

**Renee Grosman**

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### **Abstract**

Renee Auerbach (?) Grosman was born in 1933 in Warsaw, Poland and brought up in Demblin (Deblin), a small town. She was an only child born to Braha (?) and Yitzchak Auerbach. Her parents worked in her mother's china shop and supplied glassware to the Polish army. Her mother was close to her sister, Feiga (?) who had a daughter around Renee's age. When the daughter was killed, the sisters made an agreement that if Renee lived after the war, she would become Feiga's daughter. Therefore, she lived with Feiga for four years. The need for the mother's glassware and her sister's seamstress skills that were needed by the German army kept them in the Demblin concentration camp until the last two years of the war when they were sent to a HASAG camp [Hugo Schneider AG] in Czestochowa. Renee hid under the barracks during the day and came out at night to eat. There were other children in the camp and she is still friendly with two. Near the end of the war, her father was sent to Buchenwald where he died on a death march. Renee was hidden from '39 to '45. Renee and her mother and aunt were liberated by the Russians and went to Lodz where her mother remarried. They did not return to Demblin as relatives were murdered there in a pogrom. She and her mother and stepfather took a train to Palestine and the aunt came later. Renee's mother remained in Israel when she moved with her aunt to the US. She married Morris Grosman and worked as a nurse and had children.

### **Summary**

00:00 Renee Grosman does not have a birth certificate so is not sure of her birthdate. Her friend, Sophie Winter, wrote to Poland and found out that she was born Renee Auerbach (?) in Warsaw. She was brought up in Demblin (?), a small town. It was recently around her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday so her daughter made her a party. Her passport indicates she was born January 12, 1933 and her friend was informed her DOB was August 12, 1933. Her mother had a hard time getting pregnant and during the pregnancy so went to Warsaw, a bigger city, for the birth. Renee visited her home in Poland and it no longer exists. Her mother had a china store that supplied glassware to the Polish Army. Renee was with both parents in two concentration camps. Her name was Regina and became Rivka when she lived in Israel. Her maiden name was Auerbach (?) and she married Grosman.

05:00 Demblin is about an hour from Warsaw. His parents are Yitzchak Auerbach and Braha Rosenberg Auerbach and they married in the 1900s. Her mother was an only child. Her father worked in the mother's store. The Rosenbergs were in the ironworks business. They lived in small towns and went to concentration camps. Irving Rosenberg survived. Renee is in touch with the children of her mother's brother's son in California. Her

mother's sister was a Communist and close to the mother. Her mother was in financial good shape and her sister was not. Her sister had a child, Minca (?), born the same time as Renee. They decided to hide the two girls with Poles. Renee's mother buried metal and coins. Renee does not remember the Pole. Her cousin was hidden first and got panicky and cried so was sent back. She was killed by a Polish officer. Her aunt kept her daughter three nights before she buried her.

10:00 Renee's parents decided not to hide her so she remained with them. She has a photo from age three taken in the country. She hardly remembers her grandmother. She has a photo her father sent to Palestine around 1938. Renee did not visit her mother's china shop. She was cherished by her parents as her mother had a hard time having her. She felt pampered. She has a photo with her wearing an imported dress. Around age two she visited an apartment house in Warsaw. When she hid during the war, her aunt who was a dressmaker, brought her food. She was hidden at night in the concentration camp.

15:00 Her parents worked in ammunition and potatoes and brought raw potatoes. Renee's mother remarried and stayed in Israel and Renee has stepbrothers and stepsisters and she became a child of her aunt's. People who worked got a ration. Renee was taken out of the camp with her parents and aunt. Her aunt worked with her parents in ammunition and potatoes. The aunt's daughter was killed in front of her. The aunt survived and sewed men's collars. Renee's mother had six siblings. There was a sister in Warsaw who had a daughter who was killed in a pogrom in Demblin (?) after the war. They had survived using Polish papers. Her husband and Poles who cooperated with Germans were also killed. Therefore, Renee and her mother did not return to Demblin (?). Her mother's sister, Feiga (?) is the one who became her mother.

20:00 Renee was placed in a labor camp with her parents, aunt and husband. Near the end of the war, Renee's father was sent to Buchenwald. He died on the last march before liberation. Renee was hidden during the day under the barracks. At night she came out and her aunt gave her food. There were other children there including her good friend Bela who lives in Paris. Also, Ben who lives in Houston, was there. Since she can't recall much, she never gave an interview. She feels she is coming to the end of her life so is giving this interview. Her children asked her to do it. She wanted to sweep away or erase that time of her life. She went out of the concentration camp to the warmth, sunshine and laughter in Israel. She has more memories of Israel. She did not want to remember the earlier events. Her mother saved Renee's life when the Russians liberated them in '45.

25:00 She kept Renee under her skirt and got a bullet in her ear. At Buchenwald the men and women were separated. Renee was hidden from '39 to '45. Since her mother supplied the Polish Army, she was the last to be shipped to a concentration camp. The Germans needed the aunt as she was an excellent seamstress. Their camp was a little milder than others. There were other children there. She has a friend in Paris and one in Houston

from the camp. There was an arrangement to marry. Renee was at the conference in Houston and helped her cousin who said there was an arrangement made when very young. Renee does not recall much about her father except that he was loving. She has a photo of him and looked at it and realized what he meant in her life.

- 30:00 Her grandson has his name. She knows her parents loved and protected her. Her father vanished from her life when he was sent to Buchenwald. The Holocaust Museum has information that he died from hunger while on the march. Sometimes Renee dreams about what happened to her and tried to erase it. She seldom talks about it. Most of her current friends talk about immigration from one country to another. Her friends talk of loving Judaism though they are not orthodox. Some do not believe that she went through so much. She invested in her children and they are successful. Her son is a doctor with a wife and two children and her daughter is everything a mother could want. Raquel Grosman has a son, Jonas and Henna, the oldest daughter, finished college. A grandson was just accepted in college. Renee's daughter is involved in her history and her son reads the testimony on the internet.
- 35:00 After the tragedy of the aunt's daughter being killed, Renee's mother made an agreement with her sister, Feiga, that if Renee survives, she would become Feiga's daughter. Therefore, Renee lived four years with the aunt. She married an American citizen and her children were born in the US. She brought the aunt and the second husband to the US but her mother remained in Israel. Her mother and her sister decided to share her and the aunt took Renee under her wings. Renee loved her mother and she survived. She has memories of after the war.
- 40:00 Her mother had been working in Demblin and the aunt was a dressmaker so they remained until the last two years of the war. Then the three of them went to a HASAG camp [Hugo Schneider AG] in Czestochowa. Renee's stories are from what people tell her or flashes she has. She hid under her mother's skirt and her head was shaven. Her mother got a bullet through the ear by a German and the bullet came out but she suffered a hearing loss. After the war in Poland, her mother's older sister's husband came out to buy something and the wife and family were killed.
- 45:00 Renee was liberated in Czestochowa, in the HASAG camp. They went to Lodz and her mother remarried in '45 or '46 and went to Palestine with the aunt. They went by train to Europe and took their rations of fish and eggs as food was scarce in Palestine and you can't throw out food. She has flashes of memory of hunger during the war. Her children made fun of her and food. She loves to give food away to others or feed her grandson. In Israel she went to Nursing School and lived in a tent with her mother and stepfather. Her aunt remained in Poland and later went to Israel and remarried and had her own place. Renee lived in rooms with her mother and stepfather in Tel Aviv where relatives gave them part of their house. Renee had completed a few grades in Poland where she

completed primary school. She worked in a Kibbutz and later as a nurse in a hospital in a special program for children.

- 50:00 Renee met her husband through girl friends from her hometown who visited her. They married in Israel in '57 and came to US as an immigrant and her children were born here. Her husband was a Holocaust survivor so at first discussed the Holocaust. He was in Schindler's list and was from Krashnick (?). He is involved with his group. All Renee's friends are Holocaust survivors. Her husband did not talk a lot about it but his behavior resulted from it. They lived in the Bronx and was scared if a child went out. The Holocaust had a deeper effect on him as he was ten years older than her. She sweeps it under the rug. Renee does not believe that her husband gave testimony.
- 55:00 Her husband was Morris Grosman and he came from a small town. He adored her. They had a wonderful marriage. He dreamed a lot about the Holocaust. It affected his life. She dreams of fear, hunger and disease. She can't watch shouting or German shepherds as it reminds her of picking out people. She prefers a sweet story. Renee has a business enterprise, the jewelry business. She has many friends and successful children. Her peers love her. She tries not to hurt anyone. She returned to Poland for a conference to see the places in Warsaw. Her uncle, her father's youngest brother, lives in Melbourne, Australia. He did not return to Demblin as it was too hurtful. He remembers their country place. Renee has a photo with her father in the country. Renee's aunt came to the US and passed away. Renee took her son to visit her mother who died in the 80s.
- 60:00 Renee adores her children and is proud of coming out of the trouble and being successful as she works part-time. She travels all over the world and visits family in Israel, Brazil and Paris. She prays for her health. Renee did this interview for her children and grandchildren. She wants to live to see more happiness in their lives. (The interview ends with showing a photo.) Renee shows a photo of herself with her father which was sent to an aunt in Israel before the war. Her children made the enlarged photo from a print. Her father, Yitzchak Auerbach is barely 30 in the photo.

64:00