

Interviewee:	<u>GLASER</u> , Ephraim	Date:	August 10, 1988 <sup>1</sup>
Interviewer:	Sylvia Brockmon		
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### SUMMARY

Ephraim Glaser, born in 1922 in Cluj, Transylvania, Romania, was the son of an orthodox *shochet*, *mohel* and *chazan*. He describes pre-war Cluj and recalls a pogrom that took place in the courtyard of his family's home when he was five years old.

He describes changes that occurred when the Hungarian occupation began in 1940, including beatings and exclusion of Jews from public schools. He attended *cheder* and *yeshiva* until 1943, when he was taken to a forced labor camp. He escaped in 1944, and because of his Aryan appearance and ability to speak German, was able to pose as a Hungarian Christian and join a German army unit as a translator. After several months, suspected of being a Bolshevik, he ran away and found refuge in a factory, whose owner, a baron, hid him in an unused oven.

His sister and her family, hidden in a Czechoslovakian monastery, were deceived by a German promise of safety and returned to their home in August 1941. They were then seized and sent on the last transport to Auschwitz. His brother-in-law, an opera singer and cantor in Bratislava, was shot while singing for the Germans.

Ephraim fled to Miskolc in the Russian zone and was liberated at the end of 1944. He briefly mentions Russian plunder of the local population. After his return to Cluj, he was active in the Zionist underground movement, *Bricha*<sup>2</sup>, transporting Jews illegally to Palestine. Accused of being a fascist by former friends who had become Communists, he went to Palestine and worked on a *kibbutz* in 1946. He describes the difficulties encountered among *kibbutz* members who stigmatized survivors like himself as being cowards who willingly submitted to their own slaughter. That experience caused him to remain silent for many years, not even telling his children about his experiences until later in his life. He explains how his silence and then finally talking about the Holocaust affected his children.

See also Ephraim's second interview conducted in 1989 during which he discusses more in-depth about his experiences in the German army unit.

<sup>1</sup>This interview was conducted in Haifa, Israel.

<sup>2</sup>Also spelled Brihah or Beriha.

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### SUBJECT HEADINGS

Cluj, Romania  
Jews - Romania  
Romania - History - Hungarian occupation, 1940  
Forced labor  
Hiding  
Falsificaton of identity  
Zionists - *Bricha* - Illegal immigration  
Palestine - Emigration and Immigration