

RG-50.091.0074

Erika Gold

In 1939 she was seven-years-old and lived in Budapest, Hungary, with her parents. Her father had a haberdashery store in Budapest. She attended a Jewish day school since the regular public schools there were open from Monday to Saturday. Her maternal grandparents and two uncles lived in Galanta, an uncle lived in Bruhn, Czechoslovakia, and an aunt lived in Cleveland. Her father had two brothers and a sister who lived in Budapest. She had relatives in Bratislava who went to Galanta at the beginning of the war to try to be safe, but they were caught and sent back; they were killed.

In April or May 1944, her father had to close his store and was sent to a work camp in the outskirts of Budapest in a Shell Oil factory. At that time, all the Jewish men in Budapest were taken to work camps. By June, they had to move to apartments that were designated for Jews in Budapest. Her grandfather, aunt and cousins were taken from Galanta to Auschwitz and were never heard from again. On October 15, 1944, when the Jewish women between the ages of 18-40 in Budapest were processed, her mother was not, since there were so many people registering, she was able to return home. At that time, her mother heard about a factory near Budapest that was making soldiers' uniforms. If you worked there, you would not be sent to a concentration camp. Her mother got them jobs there; she sewed buttons on uniforms. Around 300 women worked in the factory. The Red Cross supervised and fed the children who were there with their mothers. On December 1, the Nazis took everyone from there in trucks. She went with her mother rather than stay with the Red Cross at the factory. At one point, they got off the truck they were on and walked away without being seen. Only her mother, her, and another woman who also escaped at that point survived the war. From there, they went to stay with their former housekeeper, where they stayed for six weeks until the Russians liberated Budapest. At that point, her father was in the ghetto in Budapest. Her mother had purchased a Swiss visa or passport or citizenship for him, which enabled him to get out of the labor camp.

They returned to their apartment and her father was able to reopen his store after the war. No one in her mother's family survived. Her mother had a sister and a brother in Cleveland, and her father had a sister and two brothers in New York. Since it was hard to get a visa for the US from Hungary and her father feared the Russians, they got immigration visas for Cuba in 1948 and waited there for their American visas. They reached the US in 1950.

In 1984, Erika Gold was 52, living in Cleveland, married and the mother of two children.