

## **RG-50.285.0018**

### **Summary**

Theresia Kriszan (née Schädli), born in Oberloisdorf, Burgenland, Austria on October 5<sup>th</sup> of 1932 describes her childhood in a small Austrian village. She talks about two Jewish families living in Oberloisdorf before 1938. One Jewish family – Leni, Julo, Jurschka and Dore – had a small grocery store (Greißler Geschäft) next to Theresia's home. The other Jewish family was called Deutsch and they had a shoe store on the other end of the village. They were very well assimilated in the village. She remembers that the kids always got some candy from the owner of the Jewish grocery store. She could not remember if the family was religious or not. After the annexation (Anschluss) of Austria to the German Reich in 1938, these families disappeared overnight and never came back. She was too young to remember this time well. The grocery store was taken over by the Schlögl family.

There were also some gypsy families in the village. The father (Zigeuner-Bepi) and his daughter Erika, were deported. The people in the village were told that the family got murdered. Another gypsy family (Haunz with the two kids Maria and Franz) survived. The gypsy kids played with the other kids in the village.

After 1938 the life in the village changed. In school they had to show the 'Hitlergruß' and there was a picture of Adolf Hitler in every classroom. Some kids joined the Nazi youth organizations like 'BDM' (Bund Deutscher Mädel) or 'Hitlerjugend', but not Theresia. They also had some Nazis in Oberloisdorf. According to Theresia most of them were Protestants. Most of the farmers had prisoners of war to help them on the fields. Theresia's family also had some because her father was at war and could not support his family. Shortly before the Russians arrived in Oberloisdorf, more prisoners of war from France and Russia came to the village. She talks about the experience with the prisoners. They were watched by the 'Volkssturm' and 'Oberfeldwebel' Karl Heinzmann from Nuremberg, who was living in the house of Schädli family.

When the Russian troops finally arrived in the spring of 1945, Theresia and her family were forced to hide in the forest for one week. They were brought back because the people working at their farm told the Russian soldiers where they were hiding. One German farmer was almost executed by the Russians but was saved by a Russian war prisoner who was working for him. The building next to the barn of Theresia's family was used by the 'Wehrmacht' as an anti-aircraft position during the war and was burned down by them after the Russians arrived. The fire spread to the living house and burnt down parts of it, so the family had to live in the ruins. At the beginning they suffered under the Russian soldiers and some women were taken by them. But after a few days it was getting better.