

JUDY HELLNER SCHATZ
BORN 1918
BERLIN, GERMANY

Judy Hellner Schatz was born 1918 in Berlin, Germany. Her parents had come from a part of Austria-Hungary that is now in Poland. They got married in 1916 and her sister was born in 1923. She went to a Jewish school. Her father had a large wine and liquor store and the family was quite well off. She shows several photographs of her family.

In 1933, the Nazis prevented the mostly non Jewish customers from entering the store, and her father had to go out of business. People were afraid to be seen talking to them. Later, her father was ordered to leave within 48 hours. The Jewish organization helped him to obtain a visa to Italy and he came to Milan in November 1937. Her sister went to the United States with a children's transport, but it took Judy and her mother five months to obtain a nonrenewable passport. When they left by train for Italy, many friends and relatives came to the station to see them off. Of this entire group, only one person survived the war and later came to the United States. She also has pictures with her sister, now married in Detroit, and of a group of people and the man from the Jewish organization who had helped them to leave Germany. There is also a picture of a Hungarian cousin and his wife who later were sent to Theresianstadt where his wife was killed in front of his eyes.

In Italy, her mother, who was a talented cook, tried to open a restaurant in Milan but failed because foreign Jews could no longer obtain a license. Judy worked for an artist but could not earn enough money. She received a work permit to go to Scotland as household help. The French and the Swiss consuls refused to give her a transit visa and the Dutch consul would have given it but said it would be much too dangerous to travel through Germany. Finally, she obtained a passage on a ship to London around Spain. Her nonrenewable passport expired on the day of her arrival in England. She went to Glasgow in 1939 and worked as maid for a nice family. Finally, in January 1941, her American quota number came up and she obtained a document as a stateless citizen which enabled her to go to the United States on the last passengers boat. They traveled in a convoy and there were 2 refugees on board. They landed in St. Jolms, NF from where the group went on to Montreal.

Before going on to New York, she sent five telegrams, to an uncle in Buffalo, her sister in Detroit and some friends in New York. None received these telegrams because they all had moved, and nobody came to the station to meet her. Finally, she contacted her relatives and on the way to Detroit stopped to see her uncle in Buffalo. He would not let her go on, and she stayed with him until she got married.

She did not know then what had happened to her parents but, finally, in 1944 she learned that they had come to the United States in a group of 1000 Italian refugees who had been given temporary asylum by President Roosevelt. Later under President Truman, they became eligible for permanent immigration. Unfortunately, her father had a spot on his lungs and could not be admitted for permanent residence. He was sent to the hospital in Perrisburg where he died shortly after.

There are photographs of her with her husband and the one survivor from Berlin and of her daughter and husband, who now live in Scottsdale, AZ. Her mother died in 1969.

She stresses that one must always remember the past but life must go on. One has to be optimistic and hope that mankind will be better in the future.