

Interviewee: SAUBER, John  
Interviewer: Gloria Schwartz  
No of audiotapes: 2 English

Date: October 21, 1999  
No restrictions  
Transcript: 1 v. (unpaged)

## SUMMARY

John (formerly György/George) Sauber, was born August 14, 1926 in Budapest, Hungary. His family lived in Rakoskeresztur until 1936 when they moved back to Budapest. After 1942 or 1943 food shortages, persecution of Jews, wearing the yellow star, and deportations started. Non-Jewish Hungarians brought his family some food. His mother's store was taken over by two Christian "partners". He attended school with non-Jewish students, had religious instruction and attended the Dohany Temple. He experienced a few instances of discrimination while a student.

In 1944, when he was 17 years old, Mr. Sauber was drafted into a forced labor unit that went to the Russian front. He was wounded and put on a Red Cross train. Because he was Jewish, he received no medical treatment and was transferred to a deportation train for Hungarian Jews. He describes conditions on the train and his arrival and processing at Bergen-Belsen Concentration camp. He talks about conditions at Bergen-Belsen pre and post liberation and his activities in great detail, including removing hair and gold teeth from corpses and how he managed to survive. He witnessed brutal treatment of inmates. The Germans fled just before the camp was liberated by Allied troops. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) cared for the survivors.

Mr. Sauber returned to Budapest and was reunited with his father. His mother and sister had been deported and killed. He had gone to medical school in Hungary, resumed his education, then went to a Displaced Persons camp in Germany, run by UNRRA, and to a camp in Bamberg with a group planning to go to Palestine. He emigrated to Saskatoon, Canada with a group of Jewish orphans sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Congress, in January 1946, and was helped by Jewish community. He brought his father and stepmother to Canada. He is still haunted by his experiences and trying to cope with the loss of most of his family. He relates a touching episode when saying *Kaddish* for his stepmother brought him some peace.

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#### SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War (1939 – 1945) Personal narratives, Hungarian Jew

World War (1939 - 1945) Deportations from Hungary

Forced labor

Bergen-Belsen concentration camp

Displaced persons camps (Germany)

Atrocities

Psychological aspects after the Holocaust