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Franziska Jagerhofer

I only knew work

Franziska Jagerhofer was born on 11th October 1938 in Graz. As her family lived in a trailer and her father couldn't work regularly due to a disability, the family was persecuted by the National Socialists as so called "asocials".

In 1941, Franziska Jagerhofer's father was sent to the concentration camp Flossenbürg where he died in 1942. The mother of Franziska Jagerhofer was deported to Auschwitz; she survived. Franziska Jagerhofer and her three sisters were sent to different homes and institutions.

Colour photo: Older woman with an empty frame in her hands.

Franziska Jagerhofer does not possess a single photograph from her childhood or a single memory of her mother from this time. (c) Walter Reichl

At the age of two, I was given to a farmer. Even before I started going to school, I had to work hard in the stalls and in the fields. I didn't know about holidays. As I didn't have the time to study at school, I left after the fourth grade. As a result, I wasn't able to learn a trade and had to work as an unskilled worker all my life. I was never told who my parents were. I was often very miserable and cried a lot because my foster parents treated me like a stranger. I didn't find my mother until I was 25. She told me about her terrible experiences in the concentration camp and about the death of my father in a concentration camp. Working from morning till night was all I knew. I missed having a secure family home. You can imagine how that weighed on me and still weighs on me today.

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