Memoirs of Holocaust Survivors Residing in South Florida

The Cap Maker's Son

Holocaust Survivor Victor Farkas's Memoir

As told to Bobbi Kaufman

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Republished by
The Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies
and The George Feldenkreis Program in Judaic Studies

THE GEORGE FELDENKREIS PROGRAM IN JUDAIC STUDIES
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
THE SUE AND LEONARD MILLER CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY JUDAIC STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Miami, Florida 2022

The information in this book is presented in good faith. The words in this book are the words of Victor Farcas as he recalled his personal experience in the Holocaust. This is his story and his truth.

On the cover: Victor Farkas with his parents in Debrecen, Hungary, at the time of his Bar Mitzvah, 1940.

Cover by Addyson Fonte
Design and art direction by Addyson Fonte and Erica Stern, M.D.

Proofreading by Linda Wank and Betsy McCormack

Back cover photo by Laszlo Selly

Printed in the United States of America

FOREWARD

"For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive future generations of a past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.…

"... I have tried to keep memory alive…I have tried to fight those who would forget. Because if we forget we are guilty, we are accomplices."

- Elie Wiesel

As time goes on, the number of Holocaust survivors alive today is rapidly dwindling. With their passing, the incomprehensible cataclysm known as The Holocaust, or Shoah, is fast morphing from a 'lived memory' into a 'historical memory'; from a personal experience of 'those who were there' into impersonal commemorative monuments and museums.

All too soon, there will be no one left to offer first hand testimony of what it was like to actually be there when all hell broke loose; all too soon, even those who knew and heard directly from the victims of the Nazis and their collaborators, will be gone.

It is, therefore, a matter of great urgency that we gather and preserve for future generations as much primary documentation and testimony as possible about the lives and experiences of those heroes who survived the Holocaust, managed to build new lives, and were willing to tell their stories.

Memoirs serve as a very important means of preserving these testimonies. Several years ago, Holocaust survivors began approaching Bobbi Kaufman, asking for help writing their memoirs, describing their lives before, during, and since the Holocaust. She began working with the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach (HMMB), writing the memoirs of Holocaust survivors who were docents and contributors to the memorial. This collaboration was instrumental in her developing a series of in-depth, book-length memoirs. Six books were completed and uploaded onto the HMMB website and the HMMB created lesson plans for each book to be used in teaching about the Holocaust.

Now, in collaboration with the HMMB, the Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies, and the George Feldenkreis Program in Judaic Studies of the University of Miami, the series has been named Memoirs of Holocaust Survivors Residing in Florida. The existing books were graphically redesigned and several new books have been added to the collection, with the objective of continuing to expand the series. The complete series will be freely available to the public in digital form on the HMMB and Miller Center and Feldenkreis Program websites.

Our hope is that this series will make a significant contribution to the growing literature of Holocaust survivors' memoirs and serve as a tribute to their ability to make new lives for themselves while never forgetting.

Dr. Haim Shaked
Director, The Miller Center and Feldenkreis Program
University of Miami

DEDICATION

In Memory of
The Six Million

For Future Generations
So It Should
Never Happen Again

—*Victor Farkas*

LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

We lived on the second floor of an apartment building at Szecsenyi Utca 23. The building was U shaped with an open courtyard in the middle. Our apartment door opened to the outside — to a narrow open corridor with a railing all the way around and a stairway on both ends. We had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen.In my parents' bedroom was a double bed and some cabinets where they kept their clothes — there weren't any closets. My grandfather had the second bedroom. He had his bed and a desk. Our maid, Rozsi, who had been living with us ever since I could remember, slept in the kitchen on a table we made into a bed for her at night. I slept on the sofa in the living room.

Our apartment was modern, we had electricity, hot water, a bathtub and a shower. We had indoor plumbing, not an outhouse. We had a radio. I remember as a very young child it was a big event when we got the radio. We listened to the British sending the news in Hungarian. It was fantastic. We did not have a telephone at home but we had one in my father's store. My father never had a car, but we never missed it.

The biggest thing was when I got a bicycle. That was a big event! It was one of the happiest days of my youth. With my friends we would bicycle to other cities, to places we couldn't go before. We would go to the beach to swim and

meet girls. With the boys I would go to soccer games. Sometimes in the afternoons I would go with friends and buy ice cream (there was no pizza). Our big game was to go to the girls' school — a middle school for Jewish girls — and make fun of them. We led a normal life. It was fun.

I had a girlfriend who lived in the same building we did. Her name was Iby. She came from the villages, but her parents sent her into Debrecen to go to a girls' school. We lived on the upper floor and she lived in a room her parents rented for her in an apartment on the ground floor. On dates in Debrecen we would go for walks and go to museums or to the park. When she went home during school summer vacation, we would send letters to each other every day. Once, when she went to visit relatives in Budapest, I got to visit my relatives in Budapest at the same time. There were dances at five o'clock in the afternoons in Budapest, so we would go dancing. It was a big love affair! There was a lot of kissing. (Sex didn't exist!!) When the war came we were separated.

Another big thing was the streetcar. My parents got me a monthly pass for the streetcar so in the summer, when I had nothing to do, I could go to the swimming pools. I had a cabin where I could dress and undress. My parents hired someone to teach me how to swim. There were no problems — Jews and Gentiles all mixed together. There was freedom. It was fantastic.

There was anti-Semitism in Hungary, but because I lived in a Jewish neighborhood, I did not experience anti-Semitism as a young child. We lived very close to the Jewish school. Our building had two entrances: one from the main street and one from the back. From the back I would walk maybe twenty steps and I was in school. All our neighbors were Jewish. The only Gentile I knew was the janitor. I was warned to stay away from groups of Gentile boys because they were rough. Once, I remember a military man catching me by the neck and saying, "Are you Jewish?" I said yes. He said, "Why are you here?" Then he gave me a lecture on Judaism and Jews. Finally, I ran away from him and went home. But there was no other problem.

My father's family was from Sátoraljaújhely, Hungary. My father's brothers were Adolf and Sandor. His sister was Ilus.

My father, Ignatz Farkas, was a cap maker. He had a store and a factory with six machines making caps for wholesale and retail. The store was at Szecsenyi Utca 3 on the same street where we lived about two blocks away. My father's store was quite decent. It had a big glass window in front and a metal sign saying Izsak Farkas Sapka Uzlet, Izsak Farkas Hat Business, hanging on the outside of the door facing the street. We had two or three people working for us. Behind the counter were shelves where we displayed the different styles and different colors of caps.

Sometimes people wanted a cap to match their suit and we would make the cap. We measured their head and they picked the style they wanted and then we made it. Some of our business came from the Jewish gymnasium. All the students had to wear uniforms and my father made the caps for the uniforms. Most of the caps we made had a visor but we also made caps with ear muffs and fur caps like the Russians wore. We made them from lamb fur — nothing too expensive. Knowing how to work with fur helped me after the war when I got a job with a furrier in Canada.

My father was a modern man. He was not Orthodox — he only wore a yarmulke when he went to shul, but curiously, he wore a kittle (a ceremonial robe worn by orthodox men) on Pesach. On Sunday afternoons my father would play cards with other men who belonged to an organization of Jewish business people. I used to go at six o'clock to pick him up to bring him home for dinner with us. Those were good walks for me because it was on those walks from the card room to our home that I got close to my father. I considered him my best friend. We had a good life. I was happy.

My father used to sing Hungarian Gypsy songs. He loved Gypsy violin music. I remember one night when my father, his brother, and I were coming from Budapest to Debrecen by train and the two of them were singing Hungarian songs. I didn't sing — no talent!

When my parents would go to a restaurant my father would always ask the Gypsy musicians to play. Many years later when I visited Hungary I asked the musicians to play some of those songs I remembered. My father's brother, Sandor, who lived near us, played the violin. When he died at age 30 or 35, everyone in the family said, "Victor will inherit that violin." I inherited the violin but I could never master playing it. My teacher told me, "Best to give it up. Play the piano." I never learned to play the piano either.

My mother, Irene Deutsch Farkas, was from a small farming town in Hungary called Napkor. She had two sisters, Malvin and Juci, and two brothers, Andor and Miklos. My uncle Andor never settled into a profession. Throughout his life he was a drifter, who often lived with his siblings. The best thing about him was he always had pockets full of candy for us children. When I did poorly in school, my parents would warn me, "Do better or you'll end up like Andor!"

My mother was a hard working woman, but she enjoyed life. She worked in our store and she worked in the factory when my father went to sell goods or buy material. She mostly looked after the customers — my father was the money man.

My mother was a good Hungarian cook. We had a maid, but my mother did the cooking. Every week, for Friday night, she would bake a challah and make *cholent* (a stew

of meat, potatoes and beans) for Saturday's meal. The maid would take the *cholent* to the bakery which was the second building away from ours and leave it there until Saturday when I would go with her to pick it up. In the *cholent* there was always an egg. (My mother taught my wife how to make *cholent* and we eat it even to this day.) Every Friday my mother went to get a fresh fish to make gefilte fish. I remember the fish was still jumping on the table because it was so fresh. She made gefilte fish fantastic! She made it with sugar. Hungarians make it with sugar — a big difference from Polish. I remember my father's mother used to come to visit us. When she would help with the cooking my father would say to my mother, "Irene, you didn't make this! This is not your cooking." My grandmother would get very upset.

Friday nights, after Shabbas dinner, my parents and I would go for a walk in the city and stop for an ice cream or something sweet. We went to this small, pretty store that was owned by a man also named Farkas, but he was no relation. Most people came to buy and take out, but we would sit at one of the tables and have our ice cream or some cake.

My maternal grandfather, Peter Deutsch, lived at our house as long as I can remember. He was alone; his wife, my grandmother, died before I was born. He was a quiet man who smoked a long pipe — the longest I had ever

seen. It was so long that when he fell asleep with it hanging from his mouth it almost touched the floor. I had a very good relationship with my grandfather. My grandfather was a very orthodox man. Because of him I became very observant and I wanted our home to be one hundred percent kosher. (I was kosher until the ghetto — then never again.) As far as I remember there was never a bad word between my mother and father or a disagreement about my grandfather living with us. When my mother and grandfather didn't want me to understand what they were saying, they spoke Yiddish. I learned some Yiddish later, in the camps.

I went to four years of Orthodox elementary school (even though my parents were Conservative) then to four years of Jewish gymnasium. I did not want to go on to higher education — I wanted to be a cap maker like my father. I did not go to *cheder* (Hebrew school) because in *cheder* the lessons were in Yiddish and I spoke only Hungarian. My parents hired a private teacher for me to learn Talmud and Gemara and to prepare for my Bar Mitzvah. The teacher was the janitor in the elementary school. I enjoyed learning with him.

Every Saturday I had to go to shul with my class from the Jewish gymnasium. Our Hebrew teacher would lead the service. Sometimes, before or after these services, I would go over to be with my grandfather at the orthodox shul. Later on, my father started to go to shul with me. He wasn't religious — he did it for me. A great influence on my life

was our rabbi, Dr. Paul Weiss. As the situation became more and more difficult for the Jews, he was the only one who spoke out and tried to warn us of the coming danger. He tried to interest us in going to Palestine.

My Bar Mitzvah was in the synagogue in 1940. When I was called to the Torah, the rabbi made a speech and I started to cry. I was very sensitive and cried very easily. I remember what the rabbi said, in Hungarian, when he saw me crying, "When you plant with tears you reap with a smile." He tried to make me happy. Afterward we had lunch at our house. There was some schnapps. The rabbi came, my aunts and uncles and some cousins came. I don't remember if my father's mother who lived in Budapest was there. My father's sister could not be there because she was pregnant with her son who lives in New York now. It's easy for me to know his age — he is thirteen years younger than me!

I was not a good student. Spelling was my worst subject; I never knew how to spell — to this day — in any language. In school, Hungarian was the first language and German was the second language. We also learned Latin. The German came in very handy later on. They taught us one thing in the Jewish schools: You are a Hungarian who happens to be Jewish. That was their philosophy. I was a proud Hungarian.

We had a teacher in the Jewish gymnasium, the physical education teacher — a man named Karoly Karpati. To this day I think he was my best teacher. In 1932 he won the silver medal in the Olympics in Los Angeles and in 1936 he was a gold medal winner in wrestling in the Berlin Olympics. Because he was Jewish, Hitler wouldn't shake hands with him. After the Berlin Olympics he became a teacher in our school. Because of him, some of us boys took on wrestling. At the end of the school year I competed in the wrestling tournament and came in second. I participated in as many physical activities as I could including wrestling and boxing.

Gentile students were taken out from school once a month for military education. Jewish students were not given military training. For a couple of hours once a month, on Tuesday afternoons, the Jewish students were taken out to work, whatever work the gendarmes wanted us to do. We would clean the streets — all kinds of manual labor. That's when I first heard, "the only good Jew is a dead Jew."

I did not like school. I wanted out! In the afternoons after school I would go home for lunch then go to our store, and whenever I had a chance, I would go to the factory trying to learn to be a cap maker. One day, my father took me aside and said, "You want to be a cap maker? I'm going to send you to a guy who has a cap factory. I don't want you to learn from me because as the boss's son you will be spoiled here."

In 1942, when I was fifteen years old, he sent me to Budapest to learn to be a cap maker. I worked there as an apprentice for six months. I would be with my father when he would come to Budapest on business. Our relationship became very close. I felt a great deal of love and trust from him toward me.

While I was in Budapest I stayed with my relatives, mostly my cousins Gabi and Agi, my favorites. For dinner I alternated between different aunts and uncles. We lived well, we were happy.

I graduated as a cap maker and went to work in my father's store. But my father wanted me to be more than just a cap maker. His dream was that I would go to Vienna — that was the great city! But I wanted to stay in Hungary — I was a good Hungarian, a proud Hungarian — until the war.

The only sad part of my young life was when my father was called into the labor camps. In Hungary, people of a certain age had to go into the army. Jews were not called into the army — they were called to work in labor camps instead. My father wore the regular Hungarian military uniform. He would be gone for a couple of months then they would send him home. The next year and the year after he would be called. He would be away for months then home for a while. When he was in a labor camp close by to where we lived, my mother would make food and I would go on my bicycle and bring it to him.

Prior to World War I, Hungary's borders included parts of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania. With the end of the war, the collapse of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the Versailles Treaty in 1918, Hungary lost much of its land. The new Hungarian government, led by Kun Bela, a Jew, was a communist regime. The country was "liberated" from communism by Admiral Horthy, who established a new government. Laws came out that limited the number of Jews who can go to university. We said to ourselves, "This we could accept. It's not the end of the world." Another law was Jews could not own a store; stores had to have a Gentile name on the front. One of my father's friends, whom he paid, lent his name for our store. My father's name, Izsak Farkas Sapka Uzlet, came off the metal sign and his friend's name went on.

When Hitler came into power in Germany, Horthy, who was a Nazi sympathizer, showed his loyalty to Hitler by enacting harsher measures against the Jews. In return, Hitler returned parts of Czechoslovakia and Romania to Hungary. I was in high school at the time. My whole school, led by our Jewish teachers, marched down the main street in Debrecen carrying torches and banners celebrating this joyous occasion and cheering and demanding the return of even more of the land we lost in World War I. Our teachers neglected to tell us, however, that at that very moment Jews were being beaten and killed by the Hungarian army. We were first and foremost Hungarian. This we were taught in the Jewish school.

With the beginning of World War II, things began changing in Hungary. Later, when the Germans came in, the Jews had to wear a yellow star on their clothing. My father had to wear a yellow arm band on his uniform to indicate that he was Jewish. We had to accept this — it was bad, but it was not terrible. I compare it to a loaf of salami — you cut a slice, a thin slice, another slice, and you still have a loaf.

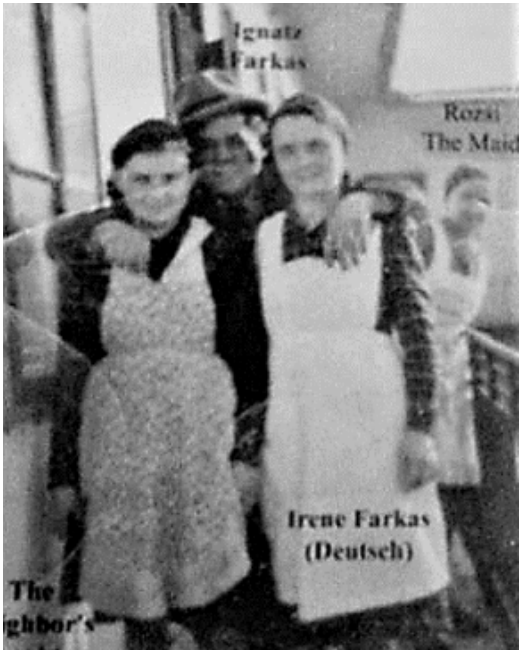
People from Czechoslovakia were coming to Hungary in 1942 to hide from the Germans. One man came Friday night after synagogue and had dinner with us. We asked him where he stayed and what did he did all day. The man said, "I found the best way for me to hide so as not to be caught by the police is I go to the police station, I sit down on the bench and wait. I sit there with a piece of paper in my hand like I am waiting for someone." We still had relative freedom compared to what was happening in Poland and Czechoslovakia. When they told us stories about the ghettos and concentration camps we thought, "Not here. This cannot happen in Hungary." I never worried about what was going to be even though we had all kinds of signs that things were going to change and get worse.

On March 18, 1944, my mother was in the hospital in Budapest having a kidney removed. On March 19, 1944, the Germans marched into Hungary. My father was in Budapest with my mother and I was home with my grandfather working in our store. Watching the Nazis march through

the streets and listening to the sound of their boots hitting the pavement was a frightening experience... we didn't know what to expect. My father called to assure me that my mother was fine and he would be bringing her home with him in a couple of days. As soon as he brought her home, he was called into the labor camp. This was the last time our family was together before the establishment of the ghetto.

My parents at their wedding. I believe my father's sister, who lived in Budapest, had this picture and gave it to me after the war.

From the left: A neighbor, my father, my mother, Rozsi, ourmaid, outside our apartment's front door.



My father in his Hungarian military uniform. All Hungarian men received military training, except for Jews who were sent to work in labor camps instead. During the war, Jews were required to wear a yellow arm band on their uniforms. My father took his off for this picture. The picture was taken on the walkway outside our apartment's front door in the early 1940's. My father always had a big stomach – I inherited that from him!

Me as a child in Hungary. c.1935

With my favorite cousins, Gabor and Agnes Deutsch. c. 1939. They were like a brother and sister to me. They survived the war in Budapest and moved to Australia where they died of old age.

THE GHETTO

Hungary was the last country in Europe to be occupied by the Germans. Their goal was to get rid of all the Jews. Because it would be more difficult to round up all the Jews in big cities than in the suburbs, they concentrated on gathering all the Jews in the smaller cities into ghettos. Many people in Budapest were not taken to ghettos or to camps. News of the ghettos was spread in the newspapers and on the radio. Everybody knew.

The Germans designated an area of our city to be a ghetto. Ten thousand people were moved into the ghetto. They built a wall around the area and had Hungarians guarding the gates. We were fortunate enough to live in the area that became the ghetto and to stay in our own apartment. Two or three couples moved in with us. My father wasn't there, so I moved into the bedroom with my mother. People took over the living room and my grandfather also took in some people. It was very crowded.

Even though my mother was recovering from the kidney operation, she was pretty good about everything. She was more worried about me than about herself. I remember my mother was very upset to give up her wedding ring. It must have been because the Germans were demanding everyone give up their gold and valuables.

We knew the people who came from Czechoslovakia and Poland had been transported out from ghettos. We knew the goal was to make our city free of Jews. So we knew we were not going to live in the ghetto forever. We knew we were going to go — we just didn't know where.

Unexpectedly, my father got a permit to come home for a couple of days. Our home was in the middle of Hungary; the labor camp was in the southern end of Hungary near what was formerly called Yugoslavia. I don't know how he got home; he may have traveled by train.

My father did his best to prepare our family. He had a jacket made for me, thinking a jacket would be very practical because we did not know where we were going and what kind of weather to expect. When he gave it to me to try on, he explained about the buttons. He told me that before he went to the labor camp he bought five gold Napoleon coins, had them covered with the same material as the jacket and sewn onto the jacket. The reason was for me to have something of value which nobody would know. He said I can sell them if I need food or money.

Under the ground floor of our apartment building was a basement where everybody had storage space. My father took me down to the basement of our apartment building and showed me where he was going to bury, under the hard-packed dirt floor of our storage space, in a metal box, the very few valuable pieces of jewelry we had. My mother had very little: a pin, a necklace, something she

wore on the front of her dress. She was never keen on jewelry. My father buried his gold pocket-watch with its gold chain in the box. Whatever he had he put in there.

Shortly after he buried the jewelry, my father was called away to the labor camp again. Before he left he asked me, "Please, if you are shipped out, write me a postcard saying where you are so I would know. In the labor camp we have a postal address and I don't know where you are going to be. Whenever you have a chance send me a postcard so I will know." I did send him the postcard, and to this day I believe it may have led to his death. Before he left he said to me, "I know you are smoking and you try not to smoke in front of me. Please don't do that. If you do something, do it in front of me." This was the last conversation I ever had with my father.

The Jewish organization was in charge of the ghetto. They gave the orders they got from the Germans. Daily bulletins were published by the committee telling us all the new laws and restrictions. They assigned us jobs, work to do. Most of the time in the ghetto I was helping people to move from one place to another. We were given some mattresses to bring to people so they would have something to sleep on. I remember carrying a lot of mattresses. On one work assignment I saw Jewish homes being ransacked. People were taking the furniture and all the belongings of the Jews. No one stopped them.

I also remember the day when Debrecen was bombed. There was a German Gentile family that had moved to Debrecen from Germany. They left Germany because there was so much bombing in Germany they thought they would be safer in Hungary. I don't know how, but the only bomb ever to hit Debrecen was where they lived and they died. We, from the ghetto, were asked to come out and bury them. We buried a lot of bodies. That was one job I remember.

The biggest disappointment of that time in the ghetto was when people I knew — friends, acquaintances — all looked away and crossed to the other side of the street when they saw me guarded by gendarmes and wearing my yellow star. People I knew didn't want to show that they knew me. That hurt the most. The Germans were reducing us and teaching others that we are no longer as human as they are. We were not in the ghetto for very long — maybe a month.

THE BRICK FACTORY

It was very, very early in the morning when the Hungarian gendarme came into the courtyard at the bottom of our building and yelled out, "Jews, get out! Pack up..." They made sure we moved fast enough. We each packed one suitcase, and we left.

We took with us some warm clothing: a few jackets, coats, raincoats, and a pair of shoes. We each took one suitcase. Everything else was left behind — the silver, the photographs — we were hoping to come back home. My mother always locked the door at night, she never went to bed without checking if the door was locked. I wonder if she locked the door this time.

Everybody in the ghetto was taken at the same time — all ten thousand people. We were loaded onto trucks to be transported to a brick factory near the railroad tracks. It was a bad trip. Once we saw where we were, we realized that things were getting worse and worse for us.

The brick factory was terrible, the worst place to be. There were no sanitary facilities — we couldn't shower or even wash up. We had nowhere to go. We slept on the dirty floor. Families tried to stay together as much as they could. My mother and I slept together on the dirty floor with my grandfather, my aunts and uncles and their children.

I remember very well seeing some very religious men with big white beards, true, just people, and thinking, "What is the future for us? Where is God when He sees this? All these people, all these children who didn't do anything wrong in their lives. And nobody can help us." This is when I decided that I would eat food that was not kosher.

We were in the brick factory maybe three or four days when we heard we would be relocated again. I welcomed the news.

The first group selected to leave included families with at least five children, as well as Zionists and Communists. Those who remained were divided into two groups. Because my uncle was part of the Jewish Committee helping divide the groups, he was to go on the last train. He begged us to wait for the last train with him thinking that after so many people were gone there would be more room, more food to eat, better conditions. But I had had enough. I was impatient, I was always impatient. I didn't think any place could be worse than the brick factory.

THE TRAIN

Two or three days after the first transport left, the second train came in. I convinced my mother and my grandfather to get on that train. Thousands of people were pushed onto that train. No one was taking names or checking lists, only counting the number of people. There were about 95 people in our cattle car.

We were given a little water and a pail for sanitary purposes. We tried to sit on our suitcases, but there was no room to sit. Because there was no room to move around at all, I did not know who was at the other end of our car. We had no idea where we were going, but those who were standing at the small window kept us informed of the names of the stations we passed.

Once, I got next to the little window when the train was stationary. When a Hungarian came to the window I asked

him, "Do you have any food available to sell?" He said, "I have bread. What have you got?" I said, "I have a gold button." He said, "Let me see it." I showed it to him. He said, "Give me the gold and I'll give you the bread."

At first we all tried to help each other, but there wasn't much to share. People stopped being so nice to each other. Then the philosophy became you do what you can for yourself to survive. There was not enough water. That's when people started passing away.

We were on that train for three or four days. The only time the door was opened was when we reached the border of Austria. We got fresh air, new drinking water and a new pail for sanitary purposes. Also, the door was left open a few inches to give us some fresh air.

We didn't know it at the time, but the trains from Debrecen were headed to Auschwitz. When the Allies bombed the railroad tracks, the first train was stopped on the tracks for a day or two before our train arrived behind it. When it was determined we couldn't go any further, they turned us around and we went to Vienna.

After the war we learned that the Austrian government had requisitioned workers for their factories and farms and some Jews were allocated for that purpose. Since our transport, the second transport, and the first transport with all the children, could not get through to Auschwitz, we were sent to Austria. That is why many children from

Debrecen survived. The third transport, originally intended for Austria, was sent to Auschwitz instead. The third transport carried my uncle and his family to their deaths in Auschwitz.

VIENNA

We arrived outside of Vienna in June 1944. When our train stopped, the first thing we had to do was unload all the dead people from the cattle cars. The first transport from Debrecen arrived in Vienna a couple of hours after we did. They had been in the cattle car for five or six days by then. It was a sad sight to see all the people who were dead. Many of the dead were children.

Next we had to line up. About 150 of us were selected and put in one group. My mother, my grandfather, and I were kept together. We were loaded into trucks and moved to a camp outside the city, Gross-Enzersdorf, in the 24th District.

When we arrived at Gross-Enzersdorf, we were sent into a big barrack where there were beds lined up side by side. We were each given a bed. It was a fairly good bed with a blanket and a pillow. We were all in one big room. My mother, my grandfather and I had three beds which we divided, or separated, for some privacy by hanging blankets on each side. Men and women were not separated; families stayed together. The youngest children were fourteen or fifteen. There were no babies.

One of the Jews from our town, he was in the needle trade, became the director of the Jews in the camp. A German or Austrian man was the manager. There were no guards or soldiers watching us.

There were showers in the building provided for everybody — men and women separately. There were sanitary facilities. The only clothes we had were the ones we were wearing from home and what we had in our suitcases — including my jacket with the gold buttons. My mother would wash our clothes. The kitchen and eating facilities were separate. Sometimes my mother was assigned to work in the kitchen. Other times she worked in the fields picking strawberries. Food was a major item on our agenda — to eat as much and whatever we can. We were required to wear the yellow star on our clothes, but we were allowed to move around freely within the camp.

Once, when I had a toothache, I was given a pass to go to a Jewish dentist in a labor camp in another area of Vienna. It was very nice of them to let me go and it was very unusual. In the first transport from our ghetto there were families with many children and one of the fathers was a dentist. He must have had some of his dental tools with him. I went on the streetcar wearing my jacket with the yellow star. I wasn't afraid at all. I was very excited to see some of the city of Vienna — that was a dream of all young people. Nobody spoke to me and I didn't speak to anybody. I think one guy gave me little pieces of cigarette to smoke.

When I got off the streetcar I saw this store where they were selling items like cigarettes, candies, and postcards. It was then that I was able to get a postcard to send to my father telling him where my mother and I were. I sent it to him at his address at the labor camp in Yugoslavia. I wrote only a few lines to tell my father our address. I was worried that it was going to go through a censor before it got to him so I didn't want to go into details about what my mother and I were doing.

I made a good friend in the camp in Gross-Enzersdorf, a friend like I never had before. In those conditions people become very good friends. His name was Jancsi Szekely. We had gone to the Jewish gymnasium together in Debrecen. Our fathers were good friends, too. In the camp we worked together. We had girlfriends — we did whatever we could to alleviate the hardship of our lives. Jancsi was very good at writing satirical song lyrics. At night, for entertainment, Jancsi and I would sit outside and talk, tell stories, sing his songs, and recite poetry. We knew the poems because we had to memorize them in school. Endre Ady was our favorite poet because we felt his life was very much like ours. He was not Jewish, but he too was forced to leave Hungary. Some of the poetry was very touching. Reciting Jancsi's songs and reciting poetry helped maintain our sanity.

My job ninety-nine percent of the time was to load and unload grain, corn and potatoes from the trucks and carry it to the warehouse. Other times we took it from the warehouse and loaded it onto the trucks. This was a little bit outside of the camp. This food was not for the Jews. We

stole potatoes and corn and brought them to the camp kitchen. The camp fed us, but this additional food that we stole helped us have enough — relatively enough — food.

One day, I had another job. There was a baker in the city who asked the camp to send people there to cut wood for his ovens. I was one of the guys picked to go cut the wood. As I was cutting the wood, the baker was watching me and then he started to talk to me. He spoke German and I spoke German. He said to me, "What did you do when you were at home? What kind of a life did you have?" I told him I was a cap maker. His eyes lit up. He said, "Can you make a cap?" I said, "Yes." He said, "My son had a suit made and we have some material left over — can you make him a cap from that material so he will have a matching suit and cap?" I said, "Yes, I can." He made an arrangement that on Sunday I would go to his house where he had a sewing machine and I would make his son a cap. I went, I measured him, and at the end of the day the cap was made. He was so happy with the work I did that he took three loaves of bread and gave them to me. Three loaves of bread was a fortune for us at that time. I asked him, "Please, could you be good enough to slice it because we have no way to slice it, and toast it so my mother can save it?" He did it for me and I took it home. My mother was very happy with the three loaves of bread. We put them away for a rainy day. The rainy day came not long after.

Every morning at around ten or eleven o'clock we could see the Allies bombing Vienna. We weren't worried that

they were going to bomb us because it would be worth it in order to bring the end of the war faster.

We knew we were in some kind of camp, a restricted area, but I don't recall seeing any guards or there being any real fence around the camp. It was almost impossible to believe this was a concentration camp. We were well taken care of. It was pretty good. Nobody ever thought about escaping. Where were we going to go? We had no money. The only clothes we had had the Jewish star on them. We knew we would be captured. We were just hoping that this is the place where we were going to wait for the war to end and then go home. I was lucky that the railroad tracks were bombed and I ended up in Austria, not Auschwitz.

THE MARCH

March 1945, as the Russians were approaching and the Germans didn't want us to be liberated by the Russians, they started moving us out of Gross-Enzersdorf. They came into our barracks in the dark and told us we had to get out. My mother, grandfather, and I packed our suitcases. They were making us hurry, hurry, hurry. They wanted to make sure we went fast enough so we would be out of the city before daylight. At the time we didn't know where we were going, but we found out later that all the Jews from all the camps in Vienna were being marched to Mauthausen concentration camp.

In our group there were maybe one hundred people. I believe my father was in one of the many groups marching. I believe he went to Vienna looking for us and was caught and sent to Mauthausen.

There were very few guards. I think there was one in the front and a couple in the back. My mother, grandfather, and I tried escaping in the very early hours of this march. We didn't try to run away, we just held back, went slowly, slowly, to the far back thinking that at the end we would walk away. But we never got that far. As soon as we came to the end, the guards made sure we understood that we had to go forward fast. Determined to try again, we stayed behind and tried to hide in an abandoned school building. It did not take long before we were discovered and again rushed to join another group of Jews on the march. Unfortunately, my grandfather was not able to keep up the pace and we were not allowed to slow down, so this was the last time I saw my grandfather.

The picture remains in my mind forever, the grandfather who lived with us ever since I could remember, a quiet undemanding man, with a small white beard, looking at my mother and me, while we were forced to run, being chased by the butt of a gun, his eyes saying goodbye and asking why? To this day I cannot forgive myself for leaving him behind and not doing something for him. For a very long time thereafter I hoped that one day I would find him alive and he would forgive me for abandoning him. This must have been very difficult for my mother; she has never spoken about it.

Later on, once we were out on the highway there was no rush. Some days we moved faster, some days slower. We were on the main highway heading west marching 140 miles to Mauthausen. It was cold, but I don't remember suffering from the cold. The only time we got into trouble was if we had to go to the bathroom. There were no facilities. Sometimes we were able to get into one of the houses or one of the factories which were on the way and use the bathroom. Sometimes we just relieved ourselves the best we could.

We slept next to the highway, either in peoples' gardens or sometimes in houses. There were occasions when they put us into some buildings where we could sleep. There was no facility to take a shower or anything like that. Once in a while, very seldom, we were given food.

We had the three loaves of toasted bread from the baker. Sometimes the people who lived near the road gave us some food. One night we stayed in the yard of a building which belonged to a butcher. I went to the butcher and said I wanted some food. I gave him a gold button from my jacket and he gave me some meat. It turned out to be horse meat. I think it was cooked, but I'm not sure. I was a little upset by it, but we needed food.

Most of the time my mother and I were talking about what we thought was going to happen, what we were going to eat, where we were going to sleep. I thought about putting my suitcase down and leaving it, but my mother wouldn't let me.

The march went on for two or three weeks. There was one time when I was fed up and tired and I wanted to give up. I even went over to a guy who was a German soldier and I said, "I am tired. I can't make it anymore." He looked at me and he smiled and said, "See the building across the street — that's where you are going to stay tonight." We went in and laid down on the floor. It was close to the end.

MAUTHAUSEN

We resumed marching west on the highway with the Danube River on one side and mountains on the other. As we got closer to our destination, more and more soldiers guarded us. Then, late in the afternoon, a detachment of SS surrounded us. They were dressed head to toe in black uniforms with shinning buttons. They looked more ominous than ever against the darkening sky. With their guns pointing at us, they ordered us to line up. We thought this was going to be the end. I will never forget seeing them draw their weapons and hearing the click as they loaded them. I was certain that as we were ordered to march, we would be shot down on the banks of the river. I whispered to my mother that at the sound of the first shot we should jump into the river and try to swim and save ourselves that way.

But there were no gunshots. The SS men were there for just one reason — to make sure we would go in an orderly fashion; that we didn't try to run away as we marched through the

village of Mauthausen. A short while later, as we were marching up the mountain road, we arrived at a gate of Mauthausen. It was now March or April 1945. The war was coming to an end, but we did not know it.

When we got to the camp they did not take a name or a number — nothing. My name was not registered there until after the war. We were just told to go into a building and stay there. Some prisoners greeted us. We heard from them this was a concentration camp. They told us, "You can expect that any of the luggage you have with you will be taken away. If you have any food left — eat it or give it away because you will never see it again."

The first thing they did was shave us. They shaved just our head. Then we were told to strip off all our clothes and that we would be going to shower. We threw our clothes down and they took everything away to the garbage — including my jacket with the gold buttons. The suitcases were taken away, too. I'm sure they went through them looking for anything valuable. After the shower we got striped prison uniforms. I don't remember what happened with the shoes. They must have given us some kind of shoes. Then they told us, "Women on one side, men on the other side," and they directed us to barracks. This was the first time I was separated from my mother.

I was assigned to a barrack and a bed. I was lucky enough to get an upper bed. There were already two other people assigned to the same bed. As more and more people were brought into the camp, four people were assigned to each bed.

The guards were all SS, but kapos, who were prisoners like us, were in charge of the barracks. They believed that if they were cruel and heartless to their fellow prisoners, the Nazis would spare their lives. The kapo in our barrack had one arm — one arm was missing. He was the toughest son-of-a-gun ever. He was a Jew from Poland who had been in the camp for several years already and resented the Hungarian Jews who had just arrived. He carried a stick with him at all times and would beat up anybody who got in his way. He wanted to prove to the Germans how wonderful he was for them. He was the one, and only one, we wanted to catch after the liberation to kill him. But he got away faster than we could find him. Nobody ever found him.

There was nothing for us to do except to make sure that we cleaned out the barracks each morning. Cleaning out the barracks meant taking out the people who died — taking them outside. There were a whole lot of people whose dead bodies were taken out there. I don't know whether they were buried or what. Then they gave us some food and we were allowed to stay in the fresh air for one hour.

They would line us up outside the barrack to count us. I don't know why — they didn't know our names, they didn't know who was who, they didn't know if we were there or not. They just counted us. I remember one day I had to go to the bathroom in the worst way. We couldn't get out of the line. We were cold, miserable, but we had to wait out there.

We were full of lice. That was awful. We played games — we pulled off a handful of lice from our body and would guess if we had an even or an odd number of lice in our hand. It was a stupid game, but we had to do something to keep sane.

Each day we got some soup and some bread. We did not have a bowl of our own — they gave us a bowl when we lined up for food. I don't recall a table or a chair. I think we just sat on the ground to eat. Everybody was slowly going down — lack of food, lack of sanitation. We did what we could.

People were dying mostly from malnutrition. Most of the people who were in Mauthausen had been there for a long time and had been put to work. Hard work, little food and all kinds of sickness — people were dying right, left and center. We were fortunate that we did not have to work; we had nothing to do. By the time we got there, there were so many people they didn't know what to do with us. I spent most of my time in my bed trying to stay away from our kapo.

My mother was in a barrack for women which was separated from the men's barracks by a fence. I remember meeting my mother every day and talking. I was on one side of the fence and she was on the other side. One day, walking to see my mother, I found my jacket with the gold buttons in a pile of garbage. Amazingly, all the gold buttons were intact.

One time, everybody got a package from the Swiss Red Cross. At night I felt a hand reaching over my head trying to take away some of the goodies I got — another person trying to survive.

LIBERATION

The war was coming to an end. The Germans knew what was coming. We didn't. In early May, the SS left the camp and civilian Austrian authorities took over. On May 5, 1945, the Allies liberated Mauthausen.

I was standing at the fence talking to my mother, when she noticed some activity up the hill and said, "Look what's happening — maybe the Americans are here." Sure enough, I looked up and saw a van with the Red Cross painted on it and two jeeps with American soldiers driving into the camp. The realization that the nightmare was over was very slow to set in.

The first thing the Americans did was put DDT all over everybody to get rid of the lice. The whole camp looked like it was covered with snow.

Some people went out of the camp mostly looking for food. When they came back, the American soldiers took all the food and burned it on a bonfire next to the gate. Of course we didn't understand why they did this. We didn't

know that many people who ate too much too soon died. Fortunately, the Americans were smart enough to make sure we did not eat too much. They gave us the proper amount of food. They knew what to give us. They gave us some clothes and I had my jacket.

My mother and I did not go out of the camp. We stayed in the camp until we could arrange a way to go home to Hungary.

An American soldier asked me if I would like to come work in the office to help register the Hungarian survivors and begin their repatriation. I went to work in the office. I enjoyed working with him. I enjoyed doing something. He wanted to persuade my mother and me to not go back to Hungary, but to go to America, to wait for our turn to go to America. He explained to us that there were four zones of occupation now and Hungary was in the Russian zone. The Russian zone was not the same as the American zone. He tried to tell us the difference. We said we wanted to go home because we wanted to see my father — we wanted to know what happened to him. Finally, when our American friend saw I would not change my mind, he arranged passage for a few of us on a train back to Hungary. He gave us a backpack with some clothes and some food and a paper saying we were liberated at Mauthausen.

How did I survive the Holocaust? I survived because I was lucky. That's all. Simple.

The Germans march into Hungary.

The gate at Mauthausen.

The liberation of Mauthausen, May 1945.

RETURN TO HUNGARY

The train ride was unpleasant. As soon as the train got into the Russian zone we realized the Russians were not our friends. At nighttime, the Russians would jump on the train and rape any woman they could lay their hands on. My mother was forty-four years old. So, each evening before nightfall, to protect my mother, we jumped off the train and spent the night sleeping in many of the same places we did when we were marching to Mauthausen. We were sleeping on the floors or in the gardens of the homes and buildings along the way. In the daytime, we would take another train. We did this twice or three times to protect my mother.

When we finally arrived in Budapest, we spent the first night sleeping on the floor of the train station where we felt a little more protected. During the night I was awakened by someone jerking my backpack from under my head. It was one of our liberators — a Russian soldier.

The first thing we did was to go to where Uncle Miklos and my cousins Gabi and Agi lived. To our great relief, they were alive. My uncle gave me some money and helped us prepare to go to Debrecen.

My mother and I took the train to Debrecen. The biggest disappointment when we got back was we had nothing. Nothing, absolutely nothing. The apartment we lived in was occupied by others. The cap store was empty. The store

was empty, the factory was empty — there was nothing there, not one machine, nothing. We had no money, no home, no furniture, nothing. The only clothes we got back were the few pieces my father had left at a dry cleaning store. This was the only decent act I can recall any Hungarian doing for us — returning what was rightfully ours.

My parents had a friend who had a furniture factory across the street from our store. He knew my mother and I had nowhere to stay so he gave us a room to stay in in the apartment behind his store. He had extra rooms because his family never came back. After the war, the only place we lived was behind the furniture store.

I went to the apartment building where we used to live and dug up the valuables my father had buried. My mother said. "Sell whatever you can. I don't need anything." The only piece I didn't sell was my father's gold watch with its long chain that he wore. I was hoping to give it to him when he came home.

Selling those few pieces of jewelry came in handy. With that money and the money my Uncle Miklos gave me, I had enough money to start a business. My mother and I opened my father's store and waited for him to come home. I don't know how I got my father's store open — I must have somehow had a key. No one stopped me. I opened our store and tried to do some business.

Everything was hard to get, so the black market was the only business available. I used to go out to the country to buy some fruit, fat, chickens — whatever else I could — and bring it back and sell it for a profit. Cigarettes were a big item. I sold mostly in Debrecen but sometimes I went to Budapest. My uncle who lived in Budapest told me I could get a better price there because not many people brought stuff there to sell.

I bought food in the countryside not far from Debrecen and took it by train to Budapest. The train rides were very risky because the Russian soldiers would take whatever they wanted from a civilian. They would also throw people off the train to have more space for themselves. Many times I would have to sit on the roof of the train. It was dangerous, but I made a nice profit. Inflation was so high that every night I changed the money for American dollars to maintain its value.

I didn't pay rent. I have no idea how much the rent was and I didn't know who to pay the rent to. The only thing I know is I got a letter from the government that my father owed taxes, city tax, and I should pay it. I won't repeat what I wanted to say. I got the same thing from the Jewish congregation. (In Hungary the Jews have to pay tax, based on the tax they pay to the state, to pay for the Jewish gymnasium and the Jewish synagogues). They called me and said I have to pay the Jewish tax. I told them I don't have the money to pay. I didn't pay the city tax either. They never believed me that there was a Holocaust. They never believed we were in camps.

During those few months in Debrecen, I became involved with the Hashomer Hatzair, a Zionist-Marxist organization and became a Zionist. My friend Jancsi also became involved in Marxist and socialist movements. I hated Hungary and wanted to leave and Jancsi wanted to stay and build up Hungarian socialism. We disagreed, but we still would recite poetry together in the evenings. When he got leukemia and didn't want to suffer anymore and he didn't want his family to watch him suffer, he committed suicide.

Believing the future of Zionism depended on the youth, the organization opened a home for the many orphans in our community, and was preparing them to go to Israel. All the surviving Jews in our community attended the opening of this orphanage. The principal of the gymnasium made a speech to open the building and asked, "Please, my former students, forgive me for teaching you to be proud Hungarians and not telling you to get out."

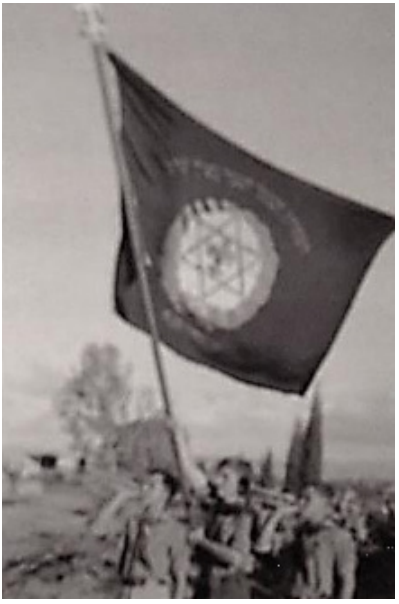
We began getting news of what happened to our relatives. Near the end of the war as the Russians were approaching, the Arrow Cross (the Hungarian Nazi party) wanted to hurry and kill every Jew they could get their hands on. Someone told them that my father's brother, Adolf, his wife, Pearl, and two children, Agi and Robert, were hiding in the basement of a building in Budapest. The Arrow Cross found them and made them come out. As they were coming out of the basement my uncle was shot and killed right there and then. Aunt Pearl and the two children were being moved to a park where Jews were being rounded up and killed.

On the way to the park, next to the Danube River, my cousin Robert, who was maybe fourteen years old, was shot and fell into the Danube and disappeared. The mother and daughter went to the park where the Arrow Cross shot everybody. My cousin was in pain and she started to cry. My Aunt Pearl, who was only hit in the arm, was begging her little girl, "Agi, please keep quiet. Maybe we can survive if you don't move. Play dead." But she was in so much pain that she cried out and they shot her again. She died next to her mother. My cousin Agi is buried in the garden at the Budapest Dohany Street Synagogue. Many years later Aunt Pearl went to Budapest and put a plaque with the names of her husband Adolf, her son Robert (Robika) and her daughter Agnes, in the memorial garden of the Budapest Dohany Street Synagogue.

I learned from people who came back to Debrecen that my father was in Mauthausen almost until the very end of the war at which time he was sent to a neighboring camp, Gunskirchen, where he was liberated. He died from malnutrition the day after liberation. Later, I learned from my Aunt Ilus that my father received the postcard I sent him from Vienna to his address in the labor camp. At that time he was stationed in Hungary, near the Yugoslavian border, an area that was liberated long before Vienna or Mauthausen. He decided to try to find us. He was able to get to Budapest where his sister begged him to stay and wait for the war to end. He stubbornly went to find us and was captured somewhere in Austria and sent to Mauthausen. Neither of us knew the other was in the

same camp. I often wonder how different my life would be if I had never sent that postcard.

Once I learned that my father was not coming back, I refused to stay any longer in Hungary. I hated the Hungarians. I wanted to go to Israel.



The The flag of the Hashomer Hatzair.

During those few months I was in Debrecen after the war, I became involved with the Hashomer Hatzair, a Zionist-Marxist organization and became a Zionist. I am the last one on the right in the back row.

BAMBERG

During one of my selling trips to Budapest I met my father's cousin Adolf Jacabovits, also a cap maker like my father. He had gone to America before the war and came back as an American soldier to look for his wife and two daughters whom he left behind when he immigrated a few years earlier. He found they had all died in Auschwitz.

My father had helped him to get passage to America and had also helped the wife and children in Hungary. Wanting to repay the kindness my father did for him, he asked what he could do for me. I said, "I want to get out of Hungary and I don't know where we are going to go."

He said, "I can arrange for you and your cousin, Joe Friedman, to be on an American military train going from Budapest to the American zone in Vienna. You can go and learn what is available." We went to Vienna where we found a number of Jewish agencies assisting people who no longer wanted to return to their former countries. Through the Zionist Organization I made arrangements for my mother and me to go to Israel.

I went back to Debrecen and told my mother we were leaving for Israel. My mother said, "I don't want to go to Israel. I am all alone. I have no husband. I have a sister,

Malvin, in Brooklyn. I want to go to Brooklyn." After much discussion, argument, and lots of tears, we agreed to leave Hungary, along with my mother's sister Juci's family, and go to a Displaced Person's (DP) camp in Germany's American occupied zone. We would wait while their sister Malvin who lived in Brooklyn applied for our permits to go to the United States.

At this time, the spring of 1946, leaving Hungary was becoming very difficult. Because the government of Hungary was becoming more and more under the influence of the Soviets and communism and the Iron Curtain was coming down hard, we had to wait for the right opportunity to leave Hungary. When the time finally came, the Zionist organization arranged for our safe passage by train to the border of Austria. As soon as the train crossed the border we were taken off the train by one of the Zionist organizers and taken by car to one of the DP camps in Germany. After moving from one place to another, my mother and I decided on Bamberg. Bamberg was a United Nations camp near a big city with an American Embassy where we could apply for visas. My cousin Joe told me, "Victor, when you register — lie. Tell them you are two years younger so you may be able to get a child's visa. It may be easier to get into America that way." When I registered at the camp I registered as two years younger.

We were given a room where we slept and a kitchen where my mother cooked. It was like a little apartment. My cousin came to Bamberg with his parents. My mother had her sister and brother there. It was not bad.

I got a job working in the canteen giving out rations: cigarettes, food, candy. We didn't get money, we got coupons — tickets to get things at the canteen. Cigarettes were a big item. It was a good job; I met a lot of people.

I met Judy Rehberger, my future wife, in the camp garden in the summer of 1946. She was taking a jacket, a coat, apart. She was turning the inside to become the outside. I think she was doing it for her brother, Bela, who was with her in Bamberg. Being in the needle trade, I knew how to take apart things and I told her I would help her. And I did. Then we got to know each other a little. I had to work hard to win her attention — she was very popular! Dating in a DP camp is not easy. We were free to move around, but we had no money and few places to go. We would go for walks and talk about the future.

In Bamberg there were thousands of people waiting to get out — mostly to America. As we were waiting, in order to pass the time we had self-made entertainment. Some people put on shows. One night we had a dance and I was one of the judges who had to pick the best dancer. Judy was one of the contestants dancing and I picked her as the winner. She had many boyfriends running after her and I think the fact that I chose her to be the winner made up her mind to be with me.

Judy's brother married a girl in Hungary right after the war whose family was living in Uruguay. After the war Judy's brother was going to Uruguay with his wife and her family and wanted Judy to go with them. By then I had talked Judy into getting married.

When she agreed, she applied for a visa to go to America with me. Judy's sister chose to go to Israel — she was twice detained at Cypress on the way. She married a French Jew and had two children. Judy's younger brother was killed in a motorcycle accident in Hungary. After the 1956 Revolution in Hungary, Judy's parents moved to Israel.

In Bamberg, Judy lived in what used to be stables. They made walls from paper to divide places for people to have private places to live. She had her place there with a bed and a table. She had nowhere to cook. My future wife wanted to show what a good housewife she was going to be, so one day she asked my mother to let her cook a Hungarian dish. It was Hungarian pasta. I hate Hungarian pasta, but that is what she made. So I ate it. After we were married and living in Norway I came home one day and she said, "I made your favorite food that you like." I said, "I don't like pasta." She said, "But you ate it in Bamberg." I said, "We weren't married!"

NORWAY

I wanted to get out of Bamberg. We had been there for two years waiting for visas to the United States. I was sick and tired of waiting for the U.S. visa so I decided to apply to every country in the world that might take me. Norway came through. Norway lost hundreds of Jews during Hitler's regime and wanted to replace them. They came to Germany, to the DP camps, to pick up some of

the refugees and bring them to Norway to settle there. Six hundred refugees were picked from our camp and Judy, my mother and I were among them.

Before we left for Norway Judy and I got married in a civil marriage ceremony so Judy's brother would know his sister was married. But my mother said, "That's not a marriage! You have to have a *chuppah*!"

As we were leaving Bamberg for Norway I made up my mind and said to myself, "I will never go hungry again. I will do whatever I can, hopefully all legitimately, but I will never go hungry again."

The boat to Norway left from the northern part of Germany. We were 600 people on that ship. It was a nice ship — just transportation. It was a short trip — maybe three or four days. I don't recall any music or dancing or entertainment. I had a cabin with my mother. My mother's brother had a cabin and Judy had a cabin. Judy and I did not live together as man and wife after the civil ceremony — my mother wouldn't allow that. Only after the *chuppah* could we be together.

We arrived in Norway on May 11, 1947. The Norwegians came to the boat to look at the newcomers. Some of them had never met a Jew before. They thought that Jews had horns. When we first arrived the Norwegians divided us into two groups of 300 each. My group went to Mysen. The other group went to a city about 200 miles away. I think they separated us only because they did not have the facilities to keep us all together in one place.

In Mysen we were housed in a camp, something like Bamberg. The only people living in this camp were the 300 people in my group. We got rooms. I was in a room with my mother.

As soon as I could, I went into Oslo to see the rabbi to tell him I wanted to get married. He said, "Okay. On June 1, that's two weeks from now, I'll be out in the camp and I will marry you." My mother started to bake the challah.

Trying to be polite, I went out to the train to meet the rabbi and take him to the camp. When the train stopped and everyone got off. I got scared — who are all these people? The Jewish community from Oslo had come to meet the newcomers! This was a nice opportunity for them. They brought a newspaper reporter and they took pictures — we were the first Jewish couple to get married in Oslo after the war. After the wedding Judy and I got a room together.

The people in Norway were wonderful to us. They gave us money and they gave us teachers to learn the Norwegian language. They interviewed everyone asking what their trade was and then tried to find us jobs. The Honorary Consul from Hungary, also a cap maker, came to the camp to meet me. As I was a former Hungarian and a cap maker, he was very happy to meet me. He asked me about myself. I told him I was a graduated cap maker. And he said, "Wait a minute. Something I don't understand — you were born in 1929 and how can you have done so many

things in so little time?" So, I told him the truth. He said, "In Norway the best thing is to tell the truth." I immediately changed back my age. He offered me a job outside Oslo at a cap factory. Judy got a job as a dress maker in a factory.

If we got a job, the Norwegians tried to find us housing so we could live close to the job. They were building new duplexes and Judy and I got an upper duplex in a beautiful complex. (They gave us a mortgage that we had to pay back. Norwegians lived in the bottom duplex.) Judy had a job, and I had a job so we lived very well.

When Judy went into labor with our first child, Susan, I was at work. She called a taxi to go to the hospital and not only did the Norwegian Medicare pay for the taxi, but when she gave birth they brought her home and gave us a nurse to help take care of the baby. They also sent someone to care for Judy when she was recovering. My mother lived with her brother but stayed with us sometimes to help care for Susan.

I worked in the cap factory and then I saw an ad in the newspaper. There was a man who had several stores in Norway selling gloves. He had a tannery where he prepared the leather for the gloves. He also sold some skins. He wanted to hire someone to set up manufacturing leather jackets to sell in his stores. I applied for the job. I spoke good Norwegian already.

He asked me, "What do you know about manufacturing jackets?" I said, "Nothing, but I know about leather because I used to make leather caps, but no jackets." He asked, "How are you going to make jackets if you don't know anything about it?" I said, "I'm going to go and buy one, take it apart and make from there a sample. And then I can make it bigger, smaller, add inches here or there." He says to me, "Those foreigners, they are smart — better than the Norwegians. You've got the job." I got the job to set up manufacturing of leather jackets. It was a wonderful job, I made good money.

We loved living in Norway, but we could not stay. At that time, Russia was occupying Hungary. We all worried that the Russians may come into Norway. Our thought was, let's get out of here. By now I had a visa to go to the United States but I didn't want to go to America because I was twenty-four years old and I didn't want to have to go into the army. I didn't want to go fight in Korea, so I refused to go to America. In 1951 we got visas for Canada. Judy, our baby daughter Susan, and I left for Canada. My mother followed a few months later.

Judy and I on the ship from Germany to Norway. May 1947.

VERDENS GANG

Nr. 123 Mandag 2. juni 1947 3. årg.

HISTORISK BRYLLUP i Mysenleiren.

Judisk ekteskapspar viet i går og dratt ut i takknemlighet til Norge.

Felles nordisk protest mot Hoovers planer.

Som sikter på å gjenreise Tysklands fiskerflåte.

We were the first Jewish couple to get married in Oslo after the war. The Jewish community from Oslo came by train to meet the newcomers! They brought a newspaper reporter and a photographer. June 1, 1947.

Judy and I at our wedding.

The "Shoes Memorial" on the River Bank. This is the memorial place from where the Nazi Hungarians shot the Jews into the Danube River in winter of 1944-45.

The memorial garden where my cousin is buried.

My Aunt Pearl put a plaque with the names of her husband Adolf, her daughter Agnes (Agika), and her son Robert (Robika) in the memorial garden of the Budapest Dohany Street Synagogue. KA at the end of names in Hungarian is an affectionate way to call a child. Adolf, Agnes, and Robert were shot by the Hungarian Nazis, Robert's body was lost in the Danube River.

My grandchildren, Robert and Angela, may have been given Hebrew names after my cousins who were killed in Budapest.

Judy's family, the Rehbergers, before the war.
Front row seated from left to right: Judy's father,
Judy's mother, Judy's brother who was killed in a
motorcycle accident in Hungary.
Back row standing: Judy, Judy's sister-in-law and
Judy's brother Bela who immigrated to Uruguay,
Judy's sister who immigrated to Israel.

The Dohany Synagogue in Budapest where the Rehbergers worshiped.

MONTREAL

We went by ship from Norway to Liverpool, England. Then we sailed on the SS Franconia from Liverpool to Halifax, Canada. From Halifax we traveled by train to Montreal. The Jewish community there was very friendly and supportive. At night I went to school to learn English, but Judy and I learned English mostly by going to the movies. Sometimes we would see three movies in one day. I loved Montreal. We lived there for the next twenty six years — from 1951 until 1978.

I'm not religious, my wife is not religious. The best we could do was maintain the holidays and follow the traditions I carried from home. In 1953 when our daughter Sheila was born I went to the rabbi and gave her a name. Our family tradition is the mother chooses the name for the first child and the father chooses the name for the second child. Many of my relatives who were born after the war are named Peter after my maternal grandfather.

When I wanted my daughter Susan to go to a Jewish elementary school in Montreal, I went there with her to see the principal and told him I wanted my daughter to become a member of the Jewish school. He told me how much it was going to cost. I said I can't afford it. His answer was, "Where is it written that your daughter has to go to a Jewish school?" I said, "You are right." She went to public school and she was a pretty good student. That my children did not go to a Jewish school was a big disappointment.

My childhood girlfriend, Iby, from Debrecen, survived the war. When she was in Montreal visiting her relatives she came to see us. Judy was preparing for the visit and our daughter, Susan, who was maybe four years old, wanted to know what was going on. Judy said, "Daddy's girlfriend is coming to visit. A former girlfriend." At five o'clock the doorbell rings, Susan rushes to the door and yells, "Dad, your girlfriend is here!" Iby was dressed like a prima donna. She talked too much.

In Montreal I went to the cap makers union and told them I was looking for a job. I was offered twenty- five dollars a week. I said, "Thank you very much, but I didn't come here to work for twenty-five dollars a week." The other people working in the factory said, "A Greener. We make forty dollars and we are here for so many months and you are complaining?!" No, I don't work for twenty five dollars.

When I got the visa to come to Canada, the Canadian council in Norway said, "You should go to Montreal which is the headquarters of the needle industry. You are in the cap business, so it is the place to go. But, I want to make sure you can earn enough money. So, I want you to buy a railroad ticket from Halifax to Montreal and from Montreal to Toronto. In case you don't get a job in Montreal, you can go to Toronto. So, I had the tickets for the three of us, my mother, my wife and myself. Nevertheless, I went to Toronto by myself to look for a job. I liked Toronto, and I could get a job there, but I couldn't get a suitable apartment.

I went back to Montreal and got another job making fur collars for jackets. I was making one-hundred dollars a week. I thought, "This is America!" Then the season ended and there was no work. So I got another job sewing with a machine. I didn't like the machines.

Then I got a job with a man in the neck-wear business who wanted to begin making caps. He hired me to run the division to make caps. He had a few machines and we started to make caps. Business wasn't good. He borrowed money — even I had to lend him $400. When the time came and I asked him for the money back, he didn't have it. He said, "You know what? Why don't you take the machinery as a payment?" I took the machines and the cutting table and I opened up Susan Hat and Cap.

During the day I was out selling, and at night I was preparing the work for the next day. The very first time I went out to sell my caps I went to a large department store. I was so nervous I walked around the building twice before I went in. On the elevator I said to myself, "Maybe the buyer will not be in. Maybe I have an excuse to leave." I was scared stiff- I had never sold anything before. But I had to learn.

I'll never forget, I went to the Eaton company in Toronto. Mrs. Lancaster, the buyer, looked at me and said, "Are you Mr. Farkas?" I said yes. yes. She said, "You have an appointment to sell caps and hats?" I said yes. She said, "I want you to know one thing — if you make a living making

headwear, at least have the decency to wear a hat. Where is your hat?" I said, "I left it in the car." She said, "Go get it." That was a lesson on how to be a salesman.

The cap business was very hard. First, I was forced to hire union workers, then the Japanese came out with the same type caps. I couldn't compete. I needed to find a new way to earn a living.

My cousin, Joe Friedman, was in the chicken business in Canada. He asked me to join him in the business. I had no money to put in, but we made an arrangement for my salary and how I would become a partner. We had a hatchery out in the country with fifty thousand chickens. We had a killing station in Montreal. We were growing big. I worked for him for a long time. His two sons were in the business, too. When I had to have a minor operation, I told him I wanted to have our agreement in writing. He said, "If my word is not good enough, then the paper it is written on is not worth it." I told him, "When I come out of the hospital I will stay with you for a week or two, but I am out." I hated the chicken business!

After I left cousin Joe's chicken business, I did not speak to him for the next 30 years. When he was in the hospital in Miami (around 1985) I went to see him. He asked for forgiveness from me and from his children. I told him that I forgave him. He died that afternoon.

I took a two week course and I became a real estate agent. After two years I became a broker. I specialized in income

producing properties like developed apartment buildings that were already rented out, office buildings that were already rented out, manufacturing spaces, and warehouses that were income producing. I didn't buy the properties, I got a commission from managing them.

After the 1967 Montreal World's Fair closed, some of the hotels built for the fair were converted into apartments. I wanted to sell those apartments to European investment banks. European banks were looking for investments in Canada and America for their clients' money. I put an ad in the European Herald Tribune saying I had real estate in Montreal with a guaranteed return. I got maybe fifty replies. I decided to go to Europe and sort it out. I started in London then went to Germany and Switzerland. In Munich I went to an investment bank and told them what I had. I showed them — these are the terms, this is the income, these are the expenses.... They liked what I had.

My philosophy as a real estate man was simple: I have to sell myself. If they like me and trust me they will buy my product. The manager in the Munich bank's real estate department liked me. We are friends to this day.

Although I never got to live in Israel, I always remained a very good Zionist at heart. When the Yom Kippur War began in 1973, I wanted to go and become a volunteer. The war started on Saturday and Tuesday I was on a plane to Israel.

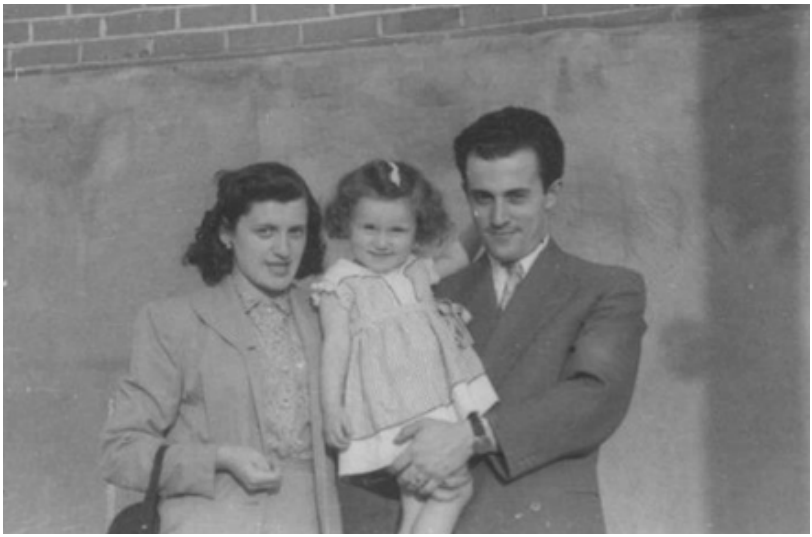
When I arrived in Israel it took two minutes for them to make mincemeat out of me. They asked what I came for. I said, "I want to do something good for Israel." They said, "Go home and send money." I said, "No, that's not why I came. I send money but I want to do more." My wife's sister who was working on a kibbutz said, "Come here, they need people to make boxes and pack bananas." I did that for a few days then they gave me a new job. They said, "Rent a car, go on the highway and if you see a Jewish soldier, pick him up and take him wherever he wants to go." I was so happy to do that. I think it is the best thing I did in my life as a Jew. I am so happy that I did one thing in my life for Israel.

In the 1976 provincial election in Montreal the separatist party won. They passed laws that French was not only the official language but that everything has to be in French. I had a shopping center with a beautiful sign saying the name of the shopping center in English. I got a letter from the government saying the sign is illegal. The name has to be in French and it has to be predominantly bigger than the English. I said to my wife, "I do not want to live here. I don't want to be discriminated against again." I said to Judy, "I am leaving." She was not too much in favor of moving, but she asked, "Where are we going to go?"

My mother and I knew that when my father died he was buried in a mass grave outside Mauthausen – Gusen. In 1956 or 1957, we went from Montreal to Austria in order to move him and bury him individually. The officials told me that every body had a number, starting from left to right, and they knew which one my father was and they would take him out and bury him in a section of the Catholic cemetery outside of Mauthausen near Gunskirchen that was saved for Jews. (There was a Jewish section because so many Jews died in the camps there.) The arrangement I made with them was to move the body and we would come back the next day and put a marker with his name on his new private grave. I did not want to be there when they moved him. I wanted to see my father, but I also didn't want to see him. I decided my mother would ave been hysterical.

The last time I went to visit my father's grave was when I was on a cruise that stopped nearby. It was on a Saturday and the Jewish section was closed, so I couldn't get in. But, what I could see wasn't good – nobody was taking care of it.

With Judy.



With Judy and Susan in Montreal.

My children, Susan and Sheila.
Montreal, Canada, c. 1954.

MIAMI

We went on vacation to Miami on Labor Day weekend in 1977 where I met some men I knew from Montreal who were negotiating a real estate deal on Three Islands, in Hallandale, Florida. It looked good. We officially moved to Miami in 1978.

I went to Germany and told the Munich bank manager about Three Islands. I told him I thought it was a good deal. He said, "Are you putting in your own money or are you making a profit and that is what you are putting in?" I said, "I am putting in real money." He put in money and we became partners. It was a very successful partnership. The project sold out and the Germans were happy with their profit. Once a year I would go to Munich to the bank board meeting. We were partners for twenty years.

When a hotel I wanted to buy in Miami was for sale, I called the Germans. They gave me the money and we became partners in the Chateau by the Sea Hotel. My customers for my hotel rooms were airlines. When I saw an ad in the newspaper saying Iceland is starting flights from Reykjavik to Miami, I picked up the phone and called Iceland Air. I told them I have a hotel and I have beds that need to be filled and you have planes and you need to have passengers, so I would like to make a deal.

The next day I went to Iceland and made the deal. Then Virgin airlines became my customer and I needed more rooms with better quality service. So, I bought the Thunderbird Hotel the same way — with German money.

In 1979 I bought a hotel in Orlando thinking everybody would want to go to nearby Disney World. That was a mistake — I forgot the first rule of real estate — location, location, location. When an Israeli man wanted to buy the Thunderbird, I told him if he wanted it he had to buy all three hotels and he did. Then I began slowly giving up managing the property I still had in Montreal.

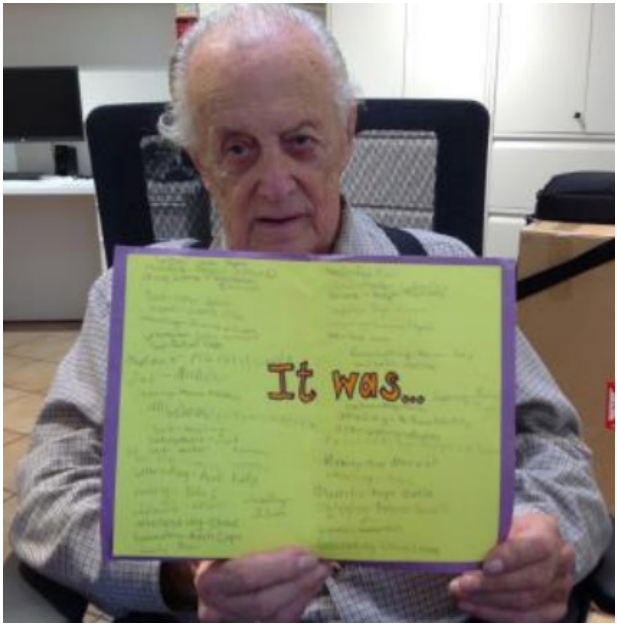
My partnership with the bank in Germany ended when they worried that I was getting old and they did not know what to do if something happened to me.

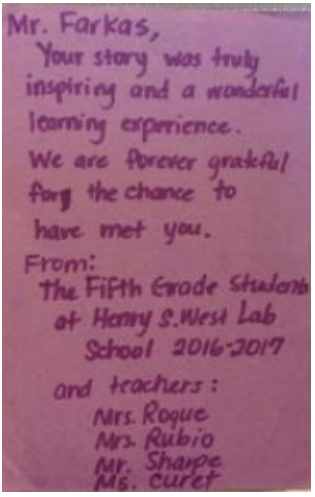
In my first year of retirement, the Miami Convention and Visitors' Bureau called and asked me to serve and promote Miami in Europe. They thought I would be good at it because my hotels had always had a very high occupancy rate, plus I was European. I had to do a lot of traveling and a lot of report writing so after three years I said thank you very much and I retired again.

VOLUNTEERING

I needed to do something in retirement, so I went to do volunteer work. First, I delivered meals for the elderly through a program at the Miami Jewish Federation.I didn't like this because half the food I delivered was wasted.

Then I became a guardian ad litem. I loved this but I had to give it up because Judy and I would spend summers in Montreal and I couldn't leave the kids I was working with for two months. Next, when I learned about the University of Miami program which paired Holocaust survivors with college students to teach about the Holocaust, I joined and I loved this program. Every semester I would work with three or four students. I always tell the young people, "Whatever you learn in life will always come in handy. It is always good to learn." Learning German in school and learning how to make a cap may have saved my life. When that program ended I became a volunteer at the Holocaust Memorial on Miami Beach.





Thank you notes from school groups visiting the Holocaust Memorial.

REPARATIONS

My mother and I went to the Jewish Agency in Montreal which helped us apply for reparations from Germany. I got a total of $450. I couldn't get any more because I was healthy. People who were sick got a different amount. Many people claimed mental illness, but for that the Germans wanted a doctor's certificate saying they had been visiting doctors not only in Canada, but also from the time of liberation until the time they applied, stating what treatments they got and when they got them. I guess they felt that $450 was the amount that compensated for me being in the Holocaust anyway.

I applied to the Austrian government and they gave me two or three thousand dollars, a flat amount, for working loading and unloading trucks in Vienna. A Jewish organization in New York also applied to Germany for me. Some time ago I began getting around $250 a month paid in Euros. I am still getting that.

My mother received reparations from the German government to replace the loss of support from her husband. She got a monthly payment for the rest of her life. My mother liked my wife so much that in her will she left fifty percent of her estate to my wife and fifty percent to me.

Some survivors, my cousin Joe Friedman among them, refused to apply for remuneration. He felt, "They cannot

pay me back with money for what they did." That is true, but on the other hand, when we came out of the concentration camp we had nothing. Nothing — not our home, not our factory or store, no furniture, no clothing, no money. We came out with zilch. So, any money we got came in handy to start a new life. I well remember my father telling us that he had a life insurance policy in U.S. dollars — not in Hungarian forint. I remember it was a big deal. We never got any money from it.

With Eli Wiesel in Miami.
Eli Wiesel and I went to the same Jewish gymnasium. He was a year ahead of me. His parents sent him to board at the school in Debrecen because the town where they lived did not have a suitable Jewish school.

MY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

My daughter, Susan, is a writer, a journalist, a television producer, and teacher. She has won six Emmy Awards. She gave one of her first Emmys to her mother. Susan and her husband, Richard Lieberman, a history professor, live in New York City. Their son, Samuel, is a journalist living and working in New York.

My daughter, Sheila, was born in Montreal in 1953. She was a sweet child. She married Bernie Brayer in 1970 and had two children. Her son, Robert, is a lawyer in California. Her daughter, Angela, and her husband, David Benjamin, met when they were in law school at the University of Florida. They live in Miami Shores with their two children, Jack and Wyatt.

In 2013 my wife and I were on a cruise. When we arrived in New York we called Sheila and she told us she had had an operation. She was later diagnosed with cancer of the lung, cancer of everything. We tried everything — I went to her doctor and I took all the information he had to another doctor who said, "She's in good hands." My wife wanted her to move in with us, to find better doctors. But doctors told us, "There is no one better than who she has now." Sheila didn't want to live with us; she didn't want to leave her husband.

She was sick for a very short time. She died on February 27, 2014.

AUNT PEARL

Aunt Pearl married again and moved to Miami. She was a sweet, sweet person. She never regained use of her left arm from when she was shot. I always remember seeing her arm dangling at her side. Whenever anybody asked about children, she never spoke. She would go into her room, by herself, and cry there. She said something I tell all my students, "Nobody likes a crying face." That's how she lived her life until the age of ninety-four.

IBY

Over the years Iby and I stayed in touch. A couple of years ago when I couldn't reach her, I called her son and asked him to have her call me. He called me the next day and told me, "I spoke to my mother last night and she promised to call you. However, this morning my sister called to tell me our mother passed away during the night."

MY MOTHER

My mother remarried and had a good life in America. Her sister, Malvin, had married a very religious man, Geza Diamond, in Hungary. In 1922 he moved to New York with Malvin and his three children from a former marriage. When Aunt Malvin died, the Jewish custom says that when a wife dies, and there is a single woman in the family, the husband must marry her. (The woman can refuse.) Geza came to Montreal to ask for my mother's hand in marriage. I said it was up to my mother. I was very happy that she married him. They moved to Brooklyn and they lived together for over twenty years.

My mother went through a lot of tough times — she had a kidney removed and two weeks later was confined in a ghetto. She survived a transport on a cattle car, a labor camp, a death march where she saw her father killed in front of her, a concentration camp, and a move to a new country. She was good through the tough times — it was after the war when she became very dependent upon me. I was all she had and she didn't want to lose me. She became a hypochondriac. She constantly made me take her to doctors. She would complain about her health, but she was healthy! She lived to be ninety-two. She is buried in Miami.

Front row from the left: Angela Benjamin, my first great-grandchild Jack Benjamin, me, Judy, Susan, Robert Brayer, Janessa Brayer.
Back row from the left: David Benjamin, Bernie Brayer, Sheila, Richard Lieberman, Samuel Lieberman.
Bermuda, 2012.

With Judy on our 65th anniversary. 2015.

Visiting Mauthausen with my daughter, Susan.
June 2004.

CONCLUSION

I had a happy life, a good life. I am a very lucky man. I am married for seventy years. Judy and I knew that for a good marriage we had to give and take, and we did that. Right now my wife and I live for the family.

One time, when I wrote my first will I wrote that I want to be buried in Israel because I thought maybe my grandchildren will come and visit my grave and come to love Israel. But I changed that in my will.

The only things I had left from before the war are the three gold Napoleon buttons from the jacket my father gave me and my father's gold pocket watch and the chain he wore with it. I gave the watch to my grandson Samuel Farkas Lieberman. I hope he will remember where it came from and always remain Jewish.

Last year I had special boxes made for the gold buttons and on Pesach, when all my family was together, I gave each of my grandchildren, Samuel, Robert, and Angela, one of the gold buttons so they will always remember.

Each year at our Passover seder, we do one page at least about the Holocaust. I can never understand why we talk about history from five thousand years ago when we don't talk about what happened seventy years ago.

My whole life I worried, wanting my children and grandchildren to remain Jewish. I hope they will always remain Jewish and they will always remember what happened in the Holocaust.

It should never happen again.

ABOUT THE WRITER

I began writing for Holocaust survivors in the 1990's when survivors I met on The March of the Living asked me for help writing about their feelings on returning to Poland for the first time. Later, survivors I interviewed for Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation asked me for help writing down all the things they did not speak about in their interview. Soon, other survivors began approaching me seeking help writing a book about their experiences in the Holocaust. I met with the survivors, recorded our numerous conversations, organized and wrote the stories in the survivors' own words, printed the books, and then handed the books to the survivors as my gift to them. The books were written solely for the survivors and their families; they were never intended for publication. They are being published now because my friends, Carol and Jaime Suchlicki, recognizing their historical value as first-person testimony, introduced me to Dr. Haim Shaked to discuss finding a wider audience for the books.

Thank you to Dr. Haim Shaked director of the Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at the University of Miami for agreeing to publish the books and for your guidance and patience as we worked together on this project.

I am grateful to the March of the Living for introducing me to the world of Holocaust education and finding a role for me in it.

Thank you to the Shoah Foundation for choosing me to be an interviewer and for mentoring me through more than thirty interviews of Holocaust survivors. Your training led me to do the work I do today.

Thank you to the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach for encouraging the docents at the memorial to work with me to write their memoirs. I appreciate your confidence in me and your respect for my work.

Thank you to the my dear Holocaust survivors for sharing your most painful as well as your most joyful memories with me. Thank you for answering questions that no one should ever have to ask or answer. Thank you for trusting me to write your memoirs accurately and respectfully. It has been my honor and pleasure to work with you.

—Bobbi Kaufman

"My father disguised five gold coins as buttons and sewed them onto my jacket. In a cattle car I sold one for a piece of bread. On a death march I sold another for a little piece of horse meat. I gave the remaining ones to my grandchildren so they could always remember what happened in the Holocaust."

— Victor Farkas

At age sixteen, Victor was a graduate capmaker working in his father's business. At seventeen he was in a Hungarian ghetto. When the ghetto was liquidated, three trains came to evacuate the residents. Two of the trains went to Auschwitz. When the Allies bombed the railroad tracks, the train Victor was on was rerouted to Vienna. Victor spent the next year as a laborer in Gross-Enzersdorf in Austria before enduring a 140 mile death march to Mauthausen where he and his mother were liberated.

In Bamberg Displaced Persons' camp Victor married a fellow survivor. He and his wife lived in Norway before emigrating to the United States where they raised their two daughters..

There is a concept in Judaism of a positive commandment, something that is time dependent, something that must be done *now*. One must, accordingly, applaud this important effort by the Miller Center and Feldenkreis Program of the University of Miami to collect and publish Holocaust survivors' memoirs as there will soon—too soon—come a time when the last survivors will be no longer. Sadly, tragically, this testimony is not only urgent but timely because the world in which we live echoes their world and the quality of their witness. The very nature of their survival has much to teach today's generations. One must express gratitude for this project and in the sagacious words of Hillel say: "If not now, when?"

Dr. Michael Berenbaum
Professor of Jewish Studies
American Jewish University
Former President and CEO
Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation
(Now USC Shoah Foundation Institute)