

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016
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PREFACE

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HANNAH KUSHYNSKI

August 23, 2016

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Hannah Kushynski**, on August 23, 2016, in **Los Angeles, California**. Thank you again for agreeing to – to interview with us today. We are – very much appreciate it. So well – like we talked about before, we’ll start at the very beginning, with your birthday –

Answer: Yeah.

Q: – your name at birth, and then we’ll move on from there.

A: Okay.

Q: So, could you please give us your date of birth?

A: December 22nd, 1924.

Q: And where were you born?

A: In **Częstochowa, Poland**.

Q: And was your name different when you were born? Did you have a different name when you were born?

A: No. Han – just the first name, they call me **Hanka**.

Q: **Hanka**, okay.

A: Yeah. Tha-That’s the Polish name, **Hanka**. **Hanka** instead of **Hannah**.

Q: And what was your maiden name?

A: **Wasserman**(ph).

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: **Wasserman(ph)**, okay. Did you have any nicknames growing up?

A: No.

Q: No. Always **Hanka**?

A: **Han** – yeah.

Q: Always **Hanka**. Were your parents born in **Poland** as well?

A: In **Poland** also, yeah.

Q: And where in **Poland**?

A: I don't know.

Q: That's okay. So y – were you born, and did you grow up in the same village?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. What were your parents' names?

A: My mother's maiden name was **Greenbaum**. And my father was the –
Wasserman(ph).

Q: And what were their first names?

A: My mother's name was **Frieda**, and my father's name was **Aberam(ph)**.

Q: Do you know how they met?

A: No.

Q: What were they like?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Nice, ordinary people. Nothing – mine father was a sportsman, he would driving motorcycles, and skiing. He was very much involved with skiing. He used to go every year. When it was – I think was a go – 1935 was – how you call it? Olympics in chez – in the – **Zakopane**, in **Poland**. So my father went there. He was involved in [indecipherable]. So that – my mother was plain house – housewife, she work with mine father in the store. We have a store, from bicycles and motorcycle in parts. We have a nice store. And that my mother and my father were do it.

Q: So when you were talking about the Olympics, did your father go to watch the skiing, or did he compete? Whe – When your father went to the Olympics in

Poland –

A: Yeah?

Q: – did he compete? Did he actually ski?

A: Skiing.

Q: So he was part of the Olympics?

A: Yeah.

Q: He was an athlete.

A: Yeah.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Oh, wow. Wow. And, did he ever talk about – di-did he ever talk about the Olympics, or just that he had been?

A: No.

Q: And so your mother was a housewife?

A: Yeah.

Q: But she also worked at the store?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Did your grandparents also live in town?

A: My grandma used to live with us, my mother's mother. And mine grandfather was not alive any more.

Q: What about your father's parents?

A: My – I don't know. He wasn't alive when I was born.

Q: Did any aunts or uncles live in town?

A: Yes. My mother have 11 kids.

Q: She was one of 11?

A: My mother's mother have 11 kids.

Q: Wow.

A: All over the world. He went in **United States**, was one brother, and the difference it is in **Poland**. But mostly the kids were in **Częstochowa**.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Did your dad have any brothers or sisters?

A: No, I don't know.

Q: So he – he was an only child?

A: I was a child, my mother have late. I was a big girl that time. She have a little boy. So – but he went with the – you know, was **aktion**, they selected people from left and right. So he went with Grandma and my mother, and I stay with mine father. Mine father was with me in the **HASAG**, and they came – came the last day. And the last day was [**indecipherable**] he went, that's it. Nothing.

Q: So let's go back a little bit. So you had – you had one brother?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was his name?

A: **Alex**.

Q: **Alex**. And you were – you were a lot older than he was? You were a lot older than he was?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah? How many years?

A: Oh, he was five years old, and I was already like 10, 11. It was a big different, but I suppose it was [**indecipherable**]. I don't know.

Q: What languages did you speak? What languages did you speak?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: The city?

Q: What languages did you speak?

A: Polish. Oh, yeah, we were talking Polish.

Q: Always Polish?

A: Always Polish, yeah.

Q: No other languages?

A: Yeah, when in school, I was learning English.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did everyone have to learn English?

A: Yeah. There was choice, German, or dor – or English, how I took English.

Q: Oh wow. Did you ever – did anyone else in your family speak English, or just you?

A: No. You know when in school is a different – when you speak here, it's a different way. It's a – it – you know, well, very hard, very hard.

Q: Mm-hm. Going from the book to –

A: But – but was a help when we came to **United States**, was a help. So, I took a little bit. Later, I went to school here.

Q: What was your – what was it like at home? Were you a very close family, or –

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, we were a close family. That's all.

Q: Was your family very religious?

A: My grandma was very religious, but my parents wasn't. Well, if you know, it's Conservative.

Q: Conservative, but not Orthodox?

A: Yeah, if you know, high holidays, they – we went to the temple, but not every day. Just plain Jew.

Q: Did your family have any traditions, besides going to temple for high holidays?

A: No, we – high holidays we went, yeah, yeah, and everybody went, parents **[indecipherable]** we went.

Q: Did you have any other family traditions?

A: No.

Q: Did you live in a house, or an apartment?

A: Apartment.

Q: What was the apartment like?

A: Apartment was – the address? The address?

Q: No, just what – what did it look like, how many rooms?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Oh, it was – was a big apartment. Was like two bedrooms, and a living room, and a kitchen, and a – we had the maid's room. Was a big house. I tell you, mine grandma used to make wine for holidays, and put it in my room for safekeeping.

But was in my room, and when she made the wine, was dripping, you know

[indecipherable]

Q: You – you'd sneak a taste, every once in a while?

A: Yeah. Was no more safe.

Q: Did she find out about that?

A: Yes, she find out. Yeah, and I was, that time, I don't know, maybe 10 years old, but I remember Grandma was very mad on me. But took it out and took it in her room.

Q: So it sounds like your family was very close –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – like your grandma living there, and your parents –

A: Oh yeah, I – an aunt used to come, holidays, even not holidays, would come for dinner, or so – you know, we're very close.

Q: Did your family ever talk about life in between the first World War, and the second World War?

A: What they have?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Did they ever talk about the interwar period?

A: I don't know. I di – no, I don't.

Q: Do you remember them ever talking about politics at home, or –

A: No.

Q: – events in **Germany**, anything like that?

A: Never.

Q: So if they did, they weren't talking in front of you, or your –

A: Yeah, well, about family, about business, but not politics.

Q: So what was the town like that you grew up in? Was it big, small?

A: A big house, big house. My grandma had the room, and may – my had the room. Was like maybe three bedrooms. Was a nice place, and that building had the stores on – we give – we were on the first floor, and under that was stores. And one of the stores was our first store. In the same building was this business.

Q: Oh, so he worked right underneath the apartment?

A: On – downstairs. Upstairs we live, and downstairs we – we had the business.

Q: And so how big was the town you lived in? Were there a lot of people living in the town, or was it smaller?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Just us. Just my family, that's all. But, there was like an apartment house. Lots of other people used to live, not with us, but in a separate apartment, but in the same building.

Q: But what about the town that you lived in, the city that you grew up in? The town – your hometown.

A: It was one – one – just one place, where we lived.

Q: I guess what I'm trying to ask is, how big was the town that you lived in, the town of –

A: How many apartments?

Q: Well, the – the entire city that you grew up in.

A: Oh.

Q: Yeah, how big was that?

A: I believe that was 30,000 Jewish families.

Q: Just Jews, 30,000?

A: That – Jewish families. Was a mixed city, wasn't a – a little place. Was – Jewish people were there, around 30,000.

Q: How many other – how many non-Jewish people? Do you know?

A: I don't remember it.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: It's okay. Do you remember the interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the town?

A: The Polish was a very anti-Semitic. Very. Mine husband, many years ago, he – he was **[indecipherable]** and he talk about it very much. I have the – the – the speech, the copy.

Q: The tape?

A: Yeah, the tape. But, if you want to see it, I can give it to you. That's all.

Q: Do you remember the anti-Semitism?

A: Me, myself?

Q: Yeah, do you remember experiencing that, or seeing anything like that?

A: No. No.

Q: So your husband saw a lot of that, but you did not?

A: Yeah, he was that time, 10 years, what is – I have – I have Polish Catholics people, friends, what could go – in the block, and friends, I – I didn't – my – my **[indecipherable]** we – we never talk about anti-Semitism, but in city, I know, was very bad.

Q: But as kids, you weren't really –

A: No.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: – you weren't really seeing that, yeah. Do you have any other memories of the town? About what it was like back then, or maybe the –

A: I – mine – my aunt, my uncles what live in city, yes, I did have, but not – later, I don't know later. I was just me and my fa – mine father. That what we were left, because the aunt, the uncle are gone. They didn't live with us, but in the city.

Q: Were there a lot of Jewish owned shops?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, your father owned his own shop. What other kinds of –

A: The shop – the shop is a store, a business.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yeah, th-this he – belonged to him.

Q: What other stores were owned by Jews in town?

A: I don't understand – how many other stores?

Q: Yeah, that were owned by Jews. Were there – you know, was there a Jewish butcher?

A: No, our street didn't have this – foods. We have more business in like leather, or somebody have to sell different things, but not – not food.

Q: But some of these other shops were owned by Jews, also?

A: Yeah.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Did your family have a radio?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember listening to it a lot?

A: I was already, there was one down th – on the first radio, what have the lights, I don't know if you know about it, a box, when what station was what city, was a light, very beautiful.

Q: So did your family listen to the radio a lot?

A: Yeah.

Q: What kinds of programs would you listen to? Did you listen to the news, or other –

A: Oh [indecipherable] news, and – and all kind, all kind of ...music, yeah, speeches. We – you know, regular radio. [indecipherable] But we didn't have television that time.

Q: What kind of speeches? Do you remember any specific ones?

A: No.

Q: Let's, see. So you said you had Jewish, and Catholic friends?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. What did you do for fun?

A: I [indecipherable]

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Did you play games outside?

A: One thing what I was playing together, was I – I used to ice skate, and you know, and around, we had lot of people, friends, what we were going together. Was Polish Catholics, all kind, all kind of people. I was very good skater, and I'm – my mother make for me a beautiful dress for skating, blue satin with white fur. I was – they call me **Sonja Henie**. I don't know if you remember that, here in the **United States**. She was one of the best – best skater. You remember? You remember **Sonja Henie**?

Q: So you were – you were very, very good, yeah? And do y –

A: I used to go with mine father, skiing. I was pretty active in sports.

Q: So that was your favorite thing to do, was sports?

A: Now is the favorite place, the – mine – mine [**indecipherable**]. The – how are you call it? [**indecipherable**] The – walker. Now it – that's the only thing I can have. I cannot walk by myself, I have to have a walker.

Q: But back – back then, you were – sports were your favorite, and –

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Did you play any instruments, or –

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: I used to play piano.

Q: Oh, really? When did you learn?

A: **Poland.**

Q: Mm-hm. And how old were you when you learned how?

A: Oh, maybe – I start young, maybe eight. And I was playing til [**indecipherable**], tha-that time they took away the furniture, everything, they took the piano, and I didn't play any more. And I have a piano for mine – mine daughter. I want her to know, but – beginning she took it, but now, same thing, give it up.

Q: Do you ever play any more?

A: What?

Q: Do you ever play the piano any more?

A: I don't, I don't play, no –

Q: No more.

A: – I just – had that for mine kids. Mine great-great kids are coming here, they boom-ber-boom. But it's okay. Someday they will be – one of them would take it home.

Q: So how long had your father owned the bicycle and motorcycle shop?

A: How long? Probably from the time when they got married, because just like I remember, all the time he had the shop.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Did he spend a lot of time at the shop?

A: Yeah, you know, on regular business, selling.

Q: When did you start school? When did you start going to school?

A: When I was kid. From – from kindergarten, I was always in school.

Q: So, five or six years old?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was your school a public school?

A: No. Beginning, it was a kindergarten, what was for everybody, and I was. Later, when dr – when I start gymnasium, I went to a Jewish **[indecipherable]**

Q: So it was a private, Jewish gymnasium? And it was here that you started learning English?

A: Yeah. This was a second in language. In school, we talk all Polish.

Q: Were girls and boys at the same school?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have a lot of Jewish classmates?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you treated differently from the non-Jewish students?

A: I don't remember, I don't think so. Was just Jewish.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: What was – what were the classrooms like? Did you each have your own desk, or did you share desks?

A: I don't –

Q: What – what did the classrooms look like?

A: Classroom?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Was – was a big classroom. W-We have a lot of people, a lot of kids. I don't remember how much, but was a lot.

Q: So a lot of desks, and everyone in one big room?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you were learning English –

A: That was one hour, in between the classes – the classes was one hour, maybe three times a week, that's all. But not a big – a little bit – whoe – whoever wants it, took it, but for – there was a choice, on German, on – bring English, and I took English.

Q: What other subjects did you learn?

A: No others.

Q: But what – what other classes? Did – did you also take math, and history?

A: No.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: What was –

A: **[indecipherable]** school teaching, you know, mathematics, and – and history,
and **[indecipherable]**

Q: Did you have to take a religion class?

A: I don't think so.

Q: Did you have a favorite subject?

A: Not specially.

Q: Did you have any favorite teachers, or maybe some memorable ones?

A: No.

Q: **[indecipherable]** just kind of, they came in, they left. Let's see, what else? So
you said your husband remembers a lot of anti-Semitism, but you don't remember
seeing any before the war?

A: No. We know before – before the war, the anti-Semitism was very big. You were
afraid to go in the street. In front of our store, what mine parents had, that they was
picketing. They put the two, three people, and they were walking with the – with the
– you know, sign, don't buy by Jews. This is a crime, let's say, like that. In Polish
they have **[speaks Polish]**. That's very bad. And the same not only in front of our
store, in front of **[indecipherable]** stores, they were going. And I only lin –
screaming, don't buy by Jews, don't – very bad, very bad. That didn't – you are –

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

and a little bit older, and you are not sure to go in the evening, and by yourself, can go – be beaten. And the same thing, they burn a temple, yeah.

Q: And this was before the war, yes.

A: That was before the war, yes. Shortly before the – the war start.

Q: What did you and your family think when you saw these people picketing outside the store?

A: They can – they cannot help nothing. It was allowed to walk in the street, and you cannot people to go – go away from here, cause they have the right to be on the street the same – just like anybody else.

Q: Was it scary at all?

A: Was scared, very scared. Was not safe to go in the evening.

Q: How long did the picketing last?

A: Til the war. Even in the war.

Q: So they just kept coming back, day after day. Do you have any other memories from before the war started, like that, or other memories?

A: I – I had a cousin, and I used to have my aunt, my father's sister, in **Israel**. They left **Poland** before the war. So that's the only one what I had. She have a son, and a daughter, but they're all gone today, no one. I'm from **United States**. I used to go

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

every two years to **Israel** to visit them. Well, now they're gone. Not going any more.

Q: When did they leave for **Israel**?

A: They left **Israel** in [indecipherable] 1935. I was a little girl, but I remember.

Q: Why **Israel**?

A: Why **Israel**? Because the doctors – mine cousin was sick, and the doctor recommended the best place to live in, is in a warm country. So, we don't have anybody, and everybody that time was going to **Israel**, you know, they were young. They have two kid – little kids, and that – they left to **Israel**. For – that's the reason they were – became, you know, alive, because they weren't in **Poland**. So that's the only one.

Q: The only ones who left before the war started? They were the only ones who left before the war started?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you know anybody else, who left before the war?

A: No. Oh yeah, my uncle. My mother's half-brother left to am – to **United States**. But Grandma wasn't in touch with him. I didn't know. I was a kid.

Q: Yeah. But some time before the war –

A: Yeah.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: – he went to the **U.S.**?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did he go to **New York**, or –

A: No, they live here.

Q: Oh, he came to **California**?

A: In **Los Angeles**.

Q: Oh, wow.

A: About – I was – after the war, I was trying to contact him, but I couldn't. Bad experience, mine husband had a – he used to work making ladies' handbags, and I was helping man – make handbags, and I decide that I take for a sample and give – and go sell it to the stores. And I went to one place, what was a man, and he bought from me some bags. And I ask him, how – what was his name? So he told me, **Joe Green**. That's all, and I just didn't think nothing, until I come home. He cancel the order of the handbags. It was suspicious. And I talk – I talk to somebody. What was the name from the owner from the store, originally. They tell me, the name was **Joe Greenbaum**. He was the fa – the brother of my mother, and he didn't want to have nothing to do with me, and he cancel – he cancel the order. I saw him, because I called him, and I told him, you are my uncle. I don't want nothing from you. I just wanted a family, because I didn't have any family. But he was afraid to be a – a

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

family with me, because when [indecipherable] father and my uncle, before the war, they came to the **United States**, and bought some stock. And he knew about it, he co – he collected. And he didn't want any – any business with me. That's how it is. Very sad. But I was very concerned to have a family, and I saw him. And he said in court, he said that he had nothing to do to me, but wasn't true. The lawyer find out that his name originally was **Joe Greenbaum**, was my mother's brother.

Q: Yeah ...

A: Very sad ...

Q: So Miss – Miss **Kushynski**, let's – let's go back a little bit.

A: What?

Q: And talk – let's start with the start of the war, in September.

A: In the 19 – in 1939, the German came to **Poland**, and specially the first [indecipherable] to **Częstochowa**, because **Częstochowa** was close to German border. So, we were the first people to be – to be hurt by them, first of all. The first thing what they did, they came to **Częstochowa**, they – they consul – they consti – they took thing from people, like jewelry –

Q: They confiscated.

A: Yeah, the contru – that's right, they – and the people have to deliver themself, you know, they put signs that jewelry th – and the all [indecipherable] to put – to

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

put [**indecipherable**] and – and the peoples have to have – in the same time, they were in different cities, and they – they put the people more together, and they made the ghetto in **Poland**. The people – and lot of people from other cities, come to our cities, and they – we have to share the apartment with people what the – didn't have place to stay. So, as long we have we – the big apartment, we have people what came to stay with us, like we just gonna have just one bedroom, not three, because we have to give – give away these – the apartment. And they – and they put [**indecipherable**] what is a – a manager for the business. Where – whatever it was, we have to give away to the – you know, like we sold something, the money have to go to the – **Germany**.

Q: Let's jump back a little bit, to when the war first started. Do you remember learning that the Germans had invaded?

A: I don't understand.

Q: Do you remember when you heard about the Germans invading **Poland**?

A: I not remember, I see them, you know, right away there was [**indecipherable**] to share the apartment for the other people, what came from **Lodz**, what came from little places. Everybody came to **Częstochowa**.

Q: But how did you know that the war had started? Did you hear it on the radio, or in the newspaper?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: We had seen the soldiers marching. They –

Q: They marched through town.

A: On the streets, you see it. You were – you were forbidden to be in the evening on the street. You were forbidden in late – too late have opened the store, was some regulations. We had to obey them.

Q: So, on September first, when they came into **Poland** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – they came to your town immediately, and so right away –

A: Yes.

Q: – they were under – how old were you when this happened?

A: I don't remember all.

Q: It's okay. Were you still able to go –

A: Maybe – maybe 11 – 12 years old.

Q: Were you at home when this happened?

A: Yeah, yeah. The schools were close.

Q: So you, your parents, your brother, and grandma were all at the apartment when you saw this?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you think when you first saw them?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: What?

Q: What did you think when you first saw them coming in?

A: It was – I don't remember.

Q: Were you scared?

A: Sure. I remember when the first time I had seen German soldier, I went to bed, and I cover myself in the pillow, not to see them. But I had to get out from that.

Q: Did your parents say anything about them?

A: Not to me. Was that, that the time – the first thing – I don't remember. I don't remember. Was so **[indecipherable]** and like 80 years ago. I am lucky that I remember that. I – I have a good memory, but lot of thing I don't.

Q: Were you able to leave the apartment much? In the – in the next few days, after the Germans arrived, did you leave the apartment at all?

A: No. We stay in our apartment til was a – they took all the people on the – on the street, and had – had a selection. And we never came back to our apartment. So, they took – they took the families together, and they make to go to the left, you go to the right. So people what they can use – I grew up, I was big girl, I didn't look like 12 years old kid, I looked like 16 at least. So one from family was standing to go. The gentleman select two people on this side, and two people on that side. So I went with mine father, and mine brother went with my mother and my grandma,

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

and I never had seen again. And we never came back to the apartment. They took us to a big hall, and we stayed there for a few days. Later [indecipherable] was a ghetto, and everybody have a da – have got an apart – [indecipherable] what was man's separate, women's separate.

Q: And this was after the selection?

A: What?

Q: This was after the selection, that you were taken to this new place?

A: Yeah.

Q: How many people to a room at this new place?

A: Oh, it was a lot of people. Everybody had a little place to stay, that's all. Was a lot of people.

Q: Did you know anybody there?

A: What?

Q: Did you know any of the women there?

A: Oh, was some friends. But what – one neighbors, what used to live before, near us. Well, you [indecipherable] other people. They – they cau – they too – took – I cannot – anyway, we – the store, and the house, and we call my father's friend, so-called friend, Polack, and told him to come with the horse and buggy, and take it for himself. He told him then, if – if I am alive, and he – my father's alive, then keep it

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

for us. So, at the same time, we told him to go upstairs, to my – to the room, and take whatever they can, to have it. And we didn't have nothing, we just came with package – suitcase, and that's all. And then the – and a big one, maybe it's all **[indecipherable]** backpack. That's it. Everybody **[indecipherable]**

Q: And before you left, ha – before you – before you left, what – did you have enough food to eat? Was there rationing of food?

A: Oh, I don't understand your question.

Q: Was there enough to eat? Was there enough food and water, before you went to this place?

A: Yeah, they gave, they gave water, and some – going around and giving something. Not big.

Q: So, you could only get so much flour at a time, or things like that?

A: Not much, not much. When we got all the ho – people what went on the one side, went to the hall, and the other people, the other half, went to **Treblinka**. And that's why, and I don't **[indecipherable]**

Q: Do you remember what you packed in your suitcase?

A: What?

Q: Do you remember what you packed in your suitcase, to leave with?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Yeah, it was – we can take it, my – was nothing. Our camp didn't have special outfits for us, we kept our own. And they didn't put numbers. We didn't have numbers. And they – it took few days, and – and they got us all together, and **[indecipherable]** and count us. And we had to, every morning, we have to come to a place, and they see that our – everybody is here. So – and we had to – to start to work. There were places where they divide people to different kind of work. And the first I have a place when they – they make – how you call it? Bullets, for – for the – for – for – for the German, who have little – little bullets. We have to segregate them, what are good, what are no good, and give it back to the German. That was like in garage, and we're there a whole day. We have an hour to go to the kitchen, in the – in the – one after another, and we got some bread, and a soup. You went back to the hall, where we were there, and after that, we were transferred to a barrack. And from there, that's our life. To go in the barrack, to sleep there. In the morning, we go to the – to the factory. And later, I was working there maybe few weeks, and th-they change my work, and I – I went to another place. I went to the – to the – to the factory, direct to the factory. Was a huge factory. And over there, we used to make bullets, from so much – I was a controller for 18 machine. The machine was working on the soap, what – with chemicals. I have to control, walk

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

back and forth in the water. I came out from the – from the camp, I have holes, what eat up the – the –

Q: There was some kind of chemical –

A: I am – I don't – don't – can't find the expression. I was working in the water, with the chemicals, and – and – and the – and the – the they – my holes were bigger and bigger. I came out –

Q: So there were –

A: – ver-very bad. I had one day, where I have to take it out, because I cannot walk, and control the machine with the bandage, so – and the bandage fall apart. And that was for a long time. Mine – my husband was that time friend of mine. He find out that I am – I am in the – in that – in factory, what they do this. He had how they call a connection with some gentleman, and he – I – one day he took me out from there, to a different place in it, where they have the dry work, not – you know, not in the **[indecipherable]** water. And I was in the pro – other place. All of a sudden, they called me from the – from the German there, the **meister**, the manager, and I went out from that, and he grabbed mine blouse, and throw me on the front, and kick my – he didn't want me to go to that place. I supposed to go back to the – to the bullets what I used to make, the **[indecipherable]** machines. I was so bad kicked, that I start to laugh, hysteric laugh. And he kicked me, what I laugh, he kicked me more.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

And thi – he told me to go back to the place where I used to work. No, not no factory. And the people brought water in buckets with butter, to – to – for me to come back to life, because I was halfway dead. Oh, God.

Q: So this was a guard that didn't want you to leave?

A: What?

Q: This was a guard who did not want you to leave? He wanted you to stay –

A: Yeah.

Q: – with the chemicals on the floor, and all –

A: Yeah, yeah, I have t – I – I couldn't go. He grabbed me from the hi – blouse, and throw me on the floor. He kick me **[indecipherable]** maybe half an hour. My – then my friend came with water, and pour on me that I will come back to life. And that's how I – I have to go back and be back in the – in the machine when they make the bullets. They called **Zugis(ph)**, they – the – the bullets. The machine what made the bullets, called **Zugis(ph)**.

Q: **Zugis(ph)**.

A: What they are spreading, you know, spread it out from a smaller bullet, to big bullets. That was my job.

Q: What was the name of the company?

A: **HASAG**.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: **HASAG**. It was a German company? So when you said your first job was looking at – you were sorting bullets, the different kinds of bullets, when you first started?

A: When I first started, I was in the – in the – in the barrack, where we select them.

Q: So you picked –

A: – was – was [**indecipherable**], they call my friend was the manager. He – he ask for me – he ask for a few people what he more wanted to stay in the garage. So, that how it was. But they did – they transferred me to that, bullets.

Q: But in – in this first job, were you picking out the bad bullets?

A: Yeah.

Q: For – so you were sorting them, the good ones, and the bad ones?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And then you moved –

A: Yeah.

Q: – to the job where you were actually making them?

A: Yeah. One time, I was – I was late, where – when the – where was to get there, when they come, the people, I was late. And I was punish, and I went to the office. I had to – I had to register as I am late. And those people who were late, they were beaten with the belt. And all of a sudden, my friend came there, and he know that

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

German, what he's doing it. He told him that mine friend is here, and he don't want me – not to be beaten. And they call me to the office. I have to stay, and see how they doing to somebody else. That was so painful. But, was better than my – I should get myself the beating. So, I wasn't beaten, but I have to see this. It was terrible. He – he let me go later, to my work, to – to that place, yeah.

Q: Did other girls working with you, also have to stand in the chemicals?

A: Yeah. I have two girls. They were the girls, a friend of mine, they was – they were – how you call it? They were working on the machine, and I was working in checking the machine, what doesn't make any straps, or **[indecipherable]** that they're – they're coming out good from the machine. But they were working on the machines.

Q: And you were all standing in the chemicals, while you were kind of overseeing the process?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. What were the barracks like, where you had to sleep? Did you have bunks, or –

A: Yeah, they – they went and get the – the top manager, what was the German, he used to come every hour, to con – to – to see how I control the – the machines. We

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

a – but I had to watch good, and the bullets should come out good. And later they take the bullets, and fill it up, in another part of the factory.

Q: And this German would come in every hour to check on you?

A: They – yeah, and the ma – the ti – top **meister**.

Q: What about the barracks where you slept? What was that building like?

A: How the buildi – there was many machines, different – different machine, with heavy belts, you know, each machine – another one had mash – ma – have – wa- was working on belts, leather belts. And my husband, that time was my boyfriend, he was working on the leather machines, on the leather belts, what sometime they cracked, you know? So they gave him to fix the belts.

Q: So your – your husband was working in the same place?

A: Yeah, in different place in the same building.

Q: But just in a different part of it.

A: Different place, yeah.

Q: And ha – had you known him before the war started?

A: What?

Q: Did you know him before the war started?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Yeah. He was a cousin of mine friend from school. So when I – I was to come to my girlfriend, I know him. I knew him that time, but we weren't friends. But in – in **HASAG**, we were – became closer friends.

Q: Was it nice having a good friend like that?

A: What?

Q: Wa – while you were at **HASAG**, was it nice having a good friend like that?

A: No, you cannot – you were separate. Men separate, and women separate.

Women have – in that book, what you had seen –

Q: Yes.

A: – is – is the, how we call it – the barracks have – have the wiring around the – around the barracks was – each barrack was around with the wires. Was bad.

Q: And the men and women were separate.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was it like inside the barracks?

A: Was shelves, what we would sleeping. So, they give us like from straw, mattresses, and everybody have place. So, that's all what we had. I – I remember one time I got from somebody [**indecipherable**] and I have an old blouse, what was made from yarn, and I took ap-apart, and I want to make for myself, a different blouse. Well, this blouse I made. I was very handy. And in the night, I didn't sleep,

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

and I have a little electric lamp under the pillow, because was no light. And I decide that I would crochet. And it just happened that the – the **meister**, the German, what was checking barracks, had seen me, and he's call me, and he said, you make for me, from the yarn I want a sweater. And I had to make it. He was very nice to me, and I make him a sweater. So that time, he didn't said nothing. He just pass by, didn't see the light. But I made that sweater.

Q: So, instead of reporting you, he said, you know –

A: Yeah.

Q: – make me a sweater instead.

A: Yeah. And that – that's had nothing to do with the war, what I was working. This was an extra – extra work.

Q: How – how did you get the flashlight?

A: I had that.

Q: Oh, you – you brought it with you?

A: I don't remember how I had it. I don't [**indecipherable**] but I had that little flashlight.

Q: How many women were in your barrack?

A: How many? Maybe 20. Was upstairs and downstairs. And mine – mine future sister-in-law was with me. Was my friend from before the war. In **Częstochowa**,

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

she live on the same street what I – what we live. But when we got together, so we were sticking together. And she was next lane to me, in the barrack. And – and she had – her friend, her man was coming to her. But he was a friend of her brother, but we were close, like, enough that after we got liberated, she got married to him, and I got married to my brother – my husband. I have here a picture from my husband. He – my husband died two years ago. We were 70 years **[inaudible]**. I have here a picture, what I belongs to a club here, **39** club. And every year, we made that work, and I have – how maybe – who is there? **Fred, Miriam!** Give me – come on here. Can she come?

Q: Sure.

A: Want to stop for a minute. **[break]**

Q: So we've been talking about the **HASAG** camp.

A: Yeah.

Q: When – when did you first arrive there?

A: What?

Q: When did you first arrive there? Do you remember the year?

A: Probably 1939.

Q: And you were – you were there for the next six years, then? Did you have any other jobs?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: No.

Q: So you stuck with the supervising job?

A: That was mine job.

Q: So you said you got to wear street clothes. There were no uniforms?

A: No, you – street clothes, yeah.

Q: So it was whatever you brought with you, you just –

A: Yeah, whatever I –

Q: Did you ever have to wear an armband, or a badge of some kind?

A: No, nothing, just plain.

Q: But there was no – no kind of badge to identify that –

A: No, we've gu – we just – no, we didn't have that.

Q: During your time there, did you hear about anything else going on in **Poland**?

Other ghettos, or deportations?

A: We have no place to go. Everything was destroyed.

Q: So you had no news of what was going on outside?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there – do you have any other memories of your time in the labor camp?

A: What I have?

Q: Do you have any other memories of your time in the labor camp?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: No, I do – that was after we – we got liberated. That was the 17 – the ninth of – 16 of 17, we got liberated, 1945. And when I walk – you liber – before liberation, my husband prepare a garage what was for horses, that we maybe will go away, run away. And he tried to get me from the working place, to his place, and from there we should go to the – to the garage where – where they had the – the horses. And he went, offer my father to go with us, but mine father said that he wants to go before, with the train, because we will already know where – where to go, when he is there. He was planning that, with the train, the German will take him whenever they go, and we will come later. But, not happen like that. They start – start the train to **Buchenwald**, and later they had to walk a lot. And they – somebody what survive, told me that my father got killed in that walk, for – how we call it? I don't remember.

Q: The Death March?

A: The Death March, that, yeah. They killed him that time. And we got liberated. Like, the Russian came to – to the town. And we were keeping together, mine sister-in-law, and my brother-in-law, and who else was with us? My stepmother and me. We were keeping together, and we were hiding in that – in that barrack, til the morning. And in the morning, we got loose, free. And I was walking with the whole group of people, and my nanny have to see me, she was in the waiting, you know,

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

with the people watching who is coming. And she give me mine father's picture, my mother's picture, this picture, that's mine brother when he was little. She had the picture, and she gave it to me. That's – that's the only picture of him I have. But he was bigger when he went to the – through the march. So –

Q: And so, through all these years, your father was also in the **HASAG** –

A: Mine father was working in the same place, the **HASAG**, together – in a different – different part of **HASAG**, but in **HASAG**, and I could see him once in a while, you know, he could come to me. And I was with ladies, and she were – he was with mens. But, we had seen each other for quite of the t –

Q: What we – what were these visits like, seeing your father after not –

A: Normal – normal get together [**indecipherable**] you know, and I was happy that he was with me. That's it. But was one bad thing, that one day before the liberation, he went on that march. He will be today – he was born in 19 – 1900. He will be today 106 years old. My father was a wonderful guy. Guy, before the war, we have a group kids, they always ask, your father will be there? Your father will be there? He dance with them, he give them ci-cigarettes. Your father will be there? Yeah, but when we walked out from **HASAG**, my nanny came out, it was really very sad.

Q: So you said your husband, tha – your boyfriend at the time, was planning an escape?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Do you know – do you know the details? Were you – how – how were you going to –

A: No. He worked – he was working by the belts, you know, leather belts for the machines, til the liberation. And we got liberated together.

Q: But you mentioned he was planning an escape? He was hi-hiding in the stable?

A: Yeah, he was, with me.

Q: So he was going to try to escape?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you know – what – what was the plan? How – how was he going to try to escape?

A: He had the friend what was a painter. And people what are sick were put to the side. He went to his friend, and told him to make me a band with Red Cross, that he is helping the sick people. And he got to me. And I was on the part of the – of **HASAG**, of the factory, and I have to go with him to – to – I had to jump. Was a place like a washroom on this first floor in **HASAG**. I have to jump from there, and I said, I am not jumping first floor. He said, come on, I catch you. And he caught me, I had to go. And we were waiting when the soldiers part, and that was when the

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

– the train was standing. So when the p – th – we went onto the train and we went to the gara – to the garage, where the last of the family was. That’s how he got me.

Q: So he disguised himself as a Red Cross person, and –

A: Yeah.

Q: So – so the Red Cross came into the camp sometimes?

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: That’s how he was –

A: Yeah.

Q: And, I guess ho – how often did the Red Cross come in?

A: No, in – he had to take it off, because he wasn’t in the Red Cross. But he – to get to me, he have to wear the –

Q: Had to pretend, yeah.

A: Yeah. So later he took it off, and we were staying til the night, in the garage.

Q: But how – how often did the real Red Cross come to the labor camp?

A: How often what?

Q: How often did the real Red Cross come to the labor camp?

A: I don’t understand.

Q: So you – you said the Red Cross –

A: Yeah.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: – came into the – how often did they come?

A: They just came that time when we have to go on the train.

Q: Oh, it was just the one time?

A: One time.

Q: Oh, I see, I see. And your husband saw them, and immediately made –

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, I see. I see.

A: My husband was very smart. I really – I was with him seven – 70 years.

Q: Seventy.

A: Yeah. Before we left **Poland**, I went to say goodbye to my stepmother, so she said, you are not going anyplace before I see you married. She arrange the whole wedding for me in one day. Friday she called people – I didn't have a wedding dress, not an even – not the right clothes, but she arranged that I get from my friend a dress, and – and th – she arrange the rabbi should come, and we got married. And after that, we left **Poland**. We smuggled through the mountains – high mountains, and cold mount-mountains, because that was – when we were going was like March. And we were climbing the mountain in snow. And the branches from – we were holding onto the branches from the trees. So, three steps up, and four step down, because was very, very hard, very hard. And we went through, later we got in

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

touch with somebody what smuggle us from – from these mountain, and the other side to ch – to **Czechoslovakia**. But we did. So, was – was impo – my mission impossible. Really, wa – normal time, that wi – that never happen. Nothing but the – the – the what you – the fear, you know, that – that somebody will get you. It was so strong that – stronger that the – that you have to hold on, and go ahead, because somebody catch you. It was – was very hard. So, we was – we went **Czechoslovakia**, and over there, from the commune – Jewish community took care of us, took us a place to stay. We were like two days, and we went for tha – we got – we got – we were in big funny papers in the consulate, for the group what we were together, that we are from **Czechoslovakia**. I don't remember how was it. We went from **Czechoslovakia**, we were to **Hungary**. And from **Hungary** we went to ou – to our si – **Au-Austria**. In **Austria** we have to stay for a few months, and they promise one day, Jewish community promise us that we get paper to go to **Israel**. But in the meantime, my husband's cousin wrote us a letter, we shouldn't come to **Israel** because the shortage of food, and the shor-shortage of – of housing, that **[indecipherable]** we have place, to go someplace else, we shouldn't come. So, we got acquai – acquainted with the – with a medical soldier what was taking care on the – on the people what was traveling that time from camps, from – from different places, and – I forgot what I was saying. If – what I was saying?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: You became acquainted with an American soldier.

A: Yeah, we got American soldier, and he is supposed to get us to friends, with the train from **Hungary**. But I didn't want to stay in the – in the **Austria**, so I told the – the office where the American people were, that I am pregnant, and I don't want to go to **Germany**, and I want to go anyplace else, but not to **Germany**. So every day I put on more pillow, and I – and I said – and I said [indecipherable] and I have to go someplace else. So, he left us down in **Belgium**. He let us down, four people, two boys, myself and my husband. We were in **Belgium**, and not language, no money, no place where to stay. We were on the road where the trains are going, to get – to get to [indecipherable] because the place where the soldier let us, was nowhere. We was – just [indecipherable] the place, was just **Belgium**. Anyway, we did go – go – walk on the train road to bel – to **Brissel(ph)**, and my husband said – I st – pass by three people, and ask them if they talk Jewish, because everybody speak French. And I remember that my sister-in-law friends came to us, and say goodbye, that he is going to **Belgium** legally. And his name is – I don't – I – I for – forgot his name. Anyway – **Sal**. And my husband stopped the third man, and him – he told him – we were talking dish – Jewish? He said yes. He said, what you looking for? I says, looking for a [indecipherable] I think **Hoffman**. We – we looking for him. He said, it's hundred of **Hoffman** in telephone books. Maybe one

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

of them will be you – your friend. He said, I went to a wedding, and was Mr. **Hoffman**, and maybe this **Hoffman** will bring you to another **Hoffman**. So, this way you can continue finding your friend. So, he said, I take you to that guy. He took us to that guy, and in – and we ask him if he knows somebody with the same name. He said, what for you looking? So I told him to that **Hoffman**. He said, I am the **Hoffman**. Was just luck. We were pretty lucky the whole time. And he help us, the Mr. **Hoffman** help us a lot. Wait – wait, I call my nephew. The nephew was in **Belgium**, by that **Hoffman**, what we were coming to. But really lucky. In May, we were staying in **Belgium** for almost five years.

Q: Wow.

A: So, and our – later, we got affida – three affidavits to – because we were just temporary in that country. We have papers for temporary permit to stay. But when the three papers came, from **Australia**, from **Argentina**, and from the **United States**, that we can pick up one of them. And my husband pick up **United States**. He did. Here we are. Yeah.

Q: So let – let's get back a little bit –

A: Yeah.

Q: – to liberation.

A: Yeah, okay.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: What did you think when you saw the Soviet soldiers?

A: Nothing. I was happy. I was very happy. Matter of fact, it was just before Passover, and the – I managed to get some food, and we'll make a Seder. And I make with mine sister, a Seder for 30 people. In between, they were Russian. And in Russian was – and we told the Russian to go and sleep someplace else, because I – we don't have enough room. They said they don't want to go to Polacks, they want to stay here, on the floor. And they sleep on the floor, by us. So later, in the morning, everybody left. But I make a beautiful dinner, and everybody was happy. The Russian, really they came with the accordion, and they dance, and sing, where they were so happy. And we were happy that they were liberate us.

Q: So you all celebrated together, being liberated?

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: Did you ever hear rumors about Soviet soldiers, and their treatment of – of other – of other women, of people –

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: No. They were very nice to us. I don't know like someplace else, some – somebody else, but were very nice to us. There was my sister-in-law, my brother-in-

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

law, my mother, and it – two other people, two families, because they – they didn't have enough room, because part already the Russian took over, you know.

Q: So you said once you were liberated, you saw your former nanny –

A: Yeah.

Q: – who had been saving some photos for you.

A: Yeah. She called me, **Hanyu(ph)**, **Hanyu(ph)**. Yes, she came.

Q: What about your father's friend, who was supposed to save –

A: My father went with the – with the dead march, didn't come any more. They killed him.

Q: Yes, ma'am, but your – your father's friend, who was supposed to keep all of your belongings from the store and the apartment –

A: Yeah, I went to talk to, with my husband, to that place, and I said that, you took – we – we hid – we left in your place, almost everything what we had, and I would like to get something. And he said, get out fort – from mine house, because I don't got nothing from you. Everything for to give **[indecipherable]** for your father. And he knew that my father is **[indecipherable]**. He tell me, if you show up again, I will chase you with dogs. I was very disappointed. He wa – he is supposed to be my best – my father's best friend. But I have nothing, nothing at all. I – I was afraid to come again. He said, beside the dogs, I will see that you don't

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

come here any more, the **AK**, you know, the organization against people – Jews, that we call **AKs**. I don't know if you know about it. I'll – but – but they are bad people, and he said – he said that he will arrange that I shouldn't come here any more. I was afraid that he would kill me. But I didn't go there any more, and I have nothing.

Q: So, what –

A: That was right after liberation.

Q: Right after?

A: Yeah.

Q: And –

A: And I settled – I had got from my friends a room, and really a day or two later, I went – I don't know where to go. I went there, and I – think he said – the first thing he said, you are alive?

Q: Really?

A: I said yes, I am alive, but don't you come here any more. That was Polacks. That's how they are. They talk to you sweet and nice. In the back they can put your knife.

Q: And so I'm – just to clarify, he said he did not have anything, or that he gave it all away?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: What you mean?

Q: So, your family's belongings –

A: Yeah?

Q: – did he say he never took it?

A: He – he took – he didn't want to give it to me, nothing. He said that mine father give it to him.

Q: Oh, I see. He said, you can just have it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: And I thought that I will come there to him, and he will give me something. He got the silverware from house, everything. Everything what is valuable, he took it with him. But he didn't give me nothing.

Q: Was that a – were other non-Jewish people in town? What was their reaction to the liberation?

A: I don't know **[indecipherable]**

Q: So, the other non-Jewish people in town –

A: Yeah, yeah?

Q: – were they happy about liberation, or –

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Sure, sure. Everybody was happy. We stay a one year in **Częstochowa**, until we start to travel.

Q: What – what news were you getting about other places in **Poland**, or, you know, in **Europe**, right after the war?

A: Where I went?

Q: I – like what – what kind of news were you getting? What were you learning about the war, after you were freed?

A: We didn't worry anything. We were glad that we are free, and we can go whatever we want. And the – and **Belgium** was a very nice country, very, very nice. It had that – I wish they didn't got the affidavits to stay in **Belgium**, I would. Very nice country, very nice people there.

Q: But i-in this year that you're living in your hometown –

A: Yeah?

Q: – what were you learning about other areas of **Poland**? Like what – what had happened during the war, in other places?

A: I didn't know about the war [**indecipherable**] for anything.

Q: Nobody – you were just happy to be out, you weren't –

A: We were just happy to go – to go the – wherever we can.

Q: When did you hear about other concentration camps –

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Oh yeah –

Q: – or killing centers?

A: Yeah, I don't know how many, but all over **Poland**, and very different – different cities. One – one – somebody told us that the **HASAG** was on – almost best for – for the Jewish people in the – in the country that had the camp. But was good enough for us.

Q: And so, right after the war, you fir – you first heard about **Auschwitz**, or –

A: I wasn't in **Auschwitz**.

Q: Bu-But you were hear – you were learning about it?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah. **Auschwitz, Sobibor**.

A: But, takes time. We – you know, we got liberated in May, but other part – people from di-different coun – di-different cities, it stays in the camps til – til the Russian came, maybe til June, maybe later. You know, we got [**indecipherable**] early liberated, the first people, because our city is close to **Germany**, and so on. That – they – they start backwards.

Q: And so, slowly you start learning about these other camps?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: When did you find out that your mother, brother and grandmother had been – when did you learn what had happened to them?

A: You – you know where some people, when came to **Auschwitz**, and they had seen what's going on, they run away. And they came **Częstochowa**, and they told me that they went in the oven. Bad news, but that was the truth.

Q: So sl-slowly you're learning about these other places from other survivors, from other areas –

A: That's right.

Q: – and other camps. But – so you knew that your – your mother, brother and grandmother had been selected one way, you and your father another?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you learn that they had been sent to **Treblinka**?

A: Right away.

Q: Right away?

A: Nobody wants to believe it, that they were put in – putted in oven, because this is behind imagination that something like that can happen.

Q: Were there a lot of survivors that returned to your hometown?

A: Yeah, the people what cou – were in **HASAG**, even from different cities, they were brought to the factory, we got liberated.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: And then s –

A: And some – some people from different cities, went back to – to a place where – what they were born, and some prefer remain just however. But 90 percent people left from **Poland**. Nobody wants to stay. I went after the war, and I have – I knew that mine cousin is alive, and mine father – mother have a property in **Częstochowa** before the war, that he signed up that I am dead, to sell the property. And I was – and I find out, my friend from **Częstochowa**, about – calling me from – to **Belgium**. **Hanka**, you'd better come quick because your cousin is selling the property. Cause he knew – she knew about it. So I got the passport from **Belgium**, and I went to **Poland**, and I stop him. So, that was – that's one time I was back in – in **Poland**, and I got the nervous breakdown, because I couldn't walk on the streets, and go in here, my [**indecipherable**] here, my aunt here – lived there, all around, until – til I collapse, and I had to leave.

Q: And so you – you already told us that you went through **Austria, Hungary**, and ended up in **Belgium**. What were you and your husband doing in **Belgium**, while you were waiting for the affidavits?

A: Well, my husband – when **Belgium** start to work, we have the permission to work, but we had the green cards, not – not those aug – the – not that we live for good in **Belgium**, just temporary. And if – my husband was working, and that's all.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

But I was working, he was working, and that's – and that's wa – that time I didn't have any kids, so was easy. And in – in **Belgium**, mine oldest daughter **Frieda**, she was born in **Belgium**.

Q: So, right before you all came.

A: Yeah. Beautiful country. When we left, we – to say goodbye, lot of neighbors came to say goodbye to us. One was a taxi driver. He said, don't take a taxi to the train, I am come ta – coming to take you. That's the only thing what I wanted to do. So, and the other ca – peoples came with flower, the-they couldn't understand why we leaving **Belgium**, they – that I have the – these affidavits to – to **United States**. Yeah, it was – was very sad to leave, because I really liked the people. They were very nice, very nice.

Q: And what languages did you learn?

A: French.

Q: French. So by the time you're getting ready to leave **Europe**, you speak Polish, a little bit of English, and French?

A: And Yiddish.

Q: And Yiddish. And Yiddish.

A: There was be – I didn't speak Yiddish when I got married, I didn't know. He was – my husband was teaching me how to talk.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Oh, I see. So you learned Yiddish from him?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, I see. Is that what y'all would speak at home, Yiddish?

A: Yeah. Not me, my grandma was talking to – Yiddish to me. But I didn't answer her, I answer her in Polish. I understood, but not to speak.

Q: But you and your husband, you spoke Yiddish at home?

A: No –

Q: Oh.

A: – not me, but my mother and my grandma, they speak Yiddish.

Q: Oh, okay, so –

A: They – Polish and Yiddish. But –

Q: And then, your husband spoke Yiddish as well.

A: Yeah.

Q: I see.

A: And my husband start to teach me Yiddish. I wa – I-I – I [**indecipherable**] crazy. And everybody was laughing, for a minute. But finally, I speak good Yiddish, now.

Q: When did you leave **Europe**?

A: **Germany**.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Ar – when did you leave **Belgium**?

A: Oh, **Belgium**?

Q: Yeah.

A: In the – '49, 1949.

Q: How did you get to the **United States**?

A: How many –

Q: How – how did you get to the **United States**?

A: I got an affidavit from somebody from the **United States**, ask for us. I don't know who, and they don't know me either. Was just a – I think that was from **HIAS**. I had the paper. I was trying to find out, when we got here, who was for the pape – the people. I don't know, I couldn't find out.

Q: And how did you travel to the **U.S.**? Did you take a – a ship?

A: By boat, yeah, we come by boat.

Q: How long did that take?

A: I think a week. A long time. They [**indecipherable**] [**break**] – so was a announcement somebody's dead, but she didn't want to read, because she didn't know how to read. So she came running to me, that's a theater, that I should buy tickets, and go and leave her – with her.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A2: She was – she was very attached to me, and she couldn't believe my parents were leaving. My mother didn't tell her. **[break]**

Q: Okay. So you came by ship?

A: What?

Q: You came to the **United States** by ship?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And it took about a week?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was it like traveling with a – with a young baby, and you know, for a week?

A: No, the kids are got married late – later, but I want to go back. I didn't want to stay here, I didn't like it. We got an apartment. I – wa – apartment in **Long Beach**, we – you know, was everything arrange from **HIAS** that I have apartment in berry – in **Long Beach**. And I didn't want to stay there, I didn't like the people, how they are dressed, and I didn't like the homes. They are not homes that – that are copies, because, you know, the – that's not how, you know, bli – **Belgium**, even in **Poland**, they're big houses, and very beautiful. But here, we came, everybody have a – have a – how you call it, the – a copy. That they have a bedroom, and a kitchen, it's in a copied. Not home.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Oh, just a very tiny –

A: Yeah. I didn't like it. I didn't – I didn't unpack my suitcase for a whole year. I want to go back to **Belgium**. Not **Poland**. For **Poland**, it's over. It's nothing else, just that I was born there, but no sympathy.

Q: So when you're traveling to the **United States** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – on the boat –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you have **Frieda**, a young baby –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and your husband.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was the trip like?

A: Very hard for me, because I didn't – she was going around, that time, she was two years old.

Q: Oh, she was three.

A: Two. Yeah, and she going around with the bag, when I [**indecipherable**] I should go on the boat [**indecipherable**] the bag. And she was walking around with the bag.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Di – I guess – were you relieved to finally get off the boat, after that week, and –

A: I don't know. I don't remember now.

Q: Where did you arrive? In **New York**?

A: Yeah. I was three days in **New York**, and my – my husband went to buy tickets to go someplace else. And he said to the – to the cashier, to give me two and a half tickets for **Florida**. So he said – she said, why **Florida**? Because it's on a – I'd – it's warm, and my wife have to have a warm climate. I had, in here, in the **[indecipherable]** what got killed, but I have **[indecipherable]** in my legs, from that soap from – from the machines what **[indecipherable]** was working. So, was pretty hard.

Q: So you – you moved to **Long Beach**?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you have an apartment?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you lived out of a suitcase for a year. So it was – it was hard adjusting to life?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: When did you start taking night school? You said you took English classes. Y- You told me earlier that you took English classes, when you moved here?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: I don't know what you said.

Q: So, you told me when you first moved to **America**, you took English classes?

A: Yeah, we went to **New York**, and I didn't like la – **New York**. And my husband went, buy tickets to go someplace, someplace else. He bought two and a half tickets. So the cashier ask, you don't care where you're going, **Chicago**, or **Los Angeles**, or – he – he said no, because I don't have family here, so I don't care, just give me ticket where it's nice and warm. So she said, go to **Los Angeles**. And he said, give me two tickets. And here I am.

Q: And once you moved, and got settled in, you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you took English classes, and –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and all that –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and when were your other children born?

A: What?

Q: So, **Frieda** was born in **Belgium**.

A: Yeah.

Q: When were your other children born?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: Oh, two here, **Los Angeles**. One was born in **Ball(ph) Heights**, the hospital **[indecipherable] Heights**, my daughter was born, and my son was born in **Beverly Hills** Hospital. He – and now, he is 57, and she is 60. **Miriam** is 60. She has gone backwards. He is 59. I have pretty good kids, I'm telling, I'm very, very lucky, very lucky. They live here, and they close to me, and **[indecipherable]** everything what we went through, now having normal kids, it's a blessing. So, and I am lucky. Here I have great-grandchildren, the picture here. It's four great-grandchildren, two girls and two boys.

Q: And how many grandchildren?

A: Mine granddaughter?

Q: So, you have three children –

A: No, I have two daughters and a son.

Q: Mm-hm. And how many grandchildren?

A: Five.

Q: Five. And then four great-grandchildren.

A: Yeah. They call me **Gigi**.

Q: **Gigi**. How much of your ex – how much of your experiences during the war, did you tell your children, or your grandchildren?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: I didn't tell nobody nothing, because I couldn't talk about it. My husband was called to **UCLA**, and he made the statement then, I have a tape. And they called me, saying I should come, and I told them I cannot come. I – I couldn't make it. I am surprising myself that I accept this here, because it's a really heartbroken, go through this again. Because I don't have any family, this – this is mine family, what I – the kids. That's all I ha – some people have uncles, have cousins. I don't have nobody. There was just me, my husband. Very nice guy. Very nice guy, I miss him a lot. He was not a – not nice to me, he was nice to friends, to help find job, to help with – with money, and abil – he was very, very nice person. He never, never ask me when I went shopping for clothes, how much you spend? How much you pay for this, how much you pay? Never. You like it, enjoy it. Always. When come holidays, he bought, you know, **Valentine**, he bought box of chocolate for the kids, for each one, and for me one big one. Yeah. We came here, we got – we belong to the organization from – from **Poland**, what calls '39 club [**indecipherable**]. Now I am never not going there any more. Nobody's there, from friends. Now, the second generation took it over. And from the old second, ni – nobody's there. It's very hard, I had group what – what – we play cards, and nobody, just I – myself. Sometime, I just wonder why I've – I am alone, really alone. It's one girlfriend,

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

one. Her husband was from my hometown. We are getting together every second week. She comes here, or I go there. But nobody's here, nobody. Yeah.

Q: Is there anything you wish people knew about living in **Poland** during that time?

A: I don't want to talk about all that. And I – and if you wanted, I can show you the tape from my husband, what was talking. He – he told – he told the **UCLA** everything. [break]

Q: So my – my last question for you is, is there anything we haven't talked about already, that you want to add?

A: I – I don't think so. I just want to say that I am one of the luckiest person in – in – in the cla – in **Los Angeles [indecipherable]** because I have a nice family now. And I miss my family, especially my husband, what I lost two years ago. That's all. What should I do? What should I do with the book?

Q: So would you – would you like to show us the photo? Or, first, I guess, could you tell us a little bit about the book? What it is, what's it about?

A: What about? This is how they treat the Jewish people the whole time when they're in **Poland**. Here, can see what kind terrible things they did. They throw babies from third floor down, to – to – to – little babies. And terrible things they did. So this is our history. Like – like the books say, thi-this – th-this Jewish history in **Poland**. That's what it is, in 19 – 19 – from 1939 til 1945.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: And how did you get this book?

A: Just – just by coincidence, because was fire in that place where the photograph is, photographer have the pictures. The German bring the pictures to develop. But I didn't have a chance to have the – the books, because the fire start, and that person what got the books, took whatever he could to bring it – I think that's time, 10 books. So, and that's how I got this, she – he brought it to me. One, he asked me, you wanted the book? I said, sure I do. But this is th –

Q: So it –

A: – the –

Q: – it was a –

A: – the –

Q: – it was a first –

A: – this everything shows how the people were treat.

Q: So, it was a photographer that had taken photos during the war –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and at the camps, and he had all of these photos –

A: Yeah.

Q: – put them together in a book.

A: Yeah.

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: And just by chance, he – he offered you a copy of it?

A: Yeah. So I accepted, and it – and now, I don't know what to do with it, because I have – don't know how left – how many years I have to – to live, I am now 92, and this have to be someplace, be going that the people should know, and remember what – what we went – all the people of **Poland** – I really that think this in **Poland**, and all over **Europe**, where the German were occupying.

Q: And this was one of the few items you brought with you from **Poland**.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So it's traveled all of this way.

A: Oh [**indecipherable**]

Q: And I think you have a photo of **HASAG**, where – the labor camp?

A: **HASAG**.

Q: **HASAG**, yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: And there's a – a photo in there, that you have. I think we marked it yes –

A: No, that's it – th-the – this is **HASAG**. This is **HASAG** here, the men's barrack, and maids' barrack, and how we were with the – with the wiring around the **HASAG**, we shouldn't run away. Now, a question is, should I leave this to the kids, or should I leave it with the museum?

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

Q: Well, we'll talk af-after we finish the interview. We'll – we'll talk more about – about this.

A: Okay.

Q: Yes, ma'am.

A: Okay.

Q: And then cou-could you hold up the book, so we can see the cover or it?

A2: Mom, mom, just hold up the front.

A: I know.

A2: No, not the – the whole book, the front first.

A: But it's in Polish.

Q: And then has – could we see the **HASAG**? And so here's the – the labor camp you were at for six years. And so, this – these are all pictures of different parts of the camp?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: It's – they – the barracks was behind the factory. Was built specially for us.

That's what it is, it was wired all around. Nobody could go out from this. Here is written that it's **Częstochowa**.

Q: Mm-hm. So, Miss **Kushynski**, if you have nothing else you want to add, we'll –

Interview with Hannah Kushynski
August 23, 2016

A: No.

Q: Okay. So this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Hannah Kushynski**, on August 23rd, 2016.

A: So maybe this is – I belong now to the [indecipherable] what is – what is part of the freedom or Jewish community [indecipherable]. I belong to them.

Conclusion of Interview