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Lillian Eckstein

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Family lived in Chekoslowackia. The family name was Mendelshon. Mother's maiden name was Maria Rosenberg. Father was in lumber business - poor but happy family. in 1938 Hungarians marched in. Father unable to earn living. Drafted Father. No food in house. Children worked in others' homes from age nine to do housework. In 1943 evicted from own house as were unable to pay taxes as father had been in labor camp. He came back sick and penniless. In 1944 Germans came and made Jews live in ghettos. Then marched Jews to trains. - fifty people in one cattle car - destination: Auchwitz. Dr. Mengele decided who went right or left. Sent to barracks six to a bed. Was selected to work with clothes of the deceased. All eight children of the family were separated. Two thousand girls from camp sent to work outside in winter. More than half died from starvation, Malaria, beatings, frost bite, typhoid. She contracts typhoid. Marched barefoot in snow towards Berlin as allies were closing in on Germans. Ended up in Bergen-Belsen with only 400 girls still alive and half of these with typhoid including herself. Rescued by English and found herself in hospital in Germany. Couldn't remember who she was. Finally upon discharge from hospital her memory returned. Went home by train and then returned to Germany when found noone there. Applied to go to Israel. Stayed in DP camp for 3½ years. Found an uncle in Bronx, N.Y. Filled out affidavit and came to U.S. in 1949. Went to school, worked, got a degree and married Michael Eckstein in 1950. Worked hard and opened a laundromat. Worked there for 12 years. Sent two daughters to Yeshiva, operas, ballets, summer camp.

Oldest daughter received Bachelor and Masters in education at age of 22. Pretty and smart, the girls were chosen to meet Ben Gurion. Oldest daughter is in Medical school. Younger daughter is a registered nurse at Einstein College. Mother works part time and is enrolled at Queen's College. Thanks to U.S. for giving her opportunity to pick up her life. In 1955 heard from a sister in Stockholm, Sweden in sanitarium with TB. Found her through Red Cross and brought her to N.Y. Her son was called Max and at age 22 he was killed in a car accident. Sister was never the same. Another sister was found in Poland with three daughters. Two years later died of cancer. Brother in Sydney, Australia. Brought him to NYC. He died of heart disease. Found another sister in Chekoslowackia and brought her to the U.S.

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Hopes her children will be what she couldn't be. Worked hard to keep children in private schools and give them opportunities such as camps, music lessons and now in medicine. Oldest is in medical school in Denver and married to a doctor. They have a daughter, age 2. Her youngest, Irene, is a registered nurse who works in intensive care at Albert Einstein. Thanks America for helping her.