

Summary of Oral History: Yita Lipshitz

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This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer on [04/2022]

Yita was born on March 21, 1916, in Olaszliszka, Hungary. Her parents were Herman Hochstein and Ilona Goldberger; there were 11 children in the family. Her mother was born there and her father in Somotor (sp?). There were about 50 Jewish families in the town and most grew grapes for wine, like her father.

She moved to Budapest in 1938, which was a ten-hour train ride from her hometown, with one of her sisters. She got married in Budapest. In 1942, she and her husband let refugees stay in their home. In 1942, the Hungarians sent her husband to a labor camp from which he never returned. She lived with her sister and mother-in-law. When the Germans entered Budapest, she and her sister bought expensive ID documents that said they were gentiles from members of the community who offered them to young people. She was blonde and people didn't think that she was Jewish. She and her sister paid a doctor to let them stay in a hospital pretending that they were sick; she was there for about a month and her sister for three. She was afraid that someone would tell the authorities that she was Jewish, and that she would be beaten and sent to Auschwitz, so she left.

After the hospital, she returned to her home on Kiryaiatsa (sp) Street. It was a Jewish house. In April, she heard that all of the Jews from her hometown were taken. When she returned to the Jewish house, she wore the yellow star because she was afraid of being caught. She was in the Jewish house until Szálasi came to power. In November/December, she got a "Schutzpass" from a wealthy acquaintance who got Swedish documents from Raoul Wallenberg, and moved into the Swedish House on Pozonitza (sp) Street with her mother-in-law. Her sister, who also had counterfeit papers, wasn't as afraid as Yita, so she didn't stay there. The document saved Yita twice when she was out in the street and Germans checked her papers. The third time that the Germans checked her papers was in the Swedish house itself, but they saw that it was counterfeit. Generally, when Szálasi's people came to the house, Wallenberg would arrive, but this time he didn't. On December 6, she was sent by cattle car from Budapest to Ravensbruck.

Upon arrival, the Germans gave them dirty, worn clothes that were full of lice. They had showers and were taken to a barrack. She was religious and tried not to work on Shabbat, so an older woman, who didn't have to work, hid her in her bunk on Shabbat. She was there for a month. Next, around 500 young people were sent to Ravensburg where they worked 12 hours a day in an airplane parts factory. The SS women there were harsher than the men and the kapos were mainly German. Here she worked on Shabbat. She was there for a half year.

At the beginning of May, they left Ravensburg: the men went to Mauthausen and the women to Gunskirchen. They were there for only three days. At liberation, she had typhus and weighed around 65 lbs. She says she was lucky because she didn't have diarrhea. Her faith helped her survive. She believes that she was saved because she was taken in the third transport and not

earlier, because she had the Swedish papers. When the Americans came, they were very nice and took care of them.