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Summary

Edith Mayer Cord – b. June 25, 1928 in Vienna Austria. In early years, name was Halpern, her paternal grandmother's maiden name because grandparents only married under Jewish law, not Austrian law; in 1934, grandparents married in civic ceremony, all changed name to Mayer.

Father – Schmil Halpern Mayer born in August 8, 1888 also known as Adolph, oldest of 8;

Mother – Anna Buchholtz, born in 1903; her family fled to Vienna in 1919. **Brother** – Kurt – born in 1923.

Before the War – Edith's family lived in Vienna. Father's business failed in 1934, so traveled back and forth to Italy for business. Left Vienna because life difficult for Jews there. Moved to Genoa, Italy in 1937; there for a year, but then told they had to leave Italy. Fled to France by passing border on Sunday when guards not there; went to Nice. Asked for political asylum and got six-month permit to stay till April 1939. Took in laundry to earn money.

During the War - 9/1/1939, father arrested (as enemy alien) and sent to concentration camp, Les Milles. There for nine months. Released in Spring 1940. July 1940, Vichy police arrested father and brother. Never saw father again. He was transported first to Gurs and then to Auschwitz in 1942 and died there 9/11/1942. Brother escaped from camp and worked as farm hand outside of Nice. Then August 1942, sent to Auschwitz and died there 8/31/1942

Edith and mother worked on farm in Southern France till late 1942. Edith was advised to go into hiding and did with help of Jewish Scouts of France and the clandestine group, Le Sixieme. New identity – Elise Maillet (sp?), an only child whose father was a POW and mother was in Nice. She went to a Catholic school in July of 1943. Only Mother Superior knew she was Jewish but then was identified so had to move. Between 1943 and 1944, had to move 13 times. In May 1944, Edith and 29 other children smuggled into Switzerland. Spent 3 months in quarantine camp, then a sanitarium for 2 months because had TB. In Switzerland till July 1945. Worked as nanny for couple who ran home for displaced children. Desperately wanted an education. Learned English. In touch with mother who was still in France.

After the War - Reunited with mother in July, 1945 in Toulouse. Got a one-year scholarship to earn baccalaureate. Finished all HS courses in a year. Then attended University of Toulouse. Worked while attending school. Decided to come to US, stayed with cousin; mother came 6 months later. Married in US. Was professor of languages till 1979 then became a financial advisor. Wrote books about her experiences and speaks to school groups.