

**Summary of Interview with
Esther Bash (Phoenix)**

I was born in Czechoslovakia in 1928. I grew up with a normal childhood. I was my father's only child, but there were children from a previous marriage. I met my brothers and sisters during the holocaust.

Our town was surrounded by large mountains. I went to a Czech school and later to a Hungarian school. My father was a Hebrew School teacher, so I was taught early how to pray in Hebrew. I felt no persecution prior to the invasion of 1939{ of Poland}. We were 1 of 5 Jewish families in that community.

A few months before the German invasion, I noticed Jewish business' closing.

I was taken to a Ghetto in 1944 on the second day of Passover. Hungarian Police called us out of the Synagogue and we were stripped of all of our belongings.

Fences were put up around the ghetto; people in the community acted as though they didn't notice. My house was not near the ghetto. I was there six weeks, and then was taken to Auschwitz.

After six weeks the police came and rounded us up. We walked to the train station. When we were at the synagogue the police had told us there was no need to take a suitcase. A lot of people died on the trains on the way to Auschwitz.

Once we were there, we were separated into old/young and male/female. I was separated from my mother and I never saw her again.

I was crying and hysterical in the beginning. There was one garment for each person. After working we were given soup. At first we didn't eat it, but later we did because we knew that was all that we would get and we needed it to survive.

My only thought was how I would get out of this mess. I met

another young girl who was friendly to me. My friend was taken with others to do separate work. Her train was bombed by the allied powers.

I went to an ammunition factory and was there for two weeks. There were two big buildings. One was for working, and the other was a crematorium. Some Germans went in to appease us that it was not a crematorium.

We worked 12 hour shifts in the beginning, the SS came and terror and beatings increased.

In April the Germans were talking about the allies getting close. I was making mines. My job was to put the handles on the mines. There were also POW's from Russia who worked. Germans walked us out because the station was being bombed. There was an ammunition factory near the barracks and I found my step sister in the ammunition factory.

Two weeks later we were liberated by the Americans. All 500 girls in the ammunition factory walked into town to get some supplies. I came back with a big jar of honey and was sick for three days.

American soldiers took us to barracks where the Germans used to be and treated for and cared for us. I registered as a Czech to get transported to America. There 30 or 40 of the women on the ship. My sister was Rumanian, and was not permitted to go. My ship to Prague broke down, and it ended up taking me a month to get there.

At the train station I met my cousin, who had hidden in the Carpetian Mountains to escape the Holocaust. We went to Kibbutz in Budapest and I met my husband, who was arranging for people to go to Israel.

I married him in Germany and then went with him to Israel and had my first child. I was, however, stuck in Cypress in a camp for three and one half months. Finally, I was allowed to leave for Tel Aviv. In Israel it was tough, but it was the best years of my life. My father in law was in the U.S., and he asked us to come. First, we went to Canada, and ended up staying there for six and one half years.

After the experience at Auschwitz, nothing seemed difficult

anymore. I came to Phoenix in 1977. Two of my children live in Arizona also.

I lost contact with my cousin, who now lives in California.