

RG-50.299.0001

Summary

This is not an interview; instead, it is an autobiographical piece which Mrs. Miklos was taped reading in 1989. She wrote it in February 1959, on the 10th anniversary of her arrival in the United States.

Sophie Miklos discusses her life in Valea Lui Mihai, Romania, where she lived until March 1944. Sophie's family was the wealthiest in their village. After she finished elementary school (age 10), she was sent to a high school in a nearby city. She had to stay there since it was too long of a daily commute. She was athletic as a child and loved ice skating, swimming, and dance. In March 1944 – when Sophie was 16 - her teacher announced that school was suspended indefinitely. She went back to her village.

A curfew was imposed the next day and then Jewish residents were forced to wear yellow Stars of David. Then Hungarian patrols gave them five minutes to pack and they were sent to Oradea, a ghetto in Hungary. During that time, her father was frequently beaten and his spirit was broken. After being in Oradea for four weeks, they were ordered to trains. After three days, they arrived in Auschwitz. Sophie, her sister, and her mother were sent to the right, but her father was sent to the gas chambers. After six weeks in Auschwitz, she, her mother, and her sister volunteered for a work crew and went to another camp (not named). They worked from 7 AM to 7 PM each day. Her mother was badly sunburned and since each day, more and more people were selected to be killed, her mother was added to the list. Her mother escaped from the barracks and went on the work detail, but the Kapo found her and had her dragged away. That was the last time Sophie and her sister saw their mother.

[Timestamp 00:34:30 to 00:39:25], Sophie describes how the Kapo informed them that the Germans wanted a Christmas show. Sophie auditioned and was chosen to perform. She describes her costume made of gauze [Timestamp 00:37:10 to 00:38:00] and how she felt about this performance and two others she was selected for. [Timestamp 00:39:25] Sophie states that, "Dancing saved my life."

[Timestamp 00:39:35] Sophie describes "The March". As bombing got closer in January 1945, Sophie, her sister, and other prisoners were forced to march. They started with 360 prisoners and after two days on the march, only 200 were left. Sophie and her sister lost their food, so Sophie suggested they hide behind the outhouse till after the march left. They succeeded and came to a small village in Poland, were able to get some food, but could find no shelter. The Germans found them and took them to another concentration camp. By this point in the war, the Germans knew they were losing and guards deserted. The Russian army freed them, but because the soldiers were drunk, Sophie and her sister knew they needed to get away from them. They ran and were found by a Jewish man who gave them shelter in a hotel. They stayed there for two weeks, then made their way back to Romania, taking two months.

Sophie wrote her story for her daughter. She states, "We have to start educating about the evils of hatred so another Holocaust will not happen." [Timestamp 00:55:30]