United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Anna Ware
April 1, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Anna Ware, conducted on April 1, 1996 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

ANNA WARE
April 1, 1996

Question: I'm here with Anna Ware on April 1, 1996. My name is Arwen Donahue and we are conducting this interview at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and we are going to begin this interview by looking at some of the photographs that Mrs. Ware has brought. Would you like to start with you're family?

Answer: Yes. Now, this is a photograph of a wedding of my father's youngest brother. And this was probably 1924. It was summer of 1924 and the reason I brought the picture is because it shows the whole _____ family that I and my little cousin are the only survivors. My little cousin is just an infant, _____ Frank. To the left is my father, my mother, myself and my brother. And on the other side is my Uncle, my father's sister, my cousin, and my two cousins. And these are the ones with whom I ended up living in New York City. But the rest of them, we can go over the photographs later, but anyway, the rest of them all perished. And I don't know how much more detail would you like in that?

Q: Well it looks like there are about fifty people here? Are they all relatives of you're father?

A: Well these are the family, that's the way they were taking pictures in those days, this is the family of the bride and this is the family, this is my family on this side. And there are about twenty-some people of my immediate family that are on this side and, altogether they are about fifty people in the picture probably. All perished except two.

Q: And where was this wedding?

A: This wedding was in Grodno.

Q: In Grodno?

A: In Grodno, Poland. At that time it was Poland, now it is Russia. See, Northern Poland.

Q: What year was this?

A: According to what I can figure out with my age and being still in Grodno. I look like my brother, maybe one-year-and-a-half, I probably am three. And then this one was even the younger cousin, this was the youngest one right here.

Q: So it's about 1925?

A: 1924, 25. It may be the summer of '24. And this one, life goes on. This is me . . .

Q: You today.

A: And this is my oldest daughter. This is my next daughter, this is my son and my youngest daughter. And these are the four grandsons and a princess.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: It was taken Thanksgiving, 1955.

Q: 1995.

A: 1995.

Q: That's wonderful.

A: Okay?

Q: Yes.

A: And the rest of the pictures, we can go over them later but I just thought that this is sort of an introduction to the whole thing. That I survived and I go on.

Q: Yes, now you said right at the beginning that you and you're cousin were the only two that survived?

A: Survived. Well actually there were four cousins who are in the picture here and their mother who went to Israel just before the war took, so they survived the war.

Q: Let's start at the beginning, with you.

A: Okay.

Q: Would you please just repeat you're name at birth and you're place of birth?

A: I was born in Grodno, Poland. Anna _____. And in 1922, January 31, 1922.

Q: And tell me something about you're parents, starting with you're father? Where was he from?

A: My father lived in Moscow and he was a tanner. I suppose he was a chemist knowing about tanning skins and the whole family really was involved in the tannery business. And his three brothers and himself, they all lived in Moscow. Now my father married my mother also in Moscow and she was studying at the Russian, at the Moscow Piano Conservatory, I mean Music Conservatory, she was studying piano. And she was studied then, history. Now as far as I know, after the Russian revolution in 1919, they moved to Poland to Grodno where the brothers and there were three sisters, they all opened a tannery and it was a large tannery and they all worked in there. My father was primarily involved in actual tanning of the skins and one of the brothers was primarily involved in traveling and making the business contacts. And the sisters were married. Now one of my father's sisters's was married to an Arian German and they lived in Klinicksberg (ph) but the two other sisters were married to Russian Jews and they all lived in Grodno.

Q: Could we backtrack just a little bit and I'm interested in hearing whether you're father's family were tanners back for generations and whether this was a tradition in you're family?

A: I think this was a tradition as far as I know. And there was always talk about skins and hides. Now what else?

Q: Now they came, do you know why they decided to come?

A: Because they didn't want to be under the Russians in Russia, you know, in the Bolsheviks. They were intelligencia. They were cultured, they were well educated and they just were free thinkers. They didn't want to be in the revolution. They weren't Communists. They were proprietors.

Q: And so they all came together?

A: They all, well one by one. I don't think that they just came by covered wagon, you know, all together. But all I know is that they all moved before I was born. And there were four girls of my father's oldest sister. And the grandmother was there too. Grandfather was dead already, I believe.

Q: And you're mother's family background?

A: Now my mother's family, I believe they lived in Riga for some time but they also moved to Grodno because I remember my mother's step-mother and my mother's father. My mother's father died just about, I was about three-years-old. Because I have a picture of my mother in a black veil and that was traditional, to wear for mourning for one year. You wore a black veil and this is a picture after my grandfather, her father, died a natural death. And then the grandmother, the step-grandmother, you know, lived with us. And I don't know when she died. I think it was quite a while after we moved away from Grodno. And then my mother had a sister who was married and they lived in a small town in Northern Poland called Sue-vow-key (ph) and they had two children, a daughter and a son. And when the war began, you see they were in Northern Poland and as far as we know, when the Germans invaded they perished. We just lost contact with them completely. So I don't know what happened to them. My mother's brother, the only brother, stayed in Russia and after the war immigrated to Israel. And he had two children and they still live in Israel. I visited them there.

Q: Was you're mother's family intelligencia as well?

A: Oh yes. Her brother and the cousin, actually it was the cousin, not her brother, they were both dentists. That's why my mother studied dentistry too. So they were all very well to do and very, very university graduates and so-called intelligencia.

Q: Where did you're mother and you're father meet?

A: Where what?

Q: Where did your mother and your father meet?

A: I suppose they met in Moscow as far as I know. You know? It was a different kind of life at that time. The children just didn't participate very much in the parents' doings, so I don't really, I'm not sure how they met and whatever happened. I just know that when we lived in Krakow, when I was already about four or five-years old, we were very well to do. We went on vacation for two months to a resort like Klen-neet-sa (ph) was one of the resorts or _____ and sometimes Marienbad and Germany and anyway, we lived like the rich people lived.

Q: Did you have brothers or sisters?

A: Yes. I had, one sister died before I was born and I guess she had convulsions as far as I knew. Then about a year later, or two years later, I was born. And then I had a brother a year-and-a-half younger. And when I was sixteen years old my mother had another child, a little girl, Felicia. I have pictures of her too.

Q: Your oldest sister's name?

A: Was Mila.

Q: And you're younger brother's name?

A: My younger brother's name was Sherman and we called him Cenia (ph), was Russian. But then later on, when we lived in Krakow, he was called Shermake (ph).

Q: And you're family, was the household very religious?

A: No. We were, it was the free thinkers of Russia. They were Jewish and they considered themselves Jewish, but we had a Passover Supper and I know my father went to the Synagogue for the High Holidays. And I think, I don't know whether it was also for Passover too or not, but we did have a Passover supper at home. And that was about, but they did go to the Synagogue on

Saturdays. But we did go, my brother and I went to what was called the Sunday school where we were taught mainly the history of the Jewish people. That's what the Sunday school consisted of. There was no praying but just learning the history of the religion and history of the Jewish people. And then my brother went to a High School, to a Hebrew school. Because they opened a very good private school and I went to a private High School, with non-Jewish, this Polish private High School. And my brother went to a Hebrew High School.

Q: This was after you had moved to?

A: To Krakow.

Q: So you're family came from Russia and were living in Poland. What language did they speak at home?

A: At home? They spoke Russian. And I spoke Russian until the age of four or four and a half when we moved to Krakow. And then they hired a nanny, a German nanny. Not Jewish, German. And she taught me German. And then I went to school, it was a public school, where I learned Polish. So I was really trilingual by the time I was about seven.

Q: Do you have any memories of Grodno in you're very early life?

A: Yes. I have a little bit. Now I don't remember the wedding but I remember that we had a very nice apartment and, but I really don't remember too much. My earliest recollection is that we use to go to the beach and I think it was the beach on the river Nemen (ph) and I remember my mother dunking herself in the water and my brother was just crawling around and I found a bunch of keys in the sand. That's all I remember.

Q: Were you particularly close with either your mother or your father?

A: Oh yes. You see, we were really, well we were brought up like rich children are brought up. You know? We had everything we needed, nice clothes, and we just lived a very happy life.

Q: What kind of activity did you do for fun?

A: You mean when I was little?

Q: Yes.

A: Actually I don't remember what was Grodno, but when we came to Krakow, I had dancing classes. I had piano lessons. It was always a joke that after the third teacher my mother decided it wasn't the teacher's fault, so I gave up the piano lessons and I also gave up the singing lessons. Those were two things I could not do. But I continued with my dancing and acting. I liked to do that very much. And I even wrote a couple of plays that were performed in my school, my elementary school. And then I started serious studies in High School. It was a private High School. And I was going to be a doctor. So, never happened, but that were the plans. In spite of my loving to dance and, you know, I was performing through the dancing school.

Q: So these weren't your plans, to become a doctor? Where they your parents plans for you?

A: Oh yes. My parents. Even though they didn't think that a girl should be a doctor, they agreed to that. And they supported me very strongly in that. I almost gave up dancing by then, but they, which made them very happy because they were, they really didn't think that I should be a ballerina.

Q: Why didn't you become a doctor?

A: Because the war started. And I was in my second year of _____, which was equivalent to the Junior College here and the schools were closed in December and there was also the time where the Universities were closed and the Professors were in Krakow, they were sent to Auschwitz. That's the first time we found out about the Auschwitz, at that time it was just a prison-like camp, and so anyway at that point I gave up my studies until I got back to the United States and in 1948 and 1949, 1949 I graduated from the University of Michigan and then for one year I went to, well it

was actually a year and a half, to graduate school for medical technology. I married a doctor. That's as close as I got to medicine.

Q: I'd like to go back a little bit and hear how it was that your family moved from Grodno to Krakow?

A: Well I really don't know the business part of it but I think that there were more opportunities. I think that the family was growing and that might have been some kind of, maybe even disagreements, you know, as far as how the business should be run and I know that my father had the opportunity to purchase this tannery set-up in Krakow. And that's when we moved. And then his oldest brother decided to move too. They didn't have any children, he was married, but no children. And he decided to move also, but a few months after we moved to Krakow.

Q: What year was it that you moved?

A: Now that was 1926. I think it was summer of '26. Because I remember there was some kind of a business inflation and there was something wrong with the Polish _____ at that time because our rent, we rented an apartment, the whole flat, and I know that the rent had to be paid in dollars. The dollar was good even then.

Q: Did you live with your father's brothers and sisters or did they live elsewhere in Krakow?

A: No, in Krakow? No. My brother, I mean my father's brother and his wife had a separate apartment. Right around the corner from us. But much smaller than ours because they just didn't have a big family but we had a large apartment. It's still, we visited the people that own it just a year ago and they remodeled it.

Q: Do you have any, I was interested in hearing whether you have memories of your father's family since they always seemed to be around during your childhood? Were you particularly close to them?

A: Well I know that they all worked together because I know there were long distance phone calls so I think that my father's tannery was sort of a, still connected somehow to the Northern part of Poland family. So I know that they were all working together. And my father's sister, that's the one with the, that eventually ended up in New York, he was mainly in the business part of this skin and hide business and they lived in Warsaw. And actually they decided to move, at first they moved to England and then to the United States. They decided to move. My cousin was about three years older than I am and he went to the University just before the war and was beat up by the university students who were very, very anti-Semitic. There was a quota and Jewish students and so there was everything, things were very hopeless. And that's where my Uncle decided that they will move. And that was still in 1938. And they moved to England and then they moved to the United States. That's how they were able to take all of their possessions with them.

Q: And in Krakow were there people who you were particularly close with in your family?

A: Yes. Our family was just the Uncle, that's this one over here.

Q: What was his name?

A: Marella. And his wife's name was Ida or Eda. And we were very close but they didn't have children so they were treating us like their children, so this was very, very nice. And especially my, the Aunt loved to read to us when we were small. And so we were quite close. Then my father's youngest brother, David, and his wife Nina, here on the picture, and they were divorced. And he remarried and they were deported by the Russians to Siberia. And at that, the first year of war, my Uncle was in New York procurer of Honduras passports for everybody. And my cousin was fourteen. And he lived with some Uncle or somebody in Vilna at that time and he just took the passports and went to Russia. He traveled through the entire Russia all the way to Siberia where he found his father with the wife and the stepsister. And they all had typhus. Now the two women

recovered but my Uncle died. And Steve didn't want to stay there of course, by then he was fifteen or so, but his stepmother was afraid to leave. And he gave them the passports and left. They survived and, but he went via Tehran to Israel. And so he spent the rest of the war in Israel and then now he lives in Paris. He is married and has a son. So that's another part of the family that survived.

Q: Did any of your mother's family . . .?

A: As far as my mother's family, the only one that I know is my cousin who is married and has two children and they live in Israel. I mean, after the war, they spent the war in Russia and they went to Israel. But my mother's sister and her husband and two children, who lived in Poland, perished.

Q: Were they in Poland near you when you were there?

A: No, they were, yes, not during the war. I mean, they were in Poland, in the northern part of Poland, in Sue-bow-key (ph), which was closer to Grodno. Also the youngest brother of my father, his wife, that's the one from the wedding, and they had one daughter. They were in Grodno and they perished. There were a whole bunch of cousins of my father's that I didn't really know very well and I don't think that any of them survived. At least the ones that were in Poland.

Q: As a child did you play with your brother a lot or did you have other playmates?

A: Well actually, as long as we had the nanny, which was from about the age of ten or so, we played together and we were sort of living in a secluded kind of an environment. We were supervised very much and we were not allowed to just roam around on the streets and all the activities were very much supervised. But then I had a friend who's mother was partially paralyzed and her name was Irene Gottlieb (ph) and they lived very close to us so my mother sort of took over and the girl always went on different excursions with us and she was the only child and her father was in some kind of a business, movie house or something like that, and so he didn't have very much time. And

the mother couldn't get around very much so Irene was my best friend. Irene survived the war but died young because she had a heart condition. And she married a Polish, and also when the war started her mother was dead already. And the father bought Polish papers for himself and the girl and her name became Irena Ravitch instead of Irena Gottlieb and so she was sort of in Polish side in hiding. She married a Polish man, they had a Catholic wedding. He didn't know she was Jewish. And they had one daughter, who until last year did not know anything about it. But my daughter met her. They corresponded for years and my daughter met her and Vanda wanted to know more about her mother and she suspected that there were some other things that she didn't know about but my daughter knew all about it and she told Vanda. Because last year, I say, "Why did you tell her?" and she didn't know anything and my daughter says, "Well, now she knows." And she was very grateful. And now she knows where she comes from.

[End of Side A of Tape 1]

Q: You were just telling me about the amazing story of you're friend's daughter. And you mentioned that you had a nanny at this time and that you, all the way up until you were ten years old, you had this nanny?

A: At least ten years old.

Q: Did you and you're brother spend most of your days then with this nanny? Would you say that you spent more time with her than with you're parents?

A: Yes. Well we had several nannies. There were different ones. I think _____ lasted about a couple of years or so. But also there were different stages. When we were little, we had a nanny that primarily taught us the language and nice behavior and all that and then when we were older, it was more or less a chaperone. I mean, she walked me to school and my parents were very, very protective of us. And then finally, I think after my tenth birthday I refused to have somebody

walking me to school. It was not very far to walk because when we visited Krakow and took pictures it was just about a five-minute walk, but still, I was walked to school.

Q: You went to a secular school?

A: No. It was a public school and an elementary school and while I was there, usually the system was that you went to school for four years and then you could go to High School. However, when I was in my fourth grade, instead of moving onto High School, they changed the system. More like the American, that you went to school through sixth grade and then you went to High School for four years. Before that the High School was six years. And so I stayed on because I wanted to stay with all my friends and I went to elementary school through sixth grade and then I went to a private High School for four years. And then to public _____, which was as I said very equivalent to Junior College for two years. It was suppose to be for two years, however, it was only a year and a little bit less than a year and a half because in December the schools were closed. And the teachers tried to teach us privately but then the law was written that it was forbidden even to have any kind of education so the schools were closed and the teachers would not teach because they would have gone to jail. So we were just waiting. My education was interrupted for quite a few years until I got back to the University of Michigan. Well, actually I went to a High School in New York after the war and they mainly taught, just learned English and the American History because I needed that for my citizenship. And in High School I studied English 10, 11 and 12 and in English 10 we read what every woman knows and in English 11 Hamlet and in English 12 MacBeth. And you can just image the language that I spoke when I got through.

Q: In what language did you read those? Were you reading them in English? You're talking about when you were in High School?

A: In High School I read it in English. That was in New York already. So that was about, the English wasn't quite the English that was spoken. Strange, but I learned awfully fast that it wasn't really the English I should use on the street. So I got a diploma and I was accepted to Hunter College but instead I got a job in Dallas, Texas, as a Medical Technologist. Well, actually as a Lab Assistant. And I lived there. And that's where I met my husband, my first, I mean my second husband who is a doctor.

Q: I'd like to talk more in detail about that, but it seems a good point to ask, how it was that you became interested in medicine and what it was that made you?

A: Oh, they say I was interested in, my mother was studying Dentistry. I don't think she ever finished, but as I say her whole family was or had something to do with Dentistry. And I was always very much interested in science. Even though I was very interested in acting and dancing, I also was a very good student in science and that's what, medicine was very interesting to me. So the closest I got to medicine was to marry a doctor and get a degree in Medical Technology.

Q: And you said that you wrote plays. What were the plays you wrote about?

A: Oh yes, well, this one play, that was still in High School and all that. One was in elementary school. Oh it was, you know, plays that a little girl that was very mean and then she got very nice again after she saw whatever. I don't really remember what happened but I know that they were very, very serious plays. And I remember that there was a performance, oh and I played the lead in the play too, and then I got a standing ovation and people were calling for the author. That I remember! And I remember I had a pink dress with a big bow in the back, it was organdy.

Q: Would you say you were very serious?

A: I was very serious and I was very talented. At least that's what I was told. Or I believed. I still do. [Laughter]

Q: So do you remember from these early years any incidents of anti-Semitism? Did you experience anything?

A: Yes. I know I was different. I know I didn't, all the little girls were studying to go to the First Communion and they believed that if you die, right after you're Communion you go straight to Heaven. And I wasn't going to go straight to Heaven because I wasn't going to study for the First Communion. And then tuberculosis was very prevalent in Poland. And my best friend's sister died of tuberculosis at the age of ten, I guess, right after her Communion. And she was buried in her white dress with the veil in a white coffin. And we saw her in the coffin and everybody was crying. But then we were told not to cry because she was going straight to Heaven. And then my friend died too. Also of tuberculosis. And I was very unhappy because I did not go to the Communion and I did not deserve to be in Heaven. And then the, most of my friends that I socialized with, they knew I was Jewish but they did not, really they did not make any nasty remarks. But once in a while there might have been boys on the street that would, you know, just tease. Like they tease the girls and then they would call me Jewish because my hair was curly. Most of the kids, my hair was reddish-brown or reddish-blonde and curly, and most of the kids, their hair was straight and blonde.

Q: So just because you're hair was curly, they thought that you were Jewish?

A: And my eyes were dark. And I just looked a little different than the Polish girls with blue eyes and straight, blonde hair. Even my mother had blonde hair, but her hair was wavy and she had blue eyes. So, I wasn't exposed too much to anti-Semitism as let's say people who lived in the Jewish section of town. And my brother, who is in the Hebrew school was in the Jewish section of town so he was, not beat up, but you know, sort of roughed up a little bit on the way home and very often he didn't want to go to school but my father insisted that he goes to the Hebrew school.

Q: Did you have any idea of what it meant to be Jewish?

A: Yes, because as I said, I went to Sunday school so we studied the history, mainly history, and some of the religious observances. But at the same time, I was the only, no, I and Irene, we were the only two Jewish girls in my elementary school. So, and there were religious instructions in school. So we would go to those classes because what else could we do? They were part of the curriculum. So we would go to the classes, so I knew all about the Catholic religion. It was very interesting too. So, you know, I liked to study just anything that I didn't, wasn't familiar with. So I probably know as much about the Catholic religion as all the kids that were being prepared for their First Communion.

Q: Did you have any other Jewish friends besides Irene?

A: Not really. Yes, after I got to High School. Yes, I had Marella. Marella was another one who was very, very intelligent and very, very good student and I went to High School with her. And then there was another one, Lucia. That's right. She was also in my High School. So these were, I had about three Jewish girlfriends and I had an awful lot of non-Jewish girlfriends. And we really didn't make any distinction at that time. As far as I was concerned, that they were Jewish friends and these were non-Jewish friends. We were just really, I dressed just like the girls and I acted like them, except that, sometimes I even went to Church with them. I knew all the prayers.

Q: How did you're parents feel about that?

A: They didn't mind. They just, they really didn't mind. They had a lot of non-Jewish friends too. As a matter of fact, they had more non-Jewish friends than Jewish.

Q: So you lived in the non-Jewish section of town and will you tell me a little bit about the place where you lived?

A: Okay. It was a very beautiful house in a very nice section of town. It was right next to a garden, nursery business, so it was always in flowers. The building belonged to Professor Boo-e-vid (ph)

who was, had sort of a Pastor Institute right in the building. He was a student of Pastor. He was quite an older man. And he died in 1942 at the age of 80-something, I mean he was an older man. And they made vaccines for diphtheria and small pox and rabies. And the laboratory was right downstairs on the first floor. Now, Professor Boo-e-vid's (ph) apartment was the entire second floor and our apartment was on the third floor and then Dr. Boo-e-vid's (ph) daughter, who was a physician also working in the laboratory, was married to a lawyer and they had two sons. They, we moved in I think in 1926, and they moved and they had an apartment on the fourth floor. They moved in in 1928. And I was very friendly with the two sons. We walked to High School together because you had to walk quite a ways from the apartment. And the older son died last summer at the age of 80 and the younger one is still around and we visit them in Krakow.

Q: What was the name of these sons?

A: Professor Boo-e-vid's (ph) daughter married a lawyer who's name was Way-geem-ish Mo-stof-ski (ph) and he, the son's was Ches-wef Mo-stof-ski (ph) was the younger son and Yes-g Mo-stof-ski (ph), who is a doctor, also he was a medical doctor, he was the older son and that's the one that died. Yes-g (ph) had a law degree and right now he doesn't practice law, he is a painter, fine arts painter. He paints pictures and has exhibits.

Q: What was the apartment like?

A: Well I had a bedroom to myself. My parents had a bedroom and my brother had a, which was also my father's study, but it was my brother's bedroom. And then we had a, there were usually no living rooms, in Poland you had a dining room which served as the living room and family usually gathered around the dining table and this was just like sitting in a living room, you know, drinking tea from a _____, which was a big, brass _____, it was a silver _____ for special teas. And we sat around. There was a big chandelier made out of

_____ cloth, a lamp over the table, and this was one of the family gatherings. And when the guests came they were served tea and cookies and pastries in the dining room. We had a modern bathroom. As a matter of fact, we had a bathroom and a half. And we had fairly nice kitchen and a maid's room. So it was a rich people's apartment.

Q: Did you have company over often?

A: Oh yes. My mother was a very popular, evidently among her friends, and she had _____ and we had a huge back stained piano, grand piano, and she performed.

Q: We haven't said much about what you're mother did. You said that she studied to be a dentist but then she . . .?

A: But actually, well you know, she got married and started to have children so, I know that she had a whole bunch of things for the dentist. Dental tools and false teeth and things like that and she let us play with it. That was one of the treats. Either with the collection of the buttons or the teeth. But actually she studied at the Moscow Conservatory and she was a performing pianist.

Q: Did she perform in Krakow?

A: I don't really know whether she performed, I think she performed mainly privately, you know, like they had _____, musical _____ or something like that, but she didn't perform as a performing artist, you know, for pay. My father didn't believe in my dancing as a performing artist, he didn't. But my mother played the piano all the time.

Q: Now when you were in High School, the German occupation began, is that right?

A: No, I was in _____. I finished High School in 1938 and then in 1938-1939, I attended the _____, in 1939-1940. In December, 1939 they closed it, so I had a year and a half there, which was, and mine was specializing in science, pre-med.

Q: Do you remember the beginning of the German occupation?

A: Oh yes. I remember, first of all, we all belonged to something like R.O.T.C. We all had to have military training. And we had, my fiancée had to report and I remember we went into a, it was August, and we talked about war and mobilization. And he got called in, he was a year older than I so he was ahead in school, and he was called in to report to the, they got the uniform and a gun to shoot. And then I had to report and I also had a uniform and I had a gun. But I never had to really shoot it, anybody. But we did have military training because I'm still pretty good at the aim.

Q: Was it mandatory?

A: It was mandatory. Oh, there was one thing that anti-Semitism probably got to me. Was that we had scouts, girl scouts and boy scouts. And I couldn't join them. Because I was Jewish. But I could join the military training. So that's what I joined. But I couldn't be a Girl Scout. And that probably bothered me the most because I really, and I was so surprised, you know, even after all these years, when I came to the States, to find out that my children were Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. And they were selling Girl Scout cookies. And I helped them. Because I could never do it. So anyway, when the war started, we knew that something was going to go on. And they had airplanes flying and whatnot. And then we woke up at 5 o'clock in the morning. We heard explosions and we stood on the balcony and we saw the planes flying up and down and we couldn't really see it, all their maneuvers, and you would see that the higher planes are probably the enemy and the lower are our plans and they are just diving into each other. And then somebody said it was for real. Anyway, the German army destroyed most of the plans, Polish planes. I think in Krakow, the first day. Also, I think, they were instructed to preserve the city. And what they were bombing was mostly the military compounds, which were on the outskirts of the city. And then everything stopped and I think a week later the Germans came in. We could hear them marching at 8 o'clock in the morning. In the meantime, people were leaving the city by whichever means they could. And the Mo-stof-ski

(ph) family, they had a car, and motorcycles, and they left. But my father would not leave because my mother was not well and we had an infant child. So we decided to stay and see what happens. And then I know it was early in the morning when we could hear [stomping feet sounds], marching. We looked out through the window and there were the German soldiers. And then the occupation began. I know I wouldn't go out of the house for about five days. I was very depressed and I just, we had enough food because we were told to have food and we had a maid who brought sacks and sacks of potatoes and sugar and everybody said to stock up on potatoes and sugar and flour. I don't know what we were supposed to do with all those pounds of sugar, but we had a lot of sugar.

Q: And all of your family was in the house?

A: Yes. So we all stayed in the house and we had enough food until things started, you know, we had the radio so we could listen to what was happening. I don't remember that the telephones were working or not, but I know that we could hear on the radio what was going on and that Germany invaded Poland and the occupation began. That Warsaw was still being under the siege. I mean, they were siege for at least three weeks.

Q: Did you observe anything from your window, what was going on in the streets?

A: Yes, that they were marching back and forth and, you see, we had the black out. So, but then we didn't have to have a black out anymore. But before September 1st, well actually for a whole week we had to keep the windows dark, but there were no bombings and things were pretty normal. Except that you couldn't buy anything in the store. Of vinegar. There was a lot of vinegar on the shelf because I don't think anybody needed vinegar. [Laughter]

Q: I'd like to go back a little bit, about you had mentioned that you had to stop school at some point and then you were continuing private lessons in the home after that?

A: No. This was not private lessons just for me, but the teachers organized private schooling.

Q: When was this?

A: When?

Q: Yes.

A: In December. When the schools closed in December and I think they tried to teach for another, maybe just a few weeks really.

Q: December of 1939.

A: And then it was forbidden because they would have been arrested.

Q: And this was 1939?

A: That was December, 1939. And then starting in January, 1940. But I think by January we did not study anymore.

Q: So after that five days that you spent in the home, did you go back out to school?

A: Oh yes, we went out and I went, the first thing I went, I went was, you know. Well actually it was my fiancée that, _____, and that he came to visit and then we just went about our business. We went to the park and everything was fine. You see, this was probably the biggest tragedy. Why the Germans could just so easily subdue people. Because at first we were absolutely free to go where ever we wanted to and then a proclamation is that all the Jews have got to register. And then they have to wear the bands. And so everything was done in such a slow motion that you sort of got use to it. Oh, register? So we registered.

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2.

Q: We left off just at the beginning of the German occupation. And there was one thing that you mentioned which we didn't talk about a little bit. You said that you had a fiancée at the time and you said that you were considering yourselves to be engaged. What did you mean by that?

A: Well you know, I met him just the Summer before and he was one of the boys, young men that was very popular and we started just going out, dating. And in those days you just held hands. That's all. And then we were talking that eventually maybe we will get married because we had a lot of things in common. And he introduced me to his family who liked me very much, but there was nothing about getting married really because nobody was getting married until they finished school and started to make a living. And so we were just beginning. We were going together steadily. And so that's the situation.

Q: What was his name?

A: His name was Yannosh Fanyo (ph). He was Hungarian but everybody called him Yannick, which is Polish 'John'. And his family spoke Hungarian. They spoke a little bit Polish, a lot of German and English, but mainly Hungarian. And so at home he was called Yannosh or Yanchie, but I called him Yannick. And he played the violin very, very, well he played piano too but he was a very good violinist and his sister played the piano and his mother played too. And his father was in some kind of an import-export business, I don't know exactly what it was, but they were quite well-to-do and they had Hungarian passports and they lived in a very beautiful apartment, also in a very nice section of town, and they were very cultured people and they had musical _____ too, which use to be a very popular past time in Poland. Especially during the war where the movies were closed, movie houses were closed, theaters were closed and there was really no place to go. Everything was taken over by the Germans. NightClubs were always very popular in

Poland. There were a lot of them in Krakow. And cafes. They were all taken over by the Germans so there was really no place to go and nothing to do, so a lot of people entertained at home. And so, especially the Fanyo family was very musical and these were very, very pleasant things, times where they had the _____. So that's how the story went.

Q: Did he spend any time at your home with your family as well?

A: Oh yes. He would come to our house and stay for dinner and my parents liked him very much. And he was a very, very pleasant fellow to be around. And also we entertained some friends until things started to get pretty bad. I mean as far as the Germans were concerned. And the family still lived quite well because they, as Hungarian citizens, and at that time Hungary was sort of partners with Germany, they could purchase food and necessities in the so-called volk-doych (ph) stores, which were off limits for the Polish people and definitely off-limits for the Jews. But people of German descent could register themselves as volk-doych (ph) and they could participate in purchases in those special stores. Which were full of food and anything you wanted, really. So the Fanyo's (ph) lived quite well and I enjoyed being with them.

Q: How did you meet him?

A: The swimming pool. This was another past time that we had in the summer. Starting when school was out in June, we all would gather in a public swimming pool. It was a huge, huge pool and that's where we would spend days. That was the past time.

Q: Do you remember feeling afraid during this time?

A: No. At the beginning, now I felt very uneasy about the Germans and about the whole situation. But we were, at the beginning, we were very free to do whatever we wanted to do. I don't remember exactly when they started registering, but it was right at the beginning, that Jews had to register and then I think that we didn't have to start wearing the white, in Krakow you wore the

white arm bands with the blue star of David, and everything, the Germans had a system. You see they didn't just file everything, all the bad things all at once. It was very, very gradual so you somehow seemed to get use to it. And at first it was registering, then it was the armbands, then you couldn't ride in the front of the streetcar, then you couldn't ride the streetcar at all. You couldn't go into the park. You couldn't do a lot of things but it was all so gradual that you almost didn't realize that that was happening. And then they started talk about the ghetto. That all the Jews will have to live in the ghetto. But that didn't happen until really 1941. And so a whole year went by where we moved around and things were quite, you may say even safe. And my parents were getting ready to go to ghetto and I said that I did not want to go to ghetto because, I just felt, that's when I really started to get afraid. And I remember I even said something that, what would happen if they would just close the ghetto one beautiful day and set fire to it. And everybody thought I was just being ridiculous. I mean, nobody would do a thing like that. Why would they do it? I said, I don't know. We read about Christalnaught (ph). We read about things that happened in Germany and why wouldn't they happen here? Everybody thought I was just ridiculous and exaggerating. And the Mo-stof-ski's (ph) made arrangements to take over the tannery. And have my father, my Uncle and my brother work there as essential to running the tannery so they would be safe and, at that time, we still lived in our apartment. And since they couldn't conveniently go by street car, the Mo-stof-ski's (ph) had a horse and buggy right in their back yard instead of in the garage. And there was a stable in the back and they would transport my father and my brother and my Uncle to the factory, which was quite a ways away. It was at the other end of the town. And so everything seemed to be going quite well and the business was good. Mr. Mo-stof-ski (ph) was running it and he was a lawyer, he knew all kinds of angles as far as business was concerned, and they gave my father and my Uncle money to live on. And plenty. Then the Germans started invading people's apartments and homes

and they simply taking whatever they wanted to take. They came one evening to our house and they tagged furniture and they tagged the _____, which was our most precious possession, and several other things, and that's when my father started to get a little bit concerned, not scared. And then again the Mo-stof-ski's (ph) came to the rescue. Oh, the Jews were forbidden to own any furs, fur coats, and being in the leather business, of course, my mother had not one but several fur coats, and the Mo-stof-ski's (ph) took those. And we had some very beautiful furniture, especially my parent's bedroom set was mahogany and some very exotic woods. There were large wardrobes and dressers, so they took that. And several other things. And also jewelry. So things were still not bad. But then when the talk about ghetto was closer and closer, I just said, "I will not go to ghetto". And that's when a friend of ours suggested that Yannosh and I get married. And this way I would be a Hungarian citizen, I would be on his passport. I didn't have to go to ghetto. And my parents were sort of opposing to it. They thought I was way too young to get married. I was only nineteen, but I had just turned nineteen that January, 1941. And they, but they agreed. And as a matter of fact, my mother gave me her wedding band and my father gave Yannosh his wedding band. So that we could have wedding bands for getting married and we did get married by some Rabbi. It was a very short ceremony. My mother was too ill, as I mentioned before, she was sick after the birth of my sister. And so she was not witnessing, but my father went and my brother and Yannosh and I and we had a very brief ceremony. But we were married legally and I moved into his parent's house, or apartment. And then I went to visit my, by then my mother and father and Uncle and Aunt and my brother and my sister moved to the ghetto. They had a fairly large apartment, which they shared, but not for very long because they put more and more people into the ghetto. They also brought people from other towns and they had to, they were allowed only one bedroom. And then my Uncle and my Aunt had another very small bedroom, but my father, my sister, my brother, they

all were in one bedroom. And then they all shared the kitchen and one bathroom. So it wasn't exactly the luxury we lived in but still my father was working and they had enough food because he could, he went to work every day and he brought back food and there were no really preserves and refrigerators as such at that time. In Poland they were in very bad _____. You went shopping everyday for food and so he brought fresh food everyday. And my mother was able to, with the help of my Aunt, to run the household up to a point. So things weren't really bad. And I went and visited them practically every day. Because I was free to go whereever I wanted. I didn't have to wear the band.

Q: Why not? Why didn't you have to wear the band?

A: Because I was a Hungarian citizen. At least I thought I was. There was something scribbled in his passport, I didn't have a passport of my own. But we went to some office and they scribbled my name on the passport. Evidently it was still a German consul, but he couldn't issue me a passport, but he put my name on my husband's passport, so I was, at least I considered myself safe. Until one beautiful day, there was what is called _____, which means 'to catch'. There was a catching business going on. The German police would stop every streetcar and let all the people out and check their identification. And that was the first time that I got a taste of what could happen. Because I did not have an identification. I told them my husband has the identification. I got a slap over my face to shut up. And I was put on a truck with another girl and there were several other people on it. And we were taken to the Gestapo office. And I don't remember the address exactly, but I know it was the main Gestapo headquarters. And the girl that was with me was Jewish too and she had no identification at all. And she was crying and wailing and she said, "they are going to kill us." And I said, "Oh, don't be ridiculous." I mean, I just gave them my husband's phone number. They still were allowed to have a phone, the Hungarian citizens. So they will get in touch with him

and everything will be all right. And what I didn't know about the girl, evidently she was outside the ghetto without papers, hiding. And she was waiting for some false papers to be given to her. But at that point she didn't have them. Well anyway, the Gestapo were quite mean to her. They were all uniformed and they were quite mean to us. They were shouting and then asking questions and I kept on insisting that I was a Hungarian citizen and they should get in touch with my husband and let me go. And I remember they put us against the wall, facing the wall. And it was a little creepy because the girl started to cry and she started to point at the spots on the wall and she says, "That looks like blood and they are going to shoot us, and I know they will shoot us". And they did have guns. And, but that was the first time when I faced that maybe they will shoot me. And it's a very funny feeling. You know? You are completely helpless. You cannot do anything. And you just stand there. And you feel kind of a creepy feeling on the back of, between you're shoulders, and you wonder, are they going to shoot between the shoulders or are they going to shoot you in the head? And I think I got a little bit sick to my stomach but I didn't cry. I just was waiting. And then one of the guys walked up to us and just turned us around by the shoulders and started to ask more questions. And they took the girl away, but they were asking me more questions and more questions, and they wanted to know where my parents were and why I was there and what was I doing? And I don't exactly remember all the answers I gave them, but I know that I insisted that they call my husband. And finally they brought some woman who took me to a, I guess a kind of a mass prison for other women that they were catching or who ever they were, and we just slept on the floor. There was a bucket in the corner. And no sanitary facilities of any kind except the bucket. And I didn't like it, but I decided I am going to just sit and wait. And the next morning, I didn't get anything to eat, the next morning they gave us some coffee and some bread and anyway, I

stayed there for about two days. And low and behold, my husband came to get me and they let me go.

Q: Did they know that you were Jewish?

A: Yes. But they let me go because I was a Hungarian citizen.

Q: Were you registered? Did you go to register when it was required?

A: No. I didn't register because, you see, I was not going to go to ghetto. So I didn't have the, it was called the chem-card (ph). So I wasn't registered Jewish because that's when you had to register, when you went to ghetto and I did not register because I wasn't going to go there. But anybody who couldn't prove they are either Polish identity or German identity was Jewish. Or had something to hide. So they let me go and we still were in the apartment at that time. And that was the end of my going out. Because I just would not go out of the house.

Q: When was this?

A: That was about the beginning of 1941. It was spring of 1941 because I know I still had my nice, winter coat with the sable fur no less. My mother had sables that she brought from Russia and she finally, one day, it was still before the war, she decided that I can have a coat trimmed with these sables. And I had a big muff and a fur collar and a hat. And I have a picture of that someplace, in a family album. So anyway, I stayed home. I would not leave. But then things happened to the Hungarians too. And we were evicted from the fancy apartment.

Q: This was in 1941 also?

A: No that was already in 1942, I believe. Because that was after Hungary, no, I really don't remember exactly the dates, but I know that it was, in 1942 we lived in an apartment near the barber, near the castle. And then they decided to tear this down, tear the building down because they were going to build something else there. And we found an apartment near the ghetto in the

basement. And my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law made a living by teaching English in secret. And that's where these friends of mine came into picture. I wrote the whole story about them to, how they were helping us throughout it. They were helping us with the apartments and with other things because it was one of my school friends and her mother. The mother had a small jewelry store and perfume store and she had all kinds of connections. And, but this is a story for itself and I have about fourteen pages written up for the _____ _____ _____ about it. And she was very, very helpful. My mother-in-law had quite a bit of jewelry, which Mrs. _____ was her name, would sell it for us for a good price. And she was very, very helpful. And then finally, she also permitted my sister-in-law and my mother-in-law to use their apartment for classes, for the English lessons. Because this was the only means of support we had at that time. My husband was working in a German furniture store but after a while he lost that job and so he wasn't working anymore. Then we moved, when the ghetto was being enlarged and the apartment in the basement where we lived was going to be enclosed in the ghetto, we had to move. And we moved to a village called Why-give-neek-ee (ph), which was a suburb of Krakow. And we rented a house out in the country from a man called Borcha Hur-oog (ph), to this day I remember, and it was a Krakow-ofska 493, or something like that address and I tried to find it. And Why-give-neek-ee (ph) is a big city now. At that time it was a country-kind of a small house with no indoor plumbing and the water was from the well, you had to put a bucket down and then crack up a bucket and bring the water up. And it was an outhouse in the yard. Also another thing that happened in the meantime is that my father-in-law had a stroke and he had a heart condition and he was partially paralyzed. He was in a bad shape. But slowly he recovered somewhat that he was able to walk around but one arm was paralyzed and his speech was slightly slurred, so he stayed home most of the time with me and the

grandmother while the sister, my husband's sister and his mother went to town to give English lessons. So that was my country living.

Q: So tell me again, how many people you were living with in you're husband's house?

A: There were six of us, including me. There was the grandmother, the father, the mother, the sister, my husband and I. There were six of us. And we had a kitchen and a bedroom. And the grandmother, the father and mother slept in the bedroom and this is their, my husband and I slept in the kitchen on sort of a rolled out mattress. During the day we rolled it up and put it aside and at night you unrolled it. Sort of an old-day futon. And it was very primitive type of living. And we lived there until 1944, April of 1944. When Germany invaded Hungary, they were not alias anymore, they were conquered country and that's when the Hungarian Jews started to be deported.

Q: Okay, before we go into that, would you, when you lived in this country spot, in this smaller place in the suburb of Krakow, did you continue to go to the ghetto to visit you're family?

A: Yes. I continued. And not only that, but I took the streetcar. I did get some kind of a paper from the consulate at that time, some kind of an identification so then I started walking to town again and I was a little bit more free. I remember even, I baked cookies, which I would take to town and try to sell. I sold them most of the time, they were very good cookies. They were wartime cookies, they weren't really delicious but they were as good as you could get them at that time, so I was in cookie business for a while. And also, by then, in 1943 the ghetto was closed. By that time, it was liquidated. By that time my father was gone, my mother and my sister. And my brother was in Poroshkov, in the camp, labor camp. And Ches-waf (ph) was giving him the money in food and also giving me some. So he was supporting us quite generously. Because they were still running the factory. But that was after March, 1943. Still April, 1944.

Q: So when did you're father, when was you're father deported?

A: My father was deported with the first transport from Krakow, which was, as far as I remember, it was first few days in June when they rounded them up. I think June 3rd or June 5th, I think June 5th is when the train left and June 3rd, Wednesday, June 3rd was when I was standing and discussing all with my husband, waiting for the people to leave the ghetto and be marched to the train station. And when we were in Krakow, the first time, I was telling Robert, describing it, and we were looking for it and we couldn't find it until . . .

[End of Side A of Tape 2]

Q: And could you just start at the beginning with that story again? You and you're husband went back to Krakow?

A: Robert, this husband. Because that's already a third husband. Okay. Anyway, Robert and I went back to Poland and we went to the _____ for the _____, which was, the _____, a drug store which was in the ghetto, and right now it is a museum. And Mrs. Swaveka Karlingska (ph) is one of the, was one of the, I don't know if she still is there, people that ran the museum, and she told us that the people from ghetto. You see, I only thought that they went to the main train station but she told us exactly where they went and so we traced that road and we found the grassy knoll and I told Robert that there was a little religious statue on it and we found it. Because I remember standing right next to it when the people from ghetto in rows of four started coming out and very slowly they were marched with the SS men and the dogs and the whole business. Right through the streets. And I did see my father. And after that, I think I started to cry and my husband grabbed me. Because there were a lot of people, Polish people standing there and jeering really, and "Getting rid of the Jews", and so on. And I know he was afraid that somebody will notice that I am crying so he grabbed me and led me out of there, against my better judgment, but anyway, I left.

Q: You knew about the deportation before it happened?

A: Well we were told that they are going, that some of the people have to deport and have to report at this particular office. And that they will be resettled to a, to some factory. And they wanted people who were trained in certain jobs. And Mr. Mo-stof-ski (ph), _____ father, was trying to get my father out of that registration because he said that he needed him to run the factory. But they said that he had my Uncle to do it so he didn't need my father. You see, my father was really just in his fifties but he had white hair and so he looked probably much older than he really was. And Mo-stof-ski (ph) couldn't do anything to get him out of that. So I knew that they are going to be deported but I wasn't sure whether my father was rescued or not. Mo-stof-ski (ph) didn't know either. So that's why I went to the knoll, to see who was really going, and I saw some friends of mine and another girl that I went to school with and her father and her sister. But they were very heavily guarded and one could not do anything. And my father, I remember him standing there with a small suitcase and he had this mannerism of scratching his head when things weren't so, I remember him scratching his head. And then my husband took me away from there. And then, you see, I could go to the ghetto by just showing that piece of paper that I had from the government. And so I went to the ghetto the next morning because they kept the ghetto closed that day, but the next morning they again let the workers go out and people come in. So I went to visit and my mother, of course, was very, very upset. But she said that she was hoping that everything will be all right. They promised that they will be put to work and then maybe even she will be able to join him later on. And it seems to me now, I don't quite remember whether it was my Uncle or whether it was my father, but she got a post card from somewhere, that the transport arrived and that everybody was all right. And then there is a crazy thing, my mother was superstitious or something, she believed in all kinds of signs and, if a bird knocked on the window it was a bad sign, and my

father left her his watch, his pocket watch, and she said the glass cracked. I saw it. I saw the glass cracked. And she said he was dead. And I told her, "This is silly." Maybe somebody knocked the watch over and what not, and she said "No", it was by her bed table and all of a sudden the glass cracked. And I didn't believe that, I felt it was all crazy. And anyway, I would come to the ghetto and bring her the food and whatever else they needed and I went there practically every day. My brother was in _____ and I saw him and he could come out and visit too. And then he had a girlfriend on the outside, a Polish girl that use to work in the lab, the _____ laboratory. And then, when Mo-stof-ski (ph) took over the factory he transferred her to the factory and she was a secretary there and she was helping my brother. And one day, she told me that he was taken on a transport to Czestochowa, to some factory. And I never heard from him again. Though her brother, Da-new-chef (ph) was her name, her brother lived in Czestochowa, and he kept in touch with my brother. But when we went back to Poland, I tried to find out what, whether it was a camp or a factory, what happened to those people in Czestochowa and I just couldn't find it. Na-new-sha's (ph) brother died and I had her address and I wrote to her many times, but she's not a young woman anymore. And she may be dead for all I know. So she is the only one who really was in touch with my brother before I was arrested. So I have no idea what happened to him. And every year we go, I try to find her, I try to find anybody that would know about anybody from _____ taken to Czestochowa, and I wasn't able to find anybody. So that's the story on that. And then we are coming closer to the march, thirteen's or whenever that was, that was 1943, which was the like liquidation of the Krakow ghetto. My mother was partially paralyzed too, I mean her arm was bad. But she still could get around. And my sister was five years old, she was born March 6th. And I was there for her birthday. I brought her chocolate and stuff, and some toys. And you could, the streetcar went from _____, the place that I lived out in the country. It had to go

through the ghetto. So I would cross the ghetto and then get out and go through the gate. And it took three days for the ghetto to be liquidated, but I made arrangements with Dan-o-sha (ph) to get my sister out. My mother didn't want to, but she was very realistic and she thought, yes, that I should take the girl. We had false papers for her and I brought Dan-o-sha (ph) the girl's clothes and I remember there was a little coverlet for her crib, she was five years old but she still had it, and we bribed the guard and I was suppose to go in and take her out. And the ghetto was closed. I could not get in. They still let the streetcar go through because that was the only way that people could get from one end of the town to the other. But the doors were closed. The SS men were hanging on the cars to make sure that nobody even opened the window or anything and let people go there. I don't know how many times I went back and forth the first day. And there was no way I can get the child out. And that was it. And then, you probably saw enough of the photographs and pictures, from Schindler's film and from this and that, and you know what it looked like. It looked probably much worse than anything you saw in the movies. And so, I don't know what happened. I know some people were taken on transport to Prostejov but these were young people who could be still working. Then most people were killed right in the ghetto, but then they said that there were several transports of women and children taken to Auschwitz. And I could not find, I was in Auschwitz and I tried to find out whether there were transports that came. There was another crazy story, that there was one truck with the children and women that broke down and didn't come with the main transport. And that the people on that truck were put in the camp and not killed right away. And I had this imagination that my mother and sister were on that truck. But even then, my mother was crippled really and I know she couldn't possibly survive. And my little sister, every time we go to Auschwitz, I watch the movie that they show and there is one little girl with these big eyes, showing her number on her arm, and I always think maybe it was my sister. Sorry. And Ches-wap (ph) gave

me pictures of my sister when she was about three years old. My father, Ches-wap (ph) was an amateur photographer too and he's the one who, my father asked whether he could make pictures of my sister and a couple of years ago when we were visiting, he said I have something for you. And yet I didn't bring the large one, but I just brought these small ones. And I had this fantasy that, they say that you can take photographs and make computer pictures to see what a child would look at an older age, and I always have the fantasy that maybe I could have that done, but it's just crazy. Even if I find out that the little girl, or some other little girl in the picture was a survivor, how am I going to find my sister? So, one thing that I knew, that she had a mole on her left shoulder. And several years ago there was a story of a Israeli actress. She was exactly the same age as my sister would have been. And she was in Auschwitz as a little child and she survived. And I was going to write to her but I thought she would think it was some crank, you know, writing her. And I was going to write to her to ask her whether she has a mole on her left shoulder. But you know, you live with these things, and, oh, stop, please.

[Pause here while interviewee is overwhelmed with emotion]

Q: Okay. You were just telling me about the liquidation of the ghetto, the Krakow ghetto. It was in 1943, and you were talking a little bit before that about your father and that your mother had this bad experience of . . .

A: A premonition.

Q: A premonition. Did you ever hear anything about your father again?

A: No. Not until we got to the _____ or when the museum in the former ghetto, in Krakow. And we found the chronology of the bands, that people were transported from, with the first

transport from Krakow, that they were transported to Belzec and then she pulled out, Mrs. Kar-ling-ska (ph) pulled out the book and said, this is what happened in Belzec. And that was the first time I found out what happened to my father. And then the next transport was in October, I believe, and my Uncle and his wife went on that transport. So, and that was the first time I found out that there was such places, at Belzec. I had no idea. After all these years.

Q: You thought that you're father might still be alive?

A: No. Not according to the description of the book, in the book. I mean, I know, well, the book that we got, there was one survivor that escaped and no body else. And I know that there is, well first of all, my father would be 100 years old, so that wouldn't be possible, of course, but I know that he did not, nobody survived from that transport. So, at least I may say I felt a little bit better knowing exactly what happened. Because I think not knowing is probably the worst part of it. And it is a little bit late for me to start searching because, even if my brother survived, he would be 72 years old. And how many people do you know that lived to be 72 years old? I don't know too many. So it is kind of little late to start really searching. But I still somehow believe that maybe my little sister survived. Maybe I should have looked for her. When we go back, we can look. I know she was not in Bergen-Belsen, but maybe she was in Auschwitz. And maybe she was in Bergen, no, they didn't have children in Bergen-Belsen. Because when they liquidated Auschwitz, they were transporting everybody, just the grown-ups. And I don't know how those children did that in the movie, survive.

Q: What did you do with your days, now that you were spending so much time in the house? Did you go out at all after the ghetto was liquidated?

A: No, I didn't go out at all. I was really afraid. And I was very depressed. And I had a garden and I grew vegetables and flowers and I remember it was just lots of sweet peas, and I still love

gardening to this day but I spend a lot of time gardening. It was spring when the ghetto was liquidated and then I, I did a lot of meditating and thinking about things. And also this friend of mine that I mentioned, Irene, came to visit me several times with her husband. And they were in business smuggling vodka. What they were doing is, it was something more than illegal, but this was their business. They would bring Absolute alcohol and bottle it and they had the whole paraphernalia, you know, to seal the bottles and put the labels on and what-not, and there was a eating place in Wa-give-neek-a (ph), the only one at that time, a drinking place, and that's where they were selling the vodka. And their headquarters were at my place. They would sleep in the basement and bottle the vodka for three days and then go back to Warsaw. They lived in Warsaw. And they use to bring another friend of theirs with them. And he was studying to be a doctor but he couldn't do it because all the medical schools were closed, but he did finish medical degree. He got a medical degree after the war and he was a cardiologist. He wasn't Jewish, but he was a very good friend of Irene and her husband. And when I went to Krakow and Warsaw the first time after the war, I called up. Fren-ya-vet-ski (ph) was his name, Dado Fren-ya-vet-ski (ph), and his wife answered and said he died a year ago of a heart attack. So, I lost another friend that was from the past, you know. And Irene died, I told you before, and her husband is still alive, and when we go to visit, we see him and see the daughter. But, what I did was I read, I loved to read. So I read and I studied the English a little bit, and I just tried to keep busy. I did some artwork and I ended up in the States here, when I started going back to school, I got a Masters Degree in Art. I think I had a Masters Degree in Drama. So I can get busy with things, so that's what I did.

Q: Was Yannosh still working at this time?

A: Well he got into some financial troubles. I don't know exactly what was. And then he lost the job. So he wasn't working either and he was sitting around the house doing nothing. So, things

were kind of sad. We were just waiting out time. Waiting for the war to be over. Waiting for things to change and nothing seemed to be changing. And, I don't know, he was in black market. And this is also possible, that that contributed to our being arrested. Because they considered us as political prisoners or whatever that was suppose to be.

Q: What about his parents and his sister? Were they working?

A: His father was paralyzed, partially paralyzed. And he spent most of his days playing solitaire. The grandmother was doing the cooking, whatever cooking she could do, because there wasn't very much food at that time either, so I think we had goulash made out of potatoes and a little bit of meat everyday. And she could cook very well. And the sister and mother went every day to the Cheen-ska (ph) apartment in the city and taught English. Sometimes they stayed overnight. Because there was a curfew, and so they couldn't come, the streetcars stopped running at a certain time so sometimes they stayed overnight. And Mrs. Cheen-ska (ph) was taking big chances and then that's why they did, they were honored by Yad-vash-am (ph) because I described the whole thing. Little by little, how they helped us. And Yad-vash-am (ph) honored them as the righteous Polish people that helped.

Q: Were they teaching English to other Jews for the most part?

A: No. There were no Jews already to teach to. They were always there in ghetto or in concentration camps. They were teaching to Polish people. And a lot of Polish people were very interested in learning English. And they were very good teachers. They had a lot of students.

Q: What happened with you're arrest? How did you get arrested?

A: You mean when the _____? We have no idea what happened. Whether somebody said that the Jews were living there and whatever happened, it was five o'clock in the morning. The big truck drove up. And they were shouting in German, "Rouse! Rouse!" But they

let us pack out belongings. We all packed a big suitcase and a small suitcase and we took most of our stuff with us. And they put us on an open truck, in the back of the truck. There were benches on the truck and we sat on the benches with the suitcases. And I expected to be taken to the same station that my father was taken to, which was really a cargo station with cattle trains. But they took us to the regular train station in Krakow. And I remember sitting on the back of the truck and looking back and trying to remember and thinking, I'll never see it again. And the first thing that I did when we came to Krakow, I went to the train station and stood there and looked at the view. I saw it again. Anyway, they put us on a regular train. Not a cattle train, on a regular train in a compartment, the six of us. And after a while, the train, the German soldier was standing outside with his gun, but they treated us very nicely. And they had a bunch of papers with them. Very, very carefully had it folded. And we sat and waited and the train started and we didn't recognize really the stations. We didn't stop. The first stop was Auschwitz. And we knew all about Auschwitz by then. You go there and you don't come back. And we waited for them to get us out. And the train stood there for quite a while and then it started and it meant we are not going to go to Auschwitz. That was a big relief. And, as I say, we were all together, the whole family, in the one compartment. And I don't remember what the first stop was, but it was sometime in the evening. This train stopped, they got us out, and sometimes they transported us in an open kind of a truck and sometimes it was like a van. And we either went, most of the time we went to a prison. And we were put, you see, I have not very much of a recollection. Whether we were separated or whether we were all put into one room with bunks. I just don't remember. I just know that we traveled for almost six weeks. Maybe four weeks. Because we came to Bergen-Belsen sometime in May.

Q: This was May of 1944?

A: 1944. Well actually, now I remember, see things come back. When we were arrested that morning, we were taken to the Gestapo again. The same prison that I was in before. And the men were, the father and brother and my husband were separate, and the four women were together. And the reason that I remember is that when we finally got to Bergen-Belsen, after seeing the train station and the prison, a couple of times we were in a camp. And I don't know, if it was Ravensbruck or some other camp, just for overnight. And then they took us back on the train and back until we got to Bergen-Belsen. And they let us have our suitcases and I remember I had two favorite dresses. And I noticed that my suitcases were open.

End of Tape 2.

Tape 3

Q: Can you backtrack just a little bit to the beginning?

A: Yes. When we got to Bergen-Belsen, I opened the suitcases and I found out that half of my things that I had packed in Krakow were missing. And I figured out that when they took us out from that room, it was a large, large room with many women in it, that they thought that we won't come back. And they just took stuff from our suitcases. And then the Germans came and got the suitcases and brought them to us. So I figured out that they must have stolen them then. But anyway, all our belongings otherwise were there. And we arrived in Bergen-Belsen and, as you can see from the book, we were registered all right, the whole family. And we were treated quite well. We got three meals a day. They weren't anything fancy. We had a sandwich for lunch and coffee and a piece of bread in the morning, but sometimes it was with margarine. And soup with a little bit of meat in it, but lots of potatoes. And you could get two bowls if you wanted to.

Q: And you were still with all of your friends?

A: And still with the family. And we all slept in the same room. It was a long room with bunk beds. It wasn't those shelves like you see in Auschwitz. They were just, you were like in a summer camp. Really. It was clean and it was nice and the mattresses were quite good. It wasn't just straw and a blanket. And we did get blankets, I don't remember having linens, but I think there were blankets. Maybe there were some rough sheets. But anyway, the work that we did, the first week we didn't do anything and then I think in a sewing room somewhere. And that's where I learned to sew. Well I did know how to sew but not as well as I know now. Anyway, I was sewing things and I don't remember what they were and most of the time there it was just day by day. It was killing time. There were a lot of people from Holland there already and especially the diamond cutters. Because I remember that they were really being treated very well because they couldn't do any dirty

work because their hands would get insensitive to the fine tools with the diamonds and so this whole time in Bergen-Belsen, it's sort of a blank. I don't really remember much, the first time we were there. Except that we were treated quite well. That it was fairly clean. That there were bathrooms, latrines you might say, but there was running water. The faucets with water and we could wash up. And I think there were even showers. And I know that we could wear our own clothes. And there was a laundry we could wash things in. And then in August, all of a sudden, we were gathered up and we were told to pack up our suitcases and that's when we were put back on a truck and taken to the train station and put in a cattle wagon. And straw.

Q: Before we go on, I realized that we skipped over a little bit about the German invasion of Hungary and how you're life changed after that, while you were in Krakow.

A: That's when, well, okay, now in Krakow, you see, I kind of don't remember the details. I know that they couldn't purchase anymore things in the _____ store. That we were selling all the jewelry that we had. That Ches-wap (ph) was bringing me money and that things weren't very good. And then, you see I didn't go anywhere. I was afraid to leave the house, I stayed in the house most of the time, all the time, except when my friend came to visit I might have gone to the village with her. Irene from Warsaw. And then, you see I don't remember the dates when actually the invasion happened. And I would have to look it up I suppose. And what caused the arrest, I again will never know. Whether they decided that we were not the protected Hungarian citizens, that we were just Hungarian Jews. But there must have been something more to it because then we would have been transported as Hungarian Jews. But we were treated as political prisoners. We had the papers. And as I say, at first we were sort of interned in Bergen-Belsen and then we were still treated as prisoners because the transport was very small and of the things that happened when we arrived in the camp. That we were tattooed with the serial number of the prisoners and not just, you

know like the Prussia people for example, had an A dash and some number. We had the serial number of this particular group of prisoners. Mine was _____, I have the vial with the number and it was 81000 with the triangle, and the triangle is still on my arm.

Q: In Bergen-Belsen, you started working in the sewing room soon after you arrived, or how long did it take before you had started?

A: It seems to me that I didn't do anything for at least a couple of weeks. Maybe more, I don't know. It just, that whole period is just very, very vague. I know I got very friendly with Betsy. I did not have much contact with my husband, definitely no intimate contact.

Q: Tell me about how you met Betsy and would you just say her full name, for the tape?

A: How I met Betsy?

Q: How you met Betsy and if you would just say her full name for the tape because I don't think we've mentioned her.

A: Betsy Gordon. I mean, I knew her as Betsy Gordon. And I met her when we arrived in Bergen-Belsen, on the transport. Either she was already there or we picked them up in some camp, the other Hungarian citizens. There were, Betsy was the only woman and the rest were men. And they were sort of middle-aged men and Betsy was Italian, I mean, Betsy was Hungarian dancer who lived in Italy and she had dyed, auburn-red hair all the way to her waistline. Very beautiful woman. And she spoke fluent Italian. She spoke some German and, of course, Hungarian. And she was born in Budapest but she lived in Italy. And her full name was Elizabeth Gordon. But she wanted to be called Betsy. That's all I know about Betsy. And I was with her the entire time, from the day we were, our heads were shaved until the day we left, I mean, until I left Bergen-Belsen, the camp, with my cousin.

Q: What about the rest of your husband's family? Were you still with them?

A: All right. The father had to have his nitroglycerin, which he didn't have, and he died I think about two weeks after we arrived in camp, in Auschwitz. He was doing okay in Bergen-Belsen. We had the medicine for him and he had angina _____ in addition to the stroke and he had to have nitroglycerin. And it seems to me that he got it from the Germans, the medication, when we were in Bergen-Belsen. Because he did get, he had the drops that you put on the tongue, you know, when you would get choked up. And I think he had some pills. Otherwise, nobody else did any medication but when we arrived in Auschwitz, I know that Yannosh came and told us that father died. And Yannosh, I don't know whether he had tuberculosis of the bone when he was a child or was it a birth defect, I just don't remember what it was, but he had a deformed hip. He was a very handsome guy, he danced and everything, the leg didn't bother him. But he did limp. But still he could get around and he was not put in the gas chamber, you know, at the beginning when, I mean, after we were rescued from the gas chamber he was put in the camp. And I saw him several times, he came to visit because some of the men could come into the camp with some errands and they would bring food or they would bring something and he would sneak out and say hello or, sometimes, he could even come to the fence. And the only thing I know about him is that when we were in Paris, when I was in Paris with Vickie, trying to get the exit visa, and there were many other people from all over Germany and there were several people from Auschwitz, several men. And I wanted to know if they knew because he wasn't just like one of the prisoners, he really had very _____ distinct limp and he was a little bit different. And they knew him. And they said that one day there was a selection and he was selected out. And they never saw him again. So I assume that he was gassed and done with. And then the mother, the sister, Betsy and I were together all the time, except for the short time when I was very ill and I was in the hospital. And then they were going to have a selection in the hospital and the nurses got me out the day before because they said

that the hospital was going to be liquidated. So whomever they could get out. What was wrong with me is that I got some kind of an infantago infection, or whatever it was, on my legs. And I had sores all the way to the bone, oozing, and then it was _____. It was a big mess and my legs were extremely swollen. But still they said I have to be able to walk out of there because otherwise I will be finished. And they put some bandages on my legs and they got me out. And then I still had to go on the roll call every morning, get up. But I was able to walk and I was able to go to work. And so that's how I survived that ordeal. But if you look closely you can still see the spots on my legs. For years and years I had big blotches. And mother, just before, in December, just before the camp was evacuated we had another selection and they separated there with us and Doot-sie (ph), Ida, we called her Doot-sie (ph) wanted to go with her and they separated them and the mother was put in what they call Schul-Newtz (ph) block, which was preservation block, and all the old and weak women were put there. And we went to visit her a couple of times and she said she knew that they were going to be just gassed because they couldn't, they had the work and they couldn't do anything. She was extremely emaciated and she was getting really weaker and weaker and one day we went to see her and the block was empty. They took them all out. And Doot-sie (ph) was very, very close to her mother and I think that really shocked her terribly and she cried and cried for days and we couldn't do anything. And she got terribly skinny in the last couple of weeks. Betsy and I were pretty skinny too, but nothing like Doot-sie (ph) was just started to look like a skeleton. And then when they selected us again, they selected me and Betsy for the train and Doot-sie (ph) stayed. And this was the 29th of December and I don't have the date when the Russians came to Auschwitz. But I am sure it is dated.

Q: But before we go on . . .

A: Doot-sie (ph) survived. Because you asked me what happened to the rest of the family. So it was just Betsy and I were taken to Bergen-Belsen and Doot-sie (ph) stayed in Auschwitz. And then I understand that she was rescued by the Russians. And when we watched the movie, it seems to me, one of them looked like Doot-sie (ph), one of the women that was being taken by the nuns, you know. But then when we got in touch with Renya Chich-en-ska (ph) whose house they taught English, I got an exact report on what happened. Doot-sie (ph) was rescued by the Russians. She stayed in Auschwitz in whatever camp they had them until they evacuated them, and then she came back to Krakow. And she came to the Deit-chin-ski (ph) house and she stayed with them for six months. She also had these sores on her legs. But they got her cured. And something horrible happened to Doot-sie (ph). She got a job with the joint, United joint, what was it? The Jewish Joint Institution, it was working in Krakow. And Rayna (ph) did not know why, but there was some kind of improprieties in the Joint. By then the Communist government was, took over Krakow. And Doot-sie (ph) was arrested by the Communists and put in prison for eight years. She was in prison for eight years. Since 1954 or so until 1962. And then she was released and went to Budapest. Now there was a cousin of theirs in Stockholm. The family, they were first cousins, and the Uncle and Aunt I suppose and the young cousin, immigrated to Stockholm and he came to Krakow, or he came and took her to Budapest. And he came to visit her several times. I got it all from Deitch-chin-ski (ph) and from the cousin from Stockholm, he wrote me a letter. That Doot-sie (ph) got married and her husband died after three years. And then she got a stoke and she was very ill for quite some time, paralyzed, and she died in Budapest in 1982. But she did survive the war but it was very, very sad, what happened to her. So that's what happened to the Fanyo (ph) family.

Q: Okay, we're continuing with the interview with Anna Ware. And we left off yesterday. Today is April 2, 1996. And you had just talked about the Fanyo (ph) family and what was the fate of each

of those members of the family. And I am interested in going back to Bergen-Belsen, the first time that you went there. And I believe you mentioned you arrived in May of 1944 and you were there until August, is that correct?

A: That's as I remember it.

Q: And I wondered if you could tell me, you mentioned that you met a friend, Betsy Gordon, and that you were, at first you weren't working but then you were working doing sewing with her? And I wondered if you could say how it happened that you came to, that you met her and you started working there?

A: Well it seems to me that Betsy, now I don't remember whether we arrived in the camp and then she arrived later or she was already there. Because we were together with the other Hungarian people. And even though she came from Italy and she lived in Italy and she was a dancer, I don't know exactly what kind of dancer, but I know that she looked like an actress with lots of make-up and the dyed hair. And she was very beautiful. And she was there. It seems to me like she already was there. That she was deported just like we were, as a Hungarian citizen living abroad. Living in a country that was occupied or in some way connected with Germany. And we were all in the same barrack. And the barracks were very clean, they were very well kept. And we slept in bunk beds which were just regular bunk bends, you know, lower bunk and upper bunk. And the older people slept in the lower bunks and the younger slept in the upper bunks. And I don't quite remember whether, I know we had blankets. I don't think we had linens as such. I can't remember, I just don't remember. But I know there were mattresses, there wasn't just a board with maybe some straw or maybe just a thin blanket. But there were, they might have been straw mattresses, which are very popular in Europe, or they might have been just some kind of things, sacks filled up with whatever filling they had. And anyway, they were not as bad as we had come later in Auschwitz. And

everything was very clean. We had to clean it ourselves but there were brooms and there were cleaning supplies and there was a wash room and a bathroom with running water. So the things weren't really, it was not as primitive as some other camps. And I know that at first we didn't do anything and it was rather boring. And there were a lot of people from Holland, I think I mentioned that, diamond cutters. And they definitely would not work in anything. They were kind of sheltered because their hands could not get ruined because they wouldn't be able to do the precision work evidently that's required of a diamond cutter. So they were more sheltered. And I don't really remember exactly what we were doing and what we were sewing, but it seemed it wasn't on sewing machines. It seems to me that we were repairing things, maybe they were uniforms, maybe they were just things from the camp. I just don't remember. But I know that we didn't just sit idly the whole time. And again we had three meals a day, I mean there were no scrambled eggs for breakfast, there was just maybe a piece of bread with some margarine and coffee, which was usually kind of brown water but at least it was sweetened with saccharine I suppose. And then for lunch we had sandwiches and again coffee. And in the evening there was some kind of soup with maybe some meat and lots of potatoes and vegetables. And we weren't hungry. As a matter of fact, I, you know, we could get seconds on soup. It was very surprising to us that that was a concentration camp and we were wearing our own clothes. All the suitcases came with us and we had them right in the barrack. And so we could change and that's when I discovered that our suitcases were pilfered, still in Krakow, because a lot of things were missing.

Q: How much did you know, or what did you know, about the concentration camps?

A: We really didn't know very much. The only contact with a person that actually was in a concentration camp was Yes-cho Mo-stof-ski (ph) who was the young man, the older brother of the two sons of _____ Mo-stof-ski (ph). And he was arrested very shortly after the Germans came

in. And, as I found out now from his brother and from Yesh-if (ph) and we visited them last summer, that he was involved in Boy Scouts and he was higher ranking official in the organization. And he was arrested. And I think in 1940, as early as that, and sent to Auschwitz. And at that time, we really didn't know what Auschwitz was except that they were sending people there. And also the university professors were arrested and sent to Auschwitz. Now we rarely didn't hear from him, and then he came back about eight months later, and as I say the dates, I don't know exactly. I know that he has stacks of books of his memoirs left because he showed them to us and they were all in Polish and I said I would love to read them and translate them into English so that people knew what was going on. Because one of the things that he told us last Summer, or maybe I should just say what happened when Yesh-e (ph) came back, and I don't remember, it was 1940 or 1941. I know it was at the very beginning. And two years was still the beginning. And he came back and he was really in seclusion. And it was, I was still very young then and I really didn't know what was going on. But the thing that I remember was that Yesh-e (ph) would not talk to anybody about things. What happened to him. What he was doing. Why he was let go. And he just wouldn't say anything of what happened to him in the concentration camp. But then when Robert and I were visiting them last summer, Yesh-e (ph) showed us his memoirs and also he was an amateur painter, well he thought of himself more than an amateur, but anyway, the walls of his apartment were just filled with paintings. And some of the paintings were depicting his life in Auschwitz, in the white and blue uniforms and the thing that he told us was about Father Colbert who was sanctified by the Pope and we happen to be on an excursion in Italy with our university and we stayed in a monastery which was converted into a hotel. And it was named after Father Colbert. And also, at that time, the Pope sanctified him, that year, he was some 82 or so, and I know that everybody was extremely respectful of Father Colbert because we had some runaround with some Italian police. And because

of, I think it was something about the tickets on the bus, but anyway they wanted to know where we were staying and we said that we were staying in the Castle Colbert. And they were very impressed and let us go.

[End of Side A of Tape 3]

Q: Mrs. Ware, could you start from the beginning of you're sentence and you were talking about Father Colbert?

A: Yes. Father Colbert was a Catholic priest in Poland and he was arrested like all the other priests, well many other priests, and sent to Auschwitz. And he was there at the same time that Yesh-e Mo-stof-ski (ph) was there. And Yesh-e (ph) witnessed his execution and he had it depicted in one of his paintings and he told us about the tortures that Father Colbert went through just because he was a Catholic priest. There was no other reason. He had no other sins.

Q: So from the stories that you heard from Yesh-e (ph), you didn't have the impression that there was a mass extermination of Jews going on?

A: No, you see, all that we got last Summer but when Yesh-e (ph) came back, when he was released from Auschwitz, he must have been told the same thing that we were told when you have not seen or you haven't heard anything. He was forbidden, he was let go on the basis that he is not going to talk about what he saw or what happened to him in the concentration camp. And even his closest family, according to his brother to whom we talked recently, he said nobody ever knew what happened to Yesh-e (ph) during the six or eight months that he was away. And also he doesn't know why they let him go except that maybe they needed the space for somebody else that they wanted to do in. So we just knew that there was a place that people didn't want to talk about. But we had absolutely no idea what actually was going on in Auschwitz or in any of the camps.

Q: So when you were in Bergen-Belsen, did you have any fears or expectations of what might happen?

A: No we didn't. Just because, we heard that the concentration camps were camps where they put the people there and they were suppose to be working and we just had glimpses of it, but here we were in a so-called concentration camp and it was nothing like anybody would have thought. That it was bad, that there were starving people or, we weren't beaten, we weren't, on the contrary, everybody was quite polite and quite nice to us. And I don't know, is it because the type of camp they were running at that time was a, sort of a holding camp for people that they wanted to use for some other purposes or whatever. And it was very, very strange when I, later on when I told somebody that I was in Bergen-Belsen before, they just couldn't believe that it wasn't as bad as it was when we were there later. And on the way to Bergen-Belsen as I told you before, we would stop in prisons. But a couple of times we did stop in some concentration camps. I don't remember the names, but I know that they were camps because we were put in a barrack, but again, they were bunk beds, they were, maybe these were spaces that they were reserving for temporary guests, or something like that. But not for the actual inmates because we really, on all these excursions we never saw what we saw later.

Q: When you were in Bergen-Belsen in the middle of 1944, did you hear any news of the war? Did you know where the Russian front was?

A: No. We never knew what was going out on the outside world. We had, there were no radios, there were no news whatsoever. We heard the _____ in Auschwitz because there were radios, there were contacts but in Bergen-Belsen it was just like a, sort of poor man's resort almost, compared with what was going on later.

Q: Were you in a separate barrack from the men?

A: No. The whole family was together. And Betsy was with us and then the other men that were in the same transport. We were all in the same place. And the only privacy you would have is, you know, we were on the bunk beds so, I think there was even electric lighting there. As I recall. You see, some of these things are very, very vague because a lot of them I was trying to sort of forget, but I just don't remember. I just know that definitely we were, the family was all together.

Q: Tell me about the deportation to Auschwitz.

A: As I said, we were living day by day and it seemed to be rather boring. And then one beautiful morning they walked in and they were quite different in attitude, the soldiers or the guards or whoever they were, they were in uniform. I guess they were all SS men. And they told us to pack and also to hurry. Everything from then on was to hurry. And so we packed and they brought a truck and they loaded us all on the truck with all of our suitcases. And transported us to the train station. And then we didn't feel so good anymore because it wasn't a passenger's train, it was the regular wagon train. And they put us all in one wagon and there was just straw on the floor. And we were given little packets of sandwiches. And these were like sliced bread with some kind of a paste in between, a paste a little bit like meat paste or whatever, but anyway they were edible, they were quite edible. And there was a bucket in the corner I guess for sanitation. And I don't remember getting any water in addition but I remember the sandwiches. And then we rode the train with the soldiers at one end and we were at the other end. And as I say, I don't remember how many of us were, there might have been fewer than twenty people. And there were six of us and Betsy and then there were several men. So there might have been fifteen, there might have been more, but less than twenty.

Q: Were they all Hungarian?

A: They were all Hungarian citizens who didn't live in Hungary. They all lived in different places. Just like we lived in Poland, Betsy in Italy, and those people might have been in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and I don't think there were any from Poland. I don't recall. But I know that they were all Hungarian citizens. Now I don't remember how long the journey lasted. I know we slept. I know we got more food so it might have been two days, it might have been two-and-a-half days, I don't remember. And then they never let us out. We had to go to the bathroom in the bucket in the corner. But there was a bucket. And I don't remember whether they had us carry out and empty the bucket, whether the train stopped, I just don't remember. It seems to me that maybe it was on the way to Auschwitz or maybe it was on the way back to Bergen-Belsen. But I don't remember.

Q: Would you say that that was a point that which you couldn't retain the same dignity any longer?

A: No. At that point it was, well just the fact that we didn't have privacy to go to the bathroom was already something that was very humiliating. And probably this was something that, well, I don't know whether I want to talk about it. But I still am having problems, you know? I mean, when I travel, I have problems. But this was the taste of what we were going to go through probably and we were scared. We were scared because all of a sudden we were not treated nicely. The soldiers were shouting at us and the grandmother was not very well and they were shouting at her because she was moaning and they yelled that we should keep her quiet and we were already having a premonition of what was waiting.

Q: And then you arrived in Auschwitz?

A: Then we arrived in Auschwitz and we were told to gather up our belongings and get out and we had to carry them out. And the grandmother still could sort of walk, I mean with help, so it was very difficult because at that point we didn't carry about the suitcases but we wanted to help her and we had to help the father to get out of the train and they were shouting, they wouldn't let us leave the

suitcases in the train. We had to carry them out. And when we arrived at the station, things you know are pretty, I kind of tried to push them out of my mind, you know, and not remember. But as I recall, the first place we stopped was some kind of an office where they tattooed us and they even tattooed the grandmother. And they tattooed, you had to hold the arm still and it seems to me like it was one of the Jewish workers that was assigned to do that. And she, and I think I pulled my arm because she stuck the needle, and then she, there it is, she stuck the pen right into me.

Q: Into the end of you're finger?

A: At the end of my finger, I mean, she decided to test her pen on me. And then she tattooed me and it wasn't very painful. It was sticking some needles into somebody.

Q: What was you're number?

A: My number, I don't remember, but it was something like 81 or 86, 87, it was 81,000 or 86,000, but it was in thousands. And I saw numbers that was like 4, I mean I think Yesh-e (ph) number was something like 800 or something like that, and Father Colbert was 1,000, so there were quite, and then also there were different, I think there were different designations of the numbers. Then depending on what group you belonged to. So I don't think that if we had 86,000, I don't think that they only had 86,000 people in that camp because it looked to me like there were many more than that, but, you know, you can't tell out of the mass of people how many actually there are. And things went very fast from there on. And I just can't exactly remember the sequence, but I know I can remember certain highlights of that whole trip. That we still had our jewelry, no, that's right. We had the suitcases and we were all dressed up and then we had to carry the suitcases to a different place where there was, and to this day I will never forget the sight of it, there was a, sort of a small building and there was a big basket, just heaped with gold. And they wanted us to take off our rings and just throw it on the heap. And I had pierced ears, I had earrings, and I was having trouble to get

it out and one of the soldiers was already grabbing my ear and I said, "I can take it out, leave it", and I was able to undo the earring and throw it on the pile, so that's the only jewelry I had. I think Doot-sie (ph) had earrings, Betsy had earrings, all women had all these earrings and, anyway, Yannick (ph) put his band, anyway, all of our wedding bands and rings and jewelry was thrown on that pile. And then we were put in sort of a row, walking, and carrying the suitcases we had to walk. So each of us carried other suitcases because the grandmother had to be helped. And we kind of dragged her along. Now we walked on a road that was quite empty and it was not paved and there were fields on both sides of the road. And we walked, I don't know how much, until the grandmother collapsed. And she could not move and one of the soldiers walked up and pulled out a gun and was going to shoot her. Now we all screamed and cried and we said, "we will carry her", and we tried to carry her, and then there was another SS man, I suppose they were all SS men, that's what we called them, had this bunch of papers. Evidently these were the papers with which we arrived so we were all registered. And I couldn't understand exactly what they were arguing about but evidently there was something about the fact that they couldn't shoot her because she was, they had the documents on her. And then, again, I don't quite remember whether somebody on a motorcycle went by and they might have told him to send a truck for us. Or, I don't know how it happened that they did send a truck for us. And one of the open bed trucks, I mean, no cover, and they helped us on the truck and we dragged the grandmother on and she was lying on the floor. And at that point I, there were benches on each side too, at that point, should I tell you? Well, it's not, but who's going to read it? You stop Robert, please. Please? Use Kotex pad on the floor of the truck. Actually two of them, and nobody looses Kotex pads. And that was the first inclination I had that something was very, very wrong. You didn't recall that, did you? Or do you want to recall it?

Q: Go on.

A: Okay. After I was arrested for the, the second time, and put in the prison while we were waiting to be transported to Bergen-Belsen, I was suppose to have my menstrual period which I did not get and I didn't menstruate all through the ordeal until 1945. After I came to New York. That's about all.

Q: So we have you're number here. Could you read it to me?

A: Yes. It is 81,867.

Q: Now when you were on the truck and you saw that image with the two Kotex pads. What did you think it indicated?

A: Well that indicated to me that there was something wrong. That, we knew a little bit about the, it was called in Polish 'wa-pon-ka' (ph), that means 'catching', catching people. And we knew that they did catch people, they put them on the trucks and drove them away, and they were rounded up and so I thought, well, I think that's the end of the people being nice to us. That something is very, very wrong. And it was sort of a, not only a premonition but really we realized that things are not going to be good. So that was my first indication that something was wrong.

Q: Where did the truck take you?

A: The truck took us to Birkenau and they brought us to, again, I tried to find the place when we were in Auschwitz, to know exactly where we came. I know we came through the gate and we came to near the crematoria. Because there is another thing that happened. That's later, because first what happened to us, the suitcases were still with us on the truck and the grandmother was on the truck. And then when we got off, they told us that we didn't have to get the suitcases off and they just took us to this one room and there was quite a commotion, that we were delivered on a truck and there was this half-dead grandmother. And from all the description that I remember, from Dr. Mengala (ph), it seems to me that it was Mengela (ph) who came in and gave the grandmother a

shot and she just died, just like that. And then there was shouting going on and we really didn't know what was going on. They separated the men and they separated the women. And they told us to undress. I mean, we were the four women and the men were somewhere else. And we saw quite a big crowd of people outside. Just like you see the pictures of the refugees, these children and women and men, just walking very slowly. And then they, some women came in and took us to a corridor and there was a door that opened and they put us into the chamber. And it was room not bigger than maybe 10 by 12, maybe, I couldn't tell. The door opened from the other side and they pushed in the men. And so here we were and they closed the doors. And here we were in that little room, it was made out of brick or plaster, I just don't quite remember. I know there was a blue light on top and there was a drain in the floor. It seems to me like there was a pipe on the ceiling but it didn't look like a shower at all. There were, what I think today it was, that when we were being de-loused, they were putting, we would undress in one room and put out clothes on a cart, which was wheeled into a sort of chamber, the door was closed. Then we went through showers. That wasn't when, that was later when we were in the camp. Then we went through showers, and then on the other side we would get our clothes. And it seems to me that they had several chambers like that because there were thousands of us at one time that they were giving us the baths. And it seems to me that that was the chamber that we were locked into. And after a while, I mean, we just stood there, but for just a few moments, a few minutes, the door opened and they pushed in two women, naked. And they threw in a little baby that looked kind of crippled, they just threw it on the floor and shut the door again, and then we knew that we were done for. And nothing was happening. And you know, sometimes you can't, sometimes time goes very fast and sometimes time stands still. And at that time it was standing still and we didn't cry, we didn't scream, we didn't do anything. And the door opened and one of the SS men, I think he had papers in his hand, he says, "The people

from Bergen-Belsen are here, are they here?", in German. And somebody said, "Yah-vol" and then they said "Rouse". So we started walking out and the two women, they were counting us. Evidently they knew how many of them were suppose to be. And they pushed the two women back in. And shut the door and put us in an identical room, right next to it. And I don't know how long we stayed in there but, maybe ten minutes, maybe twenty, maybe five, I couldn't tell. And we could hear muffled screams and it sounded like the baby mostly. But not, it was, and then it was quiet. And then they opened our door and they said, "Rouse", so we went out and they told us "_____ _____ _____ _____", and we all nodded. And then they took the men again on one side and us the other side, the four women. And there were a whole bunch of, there was a large room with the big windows on each side and these were Jewish women who were evidently in charge of preparing the prisoners. And they were quite friendly, they were very nice. The first thing they did, they put us on small stools and with what do you call it? Clippers, they weren't electric clippers, they had to do it like this in order to shave your head, and they shaved our heads and the pubic hair and the hair under the arms. And it all was in a pile and I had very beautiful hair, sort of reddish-blonde curls, and they were all on the floor. And there was Betsy. She had black roots already because her hair was dyed, so all her hair was on the floor. Anyway, we looked very, very strange. After a while we got use to each other.

End of Tape 3.

Tape 4

Q: We're going to go back just a little bit to before you entered the room that you were just describing. And were you undressed while you were in that room?

A: No. Right out, when they, now I don't, it seems to me, in which room?

Q: In the room that you were waiting and that the two women with the child were pushed in. Were you undressed before that?

A: No, we were naked in that room, but we were told to undress. You see, they separated the women, us, the Hungarian women from the men. We were in two separate rooms. And we were told to undress, the four women. Evidently the men were told to undress too. And then we came into that small chamber from one side and the men came in from the other side. There were two doors to that chamber. And so we were naked in that room. And then when they let us out again, they separated. We went to one side and the men went to the other side. And we were all naked.

Q: So when you went to get you're hair shaved, were you still naked? Had they given you any clothes?

A: Yes, we were still naked. We were naked when we had our heads shaved and after they were shaved, we were given clothes from a big pile that was on the side. And I was given some underwear, just a pair of bloomers. Because I remember they were very large, kind of long, old-fashioned. And no bra, no slip, just the bloomers and a dress that was way too big. And then two shoes, one shoe looked like a small man's shoe and the other one was just a regular woman's shoe. And they barely fit, they were falling off my feet. And I remember later on I found some string or something, or maybe tore out a piece of my dress, and made a tie for the shoe. The dress had a cross painted on the back with oil paint and actually the girl painted that cross on my back. And so I was looking at that and we were talking, that we couldn't run away anywhere with a cross on you're

back and two different shoes. But also I remember we were standing there waiting for things to happen. When we saw all these people outside the windows and the girls who were working there, they just very casually said, "You see all these people?". "Yes". "Well, in ten minutes they will be going out through the chimney". And there were chimney's smoking. So we were in that entire compound where there were the saunas and the gas chambers and the crematoria was, it all seemed to be in that space. So anyway, after we were dressed and we were taken to the barrack of the Hungarian women. And then we were given, each of us was given, that's right, each of us was given a blanket and a bowl, about this big, enameled bowl with a little hole on the side. And that was very important because you could put a piece of string though that hole and tie it up to you're dress because if you lost the bowl you couldn't get any food because nobody would loan you their bowl because they, if they can get another bowl of food they will eat it, so the bowl was probably you're most precious possession. And I made a whole art piece for my thesis about the bowls. I'll tell you about it later if you want to, but anyway, we were taken to a quarantine barrack. It wasn't the barrack that we stayed in later on, this was a barrack that we stayed in, I think, for two weeks, two or three weeks, I don't remember. But I know it was a quarantine and they just wanted to make sure that we don't have some kind of a disease and spread it all over the camp. So we stayed there for, we still had to stand the role call every morning about 3:30 in the morning or so, and they counted us and then they gave us this bowl of soup with a small piece of bread. That was suppose to last us for the whole day. And for the first week, it seems to me like we didn't do anything. The second week, after the role call, they lined us up and some of us went, still inside the camp, to dig ditches. And some where doing or taken somewhere else. I was taken to dig ditches. And I remember, another reason that I remember it, it was sometime in the middle of the summer was because the sun was very hot and I was getting sunburned on the top of my head. And I took off my

bloomers and I made a turban to protect my skin. So this was the quarantine and after, I think it was after two weeks, we were transferred to the barrack that we were suppose to stay in. And that's where we stayed for the entire time until we were evacuated to Bergen-Belsen again.

Q: Was this barrack in Birkenau as well?

A: That was in Birkenau. All that I described to you happened in Birkenau. And so the barrack was the Hungarian women's barrack in Birkenau and it was just a regular barrack with the three tiers of bunks and I was on the top tier. Like when we were in Auschwitz, I showed Robert one of those bunks and we had a window on top. And this was the only air that we were getting, the windows from the roof. There were no windows on the walls. And we were very cold. It was in the fall already. And the windows were just propped up with a stick and then I got the idea that maybe we should close it because the rains started to fall. And so I climbed up, I mean I stood up and I reached over and I pulled the stick out. That was crazy, I was crazy because the window came crashing down and broke. So here, we not only had rain coming in, but we also had glass all over. And that's when the thing happened. The cappo (ph) came and she made me get down and screamed at me, and I said something to her, that why is she screaming, that I didn't want to break the window. And she started to hit me. And she was a woman just like I so I hit her back. Well, I didn't know any better. And she almost killed me. I mean, she started hitting me on the head. She knocked out one of my teeth, she broke another one. And then I was deaf for about, I don't know for how long. I think I have been deaf ever since. So, I just, that was probably one of the, one of the worst experiences because she was a young woman just like I. And she was very, very strong. Evidently she was trained and her number was like 400. She's been there, one of the first ones, from Czechoslovakia. And all those cappos (ph) that I came in contact with were from Czechoslovakia. They were the cruelest people I have ever met. They were Jewish girls that were trained and they

survived. They had a little room off the main hall of the barrack and that's where they, some of the barracks had two little rooms like that, and that's where the cappos (ph) stayed. And they had a bed and they had all kinds of goodies. And they would steal bread from us. When we got a loaf of bread, it was like about this size, a square loaf. And what they did was each of us was suppose to get 1/4 of the loaf, and what they did was they didn't cut it into four pieces, they cut it one piece here and one piece there and the center was theirs. And then the center from the two other pieces were theirs too. So they actually took almost half a loaf to themselves. And then they could trade that for the people from Canada. And I don't know, you probably heard about the people from Canada because they were called, you know gold was discovered in Canada, and in Poland Canada was paradise. And these were the people that were working on the transports, getting all the stuff that was smuggled in and, before the Germans got to it. They were sorting the clothing, they were sorting things out, so the cappos (ph) had everything because for bread you could get anything. And they were just trained to survive and they were surviving. So that was probably one of my worse experiences.

Q: How did she, did she leave you unconscious?

A: Oh yes. Then the girls took care of me. My sister-in-law and Betsy and whoever else was there, evidently they got water and poured it on me and I had bruises all over and I bruise very easily so I was really black and blue and luckily she didn't break my nose or whatever. So I just had black eyes and shiners under my eyes and then I was deaf. And I don't know whether she broke my eardrums or whatever she did to me, but I couldn't hear anything. But eventually my hearing came somewhat back but not enough to really hear.

Q: Did you have any problems getting by in the camp without hearing?

A: I wasn't completely deaf. I could hear but not enough to really get along in the hearing world, that's why I have to have hearing aids. I mean, I take my hearing aids out when I am at home alone with my husband and I can still hear, but, if he doesn't get too annoyed, but most of the time I learned to survive with hearing. No, it was all right. I could still hear. It wasn't just that I was, eventually the hearing came back and I was not completely deaf so I could get along. I could hear the shouting, "Rouse!", or whatever else they were shouting. So that was all right. And when I started working, I decided to get the hearing aids. But otherwise, I was always trying to, my children were use to it, that you shout or get my mother's attention, or whatever. So that was one of the souvenirs that I have from the camp.

Q: Did you have to go to work again the next day?

A: No, I couldn't. I couldn't even get out of the bed but I had to go to the roll call so they dragged me out. You see I was on the third floor so they let me sleep. Somebody else moved over and they let me sleep down. And then they kind of dragged me over to the roll call. And I know I didn't go to work that day. I don't know what happened, I don't know whether they, how they let me stay, but I know I couldn't. But I don't think it lasted more than a day because the following day I did go to work. And the work that I did in the camp really varied. I know that sometimes we walked outside the camp and with hoes and we made little, small pieces of clumps of dirt out of big clumps of dirt. And I don't, to this day I don't know what, we weren't planting anything, we were just chopping the dirt into small clumps. And so that was for weeks I was doing that. And then when the winter came we did, now the snows came pretty early, maybe October, and we were going into the fields whether it was sunshine or rain. It didn't matter. Then when the weather got a little colder, we did get either a sweater or some kind of a jacket or an over coat, but nothing that would fit. But we did get another outer garment after one of those _____ experiences were. The lice were, I swear

I probably will never see a bigger louse in my life, but when we were through working and after we got our so-called dinner, we spent most of our time on the bunks killing lice. And these weren't head lice because we didn't have any hair. The hair was growing about a quarter of an inch or so, but these lice live in, they are body lice, and they live in the seams of you're garments. They are very hard to get rid of. And so every so often we were supposedly de-loused, but according to our theory, they might have killed the live lice but the eggs they just probably, I don't know, they made them hatch faster in this area. It seems to me like we had more lice after de-lousing than before, but the lice probably were one of the biggest tortures because here you couldn't rest at night because you had to scratch. And I still itch sometimes when I think about it. So, so much for the lice.

Q: Did you have, tell me about the food that you ate?

A: Okay. In the morning we got the coffee, which was brown water. And we didn't have cups, it was all, the bowl was the cup and everything. And we got the piece of bread. Sometimes we got it in the morning and sometimes we got it in the evening. And in the evening also, but anyway in the morning we got a piece of bread and that had to last us the whole day. And at noon we might have gotten a bowl of soup, which was mostly water with a few potatoes, a few turnips floating in it. And it tasted horrible. And we still think they were putting salt peter into it. That was the story, that they were putting salt peter to keep us quiet. I don't know whether this is true or not, salt peter is quite poisonous. It is sodium nitrate as I know, but that's what we were told, that it was full of salt peter, that that's suppose to quiet you're nerves and you become more obedient. And then in the evening we got more soup, it might have been a little bit thicker, that might have been, so we're just two pieces of potato, might have been four pieces of potato and maybe two turnips, and another piece of bread. And sometimes there was a tiny little square of margarine or a tiny little slice of a kind of a sausage, but that was maybe just once a week. Most of the time it was just dry bread.

And bread became a, had monetary value. If you wanted something else you could trade it for bread.

Q: When you were working did you work with Betsy?

A: Yes, with Betsy and Doot-sie (ph) and the mother, we all stayed together. Somehow for all that time we were always together. And then another work that I was doing was, to this day I have no idea what it actually was, somebody said this was something in connection with ammunition, and it was a, we were led into a room with long tables. And there was a nail on the table and there was a pile of rags and strips of rubber, just flat rubber strips. And we were suppose to plate braids. The hook was to hook on the beginning, you tied it up and then you started to plait and roll the ball and hook on again. And in the morning an SS woman, well fed, would come in and she would sit down and start plaiting, and then somebody would, an SS man with a stopwatch, would time her, and then they measured it. And then they multiplied it, I don't know, for how many hours we were working. Sometimes ten, sometimes twelve. So that's how many meters of that stuff we were suppose to weave or plait. And at the end of the day we measured it, forever. I mean, there was an awful lot of measuring going on. And if you were one meter short, you get whipped with a whip. And I'd rather be whipped with a whip than pounded with fists because the other thing what they were doing is pounding you with fists. So the whipping left welts but they were less painful than, there was just skin that was, you know, injured. But if you were beaten up with fists, then you're bones hurt and everything else. So I was very good with my hands and I rarely, I think I just got whipped once, that I was short, because I think I wasn't feeling well that day, but most of the time I was able to plait the quota. It wasn't exactly the number of meters that the woman was plaiting and calculating, but we had to come within a sort of a reasonable amount. Most of the time I filled up my quota so I was okay. And then I was also sewing on sewing machines. And I guess these were uniforms or

whatever it was. And as I recall, this was about the variety of work that I did. There was the fieldwork and then the sewing rooms again, and probably the longest I was in those plaiting rooms. And somebody said that they were using it in cannons or, who knows what. Oh yes, then also that wasn't only the number of meters that we had to plait, also how strong they were. So you have to make sure that if the two SS women start pulling on them, they will not break it. Because you got beaten up if they broke. And then you had to fix it. So I was very careful that I plaited them to their satisfaction. And that's so much for the work.

Q: Did you mostly speak Hungarian?

A: Yes, I spoke only Hungarian at that point because Betsy spoke a little bit of German but we did not want to speak German. But I spoke Hungarian. Another thing that was happening and was probably very strange, but we were cooking. When we were standing for hours in the roll call waiting to be counted and waiting for the time to pass by, we were talking about food. We were exchanging receipts. And we were making up receipts. I mean, you know if you would add this to that I think it would really taste much better, don't you think so? And we spend a lot of time cooking like that. And one time a very strange thing happened. Because one of the women came by, she was late for the roll call, but she made it on time though, by the time we were counted. We said, where were you? She had her breakfast. Well, what do you mean? She had scrambled eggs and she had ham and she had white bread and everything. Well it turned out that she was assigned to bring water or something to one of the SS women in one of the barracks and she brought it in when the woman was eating breakfast. And then the prisoner woman walked out and through the window she watched her eat. And then she described it all to us. It happened several times, you know, the prisoners watching the cappos (ph) or the SS women eat regular food and then thinking that they ate it, or imagining that they ate it. There were all kinds of very strange things happening.

There were homosexual women when we went to work, a couple of them were grabbing at the girls. They were Ukrainian women. One of them bit me on my neck. But other women pushed her away and then I stayed away from anybody that looked strange, that at least I felt they looked strange, so I really didn't have too much of that kind of experience. But other girls told me that they were raped by other women, but I didn't know anything about it. And I didn't want to know anything about it.

Q: Did you have anything on you're uniform other than that cross on the back? Did you have a badge or anything?

A: No. Not that I recall. Maybe I did have a triangle, you see I don't remember. I know I had the cross on the back.

Q: And the other people in your barrack, were they all Jewish prisoners?

A: They were all Jewish Hungarian women. They were all Jewish. Now one woman gave birth to a baby. And that woman was, there were a couple of pregnant women. One disappeared. I know that the pregnant woman always asked for a little bit more food because she was pregnant and then one gave birth to a baby and the baby was taken away. And I know she screamed and screamed and the cappo (ph) said that if she doesn't shut up she will be taken away. So, but that was right at the beginning when I was there. Another thing that happened was that some people got Red Cross packages. And I remember one woman, you see there were stoves in the barrack, it was already winter, and I remember she cooked all kinds of stuff that she got in the package. And I remember she gave me a little bit of the potato water that she cooked the potatoes in, she didn't give me the potatoes but she gave me potato water in the bowl, and I shared that with Betsy. But I don't know that, we heard that the Red Cross was bringing packages.

[End of Side A of Tape 4]

Q: If you would just go ahead.

A: We can start with the hospital. I got some kind of an infection. I think it started with probably some chigger bites or some bug bites that I got working outside. And I always was quite sensitive and would scratch. I know that I scratched my legs and then I guess because of the dirt and things that we lived in, I got some kind of an infection. It might have been also fleabites or whatever. And it was getting worse and worse to the point where my legs were very, very swollen. And I could not walk even. Pus was oozing and these were big, round circles all over my shins. And so they took me to the hospital and they really didn't do anything. I think they put some Vaseline or something over the wounds and covered it with some gauze and there I was lying and hoping that it will heal. But at the same time, the German doctors were coming in and drawing blood from us. And then injecting us with something and I have no idea whether these were suppose to be medications or whatever, but anyway. Then they were also doing vaginal and rectal examinations with their fingers. Which wasn't exactly what I considered pleasant. And it was rather very humiliating. I just didn't know what was going on. I was not the only one. There were several women that were singled out and we were sort of in a group and it was extremely humiliating. I was only 20 or so and I just didn't feel that this was exactly the treatment I wanted to have but I was probably worried more about my legs. And then I think I mentioned it before, that the women, there was a couple of Jewish women doctors and they said that they knew that there was going to be another selection in the hospital so they dismissed me together with some other women because they were afraid that the state I was in, I would have been selected to the gas chamber. So I was put back into my regular barracks and I barely could walk. But at that time, I was still working in that weaving business so I didn't have to walk into the fields and I was able to stand during the roll call and then just go to the barracks, which were right on the premises. So it wasn't like I had to go very far. And eventually my legs healed but they were, I had sort of scars all over, from my ankles to my knees, and I tried to

be much more careful with scratching and things that may aggravate the condition. My legs eventually healed. It took about another month or so, but anyway, I was all right. So this was another thing that I wanted to talk about. The other thing that I wanted to say was that about two months before, two or three months before we were arrested, it might have been around Christmas time or maybe a little bit later, I discovered that I was pregnant. And I went to a Polish doctor, a gynecologist who determined that I was about two months pregnant, maybe two-and-a-half, and he did an abortion right in his office. And I was very sad that I had to do it but in the circumstances I couldn't possibly have a baby. And if I did have one, I would have been pregnant when they arrested us and I probably wouldn't have survived anyway and the baby definitely wouldn't have been alive today. But if you do think like that, if you just keep on thinking all you're life about the child that wasn't born. So, this was another trauma that I had to live with. Then I didn't give it much thought of course when I was in the camp, as I said before, that nature takes care of itself and I didn't menstruate since we were put in the prison in Krakow. And I didn't menstruate until I came to New York. And I really think it was a blessing because I just cannot image thousands of women without any sanitary facilities having their periods. Now the ones that were in the camp a long time, they and the cappos (ph), some that knew how to get around because their number was just maybe 400 or 300 or so, and they were the rich ones and they might have been normal already, but the rest of us just were sterile I suppose. But what amazed me was that really, it was almost like a miracle that we didn't menstruate because it would have been a big, big mess.

Q: When you were in Budapest and before you were arrested . . .

A: We were in Krakow.

Q: Oh, I'm sorry, of course. You were in Krakow before you were arrested and you discovered that you were pregnant. Did you have any thoughts that the war might end soon? Did you have a feeling that there was just no way?

A: No. We didn't really have any hope. We didn't know how long, how much longer we could survive in the conditions that we were in and the circumstances that we were in. But it was so absolutely hopeless that we just did not think that this is the time to bring a child into the world. So it was a very hard decision to make but I made that decision. And after that, I didn't sleep with my husband anymore.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about how these two events that you just mentioned have effected you're life since then?

A: Well, as I said, you never stop thinking of the child that you, well I can't say killed, but didn't permit to be born. And I have four wonderful children and you always think how wonderful that one might have been. So my life was very much effected by everything that happened to me because to this day I have nightmares and I wake up and I don't know where I am, and I have all kinds of physical problems. What was it, a year and a half ago I finally was sort of diagnosed with an ailment that I've had for about twenty years or so. That I would come down with, or maybe more than twenty years, I came down with, suddenly, with high fever. But it was like 104, and shaking and practically being unconscious. And it would come on quite suddenly. It would last for several days and usually I got better. And it would happen like about every three to four months. And eventually I got sort of use to it and I paid no attention to it anymore. But a year and a half ago I had my neurosurgery, but two months later, again I got this fever. And this time it was much more serious because I, well, Robert knows because he was taking care of me. It was so bad that, you know, you don't call you're doctor after hours, and he got to call the doctor and find out what to do.

Whether he should take me to the hospital. And my doctor, who is a physician, said that I have something called the Brill Zincer Syndrome (ph). And she researched it and found out that a lot of people who had typhus in the concentration camps, the _____ which causes the typhus just becomes dormant and every so often it wakes up and causes the fever. But usually they are mild attacks and very few people paid much attention to it. But this time I was really seriously ill. It was 104, you are not joking you know. My doctor put me in the hospital and just to do the tests, and they ruled out every possible disease that could cause this kind of symptoms, like tuberculosis and _____ and fever, and what is the one in _____ working, the Valley Fever, and anyway, I don't know how many tests they did and they send my blood to a clinic and they were testing it for _____, but the strain that they had wasn't exactly, the results were quite inconclusive. But when I went to Poland the following Summer, Yesh-e (ph) was still alive and he said that he was a _____ and he said that the strain of _____ was a specific strain that was in Eastern Europe and it was called Ball-in-netsa (ph) or whatever, and he said that they should have tested for that and that definitely would have been positive. But my doctor wasn't going to wait for any tests and he put me on very high doses of tetracycline. And I was on tetracycline for about six weeks and the fever subsided and the tests were negative again. And he says, well, let's wait for the six months and see whether you get anything again. And I was sort of use to it, you know, it was just matter-of-fact. I was getting use to it and that was it. But it is already two years and I haven't had the fever anymore so they decided they killed off the _____. And evidently you have to do it when the _____ are active, when you have the fever. And another symptom which was described in the book, because that was the first thing that the doctor asked, where is the rash? And I had a rash going from the armpit down the arm and that was the first thing that he asked, whether I had the rash because that was one of the very typical symptoms of this sort of syndrome.

So that's another thing that I had. And another symptom that, now since we are talking about diseases, is that after I had, well maybe when we come to Bergen-Belsen the second time we can talk about it. Or should we talk about the diseases now? Because another thing was I had typhus in Bergen-Belsen. Everybody had typhus. I didn't have tuberculosis, I don't think so. But there are spots on my lungs that are calcified, but it's sort of secondary symptoms. It's really is not too significant. I mean, I have something that's called a B Lung picture, but its, the thing that was was the typhus. And another thing that people where getting was starvation edema. And this was something that was really frightening because you woke up in the morning and you're eyes were swollen with bags under the eyes and they were getting more and more swollen during the day. And that was it. In three days you were dead. I mean, it was just unbelievable because you could see the people swelling. The faces would get swollen and the legs, the feet and the hands, and then eventually the whole body. And as I understand this was diagnosed as starvation edema. And I didn't get it to that extent. And my legs were very swollen, my feet were swollen and my face just a little bit but somehow I recovered from it. I didn't die. But it was very, very frightening and I have absolutely no tolerance for salt. I am on an almost salt-free diet most of the time. If I go to a restaurant, like for example today, and I had the tuna fish sandwich, I will have to take medicine when I come home. And I am on medication the whole time, the dietetics. And my doctor who is fairly new in town because my old doctor retired and I got a new one, and he was very much against the dietetics and he just didn't think that I should take them. And he asked me to stop it. And two days later, Robert took me to the doctor's office. I couldn't go to work. I gained about twelve pounds on the scale. I couldn't open my eyes. I could not talk. I was so swollen that I couldn't even walk. And Robert took me to the doctor's office and the doctor could not believe it. He said he has

never seen anything like it. He says, you go back on you're pills and renewed my prescription. And so these are still things that I've had since I left the camps.

Q: Did you ever learn what kinds of experiments were being conducted at all?

A: No, I never learned. All I knew is that they took quite a bit of blood from us and they were injecting us with something else and they were taking, but they were doing so many things of that sort that you just didn't pay any attention to it. And I don't think that that cause any, that was in Auschwitz, and the edema came in Bergen-Belsen, so I don't think that those two have anything to do with each other. And I don't know why I didn't get typhus in Auschwitz, maybe because they were de-lousing us. But the typhus was in Bergen-Belsen. And of course the psychological effects of the whole experience is something else. Because I go to the hairdresser, I put make-up on, and I was going, you know, I got three graduate degrees and I did very well. I was on the Dean's list and I was, I got one of my Master's Degree's in art with distinction, and I entertain and I go out and I think I look very pretty. But a lot of it is also a façade. Because Robert knows that there are times that, I call it I'm out of my head. And I have to have a nanny for the kids because I couldn't always take care of them. So I was very fortunate that I could afford, or my husband could afford it. So we had a nanny for seventeen years, until Sir-re-high (ph) started High School, so she was sixteen. Well actually I had a nanny for longer than that because Margaret was with us for seventeen years and before that we had a nanny for five years. So, I mean different nannies, but then we found one that stayed with us for seventeen years because I could not take care of the children. And very few people know that because I, my kids were brought up and I participated in PTA and I just pretended that I lead a normal life. And so I think I finish on the fact that I had a good façade and everything, but every so often the children would say, well mother you never really took care of us, it was Margaret who did. But I tried to be a very good mother and I think I did do a good job. I made sure

that they go to school and do well in school and what-not, but there were many times that, I call it I couldn't take care of them the way, you know, I should have. And there was something, always, I think I held them when they were babies, but we had very little physical contact when they were growing up. And even now, you know, it may be just a peck on the cheek or something like that, but you never see me kissing the kids and really hugging them. I do with my grandchildren though. My grandchildren I hug and I hold and I play with them, but somehow with my children, there was some kind of a barrier that I couldn't break. And I know it was all in my head and I was examined by a German psychiatrist for the restitution and he decided I was nuts. Oh yes, they rewarded me restitution all right. I get a monthly check because I figured out that they pay wasn't very high because, you know, at first they gave me a lump sum and it came out to about $5.00 per diem for the time that I was in the camp. But it was more than nothing, but then they awarded me a monthly pension and they adjusted it since I have been working, and then they said, well, if you are working you really can't or don't deserve the full amount. But then I petitioned and I send more letters and I have a stack of correspondence with the German government, through my lawyer who is a German man and very, very helpful and he specializes in the restitutions, so that's another story that maybe worth preserving. All the letters that we were sending back and forth to find out whether I am deserving or not.

Q: What did you're psychological state have to do with the restitution?

A: Oh, well what my psychological state was that I wasn't, okay, my husband was supporting me supposedly. They wanted to know how much money he was making and so on and I insisted that in America, women are independent and I am not able to work. You see, I didn't start working for money really. For making a living, until my second husband died. Before that when I was working, it was charity work and whatnot. And I was teaching at the university as a student teacher. I wasn't

really working for money. And so the reason that they awarded me the restitution was, it is really a pension. Nobody can live on that pension because it was like $300.00 and then every year they adjust it for cost of living, whatever. So it wouldn't even pay half the rent for a small room somewhere. But I had to have a physical examination by a German doctor and who determined that I had a chronic edema, or whatever he called it, and then, I don't know, whatever else his diagnosis was, and then they decided to have me checked by a psychiatrist. And he gave me the standard psychiatric examination and I had to fill out all kinds of questionnaires, you know, whether I feel that I am being followed and whether I can sleep or whether I can't sleep, do I have nightmares, and I actually had everything that he was asking for, so I said yes. And then he decided that maybe I do deserve some kind of a pension because he didn't think that anybody would employ me in the state of mind I was. So that's another story.

Q: We can come back in more detail to the restitution later.

A: Well, the thing is that as far as the restitution is concerned, I have copies of all the letters that I sent to the lawyer and the copies of his letters to me and the final judgment in all that. It is all very interesting because it took like maybe several years of constant correspondence and wanting more proof and more proof of this and that and something else. So, if you think that that would be an addition to it. Because I really didn't hear anything about restitution in the whole museum. And there are a lot of people that are getting money from the German government. One curious thing is that once a month in between the 1st of August, it has to be after the 1st of August and before the 1st of November, I have to fill out a certificate of life. And it has to be notarized by a notary public. Years ago it had to be also, not certified, but made true, I can't think of the, I can't think of the word, but it was in German and then eventually it started to translate it into English, that it had to be certified by a German authority. So I had to send it to the German counsel in San Francisco, and

then I had to get it back and then I had to send it to Germany. So this is something quite curious that I think very few people know about it. Have you known about it?

Q: No.

A: Well then you're the first one to learn about it.

End of Tape 4.

Tape 5

Q: And go on.

A: When I got married in June, 1947 to Dr. Levin, we decided that we didn't want to have children the first few years because we both were going to go to school. And I wanted to get my degree from the University of Michigan. That's where he was going to be for three years in surgical residency. So when we were even still in, we got married in Dallas, Texas. And I went to a gynecologist for my pre-marital examination and he examined me and he told me that I don't have to worry about getting pregnant because he thinks I am completely sterile. My fallopian tubes were plugged, scarred, and there was no way I could possibly get pregnant. And so, of course it was a great shock to me. I told him my history and he said, well, this is what contributed to it. And I, of course, I didn't want to get married, because my future husband was from a large family. There were six children and he was the only son. Well, actually he had a half-brother, but he was the only son of his mother, and he, they definitely wanted to have a grandson or granddaughter, or whatever, so it was a great disappointment to him and he didn't tell his parents. But he said he didn't care. He still wanted to get married, even though I didn't, but we did get married. And I just tried not to think about it. But I tried to plan my life. Definitely go to school and have some kind of a profession so that I can be working and not missing the fact that I can't be a mother. So, actually I was so busy with the university studies that I did not really have time to worry about anything else at that point. But then, he was finishing his residency and I was finishing my graduate degree and we were going to move on. And looking for a place to settle. And I thought that maybe I should do something about it. But we moved to Detroit and I got a job as a Medical Technologist at Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital and he was a surgeon there. And we had a very good friend who was a gynecologist and we told him my predicament and he said that he will see what he can do. He gave me a very

thorough examination and then I had, he put me on high doses of penicillin, back then penicillin was very much in use. And so if there was any kind of infection, then it would definitely get cleared. And then in addition he put me through quite painful treatments. It is kind of a little complicated, these are uterine injections of lapydol (ph), which is a very heavy oil with, first he tried to blow the air through and he wasn't able to, my tubes were definitely plugged. And then lapydol (ph) is a very heavy oil and it has some kind of an additive to it that it will show up on x-rays, and so he injected that and the lapydol (ph) is suppose to go through the tubes and if they, and the weight of it sometimes will open them. And the tubes are really opened into the abdominal cavity and the good sign is when the lapydol (ph) spills into the abdominal cavity. And it's quite painful because there is some kind of a nerve connection, especially if, the pain is hitting the shoulders. And nothing happened with the injection. And he repeated it and after two days there was a spill on the right side. So he said, well, that was sufficient indication that things may be all right. And a few months later I did get pregnant. And so we spent a year in Detroit and then I was about three months pregnant when we left. And we came to Fresno. And my daughter was born in August, we came to Fresno in December and my daughter was born in August. So things turned out for the best. But without medical treatments and all, I probably would have not been able to have children. The American doctor who examined me the first time, when I went there for my pre-marital examination, because I was getting married and I didn't think that I wanted to get pregnant right away, said that I probably would never get pregnant because my tubes were scarred and plugged up. And that I don't have to worry about getting pregnant. And he wanted to know what could have caused it. And I wanted to know what the cause might have been and he says, well, one of the causes that usually plugs up the tubes is an infection and its mainly gonorrhea and I said, well, how on earth would I have gotten gonorrhea and he says, well, you just think. And you know you can

get gonorrhea by an intercourse with an infected person, which I did not have, and so I told him about the gynecological examinations that I was getting in the camp. And that when I was in the hospital with the skin infection, there were also doctors coming in and poking their fingers into us, and I did not think that they were having sterile gloves on because they were going from one woman to another without changing the gloves. They were protecting themselves but not us. And these were vaginal and rectal examinations and the doctor, the American doctor who examined me in Dallas, he said yes, that was sufficient to get you infected.

Q: How long all told were you in the hospital at Auschwitz?

A: I really don't quite remember. It could have been, probably around ten days. And one thing that I remember very distinctly was that sometimes they were dressing the wounds on a table. We were in bunks all the way around and there was a space in the center and they would put the patient there and several doctors would be standing around her and doing all kinds of things so that we couldn't really see, but one time I saw her legs. I thought mine were in a bad shape, but her's were so bad that you could see the bone. The flesh was just practically rotted away. And one of the things that they would, they didn't do the maggot treatment to me, but it was very popular in Europe to use maggots to treat this kind of wounds. And I know that her legs were just crawling with maggots. And evidently maggots were putting some kind of an enzyme or whatever, that was killing the dead tissue. Or maybe they were eating the dead tissue and that stimulated the granulation and growth of the new tissue. And that was one of the cures. So they did use maggots, but they didn't use penicillin. They didn't use maggots on me, I somehow got better.

Q: Were they treating you in any way that was productive? That was helpful?

A: Well, as I say, it seems to me that they put some kind of an ointment on my wounds and they were somewhat helpful, so that the oozing stopped. It looked like Vaseline, but I can't believe that

Vaseline alone could have cured, but anyway, at least the things were not full of mud and dirt, which I would have gotten in the regular barracks, or even going to work. So there were bandages, they bandaged my legs and they were at least kept clean. I was a pretty healthy and strong person at that time and I guess it was my resistance and just my natural ability to heal. And to this day I heal very well. I get a cut on my finger and two days later it is gone, so maybe it was just my ability to heal well.

Q: And you mentioned that you left the hospital before you were completely healed?

A: Yes. I left the hospital because of the on coming selection. And the doctors that were there, the women doctors, they were Jewish women doctors. They were afraid that the selection may not be very selective and they may just reduce the number of patients so they didn't want anybody who was well enough to walk out, was asked to walk out. And as I say, after that, I went back to my barrack and I was able to stand the roll call and I was able to walk to that place where we were plaiting the braids. And sitting all day, I could still keep my bandages on my legs and then I think a couple of times, as I recall, I went to the hospital and I had the bandages changed.

Q: Did you ever see Yannosh (ph), you're husband, during this time?

A: Yannosh (ph) disappeared about half way. I think I saw him a few times and I said he came on some errands, he brought some stuff with the other workers to the camp. And I don't know exactly what, and I was able to say a few words to him. But it was not more than two or three times. The first time when he came was to, he told us that father died, and that was just maybe like a few days, maybe a week or so, maybe two weeks after we were separated into the different camps. He died very soon after he got there. But I didn't see Yannosh (ph) maybe for three months and after that I didn't see him anymore. I don't think I saw him after October. As I remember, the last time I saw him was the weather was still bearable and then in October it started to get very cold and snow, and

I know I didn't see him anymore. And I told you before that when I was in Paris, that there were two guys that said that they knew him in camp and that he was selected and that they never saw him again. And evidently because he was crippled.

Q: Do you remember that last time you saw him? What you said to him, what you said to each other? Anything about that last time you saw him?

A: I didn't know it would be the last time. I didn't think that each time was the last time, but there was very little that we could say to each other. It was, I don't remember.

Q: And you mentioned there was another place that you were working, beside in that, another place?

A: Yes, I was also working on some kind of a brick-laying place. And I remember one thing, that one of the guards complimented me. That I had a very good ability to measure the distances because my bricks were laid very evenly and I was spreading the mortar, I think I was buttering a slice of bread, and that the bricks were built very, very evenly and very nice. And what we were working, and that was a very short time that we were working on it, were large, round, brick structures. It doesn't seem to me that they were ever finished, but by then we, of course, we knew exactly about the crematoria and we knew about everything else. And what these structures were suppose to be was, and I don't know whether that was the hearsay or whatever, but that's what we were kind of hearing, that these were going to be special extermination places with sort of electrical contraptions that would be electrical crematoria and electrical killing, the high voltage. But I don't know whether that was true and I never really found out what these structures were. And when we were in Auschwitz, I was telling Robert about these structures and the first time we went to Auschwitz he says, that's what you described. And I said, yes, that's what I was working on. And

we never found out in Auschwitz what these things were supposed to be. But it was very, we probably will go again and I'll try to find out what they were.

Q: They were in Birkenau, these structures?

A: In Birkenau. Right past the crematoriums, or along side the crematoriums. And I don't think they were ever finished.

Q: You mentioned earlier that by the time you got to Auschwitz you were hearing more news of the war and of the outside world. Do you recall some of the news that you heard?

A: Not really. I just know that, well actually it was more in Auschwitz than in Belsen-Bergen. In Belsen-Bergen, whatever news we got was when the new transport came. But all the transports that were coming to Bergen-Belsen were mainly from Holland or from other countries, from smaller countries. And they were very small transports. And it seems like, as I mentioned before, that they all seemed to be of prisoners or some political people that were rather taken care of. As I say, we weren't, we didn't seem to be doomed or anything. Just like the Holland diamond cutters, they were being sort of guarded and preserved. And so, if a new transport came, they might have told us what was going on. But we really didn't know. But while we were in Auschwitz, there were underground radios and then also there were a lot of workers who were going outside and coming back in the evening and they would bring some news that what was happening on the front and what was happening with the war. And at one point we knew that the Russians were coming and that the siege of Warsaw, and things like that. That there was an uprising in Warsaw. And I just don't remember really. We were much more concerned about surviving from day to day than worrying what was happening outside. There were raids, air raids. There were quite a few air raids and we were hoping that they will bomb but they didn't. The airplanes were swooping down but they were never really throwing any bombs on the crematoria and we were disappointed because we

thought that maybe they would destroy the crematorium, they couldn't be used. But they were saying that it was the American planes that were coming. And we could hear the anti-craft shooting, but I don't think they ever shot down any planes either, but they were just shooting at them. And so, but we really had very, very little contact with the outside world. And when we were in Bergen-Belsen, we didn't know anything. But we haven't gotten to Bergen-Belsen yet. We are still in Auschwitz. A couple escaped, there were people escaping. And we witnessed one hanging of a couple that escaped. And we understand that there were more escapes and more hangings, but we did witness one. And there were also suicides. I mean, it was very easy to commit suicide if you could just get to the high voltage wires. And some people did. Another thing that happened that was quite a regular occurrence were the latrines. I mean, we had to go when we were ordered to go and I don't know whether you saw the pictures, I didn't see any pictures in here of the latrines, but it was a cement kind of a block in the center of the barrack with holes. A double row of holes. And you were supposed to do your business there. And that sure was not a very pleasant sight or a very pleasant time. And this one thing that I was really suffering from was constipation and to this day I still have to be very careful what I eat and what I do and the timing because, I don't want to talk about it, Robert. But maybe this is important that it is recorded too. I mean, you don't like to talk about these things, but I remember one night. I mean, at night if we had to go, there was a bucket. And I remember one night I had to go and the cappo (ph) would not let, and I think it was Betsy with me, they wouldn't let us until we emptied the bucket. And the bucket was about, like a 30 gallon garbage can, maybe 25 gallon garbage can, I know it wasn't as high as that, it was about this high. And she said we have to carry the garbage can to the latrine, there was a ditch that you poured it in, before we can use it. And that's not a very pleasant feeling either.

Especially when, if you do have an accident, there's no clean clothes that you can put on. And there is no way of washing it.

Q: So two people would carry these buckets and these buckets are about two or three feet high?

A: About two and a half feet high. Like a garbage can, but it was more like a drum with sort of handles, wire handles or something, and we carried that. And it was pretty full. And we were trying to carry it very carefully so that it wouldn't splash because, as I said, if it splashed on us we had no way of clean up and these probably were the worst times. Probably much worse than not having enough food. Because you really dealt with, I don't really want to say, but it was shit. [Laughter] But that's what it was. And I can't understand how I can laugh now, I really can't. But I do. Maybe that's why I survived. Maybe that's why I'm not completely crazy.

Q: You mentioned that there were hangings going on, or that you witnessed one hanging. What was the reason?

A: They escaped and they were caught. They were brought back. There were more hangings in Prostejov and they always made hangings public to scare us, I suppose. But my brother was in Prostejov and he had a girlfriend. And I think he was quite fond of her and he was still able to go out because he was going to work in the factory, that was after my father was already gone. And he came, I never saw him cry. He was a very brave guy. And that time he came in and I had a place to meet him and I would bring him some food and stuff. And he said that they were, that they did hang the girl and some other people with her. And why? Somebody tried to escape and they caught them and then they just took people at random and she was one of them. And he said, it could have been him, it could have been anybody else, but they did hang her. So, I try not to think about these things.

Q: Did you ever consider trying to escape or do anything?

A: No. Because we knew that it was impossible. I mean, the people that did escape, I really don't know of anybody that escaped and wasn't caught. Because the way the camp was situated, it wasn't like there were woods and you can just hide and whatnot, unless you had really help from the outside. And I really don't know much about it. All I know is that between the barbed wire, electrified, and the guards in the towers, and the dogs, it was impossible. That anybody who would try might as well finish off on the wires.

Q: When were you deported to Bergen-Belsen?

[End of Side A of Tape 5]

Q: I had just asked you when you were deported again to Bergen-Belsen from Auschwitz?

A: Okay. It was December and I believe it was December the 29th because the trip lasted about four days, maybe three. I don't know, but all I know is that New Year's Eve was on the train because the German soldiers, the SS men, the guards were celebrating. And _____, that's the toast they were making, and yelling and drinking. And I swore that if I ever get out, I will always be very happy on New Years Eve. I will always remember the night on the train. And I do remember it. I even remember thinking, my hair was about maybe an inch and a half long or maybe a little bit longer but it was still very, very short, and I was just wondering, just dreaming that maybe by the next New Years Eve my hair will be long enough to go to a party. And I was in Paris a year later. And I had a big barrel of champagne and I think I got really, really plastered. My hair wasn't long enough to be really good but it was long enough. It was all right.

Q: The train ride took how long?

A: I don't know. I think, I am quite sure that it, you see, some of the dates I try to remember, but I think it was the 29th in the evening because it was dark and I remember Doot-sie (ph) jumping up and down trying to join us. They separated her from Betsy and me because we were going to go on

the train. And I don't know what was better, whether to stay in the camp or to go on the train, but we had no choice. And I felt very, very bad about leaving her because her mother was gone all ready and she was just left alone. And I know she was crying and she looked like a skeleton all ready and we didn't look much better, but she looked really bad. And that's why they didn't let her go. They selected people that were in a better shape I guess, so I didn't think that I'll ever see her again, and I didn't. But I also thought that I wouldn't see her again because she wouldn't survive the ordeal. But she did survive. And I think I mentioned all about her before, but anyway Betsy and I were put on the train.

Q: Can we go back just a bit to when you mentioned Doot-sie (ph) mother had already been separated from you. Will you tell me when that happened?

A: Well that happened about two or three weeks before. You see, we went to sauna and the de-lousing so-called. And when we were completely undressed, you see the routine was as I said we bundled our clothes and put it on this cart which was wheeled into the de-lousing compound which I think were the temporary, provisional little gas chambers, but anyway, that's where we were. In a room where we undressed and then the SS men came in and started to whip right and left, right and left. And Doot-sie (ph) mother was by then, she was an older woman, I mean today its not an older woman if you're in you're late 50's or so. But she was in a bad shape and she was really very, very skinny and very old looking. And so she was pushed away together with some other older women and Doot-sie (ph) and I and Betsy were pushed to the right to go to the sauna. And I remember Doot-sie (ph) really went into hysterics and she ran to her mother and they were holding onto her and the guards were just whipping her and pushing her and really separated us. And they pushed us into the sauna and closed the door. And Doot-sie (ph) was in complete hysterics because she was really, really always very close to her mother. Then we went through the bath and went back to our

barracks. And I know she cried all night. But then we found out that the mother was in so-called Shonin's (ph) block where they kept people supposedly that weren't able to work anymore and they were kind of sheltered. And taken care of. And she cried and she was very philosophical about it when we saw her. She says, well, I suppose I'm going out through the chimney. And Doot-sie (ph) went into hysterics and the mother said that she was very, very thirsty. That the soup that they got was terribly salty and they didn't get any water. And there was no way we could bring her any water. I mean, we couldn't carry it in the bowl because they would have seen it and there were no bottles and she said that she really just lost the will to live. Mainly because she was so terribly thirsty. And we came the next day again to see her and she was in a worse case even. And she said that she was just too weak to even walk. And then I guess that evening they finished them off because we came the next day and, I'm quite sure we saw her at least twice. And then the next day they were all gone. The barrack was empty. You see, we could move around after work. I mean, we sometimes would get a permission to go out and go to the other barrack. So they were just taken to the gas. And evidently we were told too by the old timers that the people that they were going to gas, they were fed salty food, very salty soups so that they were so thirsty that they would just going half crazy and they would just as soon go into the gas chamber than to suffer. So they just went. They were not fighting or they were not trying to save themselves. The faster the better. So, she was gone.

Q: Was Doot-sie (ph) younger than you?

A: Oh no, Doot-sie (ph) was quite a bit older. No, she was, I don't remember, in the book it says what year she was born, but Yannick (ph) was born in 1921 and Doot-sie (ph) might have been five years older, five or six years older. They were the only two children that they had. But she was quite a bit older.

Q: And when the day of the selection came, did you have any forewarning?

A: No. Absolutely not. We had no idea of what was going on. And again, it was, they gave us a bath again. All the selections were taking place in saunas. And I had no idea whether Doot-sie (ph) was taken to the gas chamber or whether she was just selected out to stay. But I know that the people that were selected to go, we had to, I think we were bathed again. I mean, we took a shower. And then got the clothes from the de-lousing cart and after that we were kept in a sort of a compound by the railroad tracks. And I think we were allowed to take the blanket. Because we used the blankets for shawls and for, and the blankets had to go through de-lousing, so I am quite sure that we came to Bergen-Belsen with blankets, because we were not given any when we were there. Because in Bergen-Belsen we, it was just bare floor and some bunks. But Betsy and I were sleeping on the floor, not on the bunk.

Q: And when you left were you taken in a train immediately or did you go in a truck?

A: No, I think we were loaded on the train and I don't think it was more than an hour or so that the train left. I think they loaded us up and it wasn't like the other transports. You know, that they kept us on the train and we weren't really very squished either. I mean, it was squishy but we could sort of stretch out. I mean it wasn't like standing room only. And it was more like they were transporting us to use us for something and not to exterminate us.

Q: But you had no idea where you were going?

A: We had no idea where we were going. And we just knew that we were going away from the crematoria. So we were rather hopeful. We were rather hopeful. And when we arrived in Bergen-Belsen, somehow we heard that it was Bergen-Belsen, and Betsy and I were very happy and we were telling everybody what a wonderful place it was after Auschwitz. That, oh, oh, we are so lucky that we are in Bergen-Belsen because this will be really just a resort compared with

Auschwitz. Resort my foot! It wasn't a resort. By then it was pretty crowded. It was quite crowded. And the facilities, I don't know what they did with the bathrooms and I don't know what they did with the lavatories and everything else because I just don't remember running water anymore. And I don't remember latrines. I think we were using buckets. Because I just don't remember that there was bathrooms or anything like that. If there were any they were not in our barrack. And at that time, I was, the barrack that we were in were not just the Hungarian women. There were Polish women and from all over and there were Czech women and there were different nationalities. There were no gypsies as I recall, but our barrack had women of all nationalities and I remember the three sisters from Poland. Carmella was the oldest one, and then there were, I don't remember the names of the two others, but one couldn't have been more than thirteen. She was a skinny little thing and not very pretty. And then there was the middle sister who was quite nice looking and Carmella was just simply beautiful. And Carmella was very, very talented and she could draw beautifully and I don't know where she got the paper from, but the whole time, and she had pencil, and the whole time she was drawing and writing poems. And I don't know whatever happened to them. Carmella was the first one to die. And I remember waking up in the morning and hearing the younger sister cried, that Carmel-ka is dead, Carmel-ka is dead! And they were both sobbing and whining. And there were many more people that were dead and when they died, we just dragged them outside. And at that time there were still the commandos for the dead people and they would tie straps to the wrists and to their feet and they would drag them. Two people would drag each cadaver to the ditch. And then, three days later the middle sister died. And then the little one died probably a week later. And I remember waking up in the morning and seeing the little one on all fours, sort of scrunched up and I think she went to the bathroom, just being scrunched up like that. And she was dead. And we dragged her out.

Q: Was it typhus?

A: Typhus. Now the little one died of typhus and Carmella I think died of typhus and the edema. And the middle one died, she wasn't swollen. The two younger ones weren't but Carmella was. And then I remember this one woman, we woke up in the morning and she was on the upper bunk and she was so swollen that she looked Japanese. Her eyes were just slits in her face and it just was, this was something that was really amazing. That it's really not, I came across a medical report book in Poland, in polish, and I tried to find that syndrome and I don't think it was ever really described. So I don't know, I didn't really research it very much but I would like to spend some time in the library and see what, if they have anything of that sort described. But it was just amazing that, if you woke up with you're eyes swelling you were dead in less than three days. And as I understand just a good dose of dietetic probably would have cured everybody.

Q: When was it that you arrived in Bergen-Belsen?

A: We arrived in Bergen-Belsen after New Years, that was 1945. I think it was January 1st because it seems to me that when they were toasting and screaming and yelling it was New Years' and I think that we arrived in Bergen-Belsen the next day. Sometime late in the evening, late in the afternoon.

Q: Did you work at all while you were in Bergen-Belsen?

A: No. We didn't do anything. We didn't do anything. We just sat there and we still had our bowls. The bowls were more precious than gold because if you didn't have a bowl you did not, you couldn't hold soup in you're hands. Maybe I, no, I don't remember whether I, I think I wanted to work in the kitchen. Because you could steal a potato. It seems to me that maybe I did because I remember eating raw potatoes because we had no way of cooking them. But I remember that I was surprised, I had never ate a raw potato before, that it tasted a little bit like an apple without the apple taste,

except the texture was more like an apple. But, maybe I did. But I just don't really remember. The whole time in Bergen-Belsen is just one big fog. And one thing happened and it was like a miracle because I was outside and I looked up and there was Mrs. Gi-gen-ska (ph). I saw Mrs. Gi-gen-ska (ph) and I thought I died. And I was back in Krakow. I couldn't believe it. And she didn't have her hair shaved or anything and she was with her cane, she was limping because she had something wrong with her leg. And she had her cane and she recognized me. Actually I recognized her because she looked just like she did. She was blonde and she had sort of wavy hair and she had her nice clothes on. Not the rags that we had. And I looked at her and I called her _____ and she recognized me of sorts. She couldn't believe that Anya (ph), Anya (ph) was my name, and we hugged and we kissed and I wanted to know what she was doing there. And she was in a different part of the camp but she just happened to be in that common area. You see, we were not standing up hill anymore, we were not counted. We just kind of existed. And she was in a very good shape. And you know that except hugging with her and kissing her, I had no recollection anymore of what happened. And I don't think I saw her again. And not until three years ago when Rena Chic-kin-ska (ph), her daughter, got my address. Well actually no, she didn't get my address. Ches-ruf (ph) wrote to Chin-ut-sa's (ph) wife, I introduced them and they were boyfriend and girlfriend at some time, and Ches-ruf (ph) send me Rena's letter. Just like the Red Cross does. If you write to the Red Cross and you want an address of you're cousin somewhere, they won't do it. You give them the letter that you want you're cousin to get and then they send it to you're cousin, and then the cousin decides whether he wants to correspond with you or not. So Ches-ruf (ph) decided the same thing. He send me Rena's letter and he said that Rena said that she knew me from school and she wanted to get in touch with me. One of the reasons that she wanted to get in touch, she knew that I was alive, at least that I was alive in 1945 because her mother saw me in Bergen-Belsen. You see, I

couldn't even remember whether I saw her in Auschwitz or I saw her in Bergen-Belsen. But Rena wrote that I saw her in Bergen-Belsen and what Rena wanted was, she went to Israel, they were not Jewish but she married a Jewish man after the war, a writer. A play writer and a play critic in Warsaw. That's another story, but anyway she went to Israel and she witnessed the Ad-va-shem (ph) ceremony for the Righteous. And she thought that maybe her mother was dead already, she died of a heart attack in I think 1983 or 1982. And she thought that her mother was helping a lot of Jews and among them she was helping my family. That maybe I could write a testimonial and see whether they could get a medal for her. And so I wrote back to Rena and I wanted to know more about her mother and she said that it was Bergen-Belsen. That what happened was her mother was helping a lot of people and one of them was smuggling weapons to the resistance or whatever it was. And they caught her finally. Just before the Auschwitz was to be evacuated. And they sent her to Auschwitz and when the train arrived, they decided they didn't need any more prisoners in Auschwitz and they sent her off to Bergen-Belsen. And she was just plain lucky because if she arrived in Auschwitz three weeks earlier or so she would have been put straight into the gas chamber with her limping leg. And this way she had, even she had her cane with her, they didn't take it away from her. And she had still her normal clothes and she was never tattooed because the train arrived, as Rena said, the train arrived in Auschwitz and then her mother was sent to Bergen-Belsen. And she stayed in Bergen-Belsen until, that I got all from Rena, until October because she did have typhus too. And so she stayed in Bergen-Belsen and then she was sent back to Krakow. So that's how Rena knew that I was alive, because her mother saw me there.

Q: You mentioned that you had a bowl in Bergen-Belsen. Did you bring it from Auschwitz?

A: Oh, the bowl was from Auschwitz, the bowl was from Auschwitz, but I didn't bring the bowl. I brought all kinds of other things. I brought the pill. I bought the cyanide capsule for about four

rations of bread that I saved. Because I wasn't going to go to the gas chamber again. They didn't bring that. And I had a knife and was going to cut my veins. I didn't have to. I think I brought the knife with me, but I don't know whether my cousin took it away from me. It was just a small pocketknife. Because you see, you could buy anything in the camp from the Canada people.

Q: You bought the knife and the pill while you were in Auschwitz?

A: Yes, that was still in Auschwitz.

End of Tape 5.

Tape 6

Q: We're in Bergen-Belsen and you were telling me about you're seeing Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph). You were telling me a little bit about after you had seen her and her daughter and you had the correspondence.

A: Oh and about her daughter, that she wrote to me, and anyways to make this story just complete, that I spent quite some time remembering all of the events from the time I decided to get married. Because it was Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) that recommended that I, that Yannick and I get married. And this way I can, she was a very clever woman. She really, she was divorced, separated or divorced from her husband and she had this jewelry store. And actually, as I found out, it wasn't, I just met her just after the war started and I found out that the store really was not hers. It belonged to a Jewish woman, and I have her name, I forget, but she turned it over just like my father turned over his tannery to the Mos-tof-ski (ph) family. This woman, Helena I think was her first name, turned over her store to Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) and it was Chi-chin-ska's Perfumery and Jewelry. It was costume jewelry mainly. And she was running a very good business and sometimes she was paying some of the profits to the Jewish woman. And I don't know exactly what happened, if she survived the war or not, but anyway this is what was happening as far as Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) was concerned. And she had a lot of connections and a lot of wisdom on how to run a business. And as I say, she helped our family to find places to live as we had to keep on moving, and then also we were selling some of the jewelry and things and she always got a very good price for it and sold it for us. So I wrote it all up, about fourteen pages, very detailed for Yat-va-sham (ph) and they accepted it. And actually, it was not just Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) but Rena at that time was, she was just about a year younger than I and she was helping too. And one of the things that she was doing, you know that Doot-sie (ph) and her mother were giving the English lessons in their apartment, and

Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) was in her store and Rena was directing the traffic of all the students. She was sort of on the look-out to make sure that there is no police and there is no suspicion, that there are people are coming and going because they had lessons every hour of the hour. So Rena was very much involved in this whole business too. So they both were recognized and I have a photograph of Rena receiving the medal, for her and her mother. And a certificate, so they got it a year ago. So that's the story of Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph). Oh, and she said that her mother came home from Bergen-Belsen emaciated and sick, but she recovered very fast and then they lived in Krakow for some time and she died of a heart attack in church. One Sunday they went to Mass and she died. So I think she was in her late 80's, so Rena was at peace.

Q: You came down with typhus as well while you were in Bergen-Belsen?

A: Yes. And actually that probably somewhat might have saved my life. Because when the British came, I was just recovering from typhus. I had edema but it was not as progressive as the ones that killed people in three days. I remember crawling on my hands and knees because my legs were so swollen, it wasn't just my ankles but I think they were swollen all the way to my knees. And my hands were swollen. But somehow my eyes and my face weren't as bad. And I remember I barely could walk. And there were two or three steps into the barrack. I think the barracks were not on a foundation, but on stilts. And I know that I crawled up and I just barely could walk. Now we are coming very close to the liberation now. Because I started, that that saved my life, that I did have typhus, because I had no appetite. I know that I hadn't eaten anything for several days. I know I was very thirsty and I just don't remember that there was water available. I know people can't live without water, but I just don't remember having any water to drink. And we knew that something was going on because we could hear shooting, and heavy shooting. And it seemed to me like there were air raids all the time because the sirens were going. And the guards seemed to be sort of not

paying much attention to us and we didn't get any food. And I don't remember how long it was that we didn't get any food. And then when we woke up in the morning there were no guards. And I remember crawling out and seeing people running towards the gates and the gates were open. There were big, wooden gates. They were not barbed wire gates, they were wooden gates. And there were big wooden posts. And there were no guards, and in the towers there were no guards, anywhere. And we couldn't believe it. And then the first tank came in. And they were British. They had barrettes and the Germans did not wear berets. And they had kind of greenish uniforms, not the blue-green but the yellow-green. They had jackets. I couldn't believe it. I don't think that I could believe either. I forgot to tell you what the camp looked like by then. First of all, there were dead people all over the place. And there was, I don't want to use the bad word, but there was shit all over because everybody had diarrhea or there was no, they couldn't get to the latrine and they just did it where ever they stood. And you couldn't even walk. And there was, I don't know whether it is recorded or not, but there was cannibalism going on. I remember. It was before the British tanks. For several days when we didn't get any food or anything and I saw people with their stomachs open and they were eating liver. I saw it. Robert likes liver. And, don't, please, please Robert. I want you to go back and erase it, please. Will you erase it now before I . . .

[Tape partially erased here]

A: People were dying all over and they were just cadavers all over the place. And I probably should say dead people. And they, the Germans, that was before the Germans escaped. They were making us, I didn't because I couldn't walk, but whoever could, say they dragged them. They dragged them to the ditches, but they didn't have enough help. They didn't have enough help to clean everything

so when the British came, the place was just absolutely covered with dead people. Just piles of them. Some of them were piled up and some of them were just scattered around, everywhere. And people just defecating and relieving themselves right where they stood. It was just horrible. And, and before that, there was this one time, a few weeks before that, when they drowned a girl in a bucket of soup. You know, they would bring the, that was when they were still cooking for us. The soup was turnips or potatoes or whatever. And they brought it in and people were so hungry that they were storming at it and pushing and pulling and one of the women leaned over and they pushed her, just right into the bucket of soup. And she couldn't get out. The rest were dipping. I, I, I, she drowned.

Q: You described seeing the soldiers coming. You knew they weren't German. Did you know that they were British?

A: Yes. We knew that they, because I said that they looked different. I don't remember the markings on the tanks or anything, or the cars, or the trucks, but they had different uniforms. They had round sort of caps and they had jackets. And they drove into the camp and stopped the trucks and people who could walk or run just swarmed them the guys really had to protect themselves. They had cigarettes and they had chocolate bars and they were throwing them and people were killing themselves for that, and so they stopped because people were just killing each other to get hold of the chocolate. And I just don't remember what happened exactly, but it seems to me that more and more of them came and somehow the people that were well enough, more of the newcomers, like Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) was one of the newcomers, I think those were trying to put some kind of an order into the place and put us back into the barracks until more soldiers came in so that they could somehow control the crowds. And the first thing that they did, they opened the kitchen and they cooked this food. They brought out big barrels of the food that they cooked and it

was some kind of British rations that were just a fantastic stew with big chunks of salt, pork or whatever, it was fat. And it was just absolutely smelling deliciously and people just went crazy and they really had to push them around to be able to ration this stuff out. And I remember getting a bowl of it and eating it with my fingers and I think I took one mouthful and I couldn't swallow it. I just couldn't eat anything. I just got sick to my stomach and I just left the bowl there and I just didn't care. I remember crawling back into the barrack and Betsy couldn't eat either. Betsy also had typhus and she, we both cried because we were so hungry and we just wanted water. There was plenty of water to drink too. They had cups and we could drink. But we couldn't eat. But there were a lot of people who were just gorging themselves with that stuff. And they were all dead the next day. They all got diarrhea and that place was really then horrible. Because they had diarrhea in the barrack, they had diarrhea everywhere. And evidently they couldn't eat that kind of food and that caused the diarrhea. And people were just sick all over. They were throwing up and that was probably worse than anything else. And by then, it seems to me like the medical Corp arrived. And they cooked up big drums of watery cereal, sort of a cream of wheat or something, but it mostly looked like watery stuff. And they gave us that to eat and I remember I ate that, I think it was more like drinking. I drank about two cups of it, but a lot of us thought that that wasn't food really and we were explained that our stomachs were not use to the rich food and we had to slowly get adjusted. I remember the next portion was a little bit thicker until we finally got gruel, which is the normal thickness, but for at least three days. And then also there was bread in storage but we didn't get it. I mean, the Germans would not give us the bread but the British finally opened the stores and they found there was plenty of bread, which they never distributed. So we did get bread. And more and more British came and they started cleaning up the camp. But the main thing was that the Germans could not, a lot of them did not escape. And they hid in the camp and the Commander, Kramer, I

think was his name, he was caught. And the woman, I forget her name, the German woman, the main woman that was taking care of the women's camp, she was caught too. And many others. But Kramer was the one and the woman was the other one that we were all cheering, that they got caught. And then what the British did that I never forget either, they had the German soldiers pile the corpses up in trucks and they had Kramer take his shirt off and lay naked at the top of the corpses. And drive, they drove to the big ditches and buried the people. And I know that the trucks were going back and forth, and back and forth, with all the dead people. I don't know, I heard the figure that there were like 30,000 or so that were dead. And then they were cleaning up the barracks and cleaning up the whole camp. And then I have a vague recollection of what was going on, but I know that they had a scale and I guess the British doctors, they were weighing us and taking photographs. And I remember I weighed 71 pounds. I didn't know what pounds were, I just knew kilograms, but they were weighing us in pounds.

Q: How tall were you?

A: 5'1". And, oh, but I know we got food. That after a while we got bread and we got still a kind of not very thick soup and not much meat, but evidently very nutritious food because it seems to me like I gained weight, maybe five pounds in the first months or so. That was April 14, 1945 when the gate opened.

Q: Had you recovered from typhus at that point?

A: By then I was quite recovered. I didn't have fever and I was recovered from typhus. And I was, except for the swelling, which was going away, and I was getting stronger after I had the food and I was feeling better and better. And it took about maybe two weeks for me to sort of recuperate. And I was getting back my appetite. But the main thing was that because I had typhus I didn't have any appetite and I didn't eat the gruel, the rich food that they gave us. And then the big thing was that

they de-loused us. But they really de-loused us with DDT. The system was that they had these pumped up, you know the containers with the pump, and we had to open our panties and they sprinkled the stuff and behind, into our dresses and into sleeves, and everywhere, and our hair. We didn't know that DDT was quite toxic, but not only for the lice but for people, but I think at that point, nobody cared what was toxic. The main thing was that we could see the lice just die, right on the spot. So that was one of the great things that they did for us. And we finally got rid of the lice. But I never forget the DDT treatment.

End of Side A of Tape 6.

Q: Okay. Mrs. Ware, will you tell what happened to Betsy at this point? Where was she in the camp? Did she still have typhus?

A: Well when we were liberated, she was still sick and she was getting worse. She couldn't eat anything and they opened the hospital. I mean, the British opened the hospital and so that's where she went and I would go and visit her. But then she recovered from typhus but she evidently had tuberculosis and so she was in the hospital the rest of the time. Until I left. So I just went to visit her and I just don't know what happened to her. I searched in the books and the only thing that I found was a record of us being in Bergen-Belsen the first time. But under the column of diseased, there was just blanks. So I haven't, and then I searched other books and I have not found her name anywhere else.

Q: Will you describe you're memories of the British. Did you have any particular recollections of relations?

A: Not a lot because, first of all, we were absolutely overwhelmed. I mean we just couldn't believe it. It took a while to sort of sink into our brains that we didn't have to be up in the morning for a roll call, that we didn't have to be scared, that we were going to get food, that we were alive. That

maybe even we had a future. And everybody was absolutely just wonderful to us. They had tons of chocolate and cigarettes and they just, they were all for, I mean cigarettes and chocolates and anything else was just for the asking. And they took a lot of photographs and I remember that they did weigh me and photograph me, just on the street. It was nothing official. And I was about 70 or 71 pounds, I was really skinny. And still in the horrible clothing because they didn't have anything else to give us. And I think we eventually got some better clothing and I don't know whether they brought them in from some warehouses or wherever, but I know that I did not wear the dress that I came in from Auschwitz, when my cousin took me. So it seems to me that at one point I, see things went so fast and there is a one big blank of sorts, of the detailed day by day activities, but I know that one thing happened. And it was shortly after the liberation when I was feeling better. It might have been maybe two weeks later, maybe more, that I joined an excursion into the village. And a lot of people were going into the adjoining villages and bringing food and clothing and it seems to me that that's where I got the dress that I was wearing later on. And I remember going into one of the houses. They were all abandoned, there were no, these were all German house, and it looked like people left in a great hurry. And I remember going into one of the houses and there was silverware and a Lika camera and I always was very fond of Lika cameras, I had one and I had to leave it behind in Krakow when we were deported. So I was just thrilled with the Lika camera. I don't know what I was going to do with it, but somebody found a pillow case and we started to put the things, you know there were some table cloths and napkins and silverware and the Lika camera, and so we were putting those things in pillow cases. And then somebody went down to the cellar or the basement and called us. And there were about four women, there were four of us at that time, and so we went down. And there were sausages and hams and a side of pork, I mean, there was food that we haven't seen for ages and it was just hanging from rafters and I think that's they way

usually food was preserved. It was all smoked and preserved and then just hanging dry. Out went the silver and the Lika and everything else, out of the pillow cases, and we loaded it all up with as much food as we could carry, and we went back to the camp and we shared it with other people. At that time we could already eat normal food. And we still were hungry all the time even though we could get as much food as we wanted. It seems to me that the kitchens were going day and night. And we did not have to stand in line. They set up tables in sort of cafeteria style and we sat at the tables and ate. And it was just such a change that it was extremely difficult for us to grasp it and to really know that it is all for real. Every time I thought, well, you know, we were dreaming about being free and going out and doing things. And I thought I was still dreaming. And we were just living in a completely unreal world. And then one day, I met a young soldier, British soldier. And he was very, very nice. He spoke a little bit German and I didn't speak much English, but he was very friendly and we were not suppose to fraternize, or they weren't suppose to fraternize with the prisoners, so we were just holding hands and going for a walk. And then he said that, he was a driver for one of the officers, for an older man. And somehow I met his superior and he found out that I could speak several languages and he talked to me and he said, he has a job for me. I should go to the hospital and also in the same building, or the building next to it, again I don't, these were all officer's quarters that the Germans lived in, and of course they were all abandoned. He told me to go and he wrote it on a piece of papers to whom I should ask for, and I went there and they interviewed me. And they thought that I would be just perfect for working in a records room, answering questions to people who are coming in looking for relatives and looking for other people. So I thought this would be kind of neat. And maybe that's when they gave me a different dress and I just don't quite remember. But, oh, something else happened before that phase. I went on another excursion into the village and we went very early in the morning, it was still very dark. And we got

there and the first house that we came to was locked up so we couldn't get in. So we went around looking for a way to get in and I know it was not proper to do it, but at that point we didn't care. We just wanted things and we wanted to, I don't know why, well, it wasn't called stealing, it was called organizing. And in the camp that was the word I learned, that it wasn't stealing, you just organized to get things and to just have things. So we went around and I heard, see I lived in the country before I was arrested, and I heard sort of a familiar sound, birds or something, so I was with two other women. And we followed the sound and there was a coop with a goose inside. A big, fat goose. Well, that was more than we could bear. I mean, that was the most beautiful sight. And I stuck my hand in and the goose bit my finger, you know they snap. And I grabbed her by the neck and I could pull her out, I mean she was fighting me. It was a female goose I think because we found eggs inside, I mean inside the goose, because I had my little knife, I told you about the knife that I had. I did an awful thing. I cut the goose's head off with the little knife and it took a while. [Laughing]. It was awful. But, I mean, having seen all the blood and all the dead bodies, I mean just cutting a goose head was not that bad, I think. But today I think it was awful and I don't know whether I should laugh or cry, but we pulled the goose out and we threw the head back in. And we were walking back dragging the goose and then we were thinking what will happen if the people come back and they will just find the head. Maybe they wanted to have the goose and the other girls were saying, forget it. Nobody was worried about you. We have the goose and we sat in a ditch and we plucked the feathers. It took about an hour and the down and the feathers were flying all over the place. And then we took the goose back to the camp. That was before the kitchens were all set up properly and before we were getting the food in the cafeteria style. We still were cooking outside on the little sort of stoves and in our bowls. I mean, not stoves but on an open fire. Anyway, I don't think I ate the goose. I don't think I could eat it, but everybody was gorging

themselves. I think they barbecued of sorts because they baked it on the, they cut it up and they baked it on top of the fire, and I know I couldn't eat it. But to this day, I can't forget killing that poor goose. So anyway, so that was before. And then I went to get the job and they told me it was all right so I, they told me I will not be in the camp anymore. I mean, stay in the barracks anymore but I will have my own room with a real bed. And they told me where the room will be so I went upstairs and sure enough there was a bed and there was a mattress and there was a pillow, but there were no sheets and no blankets. And I thought, well, I suppose maybe they will give me something. So then I found out that there was a supply room downstairs. I don't know whether I should tell you this story because I told it to my children and they said, well, you have to tell. [rest of following sentence accidentally deleted from testimony] study. So, I could read English much better than I could speak. And, you see I didn't know the pronunciation, so I went downstairs and I tried to tell them that I need some bedding. But they couldn't understand what I wanted and I said, "two shits for my bed - two shits". They almost died! Oh, they kept on asking me and they were just laughing and I kept on repeating and they were laughing some more. Well, finally they knew what was going on, that the pronunciation was, you know? Sheet or shit or whatever, it's all the same to me. Well anyway, they gave me the bedding and that was the first time in over a year I slept in a real bed. With a blanket. Covered with a blanket cover and a sheet and a white sheet, washed, clean, and a pillow with a pillowcase. And I couldn't sleep. The mattress was not like I was use to, but still it was not the floor. It was maybe a straw or maybe a thin blanket, and this is something I don't think I will ever forget. So this was my room. And it seems to me that I got some underwear and I got some, a change of clothes because I know they wanted me to be dressed up. And I had a badge with my name on it. I think they took my photograph too. So I worked there and many people were coming and asking for relatives and, you know, people were wandering and wandering and

wandering from other camps and, I don't know, but there were a lot of people coming. Even from our camp. People were coming that were separated when they arrived and they wanted to know. So I was busy. I was mainly sitting there looking through the files and, I don't know, somebody else was preparing the files. And I was still kind of seeing this young man who decided he was in love with me and he wants to marry me. Well, there was no such thing. There was no fraternization and you could not marry anybody. And so he talked to his boss and what was happening too is that the officer, I don't know whether he was a General or somebody who was in charge of that particular division and the young man was his driver. As a matter of fact, I still have his photograph. I didn't bring it with me but there it is, "To my beloved Anna". And he said, so the older man, the British officer, wanted to know whether he could take, really get me out of the camp. Well there was no way he could. And he had a daughter about my age and he just couldn't see leaving me there. So he said, now do you have any relatives? No, I don't have anybody. Not that I know of. And he said, well, not in Poland but maybe you have somebody in America? I said, oh yes, in America. I have an Uncle in America. Well they sent us, one time they sent us a package from America, when we were still in Krakow. Where in America? New York. Where in New York? What do you mean, where in New York? In New York! I didn't know that, my geography, American geography wasn't very good. I didn't know there was New York State and New York that is Brooklyn and Manhattan, and whatever. He says, Okay, New York. Well the Red Cross was there already and they, he gave all the information to the Red Cross. This, Aaron Chil-o-vitch (ph), New York. So the Red Cross got the information and they, I don't know whether they cabled to my Uncle or whether they wrote a letter, I have no idea. But my Uncle was notified that Anna Fayno claims to be his niece. No, also, New York, the way they found Aaron Chil-o-vitch (ph) in New York was they looked in the Brooklyn telephone book, that's where all the Jews lived. And there was no Aaron Chil-o-vitch

(ph). So the next thing is Manhattan. And there was Aaron Chil-o-vitch (ph), the only Aaron Chil-o-vitch (ph), its not the very usual name in America. On Wall Street. So they got in touch with him, that Anna Fayno is in Bergen-Belsen and she says she is you're niece. And he said, I don't know any Anna Fanyo. And then he decided, talking to my Aunt, that I did get married. They remembered because they had a daughter the same age. And they remembered that their daughter got married at nineteen and I got married at nineteen. So they decided that maybe this is my married name. And my cousin, their son, was in the American army. And he was sent, he was suppose to, I mean, everything is fate, you know? He was also speaking several languages and he was a very good linguist and he had put him in a Japanese school to learn Japanese and he was suppose to go to Japan. And somebody came down with measles in his division so they quarantined them. And by the time they, it was time for them to go, the other division left and these people stayed, so they decided they will send him to Germany after all. And one of his jobs was to go from camp to camp in the American zone to look for the SS men and the guards and the commandants of the camps who were hidden among the prisoners. And he, that was his job, and he was stationed in Leipzig. And so my Uncle cabled to him, for at that time there was no telex, but anyway, he said there is an Anna Fayno in Bergen-Belsen, check it out. Maybe that's Neur-rev (ph) because that's my Russian name, Anna is Neur-rev (ph). So he got a jeep and a driver and they proceeded to Bergen-Belsen. And they arrived in Bergen-Belsen and he wanted to know whether anybody knew Anna Fayno and nobody knew Anna Fayno. And finally they told him to go to the file with the dead people because we do keep a file on all the people that died in camp and there were many of them that died after the liberation, so maybe you can find her there. So, he went to the office and he walks in and he walks up to my desk and he says, in Polish, he started to say, to ask about Anna Fayno, and he grabbed me and started to kiss me and everybody in the office knew that, you know,

there was some hanky panky going on, but you know? In the dark of the evening or something, but not in the middle of the day, in the middle of the office. So, he cried and I cried, I immediately recognized him too in spite of the uniform, and he recognized me. Even though my hair was not the same and my face was not the same, but he did recognize me. So everybody started jumping around and crying and laughing and, anyway, I think he got more marriage proposals that day than he ever did, except that he had a big band on his hand, he was married already. But he didn't even stay over night there. He put me on the, I mean he just signed some papers and got released and he put me on his jeep and he says, "what is this?" Well I had a bundle with me and these were the two British blankets from my bed. They were beautiful, soft wool and I wasn't going to leave them there. So, and a couple of my treasures including the little knife. So anyway, I wouldn't part with the stuff so he said, "All right, let's go." And we drove to Frankfurt.

Q: Before we go on I have a few questions about Bergen-Belsen. Did you have a desire to leave after the liberation? Did you have ideas of where you would like to go?

A: I had absolutely no ideas. I thought that first I would try to find whether anybody is alive. And actually I don't think that I was thinking very clearly. I think that I was just enjoying the fact that I was alive. That I had as much food as I could possibly eat. I ate all the time. I don't want to tell you how much weight I gained. But I didn't bring that picture, but there is a picture of me half a year later on the ship, and you wouldn't believe that it could have been the same person. I doubled my weight almost. And I just enjoyed the fact, or relished the fact that I was alive. That I could do almost anything that I wanted to do. And I just, I saw Mrs. Chi-chin-ska (ph) several times, so that's how everybody in Krakow knew that I was alive. You know, when she went back. She went back in October. And I just lived in a real, un-real world. And it was just as if I pushed everything out of my mind and at that time I didn't even think that it was real. I didn't think that, I felt, well, I'm just

dreaming. I'll wake up and it will be all over. So it was really like living from day to day and I just couldn't get use to the fact that it was all real. Does that answer you're question?

Q: Now you're saying that this young man who fell in love with you, you didn't share that same feeling inside?

A: Oh no, no, not at all. I mean, first of all we couldn't communicate very well. I mean, you know, my English and his German just didn't jive. But you know, we sat and he was telling me things about England and I didn't quite understand what he was saying, but just being with somebody and holding somebody's hand and just somebody telling you that he really loves me and that I am wonderful and that I am beautiful. It was just about enough. And I don't know what I wanted. I really don't know where I wanted to go and what I wanted. And, I mean, if I was looking back now and maybe analyzing it, the best definition I can say is that I was a little bit out of my head. And my cousin thought I was a little bit out of my head evidently because that's what he told his family. I don't know that he wrote to them or what, but they expected somebody that was not quite all together. The way they were treating me and the way, but he put me on the jeep and they had the . . .

End of Tape 6.

Tape 7

Q: And before you left Bergen-Belsen, would you say something about the cultural life there? Did you ever go or know that there was a theater being organized in Bergen-Belsen? Were you involved with the community in any way, in anything fun or social?

A: You mean in Bergen-Belsen?

Q: Yes.

A: No. As I said, the only thing that I could think of was being warm, being clean and have food. And then I got very much involved in working. And I don't even know of any cultural life existing there. I was completely, if there was any, I was not involved at all because I think the thing that, as I said, concerned me where more the physical things more than the mental, than the intellectual. And I was glad that I had the job. Because that was something that really occupied my whole day. I started at 8:00 in the morning and I think we, just like a regular job. We broke for doing for lunch and then worked until dinnertime. And after dinner, most of the time, I went for a walk with this young man. And I just don't remember any kind of other activities. There might have been a dance. But I don't think that, there might have been dances, but I really don't remember actively participating in anything of that sort. I just don't remember.

Q: Do you remember visits from diplomats? Do you remember Earl Harrison coming to visit, Truman's emissary?

A: No. No, I don’t remember.

Q: When was it that you left?

A: I left, it was either July, I believe it was either July or August. I just, at this point, at this moment, I don't remember. But I think I remember Red Cross visits. Because I know that it was the Red Cross that contacted my Uncle. But I don't remember any visits of the diplomats. I don't

remember any activities. I remember that we ate in a room with long tables and curtains and I was eyeing the curtains because I could make a nice dress out of them. But I don't know, all I know is that there was a, maybe I did steal something. I don't know, but there was a lot of organizing going on and I think I did organize a curtain. I did. I did. And I made that dress. So, but I hate to admit that but I did. But I don't remember any dignitaries, I don't remember anybody else talking to me except the General and the people in the office. I don't know whether he was, everybody was a General as far as I was concerned. I mean, anybody. I know he was a high-ranking officer in the British army, but I don't even know his name. And never tried to find out. You see, half the time I tried to forget everything. And not tried to think. And this is the first time that I'm really looking through any kind of records and doing a thorough search. Otherwise, I always said, well, maybe I'll do it tomorrow. Maybe because I didn't want to find out that I can't find anything out. So, are we in the jeep now or are we still in Bergen-Belsen?

Q: We can go to the jeep now.

A: Okay. So, in the jeep my cousin had, I guess these were the K-rations. And he always was telling my Aunt and Uncle that he couldn't believe it. But the K ration was supposed to last a soldier a whole day. And I ate five of them! And then we stopped for the night. I don't remember exactly where, but it was some kind of a guesthouse or whatever. And then we went on to Frankfurt. And he evidently already knew about the place or what because we went straight there. It was a house which belonged to some German officer who, as my cousin said, was in a safe place now. I mean, he was jailed already. And his wife was a very nice lady who said she will take good care of me. And she did. She cooked whatever I wanted to. I think at 11 o'clock at night I woke up and I wanted potato pancakes and she cooked potato pancakes for me. There was one thing that I discovered in her house is that her basement was full, and I mean full, with cases of Red Cross food.

Her husband was a commandant in a, some kind of a small prison camp or Jewish camp, or whatever it was. I don't know which one. And all these Red Cross packages were ending up in their basement. I was shocked. I told, you see I was visited by my, my cousin had to leave because he had orders to go back. And, but these good friends who were stationed in Frankfurt were visiting me and bringing me stuff and sort of taking me out for outings and I stayed there until just a few weeks, maybe two weeks, maybe three weeks, and then they took me to Paris in their truck. But this time it was a nice truck. It was a covered truck and the benches were still only benches but they folded up a blanket and I sat on a blanket. And I don't really, the trip was quite long but I remember we arrived in Paris and oh, everybody started to cheer because they were going to go home. And then they took me to the place where I was going to stay, which were my cousin's relatives. And I stayed with them until I got the visa and I left in February, I think it was February 4th, into the United States.

Q: From where did you leave?

A: It was February, 1946.

Q: So you left, take me back. You left Bergen-Belsen?

A: I left Bergen-Belsen in 1945. And then I stayed in Paris, I mean I was in Bergen-Belsen, I think it was until, either the end of July or beginning of August. And then I was in Frankfurt for a short time, just a few weeks. So it might have been September that I came to, or maybe even earlier. No, it must have been probably September. Anyway, I have a card.

Q: What does the card say?

A: Okay. The card is from, made out to Madame Fayno, Anna. And it is _____ _____ in Paris. And I enrolled, this card, [reading in French what was on the card], it was the winter session.

And I started in October. And I went October, November, December and January. I went for four months to _____ _____ to learn French properly.

Q: Was this you're decision?

A: Oh yes. Yes. I wanted to do it very badly. Because I did speak french. I had some French, you know, I had quite a bit of French in High School in Poland. And I decided that I might as well utilize my time because it wasn't very certain when I will get the visa to America. It was very difficult to get it. So this is what I decided to do and I did it. It was very interesting because the teacher did not speak anything but French. The method that they were using was just learning just like children learn a foreign language. And there were maybe twenty people in the class and I don't think there were two of the same nationality. So it was very nice. And this number, 113, was my school number.

Q: And the family that you were staying with, what were you're relations like with them?

A: Okay. The family that I was staying with were Jewish people that were my cousin's wife's relatives really. And they had lived, they were originally from Russia but they moved to Paris and they lived in France before the war. And during the war, they had a cottage out in the country and that's where they lived. And it was not as bad as it was in Poland, that you would be, you had to move to the ghetto, there was no ghetto in Paris. People where deported but they really were not deported from villages. And they lost their daughter and granddaughter to an accident because they moved to an apartment and in Europe they have water heaters that turn on when you turn on the faucet. So you use only the amount of water, I mean you heat only the amount of water that you actually will use. And the husband of their daughter was away. It was the daughter and the granddaughter in the apartment and they were found dead in the bathroom. They evidently, they took the baths and they shut off the water but the gas did not turn off and they were asphyxiated.

Q: When was this?

A: That was, I think that happened in 1942 or 1943. I arrived. There was already another young woman there, Vickie Zamora. And she's in the registry. Because what happened was when my cousin was stationed in Leipzig, that's when he, in every camp he was looking for relatives and could not find anybody. And in Leipzig there was a whole bunch of young women, mostly Russian, from a labor camp. I mean, not extermination camp, just labor. And there was this young woman who spoke Russian and she also spoke Polish. And she looked Jewish. And he asked her whether she was Jewish and, of course, she denied, no. I mean at that time, because she was in that camp as non-Jewish, and that's a whole story. I don't know whether she ever made testimonials in Yad-va-sham (ph) because she does live in Israel. But what happened was that my cousin told her that he would take her to America. And she wasn't sure whether she wanted to go and all her girlfriends were saying, are you crazy? You know America. They are full of kidnappers and gangsters and who knows. He probably will sell you into white slave labor or something. And she decided that there wasn't anything worse than she already went through. And he promised her he will take her to America. So he did. He took her to Paris and he placed her with this Mr. and Mrs. Gar-loose (ph), this was the name of the people. So she was there when I arrived. And we shared the bedroom and we were together going to the consulate and to all the different offices to get the exit visa, to get the entry visa, and finally we got the tickets for a liberty ship, Rafael Riviera.

Q: How did you feel about going to America?

A: Anything but where I am. The future is what will be different. I just lived in a completely un-real world. I, I, at Italian Francoise, I met some Iranian Prince or God only knows what, who was a handsome guy. Very, very wealthy. He introduced me to his Iranian friends and they stayed at the Ritz Hotel, no less. But this romance didn't last very long because I was going to go to the United

States. I met him just before we were really leaving. And he wrote to me several times and he wanted to come to America and marry me. And my Uncle said, you give me the address and now I'm going to write him a letter. You don't need that. I mean, he sent me his photograph and my Uncle said, no! And at that time I still, like I say, I was a grown woman, I still felt like a little girl. I never grew up during the five years of war. I was still eighteen, I think, or seventeen, or whatever it was. And obeying my parents. And, it was very good my Uncle said no because I didn't need to go to Iran. But I stayed with my Uncle and Aunt in New York until that summer.

Q: Tell me first about arriving, about you're ride on the ship and arriving in America.

A: Okay. We were on this ship for twenty-one days. It was suppose to be much shorter voyage but it was a liberty ship and a big transport of GIs going back home was suppose to go on that ship. But they were detained or whatever, they were late, and the ship couldn't wait any longer. So there were only maybe fourteen passengers. There were the two women, Vickie and I, and the rest there was a, or maybe even less passengers. There was a newspaperman, a reporter who was coming back to the States. And there were several other, I don't know whether they were businessmen or some officials, or whoever they were, but anyway they were all going. And Vickie and I had a officer's cabin and it was very nice. There were two bunks. And we had all the food. I mean, there was so much food on this ship because they expected, I don't know, 140 soldiers or so, and they never arrived. So we had all the food in the world.

Q: From where did the ship leave?

A: The ship started from Rue Ane (ph) and we had to go by train to Rue Ane (ph). And I made a cloak out of the blanket. [Laughter] And I had my suitcase. In Frankfurt, my cousin left some money and the German woman took me shopping so I had a nice leather suitcase and I had some nice clothes, but I still wanted my blanket. And anyway, we went to, oh, you see there is another

thing, I want the past and I don't want it. There was another young man that I met at school. He was French, his name was Jerrard or Jerold Rosenstein. And he came to the train station to see us off. And then he came to the United States and I sort of, I saw him in New York several times and then when I left New York I lost track of him. And I am a very bad correspondencer. There is the San Francisco Holocaust Center and one of the people on the Board is Jerold Rosenstein, a survivor. Because they have little dots, they are survivors. And I never got in touch with him. And I don't know, there is something, some kind of, I mean, my head is not quite all right in spite of my great accomplishments. I still have a split personality. I sometimes am very nice and sometimes I am completely out of my head. So, like for example, I don't do things like that that I would, I don't know why I don't want to get in touch with him. On the other hand, every time I see his name when we get the newsletter from the Holocaust Center, I say, oh, I ought to get in touch with him. And so, you know? It seems to me that something did happen to me in that camp and that after fifty years, I still don't act like I use to. So what happened to this ship, okay, in Rue Ane (ph) we arrived by train from Paris and we boarded the ship at about 6 o'clock in the evening and they gave us dinner. The ship was not going to start on the river to Le Harbor until probably 5 o'clock in the morning or so. Well anyway, we ate and then we read and we sat around and finally we went to bed. I was sleeping on the lower bunk and Vickie was in, six years younger so she can climb up and she can have the upper bunk. And five o'clock in the morning, I felt rocking like this. And it turned out the ship was going, but it was going very slowly. And then the rocking start, it was several hours, and then the rocking started to be quite heavy. And everybody was saying that we left the port already and we are on the water, on the ocean. And I ran up on the deck in my robe, I had a robe. Because when I was about twelve years old, I saw a movie with Greta Garbo. 'Christina, the Queen of Sweden'. And the scene that I remembered, she was standing at the back of

this ship, there is a name for this ship, I don't know exactly, but anyway it was the back of the ship with her flowing gown and she had a veil which was also flowing, and she looked at Sweden disappearing in the fog. And I was going to do this same thing. I ran up on the deck and I ran to the end of the ship and I stood there holding onto the railing, seeing the French coast disappearing in the fog. And I got so seasick! It was not romantic at all. I was so sick to the point that they had to take me down to the cabin and lay me down and they gave me some ice cubes and they put cold compresses and a bucket right next to my bed. [Laughter] And I was on that bunk for most of the time. I would go to the dining room to eat, it was not the dining room, it was the mess, I think. And I couldn't eat anything, which was all right because I gained quite a bit of weight in Paris. Because the lady in whose house I lived was a wonderful cook and they had a goose too! Very often! So anyway, once in a while the weather was pretty good and we would be sitting on the deck or in the dining room and talking. And the young reporter was asking all kinds of questions. And Vickie just loved to talk about her experience. She was not in a concentration camp. She was with the Russian girls in a labor camp. So she was telling him all kinds of goodies and he was asking me questions but I didn't want to talk very much about it. Anyway, he gave us his, he was in Manhattan, and gave us his phone number and address. And the voyage was very, very long, but I lived mainly on ice cream because that's what just stayed in my stomach. Otherwise I was seasick all the time. And we finally arrived in New York to find out that there is a dock strike and we cannot land. So they send us to Baltimore. And we also can't land in Baltimore. We sat in the New York harbor for quite some time and finally they said, well get the passengers off and they said they couldn't, go to Baltimore. So we went to Baltimore and somehow they notified my Uncle and my Aunt that we will be debarking in Baltimore. And so we sat on the ship in the port in Baltimore and finally they said, get a boat and get our passengers off, we have enough. So they did. So we came

on a small boat back to the port and got off. And my Aunt, she cried all the time, so she cried again. And my Uncle couldn't believe it. He kept on touching me and grabbing me and, evidently I didn't look much different because I had already gained weight and I looked pretty good. And they liked Vickie very much, she was a very sweet and polite young lady. Anyway, they said we are going to, by train. And we had little packages. "And what is that?" "Don't touch it". "Well come on, what is it?" "Nothing". "Okay". Then we sit down on the train and we open our packages and my Aunt says, "You don't need to do that. That's food and we will go to the diner." "What's a diner?" "It's a dining cart that will have food." "Oh." So we packed it up and we put it away and she said, "Throw it out." "No!" So we held onto our food. And then my Aunt looked at us and she said, "Well, you know what?" She had a beautiful hat on and we had hats that we bought in Paris. And I think we bought it in a place where the ladies of the night buy hats because my Aunt said, "Well, you know, in America, when you go to a dining place, you really don't wear hats inside." So she took her hat off, and my Aunt wouldn't be caught dead without a hat. But she wanted us to take those horrible hats off. Mine was with a feather sticking out like that. I remember it was a pheasant feather, just like this. Well anyway, we didn't want to do that but we took the hats off and we went to the diner and then we started to eat. And she couldn't believe that two young women can consume that much food and be still hungry. Then we had to learn how to eat the American way. Because you see in Europe you hold the fork and the knife and you cut with you're left hand. And she showed us right there in the diner that you eat with the fork with you're left hand and you don't pile up stuff on the fork and eat it like that. So anyway, she treated us really like two very young girls, which really what we were. I mean, with social graces and things like . . .

[End of Side A of Tape 7]

A: . . . came to New York. So anyway, we arrived in New York and my Uncle had his car parked at the train station and he drove us. And then I said, "Oh, could we see that street?" "What street?" "You know, the street that you just stand on and it goes by itself." Evidently at the World's Fair, they had this sidewalk like that. And he said, "Well, not today". And we came to their apartment. And they moved to a new, knowing that we are going to be there, they will have more people living, they moved to a larger apartment. It was really a very large apartment on 86th Street in Manhattan. And we had a dinner at the dinner table and there were green peas, fresh green peas in February. And my Uncle said, "Oh, we have a hot house up on top of the roof". Well, he was lying. They were frozen peas. I didn't know that you can freeze peas and they would taste as if you just picked them out of a hot house. Anyway, there were an awful lot of surprises. And it took us quite a while to get adjusted. But we got a phone call from the reporter. And he . . .

Q: The same reporter who was on the ship?

A: The reporter who was on the ship. And he wanted us to come for some kind of a party that they had. And my Aunt was very leery and says, "Well all these are people that we met on the ship and it will be all right", and it was like maybe a couple of weeks after we arrived. And it was somewhere on 14th Street and the neighborhood, we went by subway, and the neighborhood was not exactly like my Aunt's. But there was no elevator and we walked up I think to the third floor and it was a very small apartment and there were an awful lot of people. But Vickie liked to talk about her experiences and all that, but I really didn't. Anyway, there were several people and they were asking us questions and Vickie was telling stories and I was answering in sort of very short sentences, and then the young man, he wasn't in uniform any more and he didn't look as dashing as before, but anyway, so he was very nice. He was married and his wife was there, just a young woman. And he asked us to come to Madison Avenue, he gave us the address. And we did come.

I think two days later. And there were cameras and people and all kinds of things. And there were some other people. And they took pictures of us and I went into hysterics. Because I didn't know what was going on and I wanted my Uncle and they got him. And he came and I know he was shouting at everybody. And he took us out of there. And then the next morning, there was a picture of Vickie and me and these three other people. The people were showing their numbers. And there was an article about the two refugee girls that were taken care by Mr. Aaron Chil-o-vitch (ph) and it went on and on and on. And my Uncle started getting telephone calls of people who wanted to adopt us. And who wanted to give money. And who wanted to do all kinds of nice things to us. And I was very bad because my Uncle got very, very angry. He really should have gotten angry at Vickie because it was all her idea really, to participate in that. And my Uncle was going to sue the newspaper for $3 million.

Q: What newspaper?

A: I think it was either The New York Times or, I don't know whether there was another large paper in New York, I don't remember. For years I had that article and then I finally threw it out. Because, you see, before we arrived, my Aunt consulted with a psychiatrist and she was told that they should keep us in seclusion. That they shouldn't ask us any questions and just see how we respond. And not to even mention the camp. I mean, we should just forget the whole thing. And we should live as if it never happened. And I think I might have had several sessions with this psychiatrist but I don't remember very much about it. I didn't want to talk about anything. But anyway, the offshoot was that we should live in seclusion. And just try to live as normal life as possible. My Aunt's daughter, my cousin, was my age, she was married. And she was in Sweden. Her husband and she both were working for, I think it was called United States, some kind of book, International Book Association, or something like that, and they were working in Sweden. And she had a little year-

and-a-half girl, Claudia, with a nanny. That one also lived in my Aunt's apartment. And I remember one day, I mean these are all sort of anecdotes of remembering things that happened later. One day, oh, the nanny use to take the baby out for an outing and then come back late in the afternoon. And then my Aunt calls me in and Claudia is sleeping in the crib, and she had nice, long hair. And my Aunt says, "Look how she's, every evening when we put her to bed, she's scratching her head so sweetly". Vickie and I look at her. "She's got lice!" "What do you mean she's got lice?" Well, the way she's scratching her head, that means she's got lice. Now where can the child get lice but from the two refugees. So my Aunt was out of her head. Anyway, Vickie was holding the baby on her lap and I was doing the usual. And there were lice. And my Aunt almost fell to the floor in a dead faint. "What do we do now?" Edith, the mother of the child, is going to be here in two or three weeks. Well, where did she get the lice? Of course, from Vickie and me. I said, "We don't have any lice. We were de-loused before we came here." Well anyway, turned out that the child got lice in the park. I don't know where the nanny took her but she didn't get the lice from us. And my Aunt says, "Well, what do we do?" I said, "Well, first of all, you cut her hair as short as possible." Preferably shaving, then you don't have any problem at all. Well, we didn't shave the child's head but we cut it about half an inch or so and then I think they got some kind of a de-lousing liquid or fluid or something from a drug store and got rid of the lice. But there was Claudia, looking like a little boy with very, very short hair. And my cousin wanted a picture of her daughter that she hasn't seen for almost a year. So my Aunt was very industrious and she got a pretty kerchief and she made a bambooshka and there was one picture of Claudia in a bambooshka and another picture of Claudia as a gypsy girl. [Laughter] Anyway, they were really cute pictures and Edith couldn't understand why the child had to be all dressed because she came home maybe three or four weeks later. And then she found out. And she also suspected Vickie and me, but then the truth came out

that it was the nanny that took her somewhere where the child got the lice. But anyways, that's another story.

Q: Did you're Uncle and Aunt intend to adopt you legally in some way, or was that an issue?

A: No, I was grown up. You see the people that offered the adoptions and all that, they had no idea who we were and what it was. But no, my Aunt and Uncle, there was no need to adopt me. I was a grown up widow and they thought of adopting Vickie but Vickie didn't want to be adopted. I mean, she was eighteen. No, she was about seventeen or seventeen and a half or so. There was no need to be adopted.

Q: Did you have a citizenship?

A: Yes. I applied for the, I mean I had that alien registration card and it would have taken five years to get a citizenship. But in the meantime, I decided to learn English really properly and I enrolled in Judy Richmond High School and I took American history and I took English 10, English 11 and English 12. In English 10, I read what varies, what plays. They were all plays. What every woman knows. And in English 11, Hamlet. And in English 12, MacBeth. And then I came home after classes and I sat down with a dictionary and I translated every single word in the reading assignment for that day. I stayed until about midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning. And I was memorizing and memorizing and memorizing. And my Aunt and Uncle insisted on speaking English, what they thought was English. But it wasn't a very good English, so the English I ended up speaking was also not very good. But I tried. And I remember writing a paper in the American History about the Pilgrims. And there was a sentence that, 'profligacy took place of sobriety'. That was about the Pilgrims. I don't know exactly what they were doing but that was the upshot. And because in Polish, the longer the word and the more complicated, the more educated that person is that would be using it. So I was looking for the longest words for most syllables and sobriety and profligacy, it

sounded very good. And my history teacher, I remember her first name was Bernice, I don't remember her last name, but she was a single woman and she really took a liking to me and she helped me a tremendous amount and she thought that was the funniest thing she's ever heard about the Pilgrims. And I remember I gave her a bottle of perfume, I think it was Prince Matchabellie, and she wrote me a thanks you note that she's going to use that for some profligacy between her moments of sobriety. So anyway, that's another thing. So after I finished, I took the Regents, the New York Regents, and I passed, I think I got only seven, but it was a passing grade, and my English wasn't too bad by then and I also was accepted to Hunter College. And I was going to start Hunter College in September, but my Aunt had a big family reunion. My cousin came back from Sweden with her husband and her husband's brothers came to visit. They had a large house in Stamford, Connecticut, so we had a big party and a big family reunion. And the older brother of my cousin's husband was a Professor of Bacteriology in Dallas, Texas medical school. And he said that instead of going to Hunter College, I could come to Dallas, live in their house and maybe do some babysitting. And they had two children, 4 and 7, and I could work in the laboratory and I could go to the Southwestern University, er, Methodist University. Southwest at Methodist University. So, I thought this was a wonderful opportunity to get away from New York, from my Aunt and from my Uncle. Not that I was ungrateful, but they treated me like a little girl and I was a grown up woman. So I left. And with their blessing. And I lived in the Professor's home and I worked in the laboratory and that's where I met my future husband.

Q: What did you want to study?

A: Well I thought I wanted to study medicine because the laboratory was, and I was very much interested in bacteriology and I was working with mice and there were all kinds of experiments studying polio. And the Professor had an idea that if you put mice to sleep, not dead but just with

the ether and just prevent them from moving around and sort of living in a twilight zone, even though they are infected with polio, they do not develop the symptoms and they will not get paralyzed. So this is what we were doing. Watching the mice, whether they get paralysis and whether they died, and if they died we had to take their brains out and preserve them and then examine them, so it was very, very interesting. So I really thought I would study that and at the University I took biochemistry and a couple of other courses and more English and then, June 1, 1947, I got married. And we moved to Michigan.

Q: What was you're husband's name?

A: My husband's name was Manual Levin. There was no middle initial. And he was originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan. And that's where the University of Michigan was. And he was a graduate of the University and the Medical School. And there was a whole group of, he was an intern in the Medical School in Michigan when the war started and then he enlisted, well he wasn't an enlisted man, he was in the Navy. I have a picture of him here. He was a doctor in the Navy. And he was in the service for five years. And then when he was discharged, he decided to become a surgeon. And he had surgical internship and so he wanted to continue his studies and actually, before he left, he was already assistant resident and then he got the three-year residency. So I had three years in which I could study whatever I wanted. And tried to get a degree. So I graduated from University of Michigan in 1949 and I got a degree in Zoology, which was a pre-med. But then I decided that it would have been probably very difficult at that time to get into medical school. Women were not really, there were a lot of men that came back from the war and applied. During the war, two of my husband's sisters were accepted to medical school. One of them finished, the other one got a Master's in Biochemistry and married a doctor. So I didn't think that, I only had one year, or a year and a half. So during that time I decided to go to graduate school and I got a Degree

in Medical Technology. So I, we moved to Detroit and for a year I worked at Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital as a Medical Technologist while my husband was trying to establish a surgical practice. But things were not moving very well, and not only that, but the winter was very hard and we had one bad car accident, not our fault, we just skidded in the snow. And then I commuted to the hospital by bus. And if I missed the bus sometimes I had to wait for another three-quarters of an hour, in other words, we just didn't like the weather. And my husband was always telling me about the fantastic, beautiful, warm California. And so we decided to look around and we ended up moving to Fresno, California. And that's where I still live, in Fresno, California.

Q: When did you decide to seek restitution from the German government?

A: Actually I don't remember exactly the date but I didn't know anything about it. And a friend of mine from Czechoslovakia who was not in the camp, I think she came to the United States before the war, no, maybe after the war, but I didn't have the details really, but she was not imprisoned during the camps, and she said that there has been a law passed that all the former inmates and survivors and so on can get restitution. And it was suppose to be a lump sum depending on the condition, the health condition of the person, there would be a pension. So I really didn't know much about it and I started to investigate and, as a matter of fact, we came to Paris on a visit, with my second husband, and we visited the Ga-loose-es (ph). Now the old people, no actually, it was the lady that died, but Mr. Ga-loose (ph) was still alive and his son was a doctor and the daughter was married to a German lawyer who was specializing in the restitutions and he was German, he was not Jewish. And he gave me a name of a lawyer that I should contact that would be helpful. And I contacted him, his name was Mr. Collinger (ph) and we were corresponding back and forth. And there is a stack of literature on the subject because, as Mr. Collinger (ph) explained, it wasn't his demands for all kinds of proofs and dates and so on, but it was the German government that was

very thorough because anybody could claim and they only had so much money to distribute. So I spent quite a bit of time writing letters and then getting an answer from him and asking for even more answers and it was many, many years of corresponding back and forth until finally I got a request that I be examined by a German doctor. And that was already after my second husband died so it was after 1977, because I remember my son drove with me to San Francisco. We had an appointment. And evidently that doctor, that's all he was doing is examining people, or I don't know, it was very, very strange. The office was very old fashioned in some big office building in San Francisco. And I felt very, very uneasy because he was quite rude and he also was not very gentle. He again gave me a gynecological examination and he poked me all over and it was a very bad experience. And I know that I felt very bad. My son was there, I mean, waiting in the waiting room and he didn't know why I came out crying, but I just, I mean, the whole business of camp and everything else just came back to me so vividly that I thought, I'm just going to forget the whole thing and I'm not going to go through with it. But I did. Then, the next thing they demanded that I be examined by a psychiatrist, also a German man. And so that was another trip to San Francisco. And that lasted most of the day, because first I was given a whole stack of questionnaires to fill out and I think these were the standard sort of questions. Do I feel that I'm being followed? Do I have nightmares? Do I have delusions? Anyway, these were things that, some of them were quite obvious what I'm suppose to answer if I want to get my restitution. But anyway, I answered to the best of my ability. I didn't have to do much lying because I didn't feel that I am being followed, but I certainly was always aware of what was going on around me. And also I did have nightmares and I, sometimes I didn't feel very good. There was one incident years and years later, as a matter of fact, it was about six years ago. When we came back from Europe, we landed, usually we land in San Francisco, but that particular time we took the Pan Am, I think the last year Pan Am was in

business, and we landed in New York. And we had to go through customs. And the airport in New York was Kennedy's. But it was so crowded and we got off the plane and then we had to go through all these different corridors and at one point I got separated from Robert and I started to scream. Because people were pushing from all sides and I just couldn't breath. And I leaned against the wall and I started to scream. And the guard or the stewardess or whoever it was came to me and she wanted to know what was wrong and I couldn't breath, I couldn't talk. I was just absolutely petrified. I mean, that just felt like I was in a gas chamber with all the people pushing and pulling and, it was absolutely horrible. And I think Robert finally somehow found me and we went, he pushed me around and we went into the larger space out of the corridor into the main area where we could stand in lines waiting for the customs to go through with us, and the passport control, and so on. But I have incidents like that all through my life, really.

End of Tape 7.

Tape 8

Q: And, you were saying?

A: So I really cannot stand certain situations. And I don't like crowds. I don't like loud noises. I can't stand anybody screaming at me. I cannot, I just lose my mind. I just can't communicate and I have to really try to compose and get a hold of myself. And I try to avoid situations like that. And I cannot stand smell of burning gasoline. When we drive in the car, Robert likes fresh air intake and I want it shut up because he cannot smell the gas and I just, I just don't want any fresh air in the car of that sort. So some of the things kind of stay with me, but I try to smile, I try to show my happy face most of the time. But there are times when I get these attacks of fear, of panic, and sometimes it is very difficult for me. But most of the time, I can cope.

Q: Have you found that you think over the years a lot about you're experiences?

A: I can't say that I think a lot, but there may be things like certain incidences that will remind me of things and I, we are making those pilgrimages now to Poland and each time I go I hope that I will find something. And I know I want, I went through the records here, I mean, that was one of the purposes of the trip, was not just to have the interview but to go through the records. But I realize that the records I am looking for, they wouldn't be here. I mean, there is no reason for them to be here because they are not complete and, as I said, the answers I am seeking, first it is probably too late. You know, in the span of time. I mean, people are in their 70's and sometimes they don't live that long. Normally. So I may be looking for people who just passed away, the normal way. Like for example, when we were in Poland this last summer, Yesh-ir Mos-tof-ski (ph) was in perfect health we thought. And he was. And we had a nice visit. My daughters, two of my daughters, met both brothers and we had tea and it was just very lovely. And three days later I found out that Yesh-ir (ph) just died from a heart attack, and sat down to paint one of his painting and asked his

housekeeper to bring him a cup of tea and when she returned with the cup of tea he was stretched out on the floor, gone. So I know I am searching and probably the thing that I think most often about is my little sister. And I watched Schindler's List, the movie in the house, we seldom go to movies. We usually rent laser discs and watch them at home, but we went to the movie and we watched it. And I think the scene with that little girl, I just couldn't take it. I really thought I would start screaming right in the middle of the movie. And I was holding Robert's hand and trying to just say, it is a movie. It seemed so real to me that she was about the age of my sister. And I just thought that what I was seeing on that movie, what I was seeing in the film, really was happening. And that maybe my sister is somewhere there. And things like that happen to me all the time. I don't know whether I mentioned to you that on one of the visits in Poland, Ches-wef (ph) told me that he had a present for me and he handed me an envelope and they were pictures of my sister. And he said that my father asked to take some pictures and Ches-wef (ph) was an amateur photographer, he had a Lika. And he took the pictures and he gave me the copies. He couldn't find the film but you don't have to have film now to make copies, so. These are probably my, I consider them my very precious possessions, and I am still hoping that maybe something happened and she did survive. But I don't know. I know it just wouldn't be possible. But not knowing whether they were killed in the ghetto or whether they were put on the truck or whether they died on the way, or whether they were put in the gas chamber, or what happened. Just not knowing is probably much worse than if I really was told. That this and this and this happened. And then you just sort of put it away. This is the same thing like funerals and wakes or memorial services, that you just sort of say good-bye to the person, say good-bye to the event, and that's it. But in this way, you just don't know. You don't want to consider the person dead because you don't know that they are dead. And that's probably what keeps me awake very often and makes me sort of lead a double life. And it's

probably the hardest thing. Because most of the time, I look pretty. As I told you that the first time when we talked on the phone, I am not a little old lady, 74 years old. I take care of myself, I go to the hairdresser, I put make-up on. And I get up at 6 o'clock in the morning and I go through my exercises and I get dressed and I read the newspaper, eat breakfast, and we get in the car and I go to work. And all day long I work with young people. I have a very responsible job in the area that I am working because I'm the one who has to see to it that all the costumes are ready for the performance at the specific time. And they are. And this is one of the things that I pride myself, that we haven't, were never late. That all the costumes are in lockers, all in order, a week before the dress rehearsal. And then we are already working on the next production. So I feel that I am doing my job and I am always smiling, and very few people know what really is happening to me. But I feel that even though I lead sort of a double life, most of it is only maybe 15% of my existence. And that's why I don't like to be alone and most of the time Robert has to go on a trip, I go with him. And very often when he has to go back to the office in the evening, I go with him, and I can always work in my office or in my area, in the shop, and wait for him. But I don't like to be home alone because then, I mean, I don't particularly like to watch television, I like to read. But it is when I am alone is when I really sort of go back. And I don't think that one can ever, ever forget.

Q: Do you still have nightmares?

A: Well yes I do. And Robert can tell you. And I can't describe exactly what happens but sometimes I wake up and I don't know where I am and sometimes I don't wake up and then I wake up, Robert is shaking me, and I say, "What's the matter with you?" And he says, "Oh nothing, just go to sleep". But sometimes he wakes me up and I'm in another room and not in the bedroom. And I really can't exactly describe what happens. Probably the most recurring thing is that I'm somewhere in Poland and I am looking for my parents or I'm looking for my sister, or I am running

away from something. But I can't really describe it. And I don't want to talk about it. I don't even want to talk about it to Robert. And I did talk about it to Manny, that's my second husband. But because I was in a much worse state when we got married, and I told him, I didn't want to get married because I didn't think that I was well enough. But I knew that he wanted to have children and I didn't know that I should have any children. And as I told you before, that I really did not, I wasn't a very good mother, and like my kids say, "Well, Margaret brought us up", and I don't think that they really feel deprived and they feel that I deprived them of something, letting Margaret bring them up, but it was better that Margaret was mothering them than, you know, in a good way, than me not doing it. It was better for me to not do it at all than do it in a bad way. But I did, I think that the worst part was when the children were little. Then later on, when they were teen-agers, I did a lot of things with them and we went on trips and we went on a lot of camping trips. Manny liked to go on camping trips and we had a house trailer and food and then also I participate in the kid's education and I drove them to music lessons, to whatever lessons they had to go to and they all did very well in school. I mean, when it came to their studies and things, I was able to participate. But I think that the emotional part, I just couldn't. I somehow feel that I could have done much more, you know, watching my friends with their children, that I haven't done as much as they did.

Q: You mentioned that you go back to Poland quite often.

A: We go once a year.

Q: Is that difficult for you?

A: No. This is why, it is not difficult now because the first time when we went it was a sightseeing trip for Robert. We went from one town to another and then the Krakow trip, part of the Krakow trip was to go to the different places and to see Ches-waf (ph) and that was the first time I saw Ches-waf (ph) after the war. And it really was catharsis, I think. It was rather good for me. It was a very

short trip, but the following year, we went for a whole month, or even five weeks. And we did a lot of things, going back to the places. We went to the camp Poroskov (ph) where my brother was and we walked through the fields and looked at the monuments. And I think it really was good for me to do it. And now we are going to go again, the 4th of June, we already have the tickets. And we will be there this time only three weeks because we want to be one week in London, Robert wants to go to the theatres, and we plan to see our friends, and we planned again, we may even go to Auschwitz again and walk the road from Auschwitz to Birkenau. I did walk it with my daughters a year ago. And of course, it isn't the same, you walk on a sidewalk, on a paved road, and it is not very difficult. But I would have preferred to go before they made the paved road, but anyway, we may walk again. And I think it is, I don't think it is painful as much as it is just getting it out of my system and realizing that life goes on. That I am alive. That I walk the road. There is another thing. When I learned to drive, and before we came to California, we bought a little Nash Rambler for me. And we towed it behind the big car so we had two cars. And I drove the Nash Rambler for several years until finally I was in a car accident and it kind of curled up when I was through with it. And so we went shopping for a car. And it was several years ago because I remember Bobby was 4 years old then. So we went to a Chrysler agency I believe because we were going to look at another Chrysler, and there I backed into a little car. And I turned around, because I wanted a small car, and I said, "Oh, that's my size! And it is robin egg blue!" I loved that color. And my husband said, "Stay away from it". And I said, "Why?" "We can't afford that, you can't drive anything like this." "Why not?" "This is a Porsche". "What's a Porsche?" "A Porsche is a German car and I don't think you want it. And it is very expensive." You can get a Volkswagen at that time for about $1,000.00 and that Porsche was $3,000.00. And I said, "I want it". I wanted that car. It was a two-seater with a jump seat in the back. And he says, "Well where will you put the kids?" And I said, "In the back.

Besides, I'm going to drive it." We bought the Porsche and I brought it home and Bobby, my son, came out and, "Did you get a car for mother?" And he says, "Oh yes, and it is your size". And so he opened the door and jumped in the car and says, "How do I make it go?" He says, "When you grow up. This is mother's car." Well anyway, I was going to write a book and I drove a Porsche and . . ., and I drove a Porsche. Eleanor, my middle daughter, said that she's going to write a book, there was a book written by, I forgot who it was, but, you know, Mama's bank account. I Remember Mama, they made a play out of it. She was going to write, Mama's Little Porsche. And the Porsche became a symbol. This was a wonderful catharsis because really, every time I drove the Porsche, I remember Kramer, the Commandant of Belsen-Bergen lying on top of the truck with the dead people. And I drove a Porsche. And Robert is crying. [Laughter] No really, this was a very, very, a lot of people ask me, "How on earth can you drive a German made car?" And I said, "That's the whole point". That's the whole point. That I lived to drive a German car. And not just, well, I didn't like Mercedes Benz because it was too expensive and in those days it was too big, but the Porsche was just my size.

Q: What happened to it?

A: It became very, very expensive. And everybody wanted my Porsche. People would, when I came to a stop light, people would be honking and, roll down the window, "Hey, want to sell it?" Or, "Do you want to sell the hub caps?" It had the big enameled emblem of the Porsche on the hubcaps. It's hub cap was about $200.00. And I had it sitting on the driveway and came home one night and I found all four hubcaps gone. And the side view mirror half unscrewed and the backlight completely unscrewed and gone. So it was about, I forget, almost $800.00 worth of replacement. And it didn't have air conditioning. Robert said no. And said, "Well, I can get new hub caps". "Yes, you get new hub caps and sell the Porsche". I said, "No, I can't sell the Porsche. I want to

drive the Porsche". He says, "Yes, and we'll go to a Chinese restaurant and park the car just in front in the parking lot and they will start serving, you pick up you're chop sticks and you put them down and then say, 'Robert, I think somebody's taking off the hub caps, will you go and look at the Porsche?'. And he says, "I want to eat dinner and not to watch you're Porsche'. So we are not going to drive the Porsche anymore. Well, we cleaned up the garage and we drove the Porsche into the garage. And once in a while I would go and look at it. We replaced the hubcaps, and the back light, but I didn't drive it anymore. And one beautiful day, I made a decision. That the Porsche served its time and it's purpose and life goes on, and we knew a builder who said, "I will build you a dining room for the Porsche". And I did have a very, we have a very nice house, but the dining room was very small. And we had a special dinner for a group of friends, about fourteen people. And we had to put up bridge tables and all kinds of things to make enough room for everybody. And I always said, "I wish I could have a long table in the dining room". And Robert said, "Well, this is you're opportunity". And we get rid of the Porsche. Al was the name of the builder and he said, "I'll take good care of it and you will have a beautiful dining room". And I made the decision. All right. And he brought his flat bed because he didn't want to drive it after sitting in the garage for ten years or so, and they put the Porsche on the flat bed and he drove away. And the next morning he started ripping up the old dining room and now I have a beautiful, big dining room with a table that will seat fourteen people. Drexel. A beautiful dining room set. And the Porsche, the Porch is in good hands and I don't even want to know what happened to it.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about the work that you've done? I know you mentioned that you've gotten three Master's Degrees?

A: Well yes. There is the Medical Technology, and then I did work for about a year and a half in Detroit but then when we moved to Fresno, I discovered I was pregnant. So I, and then my husband

worked in the hospital and I thought of getting a job there but then I really didn't want to work because I really was afraid that maybe that might hurt the baby and being in the hospital with diseases and things, so I decided to stay home. But I still kept my Registry, you had to be registered in California for several years, until I eventually gave that up. I decided I don't want to be Medical Technologist after all. And I, when the children were little, especially when, even through my first pregnancy, I took painting lessons. And I was doing a lot of painting and I enjoyed that very much. Then I joined Community Theatre. And they found out that I can paint and act, so I was acting in some plays. And also they wanted me to help with the scenery. And since, I really, I knew how to paint pictures but I didn't know that much about scenery, I went to college. At that time it still was college, now it is a University. And I enrolled in the Drama Department. And then they said, well, why don't you just work on you're degree instead of just taking courses. So I said, fine. And I acted. And I was an assistant to the scene designer. I designed scenery for the Community Theatre and then I designed scenery for our University Theatre and I got a Masters Degree in Theatre. And, at the same time, I wanted to polish up my skills in painting, so I went to the Art Department and I started getting, you know, just to get some classes in drawing and painting and sculpture. And then they said, you've got enough credits now, you can really get you're Master's Degree. So I started to take more graduate classes and I did get a Master's Degree in Art. And that I got with distinction because I did some innovative process on my sculptures and the thesis was ceramic bowls. And it was really stone ware. And then I _____ silver, copper and silver. Over the stone ware. And the whole thing was, again, a wonderful catharsis though, because the symbol of the bowl. When we came to the camp we got a bowl. One of those big, enamel bowls that were made in, probably in Schindler's factory. And they are on display. And here there is just a small case, but in Auschwitz there is a case the size of a small room filled with bowls. And this was probably, once

more, most precious possession. Because if you didn't have a bowl, you could not get food. That was the only way you could get you're cup of coffee or you're bowl of soup. So the bowl was something that you put under you're pillow made out of blanket or a rag. And you really guarded it with your life, because this was your life. So I decided to make bowls that are completely useless. I like pretty things so I made everything very pretty. But you can't put anything in that bowl, they are either too small or too big or too crocked or too pretty. You wouldn't put soup in a bowl that has beautiful design inside. But then it is all goocked up with some kind of acid to make it shiny and polished and whatnot. I don't think the soup would taste very well mixed with the chemicals. So I made a lot of bowls. And they are not just bowls, they are containers. Different types of containers. And I was making them just in the Art Department. Some of them are thrown on a wheel, some of them are just built up. And then when I got through with the stone ware and the enamel, I would move on to the chemistry department, which they gave me a lab there. And that's where I would perform the _____ forming. It is quite a complicated process. If you use copper sulfate and the silver cyanide, and sulfate acid and electricity. And I had a lot of fun connecting wires and doing things...

[End of Side A of Tape 8]

Q: Go on.

A: Anyway, he gave me a cyanide resuscitation kit. Just in case I have an accident with the silver cyanide or the gold cyanide that I was working with. And the cyanide has a bitter almond smell that you can really smell it if it gets spilled and whatnot. Anyway, the resuscitation kit is a, I don't know exactly what it was, I still have it. This big syringe of something or other. I don't think I, I told him I don't want to even think of using it, but anyway, and I was laughing and I said, "I know what cyanide is". And I know it smells like bitter almonds. That was probably one of the best cures for

me in a certain way because I was working with materials that were the deaths in some, and the hopelessness. And here I was doing and making beautiful things for the future. So it is sometimes very difficult, but on the other hand, it is easy if you really want it. So this is what I was doing and when I finished I had an exhibit at the University. And then I had an exhibit at the Art Center. And then everybody was admiring the bowls and Manny wouldn't let me sell any. And I says, "Well, just a few". I had made some little ones and those were for sale, but everybody was very upset that I don't want to part with them. So I said no. And then my Professor suggested that I send them to several exhibits and every time I send them to exhibits they were accepted. Most of the time I send slides and then I have to send the real thing and the one at the Oaken Museum, they specialize in crafts and _____ and _____, they have one of my bowls. They purchased it. It was a purchase award. And it is in the permanent collection. And then the big thing was a traveling exhibit, which was in St. Paul, Minnesota and at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, and it was photographed for the album, for the souvenir album. So it was all great honors. And also I had one bowl exhibit at, and in the catalogue, actually it is more of a book, it’s a California Design 11. So these were the great honors I had. And when I finally got my Master's Degree, I finally got a job at the University in the Art Department, teaching crafts and design and ceramics and elementary art education. And I took the class for the elementary art education, which was training teachers who were in child development. At that time the major in child development because very hard and so we had a lot of students and we taught them, among other things, the basic art procedures that they can use with children. And I enjoyed that very much because I never did any art with my kids and here I was teaching future teachers and I did quite a few innovative things. I think I was quite successful at it. One thing that I would say is, after being this sterility case, I ended up having four children. Three cribs in one room. I had four children and none in school and they are supposed to

start at the age of five. They were just about a year and a year and a half apart. And that they all became very successful citizens, I suppose. Maxine, the one that lives in Silver Springs, that's her second time in the Washington, D.C. area. She is a soil scientist and she, after all these years, she finally worked up to a little bit higher position than she started with. And that's where she gave up the job in Davis, California, because she got another promotion and she decided to come to Washington. And Maxine is not married. But Eleanor is a physician, she is a cardiologist. And she is the Chief of Cardiology at Kaiser Permanente in Santa Clara. They live in Los Altos and she is married to a physician who is an endocrinologist but he works in research. And then the next one is Robert, Bobby. That's the only son. And he is in New York in finances, whatever that is. He's a broker and he's also an author of two books on politics. 'Democratic Blueprints' and one that was sort of a promotional book for Bill Clinton. 'Bill Clinton, the Politician', or whatever the title was. And then the youngest daughter graduated from, well she went to Berkley and then she graduated from Humbolt University, which is in Northern California, in environmental science. And she was a backcountry ranger for eleven years. And she was patrolling the area in Kern River Canyon for six months and going to school for six months. And she finally graduated and then she got her credentials and now she is a sixth grade teacher married to a music teacher. And she herself is an accomplished musician. She has played the bassoon and the violin. And Eleanor, who is the doctor, is an accomplished harpsichord player. I sort of mention that because, again, life goes on. And I am looking forward to my grandchildren growing up. Eleanor has three boys and _____, the youngest, has a boy and a girl. And that's it.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

Conclusion of Interview.