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Summary

Edit Fonyó Petőcz was born on August 31, 1931 in Budapest. Her father's name was Miklós Rósenberg, but after WWII, she changed her name to Fonyó.

Her father became a tinsmith, a trade he had learned from his father. Though interested in architecture, he had had no money to study. He owned a small shop in the VIth district of Budapest (the part that was called "Chicago"). She spent lots of time in her father's shop and enjoyed playing with the tools. Her mother also came from a poor family, having been raised with four siblings by her widowed mother.

The family was not religious. Her mother's siblings all lived in mixed marriages.

Her father was politically left leaning.

In the late 1930s, the family moved to 64 Csengery St. They lived very modestly, never had more than one room and a kitchen. She had an older sister, born in 1929.

She went to elementary school in Sziv St., and middle school in Bajza St.

In 1944, after the German occupation schools closed and she could finish only three years.

She remembered when they had to wear the Yellow Star. Her father was making Yellow Stars out of tin, which he painted yellow.

Her father was called up for forced labor twice. After the second time, in 1944, she never saw him again. She did not remember where he was, but he escaped with four other men to avoid being taken to Germany. They were, however, captured by a Soviet army unit and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Russia where he died in 1945. She said her father died because after hearing that all Hungarian Jews were killed, he could not deal with the thought that his wife and children were not alive.

In 1944, the building in Csengery St. became a Yellow Star house.

Until October 15, 1944, the Arrow Cross coup, they lived relatively quietly. On October 19, Arrow Cross raided their building and began shooting. Since they lived on the first floor, her mother ran with the children to the basement and hid there. They stayed there for three days without food, water, and clothing. The Arrow Cross did a quick search in the basement as well, but did not discover them. When quiet was restored, they went upstairs; most of the people had been taken and 18 were shot, among them a 15-year-old boy.

Her mother decided to flee. One of her father's shop assistants, a Christian, Aladár Koleszár lived outside of the city, close to Ferihegy airport. They walked there one night. Koleszár took them in, and they spent the rest of the war in his small house.

They were waiting for Russian liberation, which came in January 1945.

They had no food and were hungry all the time.

They went back to their apartment. Her father's workshop had survived the war, but had suffered a lot of damage. Her mother tried to make a living by managing the business, but was not really successful, and sold it before it was nationalized. She learned different trades, working in several businesses and factories. She married. Her husband worked as a mechanic. In 1955, they moved into the small apartment where the interview took place.

In 1956, her son was born. During the 1956 uprising, she spent three weeks with her son who became very sick in the hospital. [The interview ends in mid-sentence.]