

**RG-50.407.0075**

**Interview: Frank Loffler, June 1996**

### **Summary**

Frank Loffler, born 9/27/19 in the small town of Balashayar\*, approximately 80 km north off Budapest, Hungary, where his father's family lived for hundreds of years. Loffler describes: his father, Charles, mother [name unclear], a younger sister, Magdush,\* two younger brothers, Desha\* and George, and a large extended family, most of whom perished in the Holocaust; his father's textile shop and prosperous family; a happy childhood and loving family; growing anti-Semitism into the 1930s, which was a major change from his father's more congenial experience; an orthodox household and community; anti-Semitic teachers; belonging to Zionist organizations; conscription into a "workers battalion" of young Jews at the beginning of the war; Hungary's alliance with Germany; in 1942 his battalion working on construction projects in Ukraine and Belarus; working in harsh conditions; brutality and frivolous killing of Jews by Hungarian militiamen; kind treatment by a Hungarian officer and occasional kindness from Wehrmacht soldiers; being taken prisoner by the Russians after Stalingrad; extremely harsh treatment initially by the Russians; his weight going from 82 to 39 kg; changed Russian policy resulting in his being taken to a hospital; being sent to Chelyabinsk, where he spent nearly three years, to work on construction projects; learning only near the end of his stay in Chelyabinsk about the extent of the Nazi genocide; being sent to work on a kolkhoz [collective farm] from late 1944 to early 1945, when he returned to Chelyabinsk; working on the beginnings of a nuclear reactor facility until the end of the war; being transported to Budapest; returning to his home village of Balashayar\* and finding his two brothers alive, no knowledge of his parents' whereabouts, his sister and four friends returning from Danzig, all of them suffering from Typhoid and dying in Austria; arranging to have the girls' bodies exhumed and reburied in a Jewish cemetery in Austria but never visiting the graves after vowing he would never set foot on German soil; accompanying his ill brother [not specified] to Israel, where he died; marrying and having a daughter [no details provided]; discovering that his parents and all of his relatives in Balashayar\* died in Auschwitz in 1944; spending six years in Israel and emigrating to Australia [dates not specified]; his life in Australia; his daughter not wanting to hear about the parents' wartime experience but finding his grandson receptive and sensitive; losing his religious belief (but his surviving brother, also in Australia, remaining Orthodox); surviving the war through "sheer luck."

\*Transliteration as heard