

Dora Steiner (nee Schechter) – Born 1925 in a small town on the border of Czech. and Poland (perhaps Teshum? Schtem?)

Father – David Schechter; **Mother** – Emilie Klausenschток. Father was Polish, mother was Czechoslovakian – parents were married by a rabbi, so not officially recognized by Czech. gov't. Mother did not want to lose Czech citizenship so Dora had mother's name. Five children – 3 girls, 2 boys; Older brother Avraham (b. 1922-23), younger brother Yitzchak (died in Auschwitz along with both parents).

Before the War – Father was religious, studied; mother was provider – had a small shop with sweets in market; also sold material. Happy childhood. Went to Czech. schools for 8 years and 1 year in Polish school. Lived in small apt. in town of 15,000 to 18,000 with a small Jewish pop. She said Czech's not antisemitic. Spoke Czech and German; father spoke Yiddish. Brothers went to Jewish school. Older brother (survivor) not religious but sent to Yeshiva in Tarnow. Germans invaded 1939; burned synagogues. Father scared – shaved beard and went to Tarnow. Mom stayed in town till 1940 when forced to leave.

During the War - 1940 Sent to work in fields – Sosnovitz (Sosnowiec, Poland); Only women sent; most men went east. 1941 – Dora and her sisters sent to work in spinning mill in Ukraine. Dora worked in office b/c she spoke and wrote German. Sisters worked in factory. Were at factory from 1/1941 to 1/1945 (though said liberated in May). Treated as things, not people. First learned about Auschwitz in 1943 when girls came to work in factory and said "They are burning people." Believes that she survived because of luck. Had typhoid at end of war but survived. May 5, 1945 – "nicest day of my life" – Germans disappeared; Russian and Czech partisans came into camp.

After the War – Went back to hometown at end of May 1945. Found out about parents and younger brother. Her father picked up in the east, sent to a labor camp, escaped, then caught and sent to Auschwitz. Found an empty dwelling and stayed for 4 years. Then went to Israel because communists took over. People with visas could go other places, but Israel was the only place she could go. Her older brother was in Switz. Her two sisters in Germany, then Paris, and finally Australia. Life hard in Israel – no money or profession; had cousins but they wouldn't take her in. Stayed from 1949 to 1953 then went to Australia to be with sisters. Married in Israel and had baby girl there. In Australia bought milk bar then a grocery store. Had two boys. Worked very hard to earn a living and never really learned how to mix with people. She never spoke to her children about her experience, but thought it was important to share her experience and teach others not to hate. Her daughter went to Germany to seek reparations but was, at first, denied; later she did receive them.