

Beatrice (Trixie) Muchman

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Abstract

Beatrice (Trixie) Muchman (née Westheimer) was born June 5, 1933 in Berlin, Germany to Meta and Julius Westheimer. She had two nicknames: Trixie and Poopa (doll). Her mother's large family had been in Berlin for generations and her father was an orphan. Her mother worked in her family's printing business for artists and her father was in the meat business. Beatrice's middle-class family lived in an apartment with a radio, indoor plumbing, and electricity and they owned a car. On Kristallnacht, Beatrice viewed the neighborhood synagogue on fire and in March '39 the family including the grandmother, Aunt Margaret and her Uncle Werner Loevy, and their son, Burnt, fled to Aunt Frieda, her husband, Walter and young son, Henri, in Brussels. Beatrice's father and Uncle Walter were arrested as they were considered Germans and imprisoned in Gers. When Brussels was occupied by the Germans, they had to wear a Jewish star. Her father escaped February '41 and came home. Aunt Margaret and Uncle Werner obtained visas and immigrated to the US but Westheimer was misspelled so the family could not get a visa. In '42, her father took her and her cousin, Henri, by train to a small town of Ottignies where they were hidden by two sisters. Beatrice never saw her mother again as her parents were arrested and her father was killed while escaping and her mother deported to Auschwitz. Beatrice enjoyed the freedom of the small town, the love of the sisters and the Catholic religion. They frequently hid in a shelter in the garden when the Allies bombed the town. Her town was liberated by the Americans and she joined her grandmother in Brussels. In May '46 they went to the U.S. and she was adopted by Aunt Margaret and Uncle Werner. It was difficult as they were not used to raising a daughter. After Beatrice's son was killed by a drunk driver in 1984, she realized her parents' difficulty in sending her away. She married Irwin who died in 1999 and then she married Larry Abrams. In recent years, letters were found concerning her father's relatives. After the interview, Beatrice shows the Rosary given to her by her Godmother and a little bible given to her by her priest at her First Communion and her prayer beads.