

Herta Vysna

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Slovakia

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Family Background and Growing Up

I was born in 1930 in Nitra, Slovakia, a town only 7 kilometers from the former labor camp in Sered. I lived with my parents and brother on our estate. I started school in Sered; however, as soon as the anti-Jewish legislation was introduced, my parents transferred me to Trnava, where I lived with friends of my family.

My father, Bernhardt Wohlstein, was born in 1888 in Sulovace. He had three brothers: Viliam, Gustav and Adolf. Their father, Samuel Wohlstein, was born in Krnca in 1860. Their mother's name was Katarina.

My mother, Renata Schubertova-Wohlsteinova, was born in Cataj in 1900. Her brother was named Julius, and her sister was Melania, who married Mr. Kulko. Her parents were Maximilian and Lolka Schubert.

My parents were married in 1920; they died in the concentration camp at Birkenau.

During the War

I witnessed several pogroms in Trnava. I saw Slovak Hlinka guards cruelly attacking and beating Jews as they left the local synagogue. In the spring of 1942, the deportations started; my parents decided it would be safer for me to be at home with them, and they brought me back.

Our estate and farm were formally Aryanized by a deputy of the Slovak parliament. He was a Lutheran and was very decent to my family. Hlinka guards attempted to round us up three times; finally, they succeeded in taking us to the Sered labor camp but, thanks to our protector, we were released.

As the situation got worse, my father decided to take the family to Bratislava and stay there illegally. We lived in one room, and my father pretended every morning that he was leaving for work. In fact, he spent the whole day near the Danube. After the air raids started, we had to hide in the cellar. We had been hiding in that room and had never been seen leaving before then. The house residents recognized us as strangers, and someone immediately reported our presence to the Gestapo. We were caught once again and again deported to the labor camp in Sered. After spending some time in Sered, we were deported to Birkenau, where my parents died. I survived the death march and was liberated by partisans in Czech Vrchlabi.



After the War

After liberation, I came to Bratislava where I went to the Red Cross office to search for my parents and relatives. I learned that only my brother survived. I went with him to Pata and stayed there for some time. Then I moved to Bratislava, married Lorand and had two daughters, Dagmar and Lydia.

Now I am retired and involved in Jewish community life, particularly helping elderly survivors of the Holocaust.