

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:38,880

2

00:00:38,880 --> 00:00:41,540

Bernard Weinstein, director
of the Kean College Oral

3

00:00:41,540 --> 00:00:44,360

Testimonies project
on the Holocaust.

4

00:00:44,360 --> 00:00:47,380

Sharing the interview
with me is Dan Gover.

5

00:00:47,380 --> 00:00:52,010

We would like to
welcome Margit Feldman.

6

00:00:52,010 --> 00:00:55,380

Thank you very much.

7

00:00:55,380 --> 00:00:57,010

I can't say it is
my pleasure, but I

8

00:00:57,010 --> 00:01:01,130

will say it is my duty to
be here with you today,

9

00:01:01,130 --> 00:01:08,210

and to remember my
past, so the future

10

00:01:08,210 --> 00:01:11,200

will know what has happened.

11

00:01:11,200 --> 00:01:14,750

And with that help,
let's hope that the world

12

00:01:14,750 --> 00:01:16,640
will do everything
in their power

13
00:01:16,640 --> 00:01:19,280
not to let another
Holocaust happen

14
00:01:19,280 --> 00:01:22,430
to anyone, whether
they are Jewish,

15
00:01:22,430 --> 00:01:26,600
or Christians, or
Blacks, or white.

16
00:01:26,600 --> 00:01:30,470
My name is Margit
Buchhalter Feldman.

17
00:01:30,470 --> 00:01:37,260
I was born June 12th,
1929, in Budapest, Hungary.

18
00:01:37,260 --> 00:01:42,020
Now, I was born in Budapest,
but we did not live in Budapest.

19
00:01:42,020 --> 00:01:44,990
The reason I was born there,
because my mother was having

20
00:01:44,990 --> 00:01:48,320
difficulty and my
father took her

21
00:01:48,320 --> 00:01:51,290
up to the polyclinic,
which is the biggest

22
00:01:51,290 --> 00:01:55,550
hospital in Budapest,
to give birth to me

23

00:01:55,550 --> 00:02:00,120

and my brother who died
even before he was born.

24

00:02:00,120 --> 00:02:08,030

So I was the only child to
Joseph and Theresa Buchhalter.

25

00:02:08,030 --> 00:02:12,110

We lived in a small
town called Tolcsva,

26

00:02:12,110 --> 00:02:13,970

near the Czechoslovakian border.

27

00:02:13,970 --> 00:02:16,580

28

00:02:16,580 --> 00:02:22,010

Being the only child, I could
tell you was not the easiest.

29

00:02:22,010 --> 00:02:24,890

A lot a responsibility,
and a lot of loneliness

30

00:02:24,890 --> 00:02:27,740

goes with being the only child.

31

00:02:27,740 --> 00:02:30,890

But of course, you receive a
lot more loving and a lot more

32

00:02:30,890 --> 00:02:34,160

caring, and an awful
lot of protection

33

00:02:34,160 --> 00:02:36,980

from the outside world.

34

00:02:36,980 --> 00:02:43,830

With this wall, I was still

brought up with a lot of hatred

35

00:02:43,830 --> 00:02:46,350
from the outside world.

36

00:02:46,350 --> 00:02:50,880
I remember as a child, my
Christian neighbors' children

37

00:02:50,880 --> 00:02:55,110
would play with me
because I had nice toys,

38

00:02:55,110 --> 00:02:57,870
but I had to go to a
Jewish parochial school.

39

00:02:57,870 --> 00:03:00,240
I could not go to a
regular public school,

40

00:03:00,240 --> 00:03:02,890
because I was Jewish.

41

00:03:02,890 --> 00:03:06,810
I remember being called
dirty Jew, filthy Jew.

42

00:03:06,810 --> 00:03:12,060
I remember stones
being thrown at me

43

00:03:12,060 --> 00:03:16,110
as I was walking back
and forth from school.

44

00:03:16,110 --> 00:03:20,880
And I also remember very well,
my father-- a blessed memory--

45

00:03:20,880 --> 00:03:24,630
trying to always, from
a distance, follow me.

46
00:03:24,630 --> 00:03:27,690
Just to keep an eye on me,
that no harm should come to me.

47
00:03:27,690 --> 00:03:31,440

48
00:03:31,440 --> 00:03:33,840
Did I have a
beautiful childhood?

49
00:03:33,840 --> 00:03:36,450
Yes, in my home, I had
a beautiful childhood.

50
00:03:36,450 --> 00:03:41,820
But for the outside world, most
of the time, it was taboo to me

51
00:03:41,820 --> 00:03:45,450
because I was a Jewish child.

52
00:03:45,450 --> 00:03:51,120
I went to elementary
school in Tolcsva.

53
00:03:51,120 --> 00:03:56,490
And then for gymnasium, I
went for one year in Budapest.

54
00:03:56,490 --> 00:03:59,880
My mother had two
brothers living there.

55
00:03:59,880 --> 00:04:00,750
So I went up there.

56
00:04:00,750 --> 00:04:04,890
But of course, the
war was coming,

57

00:04:04,890 --> 00:04:08,250
and the news from overseas
was kind of upsetting,

58
00:04:08,250 --> 00:04:11,160
and my father insisted that
I do come home and stay home

59
00:04:11,160 --> 00:04:12,690
with the family.

60
00:04:12,690 --> 00:04:15,360
Excuse, me how large a
community was Tolcsva?

61
00:04:15,360 --> 00:04:21,390
Tolcsva might have had,
maybe, 4,000 or 5,000.

62
00:04:21,390 --> 00:04:24,480
And what percentage was
Jewish of that population?

63
00:04:24,480 --> 00:04:28,403
Of that population,
maybe you had about 200,

64
00:04:28,403 --> 00:04:30,400
250 Jews in there.

65
00:04:30,400 --> 00:04:33,360
It was a shtetl.

66
00:04:33,360 --> 00:04:35,860
And what did your
parents do for a living?

67
00:04:35,860 --> 00:04:38,250
My father had a general store.

68
00:04:38,250 --> 00:04:42,060
Mostly food and some clothing.

69

00:04:42,060 --> 00:04:44,970

And of course, as
the war was ending,

70

00:04:44,970 --> 00:04:48,420

he was allowed to sell
less and less food that

71

00:04:48,420 --> 00:04:50,220

was on coupons, especially.

72

00:04:50,220 --> 00:04:52,340

No sugar, no flour.

73

00:04:52,340 --> 00:04:56,340

The Jewish merchants were not
allowed to sell those things.

74

00:04:56,340 --> 00:05:00,000

We had a little
farm near our home

75

00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:03,670

where we had our own animals.

76

00:05:03,670 --> 00:05:07,860

They had chickens
and turkey and geese.

77

00:05:07,860 --> 00:05:09,180

Those were my playmates.

78

00:05:09,180 --> 00:05:12,660

I remember those days
very well, very vividly.

79

00:05:12,660 --> 00:05:14,550

And we had cows.

80

00:05:14,550 --> 00:05:17,910

I used to play with
the little calf.

81
00:05:17,910 --> 00:05:23,370
And we used to deliver milk,
especially to the rabbi's home,

82
00:05:23,370 --> 00:05:25,920
and to the cantor's
home, because we

83
00:05:25,920 --> 00:05:27,420
were a strictly kosher home.

84
00:05:27,420 --> 00:05:31,470

85
00:05:31,470 --> 00:05:35,280
My father-- of course
I was the only child,

86
00:05:35,280 --> 00:05:38,390
so I was his son
and his daughter.

87
00:05:38,390 --> 00:05:41,240
He was a very religious
man, and he would

88
00:05:41,240 --> 00:05:43,430
go to temple, any occasion.

89
00:05:43,430 --> 00:05:46,370
We had a small
temple in our town.

90
00:05:46,370 --> 00:05:50,933
And I would carry his
tallis, because come Shabbos,

91
00:05:50,933 --> 00:05:52,475
you're not allowed
to carry anything.

92

00:05:52,475 --> 00:05:56,300

93

00:05:56,300 --> 00:05:59,900

I would do everything
to with him or for him,

94

00:05:59,900 --> 00:06:03,290

as much as I was allowed
to do in a Jewish religion.

95

00:06:03,290 --> 00:06:05,480

But those are beautiful
memories which I will

96

00:06:05,480 --> 00:06:08,430

cherish for rest of my life.

97

00:06:08,430 --> 00:06:10,260

My mother was a homemaker.

98

00:06:10,260 --> 00:06:13,580

She stayed in the
background most of the time

99

00:06:13,580 --> 00:06:15,950

to help my father in the store.

100

00:06:15,950 --> 00:06:19,850

Taught me how to make all
those wonderful Hungarian cakes

101

00:06:19,850 --> 00:06:23,090

and cookies and food, which,
thank god she taught me.

102

00:06:23,090 --> 00:06:26,150

I resented it at that
early age, because to get

103

00:06:26,150 --> 00:06:28,520

up early in the morning and
make the dough and all that.

104
00:06:28,520 --> 00:06:32,000
You, as a child, you
don't want to be awake.

105
00:06:32,000 --> 00:06:35,270
But I'm thankful to her
for all those teachings.

106
00:06:35,270 --> 00:06:40,460
We did have, you
would call it here,

107
00:06:40,460 --> 00:06:43,350
a maid who helped
us out in the house,

108
00:06:43,350 --> 00:06:46,450
so my mother was more free to
help my father in the store.

109
00:06:46,450 --> 00:06:49,250
And my grandmother
lived with us.

110
00:06:49,250 --> 00:06:52,340
My grandfather, both my
grandparents lived with us.

111
00:06:52,340 --> 00:06:55,700
I think I was six years old
when my grandfather passed away.

112
00:06:55,700 --> 00:07:00,500
These were my mother's
parents, the [PERSONAL NAME]..

113
00:07:00,500 --> 00:07:03,740
We had relatives in
the nearby towns.

114
00:07:03,740 --> 00:07:05,870
There were cities

already, and there

115

00:07:05,870 --> 00:07:09,260
was a lot of intermingling
with holidays,

116

00:07:09,260 --> 00:07:13,330
or visiting with cousins
and aunts and uncles.

117

00:07:13,330 --> 00:07:19,130
I think the European families
were much more closely knit

118

00:07:19,130 --> 00:07:21,830
than the ones you see
here in the United States.

119

00:07:21,830 --> 00:07:26,270
I'm sorry to say that, but
this is my personal feeling.

120

00:07:26,270 --> 00:07:28,030
You will go out of your way.

121

00:07:28,030 --> 00:07:31,370
It didn't matter how many miles,
just to spend time together.

122

00:07:31,370 --> 00:07:34,640

123

00:07:34,640 --> 00:07:39,140
I grew up, as I said, in
a very religious home,

124

00:07:39,140 --> 00:07:44,600
and I think that upbringing
and that believing in God

125

00:07:44,600 --> 00:07:50,120
saw me through a lot of dark
periods of my life up to today.

126
00:07:50,120 --> 00:07:53,180
Did I didn't know anything
about the war forthcoming?

127
00:07:53,180 --> 00:07:55,820
As I said, I was the only
child, so I really didn't.

128
00:07:55,820 --> 00:08:00,120
My father shielded
me from any bad news.

129
00:08:00,120 --> 00:08:03,800
I know that in
1943 the Jewish men

130
00:08:03,800 --> 00:08:12,050
were taken into forced labor
camps, into neighboring cities,

131
00:08:12,050 --> 00:08:13,760
to do manual labor.

132
00:08:13,760 --> 00:08:17,600
To help out on the farms,
and to clean the streets.

133
00:08:17,600 --> 00:08:21,200
And they were taken away for
some time, a month at the time,

134
00:08:21,200 --> 00:08:23,120
or six weeks at a time.

135
00:08:23,120 --> 00:08:25,160
And I would go and
visit my father.

136
00:08:25,160 --> 00:08:27,890
So I knew that something
was forthcoming.

137

00:08:27,890 --> 00:08:31,370

But the fear wasn't there,
because I still saw him.

138

00:08:31,370 --> 00:08:35,539

He was still able to
come home on furloughs,

139

00:08:35,539 --> 00:08:37,190

and we still were
able to together

140

00:08:37,190 --> 00:08:40,350

be together as a family unit.

141

00:08:40,350 --> 00:08:48,170

But my world really stopped one
day in 1944 when the Hungarian

142

00:08:48,170 --> 00:08:52,070

gendarmes come knocking on
my parents', on my home,

143

00:08:52,070 --> 00:08:55,750

to inform us that they had to
collect all our belongings that

144

00:08:55,750 --> 00:09:00,030

we're able to carry with
us, and all our valuables.

145

00:09:00,030 --> 00:09:02,550

This was April of 1944.

146

00:09:02,550 --> 00:09:06,440

And I know that the Passover
dishes were still out,

147

00:09:06,440 --> 00:09:08,520

so it had to be
during Passover time.

148

00:09:08,520 --> 00:09:11,030

149

00:09:11,030 --> 00:09:17,810

And we collected as much as
we could, and packed it up.

150

00:09:17,810 --> 00:09:22,100

And the next day,
we left our home

151

00:09:22,100 --> 00:09:24,020

and assembled, with
the rest of the Jews

152

00:09:24,020 --> 00:09:27,810

in my town in the town hall.

153

00:09:27,810 --> 00:09:30,860

I remember there were
no Germans there.

154

00:09:30,860 --> 00:09:35,172

This was done or by the
Hungarians gendarmes.

155

00:09:35,172 --> 00:09:39,320

Of course, when we entered,
they registered every family,

156

00:09:39,320 --> 00:09:43,990

and they asked immediately to
give over all our valuables,

157

00:09:43,990 --> 00:09:47,840

meaning any jewelry
or any money.

158

00:09:47,840 --> 00:09:50,060

Some people were
able to hide some,

159

00:09:50,060 --> 00:09:53,390

although it was not revealed
to us where we were going,

160
00:09:53,390 --> 00:09:56,600
but some didn't.

161
00:09:56,600 --> 00:09:59,870
A lot of times, when
I'm asked to lecture,

162
00:09:59,870 --> 00:10:04,550
I'm asked, how could you just
obey and pack up your things

163
00:10:04,550 --> 00:10:06,110
and leave your home?

164
00:10:06,110 --> 00:10:09,440
And not to rebel, and
not to fight back?

165
00:10:09,440 --> 00:10:11,900
Well, there's only one
answer that I could

166
00:10:11,900 --> 00:10:13,220
give to the world for that.

167
00:10:13,220 --> 00:10:16,860
I did not come
from a free world.

168
00:10:16,860 --> 00:10:19,090
I had to do what I was
told to do, especially

169
00:10:19,090 --> 00:10:21,590
because I was a Jew.

170
00:10:21,590 --> 00:10:23,900
And when the gendarmes
told you to do something,

171

00:10:23,900 --> 00:10:27,350

either you did it, or you
were brutally beaten for it,

172

00:10:27,350 --> 00:10:29,950

or even your life
was taken from you.

173

00:10:29,950 --> 00:10:31,590

So we followed
orders, and we did it.

174

00:10:31,590 --> 00:10:34,830

175

00:10:34,830 --> 00:10:38,520

Now, once there, all the
people from my hometown,

176

00:10:38,520 --> 00:10:40,380

and the region
around my hometown,

177

00:10:40,380 --> 00:10:44,760

was gathered our
march started on foot.

178

00:10:44,760 --> 00:10:48,690

Our belongings were put
on horse-drawn wagons,

179

00:10:48,690 --> 00:10:52,230

and the elderly who could not
work were put on the wagons.

180

00:10:52,230 --> 00:10:52,800

Excuse me.

181

00:10:52,800 --> 00:10:55,500

182

00:10:55,500 --> 00:10:59,010

And our march started for
the capital of my region,

183
00:10:59,010 --> 00:11:04,050
which is called SÃ¡toraljaÃ°hely,
where they had a ghetto waiting

184
00:11:04,050 --> 00:11:06,360
for us.

185
00:11:06,360 --> 00:11:10,230
Now, in the ghetto, everyone
was there from the region

186
00:11:10,230 --> 00:11:11,250
where I come from.

187
00:11:11,250 --> 00:11:15,300
Of course, we were together
with all my aunts, cousins,

188
00:11:15,300 --> 00:11:17,730
who lived in that region,
plus my other grandmother,

189
00:11:17,730 --> 00:11:21,160
my father's mother.

190
00:11:21,160 --> 00:11:25,930
We stayed in that
ghetto for a few weeks.

191
00:11:25,930 --> 00:11:28,980
A lot of people committed
suicide in the ghetto,

192
00:11:28,980 --> 00:11:31,260
I remember vividly.

193
00:11:31,260 --> 00:11:32,730
The region where
I come from, there

194

00:11:32,730 --> 00:11:36,630

were no indoor plumbing,
or no indoor heating,

195

00:11:36,630 --> 00:11:38,830

or no electricity.

196

00:11:38,830 --> 00:11:41,850

So we had to use the outhouses.

197

00:11:41,850 --> 00:11:43,290

And when, in the
ghetto, you would

198

00:11:43,290 --> 00:11:44,860

go to the outhouse
in the morning,

199

00:11:44,860 --> 00:11:49,110

you would find a lot of people
with their throats slashed,

200

00:11:49,110 --> 00:11:52,050

or their wrists slashed.

201

00:11:52,050 --> 00:11:57,320

These were people who no had an
idea of what was forthcoming.

202

00:11:57,320 --> 00:12:00,870

And of course, we
had to take care of--

203

00:12:00,870 --> 00:12:02,580

not we, the adults
in the ghetto--

204

00:12:02,580 --> 00:12:06,870

had to take care of all these
dead bodies and bury them.

205

00:12:06,870 --> 00:12:11,610

This was going on every single day until we were transported.

206

00:12:11,610 --> 00:12:16,350

I had one pleasant experience happen to me in a ghetto.

207

00:12:16,350 --> 00:12:20,900

In Europe, you don't fall in love on your own.

208

00:12:20,900 --> 00:12:22,650

I don't know if you're aware of it or not.

209

00:12:22,650 --> 00:12:24,090

You're promised to someone.

210

00:12:24,090 --> 00:12:26,460

A shidduch is made for you.

211

00:12:26,460 --> 00:12:31,740

So my father, a blessed memory in the First World War,

212

00:12:31,740 --> 00:12:35,010

promised his best friend, if they survive,

213

00:12:35,010 --> 00:12:38,820

whoever will get married and have children,

214

00:12:38,820 --> 00:12:41,260

a marriage will take place.

215

00:12:41,260 --> 00:12:44,475

And I was promised to his best friend, who had a son.

216

00:12:44,475 --> 00:12:48,680

And in the ghetto I was introduced to this young man.

217
00:12:48,680 --> 00:12:50,790
Now, this was in May.

218
00:12:50,790 --> 00:12:53,580
I was 14 years old.

219
00:12:53,580 --> 00:12:55,620
He was 18.

220
00:12:55,620 --> 00:12:58,470
And of course, immediately
asked my father

221
00:12:58,470 --> 00:13:00,240
that the marriage
should take place now.

222
00:13:00,240 --> 00:13:02,640
The promise was made to him.

223
00:13:02,640 --> 00:13:06,240
I think I was pretty mature
young lady at that age.

224
00:13:06,240 --> 00:13:08,940
But my father said
to him, now, look.

225
00:13:08,940 --> 00:13:11,570
My word will stand.

226
00:13:11,570 --> 00:13:15,450
The future for all of us is
very uncertain right now,

227
00:13:15,450 --> 00:13:18,080
but I promise you, like I
did your father, wherever

228
00:13:18,080 --> 00:13:21,980
we go on and will come back,

that marriage will take place.

229

00:13:21,980 --> 00:13:24,960

And of course, I survived,
but the young man didn't, so

230

00:13:24,960 --> 00:13:28,440

that marriage never took place.

231

00:13:28,440 --> 00:13:30,060

But going back.

232

00:13:30,060 --> 00:13:33,210

We stayed in the ghetto
with minimal food

233

00:13:33,210 --> 00:13:35,640

that was that we were
able to bring with us,

234

00:13:35,640 --> 00:13:38,820

and what the government
there was able to give us.

235

00:13:38,820 --> 00:13:40,440

Wanted to give us, I should say.

236

00:13:40,440 --> 00:13:43,140

237

00:13:43,140 --> 00:13:47,280

In the rooms, they put
four or five families,

238

00:13:47,280 --> 00:13:50,610

and they had straw mattresses
on the floor which we slept on.

239

00:13:50,610 --> 00:13:53,860

240

00:13:53,860 --> 00:13:55,930

These were the
areas, I think, where

241
00:13:55,930 --> 00:13:59,860
the Gypsies in Hungary, or the
unwanted, used to be living.

242
00:13:59,860 --> 00:14:04,030
And they just dislocated
them from their homes,

243
00:14:04,030 --> 00:14:07,610
and they made the
ghetto out of it.

244
00:14:07,610 --> 00:14:09,670
Of course, one day, we
were told, once again,

245
00:14:09,670 --> 00:14:15,130
to collect all our
belongings, and we were being

246
00:14:15,130 --> 00:14:19,930
shipped into a labor camp.

247
00:14:19,930 --> 00:14:23,590
Not to worry, the families
will remain together.

248
00:14:23,590 --> 00:14:26,920
And we all assembled and we
marched towards the railroad

249
00:14:26,920 --> 00:14:28,510
station.

250
00:14:28,510 --> 00:14:30,730
This was my very
first time that I

251
00:14:30,730 --> 00:14:33,160
saw what a German as

a soldier looks like.

252

00:14:33,160 --> 00:14:36,470

253

00:14:36,470 --> 00:14:39,990

They took over the
screaming enjoyment

254

00:14:39,990 --> 00:14:45,950

to mach schnell, get
in the railroad cars,

255

00:14:45,950 --> 00:14:51,375

push you in there with their
police dogs at their side.

256

00:14:51,375 --> 00:14:53,900

They pushed in as many as
they could push in there.

257

00:14:53,900 --> 00:14:56,870

I think in my
cattle car must have

258

00:14:56,870 --> 00:14:59,480

been at least 100 people there.

259

00:14:59,480 --> 00:15:00,840

Was the entire ghetto dissolved?

260

00:15:00,840 --> 00:15:01,340

Yes.

261

00:15:01,340 --> 00:15:02,673

Or were some people left behind?

262

00:15:02,673 --> 00:15:03,610

No.

263

00:15:03,610 --> 00:15:09,320

That was the first transport

really out of that region.

264

00:15:09,320 --> 00:15:15,650

I must tell you that there were
15,000 people from my region

265

00:15:15,650 --> 00:15:16,880

that was transported.

266

00:15:16,880 --> 00:15:23,540

Out of the 15,000, to my best
of my knowledge, 250 survived.

267

00:15:23,540 --> 00:15:27,680

Out of that 15,000, 68
was my immediate family

268

00:15:27,680 --> 00:15:29,975

that I could count to survive.

269

00:15:29,975 --> 00:15:34,330

270

00:15:34,330 --> 00:15:36,040

Going back to the transports.

271

00:15:36,040 --> 00:15:39,290

272

00:15:39,290 --> 00:15:41,400

We got into the cattle cars.

273

00:15:41,400 --> 00:15:44,010

Of course, there was
just standing room only.

274

00:15:44,010 --> 00:15:46,340

If you could crouch
yourself down, you did.

275

00:15:46,340 --> 00:15:51,120

They put one pail in

for bathroom facilities.

276

00:15:51,120 --> 00:15:53,970

Water by the door.

277

00:15:53,970 --> 00:15:56,980

As they opened the door on
the transport with a ladle,

278

00:15:56,980 --> 00:16:01,970

they would come, and whoever was
near it was able to have some.

279

00:16:01,970 --> 00:16:05,830

I would say more than one third
didn't make it to Auschwitz

280

00:16:05,830 --> 00:16:06,330

alive.

281

00:16:06,330 --> 00:16:09,310

282

00:16:09,310 --> 00:16:12,990

I know there were
infants on the train

283

00:16:12,990 --> 00:16:18,420

that I was on, in the
car, and the mothers just

284

00:16:18,420 --> 00:16:20,670

really twisted the neck
of their own infant

285

00:16:20,670 --> 00:16:22,360

just to silence them.

286

00:16:22,360 --> 00:16:28,650

They weren't able to feed
them, and the children just

287

00:16:28,650 --> 00:16:31,360
wouldn't be quiet.

288
00:16:31,360 --> 00:16:35,520
You know, an infant, you can't
comprehend what is going on.

289
00:16:35,520 --> 00:16:39,000
Our food ran out, because the
transport took quite a few days

290
00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:40,030
to get to Auschwitz.

291
00:16:40,030 --> 00:16:40,530
Why?

292
00:16:40,530 --> 00:16:43,520
I find that out now
by reading a lot.

293
00:16:43,520 --> 00:16:47,010
That they had to, every time
they came to, they had to stop.

294
00:16:47,010 --> 00:16:48,960
They had to get a new conductor.

295
00:16:48,960 --> 00:16:53,060
They had to pay so much in
money to go through that time

296
00:16:53,060 --> 00:16:53,655
to the people.

297
00:16:53,655 --> 00:16:57,150

298
00:16:57,150 --> 00:17:01,770
This was already May,
and the outside world

299

00:17:01,770 --> 00:17:05,040
was coming alive
after the winter.

300
00:17:05,040 --> 00:17:08,130
I remember looking through
the slits of the train.

301
00:17:08,130 --> 00:17:12,220
The trees were starting
to become green.

302
00:17:12,220 --> 00:17:15,180
Some were in flowers.

303
00:17:15,180 --> 00:17:17,310
The irony of it is
that the outside world

304
00:17:17,310 --> 00:17:21,950
was becoming alive, and my
world was coming to an end.

305
00:17:21,950 --> 00:17:24,599

306
00:17:24,599 --> 00:17:30,320
The German race, in
my mind and heart,

307
00:17:30,320 --> 00:17:32,780
is a brilliant,
highly educated race.

308
00:17:32,780 --> 00:17:34,410
And they knew what
they were doing.

309
00:17:34,410 --> 00:17:39,650
There was very well thought
out, and very well done.

310
00:17:39,650 --> 00:17:43,670

As you were coming towards
the gate of Auschwitz,

311
00:17:43,670 --> 00:17:48,500
you weren't scared, even though
you were dehumanized already

312
00:17:48,500 --> 00:17:50,180
in those cattle cars.

313
00:17:50,180 --> 00:17:52,340
But number one, you were
still with your family.

314
00:17:52,340 --> 00:17:56,080
Number two, when you approached
these iron gates in Auschwitz

315
00:17:56,080 --> 00:17:57,770
that said arbeit mach frei.

316
00:17:57,770 --> 00:18:00,680

317
00:18:00,680 --> 00:18:04,490
Before you came to
it, there was one area

318
00:18:04,490 --> 00:18:11,060
that had small little homes
with flowers and children

319
00:18:11,060 --> 00:18:13,550
running around outside.

320
00:18:13,550 --> 00:18:15,180
Family units together.

321
00:18:15,180 --> 00:18:17,570
So this is what you saw.

322
00:18:17,570 --> 00:18:21,470

Now I once again,
believe firmly,

323
00:18:21,470 --> 00:18:26,000
if the world Red Cross ever
did go to see the camps,

324
00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:28,550
this is the place that
the Germans showed them.

325
00:18:28,550 --> 00:18:31,820
They never were allowed to
go through the iron gate that

326
00:18:31,820 --> 00:18:34,280
said arbeit mach frei.

327
00:18:34,280 --> 00:18:37,940
Because once you went
through that iron gate,

328
00:18:37,940 --> 00:18:40,160
you really entered
into hell itself.

329
00:18:40,160 --> 00:18:46,340

330
00:18:46,340 --> 00:18:51,090
They quickly opened the
doors on our trains,

331
00:18:51,090 --> 00:18:56,520
and the capos, who
were all Polish men--

332
00:18:56,520 --> 00:18:58,440
Germans did not
dirty their hands.

333
00:18:58,440 --> 00:19:00,450
They didn't handle any of us.

334
00:19:00,450 --> 00:19:02,400
They just stood there
and screamed out

335
00:19:02,400 --> 00:19:05,270
orders to get out of
those cattle cars.

336
00:19:05,270 --> 00:19:07,380
Mach, you know,
schnell, schnell.

337
00:19:07,380 --> 00:19:10,170
Get out, raus.

338
00:19:10,170 --> 00:19:14,640
And leave all your
belongings on the cattle car.

339
00:19:14,640 --> 00:19:17,205
They made two lines,
one men and one women.

340
00:19:17,205 --> 00:19:20,010

341
00:19:20,010 --> 00:19:24,070
The German soldiers were
with their police dogs.

342
00:19:24,070 --> 00:19:29,560
The capos were emptying the
trains pulling us out of it.

343
00:19:29,560 --> 00:19:32,580
And I remember one
figure that really

344
00:19:32,580 --> 00:19:35,200
is burnt into my brain
for the rest of my life,

345

00:19:35,200 --> 00:19:38,442
and that was Dr. Mengele.

346

00:19:38,442 --> 00:19:42,490
In leather boots, in
his leather jacket,

347

00:19:42,490 --> 00:19:47,460
leather pants, with his dog at
his side and his leather stick.

348

00:19:47,460 --> 00:19:48,900
He played God.

349

00:19:48,900 --> 00:19:51,320
That stick he pointed.

350

00:19:51,320 --> 00:19:55,350
If he pointed it to the right,
you went to the crematorium.

351

00:19:55,350 --> 00:19:59,430
If he pointed it to the
left, for the time being,

352

00:19:59,430 --> 00:20:02,100
you stayed alive, and you
went into the other side

353

00:20:02,100 --> 00:20:03,353
of Auschwitz.

354

00:20:03,353 --> 00:20:06,670

355

00:20:06,670 --> 00:20:13,690
My father risked and received
a tremendous beating.

356

00:20:13,690 --> 00:20:16,390
He ran back from
the line that he was

357
00:20:16,390 --> 00:20:18,400
with his two other brothers.

358
00:20:18,400 --> 00:20:20,930
And he put his two
hands on my head,

359
00:20:20,930 --> 00:20:24,730
like he did every Friday night,
and he said his last blessing

360
00:20:24,730 --> 00:20:25,300
over me.

361
00:20:25,300 --> 00:20:27,960

362
00:20:27,960 --> 00:20:32,095
And he-- I'm sorry.

363
00:20:32,095 --> 00:20:32,720
It's all right.

364
00:20:32,720 --> 00:20:35,530

365
00:20:35,530 --> 00:20:39,730
He asked me to take
care of myself,

366
00:20:39,730 --> 00:20:41,920
and I should be a
good girl for him.

367
00:20:41,920 --> 00:20:47,420

368
00:20:47,420 --> 00:20:53,070
After so many years, I
try not to get emotional.

369

00:20:53,070 --> 00:20:54,100

Where was your mother?

370

00:20:54,100 --> 00:20:56,380

My mother was already
separated from me

371

00:20:56,380 --> 00:21:02,400

with her mother, and her
sister-in-law, and my two

372

00:21:02,400 --> 00:21:04,140

younger cousins.

373

00:21:04,140 --> 00:21:07,630

And I stayed with my father's
sister and her sister-in-law.

374

00:21:07,630 --> 00:21:10,200

375

00:21:10,200 --> 00:21:13,360

My mother went straight to
the crematorium that day

376

00:21:13,360 --> 00:21:16,050

with her mother and
sister-in-law and the two

377

00:21:16,050 --> 00:21:20,250

younger cousins of mine.

378

00:21:20,250 --> 00:21:23,760

I stayed with my aunt
and her sister-in-law,

379

00:21:23,760 --> 00:21:26,710

and we ran towards the
other side of the camp.

380

00:21:26,710 --> 00:21:29,710

381
00:21:29,710 --> 00:21:34,120
And as we march towards the camp
where the people were staying

382
00:21:34,120 --> 00:21:40,100
alive, there was one
distant cousin of mine

383
00:21:40,100 --> 00:21:43,220
who yelled out to my
aunt, who recognized us.

384
00:21:43,220 --> 00:21:45,860
Who came maybe a
day or two before,

385
00:21:45,860 --> 00:21:48,470
from another region of Hungary.

386
00:21:48,470 --> 00:21:53,240
And yelled out to my aunt,
lie about Margaret's age,

387
00:21:53,240 --> 00:21:55,070
because if you
tell them she's 14,

388
00:21:55,070 --> 00:21:58,520
they will send her back
to the crematorium.

389
00:21:58,520 --> 00:22:01,690
So at that moment, I
became 18 years old.

390
00:22:01,690 --> 00:22:05,780
I had difficulty, when I was
liberated, to reclaim myself.

391
00:22:05,780 --> 00:22:08,690
But with the help of some of
my friends who were with me,

392
00:22:08,690 --> 00:22:10,700
I was able to accomplish that.

393
00:22:10,700 --> 00:22:12,860
Can I go back over something
for a moment, Margit?

394
00:22:12,860 --> 00:22:15,170
You mentioned about your
father being beaten.

395
00:22:15,170 --> 00:22:18,230
I know it's painful, but did you
actually see him being beaten?

396
00:22:18,230 --> 00:22:18,890
Oh yes.

397
00:22:18,890 --> 00:22:20,300
Oh yes.

398
00:22:20,300 --> 00:22:23,210
He was pulled away
from me, and he

399
00:22:23,210 --> 00:22:26,390
was beaten for
getting out of line,

400
00:22:26,390 --> 00:22:28,600
coming over to say his
last goodbye to me.

401
00:22:28,600 --> 00:22:31,920

402
00:22:31,920 --> 00:22:36,070
My mother just waved to me,
and we never said our goodbyes.

403
00:22:36,070 --> 00:22:40,260

404

00:22:40,260 --> 00:22:45,210

And my aunt, of course,
embraced me and calmed me down.

405

00:22:45,210 --> 00:22:49,290

I think I was in more of a
shock than hysteria or crying

406

00:22:49,290 --> 00:22:50,700

or anything.

407

00:22:50,700 --> 00:22:52,650

And as we marched
towards the place

408

00:22:52,650 --> 00:23:03,950

where they disrobed you
and shaved all your hair,

409

00:23:03,950 --> 00:23:06,730

I remember, that's when
I first broke down.

410

00:23:06,730 --> 00:23:10,310

Because there is
nothing more frightening

411

00:23:10,310 --> 00:23:16,370

than see a room full of
women and some young ladies,

412

00:23:16,370 --> 00:23:21,500

not children, starkly
naked with nothing on you,

413

00:23:21,500 --> 00:23:22,220

your hair shaved.

414

00:23:22,220 --> 00:23:24,900

You don't recognize anyone.

415

00:23:24,900 --> 00:23:26,290

So I was 14 years old.

416

00:23:26,290 --> 00:23:28,220

I was petrified.

417

00:23:28,220 --> 00:23:31,430

Of course, my aunt reached for me, tried to cover herself,

418

00:23:31,430 --> 00:23:34,550

and reached for me to be quiet.

419

00:23:34,550 --> 00:23:36,260

You'll be all right,
just be quiet.

420

00:23:36,260 --> 00:23:38,180

And I went through
that procession

421

00:23:38,180 --> 00:23:41,070

with her and her sister-in-law.

422

00:23:41,070 --> 00:23:43,310

Now, the Germans were
notorious to keep you

423

00:23:43,310 --> 00:23:46,080

in line for hours
and hours at a time

424

00:23:46,080 --> 00:23:48,540

for counting and recounting.

425

00:23:48,540 --> 00:23:49,040

Why?

426

00:23:49,040 --> 00:23:50,270

I don't know.

427

00:23:50,270 --> 00:23:53,150

To escape, where could
you have escaped?

428

00:23:53,150 --> 00:23:55,040

I'm talking about my group.

429

00:23:55,040 --> 00:23:57,350

You were in Auschwitz.

430

00:23:57,350 --> 00:24:00,140

The whole camp was
enclosed with barbed wires

431

00:24:00,140 --> 00:24:02,420

full of electricity.

432

00:24:02,420 --> 00:24:04,790

If you would have
run anywhere, there

433

00:24:04,790 --> 00:24:08,510

were German gestapos
who were watching you

434

00:24:08,510 --> 00:24:09,452

from the watchtower.

435

00:24:09,452 --> 00:24:10,910

Either they would
have shocked you,

436

00:24:10,910 --> 00:24:14,010

or you would have
been electrocuted.

437

00:24:14,010 --> 00:24:16,520

But yet, they continued
their counting and recounting

438

00:24:16,520 --> 00:24:20,630

that would wake you up
wee hours of the morning.

439

00:24:20,630 --> 00:24:22,220

After we went through
the procedure,

440

00:24:22,220 --> 00:24:29,460

I was given a cheesecloth dress
with a prison number on it,

441

00:24:29,460 --> 00:24:32,240

and a pair of wooden shoes.

442

00:24:32,240 --> 00:24:35,750

And that was my garment
for the time being.

443

00:24:35,750 --> 00:24:39,650

We were eventually allowed
to go into the barracks,

444

00:24:39,650 --> 00:24:42,890

and stayed there.

445

00:24:42,890 --> 00:24:46,970

The facilities
were unbelievable.

446

00:24:46,970 --> 00:24:50,600

I remember one thing
that used to really

447

00:24:50,600 --> 00:24:54,520

make me sick to my stomach,
and used to burn my eyes.

448

00:24:54,520 --> 00:24:59,150

That horrible, horrible fume
coming out of the gas chambers.

449

00:24:59,150 --> 00:25:00,680

Did you know what it was?

450

00:25:00,680 --> 00:25:09,290
Not on my first day of arrival,
but I became smart overnight.

451
00:25:09,290 --> 00:25:11,890
Because transports were
coming in every single day,

452
00:25:11,890 --> 00:25:15,710
so the furnaces would go on
day and night, day and night.

453
00:25:15,710 --> 00:25:19,070
And the fume was, I mean,
it just burned your nose,

454
00:25:19,070 --> 00:25:20,900
it burned your eyes.

455
00:25:20,900 --> 00:25:23,600
You couldn't smell it.

456
00:25:23,600 --> 00:25:26,150
You would cough and whatnot.

457
00:25:26,150 --> 00:25:29,860
My barracks were not
that far away from it.

458
00:25:29,860 --> 00:25:32,350
That I remember vividly.

459
00:25:32,350 --> 00:25:35,390
Now, I did not stay
in Auschwitz too long.

460
00:25:35,390 --> 00:25:37,520
See, the Germans
were also notorious

461
00:25:37,520 --> 00:25:41,440
not to keep you in
one camp too long.

462
00:25:41,440 --> 00:25:43,580
Stayed in Auschwitz
for a few weeks,

463
00:25:43,580 --> 00:25:47,220
and then I was sent to Krakow.

464
00:25:47,220 --> 00:25:50,660
In Krakow, I was sent with my
aunt and her sister-in-law.

465
00:25:50,660 --> 00:25:53,360
The three of us were
always together.

466
00:25:53,360 --> 00:25:57,890
In Krakow, I worked in a quarry.

467
00:25:57,890 --> 00:26:03,170
Chiseling stones out of a wall,
lifting them and putting them

468
00:26:03,170 --> 00:26:07,670
on a lorry, and then pushing
them from one end of the quarry

469
00:26:07,670 --> 00:26:09,040
to the other.

470
00:26:09,040 --> 00:26:11,240
Unloading, and going back.

471
00:26:11,240 --> 00:26:13,490
If you didn't move
fast enough, or if you

472
00:26:13,490 --> 00:26:16,450
didn't lift a heavy
enough stone quick enough,

473
00:26:16,450 --> 00:26:20,360

you got the beatings
of little life.

474
00:26:20,360 --> 00:26:24,860
The Germans had one game,
which they played in Krakow.

475
00:26:24,860 --> 00:26:28,333
I don't know if any of you
are aware of it or not.

476
00:26:28,333 --> 00:26:29,750
Once again, they
would wake you up

477
00:26:29,750 --> 00:26:33,200
when it's still dark outside,
and you would have to assemble,

478
00:26:33,200 --> 00:26:35,760
stay on line.

479
00:26:35,760 --> 00:26:38,640
And as you stayed on line, they
would shoot every tenth person

480
00:26:38,640 --> 00:26:42,310
right in front of you.

481
00:26:42,310 --> 00:26:45,220
I don't know why I was
so lucky, because I

482
00:26:45,220 --> 00:26:46,900
will live with
this guilt of being

483
00:26:46,900 --> 00:26:50,590
alive for the rest of my life,
which will go into in detail

484
00:26:50,590 --> 00:26:52,420
later.

485
00:26:52,420 --> 00:26:59,380
But either I ended up in the
end or a few away from it.

486
00:26:59,380 --> 00:27:02,130
Once, I ended up
next to the person.

487
00:27:02,130 --> 00:27:04,660
And of course, we had to
collect all those bodies.

488
00:27:04,660 --> 00:27:08,350
Still alive, many of
them, put them on trucks,

489
00:27:08,350 --> 00:27:10,300
and they were buried
in mass graves

490
00:27:10,300 --> 00:27:12,500
because Krakow did not
have a crematorium.

491
00:27:12,500 --> 00:27:15,350

492
00:27:15,350 --> 00:27:18,090
And then, we would
be served our soup,

493
00:27:18,090 --> 00:27:21,690
which I could close my eyes
and still see in one of me.

494
00:27:21,690 --> 00:27:26,790
Was a green soup with
cabbage, and the green worms

495
00:27:26,790 --> 00:27:29,040
swimming in it,
and whatever else

496

00:27:29,040 --> 00:27:34,770

they could throw into it, and
a piece of black bread with it.

497

00:27:34,770 --> 00:27:36,970

Why did we eat it?

498

00:27:36,970 --> 00:27:40,280

There was just a will
in you to defy them,

499

00:27:40,280 --> 00:27:43,320

that I'm going to stay alive,
even though you didn't want to.

500

00:27:43,320 --> 00:27:46,800

But something inside of
you made you do this.

501

00:27:46,800 --> 00:27:50,610

And you begged and forced your
friends and your relatives

502

00:27:50,610 --> 00:27:53,320

who were with you to eat, no
matter what it tastes like.

503

00:27:53,320 --> 00:27:56,670

Was your aunt and
your other relatives--

504

00:27:56,670 --> 00:28:00,157

Her sister-in-law and my
aunt were with me in Krakow.

505

00:28:00,157 --> 00:28:03,640

506

00:28:03,640 --> 00:28:07,600

I stayed in Krakow, once again,
for maybe six weeks or eight

507

00:28:07,600 --> 00:28:10,330

weeks, and then I was
sent back to Auschwitz

508

00:28:10,330 --> 00:28:12,820

for the second time.

509

00:28:12,820 --> 00:28:15,250

When I went back to Auschwitz
for the second time,

510

00:28:15,250 --> 00:28:23,310

I received my tattoo
number, which is A23029.

511

00:28:23,310 --> 00:28:26,650

The second time
back in Auschwitz,

512

00:28:26,650 --> 00:28:33,460

I worked where they made the
food in these big kettles they

513

00:28:33,460 --> 00:28:35,530

cooked the soups in.

514

00:28:35,530 --> 00:28:38,950

They would make a hole in
the ground and make a fire

515

00:28:38,950 --> 00:28:40,750

and put the kettles on it.

516

00:28:40,750 --> 00:28:43,390

My job was to clean
up those kettles

517

00:28:43,390 --> 00:28:47,170

to the best of my ability
for the next meal.

518

00:28:47,170 --> 00:28:49,450

And I remember, I
would just lick it off

519
00:28:49,450 --> 00:28:51,730
with my finger and
my tongue as much

520
00:28:51,730 --> 00:28:54,520
as I could to get as much
more nourishment out of it

521
00:28:54,520 --> 00:28:57,550
as I could.

522
00:28:57,550 --> 00:28:59,830
I saw quite a few
horrible things

523
00:28:59,830 --> 00:29:03,490
going on the second
time, but once again, I

524
00:29:03,490 --> 00:29:08,110
was more wiser and know
more what was going on.

525
00:29:08,110 --> 00:29:10,110
Learned a lot more than
when I first arrived.

526
00:29:10,110 --> 00:29:13,790

527
00:29:13,790 --> 00:29:17,020
I saw a very dear friend
of mine, a young girl,

528
00:29:17,020 --> 00:29:19,830
she was maybe a year and
a half older than I was,

529
00:29:19,830 --> 00:29:23,320
recognizing her mother on the

other side of the barbed wire

530
00:29:23,320 --> 00:29:24,520
in another barracks.

531
00:29:24,520 --> 00:29:27,130
And running forwards
it, calling her mother,

532
00:29:27,130 --> 00:29:29,380
and both running, touching
the electric wire,

533
00:29:29,380 --> 00:29:31,860
and board getting
electrocuted at the same time.

534
00:29:31,860 --> 00:29:36,660

535
00:29:36,660 --> 00:29:42,500
I saw a lot of my good-looking
inmates being taken away

536
00:29:42,500 --> 00:29:44,180
and being used as prostitutes.

537
00:29:44,180 --> 00:29:49,050

538
00:29:49,050 --> 00:29:54,210
Once again, we had the
capos taking care of us.

539
00:29:54,210 --> 00:29:59,040
Life was like, by then,
you were dehumanized.

540
00:29:59,040 --> 00:30:02,460
You did as you were told.

541
00:30:02,460 --> 00:30:05,040

I'm sure they gave you
something in your food

542
00:30:05,040 --> 00:30:06,830
that stopped your--

543
00:30:06,830 --> 00:30:08,290
girls who were
menstruating stopped

544
00:30:08,290 --> 00:30:09,390
their menstrual periods.

545
00:30:09,390 --> 00:30:16,800
Stopped all type of a
growth inside of you.

546
00:30:16,800 --> 00:30:19,460
And you followed orders.

547
00:30:19,460 --> 00:30:23,310
A lot of people ask me on my
lectures, didn't you rebel?

548
00:30:23,310 --> 00:30:24,900
Didn't you tried to escape?

549
00:30:24,900 --> 00:30:27,620
I'm sure there was
some rebelling going

550
00:30:27,620 --> 00:30:29,670
in different
concentration camps.

551
00:30:29,670 --> 00:30:33,840
But I never saw it, because it
didn't happen with my group.

552
00:30:33,840 --> 00:30:36,880

553

00:30:36,880 --> 00:30:40,060
From Auschwitz, I
was sent to Grunberg.

554
00:30:40,060 --> 00:30:42,860

555
00:30:42,860 --> 00:30:47,930
In Grunberg, I worked in
an ammunition factory.

556
00:30:47,930 --> 00:30:51,320
They took 2000
Hungarian inmates,

557
00:30:51,320 --> 00:30:53,650
and 2000 Polish inmates.

558
00:30:53,650 --> 00:30:54,650
You said from Auschwitz.

559
00:30:54,650 --> 00:30:56,000
Do you mean from Krakow?

560
00:30:56,000 --> 00:30:56,600
No.

561
00:30:56,600 --> 00:30:59,330
From Krakow, I went
back to Auschwitz,

562
00:30:59,330 --> 00:31:01,470
where I received my tattoo.

563
00:31:01,470 --> 00:31:06,590
Then, from Auschwitz, I was
sent to Grunberg, where I worked

564
00:31:06,590 --> 00:31:09,140
in an ammunition factory.

565
00:31:09,140 --> 00:31:12,530

You see, the war was ending.

566

00:31:12,530 --> 00:31:18,110

Coming from Hungary, we only had
one year of concentration camp.

567

00:31:18,110 --> 00:31:21,650

Not like the Polish
Jews or the other Jews.

568

00:31:21,650 --> 00:31:24,440

So the war was ending, and
they needed all the labor

569

00:31:24,440 --> 00:31:26,550

that they could get.

570

00:31:26,550 --> 00:31:28,890

And I was making
munitions in a factory.

571

00:31:28,890 --> 00:31:32,850

572

00:31:32,850 --> 00:31:37,200

Life was much more bearable
there, because they needed you.

573

00:31:37,200 --> 00:31:40,830

And believe it or not,
some of their people

574

00:31:40,830 --> 00:31:43,830

risked their lives
by sometimes sneaking

575

00:31:43,830 --> 00:31:47,040

an extra piece of bread
in under their skirt

576

00:31:47,040 --> 00:31:50,970

and following you into the
bathroom, and giving it to you,

577

00:31:50,970 --> 00:31:53,315
and you would eat
it right there.

578

00:31:53,315 --> 00:31:54,690
If they would have
gotten caught,

579

00:31:54,690 --> 00:31:57,090
they would have been
punished, killed, or so

580

00:31:57,090 --> 00:32:01,800
would I. Prisoners who
received that food.

581

00:32:01,800 --> 00:32:05,250
We lived in a barracks
on straw beds,

582

00:32:05,250 --> 00:32:09,705
but you were out
of the environment

583

00:32:09,705 --> 00:32:12,520
of so-called
concentration camps,

584

00:32:12,520 --> 00:32:15,480
so life was more bearable there.

585

00:32:15,480 --> 00:32:16,630
Which was short lived.

586

00:32:16,630 --> 00:32:20,670

587

00:32:20,670 --> 00:32:22,570
Do you want me to go
to that person who

588

00:32:22,570 --> 00:32:25,870
I found after all these years?

589
00:32:25,870 --> 00:32:26,650
Yes.

590
00:32:26,650 --> 00:32:28,320
Because this is where she was.

591
00:32:28,320 --> 00:32:29,680
Yeah.

592
00:32:29,680 --> 00:32:35,768
I had the opportunity
of meeting someone

593
00:32:35,768 --> 00:32:36,935
who was with me in Grunberg.

594
00:32:36,935 --> 00:32:42,070

595
00:32:42,070 --> 00:32:45,460
Her name is Gerda Weiss Klein.

596
00:32:45,460 --> 00:32:52,690
We were both together in
Grunberg, and this October

597
00:32:52,690 --> 00:32:57,220
15th, she came to my community
in Bridgewater, New Jersey,

598
00:32:57,220 --> 00:33:00,760
to speak at the
Pacesetters Dinner.

599
00:33:00,760 --> 00:33:04,990
And while she was
giving her life story,

600
00:33:04,990 --> 00:33:07,120

we both looked at each
other, and realized

601
00:33:07,120 --> 00:33:08,960
we were both together.

602
00:33:08,960 --> 00:33:12,317
So after 40-some odd
years, 45 years--

603
00:33:12,317 --> 00:33:13,150
no, more than that--

604
00:33:13,150 --> 00:33:17,890
47 years, we discovered that we
were both in Grunberg together.

605
00:33:17,890 --> 00:33:20,920
We were both on a death
march out of Grunberg

606
00:33:20,920 --> 00:33:25,130
to our final camps.

607
00:33:25,130 --> 00:33:28,390
And she didn't realize
that I survived.

608
00:33:28,390 --> 00:33:30,360
I didn't realize
that she survived.

609
00:33:30,360 --> 00:33:33,870
And it was a great
reunion for both of us.

610
00:33:33,870 --> 00:33:35,650
And I only wish and
prayed that there

611
00:33:35,650 --> 00:33:40,420
were more reunions like this
going on through the world.

612
00:33:40,420 --> 00:33:41,530
Going back to my story.

613
00:33:41,530 --> 00:33:44,550

614
00:33:44,550 --> 00:33:47,620
When I left Grunberg,
we left on foot.

615
00:33:47,620 --> 00:33:53,215
The Germans did not
allow any transports

616
00:33:53,215 --> 00:33:56,698
on trains anymore or on buses.

617
00:33:56,698 --> 00:33:58,240
This was in the
middle of the winter.

618
00:33:58,240 --> 00:34:01,180
This is why it's
called a death march.

619
00:34:01,180 --> 00:34:06,760
On foot, in a deep
snow, we marched.

620
00:34:06,760 --> 00:34:09,360
One thing we had plenty
of, and that's liquid.

621
00:34:09,360 --> 00:34:11,830
Because if you take the
snow, put it in your mouth,

622
00:34:11,830 --> 00:34:15,130
you have plenty of fluid.

623
00:34:15,130 --> 00:34:19,360

A lot of my inmates fell in
the snow and froze to death.

624
00:34:19,360 --> 00:34:22,570
Believe it or not, the
Germans didn't even

625
00:34:22,570 --> 00:34:24,370
give them the dignity
of shooting them

626
00:34:24,370 --> 00:34:25,570
to death with a bullet.

627
00:34:25,570 --> 00:34:28,900
They didn't want to
waste their bullets.

628
00:34:28,900 --> 00:34:33,489
I remember, once,
specifically, we

629
00:34:33,489 --> 00:34:37,920
came upon a big
barn that had hay,

630
00:34:37,920 --> 00:34:41,429
and we spent the night
indoors in this barn.

631
00:34:41,429 --> 00:34:44,199
As many of us on
top of one another.

632
00:34:44,199 --> 00:34:48,159
Just to be in indoors
somewhere, we didn't care.

633
00:34:48,159 --> 00:34:52,300
But in Europe, there wasn't
that much refrigeration,

634
00:34:52,300 --> 00:35:00,400

so to keep like potatoes,
or kohlrabi, or beets,

635
00:35:00,400 --> 00:35:05,960
you put it amongst hay, and
it stays, believe it or not.

636
00:35:05,960 --> 00:35:07,830
It doesn't get frozen.

637
00:35:07,830 --> 00:35:11,800
So as we arrived into the barn,
we were looking to lay down.

638
00:35:11,800 --> 00:35:16,300
We found pieces of raw
vegetable and we ate them.

639
00:35:16,300 --> 00:35:20,350
And some of the people went
on the other side of the barn

640
00:35:20,350 --> 00:35:22,810
and found some live chickens.

641
00:35:22,810 --> 00:35:25,000
And we just twisted
off their necks

642
00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:29,710
and plucked their
feathers and ate them raw.

643
00:35:29,710 --> 00:35:33,740
Starved out we were, not
realizing how deathly sick

644
00:35:33,740 --> 00:35:36,760
we all got from it.

645
00:35:36,760 --> 00:35:39,820
We had nothing to eat but the
snow, and to eat raw vegetables

646
00:35:39,820 --> 00:35:47,110
and eat raw meat, we all got
terrible, terrible, diarrheas

647
00:35:47,110 --> 00:35:48,040
and whatnot from it.

648
00:35:48,040 --> 00:35:50,050
We were very sick from it.

649
00:35:50,050 --> 00:35:53,350
But our march continued,
and my final destination

650
00:35:53,350 --> 00:35:56,260
was Bergen-Belsen.

651
00:35:56,260 --> 00:36:00,850
I don't know if any of you read
about life in Bergen-Belsen.

652
00:36:00,850 --> 00:36:04,570
But that was really the pits.

653
00:36:04,570 --> 00:36:07,570
It was hell in itself.

654
00:36:07,570 --> 00:36:10,990
People were just deteriorated.

655
00:36:10,990 --> 00:36:12,750
Bodies were covered with lice.

656
00:36:12,750 --> 00:36:15,880

657
00:36:15,880 --> 00:36:21,580
Diphtheria and typhoid
was rampant in the camp.

658

00:36:21,580 --> 00:36:25,810

No facilities to burn the
bodies or bury the bodies.

659

00:36:25,810 --> 00:36:28,610

Just piling them up
on top of one another.

660

00:36:28,610 --> 00:36:31,870

This is where you saw
those heaps of corpses,

661

00:36:31,870 --> 00:36:34,600

at Bergen-Belsen
was one of them.

662

00:36:34,600 --> 00:36:38,930

We were put into barracks
that didn't even have straw.

663

00:36:38,930 --> 00:36:42,205

Just the concrete floors
and the cinder block walls.

664

00:36:42,205 --> 00:36:44,870

665

00:36:44,870 --> 00:36:47,770

And people who didn't
have strength to go out--

666

00:36:47,770 --> 00:36:49,520

they didn't even have
outhouses, they just

667

00:36:49,520 --> 00:36:53,520

made holes in the ground
to relieve yourself--

668

00:36:53,520 --> 00:36:56,680

would just do
whatever they have to,

669

00:36:56,680 --> 00:36:58,100
right wherever they were laying.

670
00:36:58,100 --> 00:37:01,130
They were so weak
they couldn't move.

671
00:37:01,130 --> 00:37:04,310
So it didn't take long for us
to arrive, the new arrivals,

672
00:37:04,310 --> 00:37:07,310
to become into the same state.

673
00:37:07,310 --> 00:37:10,370
My body got covered with
lice, and I came down

674
00:37:10,370 --> 00:37:11,950
with typhoid and Diphtheria.

675
00:37:11,950 --> 00:37:15,470
Lost all my hair.

676
00:37:15,470 --> 00:37:19,750
No matter how you tried to
brush the lice off your body,

677
00:37:19,750 --> 00:37:22,910
within seconds, there
were even back more.

678
00:37:22,910 --> 00:37:25,880

679
00:37:25,880 --> 00:37:27,140
Food was very minimal.

680
00:37:27,140 --> 00:37:30,290

681
00:37:30,290 --> 00:37:32,960

German soldiers were
still around, watching us.

682
00:37:32,960 --> 00:37:35,420
For what, I don't know, because
none of us had strength.

683
00:37:35,420 --> 00:37:39,470
Slowly, it went all the way.

684
00:37:39,470 --> 00:37:42,710
As I said to you on the phone,
I was liberated in Bergen-Belsen

685
00:37:42,710 --> 00:37:44,540
by the English
soldiers, the Tommies.

686
00:37:44,540 --> 00:37:47,520

687
00:37:47,520 --> 00:37:51,180
I lost my aunt in Bergen-Belsen,
maybe two or three days

688
00:37:51,180 --> 00:37:52,500
before liberation.

689
00:37:52,500 --> 00:37:54,420
She died in my arms.

690
00:37:54,420 --> 00:37:59,220
Her sister-in-law died about
four weeks before that.

691
00:37:59,220 --> 00:38:05,760
So there I was, all
alone at the age of 15.

692
00:38:05,760 --> 00:38:13,590
Except my rabbi from Hungary,
his daughter, was in my group.

693

00:38:13,590 --> 00:38:16,650

She was in the room,
in my barrack with me.

694

00:38:16,650 --> 00:38:19,290

She's still alive, thank god.

695

00:38:19,290 --> 00:38:21,880

And two of my friends--

696

00:38:21,880 --> 00:38:25,582

one lives in California and
one lives in Cleveland--

697

00:38:25,582 --> 00:38:26,910

who survived with me.

698

00:38:26,910 --> 00:38:29,430

699

00:38:29,430 --> 00:38:31,890

Liberation finally came.

700

00:38:31,890 --> 00:38:34,140

But before I go into
liberation, there

701

00:38:34,140 --> 00:38:38,520

is two things that I will never,
never understand and forgive

702

00:38:38,520 --> 00:38:40,050

the free world.

703

00:38:40,050 --> 00:38:44,210

Their deathly silence
through all this.

704

00:38:44,210 --> 00:38:46,480

I mean, it's hard for
you to understand,

705

00:38:46,480 --> 00:38:49,160

but I cannot accept it.

706

00:38:49,160 --> 00:38:51,060

There was a free world outside.

707

00:38:51,060 --> 00:38:54,570

Why were they so silent?

708

00:38:54,570 --> 00:38:58,620

There were aeroplanes
going over our camps.

709

00:38:58,620 --> 00:39:03,060

Why didn't they bomb the
camps to get us out of misery,

710

00:39:03,060 --> 00:39:06,450

instead of letting
us lay there and rot,

711

00:39:06,450 --> 00:39:10,830

and die by the thousands, by
the hundreds of thousands?

712

00:39:10,830 --> 00:39:14,450

These are questions that
no one could answer me.

713

00:39:14,450 --> 00:39:16,530

And I don't know if
the world will ever

714

00:39:16,530 --> 00:39:19,040

have an answer for it.

715

00:39:19,040 --> 00:39:22,120

Did the people in the camps
talk about these things,

716

00:39:22,120 --> 00:39:24,010

or was it a kind of a silent?

717
00:39:24,010 --> 00:39:24,830
No, we talked.

718
00:39:24,830 --> 00:39:26,970
We were hoping and praying
that a bomb would hit

719
00:39:26,970 --> 00:39:30,180
us to get us out of our misery.

720
00:39:30,180 --> 00:39:33,780
We were hoping that America
would come to our rescue.

721
00:39:33,780 --> 00:39:38,880
It was uncomprehendable then,
and it's even worse for me now.

722
00:39:38,880 --> 00:39:42,000
But what makes it even
worse, that if you

723
00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:45,320
do go into Washington
to the archives,

724
00:39:45,320 --> 00:39:48,360
the government
had full knowledge

725
00:39:48,360 --> 00:39:52,800
what was going on there,
and they did nothing.

726
00:39:52,800 --> 00:39:56,610
I don't know if any of you
saw the film of the liberators

727
00:39:56,610 --> 00:39:59,160
when they came to
the United States.

728
00:39:59,160 --> 00:40:01,170
I have that film.

729
00:40:01,170 --> 00:40:03,630
There was a Polish
general who came

730
00:40:03,630 --> 00:40:10,470
to see President Roosevelt.
Pleaded with him, told him what

731
00:40:10,470 --> 00:40:15,810
was going on, and President
Roosevelt replied,

732
00:40:15,810 --> 00:40:22,960
we will win the war, and we
will punish perpetrators.

733
00:40:22,960 --> 00:40:23,650
And that's all.

734
00:40:23,650 --> 00:40:26,440

735
00:40:26,440 --> 00:40:30,640
These words will ring
in my ear forever.

736
00:40:30,640 --> 00:40:36,640
Because President Roosevelt was
a very well-loved president,

737
00:40:36,640 --> 00:40:40,030
not only by his country,
but for all over the world.

738
00:40:40,030 --> 00:40:43,610
And the world
expected more from him

739
00:40:43,610 --> 00:40:46,580

than just say that
we will win the war,

740
00:40:46,580 --> 00:40:50,130
and the perpetrators
will be punished.

741
00:40:50,130 --> 00:40:52,910
So now that I'm reading
more and learning more,

742
00:40:52,910 --> 00:40:58,640
it makes it more difficult
to accept what went on there.

743
00:40:58,640 --> 00:41:01,580
But going back to my liberation.

744
00:41:01,580 --> 00:41:03,560
The German soldiers,
all of a sudden,

745
00:41:03,560 --> 00:41:06,800
disappeared because the
English were coming.

746
00:41:06,800 --> 00:41:08,660
They did not want to be found.

747
00:41:08,660 --> 00:41:12,330
They did not want to be
exposed to what they did.

748
00:41:12,330 --> 00:41:13,970
So they all ran.

749
00:41:13,970 --> 00:41:18,380
So the camp was left on its
own for quite a few days

750
00:41:18,380 --> 00:41:19,620
with no supervision.

751

00:41:19,620 --> 00:41:24,320

Not that they supervised, but
no brutal behavior or mannerism

752

00:41:24,320 --> 00:41:26,840

from them.

753

00:41:26,840 --> 00:41:29,330

People were dying
by the thousands,

754

00:41:29,330 --> 00:41:32,060

and those of us who
still had strength

755

00:41:32,060 --> 00:41:37,360

would just pull out the
corpses from our environment

756

00:41:37,360 --> 00:41:43,310

and pile them on top of
this heap of dead people

757

00:41:43,310 --> 00:41:47,390

rotting away and the germs
and it was going just, unreal,

758

00:41:47,390 --> 00:41:50,090

rampant.

759

00:41:50,090 --> 00:41:50,590

No.

760

00:41:50,590 --> 00:41:54,130

Liberation came when the
English soldiers finally

761

00:41:54,130 --> 00:41:58,510

drove into the camp,
and it was just unreal.

762

00:41:58,510 --> 00:41:59,920

Unbelievable.

763

00:41:59,920 --> 00:42:01,570

You couldn't comprehend.

764

00:42:01,570 --> 00:42:04,540

You couldn't accept.

765

00:42:04,540 --> 00:42:07,840

And you didn't want to believe
it, or maybe it was a hoax.

766

00:42:07,840 --> 00:42:10,540

Maybe it's just part of your
punishment that they did,

767

00:42:10,540 --> 00:42:13,120

just pulling a fast one on you.

768

00:42:13,120 --> 00:42:17,770

But when the soldiers started to
mingle, and some spoke Yiddish,

769

00:42:17,770 --> 00:42:21,370

and some spoke German,
to try to calm us down,

770

00:42:21,370 --> 00:42:27,130

and opened up their bags,
and handed out candy or food,

771

00:42:27,130 --> 00:42:28,720

whatever they had.

772

00:42:28,720 --> 00:42:31,150

And touched us,
tried to calm down.

773

00:42:31,150 --> 00:42:34,990

They were not afraid to
touch us, believe it or not.

774

00:42:34,990 --> 00:42:41,860
We eventually started to sink in
that we were going to be free.

775
00:42:41,860 --> 00:42:45,070
They took us out
of this environment

776
00:42:45,070 --> 00:42:47,180
with the help of the
Red Cross, the World Red

777
00:42:47,180 --> 00:42:48,970
Cross that came in.

778
00:42:48,970 --> 00:42:51,500
They de-fumigated
us, they de-liced us,

779
00:42:51,500 --> 00:42:53,630
and they give us
some clean clothes.

780
00:42:53,630 --> 00:42:56,850
And we were allowed to
go into the facilities

781
00:42:56,850 --> 00:43:01,150
with the German
soldiers used to live.

782
00:43:01,150 --> 00:43:03,080
Into their barracks.

783
00:43:03,080 --> 00:43:05,200
And that's where we stayed.

784
00:43:05,200 --> 00:43:07,000
And we were given
permission to go

785
00:43:07,000 --> 00:43:11,950
into the town of Bergen-Belsen,

and ask for anything

786

00:43:11,950 --> 00:43:14,320
from the people who lived
there, food or anything,

787

00:43:14,320 --> 00:43:16,683
or take anything they want.

788

00:43:16,683 --> 00:43:18,350
I don't even think
we needed permission,

789

00:43:18,350 --> 00:43:21,990
we just would've done it.

790

00:43:21,990 --> 00:43:27,250
So being starved out, one
day, a few of my friends and I

791

00:43:27,250 --> 00:43:30,370
went and got a pot and
some meat and potatoes.

792

00:43:30,370 --> 00:43:34,180
And we were going
to make a stew.

793

00:43:34,180 --> 00:43:40,740
And dug out, made a fire,
and while we made the fire,

794

00:43:40,740 --> 00:43:45,090
the soil got heated and there
was a tremendous explosion.

795

00:43:45,090 --> 00:43:47,920
You see, the Germans had
all intentions of blowing up

796

00:43:47,920 --> 00:43:51,370
Bergen-Belsen, but they
ran so fast that they never

797
00:43:51,370 --> 00:43:54,010
did their final solution.

798
00:43:54,010 --> 00:43:57,020
And I got covered
with shrapnels.

799
00:43:57,020 --> 00:44:00,130
I still have a piece
in my skull embedded

800
00:44:00,130 --> 00:44:02,610
which doesn't interfere
with any of my functions,

801
00:44:02,610 --> 00:44:04,330
so it was never taken out.

802
00:44:04,330 --> 00:44:06,580
I had a big gash
under my left breast,

803
00:44:06,580 --> 00:44:10,320
and a big hole into my thigh.

804
00:44:10,320 --> 00:44:13,510
So my freedom was short lived.

805
00:44:13,510 --> 00:44:15,490
I was taken into
the army hospital

806
00:44:15,490 --> 00:44:18,250
immediately and given
first aid, and then taken

807
00:44:18,250 --> 00:44:20,860
to the Red Cross hospital.

808
00:44:20,860 --> 00:44:25,090
And eventually, my

transport into Sweden

809

00:44:25,090 --> 00:44:28,750
was made on the ship.

810

00:44:28,750 --> 00:44:32,140
But while laying in the bed, not
being able to move or anything,

811

00:44:32,140 --> 00:44:36,370
I developed pleurisy and
pneumonia, and that was really,

812

00:44:36,370 --> 00:44:41,680
I barely fought through
at that time, I remember.

813

00:44:41,680 --> 00:44:44,190
We arrived into Sweden.

814

00:44:44,190 --> 00:44:48,760
And let me tell you, my
friends, the Swedish people

815

00:44:48,760 --> 00:44:51,790
were our guardian angels.

816

00:44:51,790 --> 00:44:53,590
If you could ever
visit Europe, make

817

00:44:53,590 --> 00:44:58,880
sure you visit Sweden,
because they came to our aids.

818

00:44:58,880 --> 00:45:01,420
They visited us
in the hospitals.

819

00:45:01,420 --> 00:45:02,550
They brought us food.

820

00:45:02,550 --> 00:45:05,310
They brought us clothing.

821
00:45:05,310 --> 00:45:08,660
There were a difficulty
of verbal communication,

822
00:45:08,660 --> 00:45:12,460
but when you love and
care, you don't need words.

823
00:45:12,460 --> 00:45:16,480
Your expression
speaks for itself.

824
00:45:16,480 --> 00:45:23,800
And with their help, I became
well enough once again.

825
00:45:23,800 --> 00:45:28,420
I had no intention, whatsoever,
to go back to Hungary

826
00:45:28,420 --> 00:45:30,070
at 16 years old by then.

827
00:45:30,070 --> 00:45:31,420
None whatsoever.

828
00:45:31,420 --> 00:45:32,350
No, 15.

829
00:45:32,350 --> 00:45:37,510
I had my 16th in Sweden.

830
00:45:37,510 --> 00:45:41,140
I made all my enquiries to
HIAS, to the social workers

831
00:45:41,140 --> 00:45:45,070
who came to visit us, to
see if anyone stayed alive.

832

00:45:45,070 --> 00:45:49,660

They informed me that my
mother and my father were dead.

833

00:45:49,660 --> 00:45:53,170

They didn't even inform me that
one of my father's brother,

834

00:45:53,170 --> 00:45:55,508

who remained alive,
went back to Hungary.

835

00:45:55,508 --> 00:45:56,050

I don't know.

836

00:45:56,050 --> 00:45:57,592

They couldn't trace
him at that time.

837

00:45:57,592 --> 00:45:58,540

I found out later.

838

00:45:58,540 --> 00:46:03,340

839

00:46:03,340 --> 00:46:06,860

And as I said, no, I don't
want to go back to Hungary.

840

00:46:06,860 --> 00:46:09,500

I had to make all the
arrangements to make

841

00:46:09,500 --> 00:46:11,900

all the way out to Israel.

842

00:46:11,900 --> 00:46:16,480

I was already booked on the
ship with a lot of my friends.

843

00:46:16,480 --> 00:46:20,890

And as the news

came out of Sweden,

844

00:46:20,890 --> 00:46:24,640
and the little article appeared
in the Hungarian newspaper

845

00:46:24,640 --> 00:46:30,530
here in New York, Margit
Buchhalter looking for--

846

00:46:30,530 --> 00:46:32,470
I know my father
had two sisters,

847

00:46:32,470 --> 00:46:35,470
my mother had three
brothers in America.

848

00:46:35,470 --> 00:46:38,260
Where in America, I didn't know.

849

00:46:38,260 --> 00:46:39,940
I didn't know my
aunt's married name.

850

00:46:39,940 --> 00:46:42,160
All I know, her maiden name.

851

00:46:42,160 --> 00:46:46,660
And her next door neighbor,
who was a Hungarian lady--

852

00:46:46,660 --> 00:46:49,910
non-Jewish, but Hungarian,
very nice lady--

853

00:46:49,910 --> 00:46:53,150
read this article and
took it into my aunt

854

00:46:53,150 --> 00:46:56,080
and showed it to her.

855

00:46:56,080 --> 00:47:00,320
And of course, immediately, she
contacted me through telegrams.

856

00:47:00,320 --> 00:47:06,180
I identified myself,
because a lot of survivors--

857

00:47:06,180 --> 00:47:10,580
you could not blame them-- tried
to come out under false names.

858

00:47:10,580 --> 00:47:13,550
Remembered who died in
their arms, and took up,

859

00:47:13,550 --> 00:47:16,180
I want to go to your
family, you know.

860

00:47:16,180 --> 00:47:22,070
So I identified myself that yes,
I was her brother's daughter.

861

00:47:22,070 --> 00:47:25,910
And then, immediately,
paperwork started for my coming

862

00:47:25,910 --> 00:47:29,720
to America to be with
my aunt and my uncles.

863

00:47:29,720 --> 00:47:32,690

864

00:47:32,690 --> 00:47:38,990
I arrived here August of 1960--

865

00:47:38,990 --> 00:47:42,760
1947, excuse me.

866

00:47:42,760 --> 00:47:48,350

The arrival was a very
memorable day for me, also.

867
00:47:48,350 --> 00:47:53,880
I came on a Swedish big
ship, the Drottningholm,

868
00:47:53,880 --> 00:47:57,020
and as we were
coming into the pier,

869
00:47:57,020 --> 00:48:01,190
the pilot ship came
out to meet mine.

870
00:48:01,190 --> 00:48:07,640
My uncle's wife's
sister worked for HIAS

871
00:48:07,640 --> 00:48:10,790
and got permission from
my immediate family

872
00:48:10,790 --> 00:48:13,640
to come aboard ship to
meet me so I did not

873
00:48:13,640 --> 00:48:19,620
have to go to the Ellis
Island and that part of it.

874
00:48:19,620 --> 00:48:21,890
And I didn't know
this was forthcoming.

875
00:48:21,890 --> 00:48:23,660
And when I heard my
name being announced

876
00:48:23,660 --> 00:48:26,840
to come to the captain's
office, I got petrified.

877

00:48:26,840 --> 00:48:30,650

Here I go, my papers are
wrong, and I'm being sent back.

878

00:48:30,650 --> 00:48:36,170

And when I walked into this room
and saw my aunts and my uncles,

879

00:48:36,170 --> 00:48:38,440

of course, I don't
have to tell you.

880

00:48:38,440 --> 00:48:40,370

Looking at my
father's sister was

881

00:48:40,370 --> 00:48:42,230

like looking into
my father's face.

882

00:48:42,230 --> 00:48:44,000

And my mother's brothers.

883

00:48:44,000 --> 00:48:51,590

It was a terribly, terribly
emotional reunion for me.

884

00:48:51,590 --> 00:48:55,330

I went through a
lot of resentment

885

00:48:55,330 --> 00:48:57,770

when I first came here.

886

00:48:57,770 --> 00:49:01,050

Every time I would go down
the street in the Bronx--

887

00:49:01,050 --> 00:49:09,280

I lived on Starling
Avenue in the Bronx.

888

00:49:09,280 --> 00:49:13,380

121 is my present day address.

889

00:49:13,380 --> 00:49:16,220

And when I would go down
the street with my aunt

890

00:49:16,220 --> 00:49:18,260

and my uncle and
their children, and I

891

00:49:18,260 --> 00:49:21,160

would see a child with
a mother and a father,

892

00:49:21,160 --> 00:49:24,320

I would just break away, run
upstairs, and throw myself down

893

00:49:24,320 --> 00:49:28,010

on the bed and cry for hours.

894

00:49:28,010 --> 00:49:29,540

This was the worst period.

895

00:49:29,540 --> 00:49:31,780

One of my worst
periods in my life.

896

00:49:31,780 --> 00:49:35,000

You come into a free country.

897

00:49:35,000 --> 00:49:38,120

You see so much love
and freedom, and so

898

00:49:38,120 --> 00:49:42,260

many beautiful things, and all
yours was taken away from you.

899

00:49:42,260 --> 00:49:45,260

And never to have it back.

900

00:49:45,260 --> 00:49:48,040
This was difficult
for me to cope with.

901
00:49:48,040 --> 00:49:52,040
But with their help, and a
lot of loving, I've overcome.

902
00:49:52,040 --> 00:49:57,060
Just like I overcome so many
other things in my life.

903
00:49:57,060 --> 00:50:00,436
I tried to go to James
Monroe High School

904
00:50:00,436 --> 00:50:04,880
to start to catch up
with my education.

905
00:50:04,880 --> 00:50:08,210
But I had to stop, because I
was only here for a short time,

906
00:50:08,210 --> 00:50:09,950
I don't remember the
exact time of it,

907
00:50:09,950 --> 00:50:12,550
when my uncle passed away.

908
00:50:12,550 --> 00:50:17,840
So I went to night school, and
I went and got my very first job

909
00:50:17,840 --> 00:50:22,280
to work for Spears Furniture
Company on 23rd Street

910
00:50:22,280 --> 00:50:24,460
in New York.

911
00:50:24,460 --> 00:50:27,470

I did filing, and
whatever I was able to do

912
00:50:27,470 --> 00:50:30,710
with my limited English.

913
00:50:30,710 --> 00:50:32,930
Somehow or other,
when you're young,

914
00:50:32,930 --> 00:50:35,640
you learn faster than
when you get older.

915
00:50:35,640 --> 00:50:38,530
So I was able to
comprehend and catch

916
00:50:38,530 --> 00:50:41,150
on to the English language.

917
00:50:41,150 --> 00:50:44,570
My writing and spelling
didn't come so fast.

918
00:50:44,570 --> 00:50:46,130
I even have trouble
with it today,

919
00:50:46,130 --> 00:50:48,710
because you pronounce, you
read, and you write things

920
00:50:48,710 --> 00:50:50,780
differently.

921
00:50:50,780 --> 00:50:57,900
Once again, my freedom was short
lived, because I took sick.

922
00:50:57,900 --> 00:51:00,430
I developed a spot
on my right lung.

923
00:51:00,430 --> 00:51:04,330
I had to be hospitalized,
and I ended up

924
00:51:04,330 --> 00:51:08,680
in Montefiore Hospital
in Bedford Hills.

925
00:51:08,680 --> 00:51:10,360
And then I finally
was transferred

926
00:51:10,360 --> 00:51:12,260
into Montefiore
Hospital in the Bronx,

927
00:51:12,260 --> 00:51:15,250
and I had a three
stage thoracoplasty.

928
00:51:15,250 --> 00:51:17,020
I had seven or
eight ribs removed,

929
00:51:17,020 --> 00:51:19,077
and my right lung was collapsed.

930
00:51:19,077 --> 00:51:22,060

931
00:51:22,060 --> 00:51:27,730
Sometime, I really
wonder why go on,

932
00:51:27,730 --> 00:51:29,950
but God gives you strength
for so many things.

933
00:51:29,950 --> 00:51:32,610

934

00:51:32,610 --> 00:51:38,880

And this is where I
met my husband, Harvey.

935

00:51:38,880 --> 00:51:41,020

We fell in love.

936

00:51:41,020 --> 00:51:43,650

And he went to become--

937

00:51:43,650 --> 00:51:47,710

with my influence-- he went
to become a lab technician.

938

00:51:47,710 --> 00:51:51,610

And once I was
well enough, I was

939

00:51:51,610 --> 00:51:57,380

working in the X-ray
department in Bedford Hills.

940

00:51:57,380 --> 00:52:01,600

And in 1953, we got
married in New York.

941

00:52:01,600 --> 00:52:03,640

We moved to New Jersey.

942

00:52:03,640 --> 00:52:06,090

He worked in Bound
Brook Hospital

943

00:52:06,090 --> 00:52:08,940

as a lab and X-ray man,
and I worked next door

944

00:52:08,940 --> 00:52:11,810

in a medical group
as the pharmacist.

945

00:52:11,810 --> 00:52:14,190

I was always very

interested in medicine,

946

00:52:14,190 --> 00:52:20,280
and I really wanted to be in the
medical profession desperately.

947

00:52:20,280 --> 00:52:22,890
If Europe would have
remained Europe,

948

00:52:22,890 --> 00:52:24,570
and I could have
finished my education,

949

00:52:24,570 --> 00:52:28,930
I'm sure I would have been
a doctor of some kind.

950

00:52:28,930 --> 00:52:34,940
I was very good with the
terminology of the pharmacy,

951

00:52:34,940 --> 00:52:38,510
and the measurements, so
I worked in the basement

952

00:52:38,510 --> 00:52:41,340
in their pharmaceutical
department.

953

00:52:41,340 --> 00:52:48,500
We got married
December 13th, 1953,

954

00:52:48,500 --> 00:52:52,940
and lived in Bound
Brook for a few years.

955

00:52:52,940 --> 00:52:57,710
And my first child was
born in '57, February 2nd.

956

00:52:57,710 --> 00:52:59,980

My daughter Tina.

957

00:52:59,980 --> 00:53:03,950

And my son was
born January 29th,

958

00:53:03,950 --> 00:53:06,460

which was, yesterday,
30 years ago.

959

00:53:06,460 --> 00:53:09,020
1960.

960

00:53:09,020 --> 00:53:13,760

I did bring in two beautiful
children to this world.

961

00:53:13,760 --> 00:53:16,550

And with their love, and
my husband's care and love,

962

00:53:16,550 --> 00:53:19,620

I've come a long, long way.

963

00:53:19,620 --> 00:53:22,790

I devote any spare time
that I have, really,

964

00:53:22,790 --> 00:53:26,310

to serve my community.

965

00:53:26,310 --> 00:53:30,110

I've been president, you
name it, every organization.

966

00:53:30,110 --> 00:53:34,990

I spend a lot of my time, if
ever I'm needed or called on,

967

00:53:34,990 --> 00:53:37,760

to lecture on the Holocaust.

968

00:53:37,760 --> 00:53:46,160
And I pray for a world
of peace for all mankind.

969
00:53:46,160 --> 00:53:49,280
And then I ask the question,
has the world learned anything

970
00:53:49,280 --> 00:53:51,167
from the Holocaust?

971
00:53:51,167 --> 00:53:53,000
And I'm going to answer
it at the same time.

972
00:53:53,000 --> 00:53:54,590
As far as I'm concerned, no.

973
00:53:54,590 --> 00:53:56,090
Very little.

974
00:53:56,090 --> 00:53:58,220
Because hatred is all around us.

975
00:53:58,220 --> 00:54:01,640
All we have to do is open up
the papers in the morning,

976
00:54:01,640 --> 00:54:05,420
and you'll see all the
anti-Semitism, all the hunger,

977
00:54:05,420 --> 00:54:08,510
and all the killing
going on in the world.

978
00:54:08,510 --> 00:54:14,100
So, I'm afraid history has
a way of repeating itself.

979
00:54:14,100 --> 00:54:21,360
And I hope the leadership in
the world, maybe peace, one day,

980
00:54:21,360 --> 00:54:23,660
will reign.

981
00:54:23,660 --> 00:54:25,550
I would like to take
some questions from you.

982
00:54:25,550 --> 00:54:26,990
I'm sure you have plenty.

983
00:54:26,990 --> 00:54:32,840
How do you feel about
the current situation

984
00:54:32,840 --> 00:54:34,950
in Eastern Europe?

985
00:54:34,950 --> 00:54:38,350
And particularly, about
the unification of Germany?

986
00:54:38,350 --> 00:54:42,070

987
00:54:42,070 --> 00:54:43,010
How do I feel?

988
00:54:43,010 --> 00:54:44,480
I must tell you one thing.

989
00:54:44,480 --> 00:54:45,810
I'm very unique.

990
00:54:45,810 --> 00:54:48,440
I have no hatred in me.

991
00:54:48,440 --> 00:54:53,690
Because hatred breeds
only destruction.

992

00:54:53,690 --> 00:54:55,760
So I don't hate
the German people.

993
00:54:55,760 --> 00:54:57,290
I'm afraid of them.

994
00:54:57,290 --> 00:54:59,140
I will not trust them.

995
00:54:59,140 --> 00:55:02,660
But I don't hate them.

996
00:55:02,660 --> 00:55:07,400
Will there ever be peace in
Eastern Europe or in Germany?

997
00:55:07,400 --> 00:55:08,340
I don't know.

998
00:55:08,340 --> 00:55:10,890
I don't trust it.

999
00:55:10,890 --> 00:55:13,310
I'm always afraid that
there is a Hitler lurking

1000
00:55:13,310 --> 00:55:16,780
somewhere in the background,
that eventually it

1001
00:55:16,780 --> 00:55:17,690
will come to power.

1002
00:55:17,690 --> 00:55:21,840

1003
00:55:21,840 --> 00:55:23,820
Let the world prove me wrong.

1004
00:55:23,820 --> 00:55:25,350
I'd be the happiest human being.

1005
00:55:25,350 --> 00:55:30,030

1006
00:55:30,030 --> 00:55:31,990
I wonder if you'd
mind telling us

1007
00:55:31,990 --> 00:55:36,430
the story of your granddaughter?

1008
00:55:36,430 --> 00:55:38,200
How can I ever omit her?

1009
00:55:38,200 --> 00:55:41,500
I do have a beautiful
two-year-old granddaughter,

1010
00:55:41,500 --> 00:55:44,440
Karen Hailey.

1011
00:55:44,440 --> 00:55:48,770
And what a joy she
brings to my life.

1012
00:55:48,770 --> 00:55:52,900
I must tell you, my daughter
is named after my mother,

1013
00:55:52,900 --> 00:55:55,780
and my son is named
after my father.

1014
00:55:55,780 --> 00:55:59,620
My mother's name was Teresa,
so she's named after Tina.

1015
00:55:59,620 --> 00:56:01,900
It's my daughter's name,
and my father's name

1016
00:56:01,900 --> 00:56:07,280

was Joseph, and so is
my son's name, Joseph.

1017
00:56:07,280 --> 00:56:12,610
My granddaughter got the
name of my father's brother.

1018
00:56:12,610 --> 00:56:17,470
And did I want to believe
that she was born?

1019
00:56:17,470 --> 00:56:20,530
Do I want to believe
that out of these ashes,

1020
00:56:20,530 --> 00:56:23,620
such a beautiful thing as my
two children and my grandchild

1021
00:56:23,620 --> 00:56:25,360
could come?

1022
00:56:25,360 --> 00:56:30,220
I'm very thankful for
her being here, to God.

1023
00:56:30,220 --> 00:56:35,320
But as I told you before, things
do disturb me, especially when

1024
00:56:35,320 --> 00:56:37,810
she first started to talk.

1025
00:56:37,810 --> 00:56:38,880
I was visiting her.

1026
00:56:38,880 --> 00:56:41,580
They live in
Commack, Long Island.

1027
00:56:41,580 --> 00:56:44,500
And she loves her
mama's cooking,

1028
00:56:44,500 --> 00:56:47,240
and was making her French
toast from Holland.

1029
00:56:47,240 --> 00:56:49,720
I put it on her little
plate, and when to cut it up,

1030
00:56:49,720 --> 00:56:51,160
and she noticed--

1031
00:56:51,160 --> 00:56:54,190
I had some short sleeve
on-- she noticed my tattoo,

1032
00:56:54,190 --> 00:56:58,240
and she put her little hand
on my arm and look at me

1033
00:56:58,240 --> 00:57:01,920
and she said, mama,
boo-boo, boo-boo, boo-boo.

1034
00:57:01,920 --> 00:57:05,090
And, of course, my daughter and
I just looked at each other,

1035
00:57:05,090 --> 00:57:08,320
and we both choked up tears.

1036
00:57:08,320 --> 00:57:10,100
Time will come when
she gets older,

1037
00:57:10,100 --> 00:57:13,600
that I will sit
down and tell her

1038
00:57:13,600 --> 00:57:15,530
all about the meaning
of this boo-boo.

1039

00:57:15,530 --> 00:57:18,140

1040

00:57:18,140 --> 00:57:23,960

And whether she will understand
or not, I don't know.

1041

00:57:23,960 --> 00:57:27,830

I'm sure she will be
troubled for quite awhile.

1042

00:57:27,830 --> 00:57:31,700

Talking of troubled, I
think, I feel in my heart,

1043

00:57:31,700 --> 00:57:35,686

that the second generations
are extremely disturbed.

1044

00:57:35,686 --> 00:57:38,950

1045

00:57:38,950 --> 00:57:40,630

Are they coping?

1046

00:57:40,630 --> 00:57:43,420

They're coping to some extent.

1047

00:57:43,420 --> 00:57:46,540

But I don't think there is any
psychiatrist in the world--

1048

00:57:46,540 --> 00:57:47,950

I hope I'm wrong--

1049

00:57:47,950 --> 00:57:51,670

that could really help them.

1050

00:57:51,670 --> 00:57:54,370

They have second
generation groups,

1051

00:57:54,370 --> 00:57:57,670

and the ones who do go to
it do get a lot out of it,

1052

00:57:57,670 --> 00:58:00,670

because they ventilate
amongst each other.

1053

00:58:00,670 --> 00:58:05,410

But you cannot get the
majority to go to these groups.

1054

00:58:05,410 --> 00:58:08,330

I don't know why, but
I wish they could,

1055

00:58:08,330 --> 00:58:10,400

including my children.

1056

00:58:10,400 --> 00:58:11,690

This is a big concern of mine.

1057

00:58:11,690 --> 00:58:14,850

1058

00:58:14,850 --> 00:58:19,210

I know my friend Bernie said
he's planning a conference here

1059

00:58:19,210 --> 00:58:22,380

in the fall for
second generations.

1060

00:58:22,380 --> 00:58:25,320

I hope that a lot
of them will come.

1061

00:58:25,320 --> 00:58:27,510

Because once they
get to a conference,

1062

00:58:27,510 --> 00:58:29,082

they do get a lot out of it.

1063
00:58:29,082 --> 00:58:34,180

1064
00:58:34,180 --> 00:58:37,420
I also want to tell
you the story that I

1065
00:58:37,420 --> 00:58:40,930
did bring on a Holocaust tour.

1066
00:58:40,930 --> 00:58:43,570
We could not get one
out of Czechoslovakia--

1067
00:58:43,570 --> 00:58:44,670
out of Hungary.

1068
00:58:44,670 --> 00:58:48,280
So I got one out of, it was
a Czechoslovakian tour which

1069
00:58:48,280 --> 00:58:52,500
is, it's all collected,
and it's in England

1070
00:58:52,500 --> 00:58:55,250
in the Westminster Abbey.

1071
00:58:55,250 --> 00:58:58,990
And through the help of my rabbi
and the Congregation Knesseth

1072
00:58:58,990 --> 00:59:03,790
Israel in Bound Brook,
I had one brought out

1073
00:59:03,790 --> 00:59:09,370
and I had [INAUDIBLE] made for
it, and a cover made for it.

1074

00:59:09,370 --> 00:59:13,750
And the crown on the Torah
was made by an artist made out

1075
00:59:13,750 --> 00:59:20,200
of copper and iron in the
symbol of the Holocaust,

1076
00:59:20,200 --> 00:59:23,227
with bodies reaching
for the flame.

1077
00:59:23,227 --> 00:59:23,935
It's very unique.

1078
00:59:23,935 --> 00:59:26,750

1079
00:59:26,750 --> 00:59:30,050
But when I went into
the Lower East Side

1080
00:59:30,050 --> 00:59:33,830
to have the cover
made for it, I came

1081
00:59:33,830 --> 00:59:36,290
across another fellow
survivor, which

1082
00:59:36,290 --> 00:59:40,160
was heart rendering to me,
to thank god she's alive.

1083
00:59:40,160 --> 00:59:41,090
I went up there.

1084
00:59:41,090 --> 00:59:44,810
And of course, with all
Hungarians, we started to talk.

1085
00:59:44,810 --> 00:59:48,980
She's not as easy to talk

about the Holocaust as I am,

1086

00:59:48,980 --> 00:59:50,930

but she couldn't
verbally express

1087

00:59:50,930 --> 00:59:54,230

herself accept pull up her
sleeve, and I pulled mine up.

1088

00:59:54,230 --> 00:59:57,470

And we realized, we were
standing in Auschwitz

1089

00:59:57,470 --> 01:00:00,780

getting this tattoo 20 people
apart from one another.

1090

01:00:00,780 --> 01:00:04,670

So we were together, and
thank god, you both survived.

1091

01:00:04,670 --> 01:00:07,640

These are the
experiences that I wish

1092

01:00:07,640 --> 01:00:10,610

I had more of, to
find more survivors.

1093

01:00:10,610 --> 01:00:14,330

Were you able to speak
right from the beginning--

1094

01:00:14,330 --> 01:00:15,510

About the Holocaust?

1095

01:00:15,510 --> 01:00:17,090

Oh, no, no, no, no.

1096

01:00:17,090 --> 01:00:20,240

What triggered your--

1097

01:00:20,240 --> 01:00:26,690

I remember about, I
would say, 15 years ago.

1098

01:00:26,690 --> 01:00:29,180

Very dear friend of
mine, they were really

1099

01:00:29,180 --> 01:00:32,710

sisters and brothers to me,
Rosalie and Edward Burrow

1100

01:00:32,710 --> 01:00:34,220

in Bound Brook.

1101

01:00:34,220 --> 01:00:38,840

Their son, Philip, went to
Bound Brook High School.

1102

01:00:38,840 --> 01:00:42,020

And he is a lawyer
now, but he was always

1103

01:00:42,020 --> 01:00:45,170

into European History,
and it interested him

1104

01:00:45,170 --> 01:00:47,030

what he heard from
me here and there.

1105

01:00:47,030 --> 01:00:48,860

Talked to his parents.

1106

01:00:48,860 --> 01:00:50,690

And he called me
up one day and he

1107

01:00:50,690 --> 01:00:54,200

said, Aunt Margit, please come
to the Bound Brook High School

1108

01:00:54,200 --> 01:00:56,960
to talk to an
audience of students.

1109
01:00:56,960 --> 01:00:59,540
They don't believe
there was a Holocaust.

1110
01:00:59,540 --> 01:01:02,600
You have to tell them
what you went through.

1111
01:01:02,600 --> 01:01:05,900
And I said, Philip,
I cannot do that.

1112
01:01:05,900 --> 01:01:06,740
I'd break down.

1113
01:01:06,740 --> 01:01:09,020
I can't talk.

1114
01:01:09,020 --> 01:01:11,960
And he said, well if you
can't talk in person,

1115
01:01:11,960 --> 01:01:15,440
I will come to your house and
you have to speak into a tape,

1116
01:01:15,440 --> 01:01:17,420
and they will hear
from your voice.

1117
01:01:17,420 --> 01:01:19,790
And that was my very first--

1118
01:01:19,790 --> 01:01:21,440
I made a tape for him.

1119
01:01:21,440 --> 01:01:23,750
And he took it to school
to the auditorium,

1120
01:01:23,750 --> 01:01:28,930
and he let his fellow
students listen to it.

1121
01:01:28,930 --> 01:01:31,500
How did I come about talking?

1122
01:01:31,500 --> 01:01:32,000