

2011 461 W

T.W. W

- 1 -

399011

TESTIMONY

OF

T. W. W

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON

SEPTEMBER 6, 1995

Q. Today is September 6, 1995. We are doing an interview for the Houston Holocaust Museum. We are at the Rice Media Center. My name is S L the interviewer. B H is the cameraman. Would you introduce yourself?

A. I am known here in this town as T W. T is a Hungarian nickname for T. T is the translation of River Tiber or Tiberius in the Hungarian language. I was born in Hungary and my name originally was W. We lived in the city of Szombathely, which is on the western border of Hungary. We were middle class people. My mother and father were in the millinery business. Millinery was a very fashionable thing in those days. It was the ultimate in fashion. My mother was Viennese and could hardly speak English. My father was from Kocptoa (sp) which is Kocptcopsarus(sp), which is part of the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Mukacheve and Muncatera(sp). He was from a little town called Oroszveg, maybe somebody will know where that is. We had a very comfortable life. I went to a very good school. I had 4 years of Latin. I was trained in physics and chemistry. As you know, the Hungarian school system was broken into three different areas. One was the Gymnasium. The second one was the real gymnasium, which had more realistic, like no Greek. We didn't have Greek, but instead of having 8 years of Latin, we had 4 years of Latin and the third level of schooling was the commercial. All my friends went there. I was the only Jew in my school. When I was 18, I became the head of the regional (?), which is the student association of all students. As such, I was ardent Zionist. I

have fought the city, my establishment, my rabbi, my father and my community, by telling them it is coming. We are going to be destroyed just like the Germans, Austrians, Czechoslovakians, but unfortunately the establishment always said, "It could not happen here." This was another story. It was so bad that I was preached out by the rabbi in one of the sermon that others should not listen to these wild leaders who mislead our youth. I was misleading him. I told him what was coming and we all should escape. The Hungarian Jews had sort of a honeymoon, until about 1944. While the Russians, the Polish, the Czechs, Austrians, one by one disappeared. They were taken to Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and other places. The Hungarians lived kind of a life of make believe that it won't happen here. When I reached the age. I was supposed to go into the army, like everybody else but Jews could not go in the army, or anybody who had Jewish ancestors. They were put in labor battalions. These were supposed to help out the military. They sometimes had military uniforms. Sometimes they had a military cap, armband or something like that, but when the war in Russia broke out, they were on the Front, and they were decimated. Only, about 10% of them survived. They were used in a manner that drove them into mine fields to see if it was mined. They had them ride rail cars in front of locomotives so that the partisans don't blow up the train. I mean, they were just dispensable, and these were the boys who were my age or older who were out there. When I got to my recruiter, my assembly place. The place was called Keszeg. Keszeg is an ancient town, infamous because of all the things that happened over there. It was the assembly for the 3rd Military Regent of Hungary. I happened to be in the 4th Battalion of labor camp. I don't have the proper