

HARRY CAPLAN
May 14, 1997

Interviewer: Zelda Kaplan

Notetaker: Harriet Tarnor Wacks

Minutes

Born in 1939, Narvik, Norway. Father owned department stores. Thirty to forty Jews in hometown. Earliest recollection of war starting - shooting. Earlier, parents could have left but didn't. Father from England (all "C" Caplans from Manchester, England). One brother from father's first marriage (3 years older)

- 5 min. 1942 TO 1943, all boys and men taken to prison (9 months) in Oslo (Greni). Mother in another prison (very sick). Maternal grandparents wealthy, bribed to get her brothers out, to escape one day before all shipped to Germany. Remembers going to garbage cans for food.
- 10 min. Taken to Denmark, kept low profile. Tells of Danish Resistance. **Rosh Hashonah, 1943, remembers very well. Middle of night, had to be very quiet. All children get injections to keep quiet, mother wouldn't let them. Warned him if not quiet, would go to dentist next day. Kept quiet. Lying down on ship, looking up. Could hear shooting and screaming from boats that didn't make it. Grandparents, mother and sister and her family to Copenhagen to ?Guthenberg. Given good housing in new district. Always building there.
- 15 min. There till 1945. Mother's family returned to Denmark. Mother returned to Norway to get back business. Wasn't that way.

HARRY CAPLAN (continued)

Danish and Norweigan underground heroic. Still much antisemitism. Fishing boats made fortune, charged more for wealthy Jews. Danish and Norweigans were insulted by treatment of Jews.

- 16 min. On Radio, King said "One Dane like the same". Never wore star. Danish made Germans miserable, relentless if Jew was taken.
- 20 min. Mother never saw his father, his three brothers and his Grandfather after taken away to Ghetto and then to Auschwitz (killed). Mother's sister and family survived. When returned to Norway (1946) had to rebuild business. Got Rheumatic Fever, went to hospital in Denmark where her brother was doctor. Harry had Hepatitis. Mother remarried to Swede, lived there till he came here.
- 25 min. His father was a good, generous man. Can't remember him. Brother died from cancer 20 years ago. Mother died at age 61, her body beaten by life (widowed at age 26). Mother wanted him to marry a Jewess, sent him to kibutz in Israel. Went with cousin. Met his wife, from Boston, came to America and married in 1963. Went to live in Sweden for two years, immigrated to Israel, returned to America in 1966.
- 30 min. 1943, ? 1945 remembers American soldiers, gave him his first bubblegum in Narik. Dreams of returning to Narik. Two sons, not interested in this (?), don't talk much.
- 35 min. Year ago, shared experience for first time at program at Brandeis. About 1,300 children (3-5 years) escaped. Has never been reunion. Uncles never really talked to him about experiences.