

Interviewee: Ted Bolgar

Date: October 24, 2012

Z-I want to start with your first day life, when you were born, where you were born. Talk to me about your family, your life growing up.

T- Are you filming this too?

Z-Yeah.

T- I make it easy for you. This was my family, I was born in 1924 in a small town called Sarospatak, in Hungary. My father had a small store. My mother helped him. My sister . . .

Z-Like a general store?

T-Dry goods. My sister was 6 years younger than I was. My father served in the first world war. He became wounded, became decorated. And later he became one of the executives of the local veteran organization. That time had a population of 13,000. Among them about 1,100 Jews. It was an orthodox community, except my father came from another part of Hungary. He was more assimilated. Therefore, I went to a nursery school run by the nuns. My first prayer were Catholic prayer. Then for fours years I did go to a Jewish elementary school, where two of us who didn't go to [0:03:42] in the afternoon, we were kept an hour later with the girls to learn whatever Hebrew they were learning. Again, high school was a Catholic high school, and those days religion was compulsory subject and . . . There was simple solution. Twice a week a Rabbi, Reverend, and Priest came in. They went into different classrooms and an hour later we were together again. Now, everybody in Europe, including Hungary, especially Catholic countries, anti-Semitism was there, but not as bad as the surrounding countries. Any time there was a problem in Poland or Ukraine or somewhere, the Jews came over to Hungary. It was at one time, that was [0:04:41].

Z- Was your family religious?

T- My mother's family was religious, but my father wasn't interested, much interested in religion. He kept his store closed, because 95% of the stores were Jewish stores, everybody kept open . . . I mean closed, he kept his store closed on Shabbes. An interesting thing is that since most of the stores were Jewish, the broker administration allowed us to open the store Sunday morning for two hours, so the people could come and buy whatever they needed. So the Sunday opening was not a problem a hundred years ago.

Z-So your friends were all Jewish?

T- No, no, no. Well the thing is by the time I got to high school, things have changed. There's already Third---. Hitler came into power, and the Hungarian government allied itself because Hitler promised them to recover all the lost territories from the first world war. And . . . things have changed. Actually, the first anti-Jewish came only in 1938 after pressure by Hitler.

Z-And you were in high school already?

T- Yeah, but by then we felt . . . that high school was a special high school, they called it a commercial high school. Bookkeeping, typing, phoning correspondence. And I used to look at the old tableaus where 70-80% of the students were Jewish. By the time I got there, there were only four of us. But the thing was Hungary was the first country, 1921, with the numerous clauses. So, I couldn't go to university, that's why I chose this commercial high school.

Z-Was your family well-to-do?

T- Well that's very hard to describe. Let me put it this way. We didn't have indoor plumbing. Four of us slept to a room. We never had a telephone. I think the first time I saw an elevator I was 17 years old, when I went to Budapest. And I think I used the first indoor toilet when I was 15. But at the same time we thought that we were middle class. We also had a live-in maid, let me put it this way. So that was the type of life we lived. Then, as I mentioned, Hitler came to power, and he was pushing the Hungarian government to do something about the Jews. They were reluctant because the Jews were very important in the Hungarian economy. But as I said by 1938 the first anti-Jewish law came and it continued, '39, '40, '41 and so on. It got to the point where Jewish merchants did not get any merchandise controlled by the government, which was salt, sugar, tobacco, alcohol, and so on. But there was nowhere to go, so we just tried to cope with it. Now, in 1941 when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the Hungarian government felt . . . to help the Germans, and they mobilized and they sent the Hungarian army to the Soviet front, except the Jews who were also called up, they didn't get the uniform, they didn't get a rifle. All they had is a hat and a yellow armband, and they were used as kind of a slave labor. Clearing forests, repairing roads and clearing minefields without equipment. So at the end of the war about 75-80% of these men were killed.

Z- Were you sent?

T- No. I was just at the edge. You see I was called up to join the army 1944, September, but the Germans took me away in March. What happened is when the tide turned, you see Hitler started to lose the war, Stalingrad and North Africa, and Hungarian government felt it's time to get out. So they tried to sue for peace, except the Germans found out and they invaded Hungary in March 1944.

Z-And you were in Budapest?

T- No. I was in the countryside, in this small town I told you about.

Z- Oh, okay.

T- The usual story, first we had to put on the yellow star, then confiscated radios, telephone –whoever had them- all sorts of vehicles, we had no cars in those days, and we weren't allowed to leave our hometown. And in the bigger towns the Jews weren't allowed to use public transportation. That didn't last long either. One Saturday morning it so happened, the day after Passover, the Hungarian [0:11:45] and the German soldiers came and gave us 30 minutes to pack whatever we can carry, and took us into the yard of the Jewish public school, which happened to be just across the street from our home. There they confiscated every jewelry, even wedding bands and watches. We slept outside and the following day they took us by train to the next town, which was somewhat bigger. By then they established a ghetto there. They simply emptied the worst part of the town, I think roughly about 2,250 people and they pushed in 12,500 Jews. It was easy because the former residents took their furniture so we had no furniture just straw and blankets and so on. And the ghetto was naturally fenced in, and Hungarian [same as 0:11:45], sometimes German soldiers, patrolled from the outside.

We tried to establish some semblance of normal life. We had a synagogue, we had a hospital. The Hungarian ghettos were not like the Polish ghettos because we still had food, and we had no sickness or starvation. But that didn't last long either. One morning, again Hungarian [same as 0:11:45], German soldier came, "pick up your belongings". And they took us to a railroad siding where there was a train engine and cattle cars, but even the opening of these cattle cars were covered. They pushed in 75, 80, 85 people. Well actually they gave us two pails, one empty, the other one was full with water. And the locked the doors and the train started. It was going and stopping and going. The trip lasted about three days. I don't have to tell you how fast the pail with the water got empty and the other got filled. As a side issue, we were lucky, the cattle car we were in, it was so rotten that we could cut a hole on the bottom, so that helped us.

Z-As a toilet?

T- Yes. Then finally the train stopped. It was quiet until daybreak, then they opened these cattle cars and we faces German soldiers with dogs. They were screaming, "Get out fast! Leave your belongings there we are going to take it after you". The place was Auschwitz, the [0:15:38] part of Auschwitz. But we didn't know.

Z-You were how old?

T- I was 20.

Z- 20.

T- There was long platform, then they separated the men from the women. And five of us we were going toward the . . . [shows a picture].

Z-This was yours particular?

Z- So how long were you in Auschwitz?

T-Well, once we got to the end of this platform there was this table with a few SS officers in front of it, one of them in a white coat. And as you approached they waved you left or right. You had no idea what it meant. Well that was the so-called selection. My sister was only 13 years old and short, so he sent her to one side, and my mother who spoke fluent German, "Can I go with her?", he said "yes". And they were taking to a place, which was supposed to be a place to take a shower. Made them undress, sent them into the shower room, but instead of water, you know, gas came. And that's how they got killed. That's hard. But I found out from some survivors. That was the day they gassed them and the same night they burned them, I don't use cremation anymore, that's too nice of a word. My father and I were sent to the other side. We had to get undressed, we were shaved from top to bottom, and finally you got a stripped uniform. We slept outside and the first food we got was about the following noon. They gave us a big bowl of vegetable soup. One bowl for six men, but they wouldn't give a spoon. They said "Jews are like dogs, you are going to eat like dogs". Well, we were hungry enough we did. I wasn't in Auschwitz long, only about four days. But I remember once I was telling my father, I said, "They can't take anything else away from us, they took away our country", because we felt always Hungarians special [0:18:48], "they took away our home, our business, our family, the shirt off our back, the rest of our dignity by making us eat like dogs". But I was wrong, they took away eventually my name. And I became 87846.

Z-Was that your number, did you have a tattoo?

T-No. No, I was in five different camps in a year and I was moved so fast that they had no time to put it that way. I just had it on . . .

Z- On your shirt.

T- Yeah, on the jacket. They were looking for tradesmen. After high school I couldn't go to university so I learned a trade, became an electrician. My father said, "Maybe they'll treat you better."

Z- So from the commercial high school you got a?

T- Problem was when I finished there I couldn't go anywhere. So by then every Jewish man or woman felt something is really bad, so we all learned a trade. The girls learned how to sew. I became an electrician. They grabbed me again, put me on a train and a few hours later, I'm in Warsaw.

Z-Warsaw?

T- Warsaw, yeah. You see, that was 1944, the uprising was in 1943. They established a camp there to try to clear the remnants of the ghetto. You see they had to blow up most of the house because they were all burned or destroyed. So that was a camp simply to clear the bricks, pile them up, and [0:21:11] came for cheap building material. But by then the Soviet army was very close and we figured maybe . . . but then again politics got into the picture. The Cold War started earlier than at the end of the war . . .

\*0:21:44 - Description of politics and strategy.

*Summary of war events:*

- polish army begins another uprising
- Germans defeat
- Germans kill and additional 90,000 Poles (non-Jews)
- At this time the camp is evacuated
- chronologically, first death march
- 6 days no food
- train in August 1944
- ends up in Dachau.
- Dachau at that time had become a distribution centre
- the workforce was made up of inmates from concentration camps and Soviet POWs
- sent from Dachau to a new camp established to build bunkers
- The name of the camp was Muldorf. (not part of Dachau, new camp).

\* 0:25:00

T- Home away from home was 16 of us and 2 layers, and a stove, that was it. It was partly underground, it was easy to heat. But then we got regular barracks. As I say, our job was to carry these cement bags up to the machines on a ramp and if you slipped and fell into the wet cement we weren't allowed to pull you out. Actually we go a small book, somebody wrote thesis about this camp. We found out that wake-up time was 4:15 in the morning. Then you got your coffee. Half a liter of [0:26:20] coffee. Now, this is . . . everyone of us got a bowl like this. You notice the piece of wire there. It's because . . . I called it a lifeline. If you lost it you had to wait until somebody else finished food. Most of the time nothing left, so we kept it on our belt and at night under our hat. Then for lunch we got half a liter of soup and for the evening a whole liter of soup. By the way we got a spoon by then, they realized we can eat much faster with a spoon. Then we got a piece of bread, at the beginning it was one third of a bread then it was reduced to 300g, which was a thick slice. Once a week we got. . .

Z-So they had to keep you a little bit healthy so you could do the physical work for them . . .

T- They actually had, the Germans are very precise and efficient. This camp had a designated number of 60, which meant on the average you lived 60 days in this

camp. Now, every evening after work there was a role call, they put all the dead bodies in the front because they had to have the number, and while we were there the SS came and if you didn't look strong enough they pulled you out, put you in a truck, send you back, they killed you and brought fresh "meat". So basically that was it. The thing is that besides that they always promised "no matter what happens we are going to kill you", and if you didn't work, had enough, they beat you. The worst part was starvation, to the point where at least I felt like a zombie. I wasn't thinking. Later on there were some experiments where they said that when you are starving your brain slows down completely. So when people ask me "did you have friends there?", I say, "I don't remember having friends". Also, one day you worked next to this guy, the next day an other guy. As I say that was . . .from here they took to an even smaller camp . . .

Z-How long were you there?

T- I don't know exactly. Just for a few months, because during the winter I was taken to another camp, which was simply a manufacturer of building blocks, was were looking for 150 men, so I was one of them. Which in a way was lucky because that was inside. This was outside the building of . . . One day they called us back from work during the day. They put us on a train. The train started, east, stopped, came back, practically at the same place where we started from. Actually what we found out later, that was end of April 1945. The war was over, they wanted to keep their promise and take this train into an abandoned mine, all they have to do is blow up the entrance of the mine, and 5,000 Jews very efficiently and cheaply get killed. But the Soviet army got there first and by then the guards realized that they are going to be POWs and they wanted to be POWs of the US army no the Soviet. They were smart enough. Anyway, we find out we have no more guards so we open the cattle cars and saw the first American troops. They just looked at us because . . .

Z-Were was this?

T- It's a small town next to Munich. Because that's the way we looked [possibly showing a picture]. By the way, I don't want to give you too many details, but in this camp there was no water to wash so we were full of life, besides everything, the typhus. So they tried to disinfect us, but we always had the same clothing on. I was liberated a year after, in the same pair of pants and jacket, which . . . I think I did changed underwear maybe three times. But we never washed . . .we didn't seem to notice these small things, like, you didn't wash. This was our bathroom, it's call a latrine. In the winter it was a little bit drafty.

Z-So you were liberated by the Americans.

T-Yeah, liberated by the Americans, and they took us into an abandoned Hitler Youth (or possibly "union") campus. And they opened their dinning room, and I realized for the first time I was sitting on a chair, I had a table in front of me, cutlery,

a plate. And they give us supper, white bread and cream of wheat. So naturally we wolfed it down, went to the end of the line for a second portion and so on. Finally they closed down the dining room, but what they didn't realize and neither did we, that was too rich for us. Over 300 of us died. I was in bed for, I don't know 8 or 9 days. And anyway we were liberated and we were taken, the name of that place was Feldafing, that campus, and they established by then another camp and they kept us there.

Z-Displaced persons camp.

T- Yeah, DP camp. Again, I didn't start thinking right away. I was just staying there and eating, that was it. Now, going back a little bit. Most of the camps in Poland were liberated end of 1944, Auschwitz I thing January 28<sup>th</sup> or I don't remember, so anybody who survived, the logical thing is let's go back to our place, see who else survived from the family, because the families were naturally pulled apart. So there was no transportation, the Soviets didn't . . . They gave them some trains but they ended up in Ukraine or wherever. To get back the trip lasted anywhere from 1 to 3 to 4 months. So when you finally got back to your hometown you went to your home. Somebody else was living there. You see, Hitler promised that the Jews will be all killed, so the Hungarian government gave away our homes. There was difficulty to get back your own home, never mind business or anything like that. Out of the 1,100 some odd Jews, 154 came back. Now, anybody who didn't find members of their family, and there was no welcoming committee so, they came back to German, which was by then occupied by the four powers. And somebody from my hometown came to this place where I was and he says, "what are you doing, your father is at home". If my father is at home let's go home. I still called it home in those days.

Z- So your father survived?

T- Yeah, he was the oldest, 54.

Z- Wow.

T- So I went back, by then it took me only two or three weeks, it was September.

Z-'45?

T-'45, yeah. Again, I looked around I said, "Let's get out of here". He says, "Look, I am old and sick, I can't start a new life". So I remained with him until he found a widow, he got remarried, then I said goodbye to him, I went back to Germany.

Z- And when was that?

T- That was in '46. I think May or so?

Z- So he got remarried quickly.

T- Yeah, well, you know, everybody was looking for . . .

Z-Yeah, oh, no, no, no.

T- No, no, I'm just saying. That's a completely different story. I have no time to explain to you. So once he wasn't alone, I got a few of my friends with whom we were librated together, "Let's get out of here". So we went back to Germany, naturally to the US part because they had the best food.

Z- All that you didn't have to pay for?

T- By then . . . First of all the [0:38:01 – sounds like "Brefa"] was active, you know what the [same as 0:38:01] is? That's the illegal immigration to Palestine. Mostly, the members of the former Jewish brigade who were fighting in Italy. Anyway, by then there were connections, we could be smuggled out of Hungary. So we went into one of these DP camps and I didn't want to go to Palestine because I didn't want to end up in Cypress again. Because in those days the English caught every ship and deported them to Cypress. I went to difference consulates, "what are you?", I said "I'm a Jew", they said "we have no quota for Jews, where were you born?", "In Hungary". He said, "Then go back to Hungary and apply as a Hungarian." I said, "look, once they threw me out, the second time I escaped, I can't do this". And we just couldn't get anywhere. Finally the Canadian government let in 1,000 youngsters.

Z-So this was '46.

T- This started in '47. The condition was under 18 and an orphan. Now, how many kids under 18 survived? So, what we did, we changed our age. We denied that anybody had a father or mother, and applied. And that's how I got to Canada in I think May, 1948.

Z- So what happened when you arrived? How old were you really?

T- 24.

J- You came by boat?

T-Yeah, we came by boat to Halifax, we arrived, I don't know 17 or something . . . And by train we came to we came to . . . we were dispersed. Anywhere, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg . . . I had no idea where I was. All I knew about Canada, it's north of US.

Z- How did they chose where people went?



T- Random.

Z- And did you speak French or English?

T- No.

Z- Nothing? No French ...

T- Well I learned some French correspondence, but they were just these expressions, you know, the old style business correspondence. Very flowery language. When they ask me if I am married or not I couldn't reply.

Z- Did you have friends with you?

T- Well, by then you see, those who were liberated together we remained as a family. It so happened that we were in the same cattle car. I never saw these people before, but we were together and then we were together in this DP camp. We became our family.

Z- Were they all Hungarian?

T- No, no, no just a small portion. There were Greeks, a lot of Polish, a few ... by then a few of them escaped from the Soviet Union, there were some Czechs ... Actually quite a few Greeks because when we were taken to Warsaw, the Germans were smart enough to choose Hungarians and Greeks who didn't speak any of the Slavic languages. So we ... because we were in contact with the local population. Anyway, so I came, arrived here. I had no idea of Toronto or Montreal or whatever. I didn't know where I was. When I heard French here I couldn't understand. I said, "I though I came to Canada". They took us into a converted duplex on [0:43:30], they call it. They gave us food, they gave us English lessons. We even got three dollars a week, pocket money. And then they slowly started to disperse. The social workers came, they ask your background, they even brought a psychologist from New York, who said, "They'll never make it". Interestingly enough, about 20 years later I was speaking to a group of school children. A little boy came to me he says, "my grandfather was involved" he says, "maybe you heard of him", he gave me the name, I said "yeah". He was the one who said you'll never make it.

Z- He said that to you?

T- No, no, no, no. What happened then, they give us even some sort of aptitude test or something. There was social workers coming around, and actually I was offered ... they wanted to educate me. And I refused, they couldn't understand. They were giving me a chance to become an electric engineer. But you see I knew that I was 24. I needed at least 2 years of high school, plus, let's see, minimum four years of university education. So I would be ...

Z- So they were willing to pay for that?

T- Yeah. Yeah. And some of us took it and they were educated here, yeah.

Z- That was specific to the orphan program right, but it wasn't for the non-orphan . . . ?

T- No, no, no. We were the so-called children transport. We were called children transport. We were treated differently. Those who came individually and so on it was different. For instance, they took us to a store and they gave us . . . for the first time in my life I was a bathroom, anyway they gave us clothing and so on. Then they . . . if you didn't want to get educated they tried to find a job for you. So I started out as an electrician here. Then I found it too cold in the winter because we were actually building the [0:46:54] building, I don't know if you saw it, but I was part of it, at the top you know. It's too cold, you know. So I found something else.

Z- Did it pay well?

T- 53 cents. By then we were not children transport of survivors or something. They went to individual companies, "can you use a worker?". So they took us in and they paid like everybody else.

Z- So that was pretty minimum, 53 cents?

T- But later on when I went to this fur dyeing place, which was too warm, because we were dyeing fur and had to dry it, 120 degrees in the next room [laughs].

J- It just starts . . . you just weren't satisfied.

T- Well, there the thing is like everything else, when they ask me "how did you survive?". I say, "It's 95% luck and 5% I still don't know". And the thing same here. I was assigned to a family. People who wanted to look after survivors, and also they got paid by the Jewish Congress. I think it was 60 or 65 dollars a month.

Z- For room and board?

T- I was lucky I got into this family. [laughs] They were actually communists, but very nice people.

Z- And they were the established Jewish community?

T- Yeah.

Z- And where was their house?

T- On the Vanhorn, Vanhorn very close to Park Avenue. That lady got up every morning with me and talked to me and says, "You might not be interested in what I am telling you, but you are listening to English". Anyway, about a year later I learned enough English so that man of the house worked in the fruit industry. He said "Somebody just left, come work for us". And I got into this office and that's how I started my 53 years of carrier in the fruit industry. [fruit industry might be food industry]

Z-What were you doing?

T- Bookkeeping. Then I went back to nights university, because I realized . . .went back to Sir George, then in 1954 I got married. . .

Z- Okay, hold on. Let's go back. So that first year you worked as an electrician outside, you worked in the fur industry, right? That first year?

T- Yeah. We were actually . . .you remember muskrat coats? We were creating the muskrat coats to look like mink.

Z- So you were dyeing them and . . .

T- Yeah, yeah, yeah, and then once I got my first clerical job then I realized . I went back to the night school.

Z- So those first few years, you came in '48, what was your social life like those first few years?

T- Let me put it this way, the Jewish community here didn't really know what to do with us. Thinking back, I can't blame them that they didn't want their daughter start dating a guy, so-called survivor, without any future, without any past. As a matter of fact, a few years later when they were training [0:51:43] for the Holocaust center, part of the program was to meet survivors. And I remember we were a panel, I think three women and myself. One woman was saying that "My uncle took me in but his wife wasn't too happy because they didn't have an extra bedroom, so they have to give me the couch in the living room". The other one was saying that "I also had an uncle here, but they had also a teenage daughter and we couldn't get along so it wasn't a happy situation". I don't remember what the third one . .but also got taken in by relatives. So when it came to my turn I said, "thank God I have no relatives here, because I found this family and they were fantastic, they were fantastic". As a matter of fact, this summer two of their grandchildren and their daughter came in from Toronto just to meet me.

J- Just to meet you?

T-Yeah, yeah and tell about their grandparents.

Z-Do you want to share their name?

T- Lipes. That was the Lipes family.

Z- So you said the established Jewish community . . .

T- Yeah, well first of all there was the language problem. So we became a separate society.

Z- Because you wanted to?

T- We had no choice. We had no choice, I mean you didn't speak the language, as I say. And we didn't have the best reputation because . . . there was always a kind of a question. Survivors, how did they survive? Were they survive on account that they were stronger, or more . . . how should I put it . . . on account of somebody else that . . .I don't know how to explain to you.

Z- Like did they betray somebody?

T- Yeah. Yeah. You had to do something to survive.

Z- So they questioned that . . .

T- Yeah, and we didn't have the reputation, or reputation we had was very bad. So what we actually did, there was kind of a new world club, which was established by people who came with families and so on. And so we created a new young section of the new world club.

Z- What as it called?

T- New World Club [listen at 0:55:30 could possibly be "Newer Club", not entirely sure]. And every Sunday afternoon we got together. We had a pianist, we were dancing, and quite a few of us found their wives their, including me.

Z- But the group of people you hung out with weren't Canadians?

T- No.

Z- I mean they weren't all Hungarian?

T- No.

Z- So what did you speak to them?

T- Well we all spoke some German, some Yiddish. And by then we all learned some English.

Z- So it was a hodge podge.

T- yeah, but it worked out quite well. I was very important.

Z- And you had no interest integrating with the established Jewish community with the exception of your family?

T- No I can't say that. I met a Montreal girl and we went out a couple of times. Three, four times, mostly just walking around or go for a coffee, but somehow we didn't connect. She was teaching me some English. I remember once she took me home, and the visit wasn't too successful of so on.

Z- How come?

T- Well, they weren't happy. I'm talking about the parents. And when I looked at the parents, especially the father wouldn't even put a shirt on, just undershirt. So I figure that he's not happy that I take out . . .

Z- Why weren't they happy?

T- What I told you before, they didn't know anything about us. I was making by then, let's see, by then I was making 80 cents an hour and they still couldn't talk or . . . they didn't realize if we were educated or not. All they heard, what happened in the ghettos. And in most cases if you grew up in a ghetto what can you expect.

Z- So were they a wealthy family?

T- No, no, no. Well there was a few wealthy families once and a while invited us for a supper or something. Again, we weren't treated like persons, just like a schnora or something, there was even a few of them came Sunday afternoon with their cars and took us for an ice cream. So it wasn't that we were completely rejected, we weren't rejected but we weren't accepted either.

Z- And you felt that strongly?

T- I don't know if we really felt it, but that was the normal thing. We are here, there are there.

Z- So this girl, how come it ended? Who ended it?

T- I don't remember, I think I did, because I didn't see her after the visit with the family.

Z- You had no interest?

T- No, [laughs] I still remember once I was kissing her goodnight she says, "that's what they did in Europe?". I said, "Yes that's what we did in Europe". She was teaching me some English, but I felt not as comfortable as with the other girls with whom we came.

Z- So was there a difference in numbers between the immigrant men and women? Were there more single men than single women?

T- I don't think so. I don't remember. Besides the New World club, those that came together in the same boat or were in the same camp in Germany, they used to get together, go to a nightclub. I still remember those days you put 6 people in a cab, sitting on each others' lap.

Z- 6 in the back seat?

T- Yeah, yeah, and those who were married by then, because there were other people coming in different way, as tailors or . . . had relatives, and they were already married or something, so we used to play canasta, I remember those days. At least once a week at somebody's home.

Z- So talk to me about Fletcher's Field . .

T- I don't have much . . . I liked the mountain, not Fletcher-- . . . I didn't play soccer so . . . one of my . . . then I had a girlfriend who was . . . didn't come with us exactly the same time but was also a Hungarian girl.

Z- Survivor.

T- Yeah. She lived with a family on Clark St. behind Fletcher. That's all I know of Fletcher, because sometimes I walked home from Clark to Vanhorn. And as I say, mostly we . . .

J- The New World Club, where did you first meet? Can you remember where that was?

T- I tried to because, well, somebody asked me the same question, it's within the McGill ghetto, around Hutchinson. All I remember it was a corner building, just a two story building. It was a [1:03:08] on the bottom floor and we rented the top floor.

J- And you would do it for a week day evening?

T- Well mostly Sunday afternoon, and we also had outings. Well by then a few of us had cars, not me. So went to lake Champlain, or somewhere.

Z- So let's go back to this Hungarian girlfriend. How long did that last?

T- Well, we had a very interesting arrangement. She said she's never going to marry me, I said "alright", so until she got married.

J- You were friends.

T- Ah, a little more than that.

Z- Why didn't she want to marry you?

T- I don't know. I don't know, we had an affair . . . as a matter of fact after she got married she had to come back because her husband didn't have proper papers for her to be able to go to New York.

Z- She married another survivor?

T- Yeah. Yeah. And so she came back for another year, we continued our affair.

Z- She was married?

T- Yeah. And then she went back and that was the end of our . . . Actually, I married my . . . I mean I met my wife in the New World club. She came . . . she'd never lived in camp. She was hiding with her family in Budapest, then came to Germany. And when we were in Germany, Norway wanted to replace the lost Jews and they invited 1,000 Jewish families and her family was one of them who went to Norway, but then the Cold War started and Norway had a border, small border with the Soviet Union. Her father got very nervous, so they came here, the whole family.

Z- What year did they come?

T- '51 and unfortunately the father by then had cancer and died three months after they arrived here. So there was she and her sister and her mother. We met in the New World club.

Z- When? In '51 . . . ?

T- No, it was I think '52 or '53. First time I was more interested in her sister, who was a divorcee, but then I realized - my wife looked very young - that she wasn't that young, she was still 6 years younger than I was. And we started going out and then eventually we got married in 1954.

Z- And what did she do?

T- When I met her she was working as a clerk, but she ended up . . . she went to university, got a teachers certificate, the special ed. certificate, she spoke 6

languages. And before she retired she was teaching in a mental hospital for special kids.

Z- So when you got married where did you leave?

T- Where did I live? What happened is I got married in 1954 . . .

Z- Oh just wait. Were you living with the family up until then?

T- I was living with the family up until . . .no, no what happened was '48, '49, I lived with this Lipes family, then my friend with whom I came out, he had some problems with his lungs, so he was in the sanitarium.

Z- Did he have TB?

T- Yeah. I went I think three times to the medical building, under three different names. We did whatever we had to do. Then we wanted to live together, and the Lipes family didn't have room for us, so I left them, then roomed with this friend of mine. But I kept in touch with the Lipes family. As a matter of fact even when I was going out with my future wife, every Friday night we ate at the Lipes' and . . . I was lucky enough, because Mr. Lipes got sick and he had to quit his job, then they moved to Toronto, to their daughter. And I went to visit them, but before I went to visit them, I went around to the industry because the fruit industry was I think 100% Jewish, and I managed to get 3,000 dollars to help them out because they were very poor. He played the stock market and anyway . . .cards.

Z- So you raised money . . .

T- I was really happy to . . .

Z- Do that, yeah.

T- To do that . . .

Z- So where did you live when you moved out of the Lipes family?

T- A few blocks . . Stewart, on Stewart. We rented a room by a Hungarian family. There as husband, wife and their little daughter. And I lived there until I got married, which was in '54.

Z- And then where did you live?

T- Well what happened is that I had 3,000 dollars saved up by then and we had a choice to buy a car or down payment, in those days \$12,500 bungalows, and moved out to the Northern part . . It's called New Bordeaux. Carteville, where the Belmont Park was.



Z- So what are the cross streets?

T- Well, O'Brien . . . I don't think . . . they were just built . . . these . . .

Z- Yeah, I'm trying to think where Belmont Park was . . .

T- Well Belmont Park was at the river, I had to turn one block and I was on the bridge too. Actually, later on, when I moved there it was only one side of the road built, and I needed, because I was downtown, I needed a place near a railroad station. And we bought a house and we moved in, no furniture or nothing, two mattresses and that was it.

Z- This wasn't a Jewish area?

T- No. There was another Jewish family. But later on it became a Jewish area for a while. There was a synagogue, which was called the Young Israel of Mont Royal, almost, I thought about 400 families. Then slowly as they had children, they wanted to bring them to Jewish schools. It disappeared. By the time I moved here, which was only about four years ago or so on, there was only seven families left.

Z- So you lived there the whole time?

T- Yeah. [1:12:52]

Z- So religion? What role did it play after the war for you?

T- I became a much better Jew, but not religious.

Z- Culturally?

T- Culturally, yeah, yeah. I always say that Hitler made me a much better Jew than I was before. I belonged to the synagogue I went for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, or [1:13:20], but basically I wasn't interested in religion. As a matter of fact about . . . I can't remember . . . Anyway, just a year before my daughter met a religious boy, and eventually she married him, but a year before that my wife said "Let's turn kosher". I said "what do you mean kosher?". I came from a kosher home, because my mother insisted on having a kosher kitchen, my father and I had some privileges, that I could bring in a ham, but just at a certain point of the place, the home. We weren't allowed to carry it around. We had our own knife and everything. And, "You never had a kosher home", "I feel like". So, anyway, we turned kosher and everyone said after, "Sure you turned kosher because you daughter married . . .". "No, no I did it ahead of time". It so happened that my daughter is a very religious woman. She is more religious than the husband was. She has a [1:14:54:], and at the same time my son belongs to a . . . I don't call it synagogue . . . chapel, or whatever it is. Because you can go only by car. He lives in the States. So when they say "what about your religion?",

I say I'm like a swinger, I feel okay at my daughter's place, I feel okay at my son's place.

Z- So after you got married did your wife work?

T- She worked until my daughter was born.

Z- Because she wanted to or you need the extra money?

T- Well then we needed the extra money, but by then . . . what happened is actually I never finished my degree. When my daughter was born, you know, I had to . . . we lived that far so I usually got home three times a week only after 10 o'clock at night from the night school. So I couldn't continue it when my daughter was born. But by then I always say I was in position to hire someone who had a degree. Then she . . .

Z- What year was your daughter born?

T- '56. Then my wife said, "I want to go back to school". So she started to go at night. Then when the children were older she went back to day university. And once she got her masters, by then the children were . . .

Z- So you were able to manage by that point on one income.

T- Yeah.

Z- But you were here 10, 12 years, so things we a lot easier.

T- Yeah. Actually I worked for three different firms.

Z- As a bookkeeper?

T- No, by then I was a manager, I was a general manager.

Z- Of?

T- As I say, of three different firms, without changing my desk. A liability, I don't know . . . But anybody who bought the firm, they got me as a bonus.

Z- Was that the fruit industry?

T- Fruit importing. Mostly from the US and then later from all over the world. But I always worked in the administration, so I never had to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning like the rest . . .

Z- So can we go back to those early years here and talk about dating. So there were a lot of young single people here. So did people just hook up quickly and get married? Or was there a dating culture?

T- I think we got married quite quickly.

Z- But you didn't? Six years?

T- Yeah. Well, actually, you see life is funny. I came out on the same ship with a girl whom I dated in Germany. We came on the same ship. As a matter of fact when we were getting off the ship, I as a gentleman took her heavy suitcase and we got to the customs he opens up, he sees all these women's things [laughs all around]. Anyway, when we came to Montreal, I said, "You know something, I would like to get married as soon as possible". She said "No way, I'm going to live a little bit". She had a rich uncle from the States. So we got separated and I found my other girlfriend and my wife. Then my wife passed away 2001. This girl married my second cousin about 20 years later.

J- The German girl?

T- No Hungarian, well she was Romanian. As I say my wife passed away 2001, and her husband passed away 2005 I think. And in his will he appointed me as an executor. So we got together and she lived here. Just before I started . . . cause you know we became partners, but I didn't give my home up yet. Finally we decided that it's stupid to have two homes. She had Alzheimer, so we had to send her into a home. And then I sold my house and I bought where we used to live.

Z- Here?

T- Yeah.

Z- So this was her place?

T- Yeah, so life is . . .

Z- Funny.

T- Funny, yeah. Later on, you know, eventually we became part of the . . . especially after you got married, then children were born, nursery school. By then we became part of the society, or social life or whatever you want to call it.

Z- Of mainstream Canada?

T- Yeah.

Z- So that was 1960s.

T- Yeah. I think so, I don't remember exact dates, but most of the survivors married other survivors. Out of my gang maybe five of us married Canadian. We were the Greenh, you know, you couldn't help it.

Z- So was there difference? So your friends who married Canadians were they happy? Was it easier? Was it more difficult?

T- Well actually, somehow, divorce wasn't in vogue yet. The wives or the husbands learned Hungarian, or Polish. No I don't think there was much difference. Because by then we were all Canadians.

Z- So what changed? Why was it easier for the Canadian to think of the survivors differently?

T- I don't want to use the expression that we proved ourselves, that we are still normal. By then some of us were very successful in business.

Z- So they weren't ashamed of you anymore?

T- No, no, no. I can't tell you how many years it lasted, but it went gradually. Also, you see when we had children, then the children gave us a kind of a connector into the other Canadian society, because they were schoolmates and I would say three quarter of the parents were Canadian. And also, there are these waves. Those who came before the war, then those who came in the late 40s, like '47 and so on. That was the next group. Then they came, let's say the 56ers.

Z- From Hungary, yeah.

T- That was already again a different wave. . . They didn't come in groups. Then later on it was easier to get in. Also, by then people had relatives here and so on. Then they came from Poland, some managed to come from the Soviet Union. So they all had a different category and later all amalgamated.

J- This is a stupid question I think. . .

T- Then you'll get a stupid answer . . .

J- Okay, sure. In 1956, 57 when the new Hungarian came, the sort of second wave. You were already here, did you look at them as a bit weird?

T- Yeah, we were different, yeah.

J- What went through your mind?

T- Well first of all, we who came . . . I left Hungary in '46, I said how could they not see what's going to be under the communist system. And they managed to live . . . you know, you manage to live wherever it is. They . . . by then [1:27:19], you see they had more education people coming, because whatever you say about the communist system, if you wanted to study, you could. So a group of doctors, engineers. You know, they had the education, which we didn't have. So there was some difference.

Z- Yeah, that's an interesting point.

T- Yeah, there was some difference. The same way that, you see, when we came, alright I was a high school graduate, those days high school graduate was just like Emmy these days. But people still remember the previous generation who had no education at all except maybe some [1:28:20].