



Eva Masnick

Holocaust Survivor

I was born in Ushorod (then Hungary) in 1943, just before the Nazi deportations went into top gear. When my parents were married my mother moved to Presov in Slovakia, where my father had a factory. However, she absolutely refused to register as a Jew in that town, so she never put on the yellow star. This gave her much more freedom to move around the city.

Our next door neighbour was a high ranking police officer and was able to warn my father when a Nazi roundup of Jews was due. It enabled him to hide until the SS went away. Once he was actually picked up and put into a cattle car, but, with great courage, the police officer was able to have him removed.

When I was a little less than one year old, my parents, with eight other Jews, managed to find rooms to rent in a small village high in the mountains. At first we said that we were fleeing the bombing in the city, but the villagers soon realized that we were Jews. The village decided to shelter us all until the end of the War. They found us a cave to hide in, but I was a baby so I could not go, because I could endanger us all, if I cried at the wrong time. I stayed behind with the lady whose home we lived in. If the Nazi army came to the village, she would pass me off as her illegitimate child by a German soldier. As a baby I had very blonde hair so the army believed her. She and all the villagers lived in mortal danger with every breath they took.

When we were liberated by the Russians, my parents took me back to their home in Presov. My Father had lost his entire family and my mother had lost most of hers.

I remember nothing of the stay in the village during the war, but my mother took me back twice more to the village, once when I had whooping cough and once before we came to Australia. I remember quite a few things from those times. My mother corresponded with our landlady for many years and only stopped when she learned of her passing away.

Once we were in Australia, my parents first found jobs, and later decided to start their own business. I had a sister by then and we were brought up in the security and freedom of this land. Both my sister and I gained university educations.

Many years later, my brother in law discovered that Zita, the girl who often was my baby sitter was still alive. When I started to work with Courage to care, I began to feel very strongly that I wanted to go back to the village and to say 'thank you' to her. I did go back in 2009 and it was a very emotional experience. A year later, we learned that Zita had passed away aged 83. I feel truly grateful that I had the opportunity to hug her once more and to let her know that we had never forgotten her or the village,