

We are recording. And--

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Edith Hollender on December 6, 2018, in Newton, Massachusetts. Thank you, Mrs. Hollender, for agreeing to speak with us today and to share something of your story.

Put it a little bit higher. Higher so I can--

Can you hear me? If I speak like this--

I can hear you a little bit but not as much.

I will try to speak louder like this, OK? Is this better? If I speak like this, can you hear me better?

That is a little better.

OK, I'll speak louder, and so maybe it will work. Tell me, what's your birth date? What is the date of your birth?

January 9, 1927.

Where were you born?

In Luchinets.

Luchinets?

Luchinets in Czechoslovakia. It's in Slovakia.

Uh huh.

And we talked Hungarian most of that time. And when-- in 1918, we came Czechoslovakia, the place that I was born. My father put me in the Slovak school so I could speak Slovak, not just Hungarian.

Well, that's interesting because that's a part of the world that changed borders many times. This would have been Eastern Slovakia. Is that correct?

Eastern Slovakia. Not eastern that much as my husband. My husband was really in Eastern Czechoslovakia. I was in Slovakia, not eastern.

Got it. Got it. Tell me, what was your name when you were born, your maiden name?

My maiden name, Grossmann.

Grossmann. Edith Grossmann.

Edith Grossmann. And tell me again, the name of the town, Lu--

It's-- it's--

[GIGGLING]

Luchinets.

Luchinets, Luchinets. Was it a big town? Was it a big place or a small place?

It's not so big but not small because we lived in a smaller place about 16 miles away, and that was Fil'akovo.

Fil'akovo?

Yes.

OK. Did you have brothers and sisters? Did you have brothers and sisters?

I had a sister. And sister was just 12 years old when we came to Auschwitz.

What was her name?

Her name is [INAUDIBLE] Judith.

Woljudith or--

Judith.

Judith? Judith. Judith. And she was younger than you?

Yes, she was only 12 years old. I was already 16, maybe 17 years old that time when we went to Auschwitz.

Was she born in 1931?

I think in 1932.

OK.

I am not sure.

OK. Let's talk a little bit about life before the war, before all these things happened. I want--

Yes. we were-- my father had a store.

OK.

We had a nice place where we lived and we had-- that place was I'm in our house. And we also rented one of the places. It was not so big that time, but that time it was not like today where we had a kitchen. We had one room and then another room that we slept.

Did you have electricity?

No-- yeah, that time we had. We started to have electricity there.

How did you heat the place? How was it kept warm?

We got-- we had a place where we put in--

Coal?

And-- how is called-- wood that be put in wood in the warm--

In the oven?

Yeah.

OK.

Did you heat by coal as well? Did you have a coal heating system or not?

If we had coal, we had-- not coal because we had just a place where we had put in our food that is-- we did not put warm. So it was a cold place.

And did you have indoor plumbing? Did you have running water in the house?

If we had in our house?

Plumbing. Water. Could you turn the faucet on, or did you have a well?

Plumbing, no. I don't think-- I don't remember that-- we had a girl who was working for my house-- for my mother cleaning the house and doing [INAUDIBLE] And she was sleeping in the kitchen.

OK.

Yes.

Was your house in the center of town, or was it further away? Did you live in the center--

It was in the middle of the town because we had the store and my father bought things that people was doing things with it.

I cannot say-- I was still a girl and also in until the fifth grade, we had over there and then I had to take place-- in Luchinets, I was--

How it's called then? I just-- I was in--

Maybe seven class or so. In Fil'akovo where we lived, I had just a few maybe five grades.

So you went to school--

And then I had to go to Luchinets, which is 60 miles away.

Did you travel every day back and forth?

Yes. When I-- I go to school every day even Saturday. Saturday I had to leave through Friday night because we don't-- it didn't go on the train.

That's right.

We had to-- and I lived there for Saturday. Saturday but we had Saturday also school. That's why I stayed over there.

So you slept from Friday night 'til Saturday-- you slept at--

I slept in--

Luchinets?

That is also somebody who was our-- cousin or somebody like that.

OK, so that means you were-- were you a religious family? Was your family religious?

We were in Jewish family. And my--

My father went to the synagogue every Saturday.

What was your father's first name? What was your father's name?

My father Joseph, Joseph Grossmann.

And your mother, what was her name?

Mother was Irene.

Irene?

Yes.

And what was her maiden name?

Horowitz.

Horowitz. Did she have brothers and sisters?

She had my-- she had six brothers--

Wow.

And three sisters.

Wow, a big family.

Yes, nine in the family.

Did you know them? Did you know your aunts and uncles?

Yes, I know.

Were they-- did they also live in the same area?

Yes.

OK. What about your father? Did he have brothers and sisters?

My father-- my father had one sister who lived nearby, and they did not have any children. She was married, but they didn't have any children. And her husband was selling kosher meat. That was his--

Occupation?

Occupation, what he was doing. And so--

Tell me, what kind of things did your father sell in his store? What did your father sell in the store?

My father was selling all kinds of stuff that people were sewing, and he was selling the material--

Fabric? Yeah.

Also he was selling like newspapers, and he was selling also stamps and so many things. And we had the store in the middle of the Main Street.

What was the name of the main street?

Main Street.

It was called Main Street?

It was Main--

Main Street?

Main Street, Fil'akovo. And in Fil'akovo, they had a big factory. They did all kind for the-- what in-- in the kitchen, they did maybe all kinds--

Pots and pans? Did they make pots and pans?

Yes, yes, yes.

Like a metal fabric or something?

Yes. All kinds of stuff and--

So that was the-- that was--

It's a big factory.

Did many people work there?

Across to the factory was a Jewish cemetery. And there was a woman who was living there that was a nice house and living there and in the cemetery.

Why would somebody live in the cemetery?

I don't know. This is close to that factory.

Do you remember the name of the factory? That's OK.

I don't think it has a name. I don't know.

That's OK. That's OK. In Fil'akovo, were there many Jewish people?

This is the Fil'akovo. And there were about I don't know, maybe 20 Jewish family.

And were there--

And they had a cemetery.

And they had a cemetery.

And they had my grandmother had a nice grave, and I made a picture of it.

I see. I see. Did you know your grandmother? Did you know her when she was alive?

Grossmann but I don't know her first name.

Was she alive when you were born.

But she was Grossmann because her husband was Grossmann.

Yeah.

And her husband didn't die before the war, and we went together to Auschwitz. And he was not in the cemetery.

Yeah. He-- so this was your grandfather? Your grandfather?

That was my grandfather. Yes.

OK. Were there many non-Jews in Fil'akovo? Were there many people who were not Jewish who lived there?

Of course. Of course. There were maybe only 20 family was Jewish.

I see.

The others, 200 families are not Jewish.

OK. Did you have--

And they were working in the factory.

I see.

And near to that factory, my grandfather used to live there, but then before the war, he sold-- I mean-- he rented his house there.

Did anybody in town have a car? Did anyone have a car in Fil'akovo?

The Fil'akovo what?

Did anyone have an automobile? Did your father have an automobile?

No.

OK.

My father did not have-- did not drive.

OK. How did you travel between Fil'akovo and where you went to school later, Luchinets?

It's--

Not the bus but a train ride.

You went by train?

By train, yes.

OK.

So I went by train.

Did many people have horses and wagons in town? Did many people have horses?

Horses?

Yeah.

They had some.

OK.

Not-- even my uncle had a horse.

Even your uncle had a horse?

Yes.

Was this your mother's brother?

That's my father's brother.

Your father-- aha. Your father--

My father's sister--

Your father's sister.

That's sister's husband.

Aha, OK. They had a horse. They had a horse.

In your father-- did your father inherit his store from your grandfather, or did he start it himself?

[INAUDIBLE] my grand-- when my grandmother passed away, my grandfather didn't stay alone. So he came and he was living with my uncle.

OK. I understand. I understand. Let me see--

My uncle, his brother.

That's right. That's right. Your sister-- his sister's husband?

Yes.

OK. What was his sister's name? Your father's sister, what was her name?

My father's sister?

Mmm hmm.

I don't know.

OK.

I forgot.

It's OK. Do you remember your-- her husband's name, the one who had the horse?

They had a horse.

Yeah. What was his--

But I don't know his name.

You don't know his name.

I don't know but--

It's OK. Did anybody speak Yiddish at home? Did anyone speak Yiddish at home?

Maybe they spoke, but I don't know. I remember when I-- my mother took--

How it's called? Somebody-- a little-- they were cooking--

Baking?

And baking. I had to take it to the--

To the baker?

House-- somebody who is dying. I mean took the--

Life of the little--

How it's called, that? And I went there with him. He passed away that--

Oh, so you mean-- are you saying you-- when somebody died--

Not-- he died.

No.

It's not somebody. Is it something what you eat.

Oh, OK. So you were-- it's some bread or some--

Not the bread but some-- he cut his--

Oh-- for kosher! It was kosher.

Oh, yeah, the kosher. Oh, yes. And I bring-- I brought it, and he did it. And I had to wait until he passed away, and I can put on all the and bring to my mother.

So was this a chicken or was--

Chicken, yeah.

Chicken.

The chicken.

OK, good OK

And those people, they're talking Yiddish. And I was learning some, a few--

Few words?

Words from them.

OK.

Yes. They were-- I mean who was doing this with the chicken.

Yeah.

His-- two--

[COUGHING]

Sons were talking. And they were talking Yiddish, and I was learning something.

Well, it's interesting--

But I'm-- I took it every week because we needed something to eat.

Of course. Of course. Did you have some kind of refrigerator at home? Did you have a refrigerator at home? How did you keep food cold.

Refrigerator, no.

OK.

That's why we had to-- we put it in the cellar where it was a little bit colder. And we did it in-- on Friday and we cooked it and we ate it all weekend.

I understand. Did anybody in Fil'akovo have a radio?

A radio?

Yeah.

We had radio.

You had a radio.

We did not have anything, just a radio. And we heard the-- what is going on in the world.

That is where you got news--

But otherwise we did not have anything. Like we did not have like today we see things--

On TV? Nothing like that.

That time, no. That time, it was no. Just radio, yeah.

Did you get newspapers?

Yes, we had newspapers. Every day, they brought the newspaper.

And your father sold them?

Yeah.

Did he read any newspapers?

I was a child. I did not read the newspaper. But we had the newspaper.

Did your father? Did your father read newspapers?

Of course. That's why they voted because he was reading it.

OK.

Because we had to re-- do something because we did not have just the radio and the newspaper. We did not have that time that was no-- you could not see like today.

Yeah. You were-- it was-- there was no-- it was isolated? The place was-- things were far away.

Yeah.

I want to ask about Hungary. Why is it that you learned Hungarian because--

I don't know. Before it was Hungarian, before [INAUDIBLE] it was Hungarian. And before it was Czechoslovakia-- Czechoslovakia started in 1918.

OK.

And before that, it was-- this place was part of Hungary.

So it was part of Austria Hungary--

Austria, yes, Austria.

Hungarian Empire.

Hungary.

Yeah. And was your father and mother's families, had they lived there for a long time? Had they lived there for generations?

My father's family was not living in [INAUDIBLE]-- my mother's family lived in Rimavska Sobota.

Rimavska Sobota?

That's a different town.

OK.

And they were living there. Sometimes we were very-- we come for-- I have some pictures where somebody was married, and they came and make pictures.

Did you have-- in your house where you lived, were your neighbors Jewish, or were they not Jewish?

Most of them are not Jewish.

So--

Jewish, maybe 20 families. And it was not far away because they-- Saturday they did not drive or they did not--

Who were-- did you have friends as you were growing up? As you were a girl, did you have friends?

I had friends.

Yeah.

I had-- yes. And also I heard that when came back to-- one of them, my friends came to America. And so--

What was her name?

Maybe-- I heard that some-- in New Jersey, some out there. And I would like to talk to them to-- but--

Do you remember her name? Do you remember the name of the friend?

Blumenthal.

Blumenthal.

Yeah.

And the first name?

I forgot.

It's OK. It's OK.

Barbara was [INAUDIBLE] one of the--

Barbara?

My friend was Barbara.

OK.

Yeah.

Did you have much contact with people who weren't Jewish? Did you have-- did you talk or have friends with people who weren't Jewish?

Over here?

No, back there, Fil'akovo.

There were some-- I had two friends who were Jewish and they had also-- the fathers had some-- one also was selling Christmas trees. That is also a Jewish man who was, yeah.

Who was selling the Christmas trees?

Christmas trees just once a year that he was selling something else. But once a year, he was selling Christmas trees.

That's interesting.

Because he was with somebody who was selling the Christmas trees. And they brought and-- we bought a Christmas tree to that woman who was helping my mother.

Ahh, the lady-- yeah.

We bought a little tree for her because she was not Jewish.

Was it a pretty town? Was it a pretty place? Did it look nice?

Yes. And so--

Well, tell me this then. Did you-- did you get news about Czechoslovakia when Hitler took over Czechoslovakia? Do you remember that event? You would have been 11 or 12 years old when Munich-- there was an agreement in Munich and Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia. Do you remember that?

No.

Do you remember anybody talking about politics in Fil'akovo, no?

No.

OK.

No.

When World War II happened, did-- were you still part of Czechoslovakia or were you then again part of Hungary?

What-- you mean when Hitler came, that's different.

Yeah.

Yeah. Of course, we put it-- they put it in the ghetto--

Let's talk before then.

And we were-- they took us from there to the Auschwitz. And I--

I want to find out first though, when the war-- when did life change in-- when did your life change when the war came? Tell me what happened to the very first things that happened that showed life is changing.

It was very bad. Very bad things happened.

Such as?

But we could not change anything.

Yeah.

I don't know. I was a girl, and we came to Auschwitz. Then I came to Auschwitz. And they-- that they cut the grass and they cooked it and I had a lot of-- how it called that? And the German took us-- look us without clothes. We should not wear anything. And they-- I send me-- they sent me to a place where they are--

You die. And I was waiting there, and then the next day, they took me the place where I am going to die. And I come down and out, and I took two women who were doing this job, talking Slovak. And I said, oh, I have to talk to them.

Maybe we'll see what happens. And I came there, and I talk Slovak. And they were, oh, what happened. Do you just came from Czechoslovakia.

And I told them what happened and that they pushed me that I am going to die. And they said we are going to save your life. And these two women who were working, they said go back. Tomorrow morning, we'll come and give you some clothes because we were without clothes if you die. And go back and tomorrow we come and bring you some clothes and take you to the barrack.

And they came the next day, and they gave me some clothes. They took me back, and they told me if they ask you to work, tell that you would like to work. And I came to the barrack, and over there, I had a few people whom I knew. And I told them.

And a few days later, they came, and they asked us do you want to work. And we said yes. And they took us with a train to our place. And we came over there, and they showed us it was a woman's luggage.

A woman's camp.

They took us to a factory, and they showed us what to [INAUDIBLE]. And then every day, they brought us in the morning to that factory and to take us back. And over there, everybody was talking Hungarian because these Hungarian people went there.

And one woman, she could not speak Hungarian. She was a Polish woman, and the Polish and the Slovak are a little bit close to each other. And we talked to each other. And she was so happy that somebody can talk to her. And we were talking together, and she told me she was happy that she had a friend.

That was important. It was very important.

And she was in the factory. And I showed her what to do.

What did you do? What did the factory make?

There was some-- a place where we had to do something.

Do you remember what you were doing?

I can show you--

No, no, no. But do you know what they were making?

And yes. Yes, there was-- something happened was I was not there, but across to me was a woman also about 15 years old. She was working the same thing. But she-- her-- some way, she passed away. She was dreaming a little bit. And something happened to the thing what we were working on.

And then when they saw it, this was something wrong with it because she was not looking for-- and then they took her down. It was cold. And they put cold water on her, and she passed away. And she had her mother with her, and her mother for-- got so sick, they took her in the hospital. And in that hospital over there because she passed away-- did this girl because they put--

Water on her.

Cold water on her. And--

Where was your mother?

So it's always something happen.

Where was your mother? Where was your mother when this was happening?

Where what?

Where was your mother? Where was your-- yeah.

Your mother--

Your mother.

Where my mother was die-- died with my sister.

What happened?

Because my mother wanted to go visit my sister. My sister--

What happened?

Was 12 years old. And so--

How did this happen?

My mother died with my sister. They went into a place one day and give bad-- I don't know. They passed away there.

Do you-- can you tell me how this happened? Can you tell me how it happened that your mother went with your sister?  
What happened?

What happened?

Yeah.

With my mother?

Yeah.

My mother wanted to go with my sister.

OK. Was this at the beginning when you got to Auschwitz? Was this at--

It doesn't--

It doesn't work? You don't hear me? Let me see if I can ask about it this way. Let me go back a bit. When life changed in your town in Fil'akovo.

I don't know why--

You don't hear me? Can you hear me now?

I can-- could not hear you well. I don't know what happened.

OK, let's cut for a second. Let's cut.

OK. So I want to learn more about what happened when you had to leave your home in Fil'akovo. Tell me how that happened when you had to leave.

We had to leave. We had to go to the ghetto.

You, your mother, your father?

And we were in the ghetto. My mother, my uncle, and my aunt, and my grandfather.

Where was your father? Where was your father?

When [INAUDIBLE]?

No. Where was your father? Was he there, too?

My father was not at home. They already sent him to work somewhere. And my father-- I didn't see my father because they told me that he passed away, but someone came down and he passed away there.

OK.

So it's always I went-- when I-- I was working in the factory. They were not too bad. I went every day. We worked 12 hours a day.

In Auschwitz?

No, not in Auschwitz. From Auschwitz, we went to this place.

Factory, OK. After Auschwitz. I want to go back to the ghetto. The ghetto. Was the ghetto in Fil'akovo?

No. A ghetto was in Luchinets. It was a bigger place, and Fil'akovo was a small place. And so they--

Who took you from Fil'akovo-- who-- what kind of soldiers? Were there soldiers who came to your home and said you have to go? Who told you you had to leave?

They-- I don't know. I was just about 15 years old.

1942.

14.

Yeah.

And then so we went. And when I was about 15 that time, they already canceled the ghetto, and they sent us to Auschwitz. I was in Auschwitz, too.

How long were you in the ghetto? How long were you in the ghetto?

Maybe half a year. Maybe 10 months. I am not sure. But there was my mother. There was my sister. And there were many people who we know.

What kind of place did you live in in the ghetto?

Barracks or a house or a room?

In a house, yeah. Yeah. We try to do things, what we could. Yeah.

What did you eat? How did you find food?

We just-- well, living in the ghetto.

Was there food? Was there food in the ghetto?

Finish?

No, no, no. Food, how did you eat in the ghetto?

Yeah, we ate something.

But was it hard?

We did something, yeah.

OK. OK.

Not much. And but we did what we could. And it was hard, very hard because we were not at home.

How did you get to Auschwitz?

I think they brought me in a train.

And was your mother--

In a train and nothing in the train was nothing.

Were there more people in the train?

Of course, a lot of people. We were just sitting in the--

Did it take a long time?

They took us to Auschwitz.

Did you know where you were going?

No.

Did it take a long time to get there?

Not so long. I don't know.

What happened when you got to Auschwitz? What did it look like?

They were put in some. They took me-- my sister away.

They took your sister away?

And my mother went with her, and I was alone. I was--

You were left alone?

I was-- I was alone.

What happened to you?

What happened to me, I was in Auschwitz, and they gave me something to eat. And I was so in a rush. And then they sent me to-- and I went to the-- put it in the place where I am going to die.

Did you know that?

And then I talked to these two Slovak girls, and the Slovak girls saved my life. And they told me if they ask me to work, I should go to work. So I went, and that was near to Berlin where I was working in a factory.

And is that factory the place where the girl had water pulled over-- poured over her head?

Yes. Yes.

OK.

Because she did not do-- something happened to what were she was working.

And this was near Berlin you say?

Near Berlin.

So that's far away from Auschwitz. That's very far away.

That was far, far-- Auschwitz was near to Poland.

Yeah.

And this was in Berlin.

Yeah. Did you stay at this factory the whole time?

Yes, I was staying there for almost a year when it was the end of the war.

I see. I see. Do you remember how the war ended? Do you remember what happened when-- yeah, do you remember being liberated? Do you remember the war end?

Liberated, yes. You know what happened?

Tell me.

What happened when I was liberated, and a Russian was liberated us.

OK.

And some Russian came to me and said you know tell those people that you are so happy that they liberated you. And because the Russian is a little-- he said the Czechoslovakian language and I said I just cannot say what to. And a Russian woman wrote down what I can tell them that I am happy that they--

Liberated you.

Liberated me. And we together-- we went together and this Russian came and I was ready for myself first. So I knew what to say, and I told them that I am glad that they liberated us. And it was the Russian liberated us.

And how was that? How was that? Was that--

Was very good. I told them-- I mean I read what that woman wrote down.

And what happened to you after that? What happened after--

What happened? They took me back to Prague.

They took you back to Prague?

Yeah. Yeah.

Had you been to Prague before?

I just came to Prague, then I took the train to Slovakia. And then I went home. And there was a Jewish woman who was helping me. Very nice, she.

And so was there anybody from your family in Fil'akovo?

This is it that I was went-- I went home, and the house was empty. That was the worst thing. How they already stolen everything they took away, and nobody was around. And then one of my uncle took me to that place to the-- you know, sanatorium,]

And they were nice to me, too.

Were you sick?

I was there. I didn't have anything.

Were you sick when you came back from Auschwitz-- from the labor camp?

I was not well. I was not, no.

Where was the sanatorium?

It's in Slovakia. It's in the Tatra Mountains in a big place.

And your mother's brothers and sisters, did many of them survive? Your aunts and uncles from your mother's side, did they--

Yeah, from my mother's side, one of my uncle survived and went to Israel and opened a store. And I remember that she-- they invited me and I came there and was nice. But I was already married.

That's a lot later-- later.

Yeah.

So when you're at the sanatorium, what happened after that? Where did you go from there?

We were-- I met my husband there.

At the sanatorium?

At the sanatorium. And David, we--

My husband had a sister who came to America and left her house for us. So we went there, and we opened the door across to us was and we could--

School and we opened a door and nice. And we had-- they came and they were very-- I could not speak. That was in Czech. And I spoke Slovak. And they were laughing at me that I did not speak their language, but I learned. When you are young, you learn. And also when I was in Slovak, I know so--

So let me see if I understand this. At the sanatorium, you met your husband. Your husband had a sister--

Yes.

Who had gone to America.

Yes.

And she had left her house--

She left, yeah.

To your husband. And then you and he could live there.

Yes.

Do you remember the name of the place?

Liberec.

In Liberec. I see. In Liberec. And so at first from the sanatorium, you go to Liberec.

Yes. Yes.

And you tried to live--

We went to Liberec and then we open a door-- a store--

Ahh, you opened a store, OK.

We did something.

Tell me about your husband. What was his name, your husband's name?

My husband is--

What is his name, your husband's name? OK. Then take a minute. Take a minute. It's fine.

Yeah. I--

What was his name? Was his name Morris?

Morris, yeah.

Morris.

Morris Hollender.

Morris Hollender. Was he from Czechoslovakia?

He was from Czechoslovakia in the Eastern Czechoslovakia.

I see. And what had happened to him? Was he also Jewish?

He was Jewish, and he was-- he's-- not just that he was Jewish, his brother was a cantor. And he was learning from him, and he was-- well, we were in Liberec.

Morris saw this was like a cantor and he was--

Did he have-- so he had a sister, and he had a brother? Did he have more--

He had two more brothers, and both of them were cantors. And he was a younger brother, and he was learning from them. And then when he came here into Liberec, in Liberec, we went to the temple. And in the temple, he was singing. And Mr. Netsky was learning from him and--

Had your husband also been in Auschwitz?

He was not in Auschwitz. He was also some other place.

He was in another place--

Maybe he was in a few days in Auschwitz. I am not sure how long.

OK. Can we cut for a second? I think something's--

Recording.

OK. Edith, I want to ask-- I want to see if I understand something correctly. So when you're on the train and you're coming to Auschwitz, you're together with your mother and your sister and your grandfather and some other relatives, yes? And when you get to Auschwitz, the doors open, and people are told to go to one side or to another side. And your sister is pointed to one side, and you and your mother are on the other side. And your sister cries from what I understood, and your mother then says I want to go to my daughter. Is this what happened?

Yes.

OK. And that's when they were chosen for that side, and you never saw them again. Is that correct?

My mother wanted to go with my sister.

OK.

My sister, it's hard to be alone in that place.

Of course.

So my sis-- my mother went with her.

And did you-- do you think they knew where they were going?

Probably but I am not sure.

OK. Now the other thing I wanted to make sure I understood is when you had to take all your clothes off and you were going to go probably to the gas chamber, yeah?

Yes.

And those two Slovak girls, the guards there hear that you are speaking to them. And they say go back. Does that mean they hid you? Did they hide you at that moment?

Go back, that was not [INAUDIBLE]. These two Slovak girls were working.

OK.

And they wanted me to go to the boss and to go and to die there. And because there was both Slovak together, I decided what should I do. Should I talk to them, or should I wait? And I go to die because I knew that I am going for to die.

And then because I heard that they were talking Slovak, I said to myself I am going to talk to them. Maybe they were doing something or not, or everything was-- will be like it's supposed-- should be. And I said to myself I go. And then I started to talk Slovak. They were so excited and so surprised because nobody was Slovak there.

Most of the people that may be Hungarian. I talk-- I went with these people Hungarian. And the Slovak not too many people were Slovak that time, yeah. And when they were so surprised and I told them that I just came and I ate what they gave me, those glass-- grass, what they-- they cooked the grass because they didn't have anything else. And I told them that when I started to talk Slovak, they were so surprised. And they decided they are going to save my life.

Did they hide you? Did they hide you?

No, they told me to go back when I was waiting that they are going to take me to this place.

One thing that confuses me, were you allowed to go back? Was you permitted to go back so that you wouldn't be taken?

I went back that is in the laundry room, and nobody else asked me anything. But I knew that I came and I-- nobody was there in that room. And because they told me tomorrow we are going to take-- give you some clothes--

Yeah.

I believed them, that Slovak, and they told me in Slovak. And in Slovak, if they tell they would not know what they are telling, what they are saying to me. But because of they say in Slovak, I knew what they thought. And if they told me to go back, I went back and I laid down and nobody else was there. But they told me I-- we are going to come tomorrow and take some clothes for you.

So you were there--

I believe it in Slovak that they are telling me the truth.

I see. I see.

And I went back, and I laid down.

And you waited? And you waited--

And the next day in the morning, they came, and they brought some clothes. And they tried on me and some clothes was OK and they took me back to the barrack.

OK, thank you. Thank you. Now I want to talk about the sanatorium, the sanatorium where you met your husband. Do you remember the name of that sanatorium?

The sanatorium is in Slovakia.

Do you know the name? Do you remember the name?

Krynitzá.

Krynitzá. Krynitzá. And from the sanatorium, you went to Liberec? Is that right?

The Liberec is this--

The sanatorium is in Slovakia.

That's right.

And Liberec is in Czech. And when I was in Liberec and I go-- the-- I-- the store, that time across to us was a big school. And these children from the school, they were laughing at me because I was talking Slovak, not Czech. But I tried Czech. I was trying. And I--

And then when we got from my sister in law the papers that we can go to America, so we decided to come here.

OK.

We came-- at first we came in New York, and then they asked us where do you want to go in America. So we decided to come to Boston.

Why?

I don't know why. I heard that Boston is a good place. I don't know. But when we came here, I started to work in a factory like in Berlin. And I did not like it because I said I am still in--

How it called? I am still in Auschwitz like. And what can I do? And we went to a Slovak club over there, Czechoslovakian, and we went there. And one Czech woman told me do you want to work with us. I can recommend you. We have five Czech girls there.

And I-- they showed me. It was like a computer, but that time, it was not computer yet. But they showed me, and because they told in Czech, I was understanding. And I did that.

But there it was not lasted too long in-- but the Harvard recommended me another job.

At Harvard University?

And I said OK. If it's Harvard, I am going to take it. So I went there, and it was-- I did that very well.

What was the job?

That was a job that from China, they brought some-- some-- trees and some flowers what we don't have here. And they just wanted to show these people that-- who were learning there, they showed what we have. But we have-- we don't have it here.

And your job was--

And I made it-- made many, many, even hundreds of that. And they liked what I made. And--

So did you make exhibitions? Did you catalog this material? Is that what you're doing?

I did all the leaves, both sides, or the flowers, both sides here and there, to show what we have, what we don't have it here. And I have-- and many people from China who are here, the doctors, and they show what we have over there and we don't have it here.

Was this work that you liked? Did you like this work?

If you want to even now, they have what I made. Over there, they have it because I just wanted to show. And I wanted to show what we have there and we don't have it here.

How long-- how many years did you work there?

I was working about I don't know 20 years.

OK.

I was-- that's why I have hundreds of--

Those examples?

I have a lot, and they come-- some professors come and look what I made.

Did you ever go to school again after seventh grade, after--

I went to school over there because in the evening I went to school.

At Harvard?

At Harvard.

OK. And what did your husband do? What was his job here in Boston?

Oh, my husband, they show-- they told us when I-- we came here, the--

How it called? Just--

It has some who are sending you somewhere if you like that-- doing this and that, you can get the job.

Hang on a minute.

So my husband went--

Let's cut for a second. A second.

Cut-- and I am recording.

OK. So tell me, Edith, tell me again how it is you came to Boston and what kind of jobs you got and so on.

Well, I just wanted to tell you that when we came to the Boston and we were looking for a job, so the Jewish Family Service send us to somewhere to see a job. And in Waltham, they had a good job. But it's more this than that, and because he did not speak English well yet because he just started and one man was speaking Yiddish and Morris was speaking, well, from home and so they were talking about it. And Morris liked the job.

OK.

So he took the job.

OK.

And since then, he was going there where both-- over there it's not nice in the synagogue. There is a close to that. There is a nice place to live. And we both thought so we--

Lived there.

Lived there. And Morris didn't have-- did not go any place, just walked to work.

Oh, that's wonderful.

He did not have to take the bus like me or something like that. And they liked him like an engineer.

OK.

And they were showing what he's supposed to do. And he really liked that job.

And that was in an engineering company?

Yes.

OK. OK.

Yes. He-- it's like an engineering. And he just got it You know, like.

And you worked in the botany department at Harvard?

Yes. I was in the botany department. I was rather doing things, showing what I am doing. And Morris, he did a different job.

Yeah. Yeah.

Did you have children? Did you ever have children, you and Morris?

We did not have any children. And we wanted to have and some [INAUDIBLE]. They asked me to go to England. They are doing a survey about this what I have. I had something in some-- they need to open it, but they could not do that. And so they could not do--

So you couldn't?

What I needed to do. But today if somebody has the same problem, they can do it today. But I'm too old [CHUCKLING] over 90, you cannot do.

No. But you also had a very hard time in Europe during those years in Europe? That doesn't help such things.

In Europe [INAUDIBLE]-- in Europe, they send me also to England, but we did not have that much money to be in England. And my husband is supposed to be himself in the store. We could not do that.

Yeah.

So we were thinking maybe later we can do it. But we could not do it. And they knew that-- what was the problem.

Did you ever go back to Czechoslovakia? Did you ever-- after you lived in Boston, did you ever travel back to--

Oh, we travel a lot.

Yeah.

We all Europe we travel. Except we did not go to Spain. And I was thinking how to go to Spain, but I am not going alone.

Yeah.

So I'm but we did all. We went to Europe to England. We went everywhere in like Finland and all this.

Did you go to Germany? Did you ever go to Germany?

Jewelry?

Germany. Did you ever--

Germany! You know that we went to Germany, too.

You did? You did?

Yes, we went to Germany, and we went back to Czechoslovakia. We went to Hungary to Budapest because we speak also Hungarian. And we've had many places, even in Spain or-- not in Spain. We did not go-- Switzerland.

Switzerland?

Yeah.

OK.

We went into Italy. Italy is beautiful.

Yeah.

Beautiful even there.

Yeah.

We went many places really, and so I'm sorry that we just couldn't go to Spain.

Yeah. Yeah.

But now we are too old. I mean I am too old and my husband is not so. My husband passed away, and I'm so sorry that I'm-- it was. And we decided to stay in Waltham because we know in Waltham in the synagogue everybody.

Yeah.

And so we decided to stay in Waltham. And so I brought all what I needed. And if I pass away, I have the place where to go.

Well, thank you, Edith. We're coming close to the end of our interview. I will want to have you explain a few pictures for me. But thank you very much for sharing your story, for telling us about it.

Thank you. Thank you for telling me this.

Oh, come now. It's very important, and I appreciate it very, very much.

Thank you. Thank you very much because you know it happened. And it's so hard that Hitler did this.

Yeah.

And he killed all of my family. My--

We're going to film some pictures right now. I will say a few words, and then we'll film some pictures. I will say that this concludes the formal part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Edith Hollender on December 6, 2018, in Newton, Massachusetts. We can cut. And now--

Mother and my sister.

Wait a minute.

And just gonna [INAUDIBLE]. We are recording. [INAUDIBLE]

Tell me who is this photograph of. Who is in the picture?

Who made this picture?

No, who is in it? Who is in it? What is it a photograph of?

I don't know. But I know that this is my mother and this is my sister.

OK. It says that it's actually you here, but maybe it is your sister. OK. OK, thank you. Did you get enough of it?

I did.

OK.

Do you want to cute in between them?

Excuse me?

Do you want to cut the camera and stop in between them?

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Hold it like this.

Recording.

OK. Have you got the photo?

I do.

OK. Tell me, Edith, who is in this photo? You can--

Mother-- my mother, my sister, my father, and me.

And let's take a look at it again. And you look like you're about 10 years old in that picture. You look young in that picture.

Thank you.

You were a young girl, yeah.

Thank you.

Thank you. OK.

Cut-- and we are recording right now.

OK. And who is this a picture of? Who is there?

Me.

And it's taken I believe in 1943?

1943.

Yeah.

I don't know. This-- it says Kodak. It doesn't say how much.

OK. Let me-- thank you so much. Yeah, the date here-- let's just get the date.

OK.

OK, got it?

Yeah.

OK. So she's-- this is in July 19, 1943. When--

Recording-- and any time.

OK. Tell me again who is that. Who is this?

When?

Who is this? Who is it?

My husband.

Very good looking man.

Thank you. Was looking good that time.

Yeah. And it says it was taken in 1948, after the war. Thanks, we can cut. OK.

And we're recording.

And tell me who is this in that picture.

My husband and me.

Ahh, what a nice couple. 1950.

Thank you. Thank you.

OK. Thank you.

Are you recording?

OK. Tell me-- tell me that's you and your husband, yes?

Yes.

And where were you at this time?

We were in the Tatra Mountains.

And the note on this photograph says it's you and Morris in Krynica sanatorium. That you're wearing an outfit you stitched together from an old military blanket. That is so unusual.

Aha. Old military blanket. This was made.

Did you make that? Yeah.

No, I did not make it, but somebody made it from it.

OK.

Yeah.

All right, let's cut.

[HIGH-PITCHED NOISE]

Whoa.

Whoa. OK, we're good. You good.

Yep. Recording.

OK. Who is this?

He is my husband.

And where is it taken?

He was-- you know, this was where he was in the sanatorium.

Yeah. Someone told me-- cut. Someone told me that--

The same picture but most of them.

Both of you?

Both of us.

Yeah. Someone told me you were in the sanatorium for two years.

Yes.

Why? Why so long?

We didn't at-- first of all, we did not have where to go.

OK.

And then they were nice to us.

Were you sick? Were you sick that long?

Yeah. Yeah, and we were together, and it was nice. But that time when my sister in law gave us his-- her apartment, then we went out. With-- otherwise we did not go where to go, what to do.

I also learned you had tuberculosis after the war?

Yes, we had tuberculosis. Both of us.

And that was because of the war? That was because of being in Auschwitz?

Yeah, that's why we stayed. And also until we had the tuberculosis, we could not go out because we did not want to take out the bacterium.

OK. Now this-- if you could hold this up.

Oh, this is where I was born. This is a synagogue there.

In Luchin-- in Luchinets?

Yes. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] Oh! [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

And this is-- did you send that postcard to your husband?

This-- Liberec.

Yeah.

To the Liberec.

Who wrote the postcard?

From Luchinets to Liberec.

That's right. From Luchinets to Liberec and--

Yeah.

You just read the postcard.

Because this is Luchinets and this is Liberec.

Exactly.

You OK.

Yep.

OK. And then I'm going to switch it.

In Fil'akova, it's no any more that I have the synagogue. No synagogue there.

Because now we're just focusing on it.

OK. I take this to be a postcard that you sent to your husband, because it's signed Edita, when you were living in Liberec but you must have visited Luchinets and you wrote something to him and this would have been in 1947 or '8. OK. Thank you. Let's cut.

In the book, what we were thanking them that they brought us.

OK, so this is--

And over here we are--

That's you and your husband. OK.

Which one?

The whole page.

Yeah? OK.

You can read it.

OK.

Is there a way that you can get all three columns, that is focus on the first, the second, and the third so that it could be read?

I could do a pan--

This is it in Waltham Synagogue.

Yeah.

Right one.

Looks good.

Good.

Yeah?

Now we got--

That was first column.

OK.

Now go to the second column.

Hold on. That looks good.

That's the second column. Right one.

OK. And I'm going to do the front cover.

Sure. There you go.

And this is called 120 HIAS Stories, and that's-- HIAS stands for Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

That's good. You want a just a wide shot of her holding the book.

Yeah.

We're seeing off the screen, but that's OK.

It's OK.

You want to have her look at the camera?

That's OK. No.

OK. Very nice. It's great.

Thank you.

Cut.

Cut.

Edith--