

HVT-21

K., George 1911-

George K. Holocaust video testimony (HVT-21) interviewed by Gerry Singer and Alan Rimer, June 21, 1994.

3 copies: 1 SVHS first camera; 1 SVHS second camera; 1 VHS copy.

Summary: George was born on October 25, 1911 in Budapest, Hungary. His family celebrated the High Holidays, and went to synagogue, but did not keep kosher. The family was very wealthy and was able to afford a life of luxury. George's father owned a popular coffee shop and his mother was a homemaker. She died before the German occupation. George had two brothers and one sister. His oldest brother graduated from a university in Budapest. George went to a textile trade school.

Shortly after Germany expanded to the Hungarian border in 1938, anti-Jewish laws and restrictions were introduced by the Hungarian government. It is for this reason that George wasn't allowed to graduate from a university in Budapest and had to go to university in Brno, Czechoslovakia. Later, he returned to Budapest where he entered the textile business. Within the context of reducing the Jewish role in the economy, his father's coffee shop was expropriated without compensation. The Jews of Budapest, including George's father, were forced into a ghetto. George's sister was brought to a Christian home and hidden throughout the war. George and his older brother were deported to forced labour camps. His brother was brought to Bor, Yugoslavia, while George was moved from one forced labour camp to another. The first of them was located in Moko, Hungary, where he stayed for six months working in the fields. He was later sent to Kiev, Ukraine, where he had to work in a Hungarian army camp, and was then sent to the small village of Fastov, Ukraine. He was eventually sent back to Budapest, where he lived in a quarantine camp in Sziklos.

After the Wehrmacht occupied Hungary in 1944, George was deported to Vac and, in November 1944, sent to the forced labour camp in Fertörakos. There, he worked building the Ostwall, a line of fortifications designed to protect Germany from the Red Army. In February 1945 George was deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp. While there he suffered from typhus.

After the liberation of the camp at the beginning of May 1945, George became a translator for the American soldiers. After recovering, George travelled to Budapest via Vienna, where he was welcomed by his younger brother, who had been interned in a forced labour camp near the Hungarian border, as well as by his sister and father. His older brother had died in the Bor camp shortly after liberation.

In 1948, after the communists assumed power in Hungary, George and his wife moved to Vienna. They later moved to Paris and opened a tricottage shop. In 1951, they emigrated to Montreal and opened a similar shop. George eventually found employment at a travel agency and worked there for twenty-five years. His father passed away in 1953. His surviving brother still lives in Hungary where he cares for their sick sister. George visits them regularly. George was born with a German last name, but he changed it after the war because he wanted to dissociate himself completely from everything German.