

Do you need anything before we start? No? OK.

Rolling.

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Lily Kalman on August 2, 2016 Benicia, California. Thank you, again, for agreeing to an interview today. It's very much appreciated. So we'll start talking about your family first.

Speak louder because this-- my ear isn't so good.

Could you please tell us your date of birth?

January 27, 1929.

And where were you born?

In Hungary, in a small town called Berettyóújfalú.

And was your name always Lily, or did you have a different name?

They called me Lily, actually, I'm Livia, name. But I don't remember, I ever said here's the name of Livia. I came here as Lily.

And what was your maiden name?

Schwartz.

Schwartz. OK. So you were born in Hungary.

I born in Hungary.

Were your parents as well?

I lost my father when I was seven years old.

Was he also Hungarian?

What?

Was he also born in Hungary?

Yes.

And your mother?

The whole family born in [INAUDIBLE].

Whole family. OK. So what was your hometown like? Was it a village or a town? How big was it?

The name--

What, was it a town or a village?

It was a small town. It was more than a village. But it was actually a small town.

Were your parents from that town also?

My parents was [INAUDIBLE].

And what were your parents' names?

Ignatz Schwartz was my father name. And my mother name Regina Steiner.

Steiner. OK. And what were your parents like? Were they-- were you close to them?

My father died when I was seven years old. And I had two brothers. And I was-- she put me in the Jewish orphanage in Budapest.

And before we go there, what were your brothers' names?

Who is there? My mother?

Your brothers, yeah.

My mother's name Regina.

Your brothers.

Oh, brothers.

Yes, ma'am.

Paul. The older on is Paul. And the younger one is Leslie. Actually, it's L̄szl̄, Hungarian. But it means Leslie here.

And how far apart in age were you and your brothers? Were you the oldest?

The older brother, we have about two and a half years difference. And from the younger brother, it was one and a half years.

And you were the oldest?

No. I have an older brother and a younger brother. I was in the middle.

I see, I see. Did you have grandparents or aunts and uncles?

I remember my grandmother. She was deported with the rest-- my brother and the other Jewish people from the town. And I hardly remember from my father's side. I was maybe five, four years old when my grandfather from the father's side died. So I-- a little but I remember, but not much of it.

But your mother's family lived in town?

My mother's family, yes. My grandmother. I think my grandfather from my mother's side died long before I was born, even when my mother was younger.

And what languages did you speak at home?

What name?

What languages?

What language? Hungarian.

Just--

They all speak Hungarian. My grandmother speak some Jewish. But I don't think my mother did.

Was your family middle class? What was your family like? Were they middle class?

Well, it was middle class, I guess, yes.

And what religion was your family?

Jewish. Everybody is Jewish.

And did you celebrate all of the holidays?

Well, actually, my grandmother, she was very religious. She wears all those scarf. And she has no hair, I mean, very little. My mother, she never cut her hair. But they keep the holidays, definitely.

And did you live in a house or an apartment?

Well, they lived in a small town. They lived in the house. But I wasn't lived there. After my father died, they put me and my younger brother into the Jewish orphanage in Budapest.

He's-- my younger brother was in the boys' orphanage. And I in the girls. So it was a different place and different organization. Where I was it was organized with the Jewish women. And where my brother was, it was in the Jewish organization, I don't know what.

And why did your mother decide to put you and your younger brother in the orphanage?

I cannot hear you.

Why did your mother decide to put you and your younger brother in orphanages?

I don't know. I don't know that, actually. Why? I don't know. That was a decision. I don't know. So many family matters. They did agree with her for this decision. But that was her decision.

And did your older brother stay at home?

Yes. He lived with my mother and grandmother. They lived together in the house.

And you were seven years old?

What?

You were seven years old?

My brother?

You. How old were you?

When my father died, yes, I was seven years old.

And so how far away was Budapest from your hometown?

I think 200 kilometers.

So that's--

I don't know miles. I don't know. You know, the European measure, kilometers.

That's a very long way to be away from your mother and older brother.

Yes, it took-- by train, it took four or five hours. The town was near to the Romanian border.

And so what was it like moving into the orphanage by yourself?

It wasn't bad, but wasn't home. It wasn't a bad thing, but when you are far away from home, you don't satisfied. You don't like the place. So I wasn't-- I wasn't happy in there.

And how many other girls were there?

In that orphanage? Oh. I think it was more than 100.

And what--

It was established by the Hungarian Jewish woman.

And what was it like living there? How many girls did you share a room with? What was--

It wasn't bad at all. But wasn't home. So I always wish to be home. But it wasn't bad. They give us all the things that we needed. It wasn't bad. Just the fact that you are separated with you-- I separated with my mother and family. So that was the problem. Otherwise, there was no problem there.

Were you able to make friends in the orphanage?

Oh, sure. Sure, we were friends.

And so what kind of things did you do for fun while you were-- while you were there with your friends, these girls you met in--

In that orphanage you mean, or what--

Sure.

--but, or when?

Sure. Let's talk about your friends in the orphanage.

Oh.

What did you--

Well, I went to school. It's not was in orphanage. I went to the public school. And since it was a Jewish organization, we kept the holidays. And sometimes we were off from school. They let us off from school, although the school bus was

the city school. But they accepted holiday was when we stayed in the Institution. We didn't go to school. And there was a synagogue in the orphanage.

So we get a Jewish life there. But it wasn't home. And it was good, but it wasn't home. So you cannot-- cannot get anything better than home. So that's what I always wish to get home, get home. And then the war came, and the Germans occupied Hungary, and they occupied the building too. So the orphanage was no more.

They let the girls-- all those girls who has any place to go, they had to go out. And those who has no parents at all and no place to go, they went to the Jewish boy orphanage where my brother was. But my brother came out from there. So everybody who has a chance to get out from there, they let them out because they need that because the two-- the boys and the girls orphanage was only one. And there was not much place for both organizations, the girls and the boys.

And so before we get to the occupation, can I ask you some more questions about what it was like before the war started?

And what?

So let's talk more about school before the war started.

The school?

Yeah. So you--

We went to public school--

With Jewish and non-Jewish students?

What?

With Jewish and non-Jewish?

Not Jewish. Not Jewish. Public school. Was not Jewish.

But it was a mix.

All kind of religious girls' school there. It's a public school like anywhere. Like here, so it doesn't matter what was their religion. They reach the age, you have to go to the school. So it was a public school. So it was Jewish girls, was non-Jewish girls, all mixed.

But it was all girls?

What?

It was all girls or girls and boys?

What?

Was it girls and boys? Or just girls?

Oh, just girls. The school was just girls. Even if it's public school, it was different. Girls' school and boys' school. In Hungary, at least, there wasn't together. Maybe you go to college, they were together. But not in lower school.

And what subjects did you learn?

Just the regular-- but we have to--

So kind of the same.

We cannot choose. It was a different-- It wasn't college. So we have to do what-- but they had it in place.

So just kind of the standard history, science--

Everything.

--math, all that.

Everything.

Did you learn any foreign languages? Did you learn any foreign languages? No. Not in school.

What were the teachers like? Do you remember any favorites

Well, most of them wasn't like the Jewish girls. Most of them. But there was a few who was all right.

And how did you know that they didn't like the-- how did you know that they didn't like the Jewish students?

Well, when you go there, you have to tell you religion. They were in the book, what religion you are. So they knew. They have to do it. In Hungary, wherever you go, you have to tell what your religion is. So it wasn't that [? like that. ?]

They never was [? sympathetic ?] to the Jewish people. Maybe long, long before because so many Jewish people lived in Hungary. So probably that's why they went there because they were allowed and they were-- and many of them, for example, the richest people were Jewish. That was the trouble.

Big factory over there was Jewish in Hungary. But they build up the factory and everything. But Jewish people [INAUDIBLE] Hungary. It was an agricultural country. And when the Jewish people went there, it's getting a little more like-- get factories.

More industrialized.

Yeah. Yeah. They did a lot. So most of the big factories was before the war. The Jewish owned them and build them. Actually, they build them.

So you think this was the reason that a lot of people didn't like Jews?

I cannot hear you.

So you think that this was the reason that a lot of people didn't like Jews, because they owned the factories and--

I don't know. It wasn't good. It wasn't good for some people, somehow Hungarians that-- knowing that most of the richest people was Jewish except, you know, except landowners. They don't let Jewish landowners. So all the land in Hungary was in the Christians hand. All of the-- later, maybe a little, a small. But big, big lands is all-- was a Jewish, wasn't in Jewish hand.

And so with your teachers, how did you know that they didn't like the Jewish students?

Well, sometime when they call you, you know, you can-- and their voice and their-- not all of them, but some them was, yeah, antisemite, some of them.

So it was the way they talked to the Jewish students.

Yeah. They way you have to be extra smart to get a good mark.

And did you have friends at school? Maybe some girls that were not in the orphanage?

I had friends in the Institute, the orphanage where I lived. We were all friends, especially in the same age as I was. Sure, we were friends.

Were any of your classmates friends?

What?

Did you become friends with any of your classmates? Girls that weren't--

With wasn't Jewish? No. No.

So you and the girls from the Institute stuck together even at school?

Yes. Yes. We were-- they don't-- not because the Jewish girls, but because the Christian, they don't want to be friendly with us. So it's not-- that was our fault or our choose. They have to choose.

So even though the Jewish girls and the non-Jewish girls were in the same class, you didn't really talk to each other?

Well, we talked. But it's just a different group.

So at school or at the Institute, were politics ever--

In the Institute--

Were--

--that was Jewish. It was only Jewish girls there.

Were politics ever discussed?

I don't think so. We were children over there. No. I don't think they discussed politics with us.

So you don't remember them talking about what was happening in Germany or anything like that?

Well, you knew that-- yeah. You heard about it, and you were in the-- news, you heard, you can read in the newspapers. So sure. If I remember, probably, they told us to-- but I'm not sure about it anymore. Well, children doesn't get much. And there was only Jewish children in there. So we didn't discuss any politics or any-- in the school, we felt the antisemitism because it was public school. But in the Institute, was only Jewish girls.

And so when you were going to school outside of the Institute--

What?

So when you were not at school or the Institute, what did you-- what was Budapest like?

Well, we studied. We did homework, what we had to do. And there was a-- played together when we don't have schoolwork or we finished our homework or something. But not special. Well, there was special because something because they made some class like English language. But we were too young, and wasn't so interested.

But because we had to do, we have to go, so we do it. But we had English. I think German too. But I don't remember exactly if it was true. But English I remember. We were taught. There was a teacher who come and taught us to the English [INAUDIBLE]. We wasn't too much interested in it. So I didn't learn much of the English language. But I learned this-- I learned it here when we came to the United States, only a few words I remember, but not much.

And this was a class that the Institute had?

What?

This was a class at the Institute, kind of an after school activity?

After school? Well, we were in the Institute day and night except when we go to the public school.

Oh, I see.

We went to the public school and lived in the Institute.

So this English class was at the Institute?

What?

The English class was at the Institute?

Yes, that's in the Institute. That's not in the public school. There was only German they taught. And also no public school you can learn English. Only if you take it as a special something, somewhere. But not in the public school. But German, it was required. It has to.

Everyone had to learn German.

Yeah, that wasn't so good. You cannot learn the language from that school. You have to go special in the-- German teacher to get learn the German or English or anything. But English, they learned, I mean, they taught. But very few-- very few words remained in my mind when I came to the United States. I couldn't speak English from that learning. I learned English here actually.

And so how far away was school from the Institute?

Not far. Maybe less than five minutes walk.

Oh, so very close.

Yeah. It wasn't far.

And in these walks, as the years go by, did you ever see any discrimination against Jews or any--

In the public school? Yes.

At--

From some teacher, not all of them. But some teacher was very big German friend. And yes, we had-- but others doesn't care.

What about around Budapest?

What?

Did you see discrimination elsewhere in Budapest?

Well, I cannot actually say because I lived in that Jewish orphanage. So only in school, what I tight experienced. I cannot experience otherwise. We cannot just go out without permission from that building--

Oh, I see.

--except if some relatives comes and take us out. But we just cannot leave the building by ourselves.

So it was pretty much, you were at school or at the orphanage?

Oh, we went to school. That was a public school. Then go back home, back to the Institute, orphanage, actually. It was an orphanage for girls. And there was my younger brother was in orphanage, boys. That was a different place.

Did they have the same arrangement where they just went to school and were at the orphanage?

Same arrangement, like what?

I guess-- so he also went to school or was at the orphanage? He couldn't go out either?

No. You cannot get out. No. You cannot get out or leave. If they let you out, told you to go somewhere. No. You cannot get out just by leaving. but when I get a little older, then I sneak out and run to my aunt's house and got some food from her and then run back.

She didn't like it too much that nobody knows because if they knew in the Institute, sometimes I was-- that I came back to the classroom and my friend told me the teacher was looking for me or something. But one time, the teacher looked up and see me over there and told the class, you see, stupid. He's not lost. They don't even think that I left the Institute without permission. It was not allowed, but I did it. Not too often, but sometimes that I was so full of it. I feel I have to get away. Then I sneak out and run to my aunt's house or running, running. And she doesn't live very close.

When I ran there, I only spent maybe four or five minutes. I eat something and then run back to the Institute because they can asked for me like they did sometimes.

How old were you when you started sneaking out?

How?

How old were you when you first snuck out to go to your aunt's-- I was really 13 or 14, not before.

And every once in a while you would do this just to get away?

Not very often because it was very risky. But sometimes I was so full of all this life, feel I broke out. And then I run, run, and went to the aunt's house. She didn't like it too much, but I was then 13 or 14 years old, not before.

So at that point, you would have been-- at that point, you would have been in the orphanage for about six years?

[INAUDIBLE]. I cannot get your answer. I mean the question.

So you went to the orphanage when you were seven. And so you had been there six years?

I went to the orphanage when I was eight years old. And I came out when I was 15 because that time, the Germans occupied Hungary, and they wanted the building, the orphanage building. And all the girls has to leave. And some girls

who has no parents or nobody to go, they went to the boys' orphanage-- Jewish boys orphanage. And the other girls has to go either parent-- mother. They don't have parents, just mother or father. And what relatives [INAUDIBLE]. And of those who absolute know nobody, they went to the boys' orphanage.

During this time that you were at the orphanage, what were your mother and older brother doing?

Well, my older brother went to school. And my mother has a-- made his own business. He bought poultry and take it to Budapest and sold these to stores. And then she bought some candy or chocolate in a factory in Budapest and sold it in the town to stores-- probably stores.

So your mother went back and forth--

Yes--

--with the goods. --back and forth. Actually, they say-- I don't know-- that relatives say she was a rich woman. But I don't think so. She worked very hard.

Did you-- did she ever come to visit you or your younger brother?

Sometimes. My mother felt because when she comes up to Budapest, they stays with my aunt. And usually, we're not allowed to get visitors, just only when the time was every month on Sunday I remember. That was the time when visitors was able to come-- relatives.

But my aunt used to come because she lived in Budapest. But my mother, no. But in the Institute has a synagogue. And when my mother came up to Budapest, she stays for the Shabbos and came to the synagogue, to the Institute. So I can see-- we can see each other for a few minutes.

And she also visited your younger brother once in a while?

Sometimes to the younger brother. Sometimes me. Yeah.

What was it like seeing her? What was it like when she came to visit?

It was a wonderful feeling, when you like-- when you love your mother and you cannot see her, just occasionally. It was very, very, very good feeling. Besides, she always bring some good-- either candy or cake or something she brought me. So that cheered a child, it's very good thing, the extra things like that.

Did your grandmother ever come to visit you?

No. No, no. She didn't come. Very seldom come out to-- Well, sometimes she went to the spa in some place. It wasn't so far from the town. There was a lot of [INAUDIBLE]. He went there sometime. It went two weeks because he had very bad legs. She used to go there, and we saw her at least two weeks.

When you were in Budapest, did you know what was going on in your hometown? Any news or--

Actually, only when I got the letter from my mother or a special thing happening, I get letter. Otherwise, I don't know anything.

Did you know about-- did you know any men that were taken to forced labor?

Men who what?

Did you know about any men who were taken to forced labor?

My brother was in forced labor. And both my uncle and both, they took them both to Ukraine. And they died over there during the war. You know, they [INAUDIBLE] that they killed them or the court killed them because they don't-- they cannot leave. [INAUDIBLE] Hungarian uniform.

Because they were Jewish, they had to leave their old clothes. And when they are [INAUDIBLE], they are not allowed to get packages. So sometimes it [? tears ?] them of all the time, you know, they worked hard. And the hard winter in Ukraine. They perished. Besides, they were killed by the Hungarian soldiers who will take care of them. It was easy to shot a Jew. They never have to be responsible for that, nobody. Jewish life means nothing.

When were they taken for forced labor?

When was--

When were your brother and uncle sent?

My brother was-- 1944.

And how old--

My uncle, one of them I this is 1940 or '41. When the war started, they were involved with Russia. And then the Hungarians were Axis part there to the Germans. So when they were involved with the Russian, the Germans, and the Hungarians too because the Germans was so-- there was Hungarian soldiers, and there was Hungarian labor camp person also in Ukraine. Ukraine mostly, not the other part of Russia. Mostly Ukraine. And both of my uncles died over there. Both of them. They never came back.

And your brother? It was Paul?

My brother wasn't in the-- it was-- when he reached the age and [INAUDIBLE], he was in labor service. He was in Hungary. And one time he was transferred near to Budapest, in the outskirts of Budapest. And that was in 1944. He even hide me over there with the Jewish labor servicemen because they were [? mechanics ?] work in the airport-- the Hungarian airport. There was something there.

As [? mechanics, ?] they were work in that place. And they had a building, a school building, a school. There was no school there at that time. And they occupied one of the school room near to the village, a village near to the airport, Budapest airport. And they were snatched somewhere. I don't know where. But they worked over there as [? mechanics. ?]

And why-- this was your brother Paul?

I can't--

Was this Paul, your brother, who was in forced labor?

What in forced labor?

Which brother? Was it Paul or LÃ;szlÃ;?

Which brother?

Yes.

Oh, the older. The younger brother was younger than I was. He was 13 years old. No, he wasn't [INAUDIBLE].

So it was Paul that was in forced labor?

My older brother was in forced labor. Yeah. He was 18 years old. And he called up as a-- usually, they would go-- the Christians called up for the army. They were called up for labor service. Jewish was called up for labor service.

Why did he take you and hide you near the airport?

Because they were mechanic, and they worked in the airport, someplace in the airport. And it was a unit. Not all of them mechanic. There was a rich, rich Jewish man who paid to get into that company because they didn't wear-- they don't have to wear the yellow band like all the Jewish soldiers-- Jewish people. They only wear a Hungarian color-- red, white, and green.

So because I don't know why. Because probably, they don't want to show that the Jews work in the airport, in such place, you know? I don't know why they did it. But there was only a very small unit.

So the forced laborers had to wear the red, green, and white.

The forced labor has to wear yellow band. But they don't want to show that the Jews worked in the airport some important place-- because they were all [? mechanic ?]. They needed them. So they let them red, white, and blue-- red, white, and green.

Instead of the yellow--

The Hungarian color.

OK. And you were able to see him while he was near Budapest?

Yes. Yes. Actually, because they were a special unit, so they were allowed to go out when they did work. So he visit us. I was then in a Jewish house that was marked by a star of David. And the Jewish people lived there. Although, there lived not Jewish, Christian people also who doesn't want to leave their home. They stayed there. But they don't have to. They can.

But they don't care leaving the Jewish-- Jews so they stayed there in their home. But most of them moved out. So the Jewish people can go in who lost their home because they weren't allowed to leave them. It wasn't marked for the Jews.

And what was it like seeing him after so many years?

Well, it was wonderful to see him. That time, by the rest of the family was already deported. He was still in Budapest, in the labor camp. But because he was a [? mechanic ?], he [? was ?] allowed to things like-- that no other labor serviceman was allowed. That's why they let them wear not the yellow armband but the Hungarian color.

And what is "may-ha-nic?" What does that mean?

Red, white, and green.

Oh. It means red, white, and green?

Yes.

And this is the special group?

Yeah.

OK. OK.

They're very small-- small unit. They [? don't ?] [? want ?] to-- the Hungarians don't want to embarrass themselves to get some smart and Jewish workers. There so work for them, so they let them wear the Hungarian color, not the Jewish yellow.

So let's jump back a little bit to 1939. Do you remember hearing about Germany invading Poland?

Yes. Yes. We heard in the radio when the newspaper-- yes. We knew about it. First Austria. Then Poland, Czechoslovakia, all those places, and then Hungary.

And you heard about this both on the radio and in the newspapers?

What?

You heard about all of these things on the radio and in the newspapers?

What do you mean, all those things?

So when Germany annexed Austria--

Yes. Sure, sure. Yeah.

And what was--

There was a big celebration. They took Austria. And even when they took Hungary, some people was celebrate it.

So for each of these things, some Hungarians had big celebrations.

Yes. They liked-- they loved the Germans.

So each of these times, they're thinking, this is great news. And you saw people celebrating.

You cannot do anything. You just accept it as it is because you cannot do anything.

Do you remember anything changing after the war started? Was school any different?

Well, there was antisemitism because I went to public school. There was a big-- well, not all of them. But some teachers, even, they made difference between the Jewish student and the non-Jewish. They never give good marks to Jewish student even if they were the best.

And after the war started, there was even more antisemitism?

It was always antisemitism in Hungary. There was always. But wasn't showed that much as when the Germans came.

And what was it like for you and the other girls from the orphanage seeing the Hungarians celebrate Nazi Germany?

We were children. So what? We have to accept what is it. We cannot do anything. Even adult can-- adult can do. How could the children do anything? It wasn't happy. But that's how it was.

After the war started, was there any rationing of food?

Any what?

Rationing?

Rationing? [INAUDIBLE] food rationing?

Food or any other things?

Yeah. There was. Yeah. You have some-- I don't know what you call-- some coupon or something that you have to use to buy. Otherwise, you cannot buy it.

Did everyone get these ration coupons or cards? Did everyone get a ration card?

Yes. Everyone. Everyone.

You--

That is Jews, non-Jews, anybody.

Did this give you enough to eat?

Well, yes. Yes. There was no problem. Well, there was certain food that cannot be get. But definitely, you cannot get anything that came from the West or the United States or things like that. There was no such thing.

Do you remember any of the foods that you couldn't get?

Mostly. But you have get in Hungary what they grew over there, that you get. But what is imported from outside, then it to was hard, especially when it comes from the West. If it comes from the East, it was much easier. But from the West, there was-- you cannot get anything from the West.

Do you remember anything specific that you couldn't get any more?

For example, I think there was like orange or fig or things like that. But sometimes it wasn't easy to get, but still there is a little. So who has enough money, they can bought it. But it wasn't as it was before the war, but you can get all things.

Did anything change at the orphanage after the war started? Before the Germans came, did anything change?

In what way?

Did you still just go to school or were at the orphanage?

The orphanage, not much. Not much in the orphanage. In school, there was a big antisemitism because we went to public school. So some teacher, not all of them, but most teacher, even the smartest Jewish-- I wasn't one-- but there was one Jewish girl, but they couldn't-- wouldn't be able to get a good mark.

When did you first hear about ghettos?

About what?

Ghettos? Or deportations.

I cannot guess you [INAUDIBLE] what.

Do you remember when you first heard about ghettos--

Oh, ghettos.

--or deportations?

Ghettos. In Hungary?

Anywhere.

I don't remember except when Hungary get it. I was too young to heard about those things. But when it happened in Hungary, then I knew. Maybe I knew a little from the [? chair ?] at the Yugoslav. It started there earlier for the Jews than in Hungary. And the Ukraine, yeah, that was a big antisemitism. It's always had been.

When did the Nazis arrive in Hungary? When did the occupation start in Hungary?

Which occupation? The Germans? it started in March 1944.

How did you--

I never forget that. I never forget that because that time, my mother came to Budapest. It was a weekend. And he took me out from the Institute and my brother too, and we went to visit our father's grave in Hungary. And when we came back, we have to change street cars at the front of the station-- the railroad station.

And anyway, we had to escort our brother to the train to get back home. And when we came out, I heard the newsboys crying that the German army occupied Hungary-- Germany army occupied Hungary. That was a Sunday afternoon when I heard it.

But they did it in the morning what, you know, people started to knew about it, that it was later. And the newspaper and the radio and things like that you can hear from. It was so sad. I never forget because my brother-- we just came from the cemetery, because when my mother was up there, we took us to the father grave.

And we just came back, and we escorted her to the railway station. And he would get on the railroad-- I mean the train. And we get out from the station, my brother and I, and we heard the newspaper boy who's selling the paper crying, German army occupied Hungary. German army occupied Hungary. Yes. That's how we knew. And then the radio and everything was saying that the Germans occupied Hungary.

And what did you think-- what did you think when you first heard that?

Well, we was surprised because the Hungarians was a big friend for the Germans. So we were surprised, why did German army has to occupy Hungary?

Because Hungary was already so close to Germany, why did they have to come in?

Well, it was close [? you know. ?] We have border to-- Hungary has border to Austria. And Austria was already in Germany. They wasn't Austria that time. It was Germany. So actually, Hungary was border to the Germans.

So earlier you mentioned the starred houses.

Houses marked with Jewish stars. Yes. What about them?

When did you first start seeing these? When did they mark them?

We lived in that area Jews has to move. Every Jew has to leave their home and move to the place where there was allowed to move, that houses which marked with the Jewish star.

When did this first happen?

It was in March. I think it March 1944. Not March, a little later. April or May, sometimes, 1944.

So right after the occupation started.

After the German occupation, yeah, definitely.

And how were people notified that they had to move?

By radio, by newspaper, and the wall in the street, and so many houses there was--

A poster?

Yeah, which said every Jew has to go and live in the house which was allowed to live, in which they had allowed to live. Every corner and between that was a wall. And the radio, probably, and the newspaper. And was a date, you have to-- [? was ?] [? rather ?] very short, very short time to make the move and leave their home.

How did you know which house you had to go to?

They know because they had to put out-- on the house, they have to put out the star of David or some sign to-- I don't remember exactly, but I know that the star has to be on the front door of the house.

But did they have lists of people? Like how did you know which house to go to?

Newspaper. They put somethings out-- I forgot how to call it in English. On the walls, in almost every corner and between there was a sign that-- I mean writing that what do you have to do, what the Jews have to do.

Did they have everyone's names?

Not names. Just Jewish people, [? was ?] Jews has to do. But not special name, every Jew.

I guess, what I want to know is were people-- were people assigned a certain starred house that they had to go to? Like how did you know which starred house to go to?

We have to put out the star of David on the front door-- front gate. So probably they had to tell the superintendent whatever which house it is. And then there was-- the newspaper is, I thing, said you can read it or on the wall, you can read that. So there was plenty of things that you can find out. And there was a date that you must do within that date.

So by a certain date, you had to go to a starred house.

You have to leave your place and move the houses. And I moved with my aunt. And her husband was already called in the labor service. And he had a stepson who lived with her. He was a 17-year-old, I guess, 16 or 17 years old. I'm not sure. And that was her stepson. He wasn't her son. She doesn't have any children.

And so her husband has to leave to the service. And I had to leave the Institute because the Institute building was occupied by the German army. So German soldiers moved into that building that I was before.

So the girls who was anybody mother or father alive or anybody else who was able to take them out has to take them out. And those who has nobody, they had to move to the boy orphanage-- Jewish boy orphanage. And from the Jewish boys orphanage, the boys who has any place to go, they have to go out. And so make room for those girls who has no place to go.

So my brother came out from the boy orphanage. And there was a restriction for the Jews to use the railroad without any permit. And you have get permit in the district police station. And since my address was different than my brothers address, so he went to the other police station. And he got the permit to travel.

And the police station where I had to go, they refused me to get the permit. I was so, so sad. I cried and cried because they refused me to go home. But actually, that man, that policeman who I had to go to, he said, you better stay here. Do you have a place to live here? And I said, yes. I lived with my aunt. And she said, don't go anywhere. Stay here.

And I was cried. I was so unhappy that I cannot go home with my brother. And I never forget, I never forget when I went with him to the railroad station. And I cried, and he said, you want me to stay with you? And I said, no. But you go home because you may have mother and grandmother because my brother wasn't twelve already. So he said, you are right. And he went to the train and went home. And I never forget-- forgive myself to do this because if he would stayed with me in Budapest he would survive. So I feel very guilty for that to let him go.

And so you stayed? So you stayed in Budapest? You moved to the starred house?

I stayed in Budapest with my aunt--

And where--

--because I had to leave the Institute anyway because I told you the Germans took the building. And the boy orphanage was not enough for the girls and the boys, so many girls and so many boys. So everybody who has somebody can go. They let them go.

Where in Budapest--

In Budapest.

--where in Budapest was the starred house?

Where was the-- they called the [NON-ENGLISH]. It's a boys orphanage you mean?

So you moved to the starred house?

A starred house. That was later.

Where in the city was that?

In Budapest. I think it's called Dembinszky utca 34. I remember. That was where it was a Jewish-- where Jewish can lived. There was very few Christian people who didn't want to leave their home and stays with the Jews. But not many.

How many people lived in the starred house?

Oh I don't know the whole house. It was so crowded. In the apartment where I lived, there lived an old couple, very old man and woman. And there was who owned the place, there were somewhat younger man and the wife. And there was also her sister and the sister's two kids and then another couple and the owner's daughter and the grandson and another man. So nine people lived in that place where before there only lived two or three.

How many rooms was it, this little--

How many rooms? It was three rooms, and there was a little room too that was-- they called the maid room, room for the maids. But that was occupied for the old couple.

So nine people crowded into this--

Yes, yes, yes. Well, the owners, the couple, the man and woman who were the owner of the apartment and their daughter whose husband was in the labor service, but she has a six-month-old child. And there was a owner's sister, I mean the woman's sister and their two kids, two girls. And I mentioned the old couple I think. And another. So it was

about people. And my aunt, me, and my aunt's stepson. It was completely, completely crowded. And it was before lived only the owner and wife and I think her daughter. Well, no, it's nine people lived in that house--

So very cramped--

--in that apartment, I mean.

So it was uncomfortable.

What?

It was uncomfortable with that many people?

Well, it wasn't very comfortable, especially when you have to use the bathroom, wash up or because it was-- toilet was separate place. And the bathtub and the shower wasn't different. So it was write down who can went, go to and use things like that.

You came up with a list of--

Yeah.

Lily uses--

You can go now, this time and this time. Yes. Otherwise, it would be very terrible. Yes, so you can use the shower or take a bath, just where you allowed to-- when you times comes.

Was there still enough food? Was there still enough to eat during this time?

Eat. Well, there was a restriction of movement for the Jews. They can only go out from their houses I think it was 11 o'clock to 2 o'clock that the Jews goes out from the houses. And it was very, very hard to get food or anything like that because it was-- especially when part of the country was occupied by the Russian army who moved to take Hungary. And it was very, very hard to get the food or anything from the outside the city.

So it was very hard by the time the Jewish people was able to go out, they can maybe get some dry beans. That was all that they can get.

Did you ever have to move from the starred house?

Have to move? Have to-- yes. You have to move to the ghetto from this because they wanted the Jews to get more closely to each other so they can easily kill. They had to go to the ghetto. And from the ghetto every night, they took a group of Jews, then take them to the bank of the Danube river and kill them, and the bodies float into the river. Every night that's what the fascists did.

Was this the Germans or the Hungarian fascists?

The Hungarian.

The Arrow Cross?

This was a Hungarian, not the German.

And this was every night?

What?

Every night?

Every night. Every day, every night, yes. When the Russians was closer, getting closer, then it getting very bad.

Did you see this? Did you see people being taken away? Or how did you know about this?

I heard it. I read it, read about it I read about it. I didn't see the [INAUDIBLE]. But I read about it.

And where did you read about it?

I think a paper. But mostly from books, what the-- and so memorandum or something, you know, that people did or left.

So after the war-- after the war, you found out about the Danube.

After the war, yes, after the war.

After the war.

There was some-- the people say things, but it was only just whispering. It wasn't really believe it. You know, it was like a gossip.

You mean--

But it was happened.

You mean during the war, there were whispering or rumors about this?

Yeah. Yeah. And it's doesn't-- not the Germans. It's the Hungarian fascists did it.

The Arrow Cross.

Miss Kalman, would you like to take a break at all?

Doesn't matter for me. I'm not tired of it. You know, it is in my mind anyway. So many times I think about it. Especially lately, when I got old, things comes back to me. Before, it was so much in my mind. Then I have it in lately.

We can take a break, or we can keep-- we can take a break, or we can keep going.

Well, I'm comfortable. If you need a break, take a break. But I not tired of it. You know, it's sometimes good to get out from you things like that.

Yes, ma'am. Let's keep going then. So when did you leave the starred house?

It stopped being the [? starred ?] house because the Jews has to go to the ghettos. And my aunt, her husband, my uncle, he has a friend who was in the fascist government. He has a position in the fascist government. And he likes my uncle. They were colleagues, work together. I don't know.

So he had a big position in the government. And he offered my uncle that he's willing to hide them, and don't go anywhere. They will hide he and wife and the son. But he didn't know about me. So my brother took me. So they went to his house. And my brother took me to the labor camp.

And the labor servicemen hide me over there with the other labor servicemen who has two daughters, and their mothers died. So the labor servicemen doesn't know where to put their daughters. So they took it with-- them with him in the

labor company. They can do that because there was no Hungarian soldiers who was in that group where they were. So they were their own actually.

Every morning, because they were mechanic, they went to the airport where they had worked. And they had other privileges. For example, they don't have to wear the yellow star on their arm. But they can wear the Hungarian color-- red, white, and blue-- red, white, and green. That was a Hungarian color. So that only wear those Christian people who has not born in Hungary. They had to wear-- wasn't Jewish, but not Hungarians actually. So they had to wear that. Then, because of their special unit, they let them to wear it.

But my brother has a colleague, the other serviceman whose wife was Christian. I mean, they weren't married because they couldn't married. But they were live together. So the wife let me go to his place and hide me in her apartment. So he hide me over there until that was very, very, very hard to-- they had to go to the bunker because the Russians was already at the border of Budapest.

So it's always fire and bombing and fires and everything. So people had to go down to the bunker and live there all the time. So that time I had to leave because he cannot take me. I don't have any paper to show I am a Christian girl. So they cannot take me. So I had to leave.

And so this woman was the--

This woman was pregnant, and she survived. She bore a child which was half Jewish. Her father was Jewish. And then I don't know what happened with her because after the war, I left Budapest. And when I get back and I try to find her, I couldn't find her in that place where she lived before because she lived in her sister or brother or I don't know whose apartment. They were not living there. So she lived there alone.

And that's how she was able to hide me until I couldn't stay the apartment anymore because the Russian was already at the border of Budapest. And it was a big fight there. So nobody can stay in the apartment anymore.

And so because you didn't have papers, like you said, did you ever leave the apartment when you were in hiding?

Sometimes, I went, sometimes. Even once, I even visited the ghetto. It was very, very stupid thing and very strange thing because if I have no paper to show I'm not Jewish. And I just getting to and visit those people who I knew and lived with before. And I was able to get out. But that was so risky. I wouldn't again because you can go in, but cannot go out. So this was a stupid thing. But I got help to get out from there-- get out from the ghetto.

Did you use a fake name when you left the apartment?

Whose name?

Did you use a fake name when you left the apartment or did you just not talk to anyone?

I don't even hear what you ask me.

Yeah. So did you use a fake name--

Fake name?

--during hiding?

I don't use any name, actually. I don't use any name. I tried to avoid it. I was 13 years old. But I was always short, and I was very, very skinny. And I didn't look more than 10 or 11 years old. So who would ask-- small child to go alone on the street already where what-- show your identification. So nobody ever asked me.

And you were the only person this woman hid?

Yes.

By yourself?

Did the woman ever tell anyone that she was hiding a Jewish girl?

Well, once I was able to see her. But then she moved away because the apartment was actually not hers. But some of the relatives I don't know, sister, brother, or whatever. I don't remember. She just lived there. And when they came back to the apartment, she moved away. So after that, I cannot find her.

I know she borne a child. But I don't even remember what girl or boy that was half Jewish, the child. The husband didn't go.

But while you were in hiding, did she tell anyone about you?

What?

When I hiding what?

When you were in hiding at the apartment, did she tell anyone that she was hiding you?

No. No, no, no. She said, she is my cousin or daughter of my brother or somebody who lives. That was her story. She lives in the town or place. And the Russians occupied as she escaped from the Russian, and she gave to me. That was the story she told. No, they don't--

She had some neighbors or things that often came into the house. And one of them has a daughter who was 18 year old or some. And she lived with a German soldier. So what I don't know. And she always try to find out who I am. And she said, if she wouldn't have such a nice Christian face, I would say you were hiding her.

So she was always trying to find out--

Yes. [? That ?] was the girls. She has a boyfriend, a German soldier.

But you and the woman always stuck to the story that you were a family member who had escaped.

Well, she didn't-- when her boyfriend kicked her out, he wrote to her mother who was a neighbor also. And then she come visit that woman who I lived with.

So since you were able to leave the apartment sometimes, what was Budapest like in those last few months before the war ended?

First, it was cold because it was December. It was very, very cold. And you cannot see. Well, once I saw a terrible thing. An old Jewish woman who wear the star in her chest, she came somehow-- she came out from the ghetto or somewhere. And then some Christian men, some fascist or probably, they started to hit and kick her. It was a terrible, terrible sight for me.

And these were Hungarians that were--

The Hungarians. Yes.

What did you do when you saw that?

Nothing. What can you do? You cannot-- first of all, I was a 14-year-old girl. What can a 14-year-old girl do? Nothing.

You just ran home?

But there was other people. Some people was so happy and even tell him to hit-- hit her more and more.

And you just went home? You ran away when you saw--

No. I just walked away. Running, it wasn't so good to run. It wasn't so good to run because they can-- [INAUDIBLE] some suspicion that I am some, if not Jewish, at least a sympathizer. So it was better not to show anything.

And there was things that I had a little difficulty for. I didn't know about my brother, what they happened with him in the camp. And I decide that one day, I will go back and find out. So I went back to that school building where they were lived. And there was filled with German soldiers, the whole school building because that time, the Russian soldier, they come nearer, and the front was near, and the Germans go back. And it was full, full of-- the whole building was full of Germans.

So I went to the school superintendent who was a super in that building. And she said, go away, go away fast-- as fast as you can. So they told me, they are left. One early morning, the fascists came and took them away. And my brother was unfortunately just arrive back to the camp. And they took him too. So that's how I knew that they were taken. But where, they don't know. And since then, I never, never saw him again.

And what about your mother?

They were deported. So they went to the gas chamber probably because she never came back. I guess she went to the gas chamber because she didn't want to leave my grandmother who was old. And if you don't want to leave somebody and went to the gas chamber, they don't-- they let-- the Germans let them go. Go if you want to go, go because she wasn't so old. She could survive maybe.

When did you find out that they had been deported?

I had relatives [? about ?] my best friend. They lived the next house to me. And we were very close friends. And her whole family was killed too. She was the only one who came back. She was a half year older than I was. But since childhood, we were friends. And what I heard, I heard from her who went through, it was in Auschwitz, who survived and came back. And then after he came back, he said, I don't want to live in this country anymore. I just want to leave. And she went to Israel where she died. She got married there and then had two children and then died.

But she said, I don't want to-- I don't want to live in this country anymore.

And she had been deported with your family?

What?

She had been deported with your family?

Yes.

That's how she knew?

She was deported, the whole the family. She has two sisters younger than her and a mother and father. They all killed. She was the only one who got back. And she said, I don't want to live in this country anymore. So the first chance she can get, she went to Israel. Then she married. She had two children. Then she died unfortunately with sickness, what she get from the deportation.

So at this point, you're in hiding with the Christian woman.

Yes.

But you have to leave when the siege or--

When my aunt and my uncle, he was hide somebody who was in the fascist government, some position in the fascist government. He was a fascist, actually. But he liked my uncle. So he said he can go and move to his house. He had a house built and has a place, like a room which was actually would be a washing room where they do the washing and everything. But it wasn't completely finished.

So my uncle and my aunt and his son, my uncle's son because my aunt has no children, they move to this place. And I was hiding over there, at that Christian woman who has a Jewish husband yet but supposed to. And then the Russian came, but was very, very close to the city. And you can hear, mostly at night, but sometimes daytime too, the firing, the noise of the front.

And they have to-- everybody in the city had to go down to the bunker because it was already the Russian at the-- surrounded the city. And was fire. And so everybody-- nobody can stay in their house except go to the bunker. And I have no paper, so she cannot take me to the bunker down there. And I cannot stay in the apartment alone because it was always checked. Apartment was checked.

So I had to leave. I went to my aunt's where my aunt and uncle with their stepson was hiding. And it was a good thing that the wife of the man who's owned that place he was a very friend of the Jews. But he with her daughter went to Austria because they don't want to get liberated by the Russian. So went with the German place. Austria was still in German hands.

They went there. And the Russian came close to Budapest. And then I was able to go to my aunt's and uncle's place because there was a husband who was in a big position in the fascist government. She hardly came home. But he said he knew about me, but after the war, he said he knew about me. But I don't think he did.

So I went and stayed with my aunt and uncle and his son in that place. And then when the fighting was in the city because there was no bunker in that house, so we have to move to a neighbors who lived opposite who has a bunker. And they let us in. They didn't know we are Jewish or non-Jewish. They don't anything about it but knew that we are staying with that house. So they let us in. And that's when the Russian liberated us in this house.

And after the Russian liberated us, then since it was shortage for everything, even water was hard to get in Budapest which was able to drink. And my uncle decided we should go back to Berettyóújfalú, you know where I born. And so it was very hard because the railroads running, but you cannot get a seat in there. So you have to go to the rail, which not for passenger but-- I forgot the name-- that railcar which not for passenger but--

Freight cars or--

Yes.

--with materials and--

Yeah. So we were able to get in one of them. And after changing cars and changing because from every bigger town or bigger village just there was always something that car doesn't go there. This car goes there. So we have to change and change until we were able to get back to my hometown.

That was already in the Russian occupation at that time. It was a long, long time. And also there was no fighting there anymore.

And what did it like to be liberated? What did it feel like to be liberated and to be able to--

What is it feel?

Yeah.

It was a good thing. But you cannot even-- you didn't feel safe. You didn't feel safe even from the Russian. They came and they-- it was a good thing I was very skinny and very short, and I didn't look like my age. I looked like more than 11 or 12 years old, so they don't bother me. But I know a young woman was in the place where I live. They took it and raped them. And the mother they raped. [? They raped all of them. ?] I don't know how my aunt was able to escape them. But she did, and I did too. We hide. They took all the-- either they raped and stole everything they fancied, they wanted. So your life wasn't in much danger anymore as a Jew. But still, it wasn't without danger as a woman or as a young girl.

So your uncle decided we need to go back to your hometown.

Yeah, we went back to our hometown, and this was nobody there. I mean, I had an aunt who married a Christian man long time ago. And she has a family. So I went to live with her for a short while.

What--

When my aunt had their old apartment, then everything I moved back with them.

Was it easier to get food and water?

[INAUDIBLE]?

Was it easier to get food and water in your hometown?

Yes. It was already liberated. So it was more normal than other places where we came from.

And you mentioned your friend who survived Auschwitz and came back. Were there are other survivors of the camps that came back?

From Auschwitz you mean?

Yes, or other camps.

Or other camps? There was. But I wasn't so close with them. So there was a few, not too many. Not, for example, not my mother, not my cousin who was-- she was a young woman, and she was pregnant when they took-- they took her with-- she born the child in the railcar when they took them to Auschwitz. So the mother and the child, they went from the railcar to the gas chamber.

What was it like living in Hungary before--

Before or after?

Well, before the Soviets officially took over? Before communists--

The country, I mean, the country, it was fascism. It was fascist government.

But I guess what was it like between the fascist government and the communist government? What was it like--

The fascists who wasn't Jewish, the fascist government was better for the Hungarians than those who were Jewish. The Russian wasn't so good either. But for the Jews, their life was safe with as a Jews but not as a people. You know [? it ?] [? say ?] if they don't like you, Jews or not Jews, they kill you. But they don't kill you because you were a Jew.

Did the communists-- did the communists target--

The communists, it was much better--

Much--

--than the fascists. Yeah. It was much better.

Did the communists target any other groups?

What?

Did the communists target or persecute other groups?

Jews, no.

Not Jews.

Communists, no. No. Many Jews belonged to the Communist Party. No. The communists was after the fascists, not the Jews.

Did they persecute other groups? So they didn't persecute Jews. But did they persecute other--

Not because they-- they don't persecute Jews because they were Jews. If they did something against them, they persecute. But not because of Jews.

Did you ever face any discrimination under the communists?

Well, not really. I did not. My husband was a Polish officer. He joined the police force after he was-- he was a Jewish man. He joined the police force after he was liberated from the Germans. So he had some rank. So he can give protection because he was a police officer.

So because of his job, you and him were protected?

We married 1948. Actually, 1949. 1949, we married. My son born in 1951, the first one, and the second, 1955.

And your husband, was your husband from your hometown?

No. Not my hometown, but not very far from my hometown. It was a big, big town. And my hometown was a small town.

You said your husband was also a survivor?

What?

Your husband was also a survivor?

Well, he was in labor camp, as a Jewish labor camp because she can't get in the army as a Hungarian soldier. So he had to be a laborer-- Jewish labor serviceman they called.

And after you got married in 1949, where did you two live?

What? He's after '49, what was your question?

Where did you live after you got married?

We lived in small town-- very small town when I born.

Oh. In your hometown.

Yeah, my hometown, yes. He was stationed at there. He was a police officer there. That's how I got to know him.

Oh, I see.

Did you have a job after you got married?

Job?

Mm-hmm.

Yes. I had a job in the Ministry of Interior in Budapest when we moved there. First, I had another office jobs. And then after that, I got the job in the Ministry of Interior where my husband worked.

And what did you do for the Ministry--

Just some small clerk-like thing.

Yes. So you had two sons?

Yes.

And you said 1951 and 1955?

Yes.

And what are their names?

The one who lives here is Leslie. And the other one is Steven. He died with heart attack.

Were they both born in Hungary?

They were, Hungary. He was six months, Steven, when we leaved Hungary. So I have to carry him all the way because we have to walk through the border from Hungary to Austria. And I have to carry her all the way. It was so hard at night. At night, the soldiers cannot find us.

And--

Carried him, not her.

When did you and your husband decide to leave Hungary?

To leave Hungary?

Yes, when?

Where?

When did you decide to?

I didn't want to leave. It was his. I was so surprised he wanted to leave because he has a good position. He was liked in his job. He was-- I don't know what happened with him. But he decided he wants to leave Hungary. And so what can I do with two children? I followed him.

And why did he want to come to the US?

Why, what?

Why did he want to come to the US?

To the US, because his brother-in-law and the family, they want to come here. And the brother-in-law, he has a sister who lived in New York City. And he has connection. I mean, his friend has connection to the embassy and here in some base. So we can get here in the United States more easily than some of the other people because of this connection. So we were almost the first-- second transport from Austria who arrive in New York City.

Were you still in Hungary for the 1956 revolution?

Yes.

What was that like?

It was a little scary because you didn't know what-- there was groups, which was fascist. They want to kill the Jews. And there was a group who was communist who want the communist regime. So it was these two groups, who was very-- the main things there. And that's why we leave it mostly. That's why were afraid of the fascists mostly.

And were they out in the streets protesting or--

They were protesting. They were, oh, sure. In the 1956 revolution that was protesting. Everybody protesting. There was fascist groups. There was communist group. Not much communist group, but other groups. Everybody was protesting against the communist regime almost, except the communist.

And it was very chaotic? You just didn't-- there was a lot going on? You didn't know what was--

There was fighting. Yes. There was fighting. It was scary because sometimes you to go to street and suddenly you get into the fire when this side and that side. It was very, very scary period.

And how long was this going on?

Well, not very long because the Russian reoccupied Hungary. So it didn't last too long.

They sent troops in? They sent soldiers in?

Yes.

And--

Because you cannot get some group here and there to get against the Russian army. This was very difficult thing to do. So after a couple of days, the Russian comes back to Hungary. And it was over. Everything was over.

[INAUDIBLE].

And so was it during this time that you were planning on leaving already?

What I want to leave?

During the revolution--

Yeah.

--were you and your husband already planning to leave?

I cannot get the [INAUDIBLE]. Me and my husband, what?

During the revolution--

Yeah. I know.

--were you already planning to leave?

Plan to leave?

Yeah. Or was it after that you said?

My husband wanted to leave.

Yes.

Yes. I didn't want to leave at all.

I didn't want to because I had a six-month-old baby and a five-years-old child. And I have an apartment over there, a nice apartment. We lived in a very good place. You can see, from the window, the Danube River. And I didn't want to leave.

For me, my apartment and my home was very important. You can see here too, I loved my-- I don't want-- I mean, I spent every money if I have to make my apartment and my home nice and comfortable. So this is my type. I don't go to watch movie or other places to get some fun like some people like to. I'm satisfied what I see from the TV. And I'm satisfied when I see my home, when I stay my home and look at my home the way I would like to have it. And I was able to do it what I like to have to be my home. So I'm a home people.

So when did you leave Hungary?

1956. In the November, 1956.

And you said you went to Austria first?

What?

And you said earlier--

Austria. Yeah. Yeah. Because my husband was a police officer. And he used to go-- he works in the Ministry of Interior in Budapest. But his job was to see the other police station all over the country. So he got acquainted with one of the policemen near to the Austrian border. And he was a very friendly man. And most of the people liked him.

So he already had that man who he knew. And he went here, and he help us to-- he walks us up through the border from Hungary to the Austrian border. He took us. And when we leave Budapest, my brother-in-law get a truck. But since the transportation was not ready in that time, then it was a revolution. So people, when they see a vehicle go somewhere,

people try, especially it was a truck. People try to get some lift. So the way we got almost a truck full of people when we got through from Hungary to Austria who we didn't know them. They just want to get transportation.

What did you do when you got to Austria?

What?

What did you do when you got to Austria?

When what?

When you arrived in Austria?

When I arrive in the United States?

In Austria.

Oh, Austria [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah.

We went in a cab first. And then my brother-in-law has a sister who lived in New York City. He married here and lived in New York City. And she came to Austria when she-- he [? let ?] quarter or sent her a telegram or whatever. He came, and he brought us from the camp to a hotel in Austria. And he, with a friend whose mother was with us too, they went to the American embassy in Austria, Vienna. And they took us to the [? man ?] with mother and my brother-in-law, sister, and the family, her sister and brother. So they went to the American embassy in Austria, in Vienna.

And they were able to get us out from Austria in the second transport who came to the United States. Because so many people leave Hungary, and they are waited for years and years to get into the country. We were very lucky because we were only maybe two months at all time that we had to spend in Austria because they were able to get us to the airplane and come to New York.

So where in New York did you live?

Where? My brother-in-law has a factory in New York City in jewelry casting, you know, to cast the jewelry. A big factory they have. So he was able to give some job to my husband and for me too. Sometimes I work in there too.

And they have to have a apartment. I remember, it was in the Bronx. That time, it wasn't so bad. It's not a good section, Bronx, anymore. But that time, there were-- part of it, it's mostly Jewish people live there. So they get an apartment for us, a living room, bedroom in the kitchen. And I was so happy. After all these thing, we have our own to live.

And we live there for many years until I was able to save enough money to buy a house in Forest Hills because I-- this is my nature to save and put it in-- even my husband earned the minimum wages for sometimes, but I was able to get \$2, \$5 from it and put it in the bank. And slowly, it grow up until I was able to put down the down payment in Forest Hills, New York for a house. And then saved to pay down the mortgage and everything. And two kids, they were young. And, well, it wasn't easy. But it wasn't so terrible either.

And so you mentioned that you only remembered a few words of English from the class you took?

Yeah.

What was it like living in the US and learning English at the same time?

I went to school at evening when my husband came home from work. Then I went to a-- there was in the classes that

teach English to speak English. And I went there to learn every evening. That's how I-- although as a child, I was study English a little. I forget most of it. I remember very little from it. I lived it in the United States. I learned it in the United States while I lived here.

Did your husband speak English?

No. He didn't either.

So what-- I guess--

It was-- it was hard. It was hard time, but it was good time because after I got my apartment, it was a room-- a kitchen, a living room, and the one bedroom. I was so happy. After all these things, I have my own home. And I lived there for years. But I was saved and saved and saved, even with the small-- my husband only learned the minimum wages. And I was able to save if not more than \$5 and put it in the bank.

And that's how I was able to put down the down payment for a house in Forest Hills. Forest Hills, this was a very, very good place. It wasn't as cheap-- cheap place. But it was getting more Jewish people there. Before it was all Christians. And now it's getting a few Jewish people there. And it was more expensive than other places. But I can manage it.

So what is your life like now living in California?

My life? Well, I saved enough money. I don't have problem with-- financial problem at all. I like this home. I like my home where since my-- first my husband and then my son who live with us died-- both died. I lived alone. So I got used to it. It's not so good. But got used to it. And I'm happy with my home.

And thank God I don't know any physical problem that bothers me. And this is a great thing because I'm old, I'm old and many old people has pain here and there and there. But thank God I-- God saved me from that. So I'm happy. I'm happy what I have. I'm happy for everything. I just thank God for what I have.

Have you ever been back to Europe?

Back to Europe? Oh, yes. Many times, many times. We spent vacations together with my husband and alone. Me and my husband went alone back. So yes, we went back to Hungary. We had friends over there and knew the places and place. And yes, we liked to go back. visit but not live there.

Did you ever go back to your hometown?

Yes, because one my cousin lives there. And sometimes, if I'm in Hungary, I go and visit her, her and the family. Yes, I used to go. But I even go and see my old house that I bought. But that's it. I have no-- no any feeling to live there.

Have you met any other survivors in the US when you moved here?

I cannot--

When you moved to the US, did you meet any other Holocaust survivors?

Yes, so many. My neighbors, many neighbors who speaks Hungarian was Holocaust survivor. And so many Hungarians lived in Forest Hills.

Did you all ever talk about your experiences?

Talk about what?

Your experiences during the war?

During the Holocaust?

Mm-hmm.

We try not to. It's not-- that's a happy things to talk about. But I thinking about a lots of time, especially when I get older. When I wasn't so old, I did not think about it. But now, since I get older, I think about it more and more.

Is there anything you wish people knew about living in Hungary during the war?

Anything what?

Is there anything you wish people knew about living in Hungary--

Oh--

--during the war?

--knew about what was in living Hungary, I mean, living in Hungary?

During the war, yeah.

There are so many-- the Jewish people who lived that day [INAUDIBLE], who survived, they all know what is was living there. So I wrote a book. You saw the book. And probably there is other books that was written about that subject. I don't know. But I guess there is.

Living in the fascist regime, it was terrible. Living in the communist regime, it wasn't good either. But it was much better than living in a fascist regime.

Is there anything we didn't already talk about that you want to add to your interview?

I think you asked me most of the things that's important, I guess.

Would you like to say why you think it's important? You told me that you thought it was important for you to do the interview.

Important to me for what?

You said it was important to you to do the interview.

To do the what?

This interview.

To do the interview.

So why do you think it was--

Well, I wouldn't-- I wasn't very-- it wasn't very important to me to do it. But I'm glad I did it. It's important to know history. It's important to know the human nature. It's important to do what hatred means. So many things important in my story to learn, I guess.

So is there anything else you'd like to add? Or--

Just about the past. The most important-- the most saddening thing was the Holocaust in my life. That was the most saddening thing. It wasn't so good living in the communist regime. But it wasn't so bad either. If you don't go and tell you hate the communists or things like that, they don't leave you alone. So they don't bother you if you don't do anything like that.

In a fascist regime, you don't have to say or do anything. It was enough being a Jew. That's all. You don't have to do anything to kill you or do anything against you.

Well, Miss Kalman, I want to thank you again for the interview.

Well, I thank you, too, because it's not a good memory. But I have this memory with me all the time. So it's not bother me anymore to talk about it because it's in my mind. As you get older, the old things coming to you mind, the memories of old things.

So speaking about it is-- I even write a book about it. So it's good to get out sometimes because that was such a terrible, terrible, terrible things, what they did. So many murdering for innocent people, children, and old, and everything just because they were Jewish. It was a terrible thing.

And I have to go through with it. And I lost so many-- so, so, so my loved ones. I lost so many of them because of that. But it is happened. And you cannot-- cannot do not and make yourself think it's not happen because you go through with it. You never forget. You never, never forget. You get look back much easier, but never forget.

Well, thank you, again.

Well, I thank you. It's was good for me to get out from my mind--

Yes, ma'am.

--and my system.

Yes, ma'am. So--

I just hope that world-- people of the world learn from the terrible thing and try not to do it again. Try not to hate and kill. Well, hate, you cannot stop hate. But to kill, that can be stopped. Yes. Well, no so many survival-- survive, I guess. I'm an old woman, too. And when I went through it, I was just a teenager.

Yes, ma'am. Well, if there's nothing more, this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview.