

Thomas Molnar



This is a picture of me in 1951 in Sydney. The ship was entering port in Perth; it was a long way by train to Sydney from there. I arrived in Sydney on a Sunday morning, and I went to live at Laci Reich's. Because there were three Reich brothers: Jancsi, Laci and Gyuri. Jancsi's family was like my parents to me. He made candy abroad too. He died only recently, at the age of 92. Laci is also past 90, he is still alive. Gyuri is the youngest; he is also past 70 already. So I lived at their place for one

or two weeks. I got a job at once. I went to a biscuit factory, where I pushed the ready biscuits on a pushcart to the oven. I thought that I knew English, but I didn't understand a word, and they didn't understand me either. The Australian accent was entirely different from what I had learned. But in a few months I got into it. I worked at the biscuit factory for three to four months, and my salary was 4 pounds and 4 shillings. I could pay the rent from this and just enough was left for me to not die of hunger. It turned out that this was a child's salary, because if I had been past 18, I would have gotten double for the same work. I lived in lodgings in the district of Sydney where the other Hungarians and the Jews lived. Then I transferred to clerk work to a spare parts factory, where I got 5 pounds. That was in the city, the transportation was easier. The biscuit factory was way out, I had to travel a long distance. I was at the spare parts factory for about six months, and then I met Laci Adler, who had been my classmate at high school, on the street. He told me, 'don't be stupid, tell them that you are 21 years old, and they will be happy to get a worker.' Fact is that there was an enormous manpower shortage in Australia, and they didn't ask for any papers. I could tell them what I wanted. Laci Adler was packing merchandise at a company, which made tools for sheep-shearing. This was a huge business, because there was a lot of sheep. I went to work there and I got an adult's salary, 8 pounds and 9 shillings. That was a lot of money. I was there for a few months.