelled to stay. It sounds like, based on what you are saying, that financial conditions were created such that, perhaps in your case, your family would not be able to afford to buy its way out by 1939, if perhaps they could have earlier.

Price: Right.

Rosen: Did you personally know many people who left Germany during this time period?

Price: Oh, sure. We knew the Jewish people from my hometown, and we knew that one had left and that one had left and the third one was on the way. We got to where we knew who was going to leave tomorrow and those ones that already got the passage and were on the ship and on their way, etc. Sure.

Rosen: Did you have contact with your brother in Israel at that time?

Price: Yes, we did have contact with my brother in Israel as long as we could write directly. We wrote directly from Germany. Then later on, we wrote to the United States, and the letters were then shipped. My brother wrote, and we got the answer from the United States because by 1940 we were still allowed to receive letters from overseas, but not from Israel.

Rosen: You also mentioned that you had an uncle who had come to America in 1935.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Was there ever an attempt, either by your brother, your uncle, or any other family or friends who had made their escape, to try and finance your departure from Germany?

Price: My father’s brother, my uncle, did not make the attempt, and I believe it was out of financial reasons. The oldest son had evacuated in 1928 to the United States.

Rosen: When you say the oldest son, do you mean the oldest son of your uncle?

Price: My uncle’s oldest son had come here in 1928, and there were two more children, two more boys. Now my uncle, as I understand it, did work for Gimbel Brothers in New York until he was in his eighties. By that time

the boys had married and had their own businesses. But I believe that they also did not believe, or could fathom, that things like concentration camps could ever happen to us.

Rosen: In mentioning the concentration camps and the deportation of your uncle and later your aunt requesting to go with him, you expressed an anger of why they had to leave home and give up what they had. Were there any expectations as to what lay ahead in the concentration camp?

Price: No, we did not have even the slightest idea because, actually, no mail would come to us. Even if those people would have been allowed to write from Poland, I think very few letters really got out. The Nazis would intercept and read it and destroy it, and so we did not have any idea as to what would become of us and what would lay ahead.

Rosen: Did you think that the movement to a concentration camp would be a temporary move or a permanent move, or do you have any thoughts on that at all?

Price: In the meantime, we had received letters from my uncle from Poland. They had been put in a ghetto in Litzmannstadt. My aunt had written to us to send her a few things if it would be possible. In between the

notes we could read actually what was going on, that they were hungry, that they didn’t have enough to eat, that they didn’t have enough clothing and things like that. News did not come to us in a way that it would come today on television. Anything that happened around the world at that time, you wouldn’t hear of it. Also, there was another thing. The Jewish people had given up their radios. They could not have a radio.

Rosen: What happened to them?

Price: The Germans confiscated them.

Rosen: Can you describe that?

Price: Well, what they would do, they knew where the Jewish people were living, and there was a knock on the door, and they would tell you, “Do you have a radio? Bring it out!” And they would take it with them. Those who were a little bit smart would hide their radio, and maybe the neighbors would not tell, if they were very lucky. But you could not officially have it in the living room and play it. If you had one hidden somewhere, you might have been informed about the aerial bombardment in Poland, where the war was going on and things like that.

Rosen: You mentioned that the Nazis would knock at the door and ask for the radio. Would they come into your apartment?

Price: Of course.

Rosen: You mentioned that they knew where the Jews were.

Price: Sure, they know where the Jewish people were living. Then after the *Kristallnacht*, say, after 1939, 1940, the Jewish people who were living in apartment houses where Christians were living all had to move out and had to move into houses that belonged to Jewish people.

Rosen: Jews could only live in those types of homes owned by Jewish people?

Price: By Jewish people.

Rosen: And that was in 1939, 1940?

Price: Correct?

Rosen: You mentioned that you and your parents lived in an apartment that was a mix of Jews and Christians.

Price: Right.

Rosen: Were you forced out?

Price: We were forced to move out and move into a house that was also partitioned into apartments. It’s not like here, where you have your private home. Most homes had at least four floors or five floors, and they were

all apartments--two bedrooms, three bedrooms, four bedrooms.

Rosen: Can you describe that relocation from the apartment. Can you describe the relocation to that house or apartment?

Price: Well, usually, what they did was...there was maybe one or two families who had moved out. They didn't want to have anything to do anymore with the Jews, so they moved out. The Christian families moved out, and then they forced us to move in to those apartments.

Rosen: So this apartment may at one time been owned by a Christian who was pressured?

Price: Not the apartment. The Christian might have lived in the house where actually a Jew was the owner.

Rosen: So the Christian renter would have to move out.

Price: Move out. The Nazis moved them out and put the Jewish people in.

Rosen: Was this also in the same city?

Price: Yes, in the same city.

Rosen: If I understand you correctly, it would be easier to relocate all the Jews in identifiable places.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Would these houses or apartments be located throughout the city?

Price: Throughout the city, right.

Rosen: So there's no ghetto there.

Price: No, no, no, there was no ghetto.

Rosen: Let's go back now to 1940 and your work at the kindergarten.

Price: In Berlin.

Rosen: Can you follow up and tell me what you were experiencing during this time period?

Price: During that time period in Berlin, I lived in a private home. There were five girls in a private home. I did not live in the *Seminar*. The *Seminar* had some students, but there was not enough room for all of them, so we were boarded out to private Jewish homes. This first place I lived in had five girls from all different cities.

Rosen: All German Jewish girls?

Price: All German Jewish girls that were from different cities, and they were all involved in school. Now we would have classes in the morning, four hours, and then usually in the afternoon we would work in some Jewish kindergarten. Now Berlin had a very big Jewish population.

Rosen: Before you go on, I want to clarify something. You mentioned you had classes in the morning. Would these be classes that you were attending as students?

Price: Attending as students, correct.

Rosen: So this is the first time that you had any formal education...

Price: Extended education, correct.

Rosen: So then, as you were saying, then in the afternoon...?

Price: We would work with the children in the kindergarten. There were several Jewish kindergartens around the city of Berlin, and I was in one what would have been in the eastern part of Berlin. We had to do what they called “practice” with the children in the kindergarten. Then, also, we would be assigned to Jewish homes and work there with the children.

Rosen: How late in the day would this run to?

Price: That would run, I would say, from 1:00 until maybe 4:00 in the afternoon. In the mornings we would go from 8:00 until noon to school, and then from 1:00 until 4:00 we would work in the kindergarten.

Rosen: The classes you took in the morning, were they preparing you for specific training or education?

Price: Yes, to work with children.

Rosen: To be a schoolteacher?

Price: In the kindergarten age.

Rosen: Elementary schoolteacher?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: You mentioned that at 4:00 you'd be finished working with the children.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: What would you do then?

Price: Then what we would do, we would go to designated places and use the tram car or use the streetcar, depending on how far we were away. We would go to the place where we would be living--either to the *Seminar* (those who stayed in the *Seminar*) or to the apartment or to the families we were living with.

Rosen: Did you have any problems traveling across the city?

Price: No, not at that time.

Rosen: Tell me how your life changed when the school closed down?

Price: Life changed at the end of 1940, of course, as I mentioned, before the Nazis closed the school. I refused to go home, and I decided I would go and work in a factory in Berlin.

Rosen: Why did you refuse to go home?

Price: The small city I was from did not offer us anything. It was actually too depressing for me. I had been in

this big city already, had met so many people and made friends and all; and so to all of the sudden turn around, I felt too depressed about it.

Rosen: You mentioned that you made several friends in Berlin. Would these be...

Price: Jewish friends.

Rosen: Did you have much association with Christians?

Price: No, no. See, here in Berlin, since we were forced to go to a Jewish school again, in the Jewish kindergartens, our friends were mainly Jewish people. Our teachers were Jewish. Then, also, the girls who were at the *Seminar* were all Jewish.

Rosen: You mentioned that you preferred the big city as opposed to a small town. I wondered if you found any difference in the way the Jews were treated in the small city where you were from compared to Berlin?

Price: Yes, there was a difference. The Jewish people in the bigger city were not as noticeable as in a small town. Since Berlin was so big, you did not have as much contact with the Christian people, and those that you did have were very, very low key. So we did not have the contact with the Christian people. We did not go nowhere where we knew we couldn’t go. Movies were out; you could not go to the movies anymore.

Rosen: You were banned from the movies?

Price: Correct. So we really had our little group that we felt comfortable with, and that was that.

Rosen: What kind of social life did you have at that time?

Price: Not very much, not very much. Since restrictions were already there, you were afraid that you'd get caught. So we stayed very much in our own circle and tried to make the best, really, of the little freedom we had left.

Rosen: You talk about a camaraderie between you and the other girls who were studying in Berlin to be elementary schoolteachers. Did you have many opportunities to meet guys at that time?

Price: No, not too much. I had met one Jewish man. His wife had already left and left him and his child behind. We became very good friends, and that was another reason I didn't want to go home. But, I'm sorry to say, when I had to leave Berlin, a short time later, he and his child were also evacuated and perished.

Rosen: You said the school was shut down by the Germans in late 1940. Was that December of 1940?

Price: It was December, 1940, yes.

Rosen: What happened to you then? What did you do after that?

Price: Well, as I stated before, I started to work in a factory in eastern Berlin. We made telephone relays. This factory contained a special department for only Jewish people. There were no Christians except for the so-called *Vorarbeiter* or the main person there who had to teach us what to do.

Rosen: You mentioned the so called *Vorarbeiter*.

Price: *Vorarbeiter*.

Rosen: Could you translate that? What does that mean?

Price: In other words, he was the foreman, what they would call a foreman here. He would tell the people what to do, etc., in the factory.

Rosen: So it was Jewish labor under a Christian supervisor?

Price: Correct. Of course, our pay was the very minimum. By that time we would still get paid for our work. We had to pay for our own board where we were living, so that was another thing. Then, of course, they had already started to ration food, and the Jewish people got less and less.

Rosen: You mentioned the rations. Are you talking about rations of food for all people?

Price: For all people, yes, because it was already wartime, and, of course, the Jewish people got lesser rations than the German people did.

Rosen: Where were you living during that time period?

Price: In Berlin.

Rosen: You mentioned that when you went to the *Seminar*, you lived with a Jewish family who put up, I believe, five Jewish girls.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: When the *Seminar* came to an end, did you continue to live there?

Price: No, by that time I had already been transferred to another Jewish family. The women had a kindergarten of her own, and she was also teaching in the Jewish *Seminar*.

Rosen: So you lived with another Jewish woman?

Price: Correct, a Jewish family.

Rosen: A Jewish family. Did you pay them rent?

Price: Yes, we had to pay rent, naturally.

Rosen: You said this was a teacher in a *Seminar*.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: But now the *Seminar* had come to an end.

Price: The *Seminar* came to an end, but they continued renting a room to us. I had a girlfriend who was living with me.

Rosen: So there were two of you that were renting?

Price: There were two of us in one room, yes.

Rosen: How long did you work at the factory?

Price: I worked at the factory, I would say, from January, 1941, until October, 1941. In October, 1941, my parents, who were still living in the small town in Gelsenkirchen, had gotten a notice of evacuation. I was not twenty-one yet, and when you were not twenty-one, you had to be with your parents. That was the law in Germany. Under twenty-one, you are still a minor. So I had to obtain a note that I could travel because by that time the Nazis had also forbidden us to move or travel from one town to the other. We had to have a special note from the SS to be allowed to travel.

Well, I did go to the SS headquarters and get my papers to be able to go home, and then they postponed the evacuation from November, 1941, until the end of January, 1942.

Rosen: Did you spend those next few months with your parents?

Price: I spent the next few months with my parents, but I had to go to work because there was not actually enough money to even buy the food. So I had to work, and by that time I went to work for the Krupp Steel. Krupp Steel was very, very known in Germany. We made war material, and they also had one part that made

false teeth. That would be shipped to the hospitals in the war zone. There again, there was only Jewish people who would work in that particular department. We would work from Monday to Saturday, six days a week.

Rosen: How many hours?

Price: At least eight to ten hours.

Rosen: Now during this time period, you had your birthday?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: You turned twenty. You still had to wait until you were twenty-one before you were free?

Price: Correct. I was twenty-one when we were evacuated because I was twenty-one in November, 1942.

Rosen: All right, in November, when you turned twenty-one, and you know that you don’t have to go with your parents, that you can leave or stay, did that cross your mind; and, if so, what happened?

Price: No, I could not leave. There was nowhere to go. There was no money to go anywhere. There was no way. This question would have not even occurred to me because there was not a possibility anymore. It was illegal to go over the border. Now the Germans in the meantime had already invaded Holland; they had invaded Belgium; they had invaded France. So there was nowhere

to go. The closest country from us was Italy. The German invasion was already everywhere.

Rosen: You had a job in Berlin.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: You left that job because you were under twenty-one and your parents received an evacuation notice?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Are we talking about 1942 at this time?

Price: The end of 1941, when my parents got the evacuation notice, I had to go with them.

Rosen: So you returned, then, and your family was ultimately evacuated in January, 1942.

Price: Nineteen forty-two, correct.

Rosen: You leave with them. What happened?

Price: They came to us and told us that we could take one suitcase with us and what we had on our bodies, period.

Rosen: One suitcase per person?

Price: Per person. We had one bakery at home that would provide us with bread. In the middle of the night, of course, that was the usual thing the Nazis did--everything was done in the middle of the night. They transported us from the place where they had gathered us together to the railroad station. The only thing

that was lucky was that they would not put us in cattle cars.

Rosen: What did they put you in?

Price: They put us in regular railroad cars--not in cattle cars--and that was our luck.

Rosen: All the people on the train, were these a mix of people? Were they mostly Jewish?

Price: They were all Jewish.

Rosen: Did you know anyone else on the train?

Price: Yes. There were, if I'm not mistaken, close to 500 from my hometown.

Rosen: Five hundred different Jewish people?

Price: Different Jewish people of all age groups with the exception of the elderly. They took people up to just around the age of fifty or maybe fifty-two or fifty-three years old. The rest of them they evacuated later and took them to the death camps.

Rosen: Did you know where you were going?

Price: No, we did not. Our destination was not told--where we would go.

Rosen: Did you have any idea about how long you would be gone?

Price: We did not have any idea how long we would be gone, where we would be going, or what--absolutely none.

Rosen: How did you feel about the future at this time?

Price: Uncertain, frightful, now knowing what would be, since by that time we had some knowledge of what was going on in places in Poland, which had been invaded by the Germans, etc. Sometimes, also, some Germans who had gotten furloughs would come, and they would talk, and the news came to light one way or the other. People would talk and give some indication--not directly, but maybe when you were going to the cellar and getting some coal for heat you might see a woman downstairs, and she might talk and tell you something. But they would not directly communicate with the Jewish people because they couldn’t be seen with us. So we knew what was going on--we knew about the places in Poland--but our destination was a big question to us.

Rosen: How long were you on this train?

Price: I think that we were on the train about three days and two nights.

Rosen: Did it make any stops along the way?

Price: That, I can’t remember anymore. If they had stopped, of course, we couldn’t get out. We had to stay in the train.

Rosen: Did they provide any food during this time period or any bathroom facilities?

Price: The bathroom facilities were in the train.

Rosen: Any food?

Price: Food, I don’t recall. We had some food with us, so I think we made do with what we had with us.

Rosen: But for those who brought no food...

Price: Well, all of us were told to take some food with us. They allowed us to take some food with us.

Rosen: I’m curious. What kind of arrangements did you make, when you were preparing to leave, for your property?

Price: There was no way to make any arrangements. You had to leave, and that was that. You couldn’t make any arrangements. With whom? There was nobody there. The Nazis? Hmm! They took everything, that’s for sure. And anybody else, who was there?

Rosen: Friends? Neighbors?

Price: Most of them would not talk to you, since we were already forced to live in homes or apartments that were owned by Jewish people, so there were not very many Christian people left who would have the guts even to try and stay in contact with the Jewish people.

Rosen: You made this train trip, and it took a few days.

Price: Where we landed was in Riga, Lettland [Latvia].

Rosen: After the three-day trip, you ended up in Riga.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: What did you know about Riga?

Price: Absolutely nothing. We hadn't heard about Riga. We found out later. After they had taken us out of the train, the SS, with their dogs, with their guns, were hollering, "*Raus! Raus! Raus!*" Of course, we could not take our suitcases; they had to stay on the train. We could take only ourselves, and that was it.

Rosen: The one possession you did have to take, the suitcases, you had to give up before you got off the train?

Price: Absolutely.

Rosen: You mention "*raus*" in German, yelling at you--meaning what?

Price: "Get out! Out! Out! Out!" We got off the train, and then they made us march from the train station to where we were to go. We didn't know where.

Rosen: The Nazis are yelling at you to get out, you leave the train, you're told to leave your suitcases behind. What then?

Price: Then they headed us into a big place with barbed wire. On both sides there were homes, houses, and one side

has barbed wire, and the other side has barbed wire. The streets are frozen. It is February 1--wintertime. Lettland is close to Russia, so we had the Russian climate there. It is very, very cold. Everything was frozen. So they made us stand out on a great, big place. Then they started to count us. Well, it was midnight, or night. We did not know what time it was.

I can’t remember now. Anyhow, it was dark and it was night, and here we are--tired, frozen, uncertain where we would be heading, where they were going to put us, what was going to happen.

They started to count us, and then they told us, “All right, for now you’re going to go find your quarters.” This was something new to us. All we could see were small houses, two stories. How can we find quarters there? Anyway, they forced us to find quarters, good or bad.

The Nazis finally left us. Across from us there were Jewish men, but they couldn’t do much to us. They warned us: “Lock your doors and do not open them when you’re in there.”

Rosen: Now this warning came from whom?

Price: From the men who were on the opposite side from us.

Rosen: They were yelling this out to you--telling you to lock your door?

Price: To be aware of break-ins. Sure enough, the same night there were break-ins, but not from the Nazis. Those were people in street clothes.

Rosen: Let’s go back a minute. When the train comes to a stop, and you’re outside now. How long are you outside waiting?

Price: Oh, maybe we were waiting an hour or long enough until everybody was out of the train.

Rosen: Then you’re given orders to find quarters?

Price: No, we were given orders to march.

Rosen: To march.

Price: Until we reached this big place with a great, big opening, barbed wire gates, and they marched us in there. There was first a real, big, open place where they would let us come every day. We had to come out to this place following our evacuation down there and be counted.

Rosen: How long did you march before you reached the camp?

Price: Maybe an hour, an hour-and-a-half.

Rosen: Were you dressed for the cold, for the frigid climate, that you had reached?

Price: Yes, most of us there were prepared for the plain reason that this winter had been very hard in Germany, too. The winter of 1941 and 1942 was very, very hard in Germany. So we had heavy clothing, but not sufficient for forty-two degrees below zero.

Rosen: It was forty-two degrees below zero when you got there?

Price: But we had heavy clothing, yes.

Rosen: So now you're in the camp, and you're told to find quarters.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Were the people given the freedom to find quarters wherever they wanted?

Price: Yes. For instance, a certain group of people would be standing in front of one house, and then they told us, "Go in there! Go in there!" So they forced us to find a shelter as good as we could.

Rosen: Could you describe these houses or shelters?

Price: Most of the houses contained maybe one or two stories, and they were separated--one room with maybe a small kitchenette or two rooms with a kitchenette. They had a small stove and whatnot. No water.

Rosen: No water?

Price: No running water, no, sir. So this was the way we had to live--the best we could manage to live for maybe a week, two weeks. We did not know how long they would keep us there or what would happen. Now the next day, they told us...

Rosen: Before we get to the next day, let’s finish up a little bit more on the first night. How many people went to the house that you were at?

Price: At the house downstairs there were maybe four or five people. Upstairs, where we found shelter, there was another family, a man and a wife, my father, my mother, and I.

Rosen: So five people were on the floor you were on.

Price: Right. Maybe four people downstairs, or five people. I can’t remember how many people were there.

Rosen: Was there any heat in this house?

Price: No, the heat was only where the stoves were in the kitchen.

Rosen: And you were on the second floor. Was there a stove on the second floor?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: So you did have some heat generated by the stove on the second floor. How many beds were there for the three people in your family and the two others?

Price: My father and mother slept in one bed. I think I slept on a couch, and there was one more bed in there where this other couple was sleeping.

Rosen: You mentioned that during the night there were break-ins in the houses by people in street clothes.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Can you follow up a little on that?

Price: We had been told later those were people from Riga--Latvian people--and that perhaps the SS allowed them to come into the ghetto and maybe share with the SS what they could rob off us. I don't know. Today I wouldn't know what to tell you accurately, but all I remember was that there were break-ins, there was screaming and hollering. Later on, we were told that "he grabbed my watch," and, "he took this and that."

Rosen: Were there break-ins in the house you were in?

Price: No, no. We had barricaded ourselves pretty good in there.

Rosen: You mentioned there were thieves. Were people physically harmed that evening?

Price: Correct.

Rosen: They were physically harmed.

Price: Yes, there were people harmed. They were slapped around and kicked and things like that.

Rosen: Was there any protection provided by the Germans?

Price: No.

Rosen: All right, what happened the next day?

Price: The next day we were told we had to be out on the big, open space for *Appell* [roll call]. That means we would be counted again. We did not know, but we found out later, that from that first time on the SS would make selections--selecting people for work outside the ghetto. Also, older and frail people were not looked at too well. So apparently, what I can recall now, they had already made up their minds that the people who were frail and couldn't work had to be put somewhere or had to be put to death. It was our later conclusion that this happened, because when we were standing *Appell* there, the SS would march through the rows and would say, "Hey, you, left! You, right!" This would go on for more than an hour, until they had selected enough people that they needed for work. They would then do something later with the elderly people. Then they let us go back to our places.

Rosen: To the homes.

Price: To the homes, to the apartment homes, yes. And those people that they had selected for work had to stay at the *Appellplatz*. They had to stand there and wait

until they would tell them what would be done with them. Now we were not there very long, and they had selected my father.

Rosen: As a laborer?

Price: As a laborer. There, later on, was the concentration camp, which had been previously a work camp. It was owned by a German company, and they had civilian workers there, who would tell the people where to work, what to do, etc. My father was selected to go to this work camp. Luckily, since my father was a barber and still had his barber shears, it came in handy for those Christian workers at the camp because they all could use a haircut and a shave once in a while and didn't have to pay for it. He came in very handy, so my father at that time had it a little bit easier. When they needed him, they would call and say, "Hey, you, come!" And they took him. At this time the SS would allow this because this was a private company. They allowed them a furlough to take my father out to their place in Riga to do the barbering.

Rosen: Do you remember what kind of company?

Price: Wolftdoering.

Rosen: What kind of company was this that your father worked for?

Price: I would say that it was more like a construction company. They would more or less do road construction and things like that, not buildings.

Rosen: All right, in the meantime your father is working in construction. What about you and your mother?

Price: My mother and I were still left in the ghetto.

Rosen: In the ghetto in Riga.

Price: In Riga. In the meantime we had also found out that my father's brother and his family was there.

Rosen: In the same ghetto?

Price: In the same ghetto. They had come with the transport earlier than we had. My uncle and his son were already selected for a work camp, but not where my father was. They were at another work camp where the conditions were 100 percent worse (Salaspilz).

Rosen: Could you describe those conditions?

Price: Now my father had fairly humane treatment in the work camp where he was, because, I like explained, the work camp was later made into the concentration camp. But my uncle went to another work camp, and the treatment there was very inhumane. In other words, they were beaten, they did not get enough to eat, they had to work very long hours; so it was very hard.

Rosen: Did you have an opportunity to see your aunt and uncle and cousin in the work camp that you were in?

Price: No. I did see my aunt and my cousin in the ghetto, but not my uncle.

Rosen: Now this is a barbed wire ghetto...

Price: Yes.

Rosen: ...in Riga. You are there now, and this is February 1, 1942.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Your father was taken to work in a labor camp elsewhere. Did he return in the evenings?

Price: No.

Rosen: What happened?

Price: No, no, no. They were stationed at the work camp, since the work camp had barracks. In one part of the work camp, they had Polish laborers there. The Nazis had Polish laborers there. They were in barracks there on one side, but the laborers who were working for Wolftdoering were there in another barracks. They were not together with those Polish people. Now the Polish people were actually prisoners from the war.

Rosen: They were POWs?

Price: They were POWs, if you want to call them that, who were from the war. They had captured them and then

took them to work in a labor camp. Where my uncle was--well, later on--some of the groups had been taken out from the ghetto in the mornings and brought back at night, from the work camps. They let us know by word-of-mouth what was going on in certain labor camps. We knew then. I think that we stayed in the ghetto in Riga until maybe May, when spring came and everything started thawing out. The ice left, and we found that the streets were bloody.

Rosen: Let me go back here for a moment before we get to this point. When your father was taken for the labor camp and stayed up there, did you have any communication with him? Did you see him at all? Can you follow up on that?

Price: I do recall that we did get news from him. We heard from him--where he was and what he was doing, etc.--because they had stationed some groups at his camp and there were some groups that they would take out to work and bring back in the evening. So we knew where my father was, that he was well and all that. Then later on in spring, they allowed the women to join the men. They would use us as workers, also, and we rejoined my father in the labor camp.

Rosen: When was this? You said it was later in the spring.

Price: That was 1942, still 1942.

Rosen: What month of 1942?

Price: I would say maybe the end of May, the beginning of June.

Rosen: This is when you were talking about the bloody streets?

Price: Right.

Rosen: All right, then between February and May when your father was taken, did you see him at all during those months?

Price: Yes, I think we saw him once or twice. He came in on the weekend, and then went out again on Monday morning with the laborers.

Rosen: Was this the SS?

Price: No, at that time it was still under private control. The SS allowed the businesses to get the workers out of the ghetto to work for them, for the private companies.

Rosen: Your father had the freedom to go back to the ghetto in Riga?

Price: Yes, to come in with the group of workers and then go out in the mornings again.

Rosen: What did you and your mother do during those months between February and May?

Price: Sometimes they would take us out to work for shoveling snow on the railroads and do manual labor like that.

Rosen: Did you see any people tortured or abused in any way during that time period?

Price: Yes and no. We did see trains of people come in at night, and at times they would look as if they didn't have anything to eat on them and things like that. Then they made us stand on the *Appellplatz* maybe for hours. They made you stand for hours until this group had come in; and if they had found something to eat on anybody, and if the ghetto commandant was in good humor, maybe he would let them live, and, if not, there was a hanging right there.

Rosen: You saw people hung?

Price: I saw people hung, yes.

Rosen: What were your feelings about that?

Price: We were scared.

Rosen: Did you know any of the people who were hung?

Price: Yes, sometimes you knew them. Sure.

Rosen: Did you have any friends that were hung or killed?

Price: Actually, no.

Rosen: What about the amount of food you had during this time period?

Price: It was very limited. We got very limited food. Rations would be given out where the SS was headquartered, and they would give us very limited food.

Rosen: Can you describe how many meals a day or what they might have consisted of?

Price: Well, a piece of bread would have been maybe enough--three slices of bread for a day--and then small amounts of vegetables, very small amounts of vegetables, and then maybe a little bit of margarine, a very small amount of jam, and that was that.

Rosen: So life goes on like this, and you and your mother are together in the ghetto in Riga, and your father is in a labor camp. Was the labor camp also in Riga?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: This life continued between February and May. Now changes are made.

Price: Changes are made. It started thawing out. The winter was over, and it gradually started to get warm. We discovered that under the ice the water was bloody. Here came the question of what happened. They found out later that the Nazis had managed, before they brought us into the ghetto, to kill the Riga Jewish women and children.

Rosen: If I understand correctly, you're saying that the women and children--Jews of Riga--were killed.

Price: Before they brought us into the ghetto because they had to make room. So they killed children, kept the men in work camps, and that way they had room to put some people from Germany in there.

Rosen: What did you think about your future at this time, knowing that there were women and children being killed?

Price: Very, very big question. Very big question about what would happen to us. We didn't have any answers.

Rosen: You saw the bloody streets?

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Was it outside the camp then?

Price: No, that was inside the camp, in the ghetto.

Rosen: All right, you see the blood since the ice is thawed out. What else happened?

Price: Well, we had already found out through communication with the men who were across from us in the ghetto what had happened to the families. They had told us. So, of course seeing the bloody streets, that was a very frightful experience. You think, "My God! How many people have they killed?" Also, when we moved in there, we found storage sheds behind the houses where

we found pictures, shoes. So there were people living there before.

Rosen: You found the personal possessions of the people who had lived there.

Price: The personal possessions of those people they had killed, yes.

Rosen: Do you continue to live in this house after May, 1942.

Price: Of course, daily we had *Appell*; we had to be counted. This was the daily ritual. Then when spring started, they had decided that they would also take the women to work, so one night they selected my mother and me, too.

Rosen: You didn’t volunteer?

Price: No, we had been selected, and we went then and joined my father at the work camp, which was gradually converted into the concentration camp.

Rosen: What concentration camp was this?

Price: This was the concentration camp in Riga, in Kaiserwald.

Rosen: So you and your mother, in May, go to Riga, the concentration camp later, at Kaiserwald?

Price: Kaiserwald, correct.

Rosen: What are conditions like there?

Price: The conditions there, as long as it was a work camp, were pretty good. We had permission to exchange maybe a watch for some food, something extra to eat besides the food they would give us at the work camp. For a little while conditions were very good, until they took the Polish workers away. I believe very strongly that they killed them, and then gradually they started converting the work camp into the concentration camp. They separated the men from women, the men on one side and the women on the other side. As time progressed they had to bring in more people.

Rosen: More workers?

Price: More workers. They had to bring in not only more workers, but they had to do something with all the Jewish people. What could they do? They couldn’t kill them in the cities. Auschwitz was already open, but they also needed the sites, the crematoria, and they needed work people. So they converted. Some would go to the death camps, and some would go to the work camps.

Rosen: When you went to the work camp, what were the living conditions like? You mentioned earlier that your father was in a barrack.

Price: Correct. We were ordered there. After they took the Polish workers away, they converted one side for the males and one side for the females.

Rosen: So were you and your mother in a barrack, also?

Price: Yes, we were in the same barracks that we were in before, when it was a work camp.

Rosen: So you and your mother were still together?

Price: Yes, my mama and I were still together.

Rosen: Did you have an opportunity to see your father?

Price: Yes, we could see him because he could come to the fence and talk to us.

Rosen: There was a fence that divided the sections?

Price: Divided the women’s camp from the men’s camp, yes.

Rosen: These fences were made of barbed wire?

Price: Barbed wire.

Rosen: What were conditions like beyond that, as far as food and clothing?

Price: Conditions got worse, naturally. We would get, like I said, maybe three slices of bread and in the evening a bowl of water soup that you could look right from the top to the bottom. This was your food.

Rosen: Both you and your mother both began working at this camp.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Doing what?

Price: We were taken out by trucks to work on an airfield. The Russians had left, and there was an airfield, and they had not completed all the runways. There was gasoline poured in the ground, and the Germans tried to retrieve it. We would make cement, pour cement, unload bricks, anything that they had told us to do. Anything that we had to do, we would do.

Rosen: You worked with your mom?

Price: Sometimes, but not all the time. There were several groups. Sometimes my mom was with me, and sometimes she was not.

Rosen: Did you make friends during this time period?

Price: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We made friends, sure, because you worked together with girls. Sometimes, when the SS or whoever was watching over you, then you might be able to let your friends know: “Hey, look! Somebody’s coming! Start working!” Then when they turned their back, you could slow down a little bit, etc. Here I did have, in a way, a little bit better situation for myself than some of the women had because one of the SS women liked me very much, and she would look out and see that not too much harm would come to me. Therefore, I had a little privilege at work. It didn’t

amount, actually, to nothing, but I could wiggle out when other things were getting too rough.

Rosen: You said you were being supervised by an SS woman. Did she seem to like you for any special reason? Why did she like you?

Price: She saw that I was maybe a little bit friendlier than the others were. I would not beg. She would say something, like, “Look, do as good as you can, and that will be okay. But make an effort or show an effort.” So she might have been a little more humane than others were.

Rosen: You said that you didn’t beg. How did some of the other girls react?

Price: See, some of them would react and shout that they either didn’t want to do the workload they were told to do, or didn’t do it, and things like that. That was very hard because if they would have been found out, then they would get slapped or would get kicked and things like that. That was not necessary if you could avoid it.

Rosen: Did you make any friends with any of the girls who were interned.

Price: Yes, very many of the ones interned with me were from my hometown and from the nearby town. So we all were in one group together.

Rosen: So you even had childhood friends there?

Price: Yes, yes, I did.

Rosen: How do you think that affected life in the camp?

Price: It did not have much effect on us for the plain reason that when you came home at night and were let in the camp, then you had to stand for maybe an hour or longer until you were accounted for. You were so tired. You were glad when you could crawl into your bunk, and that was the end of the day.

Rosen: When would that be about?

Price: Oh, maybe 5:30 or 6:00.

Rosen: What time did you get up in the morning?

Price: At 5:30 or 6:00.

Rosen: And go to work?

Price: At 7:00.

Rosen: And then work from 7:00 until?

Price: Until in the afternoon.

Rosen: How long did this last?

Price: This lasted for quite some time. I would say it was maybe from May or June, 1942, and it lasted through

1942. We were working at the airfield, and they also had brought in workers from the ghetto.

Rosen: What ghetto are you talking about?

Price: From the ghetto in Riga. From the main ghetto in Riga, they had also brought in some workers.

Rosen: So you're talking about the ghetto that you had been in until May?

Price: Right, right. The Riga men who were still there were brought in to work at certain places.

To my disadvantage, there was one thing that happened. When a group of the workers got in from outside, they would allow visitations, and the workers would secretly get something to eat or get a note or something. Well, one night they found somebody who had a note with them where my name was mentioned in it. The SS found out, and there was an investigation going on. There were two girls with the same first name. In the note it was mentioned that if they were to be sent out to the work camp and stationed there, they should leave their belongings with me. By that time I was working in an office. One of the civilian workers wanted me to work in the office--make the payroll for the workers.

Rosen: Now we're talking about what time frame?

Price: I would say it was close to maybe September, 1942. We still worked out at the airfield, but they had also, like I mentioned, brought in people from Riga itself. They were stationed outside the ghetto and put with the workers out there at the airfield. So we would see them, be together with them. Since they had mentioned in this note two girls with the same name, they got the investigation going on, and they got me.

Rosen: I'm turning over the tape for Side B now. Mrs. Price is going to continue with her story about the men who picked up the note that had her name on it.

Price: They picked up the little note with my name on it. It told those workers who would be eventually stationed permanently in a work camp outside the ghetto to leave some pictures or mementos or what belongings they had with me so that I could return this to them later on. The SS found this note, and they picked up two girls with the same first name. Of course, I was the guilty one. When the SS questioned me, I didn't admit nothing. They asked if somebody else had also hidden some papers or some pictures and if I knew of their names. I plainly said, "No."

To my benefit, it must have been a lucky day. Then the SS man said, "All right, now you will be

shipped to another work camp!" I was very fortunate because they could also have taken me out to the cemetery and shot me. This is what had been done before. So I was still alive, but from then on I would be separated from my mom and could also not see my dad anymore.

Rosen: The men who had the notes--were they picked up?

Price: Well, there was actually only one that had the note that they caught.

Rosen: How many notes were there?

Price: Apparently, there was only one note. There were two names that were mentioned.

Rosen: And of the two names of girls mentioned in this note, it said that you would hide the possessions?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Was there any truth to this?

Price: Yes, there was truth to it, because by that time one of the civilian workers had selected me to work in an office. I worked at an office making the payroll and doing some paperwork, and I had the opportunity to hide some things. At that time we did not have a strict Nazi controller. The SS men were maybe patrolling, but they would not bother us since we were still under the jurisdiction of the private company.

So we could more or less have a little bit more freedom. We could go to the bathroom, and we didn't have to ask, "May I go" or things like that. Maybe, also, we had the opportunity to talk to someone, some of the other Jewish workers, who were around. We had girls who were assigned to clean the offices or do some washing there for the men or things like that. We had a little freedom and could possibly do things that were not detected right away.

Rosen: What kind of things did you hide?

Price: Those men still had a few pictures from their loved ones whom they had lost, and they wanted to hold on to them.

Rosen: Where would you hide the pictures?

Price: Well, in the office there was a desk, and I could hide them in the desk and then later on let them get them back.

Rosen: You realized you were taking a risk?

Price: Absolutely! Absolutely! But I did it anyway because, when you are under the kind of conditions we were in, life didn't mean that much to you. Sure, you wanted to stay alive, but there were certain things you do, and you take certain risks.

Rosen: Did you realize that this could be a life or death situation?

Price: Yes, I did.

Rosen: And you took it nonetheless?

Price: Right.

Rosen: All right, so now you're revealed in the letter, and the SS says that you will be deported. Where? Describe that.

Price: If I remember correctly, I spent one night at the main concentration camp, and then the next day I was put in another work camp that was for General Electric. General Electric had a work camp for about five hundred women.

Rosen: Now this is in Riga?

Price: In Riga, yes.

Rosen: So you moved from the work camp, which would be later Kaiserwald, to another work camp?

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Then how much time passed between the notification that you received that you were going to be moved and the time you moved?

Price: That was within a couple of days.

Rosen: Were you able to say good-bye to your mother?

Price: No, I was not. I was picked up and brought into the ghetto for confrontation with the SS, and from there I went to the main concentration camp and from there to the work camp of General Electric.

Rosen: What were your feelings when this was going on?

Price: I was very upset, because in the times we were living, we never knew what the next day would bring. It came true for me that I never saw my parents again.

Rosen: When you went to the next camp, was there a name for this camp?

Price: This was a work camp for General Electric.

Rosen: And what did you do there?

Price: We rewired carburetors for big trucks. That’s what we did there.

Rosen: When was this?

Price: This was 1943.

Rosen: When in 1943? Do you remember?

Price: I would say it was around March or April of 1943.

Rosen: How long did this go on for?

Price: I was with the camp of General Electric until to the end.

Rosen: The end of the war?

Price: Not to the end of the war, but to the end when they eliminated Riga completely.

Rosen: And when was that?

Price: That was right when the offensive really started. In 1944 they eliminated the ghetto, and they also had eliminated all the work camps in and around Riga.

Rosen: When in 1944 was this? Do you remember?

Price: Let’s see. When did the offensive start? It must have been spring of 1944.

Rosen: So you were in the General Electric work camp from about March, 1943?

Price: March of 1943, yes.

Rosen: The offensive was in the spring of the next year, so you were there for about a one-year period.

Price: Yes, about a one-year period.

Rosen: What was life like there?

Price: Heaven!

Rosen: Describe heaven in a concentration camp.

Price: I will describe it for you. For the first thing, we had hot water to shower! Hot water! It was heaven! Every day, if we wanted to, we could take a shower. Even if we didn’t have any soap, we would have warm water. Food was better. Eating conditions were a lot better. We had maybe a little better rations. We had not such cramped quarters. We had only to go across the street to work, didn’t have long foot marches or

transportation in trucks or whatever. We had much better conditions, also, at work.

Rosen: You mentioned the food was better here, or at least rations were better. Could you give a contrast of how it was better?

Price: It was better inasfar as maybe the food was not as watery. Once in a while, we did get a piece of margarine and a little bit of jam for the bread and things like that. Also, once in a while, maybe once a month, we'd get a piece of sausage in our rations. Many times we did not see this in other places. The guards also had to have their food. They had to have some food, which maybe they could exchange for some drinks, some schnapps and whatnot.

Rosen: Are you saying that you were able to barter with the guards?

Price: No. First, of course, when rations were delivered, naturally the SS guards who were there got their big share, and the rest was left for us.

Rosen: You mentioned the quarters were better. How were they improved from what you experienced?

Price: Well, the quarters were not as cramped or tight. We had, I believe, at least two bunks up and down where we could sleep. In the concentration camp, the bunks

were also up and down, but they were really back to back.

Rosen: So you had more space?

Price: We had a little bit more space, and we were warmer. We were not as cold as we were in the other places.

Rosen: Was there heat in this?

Price: Yes, there was a little bit of heat--a little bit more warmth where we were quartered than we had in the barracks.

Rosen: Now you're in a barrack at the General Electric work camp.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: How many women would you say were in the barracks?

Price: Well, altogether there were five hundred of us--women and also children.

Rosen: Any men?

Price: No men.

Rosen: Roughly, in your memory, do you remember how many barracks there were?

Price: There might have been four.

Rosen: So four barracks for approximately five hundred people, so about 125 people per barrack.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: You also mentioned that conditions were better at work.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: How so?

Price: We did not have as rigid conditions where we were working. We had maybe a little bit more, if you could call it, humane conditions. The foreman and women that were there, by the way, were people from Latvia. They were working there. They were a little bit more humane maybe--did not treat us as roughly, since they had to show us what to do and how to work first and whatnot. They needed us to work on the carburetors because they were needed again for the trucks.

Rosen: You mentioned that you were being supervised by Latvians. Were these Nazis?

Price: They must have belonged to the Nazi party, but they were not wearing uniforms.

Rosen: It sounds like you were under the supervision of civilians...

Price: Correct.

Rosen: ...as opposed to the military. It sounds like you were lucky that you were caught.

Price: Yes, in a way I was lucky because, let me tell you, when they brought me into this camp to work, I had

had a cold, and it turned into yellow jaundice. I became quite sick. As a matter of fact, I got so sick that, since there was no doctor or anyone who could handle this, I should have been quarantined and all. They brought me back to the ghetto. At that time the ghetto was still open, and there was a *Lazarett* in the ghetto.

Rosen: There was a what?

Price: *Lazarett*, a sick station. There were doctors there, but they couldn’t do much for me. But at least they kept me there for a little while, until they thought I was better. Then they brought me back, and I got sick again, and I started to get real nice and yellow. I had hepatitis, and not yellow jaundice. But at sickbay food by that time had gotten worse. What they fed us, what they cooked, was chicken feet.

Rosen: Chicken feet?

Price: The smell of it was enough...every time that they came in with a bucketful to feed us, I would run to the bathroom because I would start throwing up. For quite some time, I did not eat, or very little if I had some bread. Otherwise, I would not eat because I couldn’t digest it. I was actually sick for nearly six weeks, but I was lucky they kept me alive.

Rosen: In the ghetto.

Price: Not in the ghetto. I had gone back from the ghetto already. They had shipped me back to the work camp from the ghetto.

Rosen: Now this is the General Electric work camp.

Price: Right. Then, when I got hepatitis, of course, they had to put me somewhere secure I would not affect all the others.

Rosen: Did you have medical care at the General Electric work camp?

Price: There was no medical care, really. But they did not make me work, so I could be in the sickbay and lay there so that maybe I would get a little strength and get over it. And I did, so I then went back to work.

Now by that time, as I mentioned before, we had the children with us, and we must have had maybe fifteen to twenty children with us who were running from the age of six or seven to about twelve or fourteen. As I also mentioned before, Auschwitz was already in bloom and putting their workers in the crematoria. We got a notice. Our *Lageralterste* was a Jewish woman...

Rosen: Your what?

Price: The oldest woman, *Lageralterste*.

Rosen: And that means?

Price: The woman who actually kept our files, the orders. She was the oldest woman in the camp and was appointed by the Nazis.

Rosen: So she, herself, was a victim.

Price: She was a victim. Yes, she was a Jewish woman. But they needed someone in between the Nazis and us, so they selected her. She had heard that there would be a selection made of the children, and that more likely they would take the children away from their mothers.

Well, there was a plan made very quickly that we would take the children to work with us. They were sitting on the work bench, and they were sorting nuts and bolts and screws and things like that. We did this so that when the SS came into the work place and saw that the children were working, they could not take them away.

Rosen: So the women of the camp were able to save the lives of the children.

Price: We were able to save the lives of the children by taking them to work and making them work, because there was a decree that anybody who was working could not be taken away and eliminated or murdered.

Rosen: You worked there in the work camp, you said, between March of 1943 to the spring of 1944. You said it was "heaven." The rations were better; the conditions and quarters were better. What was the morale of the people like there?

Price: Actually, better. I would say the morale was better. Naturally, we knew what was going on. We had our sources where we would find out what was going on in the war and how things were standing. But it was maybe a little bit quieter, a little bit more peaceful, if you can call it peaceful, in that we were not as worried about what would happen. We were not so frightened that maybe tomorrow we would all be herded out and shot somewhere.

Rosen: During this time period, did you have any idea if your life now would ever come to an end? Did you ever see a future beyond camp?

Price: We might have speculated or fantasized, if you want to call it that, about what we would do if we got out alive. We had no idea what the outside world would look like, where we would wind up, what country we would be stuck in, could we go back home, what would happen--no idea whatsoever. But people can dream, and every one of us would once in a while think of what

would happen “if.” Naturally, the “if” was a big question mark.

Rosen: In the camp you were at, you mentioned five hundred women.

Price: Five hundred.

Rosen: And men?

Price: No men.

Rosen: No men. Were there any uprisings among the women?

Price: No, no.

Rosen: Discipline was...

Price: Discipline was fairly good since we had all the same. There was nothing to be mad about or speculating that this one would get some more.

Rosen: You had friends in this camp?

Price: Yes, actually, I would say that I was very good friends with all the women that were there. In particular, naturally, I knew some from my hometown or from the transport we had come in with. So we were friends in there.

Rosen: You mentioned that in the spring of 1944, the Russians were conducting an offensive.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: And that changed the conditions for you.

Price: **Absolutely! We were at work, and we heard what sounded like airplanes flying by. Once in a while, we heard awfully loud noises from detonations of maybe a bomb. What was going on? I can recall one time we went to the bathroom, which was half a floor down from our work room, and we watched out of the window. The windows had bars on them, naturally, but we watched the airplanes coming by. We heard some shooting, and we thought, "What's going on?" Then, of course, we found out that the offensive had already started from Russia.**

The Germans by that time started making plans to evacuate what was left over in the ghetto and also evacuate all the remaining work camps of Riga. The first thing the Nazis did was--I had heard this very many years later--was to close out the Riga ghetto. The remaining people that were at the ghetto were mainly men, and what they had to do was to eradicate all the reminders of the Nazis being there or who was sick and would be killed. The Nazis had a very good method there. They took them and shot them, and then the men who were left at the ghetto, who were called the *Beerdigungkommandos*, would bury the dead.

Rosen: **Were these Jews themselves?**

Price: Those were also Jewish men, yes. They were left in the ghetto. They would have been maintenance men for the SS--doing their dirty work, helping them get things that they wanted--and sometimes, depending on who they were and whatnot, the SS let them even drive the trucks with the SS in there if they didn't have a driver. The *Kommandos* would have numbered, if I recall right, about ten or fifteen men who were left. They were later shipped to Germany. Like they did with us, they had planned to empty the ghetto. They started emptying the work camps, and they had some boats that they loaded us in. There were no bathroom facilities. A bucket was used. Actually, there was no place to stretch out or sleep or maybe sit down. When they loaded us into the boat--and we were five hundred women--they put us in the belly of the ship, down below where there were few lamps hanging around to see where we were stepping. But that was just about all.

Rosen: Did you know at this point in the boat what body of water this was on?

Price: Yes, on the Dvina. It flows past Riga.

Rosen: That's a river?

Price: A river, correct.

Rosen: Did you know where you were going at this point?

Price: Our destination was Stutthof.

Rosen: And Stutthof was where?

Price: By Danzig.

Rosen: By Danzig in Poland.

Price: In Poland. That was our destination. That was the closest city they could bring us to because--I now believe from what we knew now--all the other concentration camps in Poland, like, Auschwitz, Maidanek, and places like that were actually overcrowded, and they could not bring more people into the death camps. Besides that, they still needed some of us to work behind the war lines to repair the machinery.

Rosen: So when you're about to be deported to this other camp, what is your expectation?

Price: Our expectations were still a big question mark because now we knew the offensive had started. What would happen to us, there were no answers.

Rosen: When you say "start," you mean the war had begun against Germany?

Price: Absolutely. The picture had turned completely around, and it was going against Germany.

Rosen: Was there any fear of being sent to a death camp? Did you know about death camps at that time?

Price: Absolutely! Absolutely! As I mentioned before, when the transport came into Riga with the children, we had already heard of the death camps. When they put the transport together, they took the children away from their mothers and brought them into Auschwitz.

Rosen: That was the intention.

Price: That was the intention, and since we had never seen the children again, we must assume that they sent them to the death camp.

Rosen: I want to back up here for a moment and clarify something. You had mentioned earlier that you and a number of the other women were to save children's lives by putting them to work.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Are you now saying that there were also other children who you and the other women weren't able to save and who were taken away?

Price: See, in the camp where I was in, General Electric, they had transported those women with children there before I ever came there, and they still had their children with them. But the other children were directly taken from Riga. When the transports came

into Riga, the children were directly taken away from them before they ever had separated the men and the women.

Rosen: So now you're on this boat. You're in the belly of the boat.

Price: We're in the belly of the boat, and we are hoping and praying that we could stay alive. We had been told that there were some torpedo boats following us or escorting us to the concentration camp. The going was fairly rough. I got seasick. It was horrible, and I couldn't even tell you how many people were down in the belly of the ship. It was terrible. Conditions were horrendous. Until we got to Stutthof, it was said again by word-of-mouth that some of the torpedo boats had been lost. We didn't know. We could only say, "Hallelujah"--we were still alive.

Finally we arrived in Stutthof. The men were in one camp, and we were again in another, separated by barbed wire--electricity-loaded wires on the fences. Now for our group, the five hundred women, there were maybe five barracks there, but the barracks were very small. And to our horror, they put four women in one bunk.

Rosen: Four women to a bed.

Price: You could only sleep in the fetal position. You could not stretch out your legs--this was impossible. Then in the mornings as in all the camps, we had to be counted. If you remember that there were four women in one bunk, what were the conditions? If you woke up in the middle of the night, if you had to go to the bathroom, it was too bad, so you would wet yourself standing outside *Appell* because you couldn't go to the bathroom. There was no more hot water. There was no way of keeping clean. We were infested by lice.

Rosen: I'm curious. You mentioned that in the bunks you weren't able to go to the bathroom, that you would have to wet yourselves or do it on yourselves. Were there bathrooms inside the barracks?

Price: There were bathrooms and washrooms in the barracks, but they were not meant for that many women. They were maybe meant for fifty.

Rosen: And how many women, would you say, were in a barrack?

Price: We were at least a hundred in one of the partitions of the barrack, so it was four in one bed. You really had to have a mastermind to think of, yes, right now there is nobody in there, and I could go.

Rosen: You mentioned that there were at least a hundred women in one partition of the barrack. How many partitions would there be in a barrack?

Price: I would say there were two partitions in one barrack.

Rosen: So in one barrack, then, there would be at least how many people?

Price: The full barrack might have had 200-250 women.

Rosen: And you say bathroom facilities that were only for...

Price: Maybe fifty.

Rosen: Before you left Riga, were there any incidences of escape?

Price: Yes, there were incidences of escape. Since we had found out through our underground, words from people what was ahead of us, some people had found a way to escape. As a result of that, they cut our hair completely--made the women bald.

Rosen: Before you go on, you mentioned that they found ways to escape. Does that mean that there were attempts to escape?

Price: There were attempts to escape, and those people had help from the outside. They had been helped to escape.

Rosen: Underground help?

Price: Underground help, correct.

Rosen: Were there any successful escapes?

Price: Yes, there were.

Rosen: Did you participate in any of them?

Price: No, I did not. But we had one women that her husband was Jewish but she was not. Since she was living in Riga, and was born in Riga, she had some help. Before they started to ship us out to Stutthof, she got out.

Rosen: Did you think about escaping?

Price: No.

Rosen: How come?

Price: Because I did not speak the language. I did not have that close contact with anybody that could help me, and I did not have any money. For planning an escape, you had to have valuables that maybe you kept to "grease" somebody's "paw," as they say so nicely, to really make good your escape. You had to make a 100-percent guarantee that, "Yes, I have so-and-so, and here it is," and then the person would take you out.

Rosen: Did you hear about escapes being planned?

Price: No.

Rosen: How did the escapes affect you and the others in camp?

Price: It affected us very much, because, like I said, they cut our hair off so we were baldheaded.

Rosen: The Nazis did.

Price: The Nazis did. Concerning the men, they cut only the middle of their hair.

Rosen: They cut their hair from the forehead to the...

Price: ...from the forehead to the back of their neck, yes, and left the sides standing. That was supposed to be a deterrent for us not to make an attempt.

Rosen: By having your head shaven?

Price: Correct.

Rosen: What kind of support or response did the members within the concentration camps have to their peers trying to escape or successfully escaping?

Price: I would not know if there was really that much support. I know only for sure that some people had the outside help and did escape.

Rosen: I was wondering if it was a source of inspiration for some or perhaps a source of anger for some who remained behind, such as yourself.

Price: It was a terrible anger and fright for us because, if I recall right, they had brought one man back, and he got shot.

Rosen: One escapee was brought back and shot?

Price: Got killed, yes, and things like that. So it was to us very, very frightful just thinking about what would happen. Sure, after we found out about a successful

escape, we cheered for those ones that could save their lives because our lives were uncertain there.

Rosen: The one who was shot, did you witness this experience?

Price: I believe it happened in the men's camp, so we wouldn't have seen it. Sometimes the Nazis would make a spectacle out of it and make us all stand outside for hours and watch a hanging. But they wanted to get on with their plans to leave because by that time they started fearing for their own lives since the bombardment got stronger.

Rosen: When you say they began fearing for their lives, are you saying...

Price: The Nazis.

Rosen: The Nazis. Were you aware of any people who were committing suicide in the camps?

Price: Not that I would really recall. There were too many people dying of natural causes, of starvation. Attempting suicide, no. We were in a way a little bit better off since we were not in a death camp. Our camp did not have crematoria.

Rosen: You mentioned that you had better food at the General Electric camp. You just mentioned now, however, that some people starved to death. Did they starve to death

at the General Electric camp, or are you talking about later?

Price: Not at the General Electric camp, but our first starvation deaths were in the main camp in Kaiserwald, and also later on there were some.

Rosen: Later on at Stutthof?

Price: Not at Stutthof, but in the following camp.

Rosen: Let’s pick up your story there at Stutthof. You mentioned already that you were transferred to Stutthof when?

Price: We went to Stutthof around October.

Rosen: If I understand correctly, you were at the General Electric work camp from March of 1943 to the spring of 1944.

Price: Right. I was with General Electric--I stayed in the same camp--until we got transferred from Riga to Stutthof. That was still in the same camp. I was with the General Electric the whole time.

Rosen: Then you were actually there from March of 1943 to October of 1944.

Price: Nineteen forty-four.

Rosen: Now you say that in October of 1944 you were transferred by boat...

Price: To Stutthof.

Rosen: How long a trip did that take?

Price: I might not recall this correctly, but I think about maybe three days.

Rosen: You knew where you were going at this time?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: You mentioned that you heard rumors that some of the torpedo boats of the Nazis were lost on the way.

Price: Yes, correct.

Rosen: And you were aware that the Nazis are on the defensive at this point, not on the offensive.

Price: Right.

Rosen: Let’s pick up with what you experienced, then, at Stutthof.

Price: In Stutthof, as I say, our group was kept together because they had planned on transferring us from Stutthof to another work camp again. ***Appells*** in the morning, cold, hungry, not enough to eat. Then we also found out that those like myself, who had left parents in Riga, what had happened to them. One morning, I recall, we were supposed to be on the ***Appell*** place in front of the barracks, but I walked away a little ways. There was another camp, separate from us, and I questioned somebody I knew to see if they had heard or known what had happened to my parents. They told

me then that my parents had not come with them. The conclusion was that my parents both had gotten shot on the same day in Riga. My father was fifty-five, and my mother was fifty-three.

Rosen: How did you feel about that?

Price: Terrible. When I woke up the next morning, I had a white streak in my hair.

Rosen: At that point how did you feel about your own life?

Price: Frightened.

Rosen: How long were you at Stutthof?

Price: We remained in Stutthof a very short time because, I recall, they shipped us from Stutthof to Thorn, which is also in Poland. It is a military fort, *Stadt*. City, I'd better say. It had always been under the Germans a military fort. The whole city there had been a military fort. How do I know this? Because my mother was born in Thorn and lived there as a child with my grandparents. So I knew about it. General Electric had opened up a work camp in Thorn again with the same foremen from Riga. We had to walk from our camp about, I would say, forty-five minutes to an hour every morning to reach the work camp, the work place.

Rosen: Now I just want to go back for a moment. You went down to Stutthof in October of 1944.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Roughly how long were you there?

Price: I would say about three-and-a-half weeks.

Rosen: Then you went to Thorn.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: This is in October or November by this time?

Price: We came into Thorn by the first of November.

Rosen: The camp you're at, Thorn, is that the name?

Price: That was also the work camp from General Electric.

Rosen: Another General Electric work camp?

Price: Right.

Rosen: And you walked from the camp to the factory.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: Was it outside the camp?

Price: It was outside the camp.

Rosen: Forty-five-minute walk?

Price: Yes, every morning then return at night--in the dark in the mornings and coming back in the dark. We went there in November, and I can't really clearly remember if we stayed for a week or so at the camp itself before they had opened the factory. But I remember that we were working every day in the factory. This was our last place, or my last place, where I was imprisoned.

Rosen: How long were you at Thorn?

Price: At Thorn we were there until January 26.

Rosen: January 26, 1945.

Price: Nineteen forty-five, correct. Now the offensive had started on the 18th of January in Warsaw. In Thorn we had very good communications from outside, so day by day we really knew what was happening.

Rosen: You mentioned you had good communications. How so?

Price: In the factory there was some civilian people from Thorn, and we found ways to try to communicate with them. Now I did one thing one time. By this time we were all skeleton-like, hungry for maybe fresh food or a carrot or an onion, which were not obtainable. But I talked to some of the workers in the work place, the civilian workers, and at one time I begged them to get us maybe a raw potato or an onion or a carrot--something--because we had hunger typhoid in the camp already. Some of our girls were stricken by it, and there was no help.

One time we got a big transport of food, carrots and potatoes, in bags and things like that. But since the war had already come closer, they had decided that in case of us being cut off from the outside world, if the Russians would overrun the camp, we would be

left some food that we could pick up. They dug a hole and put straw down at the bottom, put the food in it, put straw on top of it, put pipes in the middle for air to circulate, and covered it up again. So that was our rations in case we were cut off. Food was scarce again, naturally, and what the SS couldn't steal they might have left for us.

Rosen: When you say they couldn't steal...

Price: The Nazis couldn't steal because also for them food had become a little bit scarce. I recall very vividly that we were going to work one morning, and it was the 26th of January. We passed an airfield, a fenced-in airfield, every morning. By that time, of course, it was camouflaged with blue lights. But the morning when we went to work on the 26th of January, I told the girls, "Something is going on here. There's no light. What happened?" We had heard a couple nights before some bombardment, maybe bombs exploding close by. But since the concentration camps were protected by the Geneva Convention, all the concentration camps had to have lights on four sides as a warning in case the pilots would know where camps were and that they would not be bombarded.

Rosen: Did you know at the point that there were such things as the Geneva Convention?

Price: Yes, at that point we knew.

Rosen: How did you know about that?

Price: Well, also through communications from outside, we had found out why they had posts on the four sides of the camps.

Well, we went to work, but then by noon one of the SS men had been sent out to the work place and commanded that we all leave the work place and march back to the camp. Something was going on.

When we reached the camp we found out what was going on. They had gotten orders to, if possible, bring us back to Stutthof. Well, the SS had a ball. They started to shoot out the lights outside of the camp. They burned all our records. Then they brought in sleds for their belongings, and we would be the horses, and they could carry their belongings with them.

They had given us that evening the last rations we would ever get from them. We got a little bit of sugar, we got some bread, we got some margarine, some jam, and, I believe, also a little piece of sausage. That was the last we got from them.

So they started and herded us all together, and they took us out. We also had those people who were sick with typhoid. Thanks to our *Lageralterste*, none of the women were left by the wayside or got shot.

Rosen: **Even the women with typhoid?**

Price: **Even the women with typhoid. What happened to us was that the Nazis had gotten an order. They had to cross one certain bridge over a stream at a certain time. The bridge was mined, and they would set it off at a certain time. So they were very eager to cross this bridge and not be cut off and fall in Russian hands. We pushed on and on, and we found on the way a hay wagon. So our *Sturmbannfuhrer* said, "All right, those who can't walk, in the hay wagon! And you make the horses!" We did. We carried the people with us. We finally stopped at one paper mill. This was still Polish territory, and since part of our women were Polish, they could speak the language. Well, when they came to the paper mill, the SS was more dead than we were, half-starved. I recall that the *Sturmbannfuhrer* was dressed in a fur coat, fur boots, and had his machine pistol around his neck. But in reaching the destination, he was very eager to push on since we had to cross this bridge and not be cut off. We were**

very, very tired, hungry, cold, everything else, but here surfaced our will to live, even if we did not know what would happen to us. We had prayed before and hoped on this march that maybe we could escape our captors and that we could live. The *Sturmbannfuhrer* mentioned at one time, "Oh, I don't care anymore if I live or die!"

So we marched on, and we came to a paper factory. There we stopped our march. It was nightfall, and the SS was as tired as we were. We rested there, and some of the Polish women we had with us from the camp made good their escape because the SS was too frightened and too tired to count us again in the morning.

Rosen: You mentioned that they were too frightened. Frightened of what?

Price: Of the Russians because the war was coming so near, so close. It was already the 27th of January, and the Russians were marching so fast that the SS was so frightened.

Rosen: You mentioned the *Sturmbannfuhrer*.

Price: He was the first commandant in the camp actually with us.

Rosen: You mentioned that he talked about wanting to go on or not caring whether he lived or died. He also didn't

kill anyone, and he allowed the women to use the hay wagon to take those who could not walk. He showed some compassion for the women.

Price: It might have been due to our *Lageralterste*, who really kept him very quiet, very subdued, at least so we would have a chance to live. She had hoped to get out alive and had hoped maybe to see her son again, which she later did. She was hoping so much that life would go on that she was the best influence on him, I think, for whatever would happen to the five hundred women that we had in this camp. Nobody got shot. Some died of natural causes. We found out the next morning, when we got out again to march farther, that some of the women had died, but they died actually of natural causes or, if you want to say, of starvation. But it was not a forced death.

Rosen: During this march in January, in Poland, the weather is very harsh at that time of the year generally. What was the weather like?

Price: Very cold.

Rosen: How were you dressed for this?

Price: We were dressed in a striped dress, gray and blue striped, like the concentration camp garb; but during

our transport, we did not get the jackets. They had given us coats.

Rosen: **The Nazis?**

Price: **The Nazis had given us coats because apparently they did not have enough jackets for us to wear over our dresses. What they did later on, in order to mark us, they put a red spot of paint on our backs so that they could see us.**

Rosen: **Are you saying the coats were a lighter weight than the jackets?**

Price: **No, the coats actually were coats stolen from prisoners in the concentration camp.**

Rosen: **So you had some warm clothing that the Nazis had given you.**

Price: **Fairly warm clothing, let's say. Of course, our clothing was "walking by itself," but that was true in all the camps because of the lice.**

Then we walked from the paper factory there. We marched on until we reached Bromberg [Bydgoszcz]. That is also a city in Poland. We came to a train depot, and we were standing there. There were still at least 450 women. The *Sturmbannfuhrer* went to make a telephone call. We were standing on the street without blankets over us, freezing, talking. The

guards were standing there. In the meantime, there came a light military truck. The soldiers in there said, “Idiots! Where do you think you’re going?” We didn’t have an answer. We had also some SS women with us, and they had given them some guns.

Rosen: They?

Price: The Nazis had given them some guns, so in case one of us tried to escape, they could shoot us down. Well, the SS women heard those fellows talking, and they threw their guns away and said, “You are free!” They jumped on that truck, and they left. They were not seen anymore.

Rosen: The SS women joined the men on the truck, leaving you free.

Price: Leaving us standing there on the street. We were not free because there was still SS men there as guards. They were there with their guns.

But, let me tell you about the escape we made. All streets were overrun with people--military, civilian, women with children and little baby buggies-- you name it--since everybody was on their way to escape the Russians. Well, the SS man had left us there for quite some time. He had in mind that he would put us on the trains and get us back to

Stutthof, but there was no way he could load us on the trains because there was no way of us getting anywhere. There was no transportation open anymore.

Rosen: You're talking about the idea of the *Sturmbannfuhrer*...

Price: ...to call and see what he could do with us to take us back to Stutthof.

Rosen: How many guards, would you say, are accompanying you?

Price: Roughly ten or twelve. Maybe ten men and two or three women.

Rosen: And the women...

Price: The women had already left.

Rosen: So now you only have about ten men.

Price: We had the guards there, and they were in worse shape than we because until then they had good food and enough to drink and whatnot.

So there we were, standing there in the street, and we were talking, and they were talking. One of the girls told one of the guards who was close by, "Listen, you didn't see anything. Turn around. You don't see anything, do you?" Well, he could have cared less.

So one girl and I made good our escape. Mind you, this was the 28th of January. We ran into a side

street, and by that time there were also people living in cellars. I saw a blanket hung by a small window, and I saw little rays of light, and I told the girl who escaped with me, “Let’s go down there.” I had warned her that I would not go in a big group. That was too risky, since we didn’t know what we would encounter. So we went down the cellar stairs, and the people in the cellar were so afraid they didn’t know what to do. They were hiding and peeping out and seeing what was going on. We were in that cellar. We came down there, and we were talking. They heard us talking, and we were talking in German. Well, frankly, they decided they had to investigate who was down there.

Rosen: Now who was this?

Price: The German people.

Rosen: Not the Nazis?

Price: Not the Nazis. They were German people, several people who were living in the cellars. When they finally found out who was down there and they listened to us, well, with the little bit they had, the first thing they did was make us something warm to drink, and they gave us a little bit of their food. Naturally, they wanted to know where we came from and what all we had

encountered, etc. So we told them bits of it, but we were so tired that we wanted to sleep. So we asked the people what we could do, if we could sleep somewhere. They said, “Yes. What you can do is go up the stairs and go into the house there, and you can sleep somewhere on the floor. Well, we followed their advice, and we walked up to the second or third floor. Those were all apartment houses. We took our blankets and the food we had with us. We rolled the blanket all up under our heads, and we bedded ourselves down on the floor. I believe until this day that I never slept better in my life than that night.

Well, here comes daytime, and the people who were living in the apartment heard us talking, and they were deathly afraid. So, naturally, we were afraid, too. We marched ourselves back down into the cellar. When we came down into the cellar, there was a man there who had been, we found out later, the maintenance man in a women’s clinic. Across the backyard there had been a women’s clinic, and this man had done all the maintenance work, the heating and whatever. The doctors had already left for Germany, but the personnel were still at the house, and he was living with his wife on the first floor.

Rosen: On the first floor of the house there.

Price: Of the house we were in.

Rosen: Now let me back up here for a moment. When you made your escape with your girlfriend from the march, you go downstairs into a cellar where you find people hiding. Are those Poles hiding?

Price: Those were not Polish people. They were Sudeten Germans. Part of them were actually workers in the clinic. They had worked there. Part of them had already lost their homes to bombardment, and they had moved in either with relatives or had found shelter.

Rosen: So we have these civilians, who are Germans, hiding in Poland here in a cellar. Now they told you and your friend that you could sleep there, but not with them in the cellar...

Price: Correct.

Rosen: ...but that you could get out and go on to one of these higher levels.

Price: Right.

Rosen: There were still people living there?

Price: Living in the apartments, yes.

Rosen: So you went into someone’s apartment and...

Price: No, no, no, no, no. See, usually there are two apartments on each floor--one on this side and one on

this side (gestures)--and there is a little foyer in between.

Rosen: You say one on each side and one on this side. One in the front and one in the back?

Price: No. Like here for instance, my apartment is here (gesture), and across from me is another apartment.

Rosen: So you had a small hall...

Price: A small hallway, and across from this door was another door, and somebody else lived there.

Rosen: On each floor there is...

Price: Two apartments.

Rosen: You went into one apartment. Were there people living in that apartment?

Price: No, no, we slept in the hallway. We did not go in the apartment. We went to the second or third floor and slept in the hallway.

Rosen: In the hallway.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: In the morning, then, you heard people in the apartment...

Price: In the apartment right where we were sleeping at their front door, you know. We heard them. They had heard us at night when we were talking, and we heard them again in the morning. We were frightened so we walked

back down into the cellar. Here was this man who was the maintenance man in the hospital. He had given his wife hell when she had told him what happened. He had told her that she was not normal and how could she be so heartless as to not give us shelter at her place and let us sleep there and things like that. The first thing this man did, he gave us something to eat. By that time we could not eat too much. We had to be very careful because our intestines had shrunk so much that you could not overload your intestines or you would get deadly sick.

Then he said, “Look, I have seen, last night, what happened to the people.” He said, “They had on the same clothes that you have, and I saw what they did to them. So you better stay here with us. I will give you a place to sleep.” We found out that they had taken the rest of the women about thirty or thirty-five miles farther to a barn where they stored hay. The SS man had told them before he and his girlfriend left, “Now if the Russians should catch you, you tell them that you were political prisoners.” They left and left the women there.

Rosen: When you talk about the women, are you talking about the other four hundred?

Price: The rest of the women who had been left standing on the street. They took them there, and they took shelter there until the Russians found them when they came.

Rosen: They left them for the Russians to find them?

Price: Right. He had told us what happened. He had seen it, so he knew what had happened.

In the evening he had done two things. He had obtained some clothes for us, and we begged him if we could take a bath. We would love to get rid of the lice; they were not too good of company for us. In any event, in Germany they have the big wash houses, and they have big basins that were made of cement, big cement basins where they then rinsed the wash before they're going to hang it or dry it in the sun. He said, "All right, I will make you a bath." So what he did, he made us hot water, and we got in that big basin. We sat there...I don't even know anymore how long we sat in there. He gave us a piece of soap, mind you--soap that we hadn't seen in three years. I think it was lye soap or what. He had organized everything for us. He had taken clothes from the women that were living in this apartment house, and he told them, "You must give some clothes to those women." So they gave

us some clothing, and we told them--what actually was not very bright because the dresses would have been very good documentation of where we had been, but we couldn't stand to put those dresses on again--"Do us a favor and burn those dresses."

Rosen: **When you talk about those dresses, you're talking about...**

Price: **Concentration camp dresses.**

Rosen: **Do you mean literally dresses?**

Price: **Those were women's dresses. Not the jackets. We had dresses. The men had the trousers and had the jackets, and we had dresses.**

He burned those dresses. Until this day I don't think I can describe how we felt being clean. In this clinic there were rooms with beds with white linens, and he put each of us in a bed with white linens on it. We didn't know heaven was like until then.

The women who had worked in the kitchen had enough food left, so they started cooking. So here we are, feeling like queens, in a bed with white linen, clean, and have food enough. But we were very cautious, very much so. We cautioned ourselves and said, "Don't eat too much at one time." I recall that one night I woke up, and I went into the kitchen. One

of the women had cooked some pudding, tapioca pudding, and I got a big bowlful of pudding and a spoon. I marched back into the room with it. To my girlfriend, I said, “Hey, wake up. Come on. Let’s eat some pudding!” We did in the middle of the night. But we did not eat too much at one time because later on, after the war was over, we found out that a lot of people had literally overeaten and died.

This must have been the 2nd or 3rd of February, more likely around the 2nd of February. We were still in this clinic, and we slept like logs. In the morning, when we were woke up, there was so much noise. “Where did the people come from?” The Russians had come in at one end of the town, and the people had left and sought shelter there. So there were quite a few people, but we didn’t see how many or what. But there were quite a few people in there. The townspeople had told us what happened, why they had fled. The Russians had come, and then also the Russians came just for one night. Some of the soldiers had come in, but they left very peacefully. Then, as time progressed, the Polish army did come in. The Russians had left, and the Polish army followed them. They were looking for some people to clean out a

school--what they could convert into *Lazarett*, into a station for the Red Cross. There was a four-cornered school that the Germans had used for their wounded soldiers. They had put beds into the classrooms and brought the soldiers first down there so they could be taken care of, then later loaded on vehicles and trains to be taken inland.

When we started out cleaning the place, we found dead German soldiers there, and to our surprise we found one roomful of German bread. By that time the Germans baked bread that could be frozen for months. You could thaw it out, and it would just be as fresh as it came right out of the oven. Well, they shared some with us, and we took it with us, and we gave bread to the people who had done us so much good. We worked there and took care of the wounded soldiers.

Rosen: **Were these wounded German soldiers?**

Price: **No, wounded Polish soldiers. They had brought them in there and kept them there for a while until they could put railroad transports together to transport them to a war hospital. Well, by that time we were nurses, so they would call out, "Sister!" [in Polish]. They wanted to smoke. The Polish officers who were there with them had asked us if we smoked. I did smoke, so**

they had given me some tobacco in a tin box and some paper for you to roll your own cigarettes. But I never did smoke here because they were hollering out of the beds that they wanted some cigarettes. So, naturally, we gave it to them.

There were no bathroom facilities in the school. You know, usually, schools in Europe were built with no inside bathroom facilities. The bathroom facilities were outside. You have to have in mind it is January, February, and everything is frozen, iced over. We had to do something with the waste; it had to be carried out. With a candle in one hand and a big pot in the other, down the stairs we would march and go out to the outhouse and empty it. Many a night we did that because that was our duty. We had to do it. We had to help the soldiers somehow.

There were some Jewish soldiers in the Polish brigade. When they found us, they didn’t know what to do for us because they had all lost their families. They had not seen Jewish women in God knows how long. So they decided that as long as they don’t have to go too close to the battlefield, they would take us with them. And they did.

Rosen: When you left, you left this town.

Price: When they got their orders to leave, they took us with them until we came very close to Lodz. It was Litzmannstadt under the Germans, when the Germans had the territory. We kept on actually working for the wounded because everyplace we came to there were wounded soldiers. Then, as we had done this, we continued. That way we were guaranteed some food.

Rosen: I'm curious. What time did you leave? What time of the year did you leave with the soldiers? You mentioned that you had met them in February of 1945.

Price: Right.

Rosen: How long were you in this town before you left the town?

Price: Oh, I would say it was maybe three weeks, not longer, that we stayed with them, helping them to care for the wounded soldiers. What we did then, as I said, we still continued working with the wounded soldiers. We would bathe them, see that they were clean, and then they would put the transport together for shipping them to a big hospital where they could be taken care of.

Rosen: Now the Jewish soldiers who decided to take you along with them, it seems like they were doing something

that was not typical--bringing women with them. Was there any flak or...

Price: No. Those soldiers were mostly officers. They were not just plain soldiers, and they had the right to do what they did. They could take us because shelter was provided for us, but we were not with them. We were not together with them, but shelter was provided by them for us so that we could continue helping them by taking care of the wounded soldiers.

Rosen: How did you and your friend about going with these soldiers?

Price: We felt very good for the plain reason that we hoped, now that we were alive, maybe we would find a town where we would see a Jewish community organization where we could obtain some papers, because we did not have any papers. We did not have nothing. We could say, “I’m the king of Persia!” at that time.

So we parted with the soldiers just shortly, I would say, before we reached Lodz. They had to go on; they had to follow their regiment and everything else. They had to go on.

But here we were, and I remember what we did. We met with a group of displaced people who had escaped. I had met two Yugoslavian soldiers. They were

stranded. They had been freed, and they were apparently looking for transportation to go farther where they could reach a town and make some connections--much the same like we were. But I remember, since it was so cold, one of the soldiers did take off his navy blue scarf. I still have it until this day.

Rosen: How long did you follow these soldiers while nursing these wounded men?

Price: Well, it might have been maybe two, two-and-a-half months--in spurts--that we followed them. You know, we had to stay, and then they would go farther on, and then we would go farther on with them. When they could take us no farther, when there was no way anymore that they could do anything for us, they continued forward.

By that time we had found some more displaced people who had been freed, so what we did one night, we hopped a freight train, an open freight train, mind you. I still can see me. I had a houndstooth coat on, a scarf around my head, a little brown hair. Here we are: “Where is it going?” “Who cares! Let’s go.” So we stayed on the freight train until we reached Lodz.

Rosen: Now you mentioned “we.” Are you talking about the friend of yours that you escaped with?

Price: The friend of mine, and then also there were more, as I say, displaced people who had been freed. We all went on this freight train. There were some men among us, and they apparently had known where this train would be going, and they said, “Okay, everybody, let’s go!”

Rosen: What time period was that in now, when you hopped the freight train?

Price: Well, we are talking around the beginning of spring, I would say, around March and on into April of 1945. When we reached Lodz, finally we found out that there was already a Jewish Committee. We made our way to the Jewish Committee, but I have to say this--we found out also that there had been a big ghetto in Lodz, and some of the walkways that had been built by the Nazis were still standing. Then it was explained to us where the place was, and finally we met some Jewish people. We got to the Jewish Committee and explained to them where we were from and what happened to us, and if they could get us some papers. We did get some papers at least with our names on it and whatnot, but the war was still going on.

So I remained in Poland and later married in Poland. I remained until around July or August of 1946.

Rosen: You made it to Lodz, Poland, sometime in late March or early April.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: How long did that freight train take you?

Price: If I could recall this, it might have been two days that we were on that freight train.

Rosen: When you remained there, you said you also married there?

Price: I met my husband, and we married, and we stayed in Poland until 1946. In 1946, of course, the war was over.

Rosen: Let’s go back for a moment. About the war ending...can you describe a little more about that time period?

Price: Now the war in Poland ended in May. At the beginning of May, the war ended. Not only in Poland, but the war ended, period. Then I did remain in Poland. By that time I had already learned to speak Polish, and I could read the newspapers, and I was well aware of what was going on in the world and whatnot. But my destination was going home to Germany. I still had the papers they had given me, and I didn’t have

nothing else. I had to get official papers, and I found out now that the city where I am from was under British jurisdiction in Germany.

Rosen: When you mention getting papers, what kind of papers are you referring to?

Price: Traveling papers, also, because by that time it was half a normal life. Since I didn’t have any papers or no passport, no nothing, I went to the British embassy in Warsaw. Now I had learned only English for half a year at home. Then, when I went to Berlin in school, we started to learn English again, but there was such a minimum of learning that I didn’t know English anymore. I wondered if I could make myself understand with the little I knew. Well, the soldiers were very nice, and they listened to what I had said in the embassy. I told them why I was there and what I wanted from them. They did give me a passport so that I could travel to Germany. I wanted to go legally over the border, not illegally.

Well, it did not go that way. Later on, I decided I was going home if my husband would go with me or not. But I was going home. He was not very warm to the idea to go into Germany, but there was no other way yet.

Rosen: When are you talking about going back to Germany?

Price: In 1946.

Rosen: Let’s go back for a minute. When the war came to an end in May of 1945, you realized you don’t have to live in fear of the Nazis anymore.

Price: Correct.

Rosen: You’ve come out of hiding.

Price: Right.

Rosen: How did you feel?

Price: I felt very good because at least this part was over. Naturally, since I had said in the beginning that my brother had left in 1936, that he was in Israel, I had made contact with my brother. So my brother knew I was alive. When we came to Germany, we did not know at first what we would be doing and how we would leave Germany because I did not want to raise my children in Germany.

Rosen: Now you’re going back to 1946?

Price: To 1946.

Rosen: In 1946 you go from Poland to Germany with your husband. Do you want to mention here how you met your husband?

Price: I met my husband in Poland.

Rosen: What was he?

Price: He was a tailor.

Rosen: Was he Jewish?

Price: Yes, he was Jewish.

Rosen: Was he in a camp, also?

Price: No. I think I told you before that my husband had left Poland and went into Russia and then made his way back later with the army.

Rosen: How long did you know your husband before you married him?

Price: A very, very short time.

Rosen: How long?

Price: Well, by that time it was not such a big question. First, here was a Jewish man, a young Jewish man, and he wanted to marry. So I accepted.

Rosen: So how long a period are we talking about?

Price: I would say three months.

Rosen: Now were there any special reasons to get married so quickly?

Price: The reason was plainly that he was lonely, and I was lonely. He wanted somebody to live with him and try to bring on a family and whatnot. It was actually idiotic to think of it by that time, but you are alive, and life goes on. So, I had one child born in 1946, and the other one was born in 1947. We stayed

in Germany for two years, from 1946 to 1948, and then we went to Israel. We immigrated to Israel.

Rosen: In looking back on the Holocaust and your survival, with all the number of people who died in it, have you ever thought about why you survived?

Price: Yes, many times there was the question why didn't I die. There must have been a reason for it. If we believe in God, we must say that maybe God still had a plan for my life, that he thought I was too young and that I had some plan to fulfill on earth that I should stay alive.

Rosen: How did this affect your faith in God?

Price: It affects me only in a good way because, since I'm still alive at sixty-eight, there must have been a reason for me staying alive and surviving the concentration camp.

Rosen: Would you say the Holocaust increased your faith, then, in God?

Price: Yes, yes, definitely, definitely, because think back to what we went through just from January 26, the foot march, those two days. There must have been a reason. Our faith had increased, absolutely, because we were facing death on one side, but we were still alive. We are still marching! We were still breathing! We are

still alive! So God had to be there someplace, somewhere. Until today, there must have been a reason why I stayed alive.

Rosen: Did you have this faith during the Holocaust itself?

Price: Yes, many a time we would pray that we would stay alive--just praying for a better day, just praying maybe even for a better hour. If we did not pray officially then we would do it silently.

Rosen: Your survival increased your faith in God. How do you reconcile the deaths of your parents and aunts and uncles with your faith?

Price: Actually, if you ask me of reconciling it, I think that was the biggest tragedy I had in my life. A reconciliation was very hard to fathom because my parents were only fifty-three and fifty-five when they had to die. But what are you going to do when you are the lone survivor? Do you want to die, too, or do you want to stay alive for some reason? So you have to question this. Life is going on. We live with the memories. There is no denial what we went through, but, as I mentioned, my life went on. After I found out that my parents had died, should I commit suicide? Naturally, I wanted to live.

Rosen: Did you ever think about taking your own life?

Price: No.

Rosen: Did you ever think that you were going to die during the Holocaust?

Price: Yes, especially when I mentioned that they had me brought from the camp to the ghetto and facing the SS man. There would have been a possibility that day, if he had a bad dream or some bad things come, he could just as well have taken me to the cemetery down there and shot me.

Rosen: You said that the Holocaust increased your faith in God.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: There must have been a plan for you to live.

Price: That’s right.

Rosen: What plan do you think that was?

Price: Maybe to have my children and grandchildren. To see them. There is still a link of the family that continues to live.

Rosen: Do you hold any bitterness?

Price: Yes and no. But, as I said, life is going on. I have been back to Germany and have seen some people who had been very good friends to us and helped us in many ways. You cannot live in peace and carry hatred in

your heart. There is no way you can live in peace because in some way this hatred comes out.

The generation we have now in Germany has nothing to do with what happened from 1939 to 1945, so how can I go on blaming those people. “Yes, you did that to my parents.” That’s impossible because 99 percent of those Germans are dead.

Rosen: Did you ever have a desire for vengeance?

Price: No, because vengeance wouldn’t get me nowhere by condemning those people. I will not refuse to speak their language or read their books or have nothing to do with them. It wouldn’t be right either, because I still have relatives in Germany on my father’s side. My father had two sisters who were not married to Jewish men. All those sisters and their husbands are dead, but their children are still alive. They are relatives of mine; they are cousins of mine.

Rosen: When you say the sisters and the brothers-in-law of your father are dead now, are you talking about through natural causes or as a result of the Holocaust.

Price: The men were not Jewish. They died of natural causes. My two aunts that had been in Theresienstadt, they returned from Theresienstadt and lived many years.

Rosen: In all, how much of your family would you say you lost during the Holocaust?

Price: My family lost six on my father's side. The sisters returned and died, but still they lived several years after they came back from Theresienstadt. From my husbands' family, there were at least thirty-six to thirty-eight that perished.

Rosen: From your father's family, six perished?

Price: Yes.

Rosen: And from your husband's family over thirty?

Price: Right.

Rosen: How would you say the Holocaust, your experience in it, has affected your philosophy of life?

Price: I believe in living only one day at a time, not making big plans or long-term plans. Due to the experience I had in the camp, you really lived sometimes only from hour to hour, not only from day to day. Today my way of life has changed so drastically, but when you get older you learn to appreciate every day you are still here, and you don't plan on making long-term commitments.

Rosen: You mentioned that after the war you spent two years in Germany, from 1946 to 1948, and then you immigrated to Israel. How long did you spend in Israel?

Price: We were in Israel eight years.

Rosen: And then from Israel...?

Price: We came to the United States in 1957.

Rosen: You mentioned you went to Israel in 1948 and then left in 1957. Was that closer to nine years in Israel?

Price: Yes, almost nine years.

Rosen: Have you had any affiliation with any organizations related to the Holocaust in the decades that followed?

Price: Yes, I do.

Rosen: Could you describe it, please?

Price: I belong to the Survivors of the Riga Ghetto that comes out of New York. Then also I am a member here of the Holocaust Survivors.

Rosen: Have you had any other affiliation with any events that came about as a result of the Holocaust?

Price: No, no. Due to family and children, you don’t travel around the world like you would like to. I have been in New York to a meeting of the survivors of the Riga Ghetto and hope that in May I will go for a weekend to the Catskills, where the survivors have another meeting, the Holocaust Survivors from the Riga Ghetto.

Rosen: After the war there were a number of war crime trials.

Price: Yes.

Rosen: Did you have any participation in those?

Price: Yes, I did. The Defamation League had an article in the Dallas paper that they were looking for survivors of the ghetto of Riga.

Rosen: Before you go on, you're talking about the Anti-Defamation League?

Price: The Anti-Defamation League, correct.

Rosen: And how long ago were you talking about?

Price: In 1980 the article was in the paper. Then it went until 1982 that they had planned a trial for Wiesner.

Rosen: For who?

Price: Heinrich Wiesner. The Anti-Defamation League had an article in the paper where they were looking for some survivors from the Riga Ghetto. I did answer this article and got in touch with Washington.

Rosen: Was this article published in the Dallas paper?

Price: Yes, it was published here, but the address was actually the Anti-Defamation League in Washington. They wanted to find out about war crimes in Riga, so I answered. Since my daughter was living in the vicinity, I had told them I would visit my daughter at a certain time, and they could question me there. They did.

I answered their questions, and, as a result, they made me take a trip to Houston, to the German embassy in Houston, where they showed me some pictures of SS men in uniform and also in civilian clothing. To the surprise of the German consul and his secretary, after they had left me with the pictures to study and make sure what I would say, I pointed to one picture and said to him, “This man was in Riga, in the concentration camp,” because I recognized him. He had his uniform on. They turned white as a wall. “This is unbelievable after that many years! You can still recognize him?” I said, “Yes, he was in Riga!” They agreed with me that this was Dr. Krebsbach.

Rosen: And this was an officer?

Price: He was a doctor. Of course, he had the rank of a high officer, but he was a doctor, and he had been in the Riga concentration camp. Now the man they wanted to prosecute was Heinrich Wiesner. This Wiesner had been the right-hand of Dr. Krebsbach. When he had been in civilian clothing, I could not recognize him.

Rosen: When you say he was in civilian clothing, you...

Price: In the photo they showed me, Wiesner had been in civilian clothes and not in the uniform in which I had seen him in Riga. They had set later on a trial

date for Wiesner in Dusseldorf, Germany, which I got a notification that I had to be present. Of course, the Germans paid for all the expenses: air flight to Germany, hotel, and all the expenses I had during the time of my stay there. The trial was very grueling, and the end result was that Wiesner got five years in prison. Well, after a time, the high court in Germany threw out the conviction, and Wiesner was free; but the Anti-Defamation League and also the Jewish organization protested against it, and they agreed to give Wiesner a new trial. Due to family circumstances, I was not able to travel again to Germany, so the Germans sent their prosecution team to the United States and all over to all the other countries where the witnesses were that were not able to travel to Germany. As a result, Wiesner again got a five-year prison term, but I doubt it very seriously that he served one day in prison.

Rosen: I'm curious. Do you know why the first verdict was overturned by a higher court?

Price: Well, the German newspapers had painted Mr. Wiesner as such a loving grandfather who could do no harm to anybody. [Tape ends]

Rosen: This is side three now, tape two side one, the third part of the interview.

Price: As I mentioned, at the trial the German newspapers had painted Mr. Wiesner as such a loving grandfather who could not do any harm, and they definitely denied that he had done any atrocities in the concentration camp. So his conviction was overturned. Then they made a new trial for him about, I would say, five or six years later. Due to circumstances in my family, I was not able to travel back to Germany, so when I testified in the German embassy in Houston, the conviction was the same five years. But I doubt very seriously if he spent one day in jail.

Rosen: Do you actually know if he has spent any time in jail?

Price: No.

Rosen: In your testimony regarding Heinrich Wiesner, you said you recognized him. Did you have any personal experiences with him to relate?

Price: Not very directly. Indirectly, yes. I had been sick, and they put me in the sickbay in the main camp. One night there had been a woman pregnant in her last months, and she was ready to have her baby. I heard some crying of what sounded like a baby. I was curious. I got up. I was not aware that Wiesner had

come into the sickbay. There were some Jewish prisoners who were allowed to help, and there was a Polish doctor in the sickbay. They had not told me Wiesner had come in, so I got up and was curious about what was going on. He stood there: “What is she doing here?” The doctor gave an answer that he was satisfied with, so I disappeared and went back to my bed so he could not do anything to me. But later on, I found out that the woman had her baby and that the baby got killed.

Rosen: Do you think Wiesner had anything to do with the death of the baby?

Price: I would say so, since he was there and knew that the woman had borne the baby. Then all of a sudden the baby was quiet, and it was stuck in a trash can. It was rolled up in a sheet and stuck in a trash can. Wouldn’t you say that he had something to do with it? A healthy baby that cries does not die just right like that--cries one minute then is quiet.

Rosen: Did you see that baby wrapped up and in the garbage can?

Price: I saw a body wrapped up in a garbage can, yes.

Rosen: Are there any concluding remarks you want to say?

Price: No, the only thing I can say is that I hope and pray that never--in nobody's lifetime--should they experience and witness atrocities that we have seen.

Rosen: Well, hopefully, by keeping people aware of the past, we can keep it from happening in the future.

Price: Hopefully.

Rosen: This recording and the transcripts may, as a result of it, will provide the opportunity for future people to know the past.

Price: Yes, I hope that they take it to heart and never--never ever--try anything like that again.

Rosen: Thank you, Mrs. Price, for your help.

Price: You're welcome Keith.

[End of interview]