

My name is Dr. Sidney Langer and I am the Director of the Oral History Project of the Holocaust Studies Resource Center at Kean College. I'm very pleased that Mrs. Milly Zuckerman, who presently resides in Hillside, New Jersey, has consented to come and talk to me today about some of her experiences during the Holocaust period.

Thank you, Mrs. Zuckerman, very much for coming. Could you tell me a little bit about when you were born, the town that you were born in, a little bit about your family?

I was born in September, 1925. 1925. And I have one sister. And we were a family just of four. And I lived in a little town.

Older sister?

Yes, who is not any more here. We lived in a little town by the name Humniska. There was a little town next to-- the name of the next town was-- which was a little bit bigger-- Brzozów. That was already a big town.

How large was your town?

My town was maybe about 2,000 people.

2,000 people?

Yeah, because when I'd been recently in Poland, they said about 500 Jews were buried there. I would assume what happened to that I don't know, but the 500 was buried in that little town.

2,000 was the total population of the town or the Jewish--

Total.

And what was the Jewish population?

I would think about 1,000 in Brzozów, not in Humniska. Where I lived, it was a very small town. We were about maybe 20 Jewish families.

How many non-Jewish families?

Like I say, about 2,000.

No, in your town.

Oh, in my town, maybe-- I don't know-- 500. Very small town. It's like I live in Hillside and next to Hillside is Newark. We were there very [? long ?]. My father had a little grocery. So of course, all the Polish people knew my father very well. They used to come to shop. There was like a little Jew in town.

And we were liked. We were well liked by the Polish people. But we still were Jewish. And we lived with not a fear, because nobody knew until the times of 1939 that we became known as Jews. We knew we were Jewish.

We heard at the school, I knew that, oh, she's Jewish. They were pointing at us. But we didn't know to be scared as much as until 1939.

When you say you went to school, you went to a public school?

Yes, I went to a public school. There was not just special school for Jews. And then I had a little teacher who came to the house and gave to me private Jewish lessons, actually Hebrew lessons. They were not giving Jewish lessons, but Hebrew. You learned how to read and write in Hebrew, how to pray in Hebrew.

And there was just a teacher who came to-- a special teacher-- who can give us private lessons. Because I was young. Now of course, then--

How much older was your sister?

My sister was about eight years older.

Eight years older?

Yes. She was already going to Hebrew school, because she was older-- I was still young-- to Brzozów, which was the next town. She was going-- after public school, she was going already to a cheder they call it, where they teach them more.

Not me, because like I say, I was still young. So I had a private teacher who came to her house and gave me private lessons in Hebrew.

So the Jewish boys in your town also went to the public school. It was a co-educational school.

Yes, it was.

There was no cheder in your own town?

No, there was no cheder No, there was no cheder in my little town, just the next town. Till 1939, like I say, I was brought up like a little girl. No, I didn't know the different did I should be afraid to be Jewish. But I say, at times, I felt that I told me, oh, you are little Jew like this. But they didn't mean nothing to me. So I'm Jewish, so what?

When did that begin when people started telling you this?

Actually, we always knew that these antisemitic between the Poles, the Polish people and the Jews. But not as much until Hitler came. That's what I felt. In 1939 when Hitler came, of course, Jewish kids couldn't go any more to school.

We were just cut off of school. When I was 14 years old-- like you know, because 1939, I was 14 years old-- I had to go to work. When you say work, they took us, even little kids, they put armbands on us. And they told us we are Jewish. And then they took us to work to Brzozów, which was that next town.

And we used to work at the streets putting stones. It was not a labor camp, because we used to come home. But to do work, hard work. And something like this-- well, I still lived at home that time in '39. But we were going every day to work.

Can I take you back just for a couple of seconds. Did you know what was going on in Germany 1933, '34, '35?

I'm sure my parents knew.

I know you were very young at that time.

Yes, I was young. And like I would say probably that was in Germany. Never going to happen by us. You really didn't believe that things like this is going to happen. I give you an example. When already later in 1940, we heard that they liquidate this town. They kill Jews there. We in that little, little group of Jewish people, we didn't believe and that.

My father said, no, that couldn't happen to us. You were always selfish. You felt it's nothing's going to happen to you. I don't know why we felt that way. But we always felt it happened there, but it's not going to happen here. When we heard that there was the pogroms that there was already in Krakow, they killed Jews, they may get us.

We heard those things, but we always felt it's not going to happen to us. I don't know why, but that was always my parents' feeling that they protected their children. It couldn't happen to us. We just didn't believe in that it will happen.

Did you remember some discussions with your family in 1933, or '34, '35? Not really?

Not really. No, my father-- to us, we never felt that it's going to happen, it's going to come to Poland. I don't remember my parents ever discuss things like this about Germany. Yes, we did hear that the German Jews, they let him-- in 1937, they throw them out from Germany.

But that happened in Germany. It did not happen in Poland. know I wish some people would be prepared for it. I guess, they would make all their homes for themselves. But somehow, I think Jewish people never believed it's going to happen so fast.

So your childhood then was--

My childhood was pretty good. I really can tell you that I was growing up in fear. No, not till '39. Then in '39, I realized that it's that good. This already-- we already lived in fear.

Do you remember when in '39? Do you remember--

September.

September of '39?

When the Germans-- when I remember it was on a Friday morning. And my mother was making prepared for Shabbos. And all of a sudden, I heard that the planes were coming. And we lived in a town where they have a lot of refineries the oil. So they were bombarding already near us.

How close was this?

Very close, maybe three kilometers from my little town.

Until that day, you didn't really have too much warning?

No. No. No, not really. Not that I remember really. Maybe there was so much to do that I don't-- we children weren't afraid of it maybe. I really don't remember. In '39, then I start to really feel that this is going to be-- already we couldn't go to school. The Jews couldn't go to school already.

Was your sister still living with you at the time?

Yes.

In '39? So she was 22 years old?

Yes, approximately. Approximately about 21. Yes, she lived with us. And so like we were from '39 to '42, we were still in our little town at my home. In '42, they decided that all the little towns nearby, they would made like a Juden clear. They took all the Jews and they put them for the next town in Brzozów.

They tell us that we're going to go there to work. We're going to live there. We're going to improve ourselves, but we cannot come back to live in our little homes. They put us in scores, 10 families like in a school. And from then they told us that we've got to work here. Then we knew that this is going to be something worse. We didn't believe it.

Even between '39 and '42, you started telling me before you actually remember the day in 1939 when you cannot go to school anymore. Now you said you were told to put an armband on--

Yes.

--with a Jewish star.

And they took us to work every day by bus, I think I remember, or we walked, snow or not snow.

Who went to work?

Me, my father. Not my mother. And my sister. No. No, just my sister, and me, and my father. Somehow my mother they didn't take. The women they didn't take. Just take two of the younger children and my father. And we all worked at the stones.

How did they transport you?

I think by bus. I think it was by bus.

So most of the people in your town then--

Went to work.

Went to work.

Yeah, Zwangsarbeit they called it. And like this, we worked till '42.

Can you describe those years a little bit?

Yeah, they were painful. Because I remember we couldn't do anything else. We couldn't go with the armband. And we were ashamed to wear it. Like look what happened to us. All of a sudden, we're known to everybody we're Jewish and they were pointing at us.

Those years were very painful, very painful growing up as a little girl. I couldn't go to school anymore. So my education was gone. And my parents always thought it's going to get better tomorrow, tomorrow, maybe next week. The Germans are not going to be forever with us. That's what they explained to me.

Someday, they're going to go away. War is going to finish. Maybe in a week. Maybe in two weeks. Nobody thought it's going to take so many years.

Can you describe some of the working conditions? Did you work in the same place with your father?

No. No, the children worked separate. The young people worked harder. We were carrying stones. And the stones were-- we used to take stones from here to there just to make us work. Nothing really and we made the streets. Like you would see asphalt. My father would work the same way, maybe harder.

So when did you leave home in the morning?

We used to leave 8:00. And then this I don't remember. They gave us-- I'm sure they gave us to eat there. Because we used to come home like at two, three o'clock after work. And we worked like this for day after day, day after day, hoping that tomorrow the war will finish.

Unfortunately, it didn't. It was very hard on us children. Because there is no education. You couldn't go any place. You couldn't go to a movie. Everything finished for me, stopped. And that was like this to '42.

Would you say that all the years were the same? Was there anything significant between 1940 and '41 as compared to '39 and '40, or '41 and '42?

Since we were so made towards to ourselves, we didn't know any better. I guess, every day was the same

as the next day. I don't remember. I don't recall. I'm sure it must have been worse by progressing, like we thought there was no end to it. It must've been.

Every day, I said, when is it going to finish? When are we going to be free? But my father always was a good attitude he had. Don't worry. That's going to finish. It can't be forever. But it was forever. Because three years, it sound not long. But it was forever. Forever.

Did you work seven days a week?

They probably at the beginning, I think they respected Shabbos. I didn't work on Shabbat.

Your family was observant?

Observant, yes. We didn't work on Shabbat until it became later worse and worse. Because this was like work, not like we were not in a concentration camp. It was like free work. That's what we had to do. In 1942-- this I remember--

Were you paid at all for the work that you did?

Excuse me?

Were you paid at all for the work that you did?

No.

How did your father support-- how was he--

I told you, we had a little grocery. But the grocery, they closed at us. They took it away. We probably-- I don't remember exactly, but we probably had something still. It wasn't easy. It was really not easy.

During those years, did anybody help you in the town that you lived in?

No. No.

In terms of giving you food?

No. No, that was not necessary then. It wasn't necessary. Because we were still at our home. The only thing which I remember very good-- this I remember-- when they came-- one day they came and all the Jews from the little town to the next town, which was Brzozów.

This is in 1942?

It's in 1942, right. In Brzozów, my mother had the whole family, my mother's lived in Brzozów. So she said, OK, so we're going to live with Grandma. My mother's sister lived there. And my mother's mother lived there. Her whole family.

She says, nothing happened. We're going to live there and we're going to work. And again, we're going to wait until the war finish.

This is not your own decision to move to the next town.

We had to. We had to.

Moved the entire Jewish identity from your town?

The entire Jewish, 20 families or whatever it was, had to move, move out. They made a Juden clean. We all had to move. Where they took with the others, I don't know exactly. Because they took us to Brzozów.

In Brzozów, which was the next town, they told us we have to go-- this town has already too many Jews. They took us to another town, Rymanow, to another school. And there we weren't too long, maybe a week.

And you were still together with your family?

Still together with my father and mother, with my parents.

And your sister?

And my sister, right. They took us to the other town also working. There I don't remember exactly how long, but not too long. Maybe a week or maybe two we were there. And they were working. And then they already started liquidating. The young people they took to labor camps. And the older people, I don't know where they took them.

So my father-- I didn't know-- got to talk to somebody there. He says, let us go back to Brzozów, which is the next town. And we're going to stay with my family. And they told us that we can go. We went back to Brzozów. And we stayed with my mother's family.

But very short, maybe two or three days. Because the same thing happened to Brzozów, to the little town which was next. They liquidate all the town, the whole town. They put everybody in a stadium. Did you know what a stadium is? It's the place where they go playing. And they put everybody there.

Suddenly, they make rules that everybody should leave their home. Whatever you have, you take. As little as possible. Just one or two pair of shoes and something to change. Because they're going to send us to labor camps now. Now we're going to labor camps. And we're going to work there. So we don't need too much, because they're going to pay us money there.

And we're going to make a living there. That's what we had, because they took already away from us from the first liquidation. So my father said, it's not good. This is not good. I don't believe him now. Now we have to find where we're going to run away.

So my mother said she's not going to leave her mother, which is only understandable. She was a woman maybe in her 60s her mother. I'm sure maybe in the 70s, I think.

And her father was--

No, my grandfather was not alive. And my father said, now we have to think serious. We have to run away. So where we're going to run? So my mother says she's not going. She's not going to leave her mother and her sister. But my father said, we've got to become selfish now. We have to run.

Because tomorrow, which is I think was Monday, that I think, but it was a Monday. He says, they are going to do something, which my foresight tells me that it's not going to be good.

And so at night, we decide. And my mother's mother said she's not going to leave her daughter, which was my mother's sister, with her children. So that meant that we can't wait for everybody to run. We became selfish. And we said, OK, so we're going to run.

And that night, we took what we had and we went away from my mother-- from my grandmother, excuse me, to that Mrs. Bocon who is now here. But her name was Mrs. Kedra, because that was her mother.

OK, so the date, you remember?

The date, I remember it was in September. I don't remember exactly. 1942. It was like already fall. It was already-- the grass was wet. How you say it? My English is going. When you get up in the fall where the grass is white.

Dew.

Dew, right. So it was in September.

So you had said that your father knew--

He had a feeling that it's not going to be good. And matter of fact, that day, they make a big, big grave, tremendous. And they killed five or maybe more hundred Jews. What happened to the rest, I cannot tell you. I don't know. We never find out where they took the rest Jews.

But I know about 500, which was my grandmother, and my mother's sister, and my uncle who lived in this town, they all went. They all went.

So what day then did you leave the town?

Excuse me?

What day did you leave?

It was on Monday.

It was on Monday. In the morning, in other words?

Yeah. It was must have been Sunday night, like four or five o'clock in the morning.

So you left yourself, your sister--

My mother, father, and my mother. Four of us, yes.

And you went back?

And we went back wondering and now so where we're going to go. So my father said, when we had the little grocery in that little town, there was a widow always coming to my store. Her name was Mrs. Michalina Kedra. She always was so nice.

But when already the time was where she said once to my father, if any time you would have some trouble, call on me. And he remembered that. And he said, we're going to knock on her window and we're going to see. Nobody thought it's going to take forever. We thought it's going to take another week.

The Jews were fooling themselves. They always thought it's going to take a day to a week, two. And it's going to pass. So we probably thought he said, we're going to go to her. And I'm sure she's going to help us.

He said, maybe she's going to just take the children. He referred to me as me, maybe Millie, because Helen and they went to school together. So let's just have one someplace.

You went to school with her daughter?

With Mrs. Bocon, yes. OK, so my father--

Did you have any trouble going back to that city? Did you have to--

Who thought about that? You were so involved how to save yourself that they shouldn't find you that you really didn't think of anything. I don't remember thinking anything. Just that we should be hidden someplace, that they shouldn't find us.

Physically you were able to leave to get back to the town? In other words, they would have prevented you from going from the town had they known you were going?

Oh, definitely.

I was just wondering what may have happened which allowed you to get out of the town.

What would have happened, they would have killed us.

No, I understand. But how was it that you were able to escape from the town?

It was just one of those things. You just didn't think about it, I guess. We just said, we're leaving, we're going. We left everything behind and we just started running away.

You run away, because we did go during the night. Because during the day-- first of all, you had to wear the armbands, so they knew right away that we're running away from whatever is going to happen tomorrow. So we knocked at her door and she said, who is it? And my father said, my maiden name is Mark.

He said, this is Mark. She said, shh, don't say loud. And she opened up the door. And she says, what do you want? So my father said, I would like to-- where he came from Brzozów. And I think tomorrow, it's going to be the liquidation of Jews. Can you hold us for a day or two?

She says, OK, let me see what I can do. She was quiet, very quiet. She put us all in the attic. And it was true. The next day, she came up and she says, you were lucky. You escaped. They did liquidate the whole town. Of course, my mother was crying. We were all crying, because we lost-- we figured we lost everybody.

So now we said to her, what are you going to do with us? She says, what can I do? I have four of my own children. I'm going to try to see if I can keep you all here. It wasn't easy for her, because she-- like I told you, she was a widow. She had no husband. She had those four children. And we were four. There were all eight of us.

And from day to day, it was very dangerous to live there. Because she probably was scared. Because in the beginning, they were looking for Jews. They were looking not particular for us, but they were looking for Jews.

So you were not able to ever go outside of the house?

Not at all. Not at all. But that was going go on and on. And finally, my father had some money to give her. We needed a bread, we needed milk. She had nothing. So my father was able to give her some money. And the money finished. So my father knew another--

How long were you with that family?

Three years.

Before, you're saying that your father's money--

Well, I don't know-- I don't remember exactly. Not too long. Not too long. Maybe a couple of months. How much did we have? But my father had in the same town, a little man who had-- how do you call it-- he was a mill. Is it? They made flour? OK?

Mm-hmm.

I don't know the right-- I don't know the word either.

Yeah. Well, he was a well-to-do-- but he was not Jewish. And again, my father said that someday, he's going to go over to him at night. And he is going to ask him maybe he can help us. You wouldn't believe it. He did help us.

This was after how long? This was after--

A couple of months, in 1943 already.

Well, let me just ask you-- let's come back for one second. For all those months that you initially spent in this house, what did you do during the day?

Nothing. Just sat. You couldn't stand up. Because in the winter, it was good because it was cool in the attic. But in the summer, it was awful hard, because her roof was very narrow. And when we get up, we hit the roof. And the roof had not slate-- I don't remember how you call it. And the heat was so hot that we were so hot. We were just sitting, sitting, praying, nothing.

You slept on the floor?

It was not on the floor. It was on hay. On hay. We did everything up there. I can't even tell you what. You have to imagine.

It's hard to imagine.

Yes, I know it's hard.

Did you come downstairs?

That's what I wanted to tell you. Sometimes at night, she felt sorry for us. So she put us to the stable. She let us go to the stable. She had a cow. And then they took away the cow from her, so the stable was empty. Stable, you know where the cow was standing.

So sometimes at night, she took us downstairs. We had to make flour. So the old fashioned mill, we used to help her make the flour. So she took me and my sister downstairs. She was very good to us. She took us downstairs to help her mill. And by the same token, to straighten out our feet. Because the feet were growing together. We couldn't straighten out. We couldn't walk.

Did anybody else know? Any of the neighbors know that you were there?

No, No.

Nobody.

Nobody knew. Matter of fact, one time-- they were constantly looking. They figured that we're alive. One not Jewish fellow said to the other one, they wonder where the Marks are. And every time she heard that they talk, that somebody [? squealed ?] that we live someplace, but they didn't know where.

So once in a while, she would come up to us and she would say, they're looking for you today. Then we became really scared. She had a boyfriend. Then the boyfriend built for us like a wall, like a double wall.

A fake wall.

A fake wall that when it was really dangerous, we used to slide down to that wall. You can just stand up and go down. And there was a door on top that they covered that up later if there was a really hot in town that we heard that they're going to look for us.

And you never know, maybe she was on the list too that they should look for us there. So every time she heard that it's hot in town, that they're going to look for the Marks, or they're looking for the Marks, we went to that wall. And it's like in Holland, you heard about what's her name? Help me out, what's her name?

Anne Frank.

Anne Frank, exactly. Because when I visit that in Holland, it remind me--

So you had slipped down--

Slipped down standing up, just standing up. It was narrow like the person that way. We slipped down and we were there hidden. And that wall was in that stable. And in the stable, she had still hay and potatoes. But because she didn't have the cow anymore.

Oh, I understand. I thought the fake wall was built in the house.

No, it was in the stable, which the stable was connected with the house. It's not like here. The stable was connected with the house. So she had-- and that's where we stayed sometimes in that wall. But then at night when everything pass, we went again up to the attic.

What was the longest period of time, for example, that you were in the wall?

Could be a day too standing like that.

A full day?

Yes, it could be, if they were looking good for us. Because they would sometimes-- the post didn't help either. They used to say, I saw Mark walking. I saw the children walking. No, they didn't. They just made up stories to help the German. They weren't good, actually, later, the post. They weren't.

They tried to do to kill even-- matter of fact, my mother's, another sister. And somehow, that woman was lucky. They all came to her, because my father probably must say sometimes that if it's something going to be bad, I'm going to run to Kedra.

So my mother's sister with two children came once to her. That was still in '42 right after when we came. And she says, look, I would love to help you. I cannot help you. I have already four living with us. How can I have more people? It's dangerous. Look what I'm doing.

She says, I really would like to help you. And she told them the guy who brought her there, she said to the guy, take him, let's say, to about 10 houses away from here. Maybe they would keep her there. That night, they killed them.

The post, they killed her with the help of the Germans, of course. Where are we? I've forgotten what I did when I wanted to say. It was a dangerous life.

You were saying that your father knew somebody else in the town.

Right, I forgot. So my father, when the money was already finishing--

This was after a few months?

About, I would say, already '43. My father said, one night-- only at night, you couldn't do anything during the day-- at night at 12, one o' clock, he says, I'm going to go to that Polish fellow. And I'm going to-- listen, you can help with those things. Either he's going to say that I am alive and they're going to kill me. Or I'm going to try to help us.

He went to that man and he knocked on the door-- on the window, excuse me-- on the window. And he said to him, Mr. Keirkowski? He says, yes? He says, he is Mark. He says, what are you doing here? Why did you come? What do you want?

He says, do me a favor. Just open the window. Please let me in. He says, let you in? He's afraid. He got dressed. And he came out to him he says, what do you want, Mr. Mark? He says, what I want you should help me. He says, help you? What can I help you with?

He says, just give me money. And my mother had still with her a ring, a chain. He says, here is the ring. Give me as much money. He says, no, no, don't give me this. But I'm going to try to help you. Well, to the end, he took the ring. He gave us some money.

So he says, can I come back if you know-- I think my father didn't tell him that time where we're staying. Because he was afraid. He says, don't worry. I'm never going to give you out. But whatever you do, don't give me out. Because the same danger what you're going to have, I'm going to have.

And like this, we used to go every couple months at the night. And then me and my sister used to go at night. And he used to give us some money then we should be able to give that widow that she should have something to buy for us, a piece of bread, a little bit of something to make a soup, or a borscht, to give us that we should survive.

And you say-- I'm sorry, did you say you'd go to him every night?

Not every night. At night. We just used to go at night.

Occasionally, you'd go--

Occasionally, but everything was at night. Because during the day, you couldn't go. It was dangerous. It was really dangerous. It wasn't easy. What shall I tell you? It was very dangerous.

Really, maybe because I was young, so I don't remember as much the danger. But if I think about now, how could we do it? How could we? When I went back now and I look at those places, and I looked at that distance, how we've walked for that money, it wasn't so near. It was pretty far away.

And at night, how would I know where to go, how dangerous that was, it's unbelievable how we survived. I guess, somebody up there wanted us to survive. This is the only thing I can say really.

You spent how long with this family?

Two years.

Two years until 1944.

In August.

And you knew it was happening throughout Poland?

A little bit. A little bit. She had the radio, shortwave radio, they called it. They had the radio. Once in a while, she used to come to us. And she says, oh, it's not long anymore. The Russians-- we were at the side where the Russians were. The Russians already fighting. They're nearby. Soon you're going to be free. Soon, soon, soon.

And that soon still took another year. And '44 in August, we got liberated through the Russians. Not as much as we liked them, but they did liberate us in August in '44.

Did you ever think about why this particular woman actually took you in?

I always think why. Always. Why did she do it? And I even talked to her daughter. Why did your mother do it? We really didn't give you nothing. She says, I don't know. She just felt that she was a religious woman. She always said, God is going to pay me back. I don't know why. We always ask why, why her? I really don't know.

Did you said you also had been friendly with her daughter.

Right, we went to school together. Right. She is a year younger. So I remember she always says-- she just said to me the other day that when it came to religion, I used the walk out, because Jewish kids walked out when they took religion. We didn't stay in class.

She said she always wondered why I walked out. She didn't understand that we had a different religion. But we always were friendly. Don't forget like I mentioned to you, Doctor, she was the oldest child and her mother was a widow. When I came to school and I brought good lunch, I shared with her, because she didn't have any lunch.

There were times I brought an apple. She didn't have any apple. There were things that they didn't have. And I guess, but that didn't-- this, I remembered that. And she remembers that.

Do you think that was an important factor in her mother taking you in?

I don't know, Doctor, I really don't know. It must have been something. She always said my father always gave her credit in the store. Because she became a widow by very young, I think 34. She was 34. And my father always said to her, Michalina, when you have money, you pay me. Don't worry. Your children have to live.

And that was very big for somebody. I guess, she remembered that. This what we can only-- we always used to discuss with my father, with my mother, why did she do it? We really didn't give her too much. We didn't have too much with us.

And whatever we had, we gave her. But that was not enough. Because really, we didn't eat meat there. She didn't have to give us. Forget about kosher or not kosher. Who would remember that time? If you were kosher, you were thankful to get something. But she didn't have to give us.

So I really don't know why she did it. She was just a good person. Good. And there's another thing, maybe she didn't know herself how long it's going to take. She probably thought a month, two, two weeks, three weeks, a month. She never thought it's going to take so long. Two years, three years is a long time. So it's really-- it's beyond me why she did it. It is.

During those two years, were you able to read books?

To read books? Yeah, she brought us the newspaper. A book. Yes, so I knew how to read poetry. So I would read the newspaper. We read the books, yes. That's all. That's all. We lived a very lonely life, very lonely. It's like from hour to hour whatever it's going to happen to us. We really didn't know.

It must have been terrible. If I think now back, I can't remember myself how in the world we could do that. We didn't take a bath. We didn't wash our hair. Once in a while-- there was no running water. So I assume we didn't take. I assume. We didn't.

I myself am thinking now, how could we survive that? I can't even tell you how-- it must have been terrible. It was terrible. And this I remember, which was already in August, the front was very close was. The German were here and the Russian were coming.

And we can hear the [NON-ENGLISH] running over the places. And they had to leave the town, everybody. So her a mother, took her children. And she had to get a cow. She took the cow. And they run away to the woods. They left us all in the house. She couldn't take us.

Oh, then we thought, this is going to be end. We're all here. No food, no water, nothing. We cannot get out. Because if we're going to go out, the Germans are going to kill us. The front wasn't too long. It was maybe four or five days.

And her mother took her life. And she said to her children, I don't care if they're going to kill us or what. Through the front, she came back to bring us something to eat.

After those four days?

After those four days. Because she thought, we're going to die anyhow. She says, if the Germans didn't kill us, the front is-- we're going to die. She came back. And the front finished. It's finished. The German moved back and the Russians came in.

Those four days I never forget. Because that was the most tragic days. We thought this is going to be our end, because we're going to die from not having food. But you see, we didn't die. She came back with a cow, with the children. She brought us some milk.

She was a remarkable woman. She brought us a piece of bread with flour that I still remember. The throat hurts you, because if you done it for a couple days, you cannot even swallow. And she came back and she brought us the food. And this I never forget, she says, now you're going to be free, because the Russians are here.

And she came out. I remember like today. She lived in the back of her house. Not far from the house there were woods. There was order the woods, not homes, but woods. And we heard the Russians on the horses, clap, clap, clap, coming. So my father said, I hope we're going to be free now.

And she went out to a Russian soldier and she said, look, I have Jews here. And the guy, the Russian said, what do you mean you have Jews? So she said, well, through the concentration camps, through the times of Hitler's times, I kept those Jews.

Now they free, because you here. She was such a smart woman. She says, please take them and just give them a home. And that time, we came out from the attic. And the Russians greeted us. And they took us with them.

How many Russians were there?

There were maybe 10 on the horses. And then they took us to that little town which was Brzozów. And already more Jews came out.

From hiding?

From hiding. They were hidden in the woods. They were hidden at more Polish families. There weren't more. There were maybe another six, so 10 of us. And then we were free.

How did you feel then?

Mixed emotion. Very mixed emotion. Happy, but there was nobody left from the family. Like I say, I don't know-- with times like this, people become very selfish. We we're happy that we're alive. We were thinking, so what we're going to do now? There's no Jews.

And the Polacks used to say-- OK, when we came out, the first thing my father said, I want to go home to my house. We came to our home and there was a Polack living there, a Pole. He says, you cannot-- he still was thinking, he says, get out from my house. This is my house now, he says.

You have nothing what to look here. He says, where were you? He says, if you don't get out, I throw you out. So we left. We were afraid. Could you believe it?

So where did you go?

We went to Brzozów. And to the next-- to that little town where we started. And there was no anybody living, not my mother's sister, not my grandmother, and my uncle, nobody from the family. I remembered that--

Your father didn't go to the Russians and say, well, this is my house?

No. No, we didn't. We were afraid. We were really afraid. We were very much afraid. We didn't want anything anymore. Nothing was important. We just wanted to be free. There was nothing for us. We didn't want to even stay there. We were afraid.

The minute we came out, we wanted to be somebody should care for us. Because we were afraid. So we were with the Russians already. And the front was like about three or four kilometer from us. So it was close by. We were really still scared, because they could've come back.

But I remember that time, I guess, the Russians must know what to do with us. They said, you have to stay at our orders. Whatever we tell you to do, you're going to do. And the front was going further. So we were safe and safe. There was no danger. They put us also in a house.

I was just wondering, you didn't you didn't feel totally safe or totally free?

Not yet. Not yet. Not yet. Not really. Not yet. Because they told us that the minute the front could come back, we have to move with them. We cannot go ahead. We had to move with them. Not yet. No, we weren't free yet, really. We really weren't. It's in the back of your mind, we were afraid that the Germans could come back and they're going to kill us.

And if not the Germans going to kill us, we thought the Poles are going to kill us. So we had to be supervised by somebody. That's what I remember. And that's what happened. We waited. Whatever they told us to do, we did.

What did you do?

We again waited not too long.

Where were you living? You went back to back to the town.

To the town, they put us in homes.

With other families?

With other families, the ones that they came to live with-- I think it was another four people-- six people, 10 people all of us.

Jewish families?

Jewish. They put us in-- somebody in another Jewish families in a home. And they gave us clothes, I remember. Because we had nothing. And they gave us food. And they just told us to sit and wait what's going to happen with the front.

Well, how far are we going to go? If something will happen, then you know. We weren't there too long, maybe a month. And the best place for us was to go to Hungary. Because Hungary at that time was free. And I remember they send us-- it must have been the Red Cross already came.

This was?

This was in '44 in August. No, it must've been already September, October, about a month or two months later. But it was not cold yet. And we went to Hungary. And there, again, to Budapest.

How did you get to Hungary?

By train. By trains. Not by train. For days, we were going there.

Why Hungary?

They told us to go there.

They told you to go there?

Yes, because that was-- Budapest, it took two places. The past went to German. And Buda was free. So that's why they took us to Buda. And there we stayed a year until 1945 when the war finished. Not quite a year.

Where did you stay there?

Again, they put all the Jews together. They made like a camp, but not a concentration camp. Like from all this sides, which Jews were free, they took him there. Because I think in Czechoslovakia-- not Czechoslovakia, they had more Jews coming from all the countries which were free through the Russians. And they all had one place, which was Budapest.

Well, how large was the community where you were living there, the Jewish community in Budapest?

It must have been large, because there was a lot of Jewish families. Little by little, they brought them in. And maybe 1,000 of Jews.

Did your father-- did he work for that year?

No, nobody worked. We were already through the HIAS, I think, the HIAS already. I think either the HIAS or the Red Cross helped us. Yes.

And they provided you with food.

With food and clothing. Yes.

How old were you at the time? You were?

In '45? I was 20-- What am I talking? Yes, 20.

You're 20 years old.

Yeah, 20? 20. I have forgotten how to count now. 20, I was 20.

OK, so you're therefore for about a year. And as you recall, either the HIAS or the Red Cross?

Yes, I think that time was still, it was called already, I think, the HIAS.

Can you describe what you're feeling through that year? So here you're free, but--

You're not free.

But you're not free.

We were taken care by the HIAS. Just live from day to day, hoping for better times, like I say. I don't know. The feelings, we were happy that year.

What kept you going all these years? All these years of hiding?

Hiding? Who knows. I don't know. It's unbelievable. It's really unbelievable what kept us going. Just hope.

You must have gotten tremendous support from your family?

Yes, my father always thought we're going to survive. We're going to survive.

Was your mother strong?

My mother? Yes, she was strong. She always felt that we have to survive. That's what kept us. My mother always said she had a feeling we're going to survive. So did my father. And there was no-- whenever we want to say, forget it, nobody's alive. Who knows if we're going to-- no, we've got to keep it up. Let's wait.

There were times we said, either we have to give us up. There was no food. We were hungry. We were completely hungry. So what we're living for? But my father always said, let's hope that tomorrow it's going to be better.

But there was never a time when you gave up hope?

No. No. No. No. But today's children are different. Whatever my dad said, it's going to be. If we have to survive, we're going to survive. That's what we lived. My father said that we're going to survive. He hopes we're going to survive. So we hoped.

So what happened then? It was 1945, you spent a year in Budapest.

Budapest. And then I think in May when the war finished, they told us all to go wherever we want. And we picked Austria. I don't know why, but that's what we picked. We thought-- no, they told us that they're going to have--

Who was they?

The HIAS. That it's going to-- the war will finish and they're going to have places that we can go. That time was Palestine. So either you have to wait to get to Palestine or if you have family in America. So we're going to go to America. So they tell us that they have in Italy camps that people could go and Austria. We picked Austria. I don't know why.

When you say camps, you refer to DP camps?

To DP camps, right. Yes. So they told us that they have in Italy or they have in Austria. So we picked Austria. And we went to Austria. And that time we came to Wels. It wasn't so easy to come there. But they took us again by train. And we came to Linz, which was in Austria and was a DP camp.

And again, we lived there. The HIAS helped us. We didn't work. We just came there and all the Jews from little-- the people from the concentration camps start to come together. And this was our home.

And you going to say, again, what did I had in mind. Again, I don't know. I was a young girl. Then I was probably thinking, how to make my own family, what to do. Probably, I don't know if I was thinking to get married, but probably.

You met your husband there?

I met my husband in 1947, yes.

In the DP camp.

In the DP camp in Linz.

What happened-- you say a lot of people came from the concentration camps to this DP camps and told you what had happened. Did you realize before 1945 the extent of what had happened in Europe to the Jewish community?

No. What do you mean, Doctor?

I mean, until, for example, you came to the DP camp, you were exposed to a number of individuals who had been in concentration camps. Did you realize how many millions of Jews had been killed before then? Did you realize the extent of the--

Of course, you-- maybe no. Maybe we didn't realize how many, because you still didn't know who was coming back. Because constantly new people came in. Maybe we didn't know how many. But of course, we knew.

Because when we came back to my little town, like I mentioned, Brzozów, and we heard from the Polacks that nobody survived. They took a massive-- one big grave. And everybody went, got killed, tumbled over in that thing. So we knew that this is it. Hitler took it care of everybody.

So you were in the DP camp for two years.

I was there for two years, yes. From 1945 the 1947. No, we were there four years, to 1949. I was married in 1947.

In the DP camp?

In the DP camps. Yes.

OK, we're going to stop here.