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Summary

Magda Cox (née Rein) was born on June 7, 1927 in Sátoraljaújhely, Hungary. She discusses her parents and younger brother Miklosz (Mordechai) as well as numerous uncles, aunts, and cousins. Only thirteen survived the war out of a hundred. Magda's father was a baker, and her mother was a midwife. Magda's mother was frequently arrested by Hungarian authorities for performing abortions, whether she was or not. Magda believed that this was because she was Jewish. She also remembered other antisemitic incidents especially by Hungarian Nazi sympathizers. Her family did not live in a predominantly Jewish area though the family was observant and kept kosher. Magda attended both a Jewish school and public schools. She spoke Yiddish and Hungarian at home. The family was well off and had a nice house in what would become the town's ghetto in February 1944.

Life got worse in 1943. Two uncles were sent to Ukraine where one died and the other survived. The survivor was sent into the Budapest ghetto with his family, and they survived with the help of Raul Wallenberg. They went to Israel after the war. In late 1943 Magda went to visit her aunt in Budapest. She stayed for three months. By that time, the Nazis had invaded Hungary and set up a ghetto in Budapest. Her aunt refused to wear the Yellow Star or to go into the ghetto established by the Nazis. She ended up surviving the war at home. Magda decided to go home to her family where they ended up in the ghetto for a few months. Her father had already left their hometown searching for flour and would later be sent to Mauthausen. Magda later found out that he was killed by a German soldier on the day of liberation. Magda's house was in the ghetto, and close to 25 other people including her grandparents and other relatives came to live with them. They experienced wretched conditions in the ghetto: having to wear the yellow star, being served starvation rations and little water. She said that the Hungarian Nazi sympathizers were as bad as the Nazis. She also maintained that there was no resistance. In the ghetto.

Magda, her brother, and mother were deported in cattle cars to Auschwitz in March 1944. The rest of her family was killed. Magda's brother survived but was emotionally and physically damaged by the war and died relatively young in Germany leaving his German wife and child. Magda's mother was separated from her and sent to Bergen Belsen where she died of dehydration. Magda ran after her but was savagely beaten by a female guard. Magda and other young women (Magda was 16) were sent to a work camp in Bavaria making parts for airplanes and motorcycles. At the end of the war, she was sent to Theresienstadt. Many people there came down with typhus. Immediately after liberation the Red Cross came and brought food, but many people got sick from eating too much. The Russian and Ukrainian liberators were brutal, according to Magda, and raped many women. But she and others were not bothered because they claimed that they had typhus. Magda returned to Budapest for a short time after the war and then went to Germany for almost three years to study physical therapy. She then emigrated to the United States. Although Magda suffered terribly during the war, she believed that someone must have been looking after her to help her survive.