

Edith Lustig

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Abstract

Edith Lustig (née Kraus) was born August 30, 1925 in Vienna, Austria to Pearl and Max Kraus. Her parents came from Stanislav on the Russian border where Edith visited when she was ten. She had a brother, Leo born in 1921 and a younger sister, Gertrude, who was called, "Trudy." The family rented a small apartment in Vienna and went away for the summers. The maid walked the children to school. Her father worked as a Representative or Salesman for Ingalls Fuchs, a large company that sold paper goods and office supplies throughout the country, Czechoslovakia and Germany. After Hitler came, he was kept on another year performing work in the office. Their Nazi neighbors were friendly. Edith felt there was anti-Semitism in the school as each grade had three sections: one for Catholics, one for smart students and one for the rest. When Hitler came, she was placed in the back row. On Kristallnacht, Edith saw Jews placed in trucks, Jewish women washing the streets and the Nazis ransacked her apartment. Her parents were afraid to go on the street so she did the shopping. Her parents were forced out of their apartment and rented a room in someone's apartment. Her brother worked in the Jewish section of the government and learned about the Rothschild's Kinder-transport so Edith and her sister went to France by train with a group of 50 children and 50 from Germany. In March '39 they were placed in a large castle where they studied French and French history and after a year transferred to La Boursl Boursl, a summer resort in the mountains which was more rustic. Meanwhile her parents got visas and went to America but could not obtain visas for the sisters. Later they obtained visas and the sisters took a train to Portugal with 10 children who obtained visas as had relatives and 100 children who obtained visas from Field Marshall in Chicago. From there they boarded the Portuguese ship, "The Moozenal" and arrived in the US in June 1941 where they were greeted by their parents. For the first two or three years, the family lived with an aunt and uncle in Brooklyn. Her father learned to use the Singer Sewing Machine with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) training and her mother worked as a seamstress. The girls attended school and her brother worked until he was drafted into the Army. After the war, Edith's father bought a factory where the entire family helped out. After she graduated from Jefferson High School, she worked as a diamond cutter in the Diamond District of Manhattan. When the war ended, the diamond business returned to Belgium and Edith entered City College for two years where she studied bookkeeping. She married in March 1950 and had three children: Ronnie, Fay and Joanie. In 1972 she took her children to visit the castle but it was locked. When her husband got sick, they moved near her daughter in Pennsylvania and when he died, they moved to Florida. Currently her granddaughter, Tara, lives with her boyfriend in Vienna where she is a student. Edith feels that if not for Israel, the Jews would be wiped out. She feels she survived and led a good life.