

Where Gabor Paneth Did His Forced Labor, In Felsőhangoly



This is Felsőhangoly. When I was first drafted into forced labor, I spent three months here in a camp between July and October 1944. The photo was taken in the 1950s when I went to see where I had been in forced labor. At the time I felt that I, and many others, were saved from deportation by being sent to forced labor there. We weren't too badly off there. Of course, there wasn't enough to eat, but sometimes after working at digging ditches, we had nothing to do, so we just hung around. In September I was taken to Kecskemet and soon after to Szolnok. On October 12, I went home to my parents but two days later I was drafted again and taken to Szekesfehervar, 60 kilometers from Budapest. On October 15, the news came that Hungary had broken away from the German alliance. Everybody was sent home from the camp. By the time I got to Budapest, I heard the newsboys shout that the Arrow Cross (Hungarian Fascists) had taken power. I crept home and found my mother and aunt there. My father had already been taken to a collection center in Budapest. I went to the Swiss embassy where I found a huge line. I was standing around looking at this queue when suddenly the door opened and an acquaintance of mine came out. When he saw me, he shoved me in through the door. I found myself inside at the head of the queue. The embassy gave me four false Schutzpasses, protection letters, and those enabled us to survive. I went and got my father out of the collection center with one pass, and we all moved from our house, which was then a yellow-star house, into a protected house. Later, in January, we had to move into the ghetto. We were there until the liberation.