

Oral History Abstract: Rose Pop, April 1996

Rose Pop, born June 4, 1920 in Kapuvar, western Hungary, the elder of two sisters, describes: her father, Alex, a grocery wholesaler, and mother, Margit (nee Steiner); a middle class existence; not being particularly religious or belonging to Jewish organizations; speaking only Hungarian in the home; a large extended family; not recalling discussion in the home of Hitler's rise; her family being in denial even after the beginning of the war; life continuing normally; not considering leaving Hungary; being affected by the war only in about April 1944 when other Jews were forced to live in her family's home; being given Catholic identity papers by a friend but not appreciating the significance of why this might help her; being sent in May 1944 with her family to a ghetto in Sopron, about 30 km west of Kapuvar; having no memory of life in the ghetto but having enough food to eat; her family being transported by train to Auschwitz on June 4, 1944, which she remembers because it was her birthday; the journey taking about three days, during which several people died; not getting an explanation of where they were being taken or realizing the significance of Auschwitz; the train journey being an even worse experience than Auschwitz; never witnessing Jewish resistance; the surreal feeling of arriving in Auschwitz; along with her mother and sister, being separated from her father but not knowing why; never seeing her father again; being taken to the showers, having her hair cut, being given the striped "pajamas"; sleeping on the floor in the lager; being hungry and thirsty; being relatively well treated by a Polish kapo; after three weeks being transported by train to a camp in southwest Germany; her sister working in a factory making bombs, her mother doing kitchen duty; being sent into the forest "digging and covering things up" [not specified]; being liberated with her mother and sister in April 1945 and ending up in Leipzig; returning to Hungary on June 4, 1945 (her birthday again); returning to her home in Kapuvar, which she found to be relatively intact; some uncles having died but others having survived; marrying a Soviet soldier in 1946; emigrating to Australia in 1952; being joined there by her mother in 1955 and sister in 1957.