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Summary

Valeria Enten was born in Nitra, Czechoslovakia on June 3, 1932. Nitra was then in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia and was populated by ethnic Hungarians. She spoke Slovak, but her parents spoke to one another in Hungarian. Her mother's name was Helena Ilona (Schwarz) and her father was Jacob Klein. She also had two grandparents, one from each side of the family and several uncles, aunts and cousins who lived in the same town. Valeria's father was a successful textile businessman, and his wife worked with him. The family was quite religious. Her father went to synagogue every sabbath and the family on holidays. Valeria went to a Jewish school in the town. The family friends were mostly Jewish. Her mother said that while friendly the non-Jews in the town were antisemitic.

After the Anschluss with Austria her uncle became very worried and went to Palestine while his wife and child stayed behind. He later returned for them. Valeria and her family did not feel the German occupation until 1941-1942. Their business and house were taken by non-Jewish friends. As the Nazis began to deport people Valeria's father went to Hungary and a member of the Hlinka Guard who was nevertheless an acquaintance of her mother helped the rest of the family go to Hungary. They were given Aryan papers there by an uncle. The family rented several short-term houses in Budapest before their false papers were discovered by the Nazis. They were all sent to a camp which Valeria described as not so bad. The children were then let out to live with families in Budapest. Her parents were sent, however, to a worse camp with little food and hard work. The camp was run by Hungarians. When the Nazis marched in Valeria's parents were deported to Auschwitz. Her brother and sister were put in an orphanage. She and a grandparent made it back to Slovakia. But she was eventually caught in September 1944 and was sent to Ravensbrück in December. She stayed there for two weeks and did not remember much about it. After two weeks she and another inmate were sent to a nearby camp run by Siemens. There they worked under what she considered reasonable conditions. A female guard took a liking to her and made sure she had sufficient food.

As the Russians and Americans came closer, she and the other inmates were marched, but eventually the Russians liberated them. After several weeks, the Russians took them to Prague, and Valeria made her way back to her former home in Nitra. Fortunately, her mother, father, grandmother, brother, and sister had also returned. Life was hard, but the family was together. Valeria wanted to return to her studies but decided it would be more practical to get technical training in making clothes, especially since she wanted to go with her parents to Palestine. Her father went to Palestine before the War of Independence while Valeria and the rest of the family went in 1949. She was very happy in Israel and worked in clothing. However, when her uncle no longer wanted to be partners with her father her family emigrated to Australia. She met her future husband in Israel in 1954 and they married in 1956.

Valeria was matter-of-fact during the interview. While she was thrilled to be liberated, she felt that others had it much worse than she did. The state of Israel remained very important to her. She also reflected how important family is. Finally, she worried that people are easily manipulated and that another holocaust could happen again.