

RG-50.029*0016

Glatz, Rivkah

1 Videotape

- 0:00 Her given name is Veronica Susannah they family called her Verna. She was born in Debrecen, Hungary on October 16, 1937. Shortly after her birth the family moved to Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár) near border of Hungary and Romania.
- 3:00 Father was laborer. Brother was seven years older and he went to Jewish gymnasium. Mother was homemaker. The family led quiet, unassuming life. Neighbors were Jewish and non-Jewish. Brother wore uniform to school. Brother got in fights with non-Jews children while walking back and forth to school. Brother was very talented with his hands and carved leather band and strips for protection. Father said that Jews should not fight; they should study. They were not hooligans.
- 4:27 Jews had to wear the Jewish star on clothes. Mother was petrified when we walked anywhere. The family lived in a courtyard in small house with outdoor plumbing. Simple Shabbat dinners and Seders were held in kitchen. Observance very important
- 5:34 Brother's Bar Mitzvah was very subdued and somber. Only a few people could come. The Bar Mitzvah was held at an Orthodox synagogue. Women were upstairs. There were not many people in synagogue because fear of walking to and from. "We did not wander anywhere outside without wearing star."
- 7:02 Father worked in cement factory. Because the city was small everyone walked everywhere. We brought father his lunch everyday. Due to a curfew there were certain hours Jews could not be on street.
- 7:45 In 1943 father was taken to a forced labor camp by Hungarians soon after my brother's bar mitzvah. Father came back only once.
- 8:22 Children were not told about what was going on. There were constant air raids and sirens. My brother and neighbors dug a bunker in the courtyard. One Passover night extremely frightened.
- 9:52 In April of 1944. My mother sensed what was going on. The family had no income except what my mother made with her knitting. My brother made doll furniture. Mother prepared knapsacks because never knew when we might be taken away. She packed a plate, a fork, a knife, a spoon, an enamel cup, underwear, and clothing. She instructed my brother to dress him self and me (Rifka) in layers if mother was not home when they were taken away. Mother was caught on street but was allowed to come home. Hungarians were gladly doing German's work.

Mother took mezuzahs off the door and took the content of mezuzah with her. One of the few items, including a few pictures survived. Rifka has it in her home (see pictures). Mother flushed diamond ring down toilet rather than sew it into her dress.

- 13:33 Hungarians knocked on the door. The house was too small to hide anywhere. Everyone was rounded up put on cattle truck. We were taken to brick factory in the city. We stayed for one month in the courtyard of the factory. No cover except for four poles that were draped over with shmatahs (rags). "I had a little parasol that protected me from the rain." Food was delivered in big buckets.

The group thought they would be saved. They heard that a lawyer (Kostner) was dealing with Eichmann to exchange money for this group. Eichman said that it would show the world that the Nazis were not committing atrocities. The group was supposed to be saved by being taken to Turkey and then to Palestine

- 17:58 Rifka was still with her brother, mother, uncles, aunts, and cousins. After two months, they were taken to Budapest and put into a big school yard. "Father was able to come and visit us from the forced labor camp. We begged him to stay, but he would not because he was afraid that others would be killed in the camp. He went back to camp and was killed."

- 19:00 From Budapest the group went on cattle trains (no windows, no facilities, and no food) to Bergen-Belsen. People were screaming. Rifka had chicken pox, but when they got off train, mother wrapped her in blankets like a baby because she was afraid that Rifka would be taken away. Rifka and her mother were separated from Rifka's brother, uncle, and cousins. "We slept on wooden bunks that were on top of each other. We were constantly counted, although we never were numbered because we were designated to be saved."

"Horror was so immense. We marched to the showers thinking that we were going to be gassed. I remember walking with the women to the showers. We passed names written on fences on the way to showers. Fences had four inch strips. Everyone was screaming, wailing, crying because they recognized the names. Everyone was naked. I was shocked. I had never seen an adult naked I cannot erase this from my memory. The shower was to disinfect us because we were the group being held as hostages for the trade. These were horrendous times, people were giving up hope. The group was there for eight months."

Rifka was six years old and accepted that this was normal. She fashioned her well being on her mother's reactions. If her mother cried, she cried. If her mother smiled, she smiled. Her entire sense of security came from being next to her mother.

- 25:00 The group was marched out of the camp. Rifka was at end of line. She remembered the faces of the German solders and how terrifying they looked.

- “Like vicious animals.” A group was put on train and sent to Switzerland, including Polish orphans.
- 27:50 In Switzerland, Red Cross, JDC and Palestinian Jews were there to help them. They were in an esplanade that seemed like an enchanted palace. Children were sent to a camp in the mountains. They were in Switzerland for eight months- at the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945. They went to school in Switzerland. It was very confusing. Rifka could not concentrate. Her brother was with her, and they were finally reunited with their mother.
- 31:00 A group of 1800 was put on a ship (Via Doran) to Palestine. The first legal Aliyah was in May of 1945. One uncle was already in Israel. They were sent to an absorption center run by British prior to Independence. Then the war broke out.
Mother went to Haifa with many women who did not know if their husbands were alive. Rifka’s brother sent to Kibbutz (Nevatam).
- Rifka was sent with four other children to Kibbutz Hulda near Jerusalem. Rifka was separated from her mother and brother.
- 34:36 The Kibbutz was nice in one respect but very difficult. Rifka was 7 and ½ years old, alone, no one spoke Hungarian, and she did not speak Hebrew. She did not even know word for “toilet paper.” Every child was “assigned” a parent. She was assigned a “father” but “I really needed a mother. He was not very warm.”
- “But there was something wondrous and positive about the Israelis. They cared about all of their youth and were very nurturing.”
- In the meantime, Rifka’s mother was working as cook in a woman’s hotel in Haifa. Traveling was very dangerous because of ambushes. There was only one bus a day to the Kibbutz, and the time her mother tried to come, she missed the connection in TelAviv.
- Rifka remembered how happy everyone was when Israel was declared a nation.
- 43.29 After 3 and ½ years, Rifka’s mother remarried a Hungarian survivor who had lost his wife and two daughters. He was a very nice gentleman—warm, gentle, loving father. One of his daughters who had died, was same age as Rifka and was named Susannah (Rifka’s other name.)
- Mother brought Rifka to Haifa but was unable to show her the affection the way Rifka wanted. “I loved her so much, but the bond had been broken. It was very hard to rebuild, but we have a very great love for each other.”
- Rifka’s brother was 18 years old. He joined army and went into Navy. Served in Haifa.

In 1953—grandmother, uncles, and aunts came to Israel from Hungary. Stayed with her family everyone was constantly searching for family members. Rifka's brother went back to Hungary briefly. Her brother was very, very angry. "I have never gone back. Someday I may go back, but just to see it. Our family lived in Hungary for generations, but I have no feelings for the country."

50:00 Mother made sure that I had a profession. I went to a girl's technical school and learned how to design children's clothes. We went to parties with boys from the boy's technical school and that is when I met my husband, Simon, a sabra (native Israeli), at a Purim party. I was 15 and he was 16. He went into army and when he came back we got married. We were 20 and 21. He always wanted to come to America to make his future. He also had an uncle in America.

52:55 In 1958 we went to America. Simon was trained as a tool and dye maker. We got our papers. We went to Camp Ramah as counselors. Then got jobs as Hebrew teachers in Schenectady, New York. Simon then studied to get prepared for college. Moved to Quincy, Massachusetts and then to Boston.

Simon wanted to study aeronautic engineering. He graduated from Boston University and made the Dean's list. Then went to MIT for one year. He worked for Grumond Aircraft and we lived in New York City.

100:14 In 1964 we realized that we could not have children, and decided to adopt. We moved to California where we adopted Terry our son and then Toni four years later.

103:10 Simon came to Washington. The rest of our family stayed in Israel. We went back to visit. It was a shock to see how our parents had aged." "Part of our life is in Israel, part is here. We think we have made wise and nice choices." Simon started his own company—naval architecture.

Rifka did not work until her daughter was six years old. Then she opened a boutique for girls. Designed bat mitzvah dresses. After ten years, closed the store.

106:00 Only picture of father. She has a photo of mother when she came to Israel. Brother, Chaim, after he came to Israel. Picture of brother and Rifka year after they arrived in Israel it is the only picture of Rifka holding doll.

107:00 "I am doing interview for future generations to **hold** them understand the horrors of war and to make sure that this will never happen again."