

MAGDA K.

Magda was born in 1916, in Miskolc, Hungary, to a modern Orthodox family. The town had approximately 20,000 people, with a large Jewish population. Magda's parents owned a dress and coat salon, and her mother encouraged her to learn the family trade, rather than attend university. After marrying her brother's best friend, Magda lived in Heves, Hungary, from 1939 to 1944, during which time she gave birth to her son.

On May 3, 1944, the family was told to leave all their possessions behind, and was moved to a ghetto 50 kilometres from the city. By the end of the month, soldiers came and took all the young men from the ghetto. A few days later, the rest of the ghetto was transported to Kerecsend. They were then placed in cattle cars and transported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, Magda was separated from her son, who was left in the care of an older woman. Magda would later learn that her son had been killed in the gas chambers shortly after their arrival at the Camp.

Magda's sister eventually arrived at Auschwitz on one of the many transports from Hungary. The sisters both went to work in Birkenau, one of the three camps of the Auschwitz camp complex, carrying heavy stones and cutting grass until the beginning of December 1944. After discovering they would be leaving Auschwitz, the sisters did what they could to keep from being separated, and succeeded in being transported together to Ravensbrück. Upon their arrival, they shovelled snow all day for two weeks before being chosen to work in an underground airplane factory in Genshagen, a sub-camp of Sachsenhausen. During the five months at this underground factory, the sisters never once went outside until they were evacuated.

As the Germans withdrew from advancing Allied forces, the sisters were forced to evacuate, and were eventually liberated in Lütz, Germany, by American troops. The sisters were transported to Prenzlau, where they stayed for two months before traveling to Hungary. In Hungary, Magda was reunited with her husband, brother, and father who had been hiding in a forest at the end of the war. In 1948, two years after having a daughter, Kathy, Magda and her husband started a new life in Budapest. They found that remaining in their hometown was too painful.

Due to the rise of antisemitism during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, Magda's family fled to Austria. The Canadian embassy in Austria first sent them to Halifax, but they eventually settled in Vancouver.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORD OF [MAGDA K., 1983](#) IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.