

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Edith Lowy  
September 13, 2010  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Edith Lowy, conducted by Ina Navazelskis on September 13, 2010 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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## **EDITH LOWY**

### **September 13, 2010**

Question: Good morning.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Edith Lowy**. Did I pronounce your name properly?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay – on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, conducted by **Ina Navazelskis**, and this is track one, and we'll start, as we always do, at the beginning. Thank you for agreeing to see us, thank you for agreeing to meet and talk with us. I'd like to start, Mrs. **Lowy**, wi – like a fairy tale, at the beginning. When were you born; where were you born; who were your parents? Can you tell us a little bit about the world that you came to know from the very beginning?

A: My name is **Edith Lowy**. I was born **Edi – Edita(ph) Pickova(ph)**, **p-i –**

Q: **C-k?**

A: The spelling, yes.

Q: Yeah, **c**.

A: Yeah, **p-i – p-i-c-k-o-v-a**.

Q: Okay. And where were you born?

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A: And I was born in a very small coal mining community in **Silesia**. The name of the community was **Lazy, l-a-z-y**. And at the age of five, we moved to another small coal mining community, and – by the name **Poruba, p-o-r-u-b-a**.

Q: And what country was this?

A: **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: Was this north of **Prague**, south of **Prague**?

A: It was closer to the Polish border.

Q: I see, I see. And do you –

A: The closest large city was **Ostrava**.

Q: I see. Oh, yeah. And what was your first language?

A: My first language was Czech. My parents spoke Czech and German, so I was exposed to the German language also. Although people in the community, the coal miners, spoke their own language, which was a mixture of Czech and some Polish and my father really didn't want us to speak it. My mother spoke because my parents had the general store, and the customers spoke – spoke this language. So my mother could easily speak with them, but my father refused, and we had to speak pure Czech.

Q: Well, it sounds like it was like a local patois, a local lingo.

A: Dialect, yeah.

Q: Yes.

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A: Right. And –

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: I had a brother, two year – two years old – young – younger brother, **Erik, e-r-i-k**. As I said before, my parents had the general store. By the standard of the community, we were very well-to-do, but we were really not wealthy. We just – we lived on the main street, the street didn't have a name, it – it was just a main street. On one side of our home was a baker, on the other side was a butcher. And we didn't have very much to do with the butcher, but the butcher's daughter was my closest friend.

Q: Were they Jewish, too?

A: No. I had no Jewish fr-friends at all at this time.

Q: Was there a Jewish community in this town?

A: There was a Jewish community, not in **Poruba** where we lived, but in a little bit larger community called **Orlova, o-r-l-o-v-a, Orlova**. And there was a beautiful synagogue and there was a large Jewish community. In my immediate community, only my grandfather, with his two daughter, who were n – daughters who were not married yet, they also had two general stores. **Icar(ph)**, the neighbor's – the baker's daughter was my closest friend, and we are still friends. Actually I spoke to her a few – few days ago.

Q: That's nice. That's very nice that something can last so many decades.

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A: So many decades, and so many different times when we didn't know about each other. Where she didn't – where sh – where she was afraid to have anything to do with me, under communists, you know, so –

Q: Yes. So tell me a little bit, how is it that your parents – your family came to be in this small coal mining town? How many – were they new to it, wer – had they been there for generations?

A: No, no, they lived there for a long time, my grandparents lived there for a long time. And as I said, nearby was a larger Jewish community.

Q: What – what do you know of your family history that your parents and grandparents might have told you about?

A: My – I was very close to my mother's father, to my grandfather, because he lived in the same community. And my mother was the oldest of six girls, and one son. I was always told that my mother was the most intelligent of the six, although each one was very talented, each one had the special talent; music, painting, piano. Each one was very talented. But my mother liked books, and my father was from **Moravia** and he was very proud that he was born near the place where the beloved President **Masaryk** was born.

Q: Ah yes, ah, yes.

A: And –

Q: What was that place?

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A: The name when he was born was called **Strážnice** – actually, **Javornik**. It's rights here too.

Q: Hang on a second. Uh-huh, **Javnice**(ph).

A: **Javornik**. A –

Q: **Javornik**.

A: **J-a-v-o-r-n-i-k, Javornik**.

Q: Yeah. Exactly. And his name was **Rudolf**?

A: **Rudolf Pick** –

Q: And – and what was your mother's name?

A: And my mother was – her name was **Irena**.

Q: That's my mother's name, too.

A: Yes?

Q: Mm-hm. **Irena** –

A: **Irena Kornfeldova**(ph).

Q: **Kornfeldova**(ph), uh-huh. And she was born in **Poruba**?

A: She was born in **Poruba**, right. And –

Q: Did your father attend university?

A: My father did not attend university, no.

Q: Was he a businessman?

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A: He was a businessman, he was trained in **Vienna** in business, and my mother was much more interested in literature and – and education, although my father – also, both our parents were very, very concerned about our in – our education. And I remember my mother was dreaming to send us to **Switzerland** to get the good education – rounded education.

Q: How did they meet?

A: I was told only few years ago, when I went to visit my cousin in **Jerusalem**, who adored my parents, she told me that they met through a traveling salesman. And then they fell in – I was told they fell in love with each other's handwriting.

Q: That's very romantic.

A: And my father – both my parents were in the – wonderful people. I have never seen anybody come of our home empty handed. Gypsies, who people resented and were afraid of, my parents always loaded with clothes and food and – and my mother all the – always taught me, give, and it will be given to you. Wish, and it will be wished out to you.

Q: Has it – has it fulfilled itself, this thing –

A: In most ways.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yes. But, as you know, with the fate they faced, life was not really as great and people were not as great, always.



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Q: Yeah. We'll come to that moment. What are your earliest memories?

A: So, my earliest memories o-of my parents are Mother sitting at the end of the day on the stove in the kitchen, after we went to bed, and when I went back to the kitchen, always she was sitting on the stove reading books.

Q: Did she work in the store?

A: Yes, both my parents work in the store, and we had a housekeeper, live-in housekeeper always. And the people in the community were wonderful people, honest people. And only when I came back after the war, I realized how much they loved and admired my parents. Only when I came back I really appreciated it.

Q: How – that's – how did that show itself?

A: I will talk – tell you at the –

Q: Okay.

A: – end when we came back what happened.

Q: Okay, okay. And what are your – that – so your earliest memory of your mother is sitting that – is that she's sitting on the stove reading a book.

A: Right, always reading. And my father was more outdoorsy. Both of my parents were very people oriented. Both loved people and people loved them, both of them. But my mother was quieter. As I said, intelligent, thoughtful. My father was more outdoorsy. He loved gardening and this I inherited from him. Also, my memories are of my mother singing a lot, and she sang a lot of Germans songs, operettas and – and

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I still remember them so well. Although, she sang nicely and I cannot carry the tune.

And m – as – my best friend was **Icar**(ph) and we read the same books and we played with our dolls, and they had the double seat swing in the garden, two seats facing each other. And when we later moved into our home, I bought a swing like this, just because of the memories.

Q: So, what year were you born in?

A: I was born in 1928, December twent – 1928. And my brother **Erik** was born two years and two months later.

Q: So the years that you grew up were the 1930s, and you – and you grew up then, I would say in a – in a small town, small place, near – near the Polish border. And did political events make themselves felt at all?

A: Only in 1938

Q: What happened?

A: I never – I have to tell you that I never, ever heard the word anti-Semitism.

Q: That was going to be one of my questions.

A: Never, never. I was the only Jew in sport, I was the only Jew in school. I never, never felt anti-Semitism, until I came to **Poland**.

Q: What happened then, in the late – in 1938? Did –

A: Let me just tell you that my fondest memories are, on Sundays my – my mother's sis-sister, the second oldest sister, which her mother was the closest, they had two

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children, and one was six months younger than my brother **Erik**. And on Sundays my father used to take the older son, **Walter**, and **Erik**, and me for a walk, and we walked to the ponds. And my father made whistles for us. In the meantime my mother cooked a very delicious lunch. And from the ponds, either we went to the – to **Orlova**, to the nearest community – there was a wonderful pastry shop, so my father bought pastries that we all like, especially my mother. Or we went to am – to a nursery. When they got – it was Mr. **S-Slama**(ph). **Slama**(ph) means straw.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I guess my love for nurseries is since then.

Q: Why are you –

A: So – and then in the afternoon, we used to go to my grandpa, who had a – most of my mother's sisters and families came, and my grandpa pan – played cards with his sons-in-law, and we had our cousins and the neighborhood children, and my fa – my grandpa had the very nice garden, and many more flowers than we had. And my father took care of my grandpa's garden. And behind the garden was a brook.

Q: Sounds ideal.

A: And geese, and a little bridge to a meadow, and I loved to go to the meadows and pick Lilies of the Valleys, and – and forget-me-nots. And it was very – a very pastoral setting behind my grandpa. So m – then, in 1938, the – the Germans took **Sudetenland** –

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Q: Yeah.

A: – and the Polish army marched into our part of **Silesia**. And as Jews we had to vacate. I think they gave us a month to vacate. Now, to go in – deeper into **Czechoslovakia**, there was no reason to go because Germans already occupied part of it. So, we opted to go to **Poland** where my grandfather had a brother, a wonderful man. And we – we went to a smaller community near **Kraków, Poland**, and there we wanted to wait for the rest of the family because we – we knew that they all will have to eventually come.

Q: What was the name of this community, this place?

A: I-In?

Q: Near **Kraków**.

A: **Prokocim, p-r-o-k-o-c-i-m, Proko** –

Q: So when you had to vacate, did that mean you had to leave your store?

A: We had to leave the store, the home, everything. So I do not know, because I was not so interested in the arrangements, I was 10 years old in '38, **Erik** was only eight when my parents made some kind of arrangement to give the house and the store. I don't know if they rented it, or what the arrangement was, to some acquaintances of the baker's family. My – my best friend's family, with the understanding that if we come back, it will revert to us. So we left practically everything. When we came to

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**Poland**, my – my father couldn't speak Polish, none of us could. But we kids learned quite fast, my father never could learn Polish.

Q: Did you see Polish soldiers in **Poruba** before you left?

A: No.

Q: Did you have any contact –

A: No.

Q: – with anybody Polish at all when – when you still –

A: When they occupied? No, it went very, very quickly. The army occupied and – very quickly. And my grandfather was gravely ill in this time. So I remember that they extended our stay, because Grandpa was dying, so we left after he died.

Q: I see.

A: In the beginning, in **Poland** – well, my – my mother's sister, I mentioned her, with the two children, they arrived. And my mother's younger sister, whom I always adored, she married just – just shortly before the outbreak of the war. And she married somebody, an engineer from **Ostrava**, the [indecipherable] city.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: And so we waited for them, and we lived together in a building I think we rented, an apartment. And for a few months, we were able to go to school, **Erik** and I, for a short time.

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Q: What was that like?

A: Of course, the language was Polish.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, it was not so easy.

Q: What – what are your memories from that school?

A: Not much.

Q: Not much.

A: Not much, because it was very short.

Q: Did you remember saying goodbye to your best friend before leaving?

A: Yeah, of course, you know, it was very sad to leave everything we loved. And then, in September '39, **Poland** was occupied, and people were afraid of the – of the German army, and many people ran. Whatever – packed whatever they could carry with them, and ran away from the – away from the army.

Q: Do you mean Jews and Poles as well?

A: Yes, but mostly Jews were frightened. So, we packed our belongings and my mother's youngest sister, with her young husband, and my family went on a run. We call it in Polish **nowa(ph) chechken(ph)**, now on – on the run. In the meantime, my mother's other sister, the one with the two children, went back to **Slovakia**, because **Slovakia** was still at peace at this time, and he, her husband was Slovak, so they went to **Slovakia**. And we went on the run with my mother's cousin also. And it was

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a terrible time, because the planes were coming, and we were so tired, carrying our belongings. When the planes came we just hopped into some ditches, and I guess my parents had some money to buy food. But it was very hard for them to see us kids to walk and walk and walk and not having a place to rest or wash up. So eventually my father decided to talk to a Polish – a farmer, and ask him to sell us two horses and a buggy.

Q: And did he?

A: And he did, because he thought, better to get some money now, than if the Germans will come and cos – confiscate this, I'll get nothing. So he sold us two horses. The horses became members of our family. We just – we loved the horses.

Q: How did you know that? Did your father say that he was – that this is what the farmer told him? Or, you just supposed that this is – he was –

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't.

A: I don't know, but I – my – my father ma – might have mentioned something. So after we bought the horses, it was much, much easier. We could rest, we could –

Q: Right.

A: – just very different.

Q: Do you know what direction you were going in?

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A: Toward the Russian front. And I remember that one time we were – we had to cross a river, and the horses got stuck in the river, and we had to unpack some of the load, and we had to get up – out and push –

Q: The buggy.

A: – the buggy. But we managed. And then, after – and I don't know how – how long we were out around. I don't know exactly how long [**indecipherable**]. But again, my father convince another farmer to take us to work for him. Then my father and my uncle were work with the horses on the field. My mother and my aunt were whatever needs to be done around the house.

Q: For someone who doesn't speak Polish, he was very, very good.

A: He was – he was good, he could communicate. And ma – my mother could a little bit better with her – what she was talking to the peasants – to the coal miners. And so the farmer took us, and **Erik** and I took care of the cows, and I learned very well how to milk cows. And again, I don't know exactly how long we were there. And then the Germans occupied **Poland**, and we decided, you know, let's go back home.

Q: Wa – wa – during this time you were with the Polish farmer, did you have any interaction with them? Do you have any memories of them?

A: I just – of the cows, of the fields –

Q: Just of the cows.



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A: – of the fields. But I have no idea what the grown-ups were talking of.

Q: Where did you sleep?

A: I guess we had rooms. I don't have exact – exact recollection of this. I just remember the fields and sitting in and milking the cows. And then we came home, and my father couldn't get any job. My uncle also, he was an engineer, but Jews couldn't get easily job. So, the horses, **Fuksa(ph)** and **Malutki(ph)** –

Q: **Fuksa(ph)** and **Marlutki(ph)**.

A: **Futka(ph)** – **Malutki(ph)** means a little one. And **Fuksa(ph)** was a beautiful horse. **Malutki(ph)** was the older hors – horse. But me – we adored the horses. And so they were moving furniture and whatever people needed to move, and that's how they found money.

Q: Money.

A: And then, suddenly – suddenly laws started appearing. Restrigh – reks – restrictions. One day signs appeared, Jews cannot go to stores, Jews and dogs not allowed.

Q: Can I interrupt just for a second? You returned home, but you didn't get your store back?

A: No, not home. Home to **Poland**. When we went to this –

Q: Home to – oh, I see, not – not –

A: – not to the Czech re –

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Q: Not to the **Czech Republic** –

A: – no, no, home.

Q: – you went back to –

A: To via – to **Prokocim**.

Q: Cro – **Prokocim**.

A: Near **Kraków**.

Q: Okay, mm-hm.

A: Right, right. And, so signs started appearing. Next day, Jews were not allowed to go to places or – en-entertainment, or swimming pools and movies.

Q: And you saw these signs?

A: The signs, yeah, every day we woke up to something new. Then Jews were not allowed to use public transportation. And then Jews were not allowed to use – to leave the community they lived in, even when grandparents – like in **Baltimore** we couldn't visit the grandparents, because we couldn't leave **Silver Spring**. And then finally Jews had to wear the bands, which I am just making because I am supposed to be speaking in a church next week, and I lost my band with the blue star. White band with blue star. Wh-When – and then Jews – Jewish children were not allowed to go to school any more. And of course, you know, the Jewish professionals were not able to – to – to practice their professions. But, it was very difficult to see all my

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friends going to school, all my friends going – being able to go on trains or buses,  
and –

Q: And you couldn't.

A: – and – and we couldn't. We went – w – I couldn't leave my community, I  
couldn't go on a bus, I couldn't go anywhere.

Q: Did you notice any change in your parents and how their manner was?

A: Frightened. I could – I could see the fear in them, I could see – and they started –  
I heard – I heard them to debate, where can we, how can we escape, where can we  
go? And one – one day it was **England**, next it was **Bolivia**, next time it was some  
other country. Who will accept us? In the end we were trapped in the worst possible  
place.

Q: You had Czech citizenship, yes?

A: Yes.

Q: Czech-Slovak citizenship?

A: Right, right.

Q: Did that matter by the – by that point?

A: I don't –

Q: No.

A: Matters that we were Jews, that's what mattered.

Q: And why would you say it was the worst possible place?

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A: Because **Poland** was the worst possible place. One day I was walking with my brother, and my cousin, who had beautiful blonde hair. He was eight years old – he was nine – nine, close to 10, my – **Erik** also, and I was 12. I was so proud at this time that I could wear the – the white band. I was – I felt so grown up. I can wear it, **Erik** cannot, he was not yet 10 years old. So one day we went for a walk and a Polish teenager approached us, lit a match, and threw it into my cousin **Walter's** beautiful blonde hair. I felt so responsible, I was the older – I was terrified. I put out the – the fire from his – and we ran home, and from this day on, I was terrified to wear this white band.

Q: Was this the first time you saw an – you felt anti-Semitism from **Poland** – from Poles.

A: That was – maybe one time before. I had the Christian friend who took me to church once with her, and I heard some people making some anti-Semitic comments, and that was the first time. And then the first really shocking experience was when men, age I think 16 to 65, if I recall it correctly, had to assemble on an assembly place somewhere. My father and my uncle were in there and we all went with him, and we waited there all day. We brought him some food, and we didn't know what's going to happen. In the evening they were loaded on trucks and taking away. We had no idea where they went. I forgot to tell also, that during the time when my father was working with the horses and moving furniture, we had the

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neighbor, also in **Poland**, a butcher neighbor. And he suggested to my father and my uncle, they should go with him out of town to buy illegal meat, so he could sell it.

And my father wanted so desperately for the family to have something to live on, that they agreed to do it. And they went, first of all, they were supposed to wear the bands, which they didn't. They were not allowed to leave the community.

Q: And they did.

A: And they did. Second – and thirdly, they were bringing in illegal meat. So, there were dangers on so many side. When they – from the minute they left until they came home, we were – this I remember so vividly, we were so afraid for their lives.

When –

Q: Had you seen anyone – I'm sorry to interrupt you – have you seen anyone at that point, murdered? Or had you seen any corpses, or had you heard any stories?

A: No, no, not at this time. Not at this time. It was just this terrible fear that if he would be caught, he would be shot. There's no question, you know, this fear. So, they went and when they were suppo – we knew approximately when they will be back, usually it was at night they were coming back. So we took turns waiting on the street to listen if they are coming, and when we heard the horses from far, it was such a relief. And they went – when they came home, they were s – frozen, literally. The people and the – and the horses, everything was frozen, everything.

Q: So you meant – it was wintertime when they had done –

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A: It was wintertime and when – I remember my – when my mother was taking my father's socks off, it was all ice, all ice. It was a terrible time for them. Anyway, so my father was taken away on trucks, and we didn't know when they will come back, if they will come back. Few days later, they did come back, and told us that they are working – I forgot also to s – to mention that when we came back after this running, we were put into ghettos. So we moved from **Prokocim** to **Wieliczka**, which was a well known city in **Poland**, to a ghetto. When my father was taken to this – on trucks, and when he came back, he said that they are working on the railroad tracks in **Prokocim**, where we used to live. So, they must have gotten permission to come on train, because otherwise they wen – would not have been able to – to come. So, one day they came home and they said that they heard that Jews from **Wieliczka** will be deported. It sounded sad, but we still didn't know what deported means, and –

Q: So they were able to come back and forth afterwards?

A: In – right, in the evening. And they decided that first they have to save the kids, so first **Erik** and me. We couldn't go all together, because a big group would –

Q: Be most –

A: – be too dangerous. So they decided one night, the kids are going, so we walked the whole night until at dawn we came to my father's – to the railroad tracks where Father was working, and my father hid us under a boxcar. He must have been sure

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that this boxcar will not go anywhere. We were supposed to stay under the boxcar, not to move, not to talk, not to whisper, until e – the evening, when my father would take us out and take us into hiding. Well, I can, as a parent, I can imagine what it must have been for my father having us under the boxcar, and my brother was a very big rascal, so – very, very. And my father came, they took us into hiding to a Polish family. And the next day they went to get Mother and my Aunt **Polly**. My mother decided that she has still some things to put in order and that nothing can happen so fast. My aunt should go and she promised she will come the next day. My aunt, of course, didn't want to leave my mother, but in the end my mother convinced her go, I am surely going to come the next day. The following day was too late. They already – my – my father and uncle heard from some Germans who were in charge and liked my father and my uncle that Jews from **Wieliczka** are already being loaded on trains. My uncle somehow managed to convince the Germans to – to come with him and bring some – some papers that Mother is needed to work in the kitchen on the railroad tracks. But they went to the trains, but they could not find her. Well, when we heard that Mother was taken, we were devastated, absolutely devastated. The only thing we thought, well, maybe she went to another camp, maybe the war will be over next week, and we will see her again.

Q: But this all was in 1939 - 1940?

A: Yeah, that's not – 1940 - '41.

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Q: 1940 – '41, mm-hm.

A: [indecipherable] '41, into '42. Into '42.

Q: So do you remember – excuse me for emphasizing this, but do you remember the date your mother was taken?

A: It was summer. Summer of – the only date – well, I remember only one date, and I will talk about it.

Q: Okay. So this – so you know it was –

A: So –

Q: – summertime, and it was either 1940 or 19 –

A: It was June or July.

Q: Okay, June or July, '40 or '41?

A: '42.

Q: '42?

A: Already.

Q: Uh-huh, all right, so you had already been in **Poland** for a good many years, actually, you know, '42 you'd been –

A: Right.

Q: – from 1938, when the Poles [indecipherable]

A: Well, we went in a ghetto in, we're not [indecipherable]. And, so my – we were together, and my – we were hiding in three different places, one was – I don't want



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to talk so much – one was on a roof and it was diagonally from a police station, and it was in the city where we used to live, so people knew us. So my father and uncle used to come in the evening, take off their bands, and always watching at night so nobody would see them.

Q: Were you like in the attic area?

A: In the attic area. Another place was we were in a mai – on a main street, then one night there was banging on the door, and we thought where somebody reported us, but it happened that it was an accident between a motorcycle and a car, and they were calling for help, so they were banging on the door. But everything was so frightening, because – and then, the third place was the most unusual. The third place, the Germans who liked my father and my uncle, offered that we can hide in the storage room of the building where the German and Polish offices – officers were, in the cellar.

Q: These were German soldiers?

A: N-N-No, German – I don't think they were Nazis, they were German overseers on the railroad tracks, and –

Q: So they weren't part of the –

A: – officer –

Q: – military, but they were part of the work force?

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A: They were not military, but they were – right, not military. But I don't think that they were **SS**. I – they might have been. They might have been, but I am not sure. So they offered we can hide in the cellar. The cellar, all that was in the cellar were crates, huge crates like from some machines. And the entrance to this was from the front of the building. No windows. No windows that – down to the cellar. So, we didn't know what weather was outside, we didn't know anything. The only people that knew that we are there, were our Polish neighbors, former Polish neighbor and I'm also forgot-got to tell you that my parents were so desperate to get **Erik** and me out when there was so much fear that we'll be deported, or whatever, that the Polish neighbors send once their son, in the early 20s to bring **Erik** and me to their house to hide. It was before we were hiding in the other places. Wer – he came, and we were sitting on the train, **Erik** and I already, with this Polish guy, when I decided I'm not going anywhere with my parent – without my parents. So I ran out of the train, of course, **Erik** a – behind me, and the guy behind me, and my parents were very, very distraught that here – again we are here in danger, that we didn't go into hiding. So, the only people that knew that we are hiding there were the Polish family, and two priests from a nearby church. And once in awhile they used to bring something and hide in the shrubs, soups, coffee, you know, in the shrubs. So, my par – my father or uncle took it out from under the shrubs at night. At night people were not working in this building, you know. But –

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Q: Tell me, the uncle, this was the husband of your –

A: Of my mother's –

Q: – of you –

A: – younger sister.

Q: – ya – sister, mm-hm.

A: I adored both of them, but my aunt was always my favorite aunt. So, we were – I don't know again how long we were in this, but it was very frightening. We had some bottles to urinate in, in one of the crates, and every time we heard – and it was quite often – Polish or – or German voices in front, talking in front of the door, we jumped into the big crate, and we didn't breathe.

Q: I'm a little surprised that Polish officers would have been allowed – you know, would have been cooperating with – with Germans, unless they were Polish police, for example –

A: Poli –

Q: – who were working for – because the military was – it was

A: No, these were Polish construction workers.

Q: Oh, I see, not military people.

A: No, no, they were construction. They were people who are working on the railroad tracks.

Q: I see, okay.

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A: All the people in the building had something to do with building the tracks.

Q: I see, okay, okay.

A: Fine.

Q: All right.

A: But still, Poles were very anti-Semitic. If anybody would see my father going there at night, we would – we would have been finished. The priests were wonderful, and they offered to do Aryan paper for us. And we decided maybe that would be another possibility to save ourself. So somehow my father and my uncle obtained some hair dyeing solution. My aunt had beautiful black hair, bu – she was a very pretty woman, very pretty woman. My father and my uncle could have passed ano – as non-Jews. My uncle had blue eyes, blondish hair. My father also didn't have Jewish features, yo-you know. But **Erik** and I and my aunt – so we decided, at least my aunt, when she dyes her hair, so it will be less risky. So they brought this solution, and I was – they went to work, my father and my uncle, and I was pouring this solution in her – into her hair, and rubbing it in, and rubbing it in, and she – it didn't do anything. She said put more, put more, put more. So I was pouring more and rubbing in, and suddenly her hair was coming out in chunks. And sh – I could see that she was ready to scream in – you know, how painful it was, and her hair was burned, her skull was burned. And here I was a 12 year old kid, 13 year old kid, and

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I felt I did it to her, I did it to her. This – what could we do? Where could I ask what to do, you know, to ask for help? We couldn't – she couldn't scream –

Q: She was down in the ce – she was down in the cellar with you?

A: In the cellar, and we couldn't – sh – sh – I could see the pain she was – she was really in excruciating pain. So, by the evening when they came back, her hair was gone, her beautiful hair was gone, and this was the end of Aryan paper. While we were there, we heard about a labor camp, Jewish labor camp, in walking distance actually, in **Prokocim**. So, I think the grow – grownups might have thought, well, it's probably safer to survive in a ca – labor camp. Labor, it means working, so we will work, and the war will be probably – few months the war – war will be over. It's surely safer than in the cellar, e-every moment was really fear, fear, fear. So we actually walked into the first labor camp.

Q: The four of you – the five of you?

A: The – the f – my – five of us, the five of us. Let –

Q: How did your aunt look? Excuse me, by that point, did she wear a kerchief on her head?

A: I – she must have some – somehow, yes, beca – but she was really very, very beautiful woman. So, when we found – it was scary to find ourselves behind fences, suddenly, not be – being trapped again, but we figured we will work, and I was working in the kitchen. I had to peel potatoes.

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Q: Not a bad job.

A: No, not – not a bad job, but we had, I remember, seven buckets, big buckets to – to – of potatoes to peel, and there were big table with lots of potatoes, and the women were sitting around it, and everybody was grabbing the biggest potatoes, because it filled faster the bucket. We assumed that if we obey all the rules, we will live. The first – there was one room, it was a sewing room, and that was actually our meeting place where w – wife and husband, you know, the husband came to visit, the boyfriends came to visit, it was our – our community room. And one day we went sitting there in the evening when we heard terrible shots, and we froze, because we haven't si-si – heard anything like it before. Nobody moved, until in the morning we heard that nine people tried to escape through the fence, and they were shot on the fence. The fence was, at this time, not electrified. So, that was the first shock. You better do what they tell you to do.

Q: Or not do anything else.

A: Anything else, right.

Q: Did you see those nine people?

A: I didn't see them dead, no, but I knew them and it was – it was – the whole camp was, for the next few days it was – it was just a horrible, horrible atmosphere in the ca-camp. But at this – in this camp, **Erik** was there, I had some friends. My – I made friends with some teenagers my age.

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Q: You were now 14 years old.

A: Right, 13 - 14, right. So, we met in the evening, and one of the boys who was suppose – supposing my boyfriend was – had a beautiful voice. So, he was singing, another was telling jokes. And I always wrote. I wrote poetry or stories on home life. So we met in the evening and we shared, either in song, memories from home, or my stories from home, and we were together still. But then one day, the camp was liquidated and we have – we had to move to another camp. Similar, also a labor camp.

Q: What was its name?

A: **Pwa – Plaszów.**

Q: **Plaszów.**

A: **P-l-a-s-z-o-w.** Under –

Q: Is this the camp where **Amon Goeth** was?

A: Near it.

Q: Near it, okay.

A: **Ge-Goeth – Goeth** we called – in camp we had **Get**, but **Goeth.**

Q: **Goeth.**

A: **Goeth** was in **Plaszów** concentration camp.

Q: And you were in the labor camp.

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A: And I was in the **Plaszów** labor camp, which was in walking distance. But, again, we knew that as long as we obeyed the rules, we probably will live.

Q: And so your father, your uncle, your – your aunt, and your brother were there all together.

A: All together. And some of my friends.

Q: Okay. Now, did you – in these camps, did you live in the same – like, as families in a room, or were the men were separated –

A: No, no, no, men separate –

Q: – from the women.

A: – men were separate there then, and of course we – on the plank beds, which you see –

Q: Yes.

A: – in pictures, like sardines next to each other.

Q: Okay. So it could be – I'm sorry to interrupt, but it could be that things could happen during the day to a family member, and you wouldn't find out –

A: No, no.

Q: – you wouldn't know.

A: No.

Q: Okay.



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A: So, in the – we moved to – to the labor camp **Plaszów** and in the group of my friends were siblings, brother and sister, **Lola** and **Henryk(ph)**. **Lola** was my age, and **Henryk(ph)** was a little bit older and they had a younger brother **Erik's** age, and they had an older brother who was a policeman, camp policeman, and they had a sister who also married shortly before that. So there were five kids from the same family, no parents. Parents were gone, just the kids.

Q: Wow. Can I interrupt just for a second? I hear noise outside. Can we close the doors here? Okay. Yeah, pause. All right, I'm so sorry.

A: It's okay.

Q: You were talking – are we back on? Okay. We were talking about the five siblings whose parents weren't there any more, who probably had been deported or – or lost somehow.

A: Right, right. One day, the policeman brother went with a group of prisoners who are working outside of the camp, went with them out of the camp, and either he bought, or somebody gave him a loaf of bread. And when he came to camp, they found it, and they shot him. So that was another –

Q: Shock.

A: – really shock for us, really, because he was such a wonderful young man. Such a wonderful young man. Also, another memory I have of this camp is that there was a young, married woman, Mrs. **Unger – Ungar, u-n-g-a-r**. Her husband was also in

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camp. And she became friendly – I guess she worked in the kitchen and became friendly with the cook. Friendly meaning human – a human being to a human being, nothing going on between them, just kind to each other. He was – and one night we were in beds when two or three of the Nazis came in and ask, is Mrs. **Ungar** here? And so she said yes. So they called her, they asked her, what is your name? And she said, **Mathilda**. And they said, **Mathilda, ein schöner namen**, a beautiful name. They took her with them, and they shot her. Just becau –

Q: Was the cook German?

A: The cook was a German person in the kitchen. That's it, see? So these were the two instances in the camp that I vividly remember, and how they ca – **ein schöner Mathilda**. Always when I heard this name, **Malthilda, ein schöner namen**, a beautiful name. In this camp we heard of **Plaszów** concentration camp, and of **Goeth**.

Q: What did you hear?

A: We – I heard people say that they would rather die in this camp than go to this camp over there. I heard that this **Goeth** is a brutal – he is really a subhuman, you know, brute – very, very cruel. And – but the choice was not our made, and one day they liquidated **Plaszów** labor camp, and we had to walk to **Plaszów** camp.

Q: Oh my, oh my.

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A: **Erik** was walking with my uncle and my dad. I was walking with my aunt in the women's group. As soon as we reached the gates of **Plaszów**, they separated the children from the grownups. There was a lot of crying, a lot of screaming and begging and children didn't want to leave, parents didn't want to leave, and it was horrible. It was just absolutely horrible. And the –

Q: Was this 1943 already?

A: I-It was ni – yes, it was.

Q: So you were 15 and **Erik** was 13.

A: **Erik** was 12 actually. I was 14.

Q: 12, I see.

A: I was 14.

Q: That's right –

A: Yeah.

Q: – because you were born in December, at the end of the year.

A: That's right.

Q: Okay.

A: And so after lots of commotion and screaming and crying, the Germans said, the children will be going to separate barracks, and just simply, you know, pulled them away from the parents and with all the screaming, I didn't know what was happening. I found myself in a huge room, with all the women, huge room.

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Q: So you weren't taken with the children?

A: Well, I didn't know what was happening – I knew everybody was taken – I was in such a state of – of disbelief what's happening. I found myself in this room with all the women, and there were big windows. And we were – the – the building was on a hill, and the women close to the window noticed that our men are below, in a barrack below, but there was a fence between us. So the women who were near the window were calling the names of the people whom they knew, you know, that we recognize some people, so there was a lot of calling, come here, you know, your father, your brother, whoever. And I don't know how long it took til I – finally I was called, and my father was out. And all I s – oh, on the day when I found myself in the barrack, we heard terrible machine gun fire.

Q: This is in the concentration camp?

A: Yeah, in **Plaszów** –

Q: Already, so – yeah.

A: It's already under **Goeth**. Terrible machine gun fire. When I heard this machine gun fire, I completely froze. I said, our poor children being killed? So when I came to the window, I ask my father, **Erik**? I just called **Erik**? And my father just did, you know, like I don't know.

Q: I don't know. So you succeeded in being taken with the women, but **Erik** was taken with the children.

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A: **Erik** was taken – I didn't –

Q: No, you didn't know.

A: – I didn't know.

Q: You didn't know.

A: I didn't know, I just ask my father and so he said, I don't know. And – but I had this – this horrible feeling, this horrible premonition that they were our children who are being killed. The next day we were taken to work and we were carrying big, wooden boards, like for building barracks. Well, you can imagine, I was a small teenager. It was very difficult for me to carry the boards, and the camp was quite hilly. You know, up the hill, down the hill. And always when we were marching in the group, we were searching for people. I always for my father. Until the second day or third day, I don't know exactly, because the whole thing is like a huge nightmare for me. Finally I saw my father's group, and he was searching for me. So when we – they were walking opposite us, so he came to me and he grabbed me, and I could barely recognize my father. I could barely recognize him, he – something terrible happened to him, I knew. So, he –

Q: What did he look like?

A: – grabbed me, just – he age, I cannot tell you, beyond – beyond recognition. So, he grabbed me and held me, and I said, **Erik**? And he said, not here. That's all he could say, and – and you know, we couldn't talk, he had to leave. And a few days

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later, we were very short time in the camp, we were – we were again herded to the railroad station to be shipped somewhere else. And when we were standing at the railroad station, my father again managed to find me and came to me, and held me and said – pointed to a rock on a hill ... and said, do you see this hill? That's where **Erik** is. Only when we were in the other next camp, I found out that when they shot the children, they were covered with a little bit soil, but they selected 50 men to bury them, and my father was among them.

Q: Oh my.

A: And he – he could see **Erik's** hand, cause he had the ring. So, from there – thank you – from there we went on our first train journey, and I don't have to tell you what the trains were like, I'm sure you heard it from many people. Packed like sardines, people were crying, screaming, silent, disbelief, you know, we – resignation, well, you name every feeling. No place to go to the bathroom, I – when I think of it today, I think how humiliating it was, you know, to be – to urinate right there, the smell, the hunger, th-the thirst, everything. The fear. And at one point, they s – this train stopped and women at the teeny window could see that we were on some kind of field. And the Germans with their rifles came in, were banging on the – on the ra – on the car – on the train, you know.

Q: On the doors, or on the – yeah.

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A: On the doors, banging and screaming, and then there were some shots, and we were thinking, is that it, where we are going to – to die? And always my thought, is my father still alive? So –

Q: Had you had any conversations with him – when everything started, and you were in **Poland** and things kept getting worse and worse and worse and worse, did he ever sit down or – did you have any – any discussions about what was going on, or did he try to keep it all inside so to spare –

A: My father?

Q: Yeah, to spare you any kind of fear?

A: He ti – he – he did try to hide a lot from me, a lot. But I could sense the pain. So, the youngest brother of – only **Lola** survive. The two of us were the only two children from the whole group that survived.

Q: From **Lola** and **Henryk**(ph) you mean?

A: Yeah. From **Lola**, and **Henryk**(ph) was on the men's side –

Q: So –

A: – so I didn't know what happened. But I heard that the younger brother, my brother's age, was killed also. And when we were in the other camp, we heard that **Erik** was beaten because – we thought they shot him because he would beg, let me live, I will work. This is the only date I remember. November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Q: November 15<sup>th</sup>. ... How old was he?

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A: Between 11 and 12. This was the only time in my life that I wanted to die. The only time I wanted to die. But, I decided I have to live for my father. So, we went on the train, and the next stop was deeper in **Poland. Georgie**, it will take a long time. I'm sorry we had – have – yo-you didn't go to the meeting yet, did you? Oh, you went already? Yeah? Okay, I think we – how long have been – we been talking now?

Q: A little over an hour. Over 70 minutes. 70 minutes.

A: Oh, it was to take a while – a little while.

A2: How long?

A: No, I'm just – I don't know, another hour, hour and a half probably. I will have to –

Q: Thank you, thank you. I know it's costing you.

A: That's okay. And so, we came to the next stop and the next stop was Camp **Skarżyska-Kamiernana(ph)**.

Q: **Skarżyska-Kamiernana(ph)**?

A: I better write it down, because that's a long –

Q: Yeah. Do you have a piece of paper? We can do it right here.

A: I – I can write it here, on piece –

Q: Writing – write on this one, that will be good.

Q2: This would probably be a good time to start a new track.



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Q: Okay, let's do that.

A: Okay.

**End of File One**

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### **Beginning File Two**

Q: And that is – and I must apologize for that. I should have not made an assumption when we spoke, and when I asked you to redo it. But generally – no, don't put it on yet, I'll – **[break]** – and I will say someth – This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Edith Lowy**.

A: And –

Q: So there you were.

A: – we are in the camp **Skarzysko-Kamienna**. I didn't know, an-and they divided us in three groups in **Skarzysko-Kamienna**.

Q: Men and women? Were there men there too?

A: Mixed, mixed, three groups, men and women. And I didn't know that there were three different camps on the same commander. The commander of the camp was **Kinneman(ph)**.

Q: **Kinneman(ph)**, huh?

A: **Cun-Cuneman(ph)**. **Cuneman(ph)**.

Q: Here.

A: I think – I don't remember if it is **[indecipherable]** **Cuneman(ph)**.

Q: U-Umlaut.

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A: I think. I have it somewhere because I have the – I have a book about **Skarzysko-Kamienna** called “**Death Comes in Yellow.**”

Q: I see.

A: So, I was very fortunate – fortunate is my four – once my fourth grader, when children had to write their im-impression of my talk, he said, people say that you are lucky. I don’t think so, he said. Nobody who was there was lucky. And it – but I was lucky that my father and I were assigned to the same camp, which was **Camp B**. But my uncle and aunt were gone, and I had no idea where. So, wi – it was very sad for me because I really loved her. She was my mother, my sister, everything after my mother was taken away. We came to – to the **Camp B**. There was **A, B – werk arveg(ph), bayvek(ph), catsen(ph)**, they were called.

Q: Did you learn German during these years?

A: I knew German.

Q: You knew German, of course.

A: I – I –

Q: You knew German before, so –

A: – knew German, right.

Q: Was that –

A: And by then I spoke very well Polish. I actually wrote already Polish poetry by then, yeah. So we – when we came to the camp, people were ask if anybody has

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some technical or mechanical skills. And my father, thinking quickly, thought it's probably a good idea to have something, so he came forward, and they brought some tools to show him if he can recognize what they are, because, you know, people were lying. So my father could recognize it because he saw it in the store. So, he was working in a – in a workshop, and his shifts were always daytime. I was taken to ammunition factory, and my shifts were 12 hour shifts, one weekday, one weeknight. My work was extremely difficult, extremely difficult. That was probably my most difficult time in camp, physically. I was given – hand a tray with hundred pieces of ammunition, tha-that big, and I had to carve rings around the ammunition. My work was standing at a huge machine, 12 hours shifts, no place to sit or rest. I had to open the machine, put the – take the ammunition, put it into the machine, take the other ammunition out, like two motions. Oil was dripping on the ammunition because the ammunition came out quite hot. My finger was burned to the bone, so painful, I – and standing 12 hour and this motion to open this big machine, it was unbelievable. I was so hungry, we were so hungry, so tired. I – when I talked for the first time to a group of students, and I was showing them how I opened the machine, I stopped talking. I forgot that I have a group of kids listening to me. I realized what happened to my finger, you know, the flesh was so burned out, it grew together, but – the skin grew together, but the flesh completely deformed my finger. It was – it was very difficult, it was clearly extremely difficult work. One –

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Q: What kind of ammuni – I'm –

A: Ammunition?

Q: What kind – yeah, what kind of – were – were these bullets, were these –

A: Bullets, bullets about that –

Q: Bullets.

A: – big, and – and I had to test them through a gauge, and if it slipped through the gauge – it had to click into it, if you – if it went through, I had to discard the ammunition and call a technician, you know, mechanic to – to adjust the machine.

But every so often I had to test it. And one time, I was so tired, I was just so, so tired, I cou – I couldn't stand any more, so I crouched somewhere near the machine for a few minutes and I fell asleep and the German supervisor came and screamed at me, and – when we were – in the evening we were – we got a bowl of soup, and a slice of bread. We experimented with the bread. Sometimes we starved ourselves to keep the bread for the next day, that if we have two slices, we'll not be so hungry. We still went hungry because we – it was so painful, the hunger was so different from when we are hungry here. So different, it never went out of our mind. It was constantly on our mind. One day we made crumbs, and we were hoping that if we eat little crumbs, it will last. No matter what we did, it wasn't. So one day, we were standing for soup at night and my father didn't come. We always, when I had the day shift, we always stood together. The prisoners always let me stand, because I – I

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was one of the very few children. So they always protected me, and you know, let me stand next to my father. And on this evening my father didn't come. So I didn't know what happened to him. I took my bowl of soup and I went to his barrack. He was in bed, and he said that he was too tired to come. I knew that it is impossible because we were so hungry, would have crawled, you know, to – to get this piece of bread. Only later I found out that he went by the camp's kitchen, and he found a carrot in a trashcan, which he took for me, and they caught him and they beat him so terribly that he couldn't move. But he wanted to hide his pain from me. Then, one day, it was Yom Kippur, the holiest day, and – and people knew that I was writing, and so they ask me if I could read something for a – they wanted to have a special – some way to celebrate the holiday. I knew that my father will be at work, so I wrote something. Not a poem, just a story, my memories of Yom Kippur at home, comparing it to what we have now. And it was packed, it was packed and when I was reading it, I heard somebody in the back crying. And I – when I looked, I saw my father. You know, I didn't know that he will be there. And then my birthday is in December, but of course, who – who wanted to think about birthday? Every day was the same, we didn't know even what day it was because each day was the same.

Q: December what?

A: December 22<sup>nd</sup>. And when we stood the line – in line for food, my father gave me a birthday gift. I couldn't believe this. It was a comb this big, it was made of steel,

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he made it in the workshop. Teeth not completely even, and I thought it was the most beautiful gift. I carried it with me, I slept on it, I – I didn't leave it off my side. I couldn't believe how he risk his life to make it. If he would have been caught for this lousy, rotten carrot, then he – he was beaten like this, they would catch him. So I was really – I loved this comb. Then, when I finished my night shift, some of – a little bit earlier, before the men went to work the day shift, so I sneaked into my father's barrack. I knew what I'll find. All the men were sleeping and my father's sitting next to a freestanding stove, sitting. I walked in, not talking, sat next to my father ... we just held each other. And that way we shared our – our love.

Q: He sounds like an amazing man, an amazing –

A: Our – our fear and our – our hopes. One day in December – okay – then one day I was working and it was almost the end of the – oh, I – I have to mention – mention that once a month we were taken on trucks to Camp **A**, which was the main camp. And I found out that my aunt and uncle are on Camp **A**, and that my aunt, my beautiful aunt was selected to be the housekeeper of **Cuneman**(ph).

Q: I was going to ask you about **Cuneman**(ph), we hadn't talked about him yet.

A: He was a hunchback.

Q: Okay.

A: Always walking with a dog or two, always. And my aunt was his housekeeper. So, when we came to – they took us to delouse, because there was a terrible

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epidemic of typhoid in the camp, and then it was already under control, but every so often, they took us to delouse us, our clothes, our hair, us, to Camp A. When I came to Camp A, a group of people were walking there, and I looked at them and I said, are these human beings? Are these human beings? The people were yellow green; their eyes, their teeth, their fingernails, everything was yellow green. I said, who are these people? They were people from Camp C, the worst of the camp, which the people were working – working with poisonous gases, and they were dying a slow death. It was – the book I have about **Skarzysko-Kamienna** called, “**Death Comes in Yellow,**” is because of the people. When we came to **werk A**, often, we have to – they assembled us on a big assembly place, and we had to watch executions of prisoners by hanging or by shooting. So, when I was – when we were supposed to go to **werk A**, my emotions were really torn, because I was so happy to be able to see my beloved aunt and uncle, but I was so afraid to see an-another execution. The worse were also – okay – one day I was so tired working at this huge machine, and it was the end of the shift, and I was – I just didn’t know what to do, I just – I didn’t – I was almost sleeping and working. And the **obermeister** came to check the ammunition, and went to – took some of mine and it went through, and he’s got, **was ist ein das**, what is this? Then he took the next one and it went through, and he started louder, **was ist ein das**? And then the next one, and all of it was bad, all of it was bad. How could I tell him that I just could not function? I – I – I just couldn’t do



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it any more, I was so tired, and so hungry, I didn't know what I was doing. So after the – after a few, he took the ammunition and with every one he knocked on my hair and screamed, **was ist ein das, was ist ein das?** And then he walked away to his office, which was off the machine room. After a few minutes he came back and called me. As I was walking behind him, I knew. I knew what it meant. And I could s – I could see the silence of the – I could hear the silence of my fellow prisoners and I could see their tears as I was ma-marching behind him. And all I remember is thinking, what will it do to my father when he finds out that he had lost me too? I – I knew what my fate will be. I came to his office, and he looked at me and looked at me and looked at me and paused. And then he said, take the broom, sweep my office, and go back to work. I don't know if my youth moved him, if he had maybe a daughter my age. But something moved him. I also am convinced that when I was not taken in **Plaszów**, it was because I was small and I was standing behind somebody and they simply did not see me. Because there's absolutely no reason why I am here and my brother and others are dead. Th – I'm – I'm convince of it, that they just did not see me. And it's not because of I – because I was hiding, because I wasn't. I – you know. So – so that was my other miracle, **[indecipherable]** that I went behind him and – and he decided, go back to work. But when my father found out, he was so worried that I will not survive this camp, because it was such horrible work, that when he – when we went to see Aunt

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**Pauline**, he – and she also, was terribly worried about me. So they decided that she will talk to **Cuneman**(ph) to move my father and me to **werk A**.

Q: Was it successful?

A: After a few months, I was moved, but my father did not get permission. So here I – I – I – I adored my father, so I was again torn. It was easier for me, but I was on **[indecipherable]** every minute worried about my father. The worst were the selection. They used to come on trucks, the Germans, and always when we heard them coming on trucks, it was this fear. We had to line up and they – they walked and they said, **du, du** – you, you, you – and we never knew, should we look at them, should we look up, sideways, back, which way? Should we stand crooked, crou – you know, never – how can we avoid **du**, because we knew what it meant. And the first people who were always taken were people with white hair. And my father, since **Erik** was killed, my father was white. So always when I heard that they saw some trucks from **werk A**, passing by **werk A**, you know, with prisoners from **werk B**, I was always, my father still alive?

Q: Did you work in his house, in –

A: She – she –

Q: – yeah, you, with your aunt, de – when you were transferred to **werk A**, did you work with your aunt, or were you **[indecipherable]**

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A: No, no, she wa – she was his housekeeper, she works for him. I worked again in the kitchen.

Q: I see.

A: I was again in the kitchen. So –

Q: How long – excuse me, how long had you been in **werk B**, do you remember? ... So here? Ah, yes. So, slave labor from November 30, '43 to August '44. About nine years.

A: Yeah, but in that – yeah, in – in – combine –

Q: Oh, it combines with **werk A**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So –

A: So –

Q: – it was about nine months then, in total, in –

A: Right.

Q: – star – **Starzysko(ph)-Kamienna**.

A: Right. And so, my life was easier physically. And then one day I woke up and I felt sick. And my aunt was standing over me, and two other men whom I didn't know were standing over me, and my aunt was crying. And I didn't know what is wrong with me. And they moved me to a little place, not to the hospital, and I didn't know while I was there what – what was wrong with me, but after I recovered, I

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found out that I had typhoid, and it was a time when the orders came that every new case must be shot immediately because the epidemic was over, and they didn't want a new spread of e-epidemic, so every new case had to be shot. And here they didn't report, and I think that **Cuneman**(ph) must have known that I had typhoid, I don't know, but that he [**indecipherable**] for my aunt's sake. I don't know if my aunt had to pay a price for it, I don't know.

Q: Did you ever meet him?

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: Was he – what was he like?

A: He was a very cruel man, very bitter, being a hunchback, you know, and [**indecipherable**] very beaten, but he –

Q: Was he physically ugly?

A: Yes, yes, yes. But in the conteres – in contrast to **Goeth**, who was very handsome man in – in **Plaszów**. He was very handsome. Have you seen the movie with his daughter?

Q: No, I haven't.

A: She is not a very attractive girl, or young woman. She is not attractive, and her father was so attractive. That is the – it's called – I'll remember. There is a – a documentary with his daughter, who found out – she did not have good relationship with her mother. And her mother told her once, you will end up just like your father,

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you are just like your father. And she assumed that her father was on the front, that he was a military –

Q: That – she didn't know who he was.

A: No. She thought that he died as a soldier. So she ask her grandmother, why did my mom say that I'll end like my father, that I'm like – so her grandmother told her what happened, that he was executed because of the horrible things he did. So she started researching him, and found a housekeeper, a Jewish housekeeper who worked for her father in **New Jersey**.

Q: Is this **Helen**? Because that's the one who was profiled in "**Schindler's List**."

A: **Helen** who?

Q: Was a housekeeper too, with **Goeth**.

A: I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: But, and a me – okay –

Q: Anyway –

A: So the two met in **Plaszów**.

Q: Oh, I think I heard about this.

A: They met in **Plaszów**.

Q: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I heard about the film, but no, I have not seen it.

A: Yeah, yeah, okay.

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Q: So –

A: So – so he was not a very attractive man. But that was another – another one of my survivors, you know.

Q: So, you had the typhoid. You don't know what cost it might have been to your aunt, or to the others who saved you, but you were able to heal.

A: Right.

Q: You were able to eat better.

A: Without them sending me to the hospital, and I listened to a tape. My cousin interviewed my uncle, my ha – my aunt's husband. So he says on the tape – on the tape that Aunt **Polly** and he practically adopted me. And he write about the typhus, that they managed to get everyone in the camp, put me in the room, isolated, and so – so that's – that was **Skarzysko-Kamienna**, and as I said, **Skarzysko-Kamienna** was a – then, **Skarzysko-Kamienna** was liquidate. I don't know what happened to **Skarzysko-Kamienna**, but we had – again we were herded to the trains once more.

Q: And Father, where was he?

A: And Father was also, but he was in a – you know, he was in **B, werk bay**, and I was in – in **A**, so I didn't know exactly what was happening to him. But we were shipped to **Germany**, and this time it was **Buchenwald**.

Q: I've been there.

A: Pardon?

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Q: I've been there.

A: Yeah.

Q: But many decades later. Many decades later.

A: So when we came to **Buchenwald**, my father was shipped elsewhere. It was only a women's camp, and I had no idea where my father is. So, new horror came over me, here I was separated from him, and I had no idea where he was.

Q: Were you with your aunt, though?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: When we came to this camp, we had to put everything we possessed, everything we had to put on a pile. I had my poetry, my stories, everything I had, I put it on the pile. But I decided that there is no way, no way anybody is going to take away my comb. But what do I do? They searched us, they – we – they stripped us, we had to take our clothes off, how can I keep it? So, we had wooden clogs. I started kicking the ground under me, and scratching and here, with all the women around me, and I – I kicked a hole deep enough, and I buried my comb, with the hope that when I ever get out, I'll find it. As long as I was in **Buchenwald**, I was kicking and kicking and walking all around the camp, because I had no idea where I buried it. When we arrived I didn't know the physical layout of the camp, so I was never able to find it,

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never. And when I tell this story to my little students, the especially little, will you go back, will you look for it, will you – I said, I was there and I didn't find it. So –

Q: But you didn't give it up, either, that's the good thing.

A: Well, I – I'm still sorry that I never found it.

Q: Yeah.

A: But in the meantime, somebody made for me a comb which is very special to me, and that's another story.

Q: Okay.

A: So –

Q: In **Buchenwald**.

A: **Buchenwald** was – work in **Buchenwald** was easier than in **Skarzysko-Kamienna**. I was again in ammunition fa-factory. I was working on bombs. And – but it was sitting, there were 10 of us in a row, including my aunt. I had two sisters on each side. They were older, I was the youngest, and we were cleaning with big, metal rods, we were cleaning scratches inside of the bombs. I learned the most beautiful poetry during this time, Polish poetry. The two sisters started one day to – just bring something from the outside world. And I was so hungry to learn, I said, teach me. And so they started – I started memorizing in the words which we couldn't pronoun – which I could not remember. Somebody smuggled a piece of chalk, so I wrote it on the bomb. And it – I – I just – several poems, but one was a



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very, very long poem about the father in **Lebanon**, who has, I think seven children, and each one died of a epidemic, and he describes the death of each of his children and his wife. And at the end it says, where the cemetery is, there is my way **[indecipherable]**, and it's a very beautiful poem. And after the war, everybody, from my friends who went to **Poland**, I said, please try to find the poem for me. After years, a colleague of mine in school said, **Edith**, I think I found the poem for you. My aunt, here in **Washington** has the book of poetry, and the poem is in it. She brought me – it was like finding a beloved friend, but I couldn't believe, 14 pages, that I learned 14 pages like this, and this was not the only poem. I have it, I printed it several times and it got – and I thought no, I – impossible that I learned all of it, but when I went through all of it, the poem, I remembered that I knew every single line. I don't know the poem now in its – but I still remember the first. But I – it was really – it meant so much for me to – in this camp, also one time somebody smuggled pieces of cloth, different pieces of cloth and needle and thread. And one of the women was a seamstress, so she made beautiful collars for us on our prisoner's dress. I have my prisoner's dress.

Q: You have your prisoner's dress?

A: It will go to the museum, but only after I **[indecipherable]** I'll show it to you.

Q: Okay.

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A: Okay. So, on our prisoner dresses, we had this – we knew we cannot walk out of the room, but for just few seconds, we felt we had the most beautiful party dresses, you know? In **Buchenwald**, I had a very good overseer. He must have been in – working in – in this ammunition company before the war. Not a Nazi. I knew that he felt very sorry for me, he was a very kind man. Sometimes he brought a piece of bread, sometimes an apple, and he hid it, and he told me where to find it. As I told you before, my mother used to sing German operettas and songs. One day he started singing a song that my mother used to sing. And it was like somebody took a knife and went through my heart. I burst out in tears, and he came to me and asked me, **warum weinst du?** Why – why are you crying? Well, I was so choked up that I couldn't answer. The next day when he came, I ask him, please sing it. He said, please tell me why did you cry? So I told him. And he tra – look at me, and he said, I'll never sing this song again. In this camp was – were some non-Jewish prisoners, they were not the same prisoners as we were, but they were still prisoners. And there was a Belgian young man, an electrician, who was working fixing something. And I call him my friend, although we never spoke. We communicated with our eyes and our smiles. And he used to – to point where he put newspaper clippings, so I would know that it's coming to the end. And I will read to you the end of – of the war, okay? Cause that's what I'm usually –

Q: So, did you [**indecipherable**]

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A: This is my precious gift story about the comb, which was published in several places, including this one here.

Q: Oh.

A: Excuse me, I'm going to the bathroom. Do you want – **[break]**

Q: I don't have to say anything then? Okay, all right. So –

A: Last weeks before liberation, **Leipzig, Buchenwald**. My father was also in **Buchenwald**.

Q: But you didn't know it.

A: I didn't know for a long time, but then one day some German – some Nazis came and said that we are allowed to write a short card to **Buchenwald** men's group. I didn't know if my father is dead or not, but I wrote. And my aunt wrote to her husband, and I got an answer back. We could all write just I'm fine, I am happy, you know, and – and – just few words. I gave the letters to the museum. So I knew then my father was in **Buchenwald**.

Q: And he was alive.

A: And he survived. Okay, it was at the end of March or beginning of April, 1945. From newspaper clippings smuggled into the ammunition factory by a non-Jewish Belgian friend, we knew that the situation did not look good for the Germans. One evening, as we lay stretched on our plank beds, we heard sounds of shelling, gunfire and explosions. We knew that these were the sounds of the American front being so

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near. What sweet sounds they were. Our hopes for being soon free rose high. Unfortunately, our euphoria was very short-lived. Around nine or 10 o'clock the same evening, we were ordered to assemble outside on the assembly field. I don't remember if we were told for what purpose. We were given some supply of food, and we were marched out of the camp into the darkness of the night. About 5,000 women began their new journey. A journey which became known as the death march. We marched and marched. Days replaced nights. We kept marching, given short periods of rest. We mar-marched in sunshine and we marched in the rain. We marched through towns, and we marched through villages. No one knew where we were going. Later we found out that we were walking between the American and the Russian front. While we were marching, we were heavily guarded by our captors. They were working in shifts. Replacements for them were coming on trucks. Food was delivered to them, while our was long gone. The officers among our captors were driving by in comfortable cars, enjoying the sight of marching subhuman creatures. Their spotless starch uniforms were highly polish – and highly polished boots, must have been quite a contrast with the wrecks and filths we were in. I remember when others were given to rest, we turned the seams of our prisoners striped clothes from inside out, and squashed as many lice as we could between our fingernails. The itching was unbearable. By now some of the events are blurred. Others are more deeply engraved in my memory. I still can see half faces of the

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German civilian population, the other half hidden behind the curtain, watching as we marched. What were they thinking? What did they feel? Once, taking a rest near woods, we heard shots. We found out later that someone was shot trying to escape. How could anyone hope to escape? Besides being so heavily guarded, we had only our prisoner's clothes on. How far could we go without being caught? So we kept marching. We ate grass, and even this was forbidden, if a cruel guard chose to do so. Days and nights went by. More and more people were unable to keep walking, and each of us was too weak to be able to help someone else. We could hardly lift our own feet. How dreadful and painful it was to have to leave someone dear behind to die. We came up on a desolate concentration camp. There was no movement anywhere. It was so eerie. Where were the people? Were they also marching, or were they shipped into crematoria? When we still had strength to talk, we kept evaluating our situation. One terrifying thought went through our minds. We were fearful, and then when the Germans will realize that they have lost, they will shoot us anyway. We imagined that they will need our uniforms to make an easier escape. There was so little hope for our survival, one way or the other. How they do it, keep marching. My most vivid memories are of a situation which occurred on a farmland. Naturally, we were very hungry, and exhausted when others came to rest. Some prisoner noticed in the distance of the field, a wagon loaded with potatoes, which several farmers were about to plant. As soon as some of the women prisoner noticed

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it, they began running to grab some potatoes. My Aunt **Polly** started to run. I grabbed her with the little strength I had left, and pleaded with her not to go. Just then rifle fire started blasting and that women were falling everywhere. A young woman, she could have been between 18 - 20 years old, was shot in the leg. She tried to get up, but couldn't. She was not too far from us. What pain and terror were reflected in her eyes. She screamed and pleaded for help. The Germans took their time to kill her. We kept walking, leaving more and more people behind, often stepping over them. As we grew weaker and could hardly walk with our eyes open, letting ourselves to be pushed by the mass of people, my – my aunt and our small group of friends around us tried to reassure ourself that one or the other are still with us. From time to time we called each other's names in weak voices, and our responses brought some relief to the others. The rest periods were welcome, but it was increasingly more difficult to get up, and to keep marching. Actually, for most of us, it was impossible to get up, but as soon as a shot was fired into the helpless prisoners, we collected our bit – last bits of energy and kept going. One day we found ourself on another farmland. There was even food for us in kettles in a huge barn. After eating and some rest, we were ordered once more to get up and to continue to march. Only this time, some of us were no longer able to do so. We reached our limits. We had to give up. We were told that if we will not vacate this barn, it will be locked and burned with us in it. It seemed that our fate was sealed.

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Some women were still able to get up and go. We found out later that they were shot, and that that Nazis did use their uniforms. As for us in the barn, freedom came in the last moment, and a Russian soldier on a motorcycle, leading the way to more Russian soldiers on trucks appeared and prevented the burning of the barn, with our living corpses in it. I have no recollection of what I felt at the time of our liberation. I – I don't remember if I fully comprehended that it was all over, and we were finally and truly free.

Q: Did you have any opportunity to sleep on those marches, or during the nighttime they kept you moving?

A: They kept us moving all the time, we must have slept, you know, whenever they told us to rest, but – but it was more and more difficult to kept marching. We just had less and less energy. We didn't eat for days.

Q: Do you know where you ended up, on that farm?

A: Yes, oh yes.

Q: What was the place?

A: The place was called **Orschatz**.

Q: **Orschatz**.

A: Here – here is it.

Q: In that paper that you showed me before?

A: Yeah, paper where I had all this camps.

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Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: **Orschatz**. I see. To **Orschatz**, where I was liberated. And where is **Orschatz**, is it still in **Germany**, or is it –

A: Actually, **Orschatz** is not terribly far from **Buchenwald**, you know, we were walking back and forth, they were marching us – the Russians came closer, so they marched us toward the American front. The American toward the Russians, so we were –

Q: I see. It was not in a line, it was in a circle line.

A: It – it was –

Q: And did you –

A: Well, when we were liberated, this is a mystery that I have not solved –

Q: Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute –

A: Oh, I'm sorry.

Q: It's okay.

A: Oh, I'm so **[indecipherable]**

Q: You want to show us something?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. We'll take this off, we'll pause it for a sec – **[break]** Just a little bit. This is amazing shape.



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A: This –

Q: Are we on? The dress? Okay.

A: This dress, if you see it in the museum, it's another dress, but this dress, as I mention, I was working with ammunitions –

Q: Yes.

A: – oil –

Q: It must have been –

A: – was dripping on it, it got dirty, it had to be washed. This is the only thing we had for spring, summer, fall and winter. In summer it was hot, in winter – winter it was extremely cold in the severe winters of **Poland** or **Germany**. Can you imagine when we had to wash it in the washroom, with a little bit soap, whatever, and we had to squeeze the water out, and had no energy, we were we – weak and hungry, so we couldn't squeeze it completely, no place to dry. We put it on our plank beds in the evening, and in the morning when we were called to roll call, we had to wear it wet as it was, and stand in the most severe winters of – in **Poland**, or **Germany**. In a few second being outside, it turn into a sheet of ice. How did we just, you know –

Q: I'm amazed.

A: – die from – from this?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Just from this.

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Q: And your number was 781?

A: Right. It's quite early.

Q: Did you – I see all these spots that are repaired. Did they cap – happen later, after you were liberated?

A: I – I – after liberation. But first of all, I have no recollection why I kept it, how I kept it, where I kept it, because the first thing when the Russian soldiers saw us, th – in what filth we were, they stripped their shirts and they gave to the women. The women, the first thing they had, they took off this full of lice clothes and threw it away. So, how did I keep it?

Q: You don't remember.

A: I don't remember. And then we were assigned to the German families in **Orschatz**, depending how well the family was; some people had four prisoners, some had six prisoners. Where I was, we were six. And the family had to feed us, clothe us, and – until we started functioning as human beings.

Q: And did – a couple of questions here, when they – do you remember how they behaved towards you, were they –

A: The Germans?

Q: Yes, in the families.

A: The families? They were so protective of – even the – the men, I don't know what they were doing during the war, but they protected na – us against the Russian

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soldiers, because the Russian soldiers were drinking a lot, and ready to rape if they – even a skeleton, they were ready to rape. So the Germans protected us and hid us when they saw the Russians coming, they hid us somewhere. It was such a strange time **[indecipherable]** so –

Q: And your father, when did you dis –

A: And my father was bo – liberated from **Buchenwald**, and of course, the first thought was to find us, my uncle and – they were liberated together. So they went from village to vel – village, trying to find out where the people went from this camp, where we went. Until somebody told them that they spotted some people from our transport in **Orschatz**. So they –

Q: They found you there.

A: They found us when we were with the German family. And that's how my father – yeah. But I – I have just no recollection of this. N-None, zero.

Q: You don't – you don't recall seeing your father then, or seeing –

A: You know what the strangest thing is? I remember going home with my father to our hometown.

Q: In – in **Czechoslovakia**?

A: Yeah, right. But I don't remember the first – the initial meeting him after the war, and I think that it was because I was so afraid to think that it might not be true. So –

Q: It was just too much that you had to deal with, too much.

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A: So then, when we went home, we had no home. So we went to **Icar**(ph), my friend's family, to the bakers, and they were in such a shock to find out what we – of course they didn't know, right – where we went, but that Mother didn't survive, **Erik** didn't survive. They were – they were devastated by it, you know? And so I stayed with them for some time, and the people who took over our home and store said, we will vacate as soon as we can, which was really incredible, because when Jewish people came back to **Poland**, they were killed by some Poles. You know, they didn't want to give back.

Q: It – it's so – yeah, it's so unusual to hear this type of a story.

A: So, not only this, but when people in the community ca – heard that we came back and what happened to us, they came to my father, they said, Mr. **Pick**, you helped us when we needed it, because when we had the store they – sometimes they didn't have the money to pay and my parents put it on the book, never asked them, because they knew when the – if the people will have money, they will pay, they don't have to remind them, you know? So, the people came back, she said, you gave us when we needed it, let us pay you back, and open this store.

Q: And that's what happened? You got back your store, you got back your house? Your aunt, your uncle, your father and you?

A: My aunt and uncle went to live in the city where my uncle came from.

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: But we – we had our store, we had our home back. My father said, all I want is the housekeeper's room in the attic, but they said, this belongs to you, and we will vacate, and – and the people in the community were unbelievable. There's a plaque on the community building naming people, and many of my family member – honor to their memory.

Q: How long did you stay in **Parowice**(ph)?

A: I stayed, I went to school, I studied like crazy, because –

Q: You missed so many years.

A: – I wanted to go to school with my peers. But my peers went to schools for six years, and I didn't. I had a little bit Polish education, you know. So fo – so I – I had the – I cried awa – to the Ministry of – of Education, let me go, I'll catch up, and my first report card was four Ds, and I was crushed. But my professor [**indecipherable**] you are sitting in this class with your peers. Give yourself credit. Next report card was Cs and then I had Bs and by then end I had some As, okay. But it was tough.

Q: Of course, of course.

A: But I-I was the only Jew in the Jewish – in the – in the Czech youth movement. I was the only Jew in school after the war, in business school. I was the only school – Jew in my sport organization. Yet I – I cannot tell you how the people were. Really, I cannot tell you. But my father remarried. And – and in spite of all, you know, that we got back and that we were so welcomed and so accepted. Like, my father was –

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and I were invited to every – in – in January, February, every organization has a ball, a party. This ball, the firefighters, the policeman [**indecipherable**] we were invited to every single one, my father and I. In spite of this, it was like being there on a graveyard. Being there, especially, especially on the bridge – we went back – you know, my – my fondest memories were of the meadow, all the family and my grandpa. No one was there. So, I volunteered –

Q: Did you ever know about – mm-hm?

A: I went to **Israel**.

Q: Before that, I'm sorry, what happened to your mother? Do you – did you –

A: Yes –

Q: – ever find out?

A: – yes, my – I always thought that she died, and that she perished in – in **Treblinka**, but she – from the **Yad Vashem** I got that she perished most likely in **Belzec**, one of the very first extermination camps.

Q: I see. But that must have come much later.

A: Yes.

Q: At that point you probably didn't know what happened to your mother.

A: No, no.

Q: No. So you went to **Israel** in what year?

A: I went to – in '48, just after the creation. I was in the Israeli Army.

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Q: Well, you also went at a very interesting time, and a very crucial time in

**Czechoslovakia's [indecipherable]**

A: Under communists.

Q: Yes.

A: I did. I we – I – I lived – I lived our – certainly our Jewish history –

Q: Yeah.

A: – you know, from the Holocaust to the – almost the creation of **Israel**. And – and when I was teaching, I was teaching here in the Jewish day school, and we went on a seminar and then we had to write our diaries. And I couldn't read, you know, and they were all strangers, I couldn't tell them about – but one time we had to write our stepping stone of our lives. And when I was – I said that's that I can do. So, I – I was telling them I was born in **Czechoslovakia**, I stayed there until the age of 10, and then I – and we went to **Poland**, and then to the ghetto, and then to my first labor camp, then concentration camp, and this much, and **Israel**. And there was such silence, because nobody had this kind of –

Q: History.

A: – life as I. And after this, a young woman comes to me and said, **Edie**, how does one want to survive, if there is no hope, if everything is so hopeless? So I said, **Sally**, you want to talk? She said yes. So I said, let's go. We sat at a lake, and I said, you talk, you talk. So she was telling me that she had – she m – she must have been

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35 years at this time. She s – she had a bad relationship with her parents. She said she – she joined some Moonies and **Roonies**, you know. She married somebody, had a horrible marriage. She was raped, she tried to commit suicide. And here I was, looking, and I said, this is a nice American girl, you know, what happened to her? So, after she finished telling me, I said, look **Sally**, I'll talk to you as a mother of daughters close to your age, and also as your peer. I said, would you have listened to your parents if they would have told you, don't marry this guy, don't join this group? Would you have, honestly? Search deep in your heart, would you have? And then I said, and as one thing to survive, I said, you have to find the reason why – why you want to survive. For me it was my father. So, she lived in **Ohio**, and one day she came to give seminar on suicide, and the next time she came to the seminar on – on rape, or something, talked to young teenager. And I invited her for dinner, and she said, **Edith**, I am making you a gift. I said, why would she make gift? Oh, I – my comb story was published and, you know, and my poems, my **[indecipherable]** of poems that I wrote were published. So, I sent her, and she sent me booklet that she had on rape, and on the – she took my comb story and took it to an artisan in **Ohio** and said, I want you to read this story. I want to pay you whatever you want. I want to design, I want to do it myself, you just teach me how. He read my comb story, he said, I'm not going to charge you, just come and do it. She – she came and she – when she came the second time she gave me this little box. When I



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opened it, I was overwhelmed; there was a comb. And not like my father's, but I was just very touched by it. And she told me how for seven weeks, twice a week she went to this artisan and each afternoon she did it, and that's how I – okay, okay, yeah, it's –

Q: We will – okay, when we finish, then you can show us the comb.

A: – I took it out, because I was talking to some people, so I was showing it to them. So she – she made it for me, and I framed it and it's on my wall. In the meantime, she died in a car accident, so it's really very special.

Q: Oh. Tell me, how long did your father survive after the war? Did he move to **Israel**, too?

A: No, unfortu – you know, I never thought that I'll separate from him ever again, but I went as a military and he couldn't come with me. And he – his second wife became ill with cancer, breast cancer, during the time I left. So we hoping she will get better, and I, you know, I even borrowed money in **Israel** and rented a tiny apartment and fixed it for them. But she died two years later, and the communists were there, and –

Q: And there was a hundred and –

A: – they didn't let him out. So here we were separated again. It was horrible. It was horrible for me. And then, after – some times later he remarried again, and then,

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after five years of another happy marriage, she became ill with breast cancer, and she died.

Q: Oh, he lost all three wives.

A: That was it. When my father went, and he would never know, he looked like – everybody said he looks like a diploma, that his life was always good – what he went through.

Q: How – when did he die?

A: He died at the age of 82.

Q: In what year?

A: He died 26 years ago, something like that.

Q: Oh, so it would have been in the 70s or 80s?

A: He –

Q: The 1970s or the 1980s he died.

A: He – he was 80 –

Q: No, no, what – what year did he die?

A: Oh, oh, yeah, a little bit **[indecipherable]**

Q: So, he died like 1980 - 1984?

A: I think a little bit earlier **[inaudible]** yeah, yeah.

Q: But you – did you see him again after?

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A: Oh yes, we visited him, we met his – I never met his third wife, but – but with his – he – he met – when his third wife died, we just moved in our little house, and we just were a short time here in **America**, we have no money, but we insisted he should come to visit. And by then, the communists let him because what could they lose? His pension they could keep, his house they could keep, you know, so – so they let him, but they let him come only for three months. But if this – when this was over, I was heartbroken, I was sick, I said, now he will again go there and be home alone. So we extended it six more months, but I was not in a better shape when he had to leave. So we extended for another six months. But when he came, **George's** mother was here. **George** is about half an hour by streetcar from where I used to be in the coal mining fr – community, and he is from **Ostrava**, from the city. His parent was a law – his father was a lawyer in the city, and my father used to shop for our store in **Ostrava**, so they had many mutual acquaintances. They didn't know each other, but mutual acquaintance. So, when his mother – his mother lived 18 years with us, but at this time she was only visiting. So when she heard that my father will be coming, she was visiting, so she stayed longer to meet my father. So we had them for about three weeks, I think, we had both of them here. And – and they knew how hard it is for me to let him go. So my cousin – my father was her favorite uncle from eight siblings he had – so my mother-in-law and my cousin paid a fare for him to come to **Israel** before he goes home to **Czechoslovakia**, so he

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would have something nice on his way. And it was – he had a wonderful month in **Israel**, and then when he came home, three women were waiting for him. But he didn't – he married somebody else, whom he met visiting a sick friend. So –

Q: Well, is there anything else you'd want to add to what we've talked about today?

A: What I want to add, I know that most – most survivors have guilt feelings that they survived and their loved ha – ones didn't. I never felt that way, I never felt that way. I always felt, I was a child and a young teenager. I haven't done anything wrong. My parents were wonderful people, it's not that I should have died, they should have lived.

Q: Yes. Exactly, exactly. By the age of 20 you had been through hell on earth, by the time you went to **Israel**.

A: And then, when I speak, you know, college students, high school students say, you must hate the Germans. I said, how could I? How? I have seen what hate can do. How could I be part of? And forgive, I can forgive for myself, and I have done it. I cannot forgive for – for the rest.

Q: Thank you **Edith**. Thank you very much for sharing –

A: Thank you.

Q: – your story today. I know that it's cost something, and – and we really, really appreciate it.

A: Thank you for doing it.

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Q: Okay. This concludes –

A: You know, it's not hard for me to tell what I went through, but it's hard to talk about my brother.

Q: Of course. He was a child. He was a child.

A: My mother ... and my father.

Q: Yes. I can't imagine it, I can't imagine it, what it must have felt to see his son there, what it is – must have felt to be afraid for you. I can't imagine it, even though I'm a parent myself, when you're not in that situation, yeah, it's –

A: Yeah, you know, it happened so long ago. When I come here, and I entertain a lot, I have lots of friends, when I go to the **Giant** and I buy, or anywhere and **[indcipherable]** always the groceries, I think God, all I wanted was **[indcipherable]** of potatoes, or a loaf of bread. All I wanted was just a little corner where I know that nobody will come and drag me. You know, I have a nice apartment, I have a wonderful family, and I have – I'm free. Oh, and when I – when I walk, when I take a walk, it still comes back.

Q: Did you have nightmares?

A: I went through different stages. I had nightmares in the beginning, but it was mostly about bombing. I went through terrible – terrific bombing in **Leipzig**, terrible, when I was afraid to be separated from my aunt. And I saw my nightmares were mostly that everybody went to a bunker, and I was left all alone. The bunker

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closed just before I reached, and then here I was in the world alone. But my husband says that when we first got married, that I screamed at night. Then I had a period that when I was in company, I – I was listening what people were saying, but I found myself that I'm somewhere else. So it was a short period. And then I had period, we have our best friends who moved with us, they're upstairs. We have been friends since the first week we came – came to **America**, which is over 15 years. So when we – so when we – I had my next period was that we went to – to some wonderful restaurant and we are sitting with friends and I burst into tears, because here was just so good. So I went through different periods, and then when we went, you know, sometimes when we are sitting somewhere in a – so we like to go to **Alexandria**, and, you know, for lunch, and sometimes I na – I get tears in my eyes, he says, again? So – so I went through different stages, but I never felt that I needed therapies. You know, I just tried to deal with it myself. And I am very fortunate. I loved what I was doing a-and – and we have many hobbies, and many interests both, fortunately, **George** and I. We both started painting after we retired, and –

Q: Are any of these paintings yours?

A: Yes, these are all mine over there.

Q: Over there?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And –

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A: These, on this wall.

Q: On that wall?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: They're beautiful. Lovely colors.

A: And this wall are **George's**. This is mine also, this collage here.

Q: They're beautiful. They're beautiful paintings. And I love the color choices.

Okay, thank you, and this concludes our interview.

A: Thank you. I'm sorry I really would love to offer you lunch.

Q: No, no, no, everything is fine, everything is fine. We have kept you for three hours today, so –

A: Was it that long?

Q: Yeah, close to it. So, this concludes our interview with **Edith Lowy**, on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Thank you again.

A: And thank you for doing it.

Q: You're welcome.

**End of File Two**

**Conclusion of Interview**