

Oral History: Irina Lazar, August 3, 2000

Irina Lazar, born May 5, 1929 in Cluj, Romania, one of four children, with two younger brothers and a younger sister, describes: growing up mostly in Bucharest; Jews not being allowed a radio or to openly discuss politics; not being permitted to attend school with gentile children; being subjected to severe, pervasive antisemitism, including the murder of Jews and burning of the synagogue; Jews having to keep a low profile; living in a single room; her father sleeping with an axe at his side; living in a congested Jewish neighborhood; her father doing forced labor, picking up corpses after Allied bombings; growing up poor; her family not religiously observant; speaking only Romanian; her father being sought by the Germans and constantly in hiding; living in fear over Allied bombing raids; seeing her father only to bring him food wherever he was hiding; her occupation as a dressmaker; her father being extremely strict; having a large extended family most of whom lived in Cluj; being aware of people being taken away for forced labor, but not hearing of Auschwitz or extermination camps until after the war; the Soviets occupying Bucharest; in 1945, returning with her family to live in Cluj [then Hungary]; marrying against her will because she had no dowry; having children; experiencing pervasive anti-Semitism; immigrating to Australia.

At 02:11:47 the interview with W. Lerner begins in the middle of his interview. He describes his arrival in Dachau, where worked with the Americans two months after liberation in April 1945. He shows photos of Dachau, including a photo book marking the first anniversary of the liberation, titled "Souvenir."