

RG-50.091.0120

Edith Simon

August 22, 1984, Cleveland, Ohio

Summary

Edith Simon was born March 26, 1925, in Slatfonia, Czechoslovakia (in the Carpathian Mountains); Maiden name: Sicherman.

Town was based around the salt mines in area, population 3,000 - 5,000. 4 generations of her family, on both sides, lived there.

Family - Father owned a bakery, they lived behind it. Mother and younger sister. Father was an early Zionist, and wanted to immigrate to Palestine.

Edith married Sidney Simon (also a survivor) in 1947 - together they had 3 daughters.

Family in Slatfonia was comfortable financially. Bakery did well. Many Jews owned their own businesses, which caused jealousy among their Hungarian neighbors.

1938 - new laws in place, restricting movement - curfews, no school.

Father was in the reserve Czech Army until 1943.

Relatives in Vienna - Kaufmann surname - left Austria and went to NYC in 1939.

1939 - Father was allowed to keep bakery because he was in the Army. Other Jewish businesses confiscated by the government and turned over to Gentiles. Bakery was on Maseryk Street - main commercial thoroughfare in town.

1938 - '39 - German Army tanks enter town. Occupied by Germans

Father away most of this time in the Army.

Passover, 1944 - Father was home, taken by Hungarian "helpers" of the police to military barracks. Mother taken soon afterwards for 2 weeks.

Ghetto in town established at that time.

Six weeks later, Mother had returned. Mother (then 39), sister and Edith deported to Auschwitz on May 6, 1944.

Walked to train station, loaded onto cattle cars, 3 days/3 nights travel.

Arrived at Auschwitz at night, immediately met by Mengele (very tall, very blond, very handsome, "I would recognize him anywhere"). Mother and sister went to the right, to gas chambers. She went to the left. Last time she saw either.

Taken to showers, shaved and given a thin dress and clogs. No work, just stayed in bunks

Aunt Celia found her after 3 weeks - they were together for the rest of the war. Aunt saved her life by making her eat bread.

August, 1944 - taken to Frankfurt-am-Main to camp (1 day by train), built hangers near airport.

In all, 5 camps - Auschwitz, Frankfurt-am-Main, Ravensbruck - the worst, where they lived in a tent with over 1200 women for 3 weeks, moved again as Russians came closer to Celertal in Sudetenland, near Bratislava - worked in a munitions factory, then walked to another camp, still with aunt

May 8, 1945 - Czechs arrived at camp in Sudetenland and liberated them. Went to Prague, where she was in the hospital for 7 - 10 days.

Went back to hometown immediately after war, but nobody was alive. Never went back again.