

Vera Krukziener
Born 1938, Budapest, Hungary

Early in the war Father was taken to a work camp.

Many of the men who went out to work each day did not return.

Those with a heart condition were instead put to work in the kitchen.

So that he could stay back Father took aspirin to increase his heart rate.

Mother and I were packed into cattle trains and taken to a large brick factory.

The Gestapo was there.

“We are going to get out of here”, Mother said.

“If they kill us, so what? If we stay we are no better off.”

Before she was married my mother had owned the biggest beauty salon in Budapest.

She could change her appearance. She was blonde and didn't look Jewish.

Mother took my hand and we started walking slowly.

We walked past the Gestapo guard and escaped the deportation area.

I don't think any of the others survived.

Later Mother and I were able to hide in a nunnery.

It was a wonderful time.

The nuns were well prepared with hiding places.

One day Father arrived. He had jumped from a train heading to Auschwitz.

He insisted that we leave that night.

Just hours later the Germans bombed the nunnery.

All the nuns, priests, children and mothers, all had been killed.

We learned that there was a Swede in Pest sheltering Jews.

It was Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat.

He protected us till the Russians entered Budapest.