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August 1, 2017, Sigethu Marmației, Romania

Summary

Golda (“Goldi”) MALEK, born on November 6, 1926 in Máramarossziget (Sigethu Marmației), Romania.

The interview was conducted in the same house, two rooms and a kitchen, in which she was born and where her family of ten lived before WWII: her parents, the maternal grandmother, and seven children. It was an orthodox Jewish family. They kept the customs, which she remembered very well: the kitchen equipment, the food they ate, etc. They spoke Yiddish at home; she first learned Romanian, later, from 5th grade on, Hungarian in the elementary school [following the Hungarian occupation in September 1940], the two languages that people spoke in town. She spoke all three languages during the interview. They lived well, she said: had some land, a garden, two cows, and small animals.

She said that she and her family were deported to Bergen-Belsen, although all she talked about happened most likely in Auschwitz. She mentioned only at the end, when the interviewer talked about an Auschwitz survivor that she, too, was in Auschwitz. She had a tattoo: A 7986, a number she remembered in German and was on her arm. She also remembered that the prisoners had to march in rows of five. She did not complain about the circumstances in the camp, mentioning two mitigating circumstances: she could sing very well and worked in various factories where she received clothing, shoes, and food. She was in the camp in summertime. She saw Mengele “18 times,” and once was selected for the gas chamber; had to go left (“links”) but was not killed. She never saw her parents again and does not know when they and her siblings died: an older sister with her child and husband, two younger brothers, 14 and 16, and a little sister, age five. [An older brother died before the war in an accident, and one sibling was not mentioned]. It is not clear whether she was Bergen-Belsen or not. Sometime, in winter [1944], she was transferred to Mauthausen where she soon was liberated.

She went back to Máramarossziget to meet her family, but the family home was empty and no one came back.

Some years later, she married.

[Her daughter was in the background and protested the detailed questions about the camp, worrying about the effect of bad memories on her mother.]

“Goldi” remembered food and recipes very well: she told them in the short second and third parts of the interview.

She also showed family photos.