

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Evelyn Bergl
September 13, 2005
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Evelyn Bergl, conducted on September 13, 2005 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. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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EVELYN BERGL
September 13, 2005

Beginning Tape One

Question: Okay. Good morning, Evelyn.

Answer: Good morning to you.

Q: It's nice to see you here.

A: Thank you. Good to be here.

Q: Tell me what your name was when you were born.

A: E-Evelyne -- Evelyn.

Q: Evelyn?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And your last name?

A: With an e at the end.

Q: Oh, with an e at the end.

A: My last name was Arzt, A-r-z-t.

Q: And your name now?

A: My name now is Evelyn, they cut out the e, and it's Bergl, B-e-r-g-l.

Q: Right. And when were you born?

A: I was born August fourth, 1931.

Q: And where were you born?

A: In Vienna.

Q: In Austria. [indecipherable] In Austria? So, what is your earliest memories? You were obviously very young when the war started, but what di -- what are your earliest -- do you have memories of Austria?

A: No, not much of Austria.

Q: No.

A: I was very attached to my family, so when the war broke out, I worried so much about everybody, that Austria was not interesting to me. I don't know if I -- you can understand --

Q: So you -- did you --

A: -- how --

Q: So you have no memories of where you were living?

A: Vaguely.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Vaguely. I was a lot with my grandparents, because they took my dad right away, and my mom just tried to get him out. At that time you were able to get them out --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- with papers. So she was gone most of the time, day and night, standing in a line to get some papers to get him out of the camp. So I didn't get to see her much, but I was with my grandparents.

Q: Right.

A: My mother's -- on the mother's side.

Q: Le-Let me just go back, even -- la -- though you don't remember these things, you do know some things.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was your father doing be -- this is before the war. What -- what was his -- was he in business?

A: He was -- he was an executive in -- in a fabric factory, fabrics.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And the name was Cosmanov.

Q: Cosmanov.

A: Cosmanov, that was the name of the factory. And I know he brought home samples, and I was so little that my mother was able to have dresses made from the little samples.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: I was -- thought you were going to say you played with these samples.

A: Well, I made some doll clothes.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah, I did, I did. And I guess -- and I started my handwork very early. I started to knit, I was five, that's what they tell me.

Q: Really?

A: I don't remember that, but that's what I was told.

Q: Huh. And did your mother work as well?

A: No.

Q: No, she didn't.

A: She didn't work any more. She worked when they were single, yes, she worked.

Q: Uh-huh. And do you know what she was doing?

A: She was working at a shoe store. Bali, have you heard of Bali shoes?

Q: Mm-hm, yeah.

A: Yeah, that's what she di --

Q: And she was selling shoes?

A: She was selling shoes, and she never got a pair of shoes that fitted her. My dad used to say that was the trouble, because you used to work for them. That's why you could never get a pair of shoes to fit you. They were always hurting her.

Q: And what was your dad's -- what was your dad's name?

A: Edward -- Edward -- Edward.

Q: Ed -- Edward. And your mother?

A: Hermine. They called her Mia.

Q: Mia?

A: Mia.

Q: Sounds like an unusual name for a Viennese.

A: Yeah -- no. You're thinking of Italian.

Q: Yeah.

A: But no, it was -- was right. Like I have a cousin -- second cousin, her name is also Hermine and they call her Mimi.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: See? So they each had --

Q: Right.

A: -- but we call Mom mer -- she was called Mia.

Q: And you have a brother.

A: I had a brother.

Q: Heinz.

A: Yeah, he passed away.

Q: He passed away, uh-huh. Is that recent?

A: Well, I can't believe it, but I think it going into the fourth year. He died Thanksgiving day, I think it was to -- '01.

Q: Uh-huh. Do you remember him when you were a kid? When you were -- before the war, or you have no rec --

A: Yes.

Q: You do?

A: I do remember him, sure. We were always together, very close-knit, yes.

Q: Now, he was four years older, yes?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And still you were --

A: Still.

Q: So he -- was he a kind of protector for you?

A: No, I think I protected him.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: How come?

A: I don't know, I just felt like he needed protection. I used to hit him and -- you know, in Vienna they used to say, if you want a -- a girl, you put sugar out on the windowsill.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So he used to put -- that's what I heard, you know, put sugar there for he wanted a sister. And then when I was a little older he says, if I would have known, I would have never put sugar on.

He really believed that, I guess, you know.

Q: Were you bigger than he was?

A: No, I was bigger -- bigger this way.

Q: Broader.

A: Broader, yeah. He was thin --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- and blonde.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I was fat and dark.

Q: And you were a bully.

A: And I was -- I'm not a bully. Only to him.

Q: Only to him.

A: Only to him. He used to -- I used to jump on him and hit him, and --

Q: Why did you do that?

A: Cause I guess he aggravated me. And then, he used to hold me.

Q: Yes.

A: And my mother used to say, you stupid, why you holding her? I didn't want her to fall down.

So he -- in a way he was protecting me, you know.

Q: Right. But you didn't quite accept it.

A: But it was nothing serious, you know.

Q: Yes, right.

A: Nothing like what the children do nowadays, nothing.

Q: Nothing like that.

A: Nothing like that.

Q: Did you start school before the war, a little bit?

A: One year.

Q: One year.

A: Not quite a year.

Q: I-In kindergarten? Or did they --

A: No, it was first class.

Q: First class.

A: First class.

Q: Do you remember?

A: I remember s -- being very upset. I came home, cause the teacher told me to stand up, which I did, and she didn't think I did, but I was so short that she thought I was still sitting down. Okay? That's one thing. And then it was hard because it was -- I could already feel the tension in the first grade, and they were already beginning to be mean. And then -- I guess it was the tame -- time when Dad was in camp.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And Mom wasn't home, and -- and my grandparents did the best they could, you know, but it was -- we were all so upset with my dad, because for a long time we didn't even know where he was.

Q: Did you see him taken?

A: No.

Q: You didn't. You were not home.

A: No [inaudible]. He was taken in the street, because I was -- my brother and I were at our grandparents, cause things were not, you know, good. And so Mother left us there, feeling that children with older people are safe, okay? And she went back with Dad to their apartment. And as she walked from their apartment to come to us, they took him, just picked him up in the street.

Q: While they were walking together?

A: While they were walking together. They just took him away. And -- and m -- Mother came by herself, and you know, they had like a staircase, I can just see it, like a spiral staircase, and I was hanging there waiting for them. And I looked down and she is hysterical, they took Papa, they took Papa. And I didn't know at first what is she talking about, they took Papa. And then my grandparents came, you know, and -- and we got the picture, they took him. Just --

Q: Did you know who she was talking about --

A: Yes.

Q: -- did you realize that there were --

A: Yes, I realized there was danger, yes.

Q: There was danger, yeah.

A: As much as they tried to protect us, not to tell us everything, somehow we just felt inside the fear.

Q: D-Do you --

A: You could feel it, yeah.

Q: You could feel it.

A: You could feel it. And then you saw them, you know, marching, and they came up the steps, you know, with their boots, and stuff, and you could just feel creepy. And they never tried to

scare us, always tried -- oh, you know, it's going to be better. But yet she was so worried because she didn't know where Papa was. So for four weeks we had no idea where he was. Then finally somebody told us that there -- a bunch of men in a basement, someplace in ha -- so then she went there, and she finally saw him.

Q: Still in Vienna?

A: You know, they waved -- still in Vienna -- waving to her, and we knew that he was a smoker, so she was worried, you know, he should have -- now we would take away cigarettes, but at that time she was worried that he'd be miserable without his cigarette. But they wouldn't let her give him the cigarettes. Anyway, and then they took him away. All of a sudden he's not there. So then again we waited to see where. And he was able to write finally, in fact, I have letters.

Q: You do?

A: Yes, I have letters that he wrote.

Q: And he went to Dachau first?

A: Dachau first, yeah. Yeah.

Q: So your -- you and your brother Heinz are at your grandparents?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: And is it your m-mother's ma -- ma --

A: Yeah.

Q: Your mother's parents?

A: Right.

Q: Were they working? Were the f -- was -- were they wer --

A: No, they were older.

Q: They were older?

A: I mean, they were in -- in their 70's, I guess.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: No, I don't think they were working.

Q: They were older. Well, it's -- it's all relative, isn't it?

A: Yeah. Well, my grandmother, I think she -- we didn't know what was wrong, but now thinking back, I think she had arthritis badly. But they didn't have anything to give her to make her feel better. She was -- but she never complained, she just sat in her chair, tried be warm, and I -- warm things on her.

Q: Right.

A: And my mother had one sister, which was not married, so she was with them, you know, all the time. And that's all.

Q: So who really took care of you? Your mother was living in their -- in that apartment.

A: Yeah well, she -- she used to take care, but just when they took Papa --

Q: Right.

A: -- then she wasn't able to because she was standing in line day and night --

Q: Right.

A: -- to get papers.

Q: Right.

A: And then, I don't know if anybody told you, but she had to walk out of the house with a pail and a brush in case they decided to make her wash the floors in Vienna. Not the floors, the --

Q: Streets.

A: -- the street, you know.

Q: And did she? Do you know?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't.

A: She never told me.

Q: She never told you.

A: Never told me.

Q: How did the -- your father is in Dachau --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- and then he's --

A: Buchenwald.

Q: -- and then Buchenwald.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And he's there for about a year.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So how are you surviving in this year? Ho -- who has money and how do you get food?

A: Well, first of all, my father had his parents still alive, which, you know, we were -- went there too, to see them, and they were, you know. And he had two brothers. Two brothers and two sisters. There were five of them. So there was family on that side. Only my mother's side there wasn't much family. So, I don't know. I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you see the f-family of your father as well --

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: -- together?

A: Sure, yeah.

Q: So everybody -- you must have felt as a child, a -- a -- a lot of the nerves of everybody.

Everybody must have been --

A: Yes, yes, and -- and yet, they were so trying to protect us that they didn't tell us half of the things what was going on. You know, nowadays, say you have to be honest with children, well, I guess they were brought up differently.

Q: Right.

A: Children -- like i-if someone died, the children never knew the person died.

Q: They just went away.

A: Just went away. I don't know why, but that's --

Q: Do you think that was a bad thing? Do you think they should have told you more?

A: No, I think I really appreciated that they didn't.

Q: Yeah.

A: I really did.

Q: Right.

A: I really did. And we left -- Mother got some papers, so -- for him to get out of the camp, but we were able to take him out, but if he wouldn't leave in 24 hours, Vienna, they take you back and that's it, that -- you only had one chance. So thank God, she got papers, spend a lot of money, whatever she had on them, and they weren't worth anything.

Q: The papers were not worth anything?

A: Worth anything. And just on time, Italy opened up, all you needed was a passport, you could go to Italy, so -- which was a blessing, because whatever she had, Uruguay, Paraguay, I don't know where all the papers were, but you couldn't travel with them.

Q: You mean, so she had papers for him to go out of the country?

A: Out of the country.

Q: But those papers were worthless --

A: Worth -- worthless.

Q: -- she paid money for nothing.

A: Exactly. With a lot of harassment when -- while she was trying to get them. And I know that was so sad, because sometimes she rushed to be first, you know, to get there, and if you were first, then they put you at the end of the line. You know, they did -- tried anything to give you a hard time. So sometimes she came home crying.

Q: Yeah. So that must have been very tough for you.

A: So -- but she, you know, she did everything she could. So we got -- she got the passport from Papa, and then he didn't have a picture, so quickly when he gonna come out, he took a picture, and that's all the passport needed. And you can see his face is swollen like that. They gave him certain things that swelled the people up, especially the ones that they let out, to show that he is -

-

Q: That he's okay.

A: That he is okay. But it was not a healthy look he had, you know? So --

Q: Did he -- did he return to Vienna before he went to Milan?

A: Yes, he came --

Q: He did, so did you see him for that day?

A: Yes, yes, oh yes.

Q: Was that a great day for you?

A: The best.

Q: It was the best. So you missed him a lot, didn't you? Yeah.

A: I went to the -- to the sta -- train station to get him. And a lot of them were [indecipherable] right in, he wasn't there yet, but he came [indecipherable]. That was the best sight.

Q: And -- and did you --

A: And then we had to tell him, you know, that he has to get out.

Q: Right.

A: So Milan, that was the closest, you know, to Italy that he could go. But we were so lucky that they let us in, just with the passport. And then he got there, and he -- I don't know, he must have written, or I guess just a letter saying that -- we said we would follow him, your mother said that she would follow him with me and my brother. And he wrote, don't come yet, because I cannot find work, and I don't speak the language. Obviously. And Mom wrote him back, don't write any more. We're coming this and this time, wait for us at the station, at the railroad station in Milan. And that's what she did, and that's how she saved our life.

Q: By not paying attention to him.

A: See, he was still so stupid -- excuse me, Dad -- after going through what he went through, he still didn't believe that they would touch children and old people. He didn't believe that. Or women.

Q: It was just the men.

A: He thought just the men. And then he would leave us alone, but obviously, as we know later, they didn't leave anybody alone.

Q: Right.

A: So he figured that we should stay safely at home, rather than going into the -- how would you say, into the world without knowing where we're going, okay? But Mom was smart enough to --

and we wanted to take, you know, the grandparents, to follow us even, and his brother. One got out to England, the youngest one. The older one had a wife and a baby, cutest baby. And no, he had -- she had a father, and he had the parents he wouldn't leave, you know, and he still had a sister. They didn't believe.

Q: They didn't believe.

A: They didn't believe, because they, you know, they took them all, after. I -- I finally went to Vienna, I made one trip to Vienna, after 35 years, 40 years, I'm not sure. And I asked if they know what happened to my family, grandparents.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So then they wrote me with a list of what camp they were taken to. Camps that I never heard of. But they said there was nothing unusual because they had like 250 camps. You know, you only knew about the big ones --

Q: Right.

A: -- like Dachau, Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen, all those. But the little ones you didn't know.

Q: Yeah, there were hundreds of them.

A: Hundreds of, yes. And they wrote me, you know, where they were killed, and wa -- they even had written down what day they wer -- died. They don't say killed, the day they were died. Some of them I think they had wrong names, but I had an idea of, you know, when it happened.

Q: So, who did travel with you besides your -- your -- or you went, you -- they didn't travel with you, but --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- you and your mother and --

A: Ju -- and father --

Q: -- Heinz, your brother.

A: -- and mother.

Q: And your father's already in Milan.

A: In Milan, yeah. [indecipherable]

Q: And did your grandparents come, or not?

A: No.

Q: Nobody. Just -- just the three of --

A: Just the four of us.

Q: The four of you together.

A: Just the four of us. Nobody else made it out. Nobody else made it out.

Q: And you took a train to Milan from Vienna?

A: Yeah, we took a train. And we got very nervous c-crossing, you know the -- the border, cause you never know --

Q: Right.

A: -- what they're gonna do with you. And the passport has a big J on it, so there was no -- you know, they're asking me always when there's my name, middle name, you have a middle name?

At that time they did not -- children did not get middle names like now. But Hitler gave us a middle name.

Q: Yes, what was it?

A: Sarah. Sarah, Sarah -- all the Jewish people were Sarah and the men were Israel. Even in the passport it tells there, you know.

Q: So did you have a passport?

A: Yeah. Well, on my mother's passport.

Q: On your mother's passport?

A: Yeah. Mine.

Q: And Heinz was on the mother --

A: Heinz, too, yeah.

Q: -- was on the mother's passport.

A: Mother's passport, three of us on one passport, mm-hm.

Q: Was your mother able to take out any money, do you know?

A: Not much.

Q: Not much.

A: We didn't have much.

Q: Right.

A: And we were afraid to take any possessions because we didn't trust them, you know --

Q: Right.

A: -- [indecipherable] in the border. So we just took like we were -- we wanted to take -- the warm blankets like they had in Austri --

Q: A quilt?

A: A quilt, a [indecipherable]

Q: A down?

A: A down.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, we all had down, and Mother wanted to take for us. And then my brother says, don't take it, don't take it. He was afraid, you know. So then later, while we still were able to converse with them in Vienna, my aunt decided she's gonna s-send one to us.

Q: You --

A: Never got that.

Q: -- never got that.

A: Never got that. But I know she did. And none of the jewelry or anything.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We didn't take anything. My mother's, you know, just wedding ring. I had a charm bracelet, you know, which I was so fond of, but we had a feeling like maybe my aunt put it in the quilt, because she knew that I liked it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But maybe that's when they found that, they just took everything away.

Q: Right.

A: You just never knew what they were -- and I forgot to tell you that in the morning they came to pick up my father. If he wasn't gone --

Q: They would have picked him up.

A: They would have picked him up, yeah. They would have taken him. W-We could hear it on the steps, too, you know, they were --

Q: The boots? The shoes?

A: Yeah, the boots, coming up the steps and knocking on the door like crazy. And my poor grandmother was so, you know, scared. But --

Q: So they came to your grandmother's house?

A: They came to my grandmother's house, because Mother, you know, was with us more than she was -- she gave up the apartment.

Q: I see.

A: But what's the use, you know, to pay rent there, and you know, not be there.

Q: Right.

A: So, she was wi --

Q: Did you wear a j -- have to wear a Jewish star?

A: No.

Q: You didn't?

A: No. And --

Q: Did your mother?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Her sign was the pail. The pail and the brush.

Q: And her passport.

A: And her pa -- she didn't have a passport then.

Q: She only had the passport when you were leaving?

A: For Papa, yeah. For Father. That was the important one.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, that he got away.

Q: When you were on the train, do you remember feeling scared?

A: Yes. Til we crossed the border [indecipherable] to border. One of the -- one of the borders which was very tense. When they come in -- they really scare you when they walk in, you know?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They were so scary looking. Well, they let us go, and that's the main thing. My brother, I think, was more scared than me, even. Maybe cause he was older, he was smarter to be scared than me. So he was really nervous when they got --

Q: Were you in a compartment in the train?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Alone? Or were there other people there?

A: No, other people.

Q: There were other people?

A: Other people, yeah, other people.

Q: Do you know if they were Jewish and they were trying to escape?

A: I don't know.

Q: You have no idea.

A: I didn't --

Q: So there was no

A: Maybe they knew, but they didn't -- Mother didn't tell me.

Q: They didn't tell you.

A: No.

Q: Were you holding onto your mother a lot?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. I was just sitting scared, too scared.

Q: Did you feel, at that age, closer to your father than your mother, in some way?

A: I felt closer -- no, I felt pretty protected by Mom, but I felt closer to Dad, because they took him.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know? I was worried about him.

Q: Right.

A: So --

Q: So you had a lot of protective instincts, didn't you, as a kid? Interesting at such a young age, to be like that.

A: I worried about him. Whew. But thank God --

Q: He was okay.

A: -- he came out. There was -- and you know, my father never talked about.

Q: Never? Did you want him to?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: I didn't really want him to, not at that young age. Maybe later on I would have liked to know certain things. But I tell you why he didn't. He felt insulted by the situation, you know? He felt so degraded. He didn't think that he was deserving of such a thing.

Q: Right.

A: So he didn't want to talk about it, no. Was strange, but he never talked about it. The only thing is, you know, when they -- in the street when they were walking, and they met someone from -- they used to say K. Z., K. Z. lager, and they knew each other, and then they called my father's name, it was like this, you know, he was jumping. So it was always a hard thing when he

-- when he met someone in the street and they called his name, he was like an attention. And was so sad to see that.

Q: And this was happening in Italy?

A: It was happening in Italy.

Q: We have to stop the tape.

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: Evelyn, do you remember arriving in Milan?

A: Yes.

Q: Remember getting off the train?

A: Train? Yes, because my dad was there.

Q: Yes.

A: That's how you remember.

Q: Right.

A: It was happiness.

Q: Did -- did you and your mother s -- and your brother study a little bit of Italian before you left?

A: No, no.

Q: No. How long --

A: We didn't have time.

Q: Do you have any idea how long it was between when your father got there, and when you got there?

A: I would say maybe a couple of weeks.

Q: That's all?

A: Yes, we rushed. I think. It might have been longer, I don't know.

Q: Right.

A: I don't know.

Q: So you think you got there 1939?

A: 1939 -- end of '39, I guess. I have to look it up.

Q: You have to look.

A: I'm not sure. Let me see. I don't even know if it says here. Think there were some dates here.

There's -- maybe here. Okay. 1930 -- 1940 was already.

Q: 1940? So it was after the war started? After the attack on Poland.

A: Escape from Vienna. Yeah, must -- must have been the end of 1939, '40.

Q: '40, something like that.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So where did you live when you were -- after you we --

A: Well, he had an apartment.

Q: He did?

A: Yeah, with one -- one room, you know, just one room. And I don't have a big memory of Milan at all.

Q: Were you there for very -- you weren't there for very long, were you?

A: I don't think very long, no. But a few weeks, quite a few weeks.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I don't have a very good memory of that. I remember being there, not knowing -- and I remember coming down stair -- steps, and whoever was there, the landlady or whatever you call her, tried to teach me to say, you know, good morning, good evening. And then I tried to remember which was morning, which was evening, you know. That was kind of hard, you know, to learn all of a sudden, a language.

Q: So what's good morning in Italian?

A: Buon giorno.

Q: And what's good evening?

A: Buona sera.

Q: So you eventually learned, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did learn. My favorite language.

Q: Is it?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: It's a beautiful language.

A: Yes, I think so.

Q: Your father didn't have work when you were there?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: How did he get an apartment, do you know?

A: I guess with the little money that he took with him, you know. But then we had to leave Milan, then someone talked us into going to France, that we could be saved in France. So we went to Italian city, Ventimiglia, which was on the border of someplace. And over there there were people that were leaders, to take you over to France, through mountains and woods, you know? But they needed money, you know, they wanted money, they did it for money.

Q: Right.

A: So we stayed there for awhile, and waited for the right people to come to take us. And some people came back. I remember that so clearly, they couldn't get them across. And here comes this young woman, we were sitting and having lunch. We had like, I remember, a lunch -- you know, lunch is the big meal in Europe, just one, either one minestr -- minestrone, you know, the vegetable soup.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Which filled you up and it was good. And that's all we could afford, you know, just have this plate of soup, or -- I didn't get used to spaghettis yet, you know, I didn't --

Q: You didn't?

A: No, I didn't. I couldn't eat the spaghettis. The only one between the four of us, my mom. She liked them right away. But we didn't, so we had the soup. And we're sitting in the restaurant, and he -- here comes this young woman, scratched from top to bottom, just scratches on her. And she stands by the door, like out of her mind, and she pees in front of everybody, just standing there on the door. She lost her mind. She absolutely lost her mind trying to get up, you know, the mountains, and they had so many thorns there that wherever they were going, it just scratched the hell out of her, you know? And mu -- she must have gone through such a terrible thing that she just didn't know what she was doing. She was crying, just crying. And I told my parents, "We have to go through that? That's terrible." So Mother said, "Yeah, but we already gave them all our money, you know, we have to go. We don't have anything left." But then some word came that it's over. They're not going any more to France. So we didn't have money, we didn't have a ride, we didn't have anything. So we went to the -- to the station, to the railroad station to get out of Ventimiglia. And somehow, I guess -- I don't know if the Jewish emi -- Jewish people helped, or who helped, I don't know. But they got us -- we were able to get on the train to Genoa, okay? So we got on the train -- we got on the train and my dad, he is -- was such a good person, he was the leader. He had a little more, you know, brain than some of the people, so he was the leader and he got everybody on the train, and he was left behind.

Q: You were on the train, and he was not on the train?

A: Do you I have to tell you more? Did this get -- did I get hysteric -- you darn right I got hysterical. And they had soldiers on the train, they were all trying to comfort me, I don't know -- didn't understand what they were saying to me, you know. But I know they were nice to me. You know, the Italian? And they tried to calm me down. And the -- I don't know what you call the guy that was running -- not running the train, but the people that are on the train, don't worry, don't worry, because next stop -- he tried to explain to me the next stop, they gonna put him on the next train and we just have to wait. But that was 100 years we waited. You know? We had just gotten him, and now to lost him again, it was horrible.

Q: So did they hold your train? They would --

A: No, they -- we -- we got to Genoa and just waited at the station --

Q: I see.

A: -- for the next train.

Q: The next train.

A: Til he finally got out.

Q: Got out.

A: So then, we were in Genoa, where do we go? You know, what do we do?

Q: Right.

A: So there was a piazza, you know, in Italy, they have a lot of piazzas, and there was a piazza Christopher Columbus. And that's where we wanted to go because we felt closer to America, being --

Q: I see.

A: -- Columbus was there.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So we went on that piazza.

Q: Now this is after your dad comes?

A: After my dad, sure --

Q: You wait --

A: -- we waited

Q: -- you're waiting for him.

A: -- oh yeah --

Q: Okay.

A: -- oh yeah. And then we needed something, we hadn't eaten a long time, too, and they had like milk, you know, they sell milk, warm milk in Italy, big -- big cups, like a bowl more. And we had some of that with some bread in that, you know, which was any thing inexpensive that we could get. And so we had a bite of that, what did we do now? So then the Italian government gave us a subsidy.

Q: Really?

A: They did, yes, they did give us some money. I don't know exactly how many liras, but it helped -- helped us, you know? And then we got into an apartment. They helped us to get into an apartment. I am saying apartment, I'm -- it's a room, we got a room with pens -- a pensione. Penzione. Fact, I got some pictures from that, too. And -- and we got one big room, and it was like below the level of the street, but we didn't care, you know, as long as we were together, and -- in fact, we snuck in some people that were, you know, needy, didn't know where to go, so we -- they slept with us on the floor, whatever. We snuck them in at night. I remember that. Of course, Mother never told us that we were sneaking them in, but I think we were smart enough to know.

Q: Right.

A: They didn't pay us, you know, they didn't --

Q: Did this room have furniture?

A: Yeah.

Q: It did?

A: It had beds, and closet, and --

Q: Now, ho-how were you and your brother -- are you just good kids?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: You know that the situation --

A: Yeah, oh yeah. We were good kids, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: They never had trouble with us, no.

Q: Unless you got separated.

A: We never wanted to get separated --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- no, we stuck together like glue. So -- and then -- then came the order. I don't know why, that we had to leave Genoa, but the men had to be separated from the women and children.

Q: Let me ask you something before we go to that. How -- about how long are you in Genoa?

A: I would say --

Q: Is it a few months? You could check.

A: Well, actually, my brother was Bar Mitzvah'd in Genoa.

Q: He was?

A: He was. He was 13 then. He was barmit -- okay, let's see.

Q: You're eight or nine years old --

A: Yeah.

Q: Right?

A: Eight or nine.

Q: So he's 13.

A: Yeah, he's 13, and I is -- again skipped something. While we were in Genoa, the Jewish community sent the children -- the Jewi -- Italian people were taking in children to feed them lunch, you know, lunch is the big meal. They were giving us lunch. But I -- to this day I don't understand why they separated my brother and I. I went to one family and he went to a different family to eat lunch. And it was very scary because there were already sirens going on, you know, the war was already beginning, or I don't know what it was, but I had to walk quite a way to get to this -- was a woman that was -- her name was Celestina Weiss. And I remember her name.

Q: Celestina Weiss.

A: Celestina Weiss. And she prepared lunch for -- not she, she had a -- a woman there who was cooking lunch for us, just the two of us.

Q: Just the two of you?

A: Just the two of --

Q: You were the only kid?

A: Yeah. Why couldn't my brother be there with me, you know? So we would have walked together, I wouldn't have to be so scared to walk by myself when the sirens came, and then the ha -- in Genoa they have large tunnels. So I rushed like crazy into the tunnel, cause that was like protection from the bombs.

Q: Was their air raids?

A: Air raid --

Q: There were air raids, weren't there?

A: Air raids, yeah. And you know, nobody would let you in once the air raids, so I'm running into those tunnels like crazy, til it's over. But I'm by myself, I'm a little kid by myself, you know?

Q: So how come your mother or your father didn't walk with you, do you think?

A: They were not supposed to.

Q: They weren't supposed to.

A: No. I came -- I think when I -- they had a little bit of schooling at the synagogue in Genoa, so from the school I had to go to the -- to it. And that there was so much left over, and I was thinking, why don't she give it to me for my parents, but you know, I -- I was -- I couldn't -- you know, I was not brought up that way, to say anything.

Q: Right, right.

A: I was just thankful for the meal. And my brother went to a different family, who was also very nice to him, but only him. And then when the Bar Mitzvah was, we went all to the synagogue there, and this family that was feeding my brother, they send us to -- they made reservations in a restaurant to -- you know, to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know they -- nobody came with us, just four of us. Now I'm thinking why? Why would not one of the parents, or -- I don't understand that.

Q: You mean no -- the -- one of -- the -- the parents where he was going --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- didn't come?

A: No.

Q: Just you --

A: They made reservation for the four of us to eat in a restaurant together, finally we were together in the meal.

Q: Right, right.

A: You know, I --

Q: But nobody else.

A: But nobody else. Can you figure that one out? No. But that was war, I guess, and people were strange.

Q: Now the woman where you were eating lunch, did you -- did she talk with you? Di -- was it nice --

A: Yeah, she was nice.

Q: -- she was a nice person?

A: Very nice.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Very nice.

Q: And a lot of families were doing this for the Jewish --

A: And you could see the richness in her house.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know? I think where my brother was going, there were younger people, because they had children and this woman was -- right now, a -- a -- she doesn't s-sound like she was that old, but you know, at the time, when you're eight or nine, you would think she is -- maybe she was 50, and I thought she was 95, you know, I don't know.

Q: How quickly did you learn to speak Italian?

A: I would say within a year [indecipherable]

Q: Yes, so by -- by now in Genoa, you're pretty good.

A: I was already -- I was doing pretty good, not -- not as good as I wanted to, but --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I'm -- I was getting along, okay?

Q: Now, do you -- you are Jews in a Fascist country.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And they do now -- by the time you're there, they have anti-Semitic laws. Are you feeling anything against you as Jews?

A: No.

Q: You're not.

A: No, not at all.

Q: Not at all.

A: Not at all.

Q: So you feel safe there, in some way.

A: I -- I feel safe, yes. Til the order did come to separate us again. That was very bad.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: As you can imagine.

Q: And I-let's -- before we do that one, w-we -- you are going to s -- to some sort of a school, every day?

A: Yeah, it's a --

Q: Jewish school.

A: -- Jewish school, at the synagogue.

Q: And are you learning academic subjects as well as religion or not? Do you remember?

A: I think it's subjects besides religion, yes.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yes, they were trying to teach us, I guess, a little bit language, and math, and --

Q: Did you have homework?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't --

A: I don't remember homework.

Q: You don't remember homework?

A: No. Don't remember homework.

Q: Do you remember teachers?

A: I don't -- I know they were there, but I --

Q: But you don't remember them?

A: Not remember them.

Q: Now, in Genoa, are you living in the same place the whole time?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: That ba -- that sort of basement --

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: -- apartment.

A: Right.

Q: Is your father working?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: He couldn't get work.

Q: So you're living on the subsidy.

A: We're living on subsidy.

Q: Which can't be very much.

A: No. Just enough to exist, you know?

Q: Now, are you hearing rumors about the war in the rest of Europe? I mean, you, as a kid you --

A: Well, you hear war because of the sirens, you know -- you know, and bom -- they were bombarding already.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: There were bombardments. So, but you don't really know what goes on here, you know?

Q: So you don't hear your parents talking, and -- and you don't know --

A: No.

Q: Do you ask about your relatives in Vienna, what's happening to Grandpa and Grandma?

A: Yeah, I ask, but they didn't know. I think my uncle was one that was -- w-was the last one that wrote. Th -- that's my father's brother.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He went to see my other grandparents, in my mother's side.

Q: Right.

A: And he was giving us report, you know, that -- there's certain toys that we had there, that he want my -- my grandfather wouldn't give it away for anything. He had like a stepstool, and my brother put nails in it with his initials, see? So my uncle wanted it for his son. And says, I give you everything, but I won't give you this away.

Q: Wow.

A: Who knows who -- who got ahold of that --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know? But one thing my grandfather did, I had a big book of -- of fairy tales, Grimm -- Grimm fairy tales. Was this thick, you know, all the fairy tales, and I loved that book. I loved to listen to the stories all the time, and try to read them myself, too. And Mother said no way can you take that book. And my grandfather, when we got to -- to Italy, there it was.

Q: Really?

A: He snuck it into the suitcase?

Q: Your father did?

A: My grandfather.

Q: No, your grandfather. Put it in your su -- really?

A: One of the suitcases, there it was. Course, we had to get rid of it on the way, you know, the running we had to do, but --

Q: But you had it for a certain period of time.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, were you able to read it by then?

A: Yes, I was able to read it --

Q: Yes, you could, yeah.

A: -- yes, sure. I was reading pretty early, yeah. Then I turned dumb later, but I was smart as a kid.

Q: I -- I doubt -- I doubt that. So, y-you now get some news, right, that you have to leave Genoa. Now, you know who's gi -- who's saying that you have to leave? Is it the government?

A: Well -- something with the government, I don't know exactly who is at fault doing that. And the way they send us wherever they wanted to. But why did they separate us, we don't know.

That was such a mystery. There was one more woman with two children, and Mother with two children. And I know we moved in together in a -- they had a bigger house, you know, so we were able to live together. And -- and that was in Potenza. The name of the town was Viggiano.

Q: Viggiano.

A: Viggiano.

Q: And that's V-e-c-c-h-i?

A: No, V-i-g-g --

Q: V-i-g-g.

A: -- g -- giano -- i-o -- ano.

Q: Viggiano.

A: Viggiano.

Q: And where is th --

A: Where province -- further south.

Q: Is it still on the --

A: On the boot?

Q: On the boot.

A: Yes --

Q: Yes.

A: -- it's in the boot.

Q: But -- but on the same side as Genoa, on the left side of the boot. Is that right?

A: I couldn't swear.

Q: You couldn't swear --

A: I couldn't swear.

Q: So you never --

A: I couldn't swear

Q: -- [indecipherable] see. Yes.

A: I don't remember that. So that's where we went. I know we had to go down -- you know, the towns in Italy are all up. You had to go up and then come down. Everything was hilly, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know. And we had to go to register with the police every day.

Q: Every day?

A: Every day, that we didn't escape, or I don't know where they -- what they thought. I don't know why. But that's how we got our subsidy, too, I think.

Q: By seeing the police.

A: By seeing the police.

Q: Now, is your father separated from you now?

A: Yes.

Q: So -- so in Genoa, he's -- he is someplace else.

A: He left, yeah.

Q: He left. And you don't know where.

A: Yes. I -- we knew where.

Q: We knew where -- you knew where.

A: Yeah, he's -- was in Tortoreto.

Q: Tortoreto.

A: Tortoreto, yeah. So he was there, and then we were able to write to each other. They didn't have cell phones then.

Q: No.

A: Couldn't call. And then they -- I don't know if it was Tortoreto, Campania. He went two places -- he went two places -- different places.

Q: And were these camps?

A: No.

Q: No. This was just an -- a city, a town.

A: City -- a town, yeah. And then what we did is we made a request that maybe he could come to us, or we could come to him so we're together.

Q: Right.

A: You know, it was so hard to be apart. So they send us together to a camp in Italy. It was called Ferramonti. You heard of it, I'm sure.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Ferramonti di Tarsia.

A: Yeah, di Tarsia. So they send us there instead of -- nice place, you know, like -- to be free. So --

Q: And Ferramonti is in the south.

A: In the south yes.

Q: And is it --

A: Very hot.

Q: Very hot.

A: Hot during the day, lot of malaria and stuff like that going on.

Q: And is -- this is below Rome?

A: Below Rome, yeah, right.

Q: And how did you all get there? By train again? Do you remember?

A: Maybe by truck? By truck -- truck? Maybe trucks, or buses.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Something like that, I don't know.

Q: Do you go by yourselves? I mean, they say you're going to be there, or do they -- the soldiers don't pick you up and take you?

A: No, we just go --

Q: This is sort of a free --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- a free thi -- I mean, you're going by yourselves to --

A: I think so.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And -- and when we got there, to f -- Ferramonti, it was so quiet there. It was the time for when they were counting, you know the people, like the soldiers were, they -- they had a -- appelle.

Q: Appelle, right.

A: Appelle, yeah. So nobody was in the street. And my brother didn't want to go in. There's barbed wire all around, he was afraid to go in. He says, that's it, the end for us, you know? So I said, and Mother too, Papa's here, we have to go in, we cannot leave him. The police had to get -

-

Q: The police had to get him? Because he wouldn't go?

A: Wouldn't go in. My brave brother wouldn't go in. So, poor guy. He says if there's barbed wire, and soldiers, it's not a good sign.

Q: Well, he has a good instinct, didn't he?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Yes. Now you are 10 or 11 year old now.

A: Yes.

Q: Right?

A: Yeah.

Q: And your brother is 14?

A: 14, yeah, must be 14.

Q: Must be 14.

A: Yeah, mm-hm. At least 14 going on 15, I guess.

Q: Right, right.

A: So we get there, and like I say, it's quiet, and there's a guy going around us like a nut, like this, around and, "Haben sie die Basel, Haben sie die Basel, Haben sie die Basel."

Q: What is that?

A: You know, constantly is asking us for a paper, a newspaper, Basel.

Q: From Basel.

A: You know the -- everybody's hungry for news.

Q: Right.

A: You know.

Q: But this guy was afraid to ask, I guess. I couldn't understand why he was going around us like crazy. "Haben sie die Basel, Haben sie die Basel, Haben sie die Basel." And he scared me almost.

Q: I can imagine.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: But he kept circling where you were?

A: He kept circling the three of us, you know, because they were just coming out of the barracks at that time, and so he wanted some news, you know --

Q: Right.

A: -- poor man.

Q: Right.

A: But finally my dad came out, so that was again a good thing. We didn't feel so abandoned when he came.

Q: When he came out.

A: Yes. He was a little man, but strong.

Q: He was strong. Okay, we'll stop.

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Evelyn, you've mentioned your grandparents a lot. Can you give us their names before we go on with the story?

A: Yeah. On my mother's side, my grandfather's name was Marcus, and my grandmother was Rose. And their last name was Leer, L double e - r.

Q: L double e - r?

A: Yeah, mm-hm. I see in my papers that nobody really knew -- some are L-e-h-r --

Q: Right.

A: -- and some are L double e - r. So I'm sticking with double e - r --

Q: Okay.

A: -- because I think that's the last papers I saw, yes.

Q: Right.

A: And then --

Q: So those were your -- that's -- were your mother's parents --

A: Mother's side --

Q: Yes.

A: -- and her sister, one sister. Her name was Haran -- Aranka.

Q: Aranka.

A: Yeah -- for Hungarian, th -- they were Hungarian.

Q: So your pa -- your mother's family came from Hungary?

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But she was already born in Vienna.

Q: I see.

A: My mother --

Q: Right.

A: -- and her sister --

Q: Right.

A: -- both. But I think my grandparents were born in Hungary.

Q: Uh-huh. And your father's --

A: Father's? My grandfather's name was Henoeh, H-e-n-o-c-h, and my grandmother was Toby.

Q: Toby?

A: Toby.

Q: Hm.

A: But they called her Toni.

Q: They called her Toni?

A: Toni, because Toby is too Jewish, it was too Jewish, so they tried to -- Vienna, you know, you had to watch your name, your language. See, there was never a Jewish word spoken in the house, because when they went into the workforce, they didn't want the children to say Jewish words, because they were right away discriminated against. So they were very careful with Jewish words.

Q: Does that mean that you were not very Jewish identified, or --

A: No --

Q: -- when in -- in Vienna?

A: We were Jewish, definitely, but we tried to live in a non-Jewish world. They were so prejudice that --

Q: Right.

A: -- we -- we -- not talking about me --

Q: Right.

A: I'm talking about my parents and grandparents --

Q: Right.

A: -- they had to watch, cause --

Q: And --

A: -- you know, one night they can take away your -- your job.

Q: And this is before Hitler? This is before the Germans come in again.

A: Yeah, before even, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You had to be careful.

Q: So was it very different for you in Italy, in term -- could you feel it being different in your family?

A: In Italy, let's see, in Genoa, no, I felt -- except that, you know, the divisions, and I was very upset. I never complained about it, I never spoke about it, but thinking back, I know that I was so upset that we had food, and not that my parents were starving, but they had to, you know, hold back. So I couldn't -- now, I cannot understand why. There was so much food these people had, and they were rich, why couldn't they feed a family, or keep two kids together? I couldn't -- I don't know.

Q: So th -- so the -- the Jewish Italian families took in kids --

A: Yes.

Q: -- but not adults?

A: Not adults, just --

Q: So, do you know what your parents did for lunch?

A: Well, they had some.

Q: They had some.

A: They were not, you know, that -- you know, they -- simple things, you know --

Q: Right.

A: -- maybe a sandwich, or Mom -- Mother made maybe some soup, or -- you know, something.

I don't think they were starving at that time, but it would have been nice if, you know, they could have had better --

Q: Right.

A: -- I would have been happier.

Q: Right. What was supper like? Did you have supper together as a family?

A: Yeah.

Q: And was that just a very light meal?

A: Yeah, light meal. Light meal. Of course, children get more hungry than adults too, you know?

Q: Yes, right.

A: We were so hungry.

Q: It was tough.

A: Yeah, it was tough when you're hungry. And I just feel for people that are hungry. I can feel the pain, the hunger, you know, that I went through. It's not good. Not a good thing. And you don't know what's going to be -- I remember -- well, that's later. I don't want to get ahead of myself.

Q: Well, you can, so you don't forget.

A: No, I won't forget.

Q: You won't forget.

A: When we get to the next town, in Ferramonti?

Q: Yes?

A: We lived in barracks, one room, you know, four of us in one room.

Q: The four of you were in one room?

A: Small, small, very small room. And I think outside the barracks there was like toilet -- I can't remember where the toilets were. I don't remember bath -- baths. I think we just washed ourselves in --

Q: The sink?

A: -- sink -- no, we didn't have a sink [indecipherable] you know, in --

Q: What, like a bowl?

A: Bowl, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Purposely made for [indecipherable] I -- I don't remember baths there. There might have been, but my memory's not there.

Q: Right.

A: And my mother was so busy feeding us that her stomach sank. Do you ever hear of that?

Q: No, what does that mean?

A: By her not eating, her stomach sank and she kept on fainting. You know, she walked, and she fainted, and she walked and she fainted. So the camp allowed us children to go outside the camp, or ma -- or the police, the milizia was there, the soldiers, they had booths in front of the camp in a few places. And they could sell you some th -- God bless the Italians, they could -- she needed

a lot of vitamins, like lemons, oranges, so we bought from them that stuff. And then once in awhile we were able to go to one of the farms to bring for Mom some stuff that she needed, you know? They didn't have vitamins like we have now to get her back on -- her health back. She was just so sick, and I had to do, you know, all the labor. The washing -- and washing was not easy because no running water, obviously and so we carried water into the house, and then we had to wash and then carry it out. And of course, you didn't have that much clothes that you have now, so you had to be careful, you know, what you did, and I had a father and a brother, and -- you know, and I was very --

Q: So you're doing the laundry for everybody?

A: I was doing the laundry.

Q: All by hand?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where would you hang the clothes?

A: I think I had out -- it dried in a minute because it was so hot. It was so hot, you couldn't go out during the day. And we always got a lot of -- and at night it was cold.

Q: Really?

A: So there was malaria, s -- that's how you get the malaria.

Q: Hm.

A: And they were so sick, people. So the government gave us shots for anti -- and then we used to eat quinine -- quinine, a lot every day we had to take quinine. But on top of it we got shots for typhus and stuff like that.

Q: So this is a camp run by the Italians --

A: Yes.

Q: -- not the Germans?

A: Not the German, the Italian.

Q: So it was nice, in comparison with what you think it might have been?

A: In comparison to German, oh yes. But you still were restricted, and I think they had a mess hall, if I'm not mistaken.

Q: And that's where you ate?

A: I think they did have a mess hall.

Q: And do you remember the food?

A: No.

Q: No. You don't remember eating --

A: I don't remember the food.

Q: -- pasta?

A: No.

Q: Did you like pasta by then?

A: Mm-mm.

Q: You still didn't like it? That's too bad.

A: Give it to me now.

Q: Now you like it?

A: Yes, I li -- I like it a lot. But -- but we ate there, I think they had so much food, and then we kind of got, would you say chummy, or -- the camp director, he had the little girl about my age, so I was friendly with her, and -- I'm moving things. And he gave us a little bit more privileges, the father, you know, the camp director, very nice man. But in that way my mother slowly gave away everything I owned to that little girl.

Q: Really?

A: I had one do -- one doll that I took from Vienna. My very favorite I couldn't take with me.

This was like a soft doll, and her name was Muschi.

Q: Muschi.

A: Muschi was a certain name this doll had. So my mother ha -- gave it to her, you know, cause she liked the doll, and that's a war, you have to do that. And a lot of my clothes, which was okay, because I grew out of them, you know, and she was a little smaller. And they were all like custom made, you know, from Vienna.

Q: Right.

A: And my dad working in the factory where fabrics were, from a little sample I was able to have a dress because I was a little kid. So that's how we, you know, we paid our way and the -- you know, you go through things that you have to do.

Q: Did that aggravate you?

A: I don't know. I think losing the doll was I think worse than my clothes. Really was, the doll. And I lost my book, couldn't have the book to schlep with me, you know, was too heavy and -- you know, I understood and I didn't understand, you know? I understood that I couldn't, but I wish I could have, and you know.

Q: So in some way you lost your childhood?

A: Exactly.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I did, yeah. And in Kansas City they came to interview me. You know, we have a book, I don't know if you are familiar with the book, which the Kansas City Star did. And this woman that came to interview me only wanted to know wa -- how was it before a -- when I was a child.

How was it then? I couldn't tell her very much. I tried to tell her, I was not a child, you know, I grew up too fast. She didn't get it, you know. So -- I mean, I told her, and I got away a little bit from it, but I never was able to really express the way wi -- things really were.

Q: Right.

A: But that's okay.

Q: It's as if pieces of your childhood --

A: Yeah, I --

Q: -- were taken away from you --

A: -- yes --

Q: -- in various stages.

A: -- taken away.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I never was a child again.

Q: When you played with this little girl, did she allow you to play with the doll? Did she realize that she was getting your doll?

A: I don't know --

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't think so. I don't know whether she did or not. She liked the doll, and --

Q: And that was it.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you think were only Jews in this camp, or was it -- there were people who were not Jewish?

A: There were peo -- people married to non-Jews, you know, that stuck with their husbands, some women do stick with their Jewish husband.

Q: Right. And they put them in --

A: Some people don't, yes, and they were there with them. In fact, we had next door to us a couple that was -- he was Jewish, she was not. But they loved each other a lot and -- cause they were together. And then they separated them, we heard later. And they told him that they killed her, and she wasn't any more alive. Well, he went out of his mind, this poor man killed himself. And it wasn't true.

Q: Oh my.

A: So you know, tragedies like that happen. They were such a nice couple. I just loved them. And they had a lot of -- in Ferramonti they had a lot of wild dogs. See, the dogs came, and it was so hot that they were a little wild, cause the heat and no food. And they came, and this couple were hiding a dog that they got attached to. But then came the order that all the dogs had to be killed. And I remember them sitting and just crying, you know. And still holding on and thinking another day, another day. They tried to keep that dog just as long as they could. But then they were searching room by room, you know, for the dog, because they said the dogs got mad, you know, like from the heat, and from -- by the hundreds they came to Ferramonti, because we were -- we were feeding them, I guess, and they came, but not enough, so they -- they were dangerous, they said. So you could just hear fire them -- firing.

Q: Mm.

A: And I felt so bad for them, you know.

Q: Did you --

A: Especially people I -- we didn't get any dog, no.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Right now I would, but at that time, no. And I felt so bad for them.

Q: Were you friendly with any of the dogs, even though you didn't have one? Did you --

A: I was friendly with the dog next door --

Q: Next door.

A: -- you know, with these people. But I was a little bit afraid, to be truthful, cause he was quite a big dog, and --

Q: Really?

A: -- and they were scaring us what the dog is gonna do, and you know, that they can bite you and attack you, and -- I didn't see any dog doing that, but --

Q: Right.

A: -- they could have, you know? W-We got a lot of injections. And another thing where my brother didn't want any inject --

Q: He didn't -- he didn't want injections either?

A: Here comes the police again, to get him to the doctor.

Q: But it's interesting that the government was doing that, even though they were keeping you in a camp, isn't it?

A: Yes, yes. They were very nice to -- to do that. And I think that was -- and later on, you know, the typhus was really rampant.

Q: Right.

A: So with those shots, we were --

Q: You were protected.

A: Yes, we were protected, we didn't even know how much, when we moved out of the camp.

There were a lot of doctors in that camp. Like -- I understand like over 200 doctors.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. Lot of doctors. And they were looking for work, they were so bored. So one day I'm carrying a -- a jug with water, and that was, you know, a jug from [indecipherable] you know, like --

Q: Ceramic?

A: -- would be ma -- ceramic, kind of. And somehow The jug hit my hand, and I was bleeding, you know, I hit the vein just there. And I was ble -- you should have seen, a hundred came running. They were so happy somebody was bleeding.

Q: So they could do something.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Did they have a school for kids?

A: They had a school. In fact, I have one picture left from that camp, with all the kids, only one picture. My brother is on it, and I am. You know, real small picture.

Q: Really?

A: I don't know how that one got saved. I'll tell you later how we got rid of our pictures. But somehow that picture is there. There was a school, and they had exercise in the morning for the children, and this neighbor, he was our math teacher, he was also from Vienna with his wife. And they had -- they had, I think, even religion in there, they had religion, and singing, you know, and it was -- and I made a lot of friends, girlfriends.

Q: You did?

A: I made some girlfriends, and I still have little doilies from Ferramonti that one of the -- my friends had, and she gave them to me. There were like four -- five sisters, and she gave them to me to embroider. Cause you know, I was always with the needle in my hand. And so I started to embroider, you know, to ey -- I loved to do those things. Not now any more, but I did then. So I still have that, would you believe it? Never finished them.

Q: You never finished them?

A: Never finished them. But I cannot part with them. Isn't that silly?

Q: Were they small doilies, those doilies?

A: Yeah, they're small, and what you can do is you can then put them together --

Q: Right.

A: -- and make, you know --

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. I ha -- still have those.

Q: So where did you learn to do all of that, you just picked it up?

A: I just picked it up. Like I said, Mother taught me to knit. Thank God she didn't teach me to sew, because she couldn't sew on a button. I don't know how come I could. But she was a terrific knitter. She knitted beautifully. And crochet so-so, but she was knitter. She made my coat, my dress, you know, knitted sweaters and stuff like that. She was good at it. And I don't know why I did -- did.

Q: Did you like school? School must have been odd for you, be --

A: Because going in and out of school.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, I liked school in Ferramonti. That was my last school. I didn't go to school til I came to the States. And I was si -- almost 16. I hated every second of it. I hated it so much, I cannot tell you, because they didn't know where to put me. I didn't have school, I was old --

Q: Right.

A: -- old, ancient.

Q: 16.

A: Wh-Where do you put a person like that? So they put me in the seventh grade.

Q: As a 16 year old?

A: Yeah.

Q: That must have been awful.

A: Awful, awful.

Q: Yeah.

A: Go with the children, and you know, I was just -- not only children, dumb children in my eyes, because they hadn't lived.

Q: Right.

A: You know? They didn't know anything about life, and I knew too much, and that wasn't so good. And I just -- I just hate it.

Q: But you liked it in Ferramonti?

A: Yes, I di -- Ferramonti.

Q: You did.

A: Only I wasn't good in math, and I'm still not good in math.

Q: No. What were you good at, besides sewing?

A: I was good in history. I was good in language. I was pretty good in Hebrew, now I can't read anything any more, cause I didn't keep it up. And wasn't good in too many things, but in seventh grade I was in honor roll, so I did something good, you know?

Q: Right.

A: But, it was bad. It was very bad for me to go to school then.

Q: Here, yes.

A: In the States.

Q: When you were in Ferramonti --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- and it's what -- 1941 - '42?

A: Something like --

Q: Are you hearing rumors about -- because now the attack on Russia comes, and now we have a real World War, right?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Are you hearing things about this, or not?

A: We hear things. We hear things -- I don't read the paper, obviously, you know.

Q: Right. Does somebody? Is a pape --

A: Oh, I'm sure my dad --

Q: -- paper comes in?

A: There must be a paper coming in. Maybe even an Italian paper, I don't know. I didn't pay attention --

Q: Right.

A: -- to be honest.

Q: Right, right.

A: I was too busy doing laundry and worrying about my mother, you know, I was so worried about her --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- because I walk with her, and boom I lost her, you know, she was just [indecipherable]. So I don't know about papers, but I'm sure, you know, information goes out. They have radios -- people have radios and --

Q: But I'm wondering what you, as a kid are hearing.

A: Me as a kid --

Q: Are you hearing -- do you recall anything?

A: I don't hear anything good, you know. It's always a little scary, what I hear, yeah, it's scary.

Q: Do you hear about killing?

A: No.

Q: Do you hear about camps? You don't hear anything about that?

A: No.

Q: You just -- if you hear anything it's about the war itself.

A: About the war, yeah, mm-hm. And we knew that there were people in concentration camps, but we never thought, you know, that they would be treated that way. And we still didn't know what happened to our grandparents. We still didn't know then, in Ferramonti. We didn't find out til we got out of Ferramonti.

Q: Right. And they of course, even if they were okay, wouldn't have known where you were, because you -- there was no communication, right?

A: Yeah, we did write --

Q: You did?

A: -- I think. I think there was writing going on, but not too much.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You never knew if you're gonna get the letter or if they're gonna take it away.

Q: Right, right.

A: You know, once it left Vienna, you never knew that. We didn't worry about the Italian people, but the German you always have to worry about.

Q: Were you worried that the Germans were going to come in?

A: Oh yes.

Q: You were?

A: Oh yes, very much.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Very much.

Q: And you're in Ferramonti for one year, two years?

A: No, almost a year [indecipherable]

Q: Almost a year.

A: Almost a year, mm-hm.

Q: Are your parents working? Your mother's too sick.

A: No, not working.

Q: And you're father's not.

A: Nothing to work, there's no work.

Q: There -- there was -- they weren't doing anything?

A: No work, no.

Q: So what do you think he did all day?

A: Well, I know Mother was sick, she couldn't work.

Q: Right.

A: And what did Father do? Probably boss me around.

Q: Boss you around.

A: I don't know what did he do. He didn't do. I don't know, he probably if somebody needed help he was there, but job -- job, you didn't have jobs.

Q: Right.

A: There were no jobs.

Q: Do you think -- were the men hanging around together? Do you -- did you notice they --

A: Yeah, from -- you know, when you got to the mess hall, they were talking, and -- but you know, you were always living in fear, even though we weren't there, we still didn't know what is it gonna be. What's gonna happen? This is not something that can last forever.

Q: Right.

A: So you always worry. And the parents are whispering --

Q: Yes.

A: -- and you don't really know what they're whispering sometimes.

Q: Right, right.

A: And you know what? Sometimes you didn't want to know.

Q: Yeah.

A: You don't want to know what they are whispering when it's scary, only scary stuff.

Q: Were you sleeping okay?

A: Was I sleeping okay?

Q: Yeah.

A: When I was a child?

Q: When you were in Ferramonti.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. You have nightmares?

A: I think so. No.

Q: No.

A: Not then. Now.

Q: Did you -- now. Did your brother? He didn't li -- he didn't like being there at all, did he?

A: No.

Q: He hated it.

A: He hated. He was -- he was afraid of camps, of being locked in, and he was very, very scared.

He didn't want to take injections, he hated injections.

Q: Well, I don't blame him.

A: And the poor man, then he was so sick, that's all he got was --

Q: Injections.

A: -- injections, injections. And they couldn't even find his veins, he had very small veins, or -- I was there in the hospital with him, because his daughter was there all the time. It just broke my heart, you know? But that's how it goes. He didn't deserve that; that I know.

Q: Right.

A: But who deserves such a thing?

Q: I don't --

A: Such a horrible sickness, you know?

Q: He had cancer?

A: He had cancer.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, I think we're going to change the tape now.

A: Yeah, I think.

End of Tape Three

Beginning Tape Four

Q: Evelyn, we were talking about Ferramonti di Tarsia.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Do you have -- we talked about school.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: We talking about you doing the washing for everybody.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: You couldn't quite remember food.

A: No.

Q: You were able to go in and out.

A: No, no.

Q: So it was not -- sometimes, no?

A: Sometimes.

Q: Sometimes.

A: If you had written permission. If you had a special thing that you needed, like some fruit and stuff for my mom, otherwise, you don't get out of the camp.

Q: Right. But it was not the hardest life.

A: No, no.

Q: Do you think you lost weight when you were there?

A: I should go back, then, if that's the case.

Q: Or did you eat well enough so that you didn't lose weight? You know what I mean.

A: I was a child, I don't know.

Q: You don't know --

A: Who paid attention to weight? I didn't pay attention.

Q: You didn't get sick?

A: No.

Q: Your mom got sick, did she get better?

A: Mom got si -- yes, she got better.

Q: She got better, cause you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you brought her the food [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, we did everything we could to make her better.

Q: And was she str -- did she get strong enough, did she become --

A: Yeah.

Q: She did?

A: She did good, yeah. She did good.

Q: Did your father get sick?

A: No.

Q: No. And your brother Heinz was okay?

A: Yeah.

Q: But he was forced to get his shots.

A: His shots, poor man, he was so upset.

Q: Did you think this was going to end, or you were going to be there --

A: Oh yes.

Q: You did?

A: I thought it was going to end.

Q: But your brother didn't.

A: He -- I don't know what he thought, but he was very fearful. Maybe cause he was a boy and he knew they were taking men, you know, for instan -- I don't know what he was, but he was quite upset.

Q: Right.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: How -- how did it happen that you left Ferramonti di Tarsia.

A: They made us go there.

Q: They made you leave. Did everybody --

A: Because we wanted to be together with my dad, and we requested to go either to him or he come to us.

Q: Right.

A: So they made us go there, together.

Q: No, when you -- when you were going to leave Ferramonti, did they -- how -- how di --

A: Oh. We had to leave because they're gonna close the camp.

Q: They were going to close it?

A: Yeah, they going to close out the camp, cause of sickness, I think, and I don't know, they were gonna close it. So we had a choice where to go, you know in Italy, always in Italy. So we didn't want to stay too far down, and we didn't -- my dad didn't want to go to close to Germany -
-

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Up too high.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: See? So we chose like in the middle, like in Toscana, there. So they came up then, when we said the middle, that's what they came up with, Grosseto.

Q: Grosseto.

A: Which was the big city, and we went to Pari, which was the town where we went.

Q: And was Pari nee grosset -- near grosset --

A: It's a province of Grosseto.

Q: I see.

A: And when we arrived on a bus, that I remember, we were on a bus. We got off the bus, and the Italian knew the children, the Jews are coming. So they looked at us, and then a few of them came to touch us, I swear to you, to touch us. And then they said, you feel just like we do. You know, you don't feel any different. You know, because they heard on the radio so much from Hitler that we are such different people, beasts or whatever. So we have to feel different. Well, they didn't see that. So they got very affectionate with us, and we became friends with the people in -- in the town, and my dad and my brother started to work in the fields, to make, you know, some money, or even for trading for food.

Q: Right.

A: And they worked very hard, they worked so hard, they had to -- you know, they got jobs, wa -
- but nobody really wanted, I mean, they were doing it, but as long as they had someone else to do it -- like to build trenches for the grapes, you know, you had [indecipherable] but they were full of stone and rock, and with that thing that they were knocking, you know. I mean, their hands were just a mess, everything was a mess. And -- but you know, they tried their best to go do it, and they did their job. And then came summer, so they worked in the fields again to cut weed, you know, cut the weed. Why do I remember that? Because in the biggest heat, we had to

go and bring them lunch, okay? Mom cooked, and I had to go and take it to them in a basket, you know, the hot food. I don't know why you needed hot food, it's hot like hell. Excuse me. And that was the rule, they had to have lunch. And I hated to walk there, it was so hot. Didn't have the best shoes, you know, to walk, but I did, and I brought them food there. And whenever I didn't have to, I was very happy. Sometimes my mom went, you know, which was even harder for her. I was -- I was a little spoiled rotten kid, I didn't want to do it, but I did. And --

Q: You were a spoiled rotten kid? You don't sound like -- you didn't sound like one before, all of a sudden?

A: I know, all of a sudden I'm a spoiled rotten --

Q: Did people tell you you were spoiled?

A: No.

Q: No. But you really felt --

A: I was not spoiled.

Q: You weren't spoiled.

A: No, I wasn't. And then --

Q: Where were you living in Pari?

A: Pari? Yeah -- i-in a house, we were living in a house. Trying to think. The f -- when we first got there, we lived in a house with -- we each a room, but we lived with another family for the kitchen -- we shared the kitchen. But we had the room, but that didn't work out too good, and then something opened up that we were able to move into a house. The only good thing was that house had a bathroom, while this house did not have a bathroom, which was nothing unusual not to have a bathroom. And -- but there was a sta -- sta -- a stalla -- stall where the -- where the cows were going in.

Q: A barn?

A: A barn.

Q: Yeah.

A: Under the house that was, like. So we had to go there to go to the bathroom, with the --

Q: Was there an outhouse?

A: Yeah -- no.

Q: No.

A: No, was just there.

Q: Just there.

A: Yeah, very, very embarrassing to me, I --I was very upset about it. And anyway, was not easy.

So we lived there in that house, and in -- in that town you had to -- you baked your own bread, okay? I went to work. I went to work. I started to sew with different dressmakers, they taught me how. Okay, I went to a dressmak -- I couldn't go to school, we were not allowed to go to school. And my ma --

Q: Because you were Jews?

A: Because we were Jews. And my mother knew that I like, you know, to work with my hands, so she says, how about if you would -- so they accepted me, you know, the dressmakers, and I started to work for different dressmaker, you know, whenever one needed me, I went there and I worked, and I learned, too, you know, while I work. They tried to teach me, and -- ironing, you know, whatever needed to be done. Sf -- finishing -- first it was finishing work, which now doesn't exist, finishing, the machine finish it. But it was all done by hand, you know, finishing, and then I made garments, slowly, you know.

Q: And do you remember if this is 1942 - 1943? So are you, 12 years old, you're 13 years old?

A: Yeah.

Q: You're 12.

A: Going on 11, maybe.

Q: You think it was '42?

A: 11, yeah. Something like that. Because then I went into the woods, so I know. But --

Q: So you're going every day to this work? Five days a week?

A: I go every day to this work, and what was bad, we didn't have much food in the house, because the Italian people, as wonderful as they are, they were stingy with giving you food, okay? Cause they tried to horde whatever they could. So, many times my mother and I walked miles to see by the farmers what they -- what we could get. Like we went -- you're familiar with ricotta cheese?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They -- wonderful ricotta cheese. Sometimes we had luck that they gave us some. May -- we were ready to pay, we didn't want for nothing. And sometimes they said they don't have, or -- usually at noon they were all, the farmers sitting on a big table having a feast. And we say could we have -- I don't know, some jelly, some whatever. Oh, we're just out of it today. You know. I was so hungry, I walked so much, you know. And they just -- some didn't want to give. Some didn't want to give. And some made me a sandwich, maybe, and gave it to me. But they were not -- the farmers were not that generous. They were more generous, my friends in the ci -- in the town, than the farmers were. Like a potato in one, and something, you know. And I think to this day I hate the walking, because I walked so much for nothing, you know. Anyway, it's a good excuse. And so then -- yeah, we -- I was sewing, and I enjoyed it, different -- yeah, I know what I wanted to say. And they always had midday, in the morning, the kids all had something to eat,

they brought there stuff to eat. Well, I didn't always have, you know, so I just walked out, because I didn't want to see, and yet I was hungry, you know, children. So once in awhile they would give me something, and -- but most of the time not. And then in the afternoon was the same thing. They were eating in the afternoon. And I had just enough for lunch, I didn't have leftover from. So I was hungry, I was always hungry. But they just didn't give, you know, so -- one day I was so hungry, and I looked every place in the house for something to eat, and all I could find was an onion, a small onion. And I bit into it like I don't know what. And I just ate the last thing in the house, that day, you know, the next day we got again something, but just to tell you how hungry I was.

Q: Right.

A: You know, children get so hungry. So I was young. Like to say, I wasn't even 11 yet, I don't think. Yeah, I was 11 while I was in the woods, so [indecipherable]

Q: So this was earlier.

A: Yeah. I remember because of -- got my period in the woods.

Q: In the woods, yeah.

A: That's why I remember that I -- my age. Which was another terrible thing. But anyway, before I get into the woods, how did we get int -- to the woods? You had to do your own bread, okay? Now, you made the bread, and there was one bakery in town, where you call them in the evening and you say, I'm making bread, so they come and pick it up and put it in the oven. So my mother called in, went to them that she is making bread. So she says, okay, I'll be there to get it in the morning. So they made the bread, and then next thing you know, somebody comes to tell us, you better leave right now, cause five o'clock in the morning the Germans are going to be here to pick you up. We don't have bread, you know, obviously, and one of our Italian friends

gave us a bread, you know, to take, and my cat, my Muschi, she wanted -- you know, we had to leave her, so I left her with a friend. And it was pouring rain. I had open shoes, but that's all I had, you know. So anyway, we said okay, let's go. There was two more families there with -- actually three. Two of them in a different direction -- there was a couple -- like my brother said, somebody Russian. There was a Russian man, Russian Jew. He was married to a Gentile German lady, who stuck with him. They were like so tall, and especially I was so little, I thought they were two giant. But they were tall. And they went one way with another couple who had two boys from Vienna, they were from Vienna. And we went with a couple with two children. Small -- little smaller than me, a boy and a girl, so there's -- they came with us, in the same place. So we kept on walking and walking and walking, and all of a sudden we were ready to enter the woods, and I hear a cat. My cat followed me into the woods. I don't know how she got out. And, you know, cats don't like wet, don't like rain, she came right in the rain with us. So, of course, with everything else, I had the cat, so I picked her up, I don't care, you know, I picked her up because I felt sorry for her. But later on you will see, the cat li -- saved our life. So anyway, I pick up the cat, and we go into the woods. We have no place to stay, and it's raining. We had like a tarp, and we put on the floor, and -- to sit on, you know, and it was -- we didn't have much food, the -- these friends gave us some bread, and I don't know, maybe a piece of cheese, I don't remember what she gave us. But whatever she wa -- she gave us, was wonderful. So in the morning, then we heard later, this woman comes. "Mia," that was my mother, "a far il pane." Make bread. Because she gives you the signal when to make the bread, and then she comes and picks it up. Well, Mia's not answering, and she cannot understand, so she is knocking, and no -- I -- that's what they told us later, she's knocking and knocking and she runs up, she sees something is wrong, and she finds we're gone. And 10 minutes later the Germans were there to

pick us up. And nobody knew, you know, what happened to us. And this woman says she called to make bread, that's impossible, they have to be here. Well, somebody saved our life.

Q: Do you know who that was?

A: Later on we found out who it was. It was a bishop from Grosseto, a bishop that called, I guess the priest of the town, I don't know who exactly, but he left word for us to leave. So he must have been, you know -- heard or whatever. And boy was he right, you know? He just saved all our lives.

Q: Wow.

A: And we went into the woods, and there was only a couple of people that knew where we were going, what woods, because there lots of woods. And eventually, while we were there, they brought us some bread, or something, you know.

Q: From the town? From Pari?

A: From the town, from Pari, yes.

Q: So how did -- how did people find out in Pari, where you were? Did someone go back and tell them?

A: Not -- not people, certain people.

Q: Certain people.

A: Certain people. Certain people -- there was one guy, he would have given his life if somebody would have told him where we are, you know?

Q: Really?

A: A Fascist, a real Fascist. But they knew it, and nobody told him where we are. And -- and in those mountains we had people that made coal, carbonia, a -- well, they were coal. And they knew us, and they wanted to keep us safe, you know. And once in awhile they gave us, if they

had leftover bread or something, they gave us. And then one day they're sitting around, and here comes the Fascist, and they knew, you know, the Fascist. So they're talking to him, which I heard later, and one of the guys is just there with one of those things that you chop wood with, you know?

Q: An axe?

A: An axe. And just talked to him, and just does that with the axe, you know, so he got the picture that if you talk, or if you don't behave -- do you know where these Jews are? You know, he was asking. I would like to give them, you know, bring them some food or something. And he said we have no idea where they are, and he was going, you know -- so you know, we had close calls, very close calls. But nobody spoke, nobody gave us away, where we are. Now --

Q: Now, these were Germans who were coming after you.

A: No, no --

Q: Not Italian.

A: -- Italian.

Q: There's --

A: Oh, the Germans were going to come and pick us up --

Q: Right.

A: -- yes, yes.

Q: But this Fascist is a --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- is an Italian.

A: An Italian, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. And he would have given anything if he could have caught -- catch us. I don't know why, we didn't do anything to him, but it was a Fascist, a -- we didn't do anything to the Nazis either, but they did to us. So anyway, nobody spoke, and then we had a very hard time. Finally, they helped us build a shack, just to have a little, you know, protection from the weather. And it was like from the trees, the branches, made from branches, cause these people knew how to do that, and they helped us, the people that -- the coal miners. And then you had to take from the earth, and you know, fill in, and then they made like beds from th -- from the branches, and then put straw on it, you know, to lay on it, but a -- small. And we were trying to be close. And one turned, the other one had to turn, you know what I mean? It was so hard, because you know, branches are not -- nothing is smooth, and the straw was falling right through. Anyway --

Q: So it wasn't such a great situ --

A: It wasn't a great situation, but it was a little bit -- you know, we were real prepared for the bad weather, because it was snowing, too. And you had to whisper the whole time, cause in the woods your voice carries, far away, you know?

Q: So what are you ins -- excuse me --

A: Inside --

Q: -- inside the woods, o -- and --

A: -- in this thing, and the first night, in fact, the thing, the roof fell in, so all the men -- the two men and my brother and the other boy, all night had to sit with something to hold it up, you know, the roof up. We couldn't make much of a fire because we didn't want anybody to see the smoke. During the day was completely a no-no with the fire, but in the night we tried to do little bit open fire to keep a little warm, you know? And we still had the cat. And the cat disappeared,

and I was beside myself, the Germans killed my cat, they took my cat. But she found herself a boyfriend.

Q: She found herself a boyfriend?

A: And she came -- she came home pregnant.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah. That we didn't need, believe me. So she came home pregnant and had four little kittens.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: So then we got -- we asked this guy that brought us food to leave the -- the cha -- the little basket, so we can put in, you know. And then he had to find us someone to want the little -- after -- you know, after awhile, to take them. And she was just marching behind, you know, her kittens, when we were moving from place to place, cause we never tried to stay too long in one place. Even when we came to sleep and we always tried to go away from the place, and watch who goes by and --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- you know, we were constantly in fear, constantly. We never knew. And then there were bombardments, and we were next to a river, and it sounded -- you know the sound was so harsh, or strong. And we thought always, we're next, you know, they're gonna bombard us next. But it didn't happen, but the fear was constant, the fear was constant. And whispering. Then one day, this couple, that Russian couple, she, poor woman, got hysterical, you know, from all of the stuff going on. I don't know what she was, but she started to scream. And that's the worst thing you can do in -- in the woods. So he tried to calm her down and everything, but, you know, she went through a lot of stress, and she probably was thinking, why am I here? You know, I have no

reason, but she stuck it out, but she just lost it. And we were -- so we had to move from there right away, cause we thought, uh-oh. And another thing what was having, they had a forest fires. So we were worried about that, you know, that's it's gonna -- we could feel, you know, the heat from the fire. So again we were on the run. Constantly on the run, in the woods, in the rain, in the heat. And oh, was -- one day it was snowing so hard. And we were without anything. We didn't have a piece of bread, we didn't have anything to eat. So we thought, okay we'll just -- you know, nothing you can do. And here comes this man, this blessed man.

Q: With food. And is this somebody that you knew?

A: He's the one that a -- that brought us food --

Q: Before.

A: -- before. He was really not from Pari, he was from the big city, he was what they called sfolato. When -- when they started to bombard the big cities, they all came to the small town. We had a lot of people from Pisa. In fact, I fell in love with a guy from Pisa. And he was -- but he was from Siena, I think. And he was wonderful, can you believe it? The biggest snow, here comes this man. He says, "I knew you didn't have." An angel. Angel.

Q: That's fabulous. Okay, I have to change the tape.

End of Tape Four

Beginning Tape Five

Q: What was the name of the man who brought you the food?

A: Dario.

Q: And wa -- was Dario from Pari?

A: Ye -- yeah, he lived in Pari because he was from the city and I think he had some relatives in Pari, and that's how he got to Pari.

Q: And how do you think he found you? Do people know, were there --

A: I think -- wait a minute, I think word was sent to him where we are. You see, I -- I had one -- one change of clothes, I didn't have much, but we had a big oversea case, you know, one of those wooden things that we left at the church. The priest took it in for us. So when we need a piece of something, somebody went there and got it, and brought it to us. And this other couple that was with us, was -- this woman there was about my size, only she was taller, she was a woman, I was a child, so -- but that's besides the point. Anyway, I was -- my skirt was getting -- not that I was getting so tall, but still I was growing, and my skirt was getting shorter and shorter. So it was not a good thing, you know? Anyway that's that. Okay.

Q: Two more questions now, for this -- for this particular part. One is, how in heaven's name did you get a cat in the first place? How did you get Muschi?

A: Well, it's not hard to get a cat in Italy.

Q: No? Lots of cats?

A: No. Lots of cats. And -- and we got her, you know, somebody gave her to me when she was a little kitten, and you know, it was just perfect. Wherever you went there was a cat, so I had a cat of my own, which was great. But we all loved Muschi, everybody loved Muschi, and -- except our people that were in the roo -- in the thing with us didn't like it because she stole some food

from them. But she put it under the bed -- under the thing. I mean, they know we have a cat, so why did they put it under there? Anyway.

Q: And you gave the cat the name of your doll?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Right.

A: Muschi.

Q: What did Muschi look like? Was she a light cat, a dark cat?

A: She was a gray cat with white. She was perfect.

Q: Yeah.

A: She was perfect, just beautiful cat. I always promised her I'll take her to the United States with me. And I would have, had she survived. But see, with all the bombardments and with all the shooting, she went wild.

Q: Really?

A: She turned wild. I was holding her when we were liberated -- getting ahead of myself, but we were liberated -- I was carrying her because a lot of dogs and other animals came, so I figured she might be afraid. So I held her. And then she saw -- this dog barked at her and she jumped off my hand and scratched me from here to here, which she never, ever did, from fear, and she went back to where we stayed, the farmers told us that they saw her. And that is quite a trip she took back, I guess looking for us, poor cat. But she couldn't -- and we told them, you know, if you ever see her, please, you know, we want her back. But the farmer said they never saw her again. She just kept on looking for us and looking for us, I guess. So I couldn't keep my promise and bring her.

Q: Yeah, couldn't bring her.

A: Which was very hard.

Q: Right.

A: Because as we got into the woods -- I told you that she saved our life --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- cause finally we got away from wherever we were, far away, and there was a farmhouse, an empty farmhouse. I don't know if it was a farmhouse -- anyway, was a -- was a building, okay, where they stored hay and everything for the animals. And they had a lot of cherry trees around there, so we have, you know, food. And so we went in there, we were two -- by then we were two couples, you know, the other couple with two children and -- and us. And Muschi was with us, and I look at Muschi, and she's looking in -- in a direction. And I'm following her eyes, there's four German soldiers coming our way.

Q: And she's not making a sound --

A: And she's looking --

Q: -- she's just looking.

A: -- looking. But I could see the -- where she was looking, thank God she is looking in the right direction. And just sat there, you know, and looked. So I told -- you know, everybody, they are here. So the men got out of that building, which was him, his son, and my brother, my father, four of them jumped out of the building, and we didn't know where they were going, but out. And we quickly -- I put on a kerchief, you know, I made myself really look like -- all of us like farmers, we're all farmers. Course we didn't speak German, you know, or anything. And all of a sudden, we hear a gunshot. A gunshot, we didn't know. They didn't know if somebody shot us, and we didn't know if someone shot them. So then here they come to the door, the Germans to our door. And they say something in German, and we just said [indecipherable] you know, like

we don't know what they're talking about. But then they say -- one says to the other, you idiot, you didn't kill the cat. Thank God. They were shooting at the cat, and as they were talking, the cat came running inside, see? So we were relieved that they didn't kill the cat, and thank God they didn't shoot at the men. But the men didn't know that yet, okay? So they left. They left. We were not important, they left. They saw there was nothing but hay there, and [indecipherable]. So then, we could hardly wait for the men to see -- so here they come, God, all in one piece, you know, with like -- but we knew we had to leave that place. So what we did, outside that house, we made room for our pictures. We buried the pictures, and my dad knew shorthand, and he wrote shorthand every day of our stay in the woods, the whole life he wrote in shorthand. So he put that down there, and pictures of ours from family, you know, whatever we had. I don't think there was money. Whatever -- anyway, we all buried it. And we figure, but -- you know, pretty down deep so it shouldn't get wet. And we left there, and we went -- you know, inside the woods a long different direction. And then -- trying to think, you know what happened first, it's hard to remember. Went there, and we buried that, and then -- and then we went on. Which was a big mistake, cause we got caught in the middle of shooting, the Germans -- and the French liberated us, the French and the Moroccans. And they were shooting at each other, and we were in the middle. Okay? The French -- we finally saw a Frenchman, and we're so happy, and he says, go away, go away. And we didn't know why he say -- tell us to go away. You know, you're so stupid sometimes. Anyway, all of a sudden we're just in the middle of all this fighting going on. And my poor dad and mom wanted to protect us, so they each laid on us. Dad laid on me, and Mom laid on my brother, so that things shouldn't hit us. We laid there for hours. And then finally, it's kind of stopped, so we kind of thought, let's go back to the house and get our stuff and get out of -- out of here. So when we got to the house, everything was -- they ripped the

pictures, whoever found. See, they thought maybe we had money that we buried. Mut -- somebody must have seen us do that, but they thought maybe it was money and when that wasn't money, they was mad, so they ripped things, you know. And so my Dad's -- all that writing went, and we lost a lot of pictures, which we were holding onto like dear life, okay?

Q: You got some pictures back? Some of them were still okay? Nothing?

A: Nothing.

Q: Nothing.

A: Nothing was still okay, everything was torn apart. And yeah, the pictures of grandparents, you know, and the brothers and sisters. So then we went, and all of a sudden -- we got out of the house, we figured well, you know, we'll go and see what -- which side we're gonna go on, we didn't know where to go. So one of the Moroccans here got -- one of them are on the mule -- on those big mules, and they are up there, and we're down here. And they point to me, and they point to the other lady, the mother of the other, she was still a younger woman, blonde, you know. And she wants us -- she want -- he wants us to go with him. So we all started to cry, you know? My mother is on her knees, begging. The kids are crying. I mean, it was a scene. And we're trying to think what to give him, he shouldn't take us, you know? And my mother had the wedding ring. So she says here, you want this do -- and there were no -- not much conversation because they -- they didn't understand each other, but I think with hands and movements you could tell what we were about. So Mother takes off that, and my brother had a watch, so -- and took off the watch to give to him. He took it. He took it. So we didn't know, are we safe now, or what does he want, you know? And he's still pointing to me and her. And my mother grow hysterical, you know? Being liberated and not liberated. So finally there were like some cows there on the field. And somehow he -- he said to us, okay, you can have the cows, or some --

that's how we understood, you know, we don't know what he said. And they all have gold teeth, you know, and they're so disgusting, you know, they're not -- the beards, and oh, horrible looking. Anyway, he left. He left. My mother faints.

Q: Your mother fainted.

A: So we got her, you know, going. Said, we have to leave this place. Then the other lady -- my skirt was up to here, you know? So she gave me one of her skirts, which covered me, and a blouse with long sleeves. You know, they made me look, you know, unattractive as possible. And a-again, you know, scarf on the head, anything they could do to make me look bad. So I said, okay, we are going. And we started to walk towards a town, different town. And we're going, and all of a sudden here's this guy.

Q: Again?

A: The same guy. My poor mom, she passed out again.

Q: She --

A: She passed out again. I thought this time she died. I was sure she's gone. Anyway, he rode -- he rode away.

Q: He didn't say anything?

A: He ro -- he didn't -- he said something, but don't ask me what, and he rode away. And we rushed to a farmhouse, where we knew partisans usually, you know, met, or I don't know what we knew. Anyway, we go there, and they have surrounded the -- that room, that house. The Moroccans, they surrounded that house, barefoot, you know, they come and sneak up on you. I mean, it's a horrible thing. And we finally opened the door and got in and here are the partisans inside. And I am hysterical. And then -- til then I was fine. And when I saw them, I got hi -- I -- I really lost it, I was hysterical crying to them. They were so sweet and so nice. They assured me

everything will be okay, you know, and stuff like that. Was horrible. So then they left, the -- the guys left.

Q: Which ones?

A: The Moroccans --

Q: The Moroccan --

A: -- left. And they kind of helped us to get into a town that was not too far from the woods, and -- which we did. In fear every step of the way. We were liberated, and not liberated. You understand?

Q: Sure, because everything's in chaos.

A: We didn't know if -- if they're coming back, or if they -- we didn't know what they were gonna do. They could have shot us, they could have -- and they could have shot my parents and then taken us, and you know, we just didn't know what they were gonna do. Because for 24 hours the Moroccan had free hand, they can do whatever they want to women. And they did a lot of damage. They were very, very rude, very mean. So we were lucky that we -- we got away with that.

Q: Was this something that you understood what your mother was really afraid of, that you would be raped? Did you --

A: No.

Q: You didn't know.

A: I didn't know. I didn't --

Q: You didn't realize. You knew it wasn't good.

A: I know it wasn't good. I know it wasn't good to go with this guy. And I wouldn't want to go with this guy, I knew that. Gosh, I knew it. But of course, I didn't see as much danger as my

parents did, you know? Oh, it was horrible. And that -- that was our liberation, don't forget. And then, I could not stand to see a soldier, I was afraid of every soldier I saw.

Q: Didn't matter.

A: Didn't matter what soldier --

Q: Who they were, uh-huh.

A: -- they were. I was afraid. We finally stopped in a town where we got a little break and washed up, and some people gave us some food, you know. Was not Pari, was town before Pari, but they helped us, you know? And we walked all the time, just walk and walk and walk.

Q: But were you trying to get to Pari? Is that where you're trying to go --

A: We tried to get to Pari --

Q: -- you're trying to get back to Pari?

A: -- Pari, yeah. But I don't --

Q: Because you know people there, and you know that they would help you.

A: Yeah, and we have our stuff there still, and --

Q: The woods that you were in, was it south of Pari, or east of --

A: It was actually -- was the Siena woods, not Grosseto woods.

Q: I see.

A: We went into Siena woods. We just kept walking, we don't know where we're going, we just kept walking.

Q: And this other couple with the two kids, do they remain with you? Or they left?

A: Yes, they were --

Q: They remained with you.

A: They remained with us all the way through. The -- the Russian, which is why -- they went to a different woods. They went somebody else, and the other couple from Vienna, with two boys, I understand that the Germans too -- found one of the boys. He tried to, you know, talk his way out of that he's from the farm, you know, and I don't really know whatever happened to them. Lost contact, cause they didn't come back to Pari, so it was just rumor, we didn't know exactly --

Q: Exactly, right.

A: -- what happened. And they were sad. In fact, one was Heinz --

Q: Same name.

A: -- one of the boys was Heinz, and one was Walter. The boys, you know. And so I don't know what happened to them. But we went back to Pari, and then we're waiting to get to America, still. Again, you know. And then my dad wo -- my brother, they took the bus to Grosseto, to talk to the American, you know, for the liberation, whatever. And my dad says they were interrogating him, and my brother -- you did this, ooh, ooh, ooh. And my dad says to my brother, "This idiot thinks we're spies." In German.

Q: In German?

A: In German.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he understood German, so he started to laugh. So, you know. Then we got -- he got some papers, and -- that we were okay to go, that we were not spies, by no means. I know I'm leaving something out, but I can't think --

Q: Well let me -- let me go back --

A: -- yeah, ask me, ask me question, yeah.

Q: -- I know that you -- let -- when you were in the Siena woods, I know it makes you uncomfortable, but it's really important as a woman --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- to hear about this. You're a young girl --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- and you get your period for the first time in the terrible circumstances.

A: Terrible.

Q: So that taking care of yourself under those circumstances seems almost --

A: Terrible.

Q: -- impossible.

A: I didn't have anything.

Q: Right.

A: My mother -- there are men here, that's okay.

Q: Oh forget it.

A: I'll ignore them.

Q: Yes, we'll ignore them.

A: My mother took off her slip and tore it apart so that I should have something.

Q: Have something, yeah.

A: And they had a river where we went to wash things. But always afraid who is seeing, you know.

Q: Right.

A: I could never really wash myself because I always thought somebody sitting in -- in the tree, you know? And I never felt clean enough, you know. And it was so embarrassing to me, so embarrassing, oh.

Q: Did you know about menstruation before it happened, had you been told that this might -- this was going to happen?

A: Not a great deal.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: A little bit I was told, but not in my imagination --

Q: You didn't.

A: -- did I think --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- this was happening to me. You know, and I was only 11, don't forget.

Q: Right.

A: Quite young.

Q: So were you quite regular during this year in the woods? You were getting your period every month?

A: Well, I didn't get it at the very beginning. I didn't get it at the very beginning, I got it little later.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But -- and always the wrong time. Whe -- when is the right time, you know, but always the wrong time. And I was terribly upset with it because I just had a hard time to handle. And the other girl that was with us, she was jealous because she wanted. I said you stupid.

Q: She wanted to get it [indecipherable]

A: She wanted to --

Q: Right.

A: -- she felt more grown up, I guess. Was almost 12, I guess --

Q: Right.

A: -- when I got it, but more 11 than --

Q: But your mother must have been menstruating --

A: Yeah, she was.

Q: -- as well as this other woman.

A: They must have. Never told me.

Q: But they didn't --

A: Never knew.

Q: You never knew.

A: Never knew. They're unbelievable what they did in those days.

Q: It's -- it's one of those things that people don't think about.

A: Gos --

Q: Do you know what I mean?

A: Yes.

Q: How -- how

A: Yes.

Q: The -- the so-called normal circumstance --

A: Right, yes.

Q: -- of this kind of a situation.

A: Oh, it was --

Q: It was awful.

A: Oh, awful, awful, awful. Really awful. So -- and don't forget, I couldn't wash my hair, couldn't brush my teeth, didn't have anything.

Q: Right.

A: Didn't have -- we had the little soap, somebody wa -- was shaving soap, you know, with like a tube. And that was the only soap. It's a miracle I didn't have lice because I -- my hair was long, you know.

Q: Your hair was long, so you did not -- you didn't cut it.

A: Long, I had braids, braided hair.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But there was no way to wash it.

Q: So did everybody smell?

A: No, I don't --

Q: Do you remember?

A: -- maybe I'm so -- was so used to the smell that it didn't smell, I don't know.

Q: Maybe it was fortunate that you were outside in that way.

A: Yeah.

Q: Because maybe the air helped you.

A: Maybe. I did not remember any terrible smell, you know, for some reason.

Q: Now, when you left Ferramonti and went to Pari -- I'm trying to figure out the t -- the -- the time frame when the allies have gone into Italy.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: When you leave Ferramonti, the allies are not there yet.

A: No.

Q: So Italy is still run by the Italians. So you don't, in fact --

A: By the Germans, by the Germans.

Q: The Germans were running?

A: With the Italians, they were --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know --

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: -- they were together in cahoots.

Q: Right.

A: There was one incident when a -- before I -- we left into the woods. Pari was again, you know, round. Up on a hill and round. So I'm there by a friend at the beginning of Pari, and the highway, like the street, you know, were cars, two cars that come, come up the street, and I'm standing there with her and I'm watching the road to see if somebody's coming. And sure enough, four soldiers. They were always walking in four, I don't know why. Four German soldiers g -- are coming. So I was like -- that was before the woods. I was like stuck to the floor, you know? I didn't know run back in or run back out or what do I do? So I just stood there, and - and the farmer, they were talking to one of the guys down there, and he goes like this. I feel he is pointing at me. So I'm really paralyzed now, but I don't move. I didn't know what to do. I stayed there and they're coming up, they're coming up and they're asking me where is a bar?

Q: Where's the barn?

A: Bar.

Q: Oh, bar.

A: Bar. So I figured, what do I do? They told them that I speak German, maybe. Do I answer German, do I answer in Italian. Are they testing me? I did not know. So I said, ober dar, you know, like broken German, like I knew, and they went away and then they kind of looked back, like thinking, what did she say, you know? Again, I was panicking. I ran back in the house, finally. I was so worried, you know, that I did the wrong thing when I didn't know what to do, you know? Cause the way he pointed, I think that he pointed at me.

Q: Right.

A: He couldn't talk to these people, so he pointed at me. Oh my God. That's one of -- another one of those fear-y things.

Q: But it was okay.

A: Yeah, it turned out okay.

Q: They went to the bar and that was it.

A: They went to the bar, hope they --

Q: You hope they got drunk.

A: They got drunk, and other things.

Q: And other things. And sick.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And we have to change the tape.

A: Yeah.

End of Tape Five

Beginning Tape Six

Q: Is there anything that we need to know more about what happened to you in the forest? Are there things --

A: In the forest.

Q: -- anything that stands out?

A: Hunger, a lot of hunger. Always scared that somebody's gonna discover us. Broken up because the sleep, and again, going to the bathroom. Don't forget, you had to go into the woods, you know. And I was one to be sure everybody's here, nobody is going where I'm going.

Q: You wanted a lot of privacy.

A: I wanted privacy.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then you never knew who was gonna be out there, either. It was very, very difficult, another difficult time. And what else? Waiting for food, worrying about my Muschi, and just worrying about everything, you know, I was always worrying about things.

Q: How did you all get along? The two families.

A: We got along pretty good --

Q: Yeah?

A: -- with this family. I really cannot say that we had any -- the only time we had really a fight was because of the cat.

Q: Yeah.

A: Cause they finally had some meat and the cat took it, and not only that, brought her boyfriend in to help her eat it.

Q: Did she leave you to go see her boyfriend a lot?

A: Well, for awhile we thought we lost her.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We thought we lost her, and then here she comes, home pregnant, just like a bad girl.

Q: But she didn't feel like a bad girl, I guess.

A: No, she was a good girl. No.

Q: So you did not keep her -- there was -- there was no way to keep her --

A: No.

Q: -- inside or anything.

A: No, no.

Q: She just roamed wherever she wanted.

A: She -- wherever she wanted, you know.

Q: Did she stick close to you very often?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Then she [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, you see she followed us in the worst weather --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- so she felt good with us, but she just was a bad girl.

Q: Yes. She found a boyfriend [indecipherable]

A: Found a boyfriend and that's it.

Q: Did you have any religious beliefs as a little kid?

A: Well, that's a very sore subject. I had religious beliefs because I was told to have religious beliefs. I had to, you know, go to synagogue, and when I went to synagogue -- we went to synagogue where the women were upstairs, the men downstairs, that was my grandparents, you know. They were kosher. But my mother never was -- believed in it. She was a rebel then, to the end. And -- but she didn't disturb their kitchen or anything. But when we went out, or when she went out -- you don't go out to eat in Vienna that much. But when she did go out, she did not eat kosher food, okay? But she -- she respected whatever the house --

Q: Right.

A: We couldn't even tear the toilet paper on Shabbat. You know, had to be done Friday, because you're not supposed to tear. And when I drove my mother crazy the whole week I didn't want to do anything, but came Saturday, I wanted to knit, I wanted to sew, I wanted to clean. Drove her nuts. The whole week you don't want to do and then -- come Saturday, you want to do it.

Q: So this was when you were living with your grandparents?

A: Yes. Grandparents, or even when I was with Mother visiting, or whatever.

Q: Right.

A: Wherever I was --

Q: You were a problem.

A: I was a problem. They never let me do what I wanted to do. And -- but they were wonderful grandparents, wonderful. So were my parents were wonderful grandparents, too, I must say.

Q: Yeah.

A: Too good. They gave everything to their grandkids, they loved the grandkids. So I guess it's -- okay you asked me about belief.

Q: Yeah.

A: I thought -- you know, I never gave it much thought as a child. I knew I was Jewish, and I was Jewish. Big deal, I'm thinking now. I didn't have to go through all of that, you know, but I'm Jewish, I'm -- I don't believe in miracles, you know. I don't know what else I would believe in if it wasn't Jewish. I don't believe in a lot of things. You know, they all say the Bible, the Bible is a wonderful thing. But it's written by people. God didn't write the Bible, you know? That's what I always feel. So what else am I gonna believe? I'm not over religious, I'm not. And I think -- for some reason I'm not, which I cannot completely say. I can't say.

Q: So you didn't pray when you were in the forest, you didn't --

A: Not much.

Q: Do you think your parents did?

A: My brother. My brother was laying Tefillin every day.

Q: You're kidding me.

A: After the -- he was Bar Mitvah'd.

Q: Really?

A: He was very religious. But -- unbelievable.

Q: So he carried the Tefillin with him.

A: Yes, he carried the Tefillin and everything.

Q: Interesting.

A: But then, you know, he got away from it because he married a non-Jewish girl who did not believe in what he believes, which is okay, but went a little bit about it the wrong way, okay, and hurt us all a little bit too much. What can I tell you? So there's not too much to argue about there.

Q: But you never -- you never had much of a belief?

A: I think the reason I didn't have much of a belief, because of what happened to my brother. I think that's kind of -- kind of upset me so much, and what happened to my parents, such disappointment that they had. And -- and they didn't even ask for what they were accused of asking for. So anyway, I don't want to tell you.

Q: Let me ask you something. You -- there -- a -- on the one side when you talk about the Italians, they're wonderful.

A: Wonderful.

Q: On the other side, you get put into a concentration camp, you are certainly on the run, and --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- in really terrible circumstances --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- for at least a year, if not longer.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: That's still in the context of Italy, so is Italy a sort of a puzzle to you?

A: No.

Q: It's not?

A: Italy is wonderful.

Q: It's wonderful.

A: Wonderful. If it wasn't for Italy we wouldn't be alive. They helped us, the people were wonderful. The people that we knew, not -- there were some son-of-a-gun that wanted to have our neck, okay, the heck with them. But most people were helpful, most people were understanding. They were wonderful, that's all I can tell you. They warned us, you know. They fed us whenever they could. Now there were some people that had, but didn't want to show that

they have, so they didn't give, and -- cause they were afraid for themselves, maybe. I don't know. But they're wonderful people, they really are. I love them dearly, I really do.

Q: Yeah. So let's talk a bit about the DP camp you went to. It's Cinecetta?

A: Cinecitta.

Q: Cinecitta.

A: Cinecitta.

Q: Cinecitta. In Rome. It-It's not right? I'm not doing it right?

A: No, no. Cine.

Q: Cine.

A: Cine.

Q: Cine.

A: Citta.

Q: Citta.

A: That's it.

Q: I'm not trying it --

A: Cinecitta.

Q: Cinecitta. So this is in Rome, which is --

A: Uh-huh.

Q: -- which was, before it became a DP camp --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- a film s -- a set of film studios --

A: Right.

Q: -- right?

A: Right, right.

Q: Which it then became afterwards again?

A: Yes.

Q: So is this the central place in Italy where the DPs were?

A: DPs, yes, it really was. And they all got jobs there. My husband's mother was a cook in one of the kitchens. My mother was a cook in the big kitchen where all the refugees came. And my father was in -- kitchen employed. I was in the kitchen employed to give out cards so people shouldn't double up on their food, see because they came twice, if it's leftover, they were welcome, but not take away from somebody else the first one.

Q: Right.

A: You know. So I had to turn cards, and give them numbers, you know, if there was one meal, that's what I was doing. And then I helped in the Red Cross, too, I was sewing mattress covers in the Red Cross.

Q: With a machine?

A: With a machine. And then came the rule that they were going to pay something for that work, but again, I was too young to get paid.

Q: Cause you were what, thir --

A: I was not fif -- not quite 15, so my mother said she's too young to get paid, she's too young to work, good-bye, You're not working any more. And that was that, she didn't let me work, cause they didn't want to pay me.

Q: So you're not going to school.

A: No.

Q: And you're not working.

A: No. I was working, you know, in the -- in the camp.

Q: And you're there from 1945 to 1940 --

A: Seven

Q: 1947. So thr-thre -- three full years?

A: Mm-hm, yeah, right.

Q: It's a long time.

A: A long time, yeah.

Q: And are you -- i -- ha -- what is the living situation? Is it like --

A: Well, we had little rooms --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- on top where the dressing rooms were for the stars, okay? So we -- being that we were working in Cinecitta, we got the rooms. There were a lot of people there, had to live in big -- in the big rooms with divisions.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Like tents, drapes and something like that. But we were lucky that we were able to get -- they u -- we started out there, but then they let us move up. And then when my brother got married, he got a room, too. A different place, but he got a room, too.

Q: So he got married while you were still in the DP camp?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So he's quite young still?

A: Yes, he was young, very young. 18. Too young.

Q: Ho -- how did you meet your future husband?

A: How did I meet him?

Q: Yeah. [indecipherable]

A: He was friends -- friends with my brother, there was a whole clique of them, whole bunch of troublemakers, including my brother, who was the instigator.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, he was instigating, but he never did, you know? He was, let them do the dirty work. Was him and the guy that still, you know, lives in Kansas City, who also is from Vienna, name of Heinz Winkler. And --

Q: So what was he trying to instigate? What sort of trouble?

A: Some trouble. I mean, stupid kid's trouble, you know, no big troubles. But there was one crazy woman on the hall, and they made her a little crazier, you know, and stuff like that. Just mischief.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Nothing serious, mischief. I think my husband will be able to tell you more about all the mischief, yeah.

Q: So you -- you met him in the context of this -- this group?

A: Yeah, mm-hm.

Q: And -- and he's a couple of years older than you --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- right?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So you were 15 or 16 when you met?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And he was 18?

A: Uh-huh. Right.

Q: Had you had boyfriends before?

A: No, not really.

Q: Did he actually become a boyfriend in the --

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Oh, I couldn't stand him.

Q: Oh, no.

A: I ca -- I'm back where I started.

Q: You couldn't stand him?

A: I couldn't stand him --

Q: Really?

A: -- going on my nerve. My God, nothing changed, actually.

Q: So it was a difficult time?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was -- was --

A: He was annoying.

Q: He was annoying, but he was interested in you.

A: Looks like he was interested.

Q: It looks like he was interested.

A: Look like he was interested, yeah.

Q: How -- w-when people talk about liberation, and we use the word as if it's completely wonderful thing, and it's not so wonderful, because --

A: Not always, yeah.

Q: -- right, because how in heaven's name do you put everything together when you've lost everything?

A: Yeah, it hard, very hard, yeah.

Q: What did you think your future was going to be like? Did you have dreams ab --

A: Oh, I didn't think much because I always felt my parents protecting me in every way, you know. As long as I had them, I didn't worry.

Q: So were you able to be a little girl in some way, finally, or not? You couldn't.

A: No. I don't remember ever doing that. I don't re -- my mother was very strict. I couldn't wear lipstick til I was 18. I couldn't date, forget about dating, my God. I took a picture with a friend, a guy, and I did like -- held my head like this against him. I thought the roof was gonna cave in.

With a strange guy you're taking a picture like that? I had fur coat on, fur coat -- m-mouton -- mouton --

Q: Yeah, yeah --

A: -- do you remember mouton?

Q: -- mouton, yeah, yeah, right.

A: That was terrible -- it was good coat, warm, but don't ever let it rain on you, cause you smell like crazy. So anyway, I was holding like this, and oh she had a fit. You know, stupid things like that, she -- and now don't stay out too late, you know, I can't sleep if you're not here. Every Saturday night I heard that.

Q: This is after liberation? This is after being in the DP camp?

A: Yes, in New York, in New York already.

Q: This is in New York? So it went -- it kept going?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: It's -- but it started in the DP camp?

A: Oh yeah, always in the DP camp. I was -- I loved to dance, just loved to dance, and the first -- I was 13 in camp, when this soldier, a British soldier in fact, took me to dance. So I danced, it was nice, you know, I started to make different steps which I didn't really know. And he was so patient, he was so nice, he was not fresh, he was a gentleman. And the trouble was he left, and I could only dance with him, I thought, you know. That's how silly a person is. So then another guy wanted to dance with me, so I said, I can't dance with you, you dance different, I can't dance with you. Oh yes, you can. So then he took me to dance. Okay, so I danced with this guy. But then there was this great dancer. He was a black guy, not American black, from Abyssinia, Ethiopia now. He was wonderful. He was Fred Astaire. And he really taught me to dance. I was the first one on the dance floor, the last one off. He was terrific. And except that he was black, his features were white, you know? And he spoke perfect Italian. And you know, just a dancing partner. So my parents said, look, we're going down to dance, we'll be with you, I don't want you to dance with him all the time. I said, "I don't have to dance with him at all if you don't want me to dance," you know. Fresh little me. So I stuck close to them, I made believe I don't see him. So this guy was smarter than me or them, came over and said -- you know, greeted my parents nicely and said, "Do you mind if your dau -- if your daughter dances with me?" Put them on the spot, and I had to dance again.

Q: So good, you got a chance.

A: So that was good, yeah.

Q: That was good.

A: That was good. And that was, you know. But then he left, and then my mother-in-law -- at that time I had no idea it was gonna be my mother-in-law, there was a Hungarian guy in camp they wanted to dance with me. I could not stand him. I absolutely could not stand him. And my mother-in-law kept on talking to him, giving him ideas how he could endear himself to me. And talked to him, you know, Hungarian, they were Hungarian. And he kept on bugging me. He was -- he took a job cleaning the hallways in Cinecitta so he could see me, you know, in my room and when I come out. I didn't come out. I didn't want to come out. And when I went to the dance, he came over, kissed the hand, you know. Very polite guy. He wanted to dance with me. You know, I was mean enough to say no.

Q: Really?

A: I did. That's how I could not stand him. I was -- washed the floor in our room, and I took the pail to go to the bathroom to spill it out, he was there, he wanted to do it. I didn't want him to do it. I didn't want him anywhere near me. I think my mother-in-law knew something. She tried to get rid of me a long time ago, it didn't work. No, we had a good relations -- his mother lived with me for 40 years.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. He lived -- she was -- she lived til she was 96.

Q: No kidding?

A: Yeah.

Q: Wow.

A: It's good we got along. My father-in-law died a little younger, and then her sister came from Italy, and she stayed with us. And they both died the same year.

Q: No kidding?

A: It was sad. So we got along, but I reminded her of what she was doing to me --

Q: And what did she --

A: -- with Mr. kiss the hand.

Q: And what did she say?

A: Laughs, you know, it was so funny. [indecipherable] it's not funny, I was miserable. You made me so miserable. She did, but she didn't know.

Q: So was it in some way a -- an okay place to be? For the te --

A: Yeah, it was an okay place to be. How can I say, how can I explain it? The boys had a wonderful time.

Q: The boys did.

A: The boys did, more than -- more than the girls. I mean, certain girls had a ball too, but I was not brought up to have a good time. I had to be a good girl all the time.

Q: Right.

A: And to this day, shoot.

Q: Do you resent that?

A: Yes, I resent that.

Q: You do?

A: Yes.

Q: And you couldn't get out of it, even when you --

A: I couldn't get out even -- I just couldn't get out of it. She demanded. She demanded that I be a good girl.

Q: And so you -- you became a good girl.

A: So I cow -- I obliged, yeah. You can't go back, you know?

Q: No, that's true.

A: And I didn't want to be bad, but I wanted a little more freedom. Not every time. And then came Sunday morning. My cute little nephews woke me up every Sunday morning. They could hardly wait to have me home. And then snuck in bed with me, and then my mother invited bachelors that didn't have family, for lunch on Sunday.

Q: Now, we're talking about New York?

A: We're talking about New York --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- so I had to get up, because the house had to be clean, and lunch had to be made, and the kids had to be fed. And I loved those kids. I loved them so much. And then she came along, you know my niece?

Q: Zenie.

A: Zenie.

Q: Zenie.

A: Zenie came along. She was different because she was first -- first girl. So she was really special.

Q: Right.

A: Was really special.

Q: So your brother had three kids?

A: No, five.

Q: Five? Wow.

A: Then he had another two. My -- my husband says -- nevermind what he says. I almost made a boo-boo.

Q: Okay, I'm not going to ask you.

A: No, don't ask, please.

Q: What -- you came to the United States in 1947?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And you were in New York?

A: Uh-huh. Lived in New York for seven years.

Q: So that was not such an easy life. Your father was a busboy?

A: My father started to be a busboy.

Q: Busboy.

A: But then he worked for Globe factory, which they made pie fillings and jellies.

Q: Oh.

A: Yeah, which was not easy either. When he started he was in the cooking [indecipherable].

Then later he worked himself up in shipping, so at least he didn't have to be in that heat.

Q: Right.

A: You know, was so hot there. And he was a shipping clerk. I guess they would say clerk.

Q: [sneezed] Excuse me.

A: Bless you. And he -- he was there all the time, yeah. Then the factory moved from Brooklyn to Jersey and he moved with them. Yeah, and that's wi --

Q: And did you move to Jersey then, or did you stay in New York?

A: I never moved to Jersey.

Q: You never did.

A: I was married already, so I -- I moved to Kansas City.

Q: All right, so now the question is, you have met Zdenko.

A: Mr. Wonderful.

Q: Mr. Wonderful, whom you didn't like in the DP camp.

A: Whom I didn't like, whom I --

Q: So how do you re-meet him?

A: He became a pest.

Q: Wait a second, but how -- but -- but he --

A: Okay.

Q: -- he goes to Lake Como, you're coming to the United States, right?

A: To the -- right, right.

Q: So how do you keep in -- who keeps in touch with who?

A: Well, we keep in touch because they were friends.

Q: The -- the family was friends.

A: The -- yeah, family friend, and my brother was friends --

Q: Right.

A: -- so my husband has a different version of how we got back in touch than I do.

Q: I see, okay, I want your version.

A: My version is that they s -- they came here after us, right, in '49.

Q: Right.

A: So, I think he looked in the phone book for Arzt, the name. And he found Arzt. Then he called up us, and then of course we wanted to see them right away, and we made arrangements to see them. And my husband thinks because they were in the paper that we saw the paper, and got ahold of them, but it wasn't like that, but it's okay, either story is okay. But I think I'm right.

Q: But you think you're right. I -- I'm sure. I'm sure.

A: He never asks me. [indecipherable]

Q: Right.

A: Never.

Q: So what -- when you re-met, it was different?

A: Yeah, when we -- when we re-met, I was -- I had a boyfriend.

Q: You had a boyfriend?

A: I had a boyfriend.

Q: Oh, ho, ho.

A: Yeah. So, he was jealous of the boyfriend.

Q: Right.

A: And the boyfriend was jealous of him. So it was a fun -- a fun time. But I guess he won.

Q: I guess he won. And we'll change the tape.

A: He won the jackpot.

End of Tape Six

Beginning Tape Seven

Q: So did you choose, or did they -- did Zdenko choose, between you? You were in the middle.

A: Choose me?

Q: Yeah.

A: I didn't choose him.

Q: You didn't. I don't believe it.

A: I gave in.

Q: You gave in.

A: I gave in.

Q: You got tired.

A: I was tired of saying no. But yo -- he called from Kansas City to New York as often as possible. Will you marry me? No. Will you marry me? No. Then he got, okay. Every day, will you marry me. So -- and I was so tired. Then my mother said, "You're driving him crazy, just make up your mind." I said, "I did make up my mind, but he doesn't leave my mind alone." So -- and everybody, you know, liked him, and they liked me and what do you mean, you belong together. I said, no. I was fighting and fighting it, but --

Q: But you gave up fighting.

A: Yeah. And in -- now I'm really talking. The morning -- no, the morning before our wedding, the day before our wedding, I got a letter from my ex-boyfriend wishing me well, and -- a very lovely letter saying how nice it was to know me, and blah, blah, blah. And my mother brings the letter just when my husband is there -- who wasn't my husband yet. So nosy wants to know. So here, read it. I mean, it's nothing wrong what he wrote. You send this letter back to him. Why? He has no business writing you a letter. I said, he's just has good wishes for us, why not? I don't

want the letter. You don't have the letter, I have -- anyway, back and forth and back and forth. And I wouldn't send the letter back. So he says, you don't send the letter back, I don't want to marry you. I said, it's a deal. You don't want to marry me, fine. Okay, we'll talk tonight, you come over to his family --

Q: Right.

A: -- and we'll see what his cousin -- he relied a lot on his cousin, older cousin, see what he says. I said, okay, take -- I brought the letter, I let George read it. George said, nothing wrong with the letter, you know. And he is hysterical with this letter. So I said, here George, you keep the letter, but I'm not sending it back. Anyway, said goodnight, you want to go -- okay, I'll see you tomorrow, maybe. So then --

Q: He said -- he said maybe? Oh, you said maybe.

A: And then in the morning he called me up and aggravates me yet about the letter. So I said, you better stop, don't want to hear it, you want to get married? Yeah, but you should, you know, it's not right, and blah, blah, blah. So I hung up on him. The morning of our wedding, I hung up on him, okay? But I knew he was gonna come around, so I did get dressed, you know? Can you see the picture of all that?

Q: Yes.

A: So anyway, I got dressed, and you're not familiar with New York, are you?

Q: Yes, I am, sure.

A: Ye -- are you? Well, we got married in Brooklyn.

Q: It's where I was born.

A: Yeah? Oh good --

Q: Queens.

A: -- so you know. On Pitkin Avenue, in -- in a place called Little Oriental. Very nice, you know, not -- they had everything ready for me, I didn't have to get a -- a rabbi, not a hazzan, a singer, a music, they arranged everything. The food, wonderful, kosher from top to bottom, and so cheap, you know. Now it's -- would be like nothing, you know, but for us it was sort of expensive, you know. So anyway we had this wonderful wedding, and the guy said, well you don't have to worry because we had guards at the door if the groom wants to run away. I said, "I think you might need guards for me, not for him." Oh. So anyway, we got married, obviously.

Q: Right.

A: Had a lot of fights in between, but we're still here.

Q: Yeah, so you kept each other on your toes.

A: We kept each other on our toes, and what can I tell you?

Q: And you were close with his mother and father?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't know --

Q: So she was very happy.

A: Yes. My -- my parents came over to Kansas City and they usually brought the kids with them, my nephews.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, and they came. Even on the bus, you know, couldn't afford really to fly them, four or five of them, so Mother was schlepping on that bus, poor woman. She wanted to come, you know, and be with me too. And --

Q: Guess it must have been hard for her for you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- to be out in Kansas City.

A: Especially we got married in July, and we were supposed to move back in October, okay?

Q: Move back to New York?

A: Move back to New York.

Q: And that's --

A: I didn't get my stuff out of New York, seven years later. Not my sewing machine, not all the gifts, everything. I didn't open anything cause I thought I'm moving back.

Q: I see. So you sti --

A: Speaking of tricking.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Speaking of tricking, he had no intention of moving back.

Q: He had no intention?

A: No. He lied through his teeth.

Q: Really?

A: He couldn't leave his parents, but I could leave my parents, you know?

Q: Right.

A: And stuff like that. So --

Q: So did you adjust to Kansas City?

A: I did adjust to Kansas City.

Q: You like it now?

A: I like Kansas City. I'm very glad I did not move back --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- to be honest, but I don't want him to know that.

Q: No, we're not going to tell him this.

A: You're not going to tell anybody.

Q: No.

A: But no, I wouldn't change it.

Q: And did you eventually get all your presents to Kansas City?

A: I didn't open my presents til I moved into the house. We lived in an apartment for seven years before we build the house.

Q: House.

A: And then I finally got everything in the house.

Q: And then you opened your presents?

A: And then I opened my presents.

Q: Did you then send thank you notes to people, or not?

A: Most of the boxes I opened, I did send thank you notes.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah. I didn't know what's in them any more, you know?

Q: This must have been the longest period of time --

A: Very long.

Q: -- that anyone held their wedding presents.

A: Very long time.

Q: Yeah.

A: I lived on this street called Truman Road.

Q: Truman?

A: Truman Road, which led to his house, you know, a little bit. He's in Independence --

Q: Right.

A: -- you've heard of Independence.

Q: Sure.

A: And we were not -- well, we were on the same road with Truman. And we had an apartment there with my in-laws, of course. And they were very nice to me, and they loved me, and I loved them. Sometimes it wasn't always easy.

Q: Right.

A: You know? It wasn't easy for them probably either. But -- you don't have much privacy, that's the only thing.

Q: Right, right.

A: But you have a good cook.

Q: You were sure of that.

A: Yeah, a good cook.

Q: And you went to work pretty much right away?

A: Yeah, I did. My first job was in -- see, I never worked in a factory. I always worked in New York, custom made clothes. And -- fine clothes, you know?

Q: Yeah.

A: I didn't know what a factory is. And then when I came he -- to Kansas City they didn't have custom made stuff.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: There was only one store and they didn't need anybody, you know? Alterations I never did, I didn't know. So I went to work at a factory that was making maternity clothes. And I started

there -- was my first job there. I started to work there in the biggest heat. That year, in '54, Kansas City had the biggest heat. And I'm in the factory, I thought I'd die. I didn't [indecipherable] and you know, they don't have air condition. The fans going, that just gave you a headache. It was very, very hard time ahead. So I tried to, after awhile -- the boss was very nice to me, in fact at first, you know, he gave me a certain how much he's gonna pay. But then when he saw me, he gave me a little more, which is good. And then I started to look for other jobs. But I just couldn't get used to the factory work. So then this lady calls me, and she says, do you do alterations? And th -- from the Jewish vocational service. I said, no, I never did alterations. Well, you know how to sew? Yes. You want to try? I said, I don't know. I know I don't like factory. Do you know how to shorten sleeves? I said, I should know how to shorten sleeve. Well, mens's sleeves. So I said, you know, I never shorten a man's sleeve. So she says, why don't you come in, try, okay? We need some help, try, see how it works. Okay. I went to try and stayed there 15 years. There's no hope for me. So they wouldn't let me go. Shin -- he showed me once, you know, how you -- men's little different. But if you know how to sew, it's not that difficult.

Q: Right, right.

A: And so I wound up doing most of the women's stuff, besides po -- besides shortening sleeves for the men's coat. And they were very fond of me, and were nice to me except for the money, they were not too generous. He was a Polish refugee who married an American girl, Jewish girl in Kansas City. And he was good to me, very good, but the money was a different story, he was stingy. So then everybody said why don't you go on your own, why do you have to work for him. And I wanted to get out, I tell you why. He was very nice, but he got ill, you know? And it upset me that he was ill, and he was nervous. So I figure, maybe it's time to leave, cause he is not going to be able to work much longer, and besides, you know, I just -- maybe they're right,

maybe I should go on my own. So then a friend of mine said that she would go in with me, that she would, you know. So -- and that's how I opened up a business. We found a spot, a store, and we open it up, and of course anybody that came to s -- to s -- him and say where's Evie, he didn't know where I went. Cause he knew, but I mean, he didn't know. He would say, I don't know. I don't know where she is. He was very, very upset that I left, you know. Because he could go on vacation and leave me, you know, he -- he trusted me, and so it hur -- I understand that he was upset that I left, but after all, I had to live too. So I went into business, 29 years.

Q: 29 years. So were you making custom clothes then?

A: No, alterations.

Q: Alterations still, right.

A: I did a few -- I snuck a few custom clothes in, but it's hard to do both. You have to do one or the other because you need different spots, and a different table, different machine. And you need too much patience, which at the end I'm not -- I didn't have any more. But I still have enough patience, people still come to me. See, the trouble is with custom made clothes, they see a paper, you know a magazine, and they think, I want that, they think they're gonna look like the magazine.

Q: Right.

A: Well, they're not going to look like the magazine. So then they start to pick. I think this sleeve is a quarter of an inch, or maybe just an eighth of an inch too long. And they make you, you know, do it over for nothing.

Q: Right, right.

A: You know, just because it's custom made, so they think they have to. So I said, no, I don't want to make anything custom made. When they buy the clothes, they know what they're getting, you know, they can see. I'd rather do alter -- which I never thought I would like.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: Never thought I would like. But I liked it for awhile, but then when I started to not have patience, I said it's time to retire.

Q: Right. 29 years is a long time.

A: Cause I don't -- and 15 years in [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

A: So, they're still coming to me.

Q: I bet.

A: And I only kept -- I only kept the cream of the crop.

Q: I would come to you.

A: I bet you would.

Q: Yeah.

A: I wish you could.

Q: In a minute.

A: Wish you could. So, you know, they still trust my work --

Q: Right.

A: -- and -- but I don't want to -- I do it, but don't rush me.

Q: Right.

A: You know? I been rushed all my life, I don't want to be rushed. No, I give you a week. I said, that's rushing. They're teasing me, you know.

Q: When did you start to think of yourself as a survivor of the Holocaust? Was it late, was it right away?

A: Right --

Q: Away.

A: I think.

Q: Did you talk about it?

A: No, not too much.

Q: No.

A: Not too much.

Q: Recently have you t-talked about it more?

A: Well, I've talked about it more since the book came out in Kansas City.

Q: And what book is that?

A: That's the book, it's called, "From the Heart." Our pictures -- all the people that are in the book, the pictures are on the front page. Mine is the only colored picture --

Q: Really?

A: -- so there I am, as a bride, see? And Johnny's next -- Zdenko's next to me. And then you turn it around what we are now, oh my gosh, okay? They had to do that. And inside, whoever's in the book, there's a story, you know, to the --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- what they interviewed, you know. I told you the one that interviewed me just wanted to know about my childhood --

Q: Right.

A: -- and she didn't understand that I didn't have a childhood.

Q: Right.

A: You know. So I couldn't really express the way I wanted to express. And -- but that's what happened.

Q: And what was that, w-wa -- was that in the 90's?

A: That's when they -- that's how I started to think more.

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: It was about 10 years ago.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That that started. And then they had a big get together, celebrating 10 years of this book, and everything. In fact, Zenie came with her husband, and my nephew, my first nephew and his girlfriend, because after 35 years they decided to divorce, and so he came with his girlfriend.

And that was wonderful, to have my family there.

Q: Oh yeah, sure.

A: That meant so much to me.

Q: Right.

A: They gave us a beautiful, beautiful dinner, all the Holocaust survivors. And Dudu Fisher, you know Dudie Fisher?

Q: I know the name.

A: He's an Israeli singer.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He came to entertain. Wonderful.

Q: Yeah.

A: Just wonderful. And like I said, it meant so much that they came. And so that's when I started, 10 years ago to think. And then certain things come to me and I said, my God, I almost forgot that.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know? And things like that. You know. That's it.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much, for coming from Kansas City and for being who you are.

A: Thank you.

Q: It's been a pleasure to be with you.

A: You're sweet, thank you. ...This is a picture in Vienna. It is I, my brother, and my little cousin, who we just were crazy about. He was just a little -- this picture really doesn't do him justice because he was so much cuter. But he makes a funny face, and I think the sun was shining in somehow. But he is one that got killed, they did not let him live.

Q: And what year do you think this was?

A: I think it must have been '39. '39, because I think my dad was gone by then, and we went to see. '38 or '39, I'm not sure.

Q: And this picture?

A: This is my brother and I, when we got to Genoa. So that was before his Bar Mitzvah, so I guess -- we figured out yesterday when was that, '40?

Q: No --

A: No.

Q: -- he was born in '29 --

A: It's '27 he was born.

Q: Twen -- oh, '27.

A: 1927, so must have been '40, that's just 13.

Q: Right.

A: 1940. We'd -- had just gotten to Genoa, and I think my parents wanted us to have a picture like that.

Q: And this picture?

A: This is when we got to Genoa. Again, it was done the same time as the one before. It's my parents, me in the middle, and my mother's in the middle a-at the bottom. And on one side the bigger woman, yeah, she was the landlady, and there was a maid there. And they took very nice care of us. They were wonderful to us. We lived there long as we were in Genoa. I can still remember the name of the street, which was via Goito. So, little after that, started bombardments, and things were a little bit more difficult. But they were so good to us.

Q: And this picture?

A: This picture is my brother in Pari, teaching these wonderful girls, and one is prettier than the other, which he loved, teaching them German. They had nothing else to do, they were coming to Pari to get away from the big city's bombardments and so on. I'm not sure what town they came from, whether it was just as close as Siena or Florence, or maybe even Pisa, I don't know.

Anyway, there nothing else to do, so they thought they would learn German.

Q: And this shot?

A: And this is me, and my parents, and my brother, and I remember my outfit being gray with a pink blouse, and was so pretty. And it was a -- a Jewish holiday. Of course, there was no -- you know, no synagogue or anything, but my mother always made sure, somehow she managed to give us some new clothes on holidays.

Q: And this was in Pari?

A: And this was in Pari, yeah. She liked that wall, I guess, she always took pictures on that wall. And we were all together, and that was always the main thing, we stuck together. Ma -- one was worrying about the other.

Q: And these pictures?

A: The bigger one is my mom and I in Pari. Just taking pictures for no reason. I guess he had some extra film in the camera. And the other picture is my brother and I.

Q: Same wall.

A: Same wall. That wall was famous.

Q: And who's this group?

A: This is all children that used to go to school in Ferramonti. Ferramonti was the camp, and they tried to keep the children busy with teaching, you know, and like a school. The barracks are in the background, whatever you can see, that's -- was our living quarters.

Q: And this is you?

A: Right there in the middle, between two girls, yeah. And one group was like five sisters, I think, four and five sisters. That's the only thing left.

Q: And these?

A: And that's again Cinecitta and my dad and I, and I'm carrying my job in my hand. Those were cards that I -- every time somebody ate, I turned the card around so that I know they ate. And that was my job. That was in the -- working in the kitchen that was for working people. Because for the big kitchen, I needed a much bigger card, you know, to carry --

Q: Right.

A: -- like this. And that's my dad, just -- just looking good. Looking to the future, which he didn't know what was going to be.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay, that's my brother driving a Jeep, with a friend who later also wound up in -- in Kansas City. And he loved cars, and loved those Jeeps, any -- and then he drove big trucks, too, but loved to drive cars. So whenever he could, he was in a car.

Q: And this is?

A: This is in Cinecitta, too.

Q: And who's this?

A: This is my dad and his youngest brother, who lived in Huntington, New York
[indecipherable]

Q: Do you know what was the man's name?

A: The brother's name? Emil. Emil. Emil Arzt. And he worked for airplane -- how can I remind, I forgot? For airplane -- whatever, making --

Q: For --

A: -- for the government.

Q: For airplane manufacturers?

A: No, the government -- if my husband will know, I don't know.

Q: And who's this good looking couple?

A: This is the best looking couple you ever saw, and that was taken July 4th, 1954, just a couple of years ago. And believe it or not, we're still together, alive. We have not killed each other yet?

Q: And where was the wedding?

A: The wedding was in Brooklyn, New York, on Pitkin Avenue, in the Little Oriental was the name of the place. And it was a wonderful affair, and I was stuck. This is me, Evelyn Bergl with my loving dog, Cuki. She is the best dog, and I love her so much, and she knows it. And she's spoiled rotten, but that's okay. That's what she's here for.

Q: Right.

A: But I wanted the world to see that I love that dog, and she loved me. I was sure of that, of nothing else.

End of Tape Seven

Conclusion of Interview