

## **Helen Wieder**

Born April 10, 1929, in Calinesti, a city near Sighet in Romania. The northern part of this area, Transylvania, became Hungarian in August 1940.

Helen was the elder of six siblings. The father, Herman Wieder, was a blacksmith and mechanic and had his own forge. Modern, Dora Dikker, was housewife. They lived in houses and Helen thought they were doing well.

From about 1940, the father was "called" in the Hungarian arm and probably belonged to one of the so-called labor battalions. The family now got harder to cope economically and Helen was not particularly fond of school and started schooling. Instead, she went to a Christian neighbor and learned to weave rugs. Her thought was that she could sell carpets and thus make money for the family. When dean's family was deported, the Christian family offered her to stay with them, but she did not want to stay alone.

During the preparation of the interview, Helen tells her that the family was religious (orthodox), and that she already as a child did not agree with the parents' attitude to different things. For example, she could never think of shaving her hair and wearing wig. When modern had had her menstruation and went to Mikvahn, Helen was allowed to come along as "apron". If they were to meet a man on her way as an acclaimed mother, Helen would respond to her place. This thought Helen was silly. During the interview, however, Helen gives another picture. She says they were not religious, but that her dad went to the synagogue on Friday night, as if they were celebrating Pessach and that grandfather bought coconut meat. There were many Jewish families living in their area. The Christians threw stones into Jewish houses when it was Easter.

According to the researchers, all Jewish residents were deported from Calinesti on 16-22 May 1944. On arrival at Auschwitz, Helen was separated from her mother and her sisters directly and she never saw them again. She was 13 when she came to the camp. She came to Auschwitz, but was saved because she was tall and looked older. She had to go to work camps where she worked in an ammunition factory.

Helens next memorial image is that she, very ill, wakes up in a barack (probably a hospital), and is surrounded by bodies raised by an English soldier. She is in Bergen-Belsen, who was freed by the English on April 15, 1945. Helen remained in the camp for the first week of July 1945. On July 8, she arrived by boat Rönnskär from Lübeck to Malmö. She was part of the group of 10,000 refugees that Sweden accepted to receive after the campaign with the White buses ended.

Then a quarantine, hospital stay and sanatorium followed. Then she came to Västerås where she got work at ASEA in the workshop. There also worked other survivors, for example. Mietek Grocher. During the first time in Västerås she was resident and shared a room with a German girl.

She never got any education, she has missed, but she could handle money.

Helen married Raffaele Fronda, who was from Italy.

She does not know any Jewish families who lived in Västerås before the survivors came. There was no Jewish assembly. The survivors founded the Jewish association in Västerås. She has not lived Jewish since she came to Sweden. She thought she needed her family to do it.