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Summary

Andre Erdely was born on January 5, 1913, in Budapest, Hungary. His father's birth name was Natan Rosengarten, but he changed it to Erdely when Jews had to have Hungarian names. His mother was Ludmilla Gruner.

In 1935 he joined the army, where he was the only Jewish man in his platoon. When he was released, his papers indicated Catholic for religion. When he went to reserve duty, he feared that he would get into trouble, so he told an officer about the mistake. The officer said he would send the papers to a labor camp. Andre then got a radio for the officer's parents, so the officer ripped up his papers. He wasn't called up until December 1942, when he was sent to the labor camp Szentkirályszabadja (located in Hungary). They built the Ferihegy airport for the Germans; only Jews worked there. He worked there until spring 1944. If they finished their work, they had off from Friday afternoon to Monday morning, so they would go home to Budapest. They were barely paid, but they were fed. They lived in bunkers, with 50-60 people per bunker. The conditions weren't horrible until 1944. He was in the one squad from the labor camp that worked at the airport. Their boss was Inspector Bregermann (PH). Andre spoke German, so his conditions were pretty good. He worked as an electrician with thirty Jews who worked for him. There was a German truck driver from Vienna named Koenig. One day an American Liberator plane was hit and thirteen men parachuted out. The Hungarian soldiers shot them as they were coming down.

His father was taken from a tram and sent to Auschwitz where he was killed. His wife, son, sister-in-law, and in-laws, fled Budapest to Kobanya, where they stayed until the end of the war. Two of his sisters were in the Lichtenberg Concentration Camp in Germany.

At the end of 1944, when the Germans were gone, he escaped from the airport and went to the Swiss house, at 39 Katona Jozsef Street, because he had Swiss papers. Friends from the labor camp escaped and joined him there. One day in December 1944, Hungarian police came: one of the men with them was young, elegant, handsome, and two or three young Jewish men. The man was Wallenberg. The police wanted bedding to take to another house. Wallenberg wanted Andre to take the bedding there, but he was afraid that he would be caught when he returned alone. Wallenberg told him not to be afraid, to take the things, and that the police officer would bring him back. One of the men told Andre that he was the Swedish Ambassador. That same day, Wallenberg asked if there was space for someone in their apartment. There was, so an older man, from Szeged, stayed with them until the end of the war.

At the end of the street was the Danube River and the small island, Margit-Sziget, where Hungarian anti-aircraft artillery was located. Every day the Hungarians would take 50 Jews to the bank of the Danube and shoot them with their machine guns. A few days after meeting Wallenberg, he saw a group of people being led by the Nazis to the Danube when one of the police that had been with Wallenberg came into his apartment. Andre told him to tell Wallenberg that a group was being taken. Five minutes later he saw Wallenberg's red car, an Adler. He caught up to them with papers. There was an argument, but it was resolved and within ten minutes the Jews were taken away. He heard that after the war Wallenberg looked

for Jews at the camp Godollo, which was a Russian refugee camp. He stayed in the Swiss house until the end of January.