

Summary of Oral History: Cecilia Schlosser Windefelt

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Cecilia Schlosser Windefelt, born 1923 in Jovsa, Slovakia, talking about her parents Elizabet and Wilhelm Schlosser; her older sister Gisella and younger siblings Alice, Endre and Vera; her maternal grandparents Moritz and Gisella Katz owning a big farm with forest; her father being hired by them as an agronomist and meeting her mother; her paternal grandparents being more religious, observing the Sabbath (Shomer Shabbat); her parents being strict about the family having Shabbat dinner together; remembering having to wear a yellow Star of David; all Jews in town being picked up by guards at 8 am and being taken to a brick factory in town; not being allowed to bring any luggage; knowing their non-Jewish neighbors would steal what they left behind; a guard offering to help her father escape since her father fought for Hungary in the first world war; her father refusing since he didn't want to leave his family; spending five weeks in the brick factory; finding out that the water was turned on briefly at 2 am in the factory and going to wash; the family staying together; being loaded in cattle cars; traveling for 12 days; the guards throwing in raw macaroni but not eating it; a girl joining her family and staying with Cecilia in the camp; seeing dead bodies being thrown off the train; burying a ring her grandmother gave her for her Bat Mitzvah in a village where they stopped, knowing everything would be taken from her; her mother refusing to leave Vera, 5, at arrival and both being taken to the gas chambers; her father not wanting to live anymore when he heard; never seeing him again; Endre being 13, tall and blond, and being chosen to work in the home of a German soldier; Endre throwing her a piece of soap over the fence and being the only one who had soap in the camp; doing slave labor, digging; feeling she never lost her humanity; accepting her new reality; her siblings Alice, Endre and Gisella surviving Auchwitz; Alice moving to Israel; Endre surviving Auschwitz going to Germany where he died in typhoid right after the war; Endre being buried in a mass grave; going to Sweden with Gisella; not bringing up her children in the Jewish religious tradition since she wouldn't combine it with Swedish tradition; still having nightmares about running away; not knowing what date her parents died, honoring their memory (Yahrzeit) on Yom Kippur.