

Hello. I'm Judie Wayman. And this is Helen Cik. We're doing the interview today for The National Council of Jewish Women Holocaust Survivor Project. Helen, first of all, I'd like to thank you very much-- you can look at me-- I'd like to thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this project today.

Could you please tell us a little about yourself? First of all, what is your name? What is it and how do you spell it, please?

Helen Cik, C-I-K. I was born Hoffman.

Maiden name is Hoffman?

Hoffman.

How old are you now?

I'm 67.

67. Where do you live?

I live on the De Soto, 3289 De Soto.

And that's in Cleveland Heights. Do you work?

I'm a housewife.

OK. Are you married?

Yes. What does your husband do?

He works for the orthopedic company.

Pardon?

Feigenbaum, the orthopedic company.

Oh, the orthopedic. And what does he do there?

He's fixing special shoes, like somebody has to build up, short the leg. So he does this work since 1949.

'49? How many children do you have?

I have only one son.

And what does he do?

He's an engineer. And he has four children, two girls and two boys.

And how old are they?

That's 11, 9 and 1/2, and 6, and 4.

Your son's name is--

Barry.

Barry. What else does he do? He's an engineer.

And he also plays for the weddings.

He's a musician?

A musician.

I'd like to get a little idea of what your life was like before the war. And this is before Hitler came into power, before 1939. Where were you living?

I was living in Lipcsemezo.

How do you spell that, please?

That's-- town keep changing. Till 1918, was Hungarian. Hungarian they called Lipcsemezo. After the war, when the Czech came, they called Lypetska Poliana. And the Czech took over in 1918. The Czech took over. They were there for 20 years, till 1938. 1938, they gave up. They didn't want to fight. They gave up when Hitler got into power there with the Hungarians.

So right at the beginning when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia?

Then more Hungarian came there. Then they called Lipcsemezo, like Hungarian.

How big a city was it?

They were living 500 non-Jewish and 50 Jewish families.

What big city was it close to?

We had there the biggest city is-- was Khust. It was the capital of that villages around there.

What did the town look like?

My town, where I was born and raised, was a small town. They had one shul, two churches. And there was no light. There was just three streets without any. It was only-- the whole village was from two streets, one main street, it run, and a side street.

And that was for us where non-Jewish people lived all over the forests and hills. And the schools, we had two schools. One on the main street and the side street.

There was Ukrainians. Ukrainians lived there. We learned Ukrainian. In the house, we talked Jewish. And in the city, they talked Hungarian, Czech.

Later, in my age, my age was only Ukrainian school. Later, they talked Czech. And we had only six grades, only the elementary school. No Jewish education, any Jewish for girls. But the boys did had the cheder they learned.

And we could go to the city to learn. For the junior high, we went to the bigger city. And there people couldn't afford to pay. So we couldn't have high school. We had to go-- high school was on Uzhhorod.

There was the capital of the state, like, we call Karpatska Rus, came to Uzhhorod. And Prague was the capital of Czechoslovakia.

How far were you from there?

From Prague, a day, a ride, one day on the train. Trains were going. So Prague, Czechoslovakia was divided in three parts. There was Bohemia and Slovak, Czech, Bohemia, Slovakia.

And the part that you were in was?

And I was in the part of Slovakia.

What did the people do in the town? What sort of work did most people do?

Well, the Jewish people had some business. And the non-Jewish people worked on their field, like farmers. Like some people made their living to cut chop woods and bring and sell the woods.

The women would make their own linen, weave. Because they would grow-- and they would make the thread, like this.

From the flax?

They make thread. And from the thread, they would weave. They would weave all kind of material.

Was that made to sell to other people as a trade, or just for themselves?

It was a trade. Not really a trade, but the Jewish women didn't do this. Because they had to make-- have a house to make that weaving.

So every Jewish woman paid and they made that weaving, all the towels and tablecloths and even sheets, have all kind of carpet. They also made carpet like this. From old clothes, they made strips. And they weaved carpet from these strips.

What was your family like? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

We were alive five, two brothers and three sisters. My oldest sister went-- with four children-- who went to the gas chamber. She had four children. She was a dressmaker. She make a living for dressmaking.

And her husband made suits. He was a tailor, my sister. And they lived in a different town.

Was it near you?

Not too far. And all the children were young, were school children. I myself also was a dressmaker. We made to sew all the dresses in that area.

How about your other sister and brothers?

The younger sister, they still were in school, children all school. My younger brother-- my older brother is alive here. He learned, like, in yeshivas, like for the rabbinical yeshiva.

And the younger brother still was in school. He was the best student. He was a very good student. But they all were young.

Life was simple there. The mother, the house, have to milk the cows every morning and make the butter and make the bread. Friday morning, every Jewish house prepared for the Shabbos. They baked challahs and bread and kuchens and all kinds of pastries. And they made even the noodles themselves, the [NON-ENGLISH], how you call it, and clean the house.

What did you do to help the family?

Well, Friday morning, I used to get up 4 o'clock and make the fire with the match. We had little wood and make warm. And then make the doughs for the challah, for the bread, so many doughs, and start to work.

And you say this was simple?

[LAUGHS]

I just have to go out and help my mother.

Did your mother work outside the home or have any source of income?

Well, no, no income. In summer, we would cut on the field, make the hay, raise the corn, and raise the potatoes, beans, all kind of vegetables, fruits, all summer. We used to dry the apples, the plums.

Was this your own land where you farmed?

Yeah. Yes, to pick and dry for the winter. And it was every morning so much. Then go out in the garden, we have to take care of the gardens.

What did your father do?

And my father was a shoemaker. He made the top only to give for all the shoemakers. He-- what would you call-- he cut it out, the top, and sew it down, made the top of the shoes. And that he gave to the other shoemakers, too. And they produced shoes.

Compared to the other people in the town, would you describe your family as being well-to-do or comfortable or poor?

My family was not so wealthy, but not so poor, either. Well, they made a living. My father made a living. And we worked all on the farm.

Who made the major decisions in your family?

How many?

Who made major decisions?

Well, my mother made the decisions. Raised the children, like every child had to do something before school, after school. And we respect very much our parents, all the children.

How did you get along with your parents and your brothers and sisters? And how did they get along with each other?

Very good, very good. We have to share every piece. One of them had something more, we shared. We didn't have toys and not a television.

But outside, we were playing with natural things and go in the fields. Like myself, I climbed up a tree to pick apples. The apples were not ripe, but I was maybe five years old. So that guy came to my father, your daughter made damage for me. So I got scared. And I run on the barn on the hay my father shouldn't hit me. Then what I did, I ran away to my grandfather.

[LAUGHTER]

Because I made some damage, like children. I loved to go in the field and pick. We used to pick-- how you call the little

one, the little nuts? They grow on the bushes. So we used to go and pick all kinds, strawberry we went to pick on the hills.

You mentioned your grandparents lived nearby.

They lived very close.

Did you have other grandparents? Both sets of grandparents lived near?

Only the grandfather I had, only a grandfather. Grandmother was not alive.

Did you have a lot of aunts and uncles and cousins?

Yeah, a lot. They all over. I have now a lot of cousins, still all over. They were in America, two aunts, since I was young, and two uncles in Belgium, and cousins all over.

How did you and your family get along with your friends and neighbors?

We were very close friends with neighbors. My house was between two Gentile house, like, here I was in the middle. And the sides, we had two Gentile houses. And we were getting along very good.

Sometimes they would like to borrow something, like, we borrow them everything they needed. But we Jewish people were kosher. So we didn't go to them to borrow anything. We would borrow a hack or a saw, a shovel, things like that. But we lived very in peace and no fights and very good relationship in the town with everybody.

Did most of the Jews and Gentiles in the town get along?

They got along. There was not such a thing that fighting, or going to court, not at all. It was good life.

How religious was your family?

Orthodox. In the city, in that small town, everybody was Orthodox.

Did you belong to a synagogue there?

We had only one synagogue and everybody went to that synagogue.

What do you remember about the holidays?

I remember everything. We kept very strict the holidays.

What is a seder like?

A seder? My father made a seder. And all the children sit around. And we could invite some people.

And my mother cooked. We had to bring down the dishes from the attic. Here I have it in my close to. But there, we had to go in the attic, bring down the Pesach dishes and put away the [NON-ENGLISH] dishes. Go climb up the attic again.

And with Pesach, we didn't-- everything was hidden away. It was very strict, what the kosher.

How many people were at your seder?

15 sometime.

What holiday was the most fun?

Fun for children? We didn't have made fun for the holidays. We kept it strict, strict kosher and for religious. We go to shul and we pray. And we would sit down and say all the brachas.

What about Purim?

Purim? Yeah, Purim was a little fun for us. Because children had to wear-- we put on different costumes. And we went-- there was a costume, two little, young children went to the houses and sing a song, like a Purim song. And they gave to the child something, few pennies, whatever.

What do you remember about holidays like either national holidays, or holidays like Christmas or Easter?

Well, Christmas also, since we were so few Jewish people, the non-Jewish people liked Jewish kids should come in and sing something. And I went to the Christmas to sing some songs. And they gave me an apple or nuts or something like that.

And Easter, the Gentiles had a different costume. The Gentiles baked. They didn't eat white bread whole year. They ate cornbread. From cornmeal, they bake the bread.

But for Easter, they baked a big round bread. And they had eggs. They colored the eggs. And everyone had to carry to the church there that bread with the eggs and the Pope made it holy. And then they went home to eat that.

Were there ever any anti-Semitic incidents?

No, not until Hitler came in. The best neighbor, when Hitler came in, they knew we had to go. The best neighbor said for my younger brother in Russian, Ukrainian, you go. You're never going to come back, the best friend.

Did Zionism or other political organizations play a part in the life of your family?

We didn't had organizations. There was everybody was one in the village, like one family, like one big family, everybody. We lived together like one family.

Where you at all Zionist-oriented? Was there much talk about going to Israel, to Palestine in those days? We were talking-- and the rabbis were talking to go to Israel. And the people didn't believe.

They loved to stay there. They didn't want to move from. Everybody has their own farm and something. They lived quietly. They didn't believe to go any place.

You said that Yiddish was the language spoken in your home.

Yeah, In the home, only Yiddish.

What other languages were spoken?

Ukrainian and Czech, Hungarian. Like, I taught Ukrainian. I would understand Polish, Russian, Czech, Slovak, Yugoslav. All these Slavic language, you can understand them.

Hungarian is a different language by them self. And I learned the Hungarian language in 1938, since the Hungarian was there. So we learned the Hungarian.

What kind of books did you have in your home?

Ukrainian books, Ukrainian. We learned in Ukrainian, all, like, to up to six grades.

Did your family do much reading at home?

Well, we really didn't have any time to read. In Shabbos, we read the Bible and say all these prayers. So it was not much time.

Was there a theater or concert hall nearby?

Well, in that village, we didn't have anything like--

What kind of entertainment did you have?

Entertainment, the work entertainment. Young people, boys and girls, in winter, they had to-- we made feathers. We grow geese and ducks. And they saved these feathers for the winter. Winter, they would they would make these feathers. Take it off from the--

Quill?

And boys and girls, young people would come together and sing. And that was entertainment. And like in fall, what was entertainment, we picked all the crops, the corns. So boys and girls would come together and take off the-- how would you say-- from the corn, and clean up the corn.

Also, sing together, that was entertainment. Dancing, it was a wedding, we danced together. But the people were religious. It was not allowed to dance with a boy and girl together, mixed dance. No. You had to dance separately.

And so it really was not much entertainment. Sometimes we went to the city to see a movie. But we had to go to the city for everything to go--

How far was that?

About 20 kilometer. And that's once a day, a bus went there in the morning and come back in the evening. So we would go into the city, shop, and do things, and come back in the evening.

Earlier years, also, there was no bus. We took a horse and wagon. And there were so many people. And winter was cold, we heat up a brick, heat up bricks to keep us warm.

And it was really cold. We put it in rags, the brick, because it was hot. We warmed up. Because it took a few hours to get to the city.

Did your family ever go on a vacation?

There was no vacation then. We worked day and night-- not day and night. We worked every day. We didn't go no place else from that village, only to the city for shopping.

And that particular city, there was living my grand-grandparents. And there was a custom that the son got married and live in the same city. My mother came from another city.

Another thing, it was a custom that the girls had to give money.

Dowry?

Dowry. Now, when my father got married in 1910, and he got dowry, he came home with my mother and they moved into my grandfather. And the dowry, the money what he got, he paid for his sister. With that money, she came to America, my father's oldest sister.

I don't know how many thousand it was korona. I think he gave her 20,000 korona. It was a lot of money.

And my grandfather gave a lot to my father to build a house and a barn, and so on. And my aunt got the money to come to America. And she bought the tickets and the train. And she came to America. It was 1912.

What was your mother's maiden name?

Mandel, Mandel.

Going back now to thinking about 1938, right around that time, what did you look like? I'm going to talk about you personally now for a little while.

Well, I was a strong girl, never sick, never sick, strong. Grow on fresh milk, and beans, potatoes, chicken, fresh geese.

I should have eaten lunch before I came here today.

The food was always fresh because we went to the garden to pick fresh fruit. And the winter, also, the food was fresh. We got to kill-- I mean, it was kosher to shochet, a goose.

And we had the meat. And then the food was always fresh. We didn't have refrigerator.

What is your outlook on life?

I look just like I look now, but I was young.

What did you think about? What did you view life?

Well, to keep on going with work and study. I wanted to study very badly. But there was no money to send me to school.

What did you want to study? What did you want to be?

I wanted to study. Since there was no money to send me to a school, even. So I said no, then I go to work to like a dressmaker. I'm going to seamstress.

Even when I was a five grade in the school, I would make embroidery. Other people went for their recess. And I would do sewing.

And that sewing, I would sell. I made all different. I would sell. Somebody came from America for a vacation and they bought all of my sewing, what I did, my broidery. How you call it?

Embroidery.

Embroidery. So I love to do that, also. And I always loved to sew. So I made really do sewing. I did sewing, all kind of dresses.

What other hobbies or talents did you have?

Well, hobbies was also painting hobby. I worked in the garden. And I worked all the farm. I loved farm.

What kind of person were you?

Well, I was just quiet and bashful, quiet and bashful. [LAUGHS] In the school, my voice was the worst. I couldn't sing.



And I grew up that way.

And I loved to work. I was ambitious. I loved my parents. I would get up, my mother shouldn't see me that I'm up in another room and do all the work. By the time she got up, it was done.

Everything was done, the cows were milked, the chicken was feeded, the geoses was feeded. The barn was cleaned. The kids, the chicken barn was cleaned. And the weeds we'd pull up from the garden. You see, there was different gardens from the vegetables where we grow, and so on.

I kept working. And there the children were not spoiled. They knew they had to work, go to school, study, do the work.

What was your school like?

My school? Like, we had the only non-Jewish school. We had on the top, a [NON-ENGLISH] was on the top of the [NON-ENGLISH].

And the teacher had a table with a [NON-ENGLISH]. I don't know how you would call that, a [NON-ENGLISH]. If people wouldn't listen or wouldn't behave good, he would beat it.

Once next to me, my friend was not good. And he came to hit her. And then he accidentally that went on me. So my father was mad. He went to talk to the teacher why he did this. But the teachers were allowed to hit the people in the school if they don't behave.

Also, school was not easy. In the morning, they didn't have heat. I had to carry a piece of wood, some wood to the school it should be warm, plus the books.

Did you learn a lot at school?

Yeah, we worked very hard. We worked hard at math and reading and grammar and all about the country. And so we worked in the fourth grade like they work here in seventh grade.

In 1938, you were about 21 years old then. What plans did you have for the future?

1938?

'38.

1938, Hitler was there. We already couldn't get married or do anything.

Just before that, before he came in, then. Before you had any--

Well, my occupation was dressmaking. And I kept on with that. So I still stayed with that sewing and make a living from that. So dresses, all kind.

The non-Jewish people wore that style to make aprons and the dresses were white, white dresses altogether. It was easy, the sewing, for the non-Jewish people.

But the Jewish people also we had to make very nice dresses, wedding dresses. We had to sew the wedding dress. And before a girl got married, she had about 12 dresses, a Black dress, a wedding dress, [NON-ENGLISH] dress. We had to give her, a girl, about 12 dresses.

And also, not only dresses. We have to give her a dozen of sheets, a dozen of tablecloths, a dozen of towels, short towels, long towels from each pillows, covers. And we had to sew that.

In 1938 now, in '39 when Hitler had already come in, you mentioned one neighbor told your brother that if he'd leave, he would not be coming back.

No, no. This is another story. In 1938, the Hungarian with Hitler took over one part only. That plus part, they went to-- in 1939, they took over the last part.

Now there was in 1942, it was 1942, they took all the Jewish people from the village. There was a Shabbos morning, the Shabbos morning before shul, before to go to shul.

They gathered all the Jewish people on the Shabbos morning to make a ghetto in next village. So they went. Then that neighbor said to my brother, go, you never going to come back. I mean, in Ukraine.

This is 1942 then?

Yeah. But now in 1938, they took over Hungarian. Then they made new laws. All the Jewish people had to give the jewelry to the bank. Somebody's got to. If not, they [NON-ENGLISH]. If they find jewelry in your house, gold, they put you in jail right away, took the jewelry away from the Jews.

No professional jobs, no professional jobs, no schooling, not to get married, no one, so on. My father had to go twice a week to report to the police. Yeah, that was 1939.

How did the non-Jews react to this?

The non-Jewish people were quiet. They didn't help any. They didn't hide any Jew.

Did they do anything to turn in the Jews or to hurt the Jews?

They didn't anything. But they took the property, right in a minute they took away the property.

What did the Jews do? Was there any sort of plans among the Jews to try to--

Hide away? They couldn't do anything. They believed that Hitler is going to not exist. And they couldn't do anything. They didn't anything.

What's the first thing that happened that made you aware that there was a war?

Well, we heard the news. See then in that time, in '39, when Hitler announced whoever is going to have citizen, whoever is going to have citizen from the grand-grandparents is not going to be deported. So then I started to-- this was '41, 1941. I tried to find citizen papers for my grandparents.

And I started to look around. And there was no records, no books no place. So before it was Budapest, the capital of Hungarian, my grandparents lived. And I went to Budapest. And there I find that paper in the statistic census.

And that paper from my grand-grandfather that he paid taxes. He paid taxes there from 1831 to 1848. Unfortunately, that paper did not help in any way. I mean, they just wanted.

But it didn't help. And 1942, I find a job in Budapest as a housekeeper for a family.

Well, before you go on to there, so at this point, life had pretty much proceeded then, after some of the restrictions went in in 1939. Until 1942, your family still lived at your home?

At the home.

OK.

I left. When I went to Budapest, my parents were at home.

OK. This was in 1942 when you found this job there as a dressmaker.

Yeah. So I'm talking now just myself. I left my parents and my family. I don't know how exactly it happened with them. Probably they gathered in a ghetto. And then they took them in trains to Auschwitz.

I believe that my mother and sisters went there to Auschwitz. But it's going to say-- and then something I find out about my younger brother and sister, how they died.

This is all after you had already gone to Budapest?

Yeah, now I went to Budapest. I couldn't go home. I wanted to go home. I couldn't. I was not allowed to travel. It was not allowed to ride nothing. So I worked in Budapest.

You know, back to where you were once you got to Budapest?

When I got to Budapest, I find a job like a housekeeper for a family. There I worked for them. And they paid me.

Now starting from Budapest, what happened. In March 1944, the Nazis placed on each Jewish house a star, a yellow star in front. You know, Budapest had one big door and around, around houses. It's not like in Cleveland, they lived. And there was a star on each Jewish house, a yellow star.

Were there many changes between when you got there in 1942 and when this happened in 1944?

Yeah, big changes.

What changes were there?

Well, the Jewish people were not allowed to have the professional jobs, not to go on the streets. No, it was one time only when they were allowed to go out, from 8:00 in the morning till 10:00 they could do all the shopping. But otherwise, you shouldn't see any Jewish people on the street. They would put you right in jail.

Tell me about the people worked for in Budapest.

It was older people. And I don't know what happened with them. Because I lived with them. And then I had to leave. I had to leave.

See, they announced that between 16 and 40 years old, people should report, be ready to go to work for the army.

Before this, when you first got there, when they first hired you in 1942. You were there--

Until I-- there was a ghetto. The house was a ghetto, every Jewish house.

What kind of family? What did they do, these people? What kind of people were they?

He was a professor someplace but they threw him out.

During this time?

Yeah. So everybody just sit in the house. There was no work.

What was the Jewish community like in Budapest?

Budapest was a very nice community, very nice city, big city. It was nice. And Jewish people lived very nice.

They were very Orthodox people. And they were [NON-ENGLISH], conservative. But the life was very nice there.

What did you think of the changes between the small town where you lived and now you're in the city of Budapest? How did that change your life?

It changed life. It was very exciting, nice.

What were some of the things you were able to do in Budapest that you--

I start to-- I mean, I wanted to be a seamstress there, too. But I didn't find what I wanted. So I decided to be a housekeeper, also good. They paid me. And the food was very good. And we had free time, also.

What did you do during your free time?

I did sewing on a machine. I did sewing.

Did you ever go anyplace, like to concerts or museums or things like this?

I had a nice girlfriend. And we went to movies and to dances, very nice. Life was very good there in Budapest, very nice, very exciting. Sunday afternoon, we had all friends. Until the ghetto came, I mean, in the ghetto, you were not allowed to walk out.

And when was that?

Well, the ghetto come later, in '44, March '44. I mean, then start the ghetto.

During this time, between 1942 and 1944--

I lived in Budapest. I did the work.

What was it like with the non-Jews? What were they like there?

Oh, they assume-- Hitler was there. That's a Hungarian song. In Hungarian, they would sing-- should I say in Hungarian?

[SPEAKING HUNGARIAN]

And that means if you have a girl, a Jewish girlfriend, take her up and hang you up, hangs you up. And they went on the street singing that.

Well, when did that start?

There was since '43, '42, when Hitler was--

Soon after--

Hungarian. We called the Hungarian Nylases. They're just soldiers. They would do everything to the Jew.

Were there Gentile neighbors near where you were living?

Yeah.

What were they like? How do they treat the family, treat you?

Right. There was a Gentile woman. But they had to separate. She was not allowed to live with her Jewish husband. They were quiet.

Was there any political movement here or anything to try to do anything to fight back against the Nazis or to leave--

No, everybody was quiet and not saying anything. In Budapest, they wanted to go to Sweden. People went. But I couldn't get in there.

They said the Jewish will be saved there. There was an office. People got up 4 o'clock and stand in long lines to get the papers. And I did this for weeks and weeks. And every morning from 4:00 till it was finished. I couldn't get it.

This was to go to Sweden?

Yeah. They also said to throw all the Jewish people in the [NON-ENGLISH], in the lake. But they didn't.

So it was not so good.

When was the last time you heard from your parents? Did you ever write to them or communicate--

My parents, I got a card from Auschwitz in Budapest that was printed, we are OK. That's all. But it was a lie. The Nazis made it send them before they put them in the chamber, in the gas furnace, to send home, to send to wherever, to relatives the card.

When was this?

That they're alive. I was in Budapest already. And it was '43 or something like that.

About a year after you left?

Yeah. If you want to go back to your narrative. Every so often, I interrupt you to get some other things in there. But narrative is a good help. It's a lot of work you went to.

Here I-- what time in Budapest working. And now here started ghetto, in March 1944 started the ghetto. The Nazis placed a badge on each door, a yellow-- all the Jewish homes were ghettos.

Even the kapos had to separate. If the spouse was Jewish, they had to separate. Every Jewish person had to wear a yellow star on their arm.

They were not allowed to walk on the street, only from 8:00 AM to 10 PM. The rest of the day, they couldn't see us. We shouldn't be on the street.

The Hungarian would say dirty Jew. And the Nazis said, Schweine Jude, Schweine Jude. In June 1944, all the Jewish women between the ages 16 and 40 years, the Nazis said one morning come to be ready to go to the armies, to work for the army. We called it the Hungarian Nylases that's the Hungarian soldiers or the Nazis.

One morning, they came to where I was living. And they said to me, take your all belongings and come and be ready to leave to work for the army. I packed my backpack and I took on my shoulder and I went.

We went to the Dohany temple. It was the largest temple in the world at that time. All the young, all the woman in the city were gathering there. They were gathering to the Dohany temple.

How do you spell Dohany, please?

D-O-H-A-N-Y. That's the Dohany temple. It was the largest temple in the world on that time. All the young woman in the city were gathered there. They took us.

And then they took us to a brick factory. We were there for three days. After that, we had to work from morning till night, all day.

What did you do at the brick factory during those three days?

Just lying there, sitting. Some people would take poison and get killed. And it was suicide. Because they knew, we knew what was going on.

But I always lived with the hope. I didn't want to do anything like that I hope that what happened, whatever it's going to happen, it's happened.

What about food during those three days?

There was some food. I packed some food in the shoulder. They walked us to about two weeks to the German boundary. Now on the way, we slept in parks and barns with the cattle.

One night where we had stopped in a park, it was raining all night. And my clothes were all wet and muddy. In the morning, the Nazis screamed of us, get up. A lot of people could not get up. They died there overnight from exhaustion.

And those of us who was alive kept walking. We passed a bridge, a deep lake. Some girls would jump in and drown themselves. I always hope to God that I shouldn't do this. I didn't want.

It took about two weeks to walk to Germany. One day, they made us stand up in a line for long hours, the Nazis with guns, every second line. I thought to myself now we finished here.

The next day, they pushed us into wagons. The wagon where animals were carried, crowded, without water and out of toilet facilities. No one could jump out. The wagons were completely locked.

They transport us to Ravensbrück. There the Nazis took all my clothes. And so we were left naked.

In addition, they shaved our heads. Then they gave us strip clothes, with that strips, and a number on the hand with a yellow star on arms.

We got bunk beds. There was three people to a bed, to each bed. There were no mattresses or covers or pillows, only straw, straw in each bed.

About how many bunks were in the--

There was a lot of bunks. You couldn't count. But three people to a bunk, one lay this way, one this way, the other way, like snakes.

There was no hot water or soap. I had to wash myself with cold water. At 4 o'clock in the morning, we had to go out in the cold weather outside till 8 o'clock. We had to stand on attention.

In the morning, 8 o'clock, we got a slice of bread, a cup of cold black coffee. Then we went to work.

OK. This might be a good time to break now. We're about at the end of the first reel. And then when we come back, we'll start off with a typical day.

It's a break. It's when I get the black coffee in the morning.

If you want to put a mark with it.

The black coffee.