

HVT-22

T., Lily 1925-

Lily T. Holocaust video testimony (HVT-22) interviewed by David Hershon and Andrea Shahin, June 27, 1994.

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

Summary: Lily was born on December 17, 1925 in Budapest, Hungary. Her parents were not religious, but the family went to synagogue during the High Holidays. Lily's father was the general manager of a textile factory and her mother was a homemaker.² Her parents were wealthy. Lily was an only child and describes herself as a 'spoiled brat' during her early years. She regularly visited her grandmother and aunts in Vienna and enjoyed going to soccer games. Lily attended a Jewish elementary school and was expelled from several high schools because of bad behavior.

Lily was in Vienna during the Anschluss in 1938. Lily brought her family's jewelry to Budapest. That same year, Lily was prevented from attending school because of her Jewish identity. Jews were removed from almost all spheres of commercial life. Lily's father lost his job, and her mother now had to support the family by working as a pastry-chef. According to Lily, her family's life changed very little until 1944. She was unaware of the situation of Jewish people in other countries.

On October 23, 1944, members of the Arrow Cross took Lily's father away. Five days later, they took her mother. Shortly thereafter, Lily obtained protection papers for her parents from the Swiss Embassy. She heard that her parents were marched towards Austria, so she went to search for them. Lily did not find her parents. She befriended a policeman at the Austro-Hungarian border and he urged her to return home. She hitchhiked and walked back to Budapest and then went into hiding with her friends. One day in December 1944, when she was visiting a girlfriend, they were denounced to the Arrow Cross. Lily and her friend were taken to the riverbank of the Danube, where a detachment from the Arrow Cross ordered them to remove their clothes. As Lily and her friend stood by the river wearing only their underwear and shoes, the Arrow Cross men tied the girls to each other and shot them. The rope that bound the girls together snapped. Lily although wounded in the arm did not bleed. Her friend, however, was killed. The Hungarian soldiers dumped them into the Danube River and Lily swam to the shore on the opposite side of the river. A Budapest policeman found Lily and took her to a German army bunker where she received clothes, medical attention, and food. Later, Lily was taken by ambulance to a Jewish hospital. After a two-day recovery, Lily moved into her parents' best friend's house. It was a so-called 'Swiss House' and she lived there until liberation with other Jews who had obtained passports from the Swiss Embassy in Budapest. During that time she was forced to work for the Arrow Cross. She got a cleaning job in one of their buildings. One of the officers fell in love with Lily and protected her for the duration of the war.

In January 1945, the Russian Army liberated Budapest. In February, Lily went to her home, located in the former Budapest ghetto. She found some of her relatives laying dead on the floor of her parents' house. Lily buried them in the synagogue's garden.

After the war ended, Lily learned that her father had been shot. She never learned of

² Information about Lily's parents was obtained from the file.

her mother's fate. She had both of her parents declared dead in 1947.

Lily remained in Budapest until 1956, when she decided to emigrate to the United States. She went to Austria and obtained a Canadian passport because U.S. immigration documents were not as readily available. Lily had two cousins and an aunt who lived in Montreal. She arrived in Halifax, and, after being quarantined for three days, she moved to Montreal.