

HVT-266

K., Suzanne 1924-

Suzanne K. Holocaust testimony (HVT-266) interviewed by Rebecca Sohmer, May 21 and June 9, 1997.

3 copies: 1 SVHS first camera; 1 SVHS second camera; 1 VHS copy

Summary: Suzanne was born on June 16, 1924 in Vienna, Austria. Her family had Spanish-Sephardic ancestors who had moved to Turkey during the Inquisition. Her great-grand father had settled in Vienna, where he founded a bank and a synagogue called the "Turkish Temple". Suzanne's father was a banker, but after the depression he changed businesses. Her mother was a homemaker and volunteered for a Jewish agency. The family spoke German and was assimilated. They were members of the upper middle-class and lived in Vienna's third district which was mixed. Suzanne went to elementary and high school. Her friends were mainly Jewish. She cannot remember any antisemitism but presumes that her parents had sheltered her from it.

After the Anschluss in 1938, Suzanne had to switch to a Jewish school. She thinks that her father felt his family would be safe even though his Swiss business partner no longer wanted to do business with a Jew. Her mother contacted a cousin who arranged for Suzanne to come to England in February 1939. She was placed with a Quaker family in Hastings. When she turned 16, she was regarded as an enemy alien and had to leave the sea coast district and move further inland.

Her parents, who had remained in Vienna, were forced to move into the ghetto in the second district and were later deported to Minsk. Suzanne presumes that they died there.

After the war, Suzanne moved to London, where she lived with her aunt and worked as a secretary. In 1953, she left for the Gold Coast (now Ghana) to work for a mining company. Being financially independent, she moved to Montreal in 1958. She took courses at McGill, worked for a newspaper and, within a year, she met her husband and married. She and her husband have two children.