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Not all Holocaust survivors have been to concentration camp. However we haven't extremely affected by the Hitler pogroms.

In 1938, I was eleven years old. I had two wonderful parents, two younger sisters, and one small brother. We lived on the first floor of an apartment house that was light and airy. There were few cars, the sidewalks were large, and there were a number of children in the neighborhood. When I think back to that time, most of what I remember was sunlight, and playing on the sidewalk – hopscotch and running after a hoop. I know there was a winter and that it could be cold, but I most remember having fun and running.

Whenever I hurt myself from falling, I'd run to my Mother who would hold me, put a Band-Aid on my knee. I wondered if I ever would have knees without bandages. We had an indoor toilet and a bathroom with a tub, and a telephone.

Then, on the morning of March 12, 1938, the Austrians welcomed the Germans into Austria, and Austria became a part of Nazi Germany. From that day, my world would never be the same.

One day I came home from school and the apartment was quiet – it was never quiet, and no one was home – I was frightened. Where were my mother, my sisters, and my brother? Shortly after, my mother came home and said that my father has been arrested, but she had gotten a lawyer to help him. Suddenly I remember what I have been hearing from the adults when they talked to each other about the people who had been arrested, who had to scrub streets with toothbrushes. That was the beginning.

My father was sent to the Polish border – he was born in Poland, but he immigrated with his family to Vienna when he was a child. He was caught, sent to prison for a month, then tried again, and finally reached relatives in Poland.

My father's business of English woolens and Irish linen was "taken over." All of his inventory and business property was confiscated. It was not long after, when a number of men arrived at the apartment and put stickers on all the furniture saying that it could not be sold. They also took all the jewelry my mother had. All our possessions now belonged to the government. Shortly after that, our apartment was taken away from us and given to a non-Jewish couple.

We moved to my uncle's apartment. It was a far cry from our old apartment. It was very small. You entered the kitchen from the hallway; it had two small windows that overlooked the back of another house. It was very narrow and opened to a small bedroom My future aunt shared

the bedroom with my Mother and the four of us children. A toilet was in the hallway that all the tenants used. Off the kitchen there was a tiny room that my uncle, who was my mother's brother, used for sleeping.

I was still able to go to school at the time – it was quite a walk. Every so often we were told we could not go out from the front of the school but must do a long detour because there were people ready to harm us in the front. Naturally I came home late and my poor mother was terribly worried. That of course was done deliberately to upset everyone. There were all kinds of edicts restricting our activities – Jews couldn't go ice-skating, and the worst for me, I couldn't go to the library. My mother was getting worried about all the escalating problems going on. She was still able to talk to my father at the time – you had to go to a telephone exchange and call from there.

They decided that it would be best if she sent their oldest three to the US where she had another brother. The US government had a small quota for children from Austria to come to the US, and my mother applied to get visas for my two sisters and me.

During this time, one afternoon, word went through the building that the Gestapo was looking for my uncle. She had him hide in the little bedroom off the kitchen when two men arrived. She was cooking and told me to get two chairs for them, which I placed in front of the window right where the bedroom door was. She proceeded to tell them to wait, he'd be back soon. So they sat while she reassured them he would be back any minute. They got impatient and told her to have him at the police station as soon as possible because they wanted to talk to him. She assured him she would. That night my uncle managed to escape to Holland, and with his future wife, managed to get to the US.

In the meanwhile, we at last got our visas. My mother took me to the exchange, and I talked to my father – it was the last time. I adored my father, who took me to eat whipped cream and always gave me pocket money for ice-cream or candy.

At the end of August 1939, the day arrived when we were packed and went to the train station. I was in charge – I was now 12, one sister was 9 ½, and the youngest was 8 years old – we had never been away from home. Our mother put us on the train and told us that our Uncle Emil was going to meet us in Paris. He was another brother of my mother. He met us and fed us and then put us back on the train. He assured us that we'd see our mother and brother in the US before long. We were with a group of people, but in thinking back, no one told us where to go or what to do – we just followed the group. So, we proceeded on our adventure.

We went across the channel (we were really seasick) and then on to Liverpool where we took a boat – the trip lasted 10 days. I discussed this with my sister and she also remembered that by the time we arrived in New York, we did not have any clean clothes.

We stayed in an apartment for three months. My uncle tried everything to get my mother and brother to New York or Cuba, but was drawing blanks, and he really could not take care of us any longer, so we went to live in an orphanage.

At this point none of us could speak a word of English. Within a few months, we certainly learned fast. We lived in a dormitory – 12 girls in one room and 12 in another. We learned to make our beds, to keep the house clean, and we also went to school. We missed our parents a lot.

When I was 16 years old, we had to leave the orphanage and live in foster homes. Unfortunately, no one took in three siblings, so my younger sisters went together to one home and I went myself to another. My second foster home was very good, and I still stay in touch with my three foster siblings. My sisters were not quite as lucky as I was, but they were all right.

Our uncle did not want to tell us, but we found out that our mother, brother, and an aunt we were fond of were gassed in a concentration camp. It was a great blow to us. We could never find out about our father – we don't know if the Germans or the Russians got him.

A girl I had grown up with in Vienna came to the US alone like we did. She had tried unsuccessfully to find out what had happened to her parents, and she assumed they had been killed in a concentration camp. One day she was sitting in a restaurant in New York, and she saw her father walk by. He had also tried to get in touch with her, but she had changed her name and for some reason, he had not known that she was alive. For the longest time we hoped we might find our father, but since he was born in 1894, it became useless as the years passed. I know my sisters and I looked at every possible time.

We all three finished high school, and I went to college. We all married American men who came back from the war. We all have fine children. I have two great girls and five wonderful grandchildren. One of the hardest things we all felt is when something really good happened or you got a commendation for outstanding work; there was no loving parent to share it with you.

I will always be grateful to my parents, who sent us to a wonderful country where we have had a good life.