

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Magda Brown

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Immigrants* Oral History project

Interview # VR2-A-L-2017-033

Magda Brown, a young Hungarian Jew and Holocaust Survivor, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember – WW II* Oral History project.

Interview date & location:

Date: May 11, 2017 Location: Skokie, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Marcia Blitstein, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:40 / 0.67 hrs.

Transcript being  
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 6, 2017.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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## Abstract

### Magda Brown, *Veterans Remember* – WW II, VR2-A-L-2017-033

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** In June of 1927 Magda Perlstein was born to a Jewish family in Miskolc, Hungary. Her parents, Jozef and Regina (Schwartz) Perlstein made their living as owners of a deli shop. Magda had a happy childhood with family, friends, and hope for the future. In the early 1940s her life began to change as one by one anti-Jewish laws went into effect. Her neighborhood soon became a ghetto, where the entire Jewish community was forced to live. Later in the war she and her family were marched through town to a brickyard, where authorities shoved them into cattle cars and sent them away. When the doors opened, they found themselves at Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. It was there that her mother, father, aunt, and uncle were murdered. Later, Magda was transported from Auschwitz-Birkenau to a munitions factory in Allendorf, Germany. She worked as a slave laborer in a manufacture munitions, handling extremely dangerous chemicals.

Toward the end of the war she was sent on a death march. Noticing a barn in the distance, she and some other prisoners crawled their way to safety. It was from that barn that Magda was liberated by two American soldiers. In the early days after liberation, Magda was sent to live with a local family in Ziegenhain, Germany. She later learned that her brother Miklos was still alive. After many unsuccessful attempts at a reunion with him, Magda realized that she needed to move forward. She left for the United States in 1946, where she connected with two uncles and other family members in Chicago. Magda was well accepted by her American family. She learned English, and married a Chicago-born Jewish man, Robert Brown. She began a career as a certified medical assistant and started a family. In 1962 she was delighted to finally connect with her brother.

In the early 2000s Magda decided to dedicate her life to speaking out on the Holocaust and the cost of hatred. Today she continues to speak to audiences at various colleges, high schools, middle schools, houses of worship, clubs, museums, etc.

**Key Words:** Miskolc, Hungary; Kristallnacht; Nuremberg Laws; Jewish Federation; Jewish Labor Kommando; Final Solution; Auschwitz-Birkenau; Einsatzgruppen; Adolf Eichmann; Allendorf, Germany; Rothschild Hospital; Pioneer Women/ NA'AMAT; National Council of Jewish Women; Ziegenhain, Germany; Skokie Central Traditional Congregation; American Association of Certified Medical Assistants

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