

Summary of Oral History: Irene Fogel Weis

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This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer on 03/2022

Irene Fogel Weiss, born in 1930 in the farming village of Bótrágy in Czechoslovakia (now Batrad', Ukraine), describes having five siblings; her father, Meyer, owning a lumberyard and helping the children with their homework and teaching them Hebrew; antisemitism not being a problem when she was a child; Hungary taking over her community in 1939 and fascists taking charge of government; hate speech on radio and in newspapers; teenagers taunting her father during a train ride; her father getting conscripted into forced military labor in 1942 then returning home after six months; Germans invading Hungary in 1944 and Jews being taken from their homes and crowded into a ghetto in a brick factory in the town of Munkács (now part of Ukraine); being forced to have her head shaved; beginning in May 1944, nearly 440,000 people being deported from Hungary to Auschwitz-Birkenau, including her family; upon arriving at the camp, her mother, three younger siblings and older brother being killed; SS authorities selecting her and her sister Serena for forced labor and running into two of their aunts, who saved their lives; the SS evacuating them on foot to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in central Germany in January 1945; the SS transporting them to Neustadt-Glewe, a subcamp of Ravensbrück, east of Hamburg; her sister Serena being selected to be put on a truck that took away sick and emaciated people to be killed, so she joined her sister and other people to wait for the truck; the truck never arriving; making their way to Prague in Czechoslovakia then returning to her home in Bótrágy and crying for the first time.