SERGE H.

Serge was born in Târgu Ocna, Romania, on July 23, 1928. In 1936, he moved to Iaşi with his mother, father and younger sister, where there was a well-established Jewish community. His father was involved in wholesale pharmaceuticals, and Serge attended a secular school for the first four grades.

By the early 1930s, the population had become increasingly hostile toward Jews. When the war started, Serge was no longer able to attend public school and instead attended a Jewish school set up by the community. In late June 1941, Serge witnessed a massacre of Jewish citizens in the streets. Serge's family barricaded themselves in their home and survived the pogroms in which thousands of Jews perished.

After the pogrom, life for Serge's family returned to "normal": Serge and his family, like all the Jews of the area, were made to wear armbands with the Star of David and, like people throughout the region, faced wartime food shortages and deprivation. In August 1944, Iasi was occupied by Soviet troops and Serge was able to return to school. His father decided they should move to Bucharest and he bribed a Jewish Soviet officer to assist them. Serge finished high school there and began to study pharmaceuticals. By September 1947, Serge had become a radical anti-communist and had to leave the country. He and his father travelled to the Hungarian border where Serge crossed on foot. He spent the next year illegally crossing the borders of Austria, Italy, and France.

In Paris, Serge trained as an ironworker. He obtained a visa to Cuba, where he spent two years working for a pharmaceutical company in Havana. He moved to Montreal in 1950. His parents followed in 1953, and his sister in 1956. Eventually, Serge moved to Vancouver where he was married and had three children.

SEE THE TESTIMONY RECORDS OF SERGE H., 1984 AND SERGE H., 2010 IN THE VHEC'S COLLECTIONS FOR RELATED HOLDINGS AND FOR INTERVIEW DETAILS.