

# CHAIM K.

Chaim was born in 1926, in Sátoraljaújhely, Hungary, where approximately one-third of the population was Jewish. He was the youngest of eight children in a deeply religious, but poor, family. He had a happy childhood, going to school and completing chores. Chaim began to experience antisemitism in the fourth grade when other children sang antisemitic songs and made derogatory comments to him on the street. His father told him that he should simply cross the street, but Chaim would fight back.

On March 19, 1944, the Germans entered Chaim's hometown and, three days later, his family was ordered into a ghetto. Chaim managed to sneak out of the ghetto twice — once to get wood for heat, and once for a cow to feed the children. The following month, he was among the first group to be relocated. After several days of travel by cattle car, Chaim arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Following the advice of a Polish boy, Chaim claimed to be an 18-year-old farmer, and was sent in the direction of those who were to work. His parents were sent in the opposite direction and he never saw them again.

A few days later, Chaim was transported to Mauthausen and spent a year working in the stone quarries in Gusen. While in Mauthausen, he contracted scurvy, and was sent to the camp hospital. After he spent a week in the infirmary, the entire group of patients was forced back to the Camp but, due to a large inflammation on his leg, Chaim was unable to walk. Rather than shooting him, a guard spared his life by having a farmer transport him. Still unable to move when back at the Camp, Chaim was left behind while others were marched to Guns kirchen. Within a few days, those who remained were liberated by American troops. Several weeks after the end of the war, Chaim returned to his home village where he learned that only three of his siblings had survived.

Chaim eventually went to Budapest to become a rabbi, but once the Communists came to power he escaped to Israel. He helped found a kibbutz and then joined the air force, remaining in Israel until 1953. He moved to Saskatoon in 1954, where he became a principal at a Jewish school, and studied law.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORDS OF [CHAIM K., 1984](#) AND [CHAIM K., 2013](#) IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.