PETER S.

Peter was born in Hungary on August 30, 1935. His father was a musician and his mother worked as a secretary. His mother came from a wealthy family and Peter recalls a very happy childhood with close family relationships.

With the onset of the Hungarian-German alliance in 1942, life for Jews became increasingly difficult. Discriminatory laws were introduced that prohibited Jewish children from going to school. In 1944, Peter's mother was arrested by the Gestapo while attempting to stop a raid at the business where she worked. He would later discover that his mother died in a concentration camp — most likely Auschwitz. His father was deported to Nazi Germany to work as a forced labourer, so Peter was sent to live with an aunt.

When the Budapest ghetto was established, Peter was taken to a home in a rural part of Budapest with the help of the International Red Cross. With his blond hair and blue eyes, Peter looked Aryan, and he lived among a group of Christian children, always moving from building to building due to the constant bombings.

At the end of the war, Peter was reunited with his aunt and uncle. His father also survived the war and they moved to Vienna where they became displaced persons. The following year, Peter was sent to an exclusive boarding school where he experienced continued antisemitism.

In 1948, Peter and his father immigrated to New York where Peter attended high school in Harlem. Peter subsequently won a scholarship to Queens College, but dropped out in order to join the army, as had been the tradition in his family. After the army, he returned to college and graduated with a PhD in psychology from Princeton University. He worked at the University of Illinois, and at Rutgers University and the University of British Columbia as head of their Departments of Psychology.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORDS OF PETER S., 1984 AND PETER S., 2013 IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.