

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,500

2
00:00:06,500 --> 00:00:10,000
[MUSIC PLAYING]

3
00:00:10,000 --> 00:00:38,500

4
00:00:38,500 --> 00:00:39,680
Good afternoon.

5
00:00:39,680 --> 00:00:41,170
My name is Peggy Dunn.

6
00:00:41,170 --> 00:00:43,960
I am a member of the Kean
College Oral Testimonies

7
00:00:43,960 --> 00:00:47,170
Project of the Holocaust
Resource Center.

8
00:00:47,170 --> 00:00:49,600
We are affiliated with
the video archives

9
00:00:49,600 --> 00:00:52,210
for Holocaust testimonies
at the Sterling

10
00:00:52,210 --> 00:00:54,990
Library of Yale University.

11
00:00:54,990 --> 00:00:59,020
Sharing the interview with me
today is Phyllis Ziman Tobin,

12
00:00:59,020 --> 00:01:01,450
the New York Affiliate
of the Yale project

13

00:01:01,450 --> 00:01:04,300
and Assistant Coordinator
of the Holocaust Testimony

14

00:01:04,300 --> 00:01:06,580
Project at Kean College.

15

00:01:06,580 --> 00:01:09,730
We are privileged to
welcome Ros Rueff today,

16

00:01:09,730 --> 00:01:12,670
a survivor who is presently
living in Livingston.

17

00:01:12,670 --> 00:01:15,340
And who has generously
volunteered to give testimony

18

00:01:15,340 --> 00:01:18,650
about her experiences
before, during,

19

00:01:18,650 --> 00:01:20,200
and after the Holocaust.

20

00:01:20,200 --> 00:01:20,810
Welcome, Ros.

21

00:01:20,810 --> 00:01:21,310
Thank you.

22

00:01:21,310 --> 00:01:24,530
It's nice to have you with us.

23

00:01:24,530 --> 00:01:27,490
I think it would be
interesting to hear something

24

00:01:27,490 --> 00:01:29,710
about your very beginnings.

25

00:01:29,710 --> 00:01:32,830

I know you were a young child
at the beginning of the war.

26

00:01:32,830 --> 00:01:36,110

But what town did
you grow up in?

27

00:01:36,110 --> 00:01:39,640

I was born in Tarnow, Poland.

28

00:01:39,640 --> 00:01:43,120

And that was 1930s.

29

00:01:43,120 --> 00:01:47,140

And I came from
a family of four.

30

00:01:47,140 --> 00:01:50,740

I have a brother, and it
was mother and father.

31

00:01:50,740 --> 00:01:54,680

And we were religious.

32

00:01:54,680 --> 00:01:57,910

And my father was
self-employed, my mother

33

00:01:57,910 --> 00:02:00,530

helped him in the business.

34

00:02:00,530 --> 00:02:02,860

My father, when
the war broke out--

35

00:02:02,860 --> 00:02:06,400

excuse me, my brother was in--

36

00:02:06,400 --> 00:02:10,539

I think he was in

fourth grade, I

37

00:02:10,539 --> 00:02:13,660

had just happened to have
started kindergarten.

38

00:02:13,660 --> 00:02:17,380

I attended parochial school.

39

00:02:17,380 --> 00:02:20,640

And the Germans entered--

40

00:02:20,640 --> 00:02:23,320

the parochial schools
or any schools

41

00:02:23,320 --> 00:02:27,130

were closed to Jewish children.

42

00:02:27,130 --> 00:02:34,120

If you could afford it, you were
able to give private tutoring

43

00:02:34,120 --> 00:02:35,440

to your children.

44

00:02:35,440 --> 00:02:36,580

It was was accessible.

45

00:02:36,580 --> 00:02:39,670

46

00:02:39,670 --> 00:02:43,540

It wasn't open that people
should know about it,

47

00:02:43,540 --> 00:02:46,750

but at a sneak, you
would know where

48

00:02:46,750 --> 00:02:49,450

the classes were attended.

49
00:02:49,450 --> 00:02:52,452
And the parents would
send their children there.

50
00:02:52,452 --> 00:02:53,910
There were a couple
of children who

51
00:02:53,910 --> 00:02:56,650
would attend in a private home.

52
00:02:56,650 --> 00:03:02,410
And that's how we were
followed up with the education

53
00:03:02,410 --> 00:03:08,080
until evacuations started
and people were taken away.

54
00:03:08,080 --> 00:03:15,010
And the Jewish population
was sort of going to a close.

55
00:03:15,010 --> 00:03:17,050
Do you have any memories
of when you first

56
00:03:17,050 --> 00:03:21,010
knew that you or your
family was in danger?

57
00:03:21,010 --> 00:03:24,040
My parents sort
of spoke about it.

58
00:03:24,040 --> 00:03:27,610
That what had
happened in Germany,

59
00:03:27,610 --> 00:03:31,990
they figured Poland is not going
to be safe that much longer

60
00:03:31,990 --> 00:03:34,660
to the Jewish population.

61
00:03:34,660 --> 00:03:38,360
However, my mother happened
to have been born right here

62
00:03:38,360 --> 00:03:40,150
in Newark, New Jersey.

63
00:03:40,150 --> 00:03:45,610
And she was supposed to
have been going to America.

64
00:03:45,610 --> 00:03:49,960
Her passport was waiting
for her in Warsaw,

65
00:03:49,960 --> 00:03:53,210
but being the fact that
she had two small children,

66
00:03:53,210 --> 00:03:57,370
she didn't know what would
transpire after she had left.

67
00:03:57,370 --> 00:03:59,620
She would leave,
and therefore she

68
00:03:59,620 --> 00:04:06,220
decided that she rather
not go and stay behind.

69
00:04:06,220 --> 00:04:08,230
And whatever
happens will happen.

70
00:04:08,230 --> 00:04:11,590
So she never went to Warsaw
to pick up her passport.

71

00:04:11,590 --> 00:04:12,970

And she would have
been able to--

72

00:04:12,970 --> 00:04:14,150

would have been
able to take you?

73

00:04:14,150 --> 00:04:14,710

Yes.

74

00:04:14,710 --> 00:04:18,730

No, she was just able
to go by herself,

75

00:04:18,730 --> 00:04:21,340

therefore she decided
to remain behind.

76

00:04:21,340 --> 00:04:23,890

77

00:04:23,890 --> 00:04:27,490

Did I know what was happening?

78

00:04:27,490 --> 00:04:30,220

The only way I knew
that what was happening,

79

00:04:30,220 --> 00:04:33,820

my father had come
home one day and he

80

00:04:33,820 --> 00:04:35,830

had hiking boots in his hand.

81

00:04:35,830 --> 00:04:39,850

And he said to my mother,
now, try this for size,

82

00:04:39,850 --> 00:04:43,600

because we'll be walking

to the Russian front.

83

00:04:43,600 --> 00:04:47,080

And my mother said, if you want
to walk, you walk yourself.

84

00:04:47,080 --> 00:04:50,260

Because I'm no going to
put any hiking boots on.

85

00:04:50,260 --> 00:04:52,330

And that was that.

86

00:04:52,330 --> 00:04:57,520

We never left, and we stayed
and took our consequences.

87

00:04:57,520 --> 00:05:01,000

For there were many people
that had gone to the Russian

88

00:05:01,000 --> 00:05:06,400

to a city called Lwów,
which was at the time--

89

00:05:06,400 --> 00:05:10,000

it was occupied by the Russians.

90

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:11,950

And that's where
people from Tarnobrzeg

91

00:05:11,950 --> 00:05:16,060

up would have gone if
they wanted to be safe.

92

00:05:16,060 --> 00:05:17,380

How far would that have been?

93

00:05:17,380 --> 00:05:19,000

Oh, it was--

94

00:05:19,000 --> 00:05:21,335
I really can't tell you.

95
00:05:21,335 --> 00:05:22,710
I mean, you wouldn't
have walked?

96
00:05:22,710 --> 00:05:23,170
Would you walk there?

97
00:05:23,170 --> 00:05:23,980
No, not well.

98
00:05:23,980 --> 00:05:25,760
If there was no way
of getting there--

99
00:05:25,760 --> 00:05:26,860
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

100
00:05:26,860 --> 00:05:28,990
If there was no way
of getting there, yes.

101
00:05:28,990 --> 00:05:30,490
You would have walked.

102
00:05:30,490 --> 00:05:34,840
Now, the Jews were not allowed
to take trains unless you--

103
00:05:34,840 --> 00:05:39,830
if you were caught,
it was death penalty.

104
00:05:39,830 --> 00:05:41,560
So that was that.

105
00:05:41,560 --> 00:05:49,180
An ordinance came out that Jews
had to have IDs and armbands.

106

00:05:49,180 --> 00:05:52,480

And I do recall my
mother wearing--

107

00:05:52,480 --> 00:05:55,510

sitting at night and
embroidering the Star of David

108

00:05:55,510 --> 00:05:59,590

on a piece of white cloth for
everyone to be able to wear

109

00:05:59,590 --> 00:06:03,010

armband on her arm.

110

00:06:03,010 --> 00:06:08,890

And one day also,
the new ordinance

111

00:06:08,890 --> 00:06:12,340

came that Jewish
population had to assemble

112

00:06:12,340 --> 00:06:18,640

at a certain part of town and
IDs were going to be issued.

113

00:06:18,640 --> 00:06:22,370

That I recall very
vividly, we came there,

114

00:06:22,370 --> 00:06:24,640

there were a tremendous
amount of people.

115

00:06:24,640 --> 00:06:27,580

I guess, the whole Jewish
population of Tarnow,

116

00:06:27,580 --> 00:06:32,620

among many others that came
from various communities.

117

00:06:32,620 --> 00:06:37,720

Because it was a
large town and city.

118

00:06:37,720 --> 00:06:40,810

Small towns were
being evacuated,

119

00:06:40,810 --> 00:06:45,250

and they were hoarded
into this town.

120

00:06:45,250 --> 00:06:48,760

So we had to assemble
there, and they gave IDs.

121

00:06:48,760 --> 00:06:55,540

The IDs were a swastika
or a K in a circle.

122

00:06:55,540 --> 00:06:59,260

And no one knew at the
time what the K meant.

123

00:06:59,260 --> 00:07:03,400

We assumed now that a K
meant concentration camp.

124

00:07:03,400 --> 00:07:09,970

The swastika was, I guess that
you could perhaps be sheltered

125

00:07:09,970 --> 00:07:13,040

for a little while longer.

126

00:07:13,040 --> 00:07:14,360

That's what we assumed.

127

00:07:14,360 --> 00:07:16,120

Did some Jews receive--

128

00:07:16,120 --> 00:07:16,895

Yes.

129
00:07:16,895 --> 00:07:17,770
--a swastika as well?

130
00:07:17,770 --> 00:07:18,460
Yes.

131
00:07:18,460 --> 00:07:21,820
My mother had
received the swastika.

132
00:07:21,820 --> 00:07:25,780
My brother and my
father received the K.

133
00:07:25,780 --> 00:07:31,150
And we had some very
nice Christian neighbors

134
00:07:31,150 --> 00:07:35,740
who had mentioned to my parents
that my father and my brother

135
00:07:35,740 --> 00:07:43,180
should go in to shelter In
their own home, which they did,

136
00:07:43,180 --> 00:07:45,770
at the risk of their own lives.

137
00:07:45,770 --> 00:07:51,160
And so they kept them for
a couple of days there.

138
00:07:51,160 --> 00:07:53,500
And at such a time they came--

139
00:07:53,500 --> 00:07:56,960
the Germans came to
investigate in homes.

140
00:07:56,960 --> 00:08:00,850

So who was there
and who had what.

141
00:08:00,850 --> 00:08:04,790
And in such a time, my
mother always said to me,

142
00:08:04,790 --> 00:08:08,860
should I be out
of the apartment,

143
00:08:08,860 --> 00:08:12,550
you tell them that
you have no father.

144
00:08:12,550 --> 00:08:13,960
And you have no--

145
00:08:13,960 --> 00:08:17,380
there are no other
males in this house.

146
00:08:17,380 --> 00:08:24,190
And she had taught me this in
the German that I could grasp.

147
00:08:24,190 --> 00:08:28,510
And the soldier came
with his German Shepherd.

148
00:08:28,510 --> 00:08:30,040
By this time, we were--

149
00:08:30,040 --> 00:08:34,990
our homes, our original homes,
were taken away from us.

150
00:08:34,990 --> 00:08:41,539
And we had to see
other means of shelter.

151
00:08:41,539 --> 00:08:44,290
So we would share apartments.

152
00:08:44,290 --> 00:08:48,400
And if you were lucky
enough, you received--

153
00:08:48,400 --> 00:08:52,990
you could obtain apartment
for a certain amount of money

154
00:08:52,990 --> 00:08:54,820
without your furnishing.

155
00:08:54,820 --> 00:09:00,190
Trying to-- what other
people had for their help,

156
00:09:00,190 --> 00:09:04,960
farming help, you were very
happy to take it as your own.

157
00:09:04,960 --> 00:09:07,600

158
00:09:07,600 --> 00:09:11,050
It was funny, because
the oven was right smack

159
00:09:11,050 --> 00:09:13,180
in the middle of this room.

160
00:09:13,180 --> 00:09:18,400
And I didn't understand why
a bed and an oven to cook

161
00:09:18,400 --> 00:09:20,260
was in the same place.

162
00:09:20,260 --> 00:09:26,770
And a out house on tap instead
of a nice toilet with bath.

163
00:09:26,770 --> 00:09:32,320

But that was war, and this is
what I do recall as a child.

164
00:09:32,320 --> 00:09:33,810
Were you required to--

165
00:09:33,810 --> 00:09:35,878
were you given
special chores to do?

166
00:09:35,878 --> 00:09:37,420
I mean, you were
only five years old.

167
00:09:37,420 --> 00:09:37,967
No, no, no.

168
00:09:37,967 --> 00:09:38,800
So you could still--

169
00:09:38,800 --> 00:09:43,090
No, you could still
do as you pleased.

170
00:09:43,090 --> 00:09:45,670
Now, we stayed
there like I said,

171
00:09:45,670 --> 00:09:49,090
and a policeman, a
German soldier, did come.

172
00:09:49,090 --> 00:09:52,810
And my mother
happened to be out.

173
00:09:52,810 --> 00:09:55,750
And he started--

174
00:09:55,750 --> 00:09:57,790
I was frightened of dogs.

175

00:09:57,790 --> 00:10:02,860

This German Shepherd
was trained very well

176

00:10:02,860 --> 00:10:08,500

to behave as he sees--

177

00:10:08,500 --> 00:10:11,800

to act the way he's
supposed to be acting.

178

00:10:11,800 --> 00:10:13,990

And of course, I was frightened.

179

00:10:13,990 --> 00:10:18,140

And he asked me
where my father is.

180

00:10:18,140 --> 00:10:21,040

And I answered in German
"Ich habe keinen Vater."

181

00:10:21,040 --> 00:10:23,570

Then he asked me if
I have any brothers,

182

00:10:23,570 --> 00:10:26,110

and I said, "Ich
habe keinen Bruder."

183

00:10:26,110 --> 00:10:28,150

And then he looks--

184

00:10:28,150 --> 00:10:29,920

and this, my mother walked in.

185

00:10:29,920 --> 00:10:31,480

Of course, I wasn't silent.

186

00:10:31,480 --> 00:10:34,450

I was crying, I had
tears in my eyes.

187

00:10:34,450 --> 00:10:39,280

And he looks at my mother
and he says, where's your ID?

188

00:10:39,280 --> 00:10:41,280

And she points to the table.

189

00:10:41,280 --> 00:10:45,480

And he looks at it and
he says, oh, an American.

190

00:10:45,480 --> 00:10:49,590

He says, but you're
only a dirty Jew.

191

00:10:49,590 --> 00:10:54,300

And in German, they would
say a "verfluchter Jude."

192

00:10:54,300 --> 00:10:59,160

And he says to her,
just because you

193

00:10:59,160 --> 00:11:01,920

have a swastika on your
ID, that doesn't mean

194

00:11:01,920 --> 00:11:04,630

that you're going to survive.

195

00:11:04,630 --> 00:11:09,600

And he was about to leave
when he saw a wedding

196

00:11:09,600 --> 00:11:11,460

band on her finger.

197

00:11:11,460 --> 00:11:15,480

And he told her to take
off the wedding band.

198

00:11:15,480 --> 00:11:17,340

And he says, but it's mine.

199

00:11:17,340 --> 00:11:21,420

He says, you don't need it,
your husband isn't around.

200

00:11:21,420 --> 00:11:23,490

And where you're going
to go eventually,

201

00:11:23,490 --> 00:11:25,540

you certainly won't need this.

202

00:11:25,540 --> 00:11:29,190

And my mother took
it off and he left.

203

00:11:29,190 --> 00:11:33,690

And of course, she embraced
me that we survived

204

00:11:33,690 --> 00:11:36,010

for a little while longer.

205

00:11:36,010 --> 00:11:39,030

But what I forgot to tell
you was this apartment

206

00:11:39,030 --> 00:11:44,290

that we had was close
to the cemetery.

207

00:11:44,290 --> 00:11:48,690

And at my age, you would hear
the screams and the cries

208

00:11:48,690 --> 00:11:52,200

of the people that were hoarded
under the cemetery, where they

209

00:11:52,200 --> 00:11:55,230

had to dig their own graves.

210

00:11:55,230 --> 00:12:00,750

And they were shot right
into the graves, mass graves.

211

00:12:00,750 --> 00:12:05,050

And you would hear these
things behind your walls.

212

00:12:05,050 --> 00:12:09,720

And as a child, you
were afraid to go out,

213

00:12:09,720 --> 00:12:12,210

but you had-- the
curiosity was immense.

214

00:12:12,210 --> 00:12:14,430

You wanted to see
what was happening,

215

00:12:14,430 --> 00:12:20,070

but under no condition was
I allowed to go out there.

216

00:12:20,070 --> 00:12:24,130

And then as the
time progressed, I

217

00:12:24,130 --> 00:12:27,870

have to say that my brother had
written me a very pretty poem

218

00:12:27,870 --> 00:12:29,670

just recently.

219

00:12:29,670 --> 00:12:32,070

And mentioned a couple
of things that--

220

00:12:32,070 --> 00:12:34,770

I forgot to bring it
to show it to you--

221

00:12:34,770 --> 00:12:37,890

where it says how

I, as a little girl,

222

00:12:37,890 --> 00:12:44,010

was sent by my parents to visit

my relatives to find out what

223

00:12:44,010 --> 00:12:48,180

they were planning to do,

where they were going to hide.

224

00:12:48,180 --> 00:12:52,320

If they were planning to escape.

225

00:12:52,320 --> 00:12:55,800

And all this they said

because I didn't look Jewish

226

00:12:55,800 --> 00:12:57,570

and I was a child.

227

00:12:57,570 --> 00:12:59,850

And thinking that

I would be safe

228

00:12:59,850 --> 00:13:03,540

walking the streets, where

the streets were separated.

229

00:13:03,540 --> 00:13:07,620

You were not allowed

to walk let's say,

230

00:13:07,620 --> 00:13:08,790

on [? Morris ?] Avenue.

231

00:13:08,790 --> 00:13:11,780

A certain segment of

[? Morris ?] Avenue,

232

00:13:11,780 --> 00:13:15,240

the Jews were not allowed
to put their foot on it.

233
00:13:15,240 --> 00:13:17,220
And had they be
caught, again, you

234
00:13:17,220 --> 00:13:21,810
would have been either taken
to prison or shot at the spot.

235
00:13:21,810 --> 00:13:27,390
So this was my memory
of a small child.

236
00:13:27,390 --> 00:13:33,330
And as the time progressed,
evacuations started.

237
00:13:33,330 --> 00:13:39,930
And people were disappearing,
and no one knew where.

238
00:13:39,930 --> 00:13:45,210
At one point, my
uncle, my great uncle,

239
00:13:45,210 --> 00:13:48,600
had a lumberyard in Tarnow.

240
00:13:48,600 --> 00:13:54,120
And he had made a couple of
hideouts underneath the floor

241
00:13:54,120 --> 00:13:55,980
of the lumber yard .

242
00:13:55,980 --> 00:13:58,620
Also, there was an attic.

243
00:13:58,620 --> 00:14:05,130
And his own wife and one of the
daughters went into the attic.

244
00:14:05,130 --> 00:14:10,980
And many relatives and friends
hid underneath the floor.

245
00:14:10,980 --> 00:14:15,480
And such place, we hid
underneath the floor.

246
00:14:15,480 --> 00:14:19,800
Unfortunately, his wife and
his daughter were taken--

247
00:14:19,800 --> 00:14:25,410
were spotted and were
taken away from the attic.

248
00:14:25,410 --> 00:14:31,260
We heard when
Ukrainians came in--

249
00:14:31,260 --> 00:14:32,650
am I allowed to say Ukrainians?

250
00:14:32,650 --> 00:14:33,960
Yes, of course.

251
00:14:33,960 --> 00:14:39,330
The Ukrainians came
into the lumber yard.

252
00:14:39,330 --> 00:14:44,200
And I guess it was in the
office above our heads.

253
00:14:44,200 --> 00:14:47,550
And you could hear them
say, if we find a Jew here,

254
00:14:47,550 --> 00:14:50,290
we're not going to give
them to the Germans.

255

00:14:50,290 --> 00:14:54,870

We'll kill them right here
on the spot ourselves.

256

00:14:54,870 --> 00:15:00,810

The lumber yard was
situated on a plaza.

257

00:15:00,810 --> 00:15:06,510

And the plaza was an assembly
for all the evacuees.

258

00:15:06,510 --> 00:15:10,920

And you could hear underneath
there were people crying,

259

00:15:10,920 --> 00:15:13,140

children were screaming.

260

00:15:13,140 --> 00:15:17,130

And no one knew what was
really happening up there.

261

00:15:17,130 --> 00:15:22,530

Later on, from witnesses,
we found that--

262

00:15:22,530 --> 00:15:26,550

what tragedies, what
atrocities were happening.

263

00:15:26,550 --> 00:15:29,070

People were being thrown
against the walls.

264

00:15:29,070 --> 00:15:32,880

Children were ripped
out of women's arms.

265

00:15:32,880 --> 00:15:35,940

Babies thrown against
the wall, the skulls

266

00:15:35,940 --> 00:15:39,310

were being shattered
into pieces.

267

00:15:39,310 --> 00:15:42,690

And that's what happened.

268

00:15:42,690 --> 00:15:43,830

We were saved.

269

00:15:43,830 --> 00:15:46,830

When we came out from
the hiding place,

270

00:15:46,830 --> 00:15:51,570

we found out that my great
aunt and my mother's cousin

271

00:15:51,570 --> 00:15:52,900

had perished.

272

00:15:52,900 --> 00:15:54,720

Or I mean, perished--
we didn't know

273

00:15:54,720 --> 00:15:56,740

that at the time that
they were perished,

274

00:15:56,740 --> 00:15:59,550

they were just taken away.

275

00:15:59,550 --> 00:16:01,920

Most of the people
from Tarnow were

276

00:16:01,920 --> 00:16:09,840

taken to Belsen or probably
to Auschwitz as well.

277

00:16:09,840 --> 00:16:12,885

I don't know, but the

majority of the people

278

00:16:12,885 --> 00:16:13,760
were taken to Belsen.

279

00:16:13,760 --> 00:16:16,590

280

00:16:16,590 --> 00:16:20,520
And this is what happened
during that occasion.

281

00:16:20,520 --> 00:16:23,190
And you were able-- because of
your uncle who had built this

282

00:16:23,190 --> 00:16:25,660
hiding place-- to be
underneath the underneath--

283

00:16:25,660 --> 00:16:26,160
Exactly.

284

00:16:26,160 --> 00:16:27,790
--the office of his lumber yard.

285

00:16:27,790 --> 00:16:29,130
Exactly, lumber yard.

286

00:16:29,130 --> 00:16:30,480
How many of you were there?

287

00:16:30,480 --> 00:16:31,710
Oh my God.

288

00:16:31,710 --> 00:16:33,480
There were quite a few people.

289

00:16:33,480 --> 00:16:35,070
But you couldn't stand up.

290

00:16:35,070 --> 00:16:36,400
You were crouched.

291
00:16:36,400 --> 00:16:40,080
I mean, I was small and
I had to be on my fours.

292
00:16:40,080 --> 00:16:41,820
But the adults--

293
00:16:41,820 --> 00:16:44,400
I'm sure it was
uncomfortable, and--

294
00:16:44,400 --> 00:16:46,710
Can you give a rough
estimate of how many people?

295
00:16:46,710 --> 00:16:48,600
I would say about 12.

296
00:16:48,600 --> 00:16:49,493
And for how long?

297
00:16:49,493 --> 00:16:50,160
Do you remember?

298
00:16:50,160 --> 00:16:52,510
We were there for
a couple of days.

299
00:16:52,510 --> 00:16:56,790
I mean, time-- you can't
really tell the time.

300
00:16:56,790 --> 00:17:01,380
It was dark and it was
during the summertime.

301
00:17:01,380 --> 00:17:05,490
It was 19-- if I
recall correctly,

302

00:17:05,490 --> 00:17:11,170

the first evacuation
was around 1940 or 1941.

303

00:17:11,170 --> 00:17:13,349

Something like that.

304

00:17:13,349 --> 00:17:17,160

But people were just
disappearing prior to that.

305

00:17:17,160 --> 00:17:20,760

Just from being on the street.

306

00:17:20,760 --> 00:17:23,940

This particular uncle
had a younger son,

307

00:17:23,940 --> 00:17:29,580

and he was going
out in the morning.

308

00:17:29,580 --> 00:17:31,620

And he looked in the
mirror, he looked

309

00:17:31,620 --> 00:17:33,280

at his face, and his sister--

310

00:17:33,280 --> 00:17:35,910

the one that perished
with her mother--

311

00:17:35,910 --> 00:17:38,670

said to him, why are you
looking in the mirror?

312

00:17:38,670 --> 00:17:41,040

I mean, you haven't gone out?

313

00:17:41,040 --> 00:17:45,300

So he says, because I have

a feeling that I'm not

314
00:17:45,300 --> 00:17:46,950
going to come back.

315
00:17:46,950 --> 00:17:49,050
And I want to see
what I look like.

316
00:17:49,050 --> 00:17:53,400
He happened to have been a
very handsome, young man.

317
00:17:53,400 --> 00:17:56,260
I mean, I thought
he was handsome.

318
00:17:56,260 --> 00:18:01,530
I was only six, but I
thought he was handsome.

319
00:18:01,530 --> 00:18:04,920
And what happened,
yes, they caught

320
00:18:04,920 --> 00:18:07,380
him someplace on the street.

321
00:18:07,380 --> 00:18:12,210
And the next thing the family
knew, he was from the Gestapo--

322
00:18:12,210 --> 00:18:13,470
at the Gestapo.

323
00:18:13,470 --> 00:18:15,510
And my great aunt
and her daughter

324
00:18:15,510 --> 00:18:23,310
were trying to bring parcels
of food and clothing to him.

325

00:18:23,310 --> 00:18:28,870

And they were told that
he died of a heart attack.

326

00:18:28,870 --> 00:18:33,120

So that was the first
person in Tarnow

327

00:18:33,120 --> 00:18:36,690

that was killed that way.

328

00:18:36,690 --> 00:18:41,580

That perished from the streets,
that people knew of something

329

00:18:41,580 --> 00:18:47,040

like that happening prior
to all the evacuations.

330

00:18:47,040 --> 00:18:53,500

But this is what had
transpired during my childhood.

331

00:18:53,500 --> 00:18:56,100

Did your parents try to
shield you from any of it,

332

00:18:56,100 --> 00:18:57,990

or was it impossible?

333

00:18:57,990 --> 00:18:59,970

There was no way of shielding.

334

00:18:59,970 --> 00:19:07,950

This was a daily diet
of war, child and adult.

335

00:19:07,950 --> 00:19:10,620

Did your father hide with
you in this first evacuation?

336

00:19:10,620 --> 00:19:11,160

Yes.

337

00:19:11,160 --> 00:19:14,160

We all hid together.

338

00:19:14,160 --> 00:19:18,930

There was a time where
some friends of my parents

339

00:19:18,930 --> 00:19:24,740

came and said, look, if you
could give us your children,

340

00:19:24,740 --> 00:19:30,430

we'll try to protect them,
and we'll try to hide them.

341

00:19:30,430 --> 00:19:33,660

And I don't know if it was
selfish or perhaps the fact

342

00:19:33,660 --> 00:19:36,970

that my mother didn't
want to part with us.

343

00:19:36,970 --> 00:19:41,190

She said if we go,
we all go together.

344

00:19:41,190 --> 00:19:44,670

And she didn't part with us.

345

00:19:44,670 --> 00:19:45,990

And so that was--

346

00:19:45,990 --> 00:19:48,770

After that, those few days
after the first evacuation,

347

00:19:48,770 --> 00:19:50,970

do you recall what
happened then?

348
00:19:50,970 --> 00:19:51,510
Do I recall?

349
00:19:51,510 --> 00:19:53,100
Yes.

350
00:19:53,100 --> 00:19:55,230
They had formed ghettos.

351
00:19:55,230 --> 00:19:58,800
The population had decreased.

352
00:19:58,800 --> 00:20:05,610
And the people, like I said,
homes were being taken away.

353
00:20:05,610 --> 00:20:08,280
The farmers were coming
with their cattle.

354
00:20:08,280 --> 00:20:11,460
And these gorgeous
apartments, they

355
00:20:11,460 --> 00:20:15,120
were hanging out with their
heads over the window, so--

356
00:20:15,120 --> 00:20:16,870
the cattle.

357
00:20:16,870 --> 00:20:19,630
I mean, it was
funny to see cattle

358
00:20:19,630 --> 00:20:22,080
in these gorgeous
apartments, where

359
00:20:22,080 --> 00:20:26,160
we had to be out there
like beggars and thieves

360
00:20:26,160 --> 00:20:27,990
and whatever, animals.

361
00:20:27,990 --> 00:20:30,990

362
00:20:30,990 --> 00:20:34,800
This is what I
recall as a child.

363
00:20:34,800 --> 00:20:38,376
I had a very short childhood.

364
00:20:38,376 --> 00:20:40,220
I mean, when I
entered kindergarten,

365
00:20:40,220 --> 00:20:41,640
that didn't last very long.

366
00:20:41,640 --> 00:20:44,620
I didn't even finish it.

367
00:20:44,620 --> 00:20:51,140
I did have a good time,
I did recall that.

368
00:20:51,140 --> 00:20:54,700
But after that, I
was like a grown up.

369
00:20:54,700 --> 00:20:58,960
And I missed that.

370
00:20:58,960 --> 00:21:02,210
I think when I saw my
children growing up,

371
00:21:02,210 --> 00:21:04,870
I didn't know how to
react, because I missed

372
00:21:04,870 --> 00:21:08,230
that part of my growing up.

373
00:21:08,230 --> 00:21:10,290
What do you remember
after those--

374
00:21:10,290 --> 00:21:13,510
in those early,
early grown up years?

375
00:21:13,510 --> 00:21:17,417
When-- not anything good.

376
00:21:17,417 --> 00:21:19,000
In other words, you
lived in hiding in

377
00:21:19,000 --> 00:21:22,450
the ghetto throughout
the rest-- for how long?

378
00:21:22,450 --> 00:21:23,480
There were ghettos.

379
00:21:23,480 --> 00:21:25,690
There was more than one ghetto.

380
00:21:25,690 --> 00:21:30,760
There were ghettos formed,
and as the time progressed,

381
00:21:30,760 --> 00:21:33,130
they made three ghettos
out of one ghetto.

382
00:21:33,130 --> 00:21:37,600
They made ghetto for
working men, working women,

383
00:21:37,600 --> 00:21:39,520

and old people and children.

384

00:21:39,520 --> 00:21:41,410

And of course, I
happened to have been

385

00:21:41,410 --> 00:21:44,320

with old people and children.

386

00:21:44,320 --> 00:21:47,110

And my brother was
with my father,

387

00:21:47,110 --> 00:21:49,780

and my mother was working
in another ghetto.

388

00:21:49,780 --> 00:21:52,270

And you had to have--

389

00:21:52,270 --> 00:21:59,350

you had to know someone to
be able to get into a factory

390

00:21:59,350 --> 00:22:05,110

in order to survive a little bit
outside, on the Christian side.

391

00:22:05,110 --> 00:22:07,660

And so my mother knew
a couple of people,

392

00:22:07,660 --> 00:22:16,180

so she had a job in the factory
where they made warm ups, leg

393

00:22:16,180 --> 00:22:21,580

warming warm ups for the Russian
front for the German soldiers.

394

00:22:21,580 --> 00:22:23,770

And she worked in that factory.

395

00:22:23,770 --> 00:22:26,680

And at night, they would
search everybody coming back

396

00:22:26,680 --> 00:22:28,510

to the ghetto.

397

00:22:28,510 --> 00:22:34,930

And my father worked outside
digging ditches, whatever.

398

00:22:34,930 --> 00:22:37,135

There was a place
called Brand, Bavaria.

399

00:22:37,135 --> 00:22:41,545

Now, as a child, I
didn't pay attention

400

00:22:41,545 --> 00:22:45,430

and I still don't know what
they were making there.

401

00:22:45,430 --> 00:22:46,930

But that's where he worked.

402

00:22:46,930 --> 00:22:50,440

And my brother was working
with my mother in this factory.

403

00:22:50,440 --> 00:22:53,140

404

00:22:53,140 --> 00:22:56,050

I just existed.

405

00:22:56,050 --> 00:22:57,940

If there was a
piece of bread, yes.

406

00:22:57,940 --> 00:23:02,720

If not, perhaps I swiped

something from somebody.

407

00:23:02,720 --> 00:23:05,156

There were other children
and old people were you were?

408

00:23:05,156 --> 00:23:05,830

Exactly.

409

00:23:05,830 --> 00:23:06,910

I made friends.

410

00:23:06,910 --> 00:23:08,920

I went into other people--

411

00:23:08,920 --> 00:23:12,620

there were people there
that sort of took--

412

00:23:12,620 --> 00:23:14,110

they protected me.

413

00:23:14,110 --> 00:23:17,260

If there was a time where
you had to go into hiding,

414

00:23:17,260 --> 00:23:19,670

I went to hiding
with everybody else.

415

00:23:19,670 --> 00:23:22,270

I was lucky enough
to survive, yes.

416

00:23:22,270 --> 00:23:25,450

There was a time prior
to the separation

417

00:23:25,450 --> 00:23:26,510

of the three ghettos.

418

00:23:26,510 --> 00:23:30,100

There was still a
ghetto, one ghetto,

419
00:23:30,100 --> 00:23:32,050
the ghetto was surrounded.

420
00:23:32,050 --> 00:23:35,050
And tried to get over
to the lumberyard,

421
00:23:35,050 --> 00:23:38,770
but it was impossible.

422
00:23:38,770 --> 00:23:45,910
It was already-- the Gestapo
was all over the place.

423
00:23:45,910 --> 00:23:53,770
And my mother did hear of a
place being formed behind--

424
00:23:53,770 --> 00:23:57,970
in an apartment.

425
00:23:57,970 --> 00:24:00,280
Excuse me.

426
00:24:00,280 --> 00:24:05,320
And as we couldn't get
to that lumber yard,

427
00:24:05,320 --> 00:24:10,150
there was a hiding-- we could
hear people calling names.

428
00:24:10,150 --> 00:24:15,460
And I just-- my parents
wanted to go to this hideout,

429
00:24:15,460 --> 00:24:18,430
and I guess perhaps as a child--

430

00:24:18,430 --> 00:24:22,750
maybe I was a
Jewish anti-Semite--

431
00:24:22,750 --> 00:24:27,700
I didn't like people calling
people by Jewish names.

432
00:24:27,700 --> 00:24:32,560
You'll have to excuse,
I have a terrible cold.

433
00:24:32,560 --> 00:24:33,920
Would you like some water?

434
00:24:33,920 --> 00:24:34,420
Maybe.

435
00:24:34,420 --> 00:24:40,970

436
00:24:40,970 --> 00:24:45,620
And so I didn't go, and
I kept on going straight

437
00:24:45,620 --> 00:24:47,870
for where we were living.

438
00:24:47,870 --> 00:24:52,010
And of course, my parents
and my brother followed suit.

439
00:24:52,010 --> 00:24:54,170
And we came there, now what?

440
00:24:54,170 --> 00:24:55,820
We came to the building.

441
00:24:55,820 --> 00:25:00,710
So my mother recalled that there
was a hideout being formed.

442

00:25:00,710 --> 00:25:04,520

So there was a
padlock on the door.

443

00:25:04,520 --> 00:25:06,725

My father ripped it
off, and there we

444

00:25:06,725 --> 00:25:08,750

were in this gorgeous apartment.

445

00:25:08,750 --> 00:25:14,760

All furnished, nice and neat,
like the people left for work.

446

00:25:14,760 --> 00:25:18,350

And my mother stood with us and
she said, please, I beg of you.

447

00:25:18,350 --> 00:25:22,370

I'm here with my family, and I
know there is a hideout here.

448

00:25:22,370 --> 00:25:24,700

Could you let us in?

449

00:25:24,700 --> 00:25:27,980

And they said, yes,
just help yourself.

450

00:25:27,980 --> 00:25:30,110

Just help ourselves.

451

00:25:30,110 --> 00:25:33,200

Behind the wall,
there was a hideout.

452

00:25:33,200 --> 00:25:37,550

A room was sealed, so we
had to disrobe our coats.

453

00:25:37,550 --> 00:25:43,160

And they pulled us in underneath

the bed into another room.

454

00:25:43,160 --> 00:25:47,280

And that's where we stayed
they, also a couple of days.

455

00:25:47,280 --> 00:25:52,380

There were no facilities, just
drinking water and some food.

456

00:25:52,380 --> 00:25:55,670

But they weren't
clever enough when they

457

00:25:55,670 --> 00:25:56,820

were looking for the place.

458

00:25:56,820 --> 00:26:00,990

If they had seen the apartment
below had an extra room,

459

00:26:00,990 --> 00:26:03,380

they would have seen
that it was a hideout.

460

00:26:03,380 --> 00:26:06,620

Sure enough, about 10 minutes
afterwards the Germans

461

00:26:06,620 --> 00:26:09,300

entered into the house.

462

00:26:09,300 --> 00:26:11,540

And they said, we were here.

463

00:26:11,540 --> 00:26:14,450

Somebody was here already.

464

00:26:14,450 --> 00:26:17,630

Because they saw that the
padlock was ripped off,

465

00:26:17,630 --> 00:26:19,560
so they didn't
search the apartment.

466
00:26:19,560 --> 00:26:21,020
I guess that was lucky enough.

467
00:26:21,020 --> 00:26:25,700
So when we came
out, we survived.

468
00:26:25,700 --> 00:26:28,670
The people behind
the wall survived.

469
00:26:28,670 --> 00:26:32,540
But the children of the people
that had to hideout never

470
00:26:32,540 --> 00:26:35,130
came back.

471
00:26:35,130 --> 00:26:36,500
They were caught.

472
00:26:36,500 --> 00:26:41,420
They were-- I don't know,
from the working facilities,

473
00:26:41,420 --> 00:26:43,280
they were taken, evacuated.

474
00:26:43,280 --> 00:26:45,860
Where did you go
after this apartment?

475
00:26:45,860 --> 00:26:50,630
After this apartment, I
went back with my parents

476
00:26:50,630 --> 00:26:57,680
to the one room that we lived
in that was allotted to us.

477

00:26:57,680 --> 00:27:01,790

Because there was no other
place to live with other people.

478

00:27:01,790 --> 00:27:04,940

There must have been about two
or three other families living

479

00:27:04,940 --> 00:27:05,570

in the same--

480

00:27:05,570 --> 00:27:10,030

we sort of separated
the room by a curtain.

481

00:27:10,030 --> 00:27:14,830

But my parents had to
go to their destinations

482

00:27:14,830 --> 00:27:17,290

of the working ghetto.

483

00:27:17,290 --> 00:27:21,230

An announcement came that
if there were any Americans,

484

00:27:21,230 --> 00:27:22,105

they should register.

485

00:27:22,105 --> 00:27:25,390

486

00:27:25,390 --> 00:27:26,500

They was going to be--

487

00:27:26,500 --> 00:27:34,660

Exchanged, for Germans coming
to a repatriate with Hitler,

488

00:27:34,660 --> 00:27:36,820

coming from the United States.

489
00:27:36,820 --> 00:27:40,360
And we were supposedly
going to be exchanged

490
00:27:40,360 --> 00:27:45,130
for any of these Germans
going to the United States

491
00:27:45,130 --> 00:27:47,590
through Portugal.

492
00:27:47,590 --> 00:27:53,410
So my mother inquired, if all of
us are going to go or just her.

493
00:27:53,410 --> 00:27:55,600
So they said, the
entire family is going

494
00:27:55,600 --> 00:27:57,790
to be protected under this.

495
00:27:57,790 --> 00:27:59,080
So fine.

496
00:27:59,080 --> 00:28:01,690
But I was in the
children's ghetto.

497
00:28:01,690 --> 00:28:04,180
So they had to smuggle me out.

498
00:28:04,180 --> 00:28:07,300
And the only way to
smuggle me out was--

499
00:28:07,300 --> 00:28:12,630
one possibility was at night.

500
00:28:12,630 --> 00:28:18,270
And at one time, they would put

China into these wicker trunks.

501

00:28:18,270 --> 00:28:23,610

And so they tucked me into
that, and they took me over

502

00:28:23,610 --> 00:28:24,960

to the working ghetto.

503

00:28:24,960 --> 00:28:30,360

And at night, my mother would
open the trunk and let me out.

504

00:28:30,360 --> 00:28:37,300

She, in the other ghetto,
was living in a store

505

00:28:37,300 --> 00:28:41,710

front where many other women.

506

00:28:41,710 --> 00:28:45,010

That each one had
a little cubbyhole.

507

00:28:45,010 --> 00:28:50,980

So it wasn't very safe for
them to see that this lady has

508

00:28:50,980 --> 00:28:53,690

a child living here.

509

00:28:53,690 --> 00:28:56,020

But they didn't say anything.

510

00:28:56,020 --> 00:29:00,580

Everybody looked away
in order to save a life.

511

00:29:00,580 --> 00:29:07,070

And sure enough, they told
us to come to the Jewish--

512

00:29:07,070 --> 00:29:09,340

they called it
the [NON-ENGLISH],,

513

00:29:09,340 --> 00:29:12,520

which was the Jewish community.

514

00:29:12,520 --> 00:29:17,680

And we came there, and they
waited for us, the Germans.

515

00:29:17,680 --> 00:29:21,310

And they told us we're
going to Portugal.

516

00:29:21,310 --> 00:29:26,110

But in the meantime, they took
us to a city called Krakow.

517

00:29:26,110 --> 00:29:32,440

And as we arrived there,
we went on very nice trains

518

00:29:32,440 --> 00:29:34,040

with Germans guarding us.

519

00:29:34,040 --> 00:29:34,545

But it was--

520

00:29:34,545 --> 00:29:35,170

As a passenger?

521

00:29:35,170 --> 00:29:37,180

--a train, yes.

522

00:29:37,180 --> 00:29:44,120

And we arrived there,
and they gave us time

523

00:29:44,120 --> 00:29:48,940

to take transportation to
wherever we were going.

524

00:29:48,940 --> 00:29:50,990

We didn't know
where we were going.

525

00:29:50,990 --> 00:29:55,220

They took one of these carts
like you have in Central Park,

526

00:29:55,220 --> 00:29:57,590

you know, horse and buggy.

527

00:29:57,590 --> 00:29:59,600

And they set us on that.

528

00:29:59,600 --> 00:30:02,630

And my father says, we're
not going to Portugal.

529

00:30:02,630 --> 00:30:04,880

There is a prison
here in this city.

530

00:30:04,880 --> 00:30:07,070

That's probably where
they're taking us.

531

00:30:07,070 --> 00:30:11,780

Sure enough, they took us to
this place called Montelupich,

532

00:30:11,780 --> 00:30:16,880

which was a very big prison
and whole of Galicia,

533

00:30:16,880 --> 00:30:19,160

And that's where we were.

534

00:30:19,160 --> 00:30:20,960

They separated us again.

535

00:30:20,960 --> 00:30:24,170

They're very efficient with

paperwork, the Germans.

536

00:30:24,170 --> 00:30:25,970

So we stood in line again.

537

00:30:25,970 --> 00:30:29,900

And they took our names

and the dates of birth.

538

00:30:29,900 --> 00:30:33,530

And they told us

the where to go.

539

00:30:33,530 --> 00:30:35,730

And they separated

men and women.

540

00:30:35,730 --> 00:30:42,920

And so I was with my mother, and

my brother left with my father.

541

00:30:42,920 --> 00:30:47,230

There again, we were

there for a while.

542

00:30:47,230 --> 00:30:48,725

I think it was about nine weeks.

543

00:30:48,725 --> 00:30:52,640

544

00:30:52,640 --> 00:30:56,240

And it wasn't so easy

to be there either.

545

00:30:56,240 --> 00:31:02,300

They sort of interrogated

my mother constantly.

546

00:31:02,300 --> 00:31:06,710

And food was scarce.

547

00:31:06,710 --> 00:31:11,030

They took us x for
showers, and while we

548

00:31:11,030 --> 00:31:15,540

were walking through
these prison hallways,

549

00:31:15,540 --> 00:31:18,290

my mother used to
see somebody that she

550

00:31:18,290 --> 00:31:21,590

knew on the Christian side.

551

00:31:21,590 --> 00:31:24,365

And she asked-- they
told us that they

552

00:31:24,365 --> 00:31:28,280

were political
prisoners, because they

553

00:31:28,280 --> 00:31:29,615

were trying to help Jews.

554

00:31:29,615 --> 00:31:32,240

555

00:31:32,240 --> 00:31:37,790

And right after-- well, my
mother asked for some food

556

00:31:37,790 --> 00:31:38,810

for me.

557

00:31:38,810 --> 00:31:41,930

And they had given me a
piece of hard, hard bread.

558

00:31:41,930 --> 00:31:44,780

I wouldn't to give
it to my own dog.

559

00:31:44,780 --> 00:31:48,620

And my mother complained, how
can I give this to my child?

560

00:31:48,620 --> 00:31:50,018

She'll break her teeth.

561

00:31:50,018 --> 00:31:51,560

And the guard said,
that's all right.

562

00:31:51,560 --> 00:31:54,910

She'll get so tired of chewing
on it, she won't be hungry.

563

00:31:54,910 --> 00:31:57,620

So that was my pastime.

564

00:31:57,620 --> 00:32:00,530

And of course, the other
people that were there to-- we

565

00:32:00,530 --> 00:32:03,140

were not the only
ones in the room.

566

00:32:03,140 --> 00:32:07,070

We were there, about 20
other women in one room.

567

00:32:07,070 --> 00:32:10,370

They gave us straw
sacks that we could--

568

00:32:10,370 --> 00:32:16,040

mattresses that we were
supposed to sleep on.

569

00:32:16,040 --> 00:32:17,960

And the windows--
you couldn't even

570

00:32:17,960 --> 00:32:19,580

look out the
windows, because they

571

00:32:19,580 --> 00:32:22,520

were boarded up with metal.

572

00:32:22,520 --> 00:32:27,160

The only thing you saw
was holes in the metal.

573

00:32:27,160 --> 00:32:34,700

And so that was the only
sight that we had of daylight.

574

00:32:34,700 --> 00:32:37,550

And so after that,
they took us again,

575

00:32:37,550 --> 00:32:41,000

telling us that we're
going to Portugal.

576

00:32:41,000 --> 00:32:43,070

And when we came
to the station, we

577

00:32:43,070 --> 00:32:45,740

met my brother and my father.

578

00:32:45,740 --> 00:32:47,120

And of course, we were thrilled.

579

00:32:47,120 --> 00:32:49,940

580

00:32:49,940 --> 00:32:53,870

And many other
people met us there.

581

00:32:53,870 --> 00:32:57,290

And these were all

supposedly Americans.

582

00:32:57,290 --> 00:33:04,460

People were able to buy papers
for South America for money.

583

00:33:04,460 --> 00:33:09,150

And you tried
anything to survive.

584

00:33:09,150 --> 00:33:11,390

And then finally,
the trains came.

585

00:33:11,390 --> 00:33:15,110

They put us on a train, and we
traveled for days on the train.

586

00:33:15,110 --> 00:33:18,860

And finally, our destination
was Bergen-Belsen.

587

00:33:18,860 --> 00:33:21,220

When we arrived there,
when trains were opened,

588

00:33:21,220 --> 00:33:24,980

we were greeted by police
dogs, machine guns, towers,

589

00:33:24,980 --> 00:33:26,360

and trucks.

590

00:33:26,360 --> 00:33:30,110

And like I said, they were
very efficient with paperwork.

591

00:33:30,110 --> 00:33:38,150

So we were interviewed
again and loaded on trucks.

592

00:33:38,150 --> 00:33:41,600

And we opened this camp.

593

00:33:41,600 --> 00:33:47,120

We were over 3,000 people
from this group that arrived,

594

00:33:47,120 --> 00:33:49,370

supposedly all Americans.

595

00:33:49,370 --> 00:33:55,220

Supposedly all foreigners
for exchange purposes.

596

00:33:55,220 --> 00:33:57,650

But we were hoarded
onto the camp.

597

00:33:57,650 --> 00:33:59,570

I think we were
the only ones that

598

00:33:59,570 --> 00:34:01,580

opened the camp at the time.

599

00:34:01,580 --> 00:34:08,600

There were some prisoners of
war there, British and Russians.

600

00:34:08,600 --> 00:34:12,500

No Americans, at least
we didn't see any.

601

00:34:12,500 --> 00:34:16,400

And we arrived onto the camp,
and there were barracks.

602

00:34:16,400 --> 00:34:19,760

Barracks with
three decker bunks.

603

00:34:19,760 --> 00:34:21,210

And--

604

00:34:21,210 --> 00:34:23,300
Do you know what year this was?

605
00:34:23,300 --> 00:34:26,449
This was 1943.

606
00:34:26,449 --> 00:34:32,389
This was I think in September.

607
00:34:32,389 --> 00:34:38,030
Because we came-- to the
prison, we can May of '43.

608
00:34:38,030 --> 00:34:42,620
It was on my father's birthday
we arrived to the prison.

609
00:34:42,620 --> 00:34:49,190
And it was in September, I
think, we arrived to camp.

610
00:34:49,190 --> 00:34:53,139
And there we-- that
was our destination

611
00:34:53,139 --> 00:34:55,610
instead of Portugal.

612
00:34:55,610 --> 00:34:57,650
And there, we were as the--

613
00:34:57,650 --> 00:35:01,880
our group, out of that
one group that we were,

614
00:35:01,880 --> 00:35:07,790
the only people that survived
in the numbers was 150.

615
00:35:07,790 --> 00:35:11,450
And from that group,
people were either dying

616

00:35:11,450 --> 00:35:18,800

from typhoid, malnutrition,
hunger, or they were just--

617

00:35:18,800 --> 00:35:24,110

because they had selections
which called roll calls.

618

00:35:24,110 --> 00:35:27,800

And we would have to stand up
early in the morning, middle

619

00:35:27,800 --> 00:35:28,400

of the night.

620

00:35:28,400 --> 00:35:30,380

Some would
disappeared someplace.

621

00:35:30,380 --> 00:35:32,570

We had to-- there were no baths.

622

00:35:32,570 --> 00:35:37,100

We were taken to
a building where

623

00:35:37,100 --> 00:35:40,460

there were baths being given.

624

00:35:40,460 --> 00:35:43,880

Our clothes were
being taken away.

625

00:35:43,880 --> 00:35:49,760

Of course, they were they called
the delousing, because lice

626

00:35:49,760 --> 00:35:52,010

were all over the place.

627

00:35:52,010 --> 00:35:53,405

Big, white lice.

628
00:35:53,405 --> 00:35:55,920

629
00:35:55,920 --> 00:35:57,997
And people--

630
00:35:57,997 --> 00:35:59,080
Were you with your mother?

631
00:35:59,080 --> 00:36:00,462
Yes, constantly.

632
00:36:00,462 --> 00:36:03,420

633
00:36:03,420 --> 00:36:07,800
And we were given
a bowl and a spoon.

634
00:36:07,800 --> 00:36:10,950
And they would give us
rations in the morning

635
00:36:10,950 --> 00:36:14,080
of soup or black coffee.

636
00:36:14,080 --> 00:36:17,490
And that was our food.

637
00:36:17,490 --> 00:36:21,720
And the latrine--
there were latrines,

638
00:36:21,720 --> 00:36:25,500
there was a stove perhaps.

639
00:36:25,500 --> 00:36:33,440
There was once a woman came
into camp, a German lady, that--

640

00:36:33,440 --> 00:36:34,310
she was German.

641
00:36:34,310 --> 00:36:38,120
She came in to be a prisoner
like everybody else.

642
00:36:38,120 --> 00:36:41,630
Her daughter denounced
her, because the woman,

643
00:36:41,630 --> 00:36:45,950
someplace in generations,
there was a mixed marriage.

644
00:36:45,950 --> 00:36:47,900
Somebody was Jewish.

645
00:36:47,900 --> 00:36:51,680
And the woman wanted
to be pure, daughter.

646
00:36:51,680 --> 00:36:57,480
And so she delivered her unto
the gates of Bergen-Belsen.

647
00:36:57,480 --> 00:37:02,570
And that's-- you have
room for many children,

648
00:37:02,570 --> 00:37:05,760
but one child doesn't
have room for her mother.

649
00:37:05,760 --> 00:37:09,250
So this daughter denounced her.

650
00:37:09,250 --> 00:37:13,650
And this is what this lady
had told us as we stood there.

651
00:37:13,650 --> 00:37:15,960
And there was one--

652
00:37:15,960 --> 00:37:21,120
I think this particular lady had
brought many things, many food

653
00:37:21,120 --> 00:37:23,880
parcels, along with her.

654
00:37:23,880 --> 00:37:26,340
And I recall it very vividly.

655
00:37:26,340 --> 00:37:29,400
My mother begged her, please.

656
00:37:29,400 --> 00:37:32,160
Now, I came from
a religious home.

657
00:37:32,160 --> 00:37:35,340
She had pork.

658
00:37:35,340 --> 00:37:40,710
And my mother begged her
for this piece of pork.

659
00:37:40,710 --> 00:37:43,470
And the woman was melting it.

660
00:37:43,470 --> 00:37:46,650
And the grease fell
on my mother's leg,

661
00:37:46,650 --> 00:37:50,760
that the whole skin
just peeled off.

662
00:37:50,760 --> 00:37:54,600
She had a third degree
burn from this whole thing,

663
00:37:54,600 --> 00:37:57,960
because she begged the woman

to give me a piece of bacon

664
00:37:57,960 --> 00:38:00,750
from this.

665
00:38:00,750 --> 00:38:06,190
I never at it, but this
was part of the reward

666
00:38:06,190 --> 00:38:08,582
for begging for food.

667
00:38:08,582 --> 00:38:10,530
Was it an accident?

668
00:38:10,530 --> 00:38:11,460
Was an accident?

669
00:38:11,460 --> 00:38:13,110
Yes, it was an accident.

670
00:38:13,110 --> 00:38:15,920
But had my mother
not begged for it

671
00:38:15,920 --> 00:38:17,850
and pushed herself
to be standing there

672
00:38:17,850 --> 00:38:22,120
in line for this, it
wouldn't have happened.

673
00:38:22,120 --> 00:38:24,040
But yes, it was an accident.

674
00:38:24,040 --> 00:38:26,570
She didn't do it on purpose.

675
00:38:26,570 --> 00:38:32,940
But these are sort of the small
recollections that I have,

676
00:38:32,940 --> 00:38:36,420
and they weren't
really very pleasant.

677
00:38:36,420 --> 00:38:39,750
And then after being
there-- the people

678
00:38:39,750 --> 00:38:42,060
came from all over the place.

679
00:38:42,060 --> 00:38:46,660
And you could hear
people from other camps.

680
00:38:46,660 --> 00:38:51,750
Young men came, and they
were hoarded into a barrack.

681
00:38:51,750 --> 00:38:56,920
And one of these young men
was a friend of my brother's.

682
00:38:56,920 --> 00:39:00,390
They went to school,
parochial school together.

683
00:39:00,390 --> 00:39:04,470
And my mother was so
happy to see him--

684
00:39:04,470 --> 00:39:06,750
across the barbed
wire, of course,

685
00:39:06,750 --> 00:39:09,810
not personally touching.

686
00:39:09,810 --> 00:39:13,170
And of course, the next day,
he wasn't there anymore.

687

00:39:13,170 --> 00:39:16,980

That particular barrack
was a slaughterhouse.

688

00:39:16,980 --> 00:39:20,400

And so, I don't know.

689

00:39:20,400 --> 00:39:25,230

He could have as well been
lucky enough to survive,

690

00:39:25,230 --> 00:39:26,400

but I doubt it.

691

00:39:26,400 --> 00:39:29,070

Because we never saw him again.

692

00:39:29,070 --> 00:39:35,670

And then after that, a
transport came from Hungary.

693

00:39:35,670 --> 00:39:38,850

694

00:39:38,850 --> 00:39:43,950

They were also supposedly
being exchanged someplace.

695

00:39:43,950 --> 00:39:50,370

They paid a tremendous
ransom for being saved.

696

00:39:50,370 --> 00:39:53,250

So everybody was sending
little pieces of paper

697

00:39:53,250 --> 00:39:59,460

across the wire for relatives.

698

00:39:59,460 --> 00:40:01,500

They were supposed
to go to Switzerland,

699
00:40:01,500 --> 00:40:02,925
these Hungarian people.

700
00:40:02,925 --> 00:40:05,460

701
00:40:05,460 --> 00:40:07,440
So that was one of these things.

702
00:40:07,440 --> 00:40:10,050
And then, of course,
one day they came--

703
00:40:10,050 --> 00:40:13,740
the bombs were flying, they
had to evacuate the camp.

704
00:40:13,740 --> 00:40:19,470
And they told us that we
are going to a camp called

705
00:40:19,470 --> 00:40:22,790
Theresienstadt.

706
00:40:22,790 --> 00:40:25,220
And so we had to go on a march.

707
00:40:25,220 --> 00:40:29,570
And we came to a train,
and we were loaded again.

708
00:40:29,570 --> 00:40:34,100
And my brother, my
father, my mother was--

709
00:40:34,100 --> 00:40:34,850
So you knew that--

710
00:40:34,850 --> 00:40:35,270
Yeah.

711

00:40:35,270 --> 00:40:36,600

You mean everyone was together?

712

00:40:36,600 --> 00:40:41,300

Yes, well we found each
other going to the train.

713

00:40:41,300 --> 00:40:44,390

And my mother was very sick.

714

00:40:44,390 --> 00:40:49,490

Her legs were swollen
with blood under it.

715

00:40:49,490 --> 00:40:51,740

I guess it was
phlebitis, I don't know,

716

00:40:51,740 --> 00:40:55,910

the doctor had to know,
but she could barely walk.

717

00:40:55,910 --> 00:41:00,560

And we were on this train,
and the train after a while

718

00:41:00,560 --> 00:41:02,390

didn't go any place.

719

00:41:02,390 --> 00:41:08,600

And the train stopped six
kilometers out of Magdeburg

720

00:41:08,600 --> 00:41:11,300

called Hillersleben.

721

00:41:11,300 --> 00:41:16,160

And the bombs-- and
they were shooting.

722

00:41:16,160 --> 00:41:18,170

The Americans were on

the ground and Germans

723

00:41:18,170 --> 00:41:20,720
were up in the planes.

724

00:41:20,720 --> 00:41:23,610
And it was the front.

725

00:41:23,610 --> 00:41:27,010
And my brother and I
decided that we are

726

00:41:27,010 --> 00:41:29,510
going to look for some food.

727

00:41:29,510 --> 00:41:32,330
And so we got out
of the train, and we

728

00:41:32,330 --> 00:41:34,610
went to look for this food.

729

00:41:34,610 --> 00:41:38,700
And we found this
lousy little carrot,

730

00:41:38,700 --> 00:41:42,110
but they were shooting
all over the place.

731

00:41:42,110 --> 00:41:44,580
So you can just imagine
how small we were.

732

00:41:44,580 --> 00:41:48,410
The both of us fit
into a dog house.

733

00:41:48,410 --> 00:41:50,690
And that's where
we sort of remained

734

00:41:50,690 --> 00:41:53,210
until the shooting stopped.

735
00:41:53,210 --> 00:41:55,430
And then as we came
back to the train,

736
00:41:55,430 --> 00:41:58,220
they told us that
we had to assemble.

737
00:41:58,220 --> 00:42:01,730
And we assembled, and the
machine guns were standing.

738
00:42:01,730 --> 00:42:03,620
And they were going
to shoot us that,

739
00:42:03,620 --> 00:42:08,600
but as this assembly part,
the American soldiers came.

740
00:42:08,600 --> 00:42:10,490
It was the 9th Army.

741
00:42:10,490 --> 00:42:15,475
And I was small, that
this one was very short.

742
00:42:15,475 --> 00:42:18,440
And it was a Jewish
man, and he cried.

743
00:42:18,440 --> 00:42:21,440
And it was the day
President Roosevelt died.

744
00:42:21,440 --> 00:42:24,080
So I'm not quite
sure if he cried

745
00:42:24,080 --> 00:42:27,740

because the president died
or because he liberated us.

746
00:42:27,740 --> 00:42:31,490
But that's-- we got liberated.

747
00:42:31,490 --> 00:42:32,150
So how long?

748
00:42:32,150 --> 00:42:32,990
So I'm here.

749
00:42:32,990 --> 00:42:33,590
From--

750
00:42:33,590 --> 00:42:35,810
1945.

751
00:42:35,810 --> 00:42:38,740
And how long were you in
Belsen then, a year and a half?

752
00:42:38,740 --> 00:42:44,450
We were there from
September till I

753
00:42:44,450 --> 00:42:49,840
would say March, no April.

754
00:42:49,840 --> 00:42:50,340
April.

755
00:42:50,340 --> 00:42:54,260
We were liberated
April the 13th, 1945.

756
00:42:54,260 --> 00:42:56,520
And you went in September '44?

757
00:42:56,520 --> 00:42:57,020
Yes.

758

00:42:57,020 --> 00:43:00,850

759

00:43:00,850 --> 00:43:04,000

No, not '44, '43.

760

00:43:04,000 --> 00:43:06,730

'43, so it wasn't--

761

00:43:06,730 --> 00:43:09,730

Here, I lose track of
time and dates, my God.

762

00:43:09,730 --> 00:43:12,100

And your mother and your
father and your brother and you

763

00:43:12,100 --> 00:43:12,600

survived?

764

00:43:12,600 --> 00:43:13,610

We all survived.

765

00:43:13,610 --> 00:43:18,760

And unfortunately,
my parents died.

766

00:43:18,760 --> 00:43:21,310

But they died here.

767

00:43:21,310 --> 00:43:23,630

How did you come
to America finally?

768

00:43:23,630 --> 00:43:29,230

Well, we left Hillersleben
because the Russians

769

00:43:29,230 --> 00:43:30,460

were coming.

770

00:43:30,460 --> 00:43:34,330

So we decided we're
going to escape there

771

00:43:34,330 --> 00:43:39,130

and we're going to go to
another part of Europe

772

00:43:39,130 --> 00:43:43,360

where it's under
American control.

773

00:43:43,360 --> 00:43:46,330

So many children,
many young people

774

00:43:46,330 --> 00:43:50,570

were going to Israel
supposedly, to Palestine.

775

00:43:50,570 --> 00:43:56,830

A town there had taken them on
exodus on bus and the trucks.

776

00:43:56,830 --> 00:43:59,200

But my mother said,
no, we survived

777

00:43:59,200 --> 00:44:00,940

that far, we go together.

778

00:44:00,940 --> 00:44:03,070

No separations.

779

00:44:03,070 --> 00:44:07,000

And we went on a
train, not knowing

780

00:44:07,000 --> 00:44:09,520

where the train was taking us.

781

00:44:09,520 --> 00:44:14,000

But we arrived to Belgium.

782
00:44:14,000 --> 00:44:14,500
VisĂ©.

783
00:44:14,500 --> 00:44:16,750
It was called VisĂ©.

784
00:44:16,750 --> 00:44:21,910
And from there, we
went to the Liege.

785
00:44:21,910 --> 00:44:23,890
And being the fact
that my mother didn't

786
00:44:23,890 --> 00:44:25,270
speak any English--

787
00:44:25,270 --> 00:44:29,830
she spoke German very
well, she spoke Polish--

788
00:44:29,830 --> 00:44:34,390
when they asked the questions,
she only replied in German.

789
00:44:34,390 --> 00:44:38,560
And so they assumed that we
were Germans trying to get back

790
00:44:38,560 --> 00:44:40,150
to the United States.

791
00:44:40,150 --> 00:44:45,610
So they put us in an internment
camp with the Germans

792
00:44:45,610 --> 00:44:49,570
until my mother kept saying,
but I'm an American, I'm a Jew.

793
00:44:49,570 --> 00:44:53,110

I just came back
from Bergen-Belsen.

794
00:44:53,110 --> 00:45:01,480
So UNRRA, a man from UNRRA
came, and he wired a telegram

795
00:45:01,480 --> 00:45:06,370
to Washington to verify if she
is really an American citizen.

796
00:45:06,370 --> 00:45:08,890
And they wired
back, yes, she is.

797
00:45:08,890 --> 00:45:11,560
And we were released.

798
00:45:11,560 --> 00:45:16,480
And my mother always taught us,
should we be ever separated,

799
00:45:16,480 --> 00:45:19,100
we should remember
that my mother had

800
00:45:19,100 --> 00:45:24,980
an aunt, her father's sister,
living in Switzerland.

801
00:45:24,980 --> 00:45:28,460
And the address was
embedded in our minds.

802
00:45:28,460 --> 00:45:33,800
And so she telegrammed
there to Switzerland.

803
00:45:33,800 --> 00:45:39,340
And my aunt, who
escaped Austria, Vienna,

804
00:45:39,340 --> 00:45:41,530

was in the United States.

805

00:45:41,530 --> 00:45:44,410

So of course, the whole
family through Switzerland

806

00:45:44,410 --> 00:45:47,500

was informed that we are alive.

807

00:45:47,500 --> 00:45:51,580

And one of my cousins happened
to have been in the Army,

808

00:45:51,580 --> 00:45:55,690

so he came to visit us.

809

00:45:55,690 --> 00:46:02,620

That was my aunt's son, who
was born in Vienna himself.

810

00:46:02,620 --> 00:46:10,480

And after two years, we
emigrated to the United States.

811

00:46:10,480 --> 00:46:13,090

And I attended high school.

812

00:46:13,090 --> 00:46:16,060

First, I came into grade
school, because they

813

00:46:16,060 --> 00:46:19,930

didn't know what I know
and what I don't know.

814

00:46:19,930 --> 00:46:23,620

I attended parochial
Catholic school in Belgium,

815

00:46:23,620 --> 00:46:25,240

because that was--

816

00:46:25,240 --> 00:46:30,040
where I lived in Dave, that
was the only school available.

817
00:46:30,040 --> 00:46:34,780
So I had known school teachers,
very nice sisters, and who

818
00:46:34,780 --> 00:46:37,430
took very good care of me.

819
00:46:37,430 --> 00:46:42,550
And from there, we
went to Brussels.

820
00:46:42,550 --> 00:46:47,500
And from Brussels, we
came through Holland,

821
00:46:47,500 --> 00:46:52,510
we came to New Orleans, and
I came to the United States.

822
00:46:52,510 --> 00:46:57,130
So attended high school
in the city, in Manhattan.

823
00:46:57,130 --> 00:47:00,610
And I went to City
College at night.

824
00:47:00,610 --> 00:47:05,860
And right now, I live here with
my husband and two children.

825
00:47:05,860 --> 00:47:07,300
When did we get married?

826
00:47:07,300 --> 00:47:09,250
In 1957.

827
00:47:09,250 --> 00:47:11,060
Is your husband also a survivor?

828
00:47:11,060 --> 00:47:12,370
My husband's Swiss.

829
00:47:12,370 --> 00:47:18,100
He was lucky he didn't have
to go through all this.

830
00:47:18,100 --> 00:47:20,920
If you look back
now, do you have

831
00:47:20,920 --> 00:47:23,950
any sense of the ways in which
your experiences have affected

832
00:47:23,950 --> 00:47:27,040
your contemporary life?

833
00:47:27,040 --> 00:47:30,940
Yes, I value life immensely.

834
00:47:30,940 --> 00:47:37,780
I feel that money doesn't
bring you happiness.

835
00:47:37,780 --> 00:47:42,530
And I cherish family life.

836
00:47:42,530 --> 00:47:45,490
I don't have that
much of family.

837
00:47:45,490 --> 00:47:51,110
And I think I conveyed
this to my children.

838
00:47:51,110 --> 00:47:54,280
My daughter is very
much family-oriented.

839
00:47:54,280 --> 00:47:57,880

My son is getting there,
but my daughter is--

840
00:47:57,880 --> 00:47:59,380
How old are your children?

841
00:47:59,380 --> 00:48:01,630
My son's 28 and
my daughter's 22.

842
00:48:01,630 --> 00:48:04,900
I think girls are more
family-oriented than boys.

843
00:48:04,900 --> 00:48:05,770
But that's--

844
00:48:05,770 --> 00:48:09,004

845
00:48:09,004 --> 00:48:11,570
What were their reaction
to you being a survivor?

846
00:48:11,570 --> 00:48:13,820
Was that something you always
shared with someone, or?

847
00:48:13,820 --> 00:48:15,650
No, I didn't share it with them.

848
00:48:15,650 --> 00:48:21,260
I didn't want to speak
about it at home.

849
00:48:21,260 --> 00:48:23,750
Many survivors don't
speak about it.

850
00:48:23,750 --> 00:48:30,560
If they get together, they will
reminisce among themselves.

851

00:48:30,560 --> 00:48:32,270

But openly, they don't.

852

00:48:32,270 --> 00:48:33,350

They like to forget.

853

00:48:33,350 --> 00:48:36,350

There was a time where I
did not speak about it.

854

00:48:36,350 --> 00:48:38,840

Just so happened
through National Council

855

00:48:38,840 --> 00:48:43,010

I have come to the point
where I speak about it.

856

00:48:43,010 --> 00:48:48,080

And my husband is very much
for me to continue the speaking

857

00:48:48,080 --> 00:48:51,740

that I do in schools.

858

00:48:51,740 --> 00:48:53,330

He backs me up.

859

00:48:53,330 --> 00:48:58,790

He feels that if I don't do
it, there won't be very much--

860

00:48:58,790 --> 00:49:01,460

there isn't very
much anyone left

861

00:49:01,460 --> 00:49:05,450

to speak about it once
my generation is gone.

862

00:49:05,450 --> 00:49:09,100

The survivors of my

generation are mostly

863

00:49:09,100 --> 00:49:11,750

second generation survivors.

864

00:49:11,750 --> 00:49:15,560

Did your children-- do your
children know of the testimony

865

00:49:15,560 --> 00:49:16,770

that you've given us today?

866

00:49:16,770 --> 00:49:16,940

No.

867

00:49:16,940 --> 00:49:17,607

Details of this?

868

00:49:17,607 --> 00:49:19,190

No, neither does my husband.

869

00:49:19,190 --> 00:49:19,730

OK.

870

00:49:19,730 --> 00:49:20,800

Thank you very much.

871

00:49:20,800 --> 00:49:21,967

That is a special privilege.

872

00:49:21,967 --> 00:49:22,490

Thank you.

873

00:49:22,490 --> 00:49:23,323

And your generosity.

874

00:49:23,323 --> 00:49:24,323

Thank you for having me.

875

00:49:24,323 --> 00:49:25,080

And your courage.

876
00:49:25,080 --> 00:49:25,580
Thank you.

877
00:49:25,580 --> 00:49:29,150

878
00:49:29,150 --> 00:49:31,640
I hope that your
children will see this.

879
00:49:31,640 --> 00:49:33,260
I hope one day they will.

880
00:49:33,260 --> 00:49:35,408
You don't have any sense of now?

881
00:49:35,408 --> 00:49:36,950
That you would let
them see that now,

882
00:49:36,950 --> 00:49:41,240
you would do that in
someplace far off?

883
00:49:41,240 --> 00:49:45,170
Well, I'm hoping that they
will have a chance to see it.

884
00:49:45,170 --> 00:49:47,220
It's a nice legacy
to leave behind.

885
00:49:47,220 --> 00:49:47,720
Yes, indeed.

886
00:49:47,720 --> 00:49:48,920
Very courageous.

887
00:49:48,920 --> 00:49:52,880
It's not a legacy of happiness,
but a legacy of survival.

888

00:49:52,880 --> 00:49:55,850

And bravery, and
great love of family.

889

00:49:55,850 --> 00:49:56,670

Thank you.

890

00:49:56,670 --> 00:49:57,537

Thank you.

891

00:49:57,537 --> 00:49:58,370

Thank you very much.

892

00:49:58,370 --> 00:50:03,106

[MUSIC PLAYING]

893

00:50:03,106 --> 00:50:40,000