

# Stephanie Heilbrunn Heller and Annetta Heilbrunn Able



Stephanie and Annetta at age 19



Stephanie and Annetta in 2008 in Australia (Photo: *Sydney Morning Herald*)

**Stephanie Heilbrunn Heller and Annetta Heilbrunn Able** were born in Subotica, Yugoslavia, on February 2, 1924. Their family home was in Prague, Czechoslovakia, but they were born early when their mother was visiting family in Yugoslavia. They grew up in a middle-class neighborhood in Prague. In 1941, their parents and younger sister, Elizabeth, were deported to the Lodz Ghetto; the twins were not allowed to go with them. It was the last time they saw their family.

Stephanie married Egon Kunerwalder in April 1942. Annetta was sent to Theresienstadt in May the same year, with Stephanie and her husband joining her there in 1942. The sisters worked as nursing aides in an infectious diseases hospital in the ghetto before being deported to Auschwitz in December 1943. It was there that they became part of Dr. Josef Mengele's medical experiments on

twins. They were evacuated from Auschwitz on a death march in January 1945, to Ravensbruck and then Malchov (Mecklenburg). They managed to escape and were liberated on the run by the U. S. Army near Lubeck in May 1945. Stephanie's husband, their parents, and sister did not survive.

After the war they both studied nursing in Prague. Annetta married George Able (whom she had met in Auschwitz in the twins barrack) in 1948. Stephanie went to Israel in 1949 with Annetta, and her husband followed her. Stephanie married there in 1954 and lived for a while in Kenya. The sisters were reunited in 1962 when both families arrived in Australia. Both sisters testified at a "mock trial" in Jerusalem - "J'Accuse", in which Josef Mengele's crimes were publicized to the world. The sisters both have children and grandchildren.

*Stephanie's number: 72919 (Her original number was 72515. The Nazis realized they had already seared that number into another prisoner's arm, so they changed Stephanie's number to 72919)*  
*Annetta's number: 72890*

Visit USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive for [Stephanie Heller's testimony.](#)