We're back with the second part of our interview with Sally Pitluk of Cleveland in the Cleveland section, National Council of Jewish Women Holocaust Archives. Sally, when we left off, you were telling us that you had just got to Auschwitz. One way was by walking-- was to the labor section. By trucks, you were taken to the death chambers.

That's right.

Show us, please, the number on your arm. Tell us the significance of this. Tell us exactly how it was put there, who did it, and what it means.

OK. Now, let me tell you. We started to walk toward the camp. And again, the same thing. We didn't know that the trucks are going to the gas chambers. We didn't know where we are going.

I remember that as we were walking and the guards were walking with us, and I asked them, I said, listen, about two or three weeks ago, I don't recall how long ago it took from one transport to the other, there were another transport that came here, perhaps here. Do you know where they are?

And he says, oh, they are living nearby. They are all-- the whole families are together. And you are going there too. And the trucks are just because we didn't want so many people to walk. So we put them on the trucks.

So we walk in. And we walk in to Auschwitz, to Birkenau. You see, Auschwitz was 40 kilometers square. And they were-- the whole compound was Auschwitz. But it was divided. There was Birkenau. There was Auschwitz the camp. There was Buna. There was Budy. There were a few camps in the compound, in the Auschwitz.

Birkenau is where the death camp was, the crematorium.

Yeah. We came into Birkenau. Our transport came into Birkenau. Well, when we approached Birkenau, it was-- at that time, it was in October. I think it was late in October. And it was a cold day. And it was very muddy.

And we came into a camp which, if you ever imagine hell, that's exactly probably how hell looks like. There were ghosts walking. And there were people laying in the mud dying, with swollen legs and bulging eyes.

And we-- they took us to a place in Birkenau which was a building. And they made us take off all our clothes, whoever was wearing shoes. And I was lucky. And perhaps that's why I survived the first few weeks-- because I had shows that looked sort of inconspicuous. They were sort of old shoes. They were high shoes, tied with ties.

And the people that had nice-looking boots or something, they had to take them off. And the ones that had those worn shoes, they let us take them in with us to a room, which was like a-- I've never been in a steam bath, but it was like a steam bath. And it was like with steps. And it was awfully hot in that bath.

We left all our clothes outside in a different room. We stayed in that steam bath. And here, I'm talking about 500 women. We stayed there overnight. In the morning, those Gestapo ladies came in. And they marched us into a large room. And the room had windows.

And it was a bitter cold day, I remember. I don't know. Somehow, in October-- but I remember, it was already very, very cold. And we walked out from that steam room. And we walked out into a large room. And there, they gave us-- we had to stand in line in the nude. And all the windows were up.

And they shaved our hair. This was-- I think that was still in the steam room. Or I don't recall exactly if this was in the room where we were. But I know that they shaved our hair off. And we had to stand in line. And they tattooed us. And they put tattoos in our arms. My number happens to be 27307.

The women did the tattooing?

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Yes. The women did the tattooing. We had a lot-- we had not a lot, but a few-- I wouldn't say a few-- and how many. But we had German prisoners, women in our camp. And they were-- if you ever heard the word kapo, they were our kapos. Those prisoners were sent to Auschwitz for prostitution, for theft, for murder. They were sent to Auschwitz.

And they were our supervisors. And they were the ones that took care of us, all right. And they-- I do not recall who tattooed me, really, because I was in a stupor, I believe. I don't know. But somebody did. I don't know who tattooed. But we stood in line. And they put the tattoo on in our arms.

Then they gave us some-- our transport, they took to a place. It wasn't Birkenau. It was Budy. It was called Budy. They took the 500 women of our transport. And they sent us-- we walked to a camp, where they gave us prison clothes. We were wearing the striped clothes. They gave it to us.

And we were-- and they gave us-- I don't even remember if they gave us some kerchiefs to wear on our heads or not. This I don't remember. And we came into Budy. We came into a camp where previously, another transport-- not from our hometown, but from another Jewish town-- were sent there. When the girls, when we came into this barrack-- they put us into one of the barracks. And we came into this barrack.

Excuse me. I have to tell you this. We're 500 women. But 200 of us were sent to Budy. And 300 were sent-- were in Birkenau, were left in Birkenau. I was one of those that went to Budy.

And I was sent there with dogs, naturally. The SS women had those big, big dogs-- and the barking, and the hollering, and the yelling, and we came in there. And the women who were there, when they saw us, they said, god, how could you allow yourself to come here? This is impossible to live here.

There were a couple of them that were laying on those so-called beds. On this day, they didn't go to work. And actually, whoever didn't go to work, right away, they came-- they saved them perhaps for a week. And then they came with a truck. And they took them away to the gas chambers. Anyhow, we started out there.

And next day, we went to work. And how to describe this work is absolutely unbelievable what we did. We had to-- every year-- this was the-- Auschwitz is there on the river, on the big River Vistula in Europe, in Poland. And this Vistula used-- every year, in the springtime, it would flood.

So we were supposed to make the a wall that the river shouldn't flood in the spring. So they gave us lorries. It was like big iron wagons. And we had to go toward a mountain. And there, we had to fill it up with dirt. And then we had to go down to the-- and we had to empty it by the river.

Now, the first week, we still had the strength, a little bit, from the ghetto, although we were emaciated already. But still, it was more or less-- was more food than in camp. And we were all young. So we managed yet.

But after a few days, when you were hungry and you-- and they wouldn't let you sleep. We had one-- in Budy, there were an awful lot of those Nazi-- the German prisoners, the German woman, who were-- I think they were-- most of them were prostitutes and they were murderers.

Because they would-- at night, they would come to our beds. And they would beat us. And we had to get up from the beds. And they would beat us. And they would-- it was so unbelievable there that within two weeks, they were probably-- out of 200, maybe there were 50 left.

And I don't know how I was left there. But one day, I was-- get up in the morning. And we were also with Ukrainian prisoners, a few of them. And they would steal. And they stole my shoes. And this was my livelihood. That's how I survived yet till now.

And they stole my shoes. And I just-- how could I go to work? This was already in November and was bitter cold. So I took-- they gave us a piece of rag to cover ourselves. I took that piece of rag, and I tore it, and I put it around my feet. In this, I went out.

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And they always counted us. We had to go out at 5 o'clock in the morning. And we were counted and counted and stayed for three hours before we went to work. And all of a sudden, they looked down. And they see that I have those rags. And she says that I committed sabotage, that I tore a piece of that rag up.

And they tell me that this day, I'm not going to go to work. You go back, which meant that they are going to kill me, probably. And sure enough, in the afternoon, a Gestapo man and one of the guards came. And he started walking me. And we walk.

And he took me to Auschwitz. There was Birkenau, I told you, there was Budy. He took me to Auschwitz. And there, they put me into a hall. You couldn't stand up, you could just sit there. And it was completely dark.

And later on, they told me that general-- when they took the people, they were-- when they were-- before shooting them. Because there were a lot of shooting too there going on. So they would put them into those cells. I don't know how long I was sitting there. I know that every once in a while, they would open the door, they would throw in a piece of bread. They would throw in a piece-- some drink, some coffee, if you want to call it.

And after, I don't know how long I was there. Maybe I was there only one day. But they came in that-- a guard came. And he says, come out. And he-- and we started to walk again. I was sure that they were going to shoot me or hang me. And he took me to Birkenau.

And then I came to Birkenau. He took me on one-- into the barracks. And I was in those barracks. And in the evening, there came a transport from Bialystok, I think, from Lomza, which is another town in Poland. And they counted me in together with them.

But I knew that there were some people, the 300 people that came previously, at the same time when I came. And they were left in this, in Birkenau. So at night, we could walk from one barrack to the other. So I was looking for my people. And I went into that barrack. It was barrack-- I remember, it was number 8. And I came.

I want to describe the barracks. A barrack was-- there were big holes in the wall made out of brick. And there were three holes. And in the holes, there-- that's where we slept. These were our beds. They were on top one, and on the middle, and on the bottom.

Wooden shelves?

It wasn't wooden. It was like brick, brick shelves. And I came to that one shelf where my friends were. I found this shelf. And they told me that when they came in-- I must tell you that this was the time-- it was the height of bringing people to Auschwitz at this time, of the Polish Jews-- bringing all the Polish Jews in '42. And then in '43, here, they came from France a lot of transports also.

And here, they told me that this place, maybe there was room for five. So they put in 20 there because there was such a big influx of people that time. But what happened is within a week, within two weeks, there were three or four remain because all the others died. They died.

We had selections. We had-- every day, when we went out to work, they would, by the gate, as we were going out, there wasn't a selection in the morning when we went out. We went to work. And on the way back, there was a selection. Because every time when we were coming back, there were people dead that were killed on the way. They were hit.

My transport, my friends, most of my friends, were killed by dogs. The dogs were trained that if one couldn't walk any longer, if we couldn't walk fast enough, then the dogs would eat their eyes out. They scratched their eyes out, literally.

My friends had their eyes scratched out. And that's how they died. Later on, they took them to the gas chambers. And it was-- in retrospect, I don't understand. I don't believe how I survived.

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Anyhow, I had my number is 27,000. Well, the camp supposedly had the capacity of 10,000 women. And here, there was that huge influx of people coming every day. There were people in 1943, for instance. There were people coming from Greece. There were people coming from Holland, and Belgium, and France, and Germany, constantly, constantly.

So they didn't have enough room for all those people. But they wanted the people, the fresh people to come to work, the ones that still had the strength. So they would take the older people that were there already a few weeks or a couple of months. So they would just take them and select them by the gates as we're coming in.

And let's say that we went out to work, there was 101. Because there were several Kommandos going out to work. Let's say that we went 100. So they would select 20 couldn't come back anymore because they were so beaten up already because they beat us at work. So they would come back. And they would select 50 out to die.

And then every Sunday, Sunday, supposedly, we didn't work. So they would wake us up anyhow. At 5 o'clock, we had to be up. And we had to stay outside in the cold, bitter wind.

And I forgot to tell you that after we went in in that room, after we came out from that room when they shaved us they put the tattoo on, so a lot of people, right away, they had pneumonia. And a lot of people just died of pneumonia pretty soon after that.

And Sundays, they would tell us to carry bricks. I don't know what the heck-- what they did with the bricks. We had to go out. And we had to carry bricks. And then after we've carried the bricks, then we would come in. And we would all stay again. And they would select us again.

They would go, and they would look, and they would take you out. And they would select a lot of them again. And we had one barrack, it was the barrack number 25. If you couldn't live anymore, you would just go to the barrack 25. And they would let you in. You would lay there. And then there would come a truck and take them to the gate-- take you to the gas chambers.

Well, the reason I-- and then again, in the ghetto, I was lucky or unlucky, but I didn't get typhoid fever. But in the camp, I got typhoid. Here, I have to go to work. And if you don't go to work, you die. And I go with typhoid, with probably 104 temperature.

And I remember it so distinctly that one day, we came back. And there was that huge selection again by the gate. And that Nazi looks at me. And he says-- shouted us, [GERMAN]. Because I was so red and my cheeks were so red, I was burning up with temperature. And he thought that I'm so strong that I am so well yet.

In English, what did he say?

He didn't say in English, he said--

No, I mean, you translate.

--look at her, she's still so strong. Look how good she looks, how red she is in her face.

What was your work at that point?

At that point, our work was-- we used to go, and they used to have-- there was around Auschwitz-- they used to have bombed-out houses. So we had to take them apart. Those houses, we had to take the bricks apart, the wood apart. We had to go-- they gave us-- I don't know, it was ridiculous work. It was hard work.

Then they took us-- it wasn't always the same thing. Then they took us to work in ammunition factories. Then they took us to work in-- I have to tell you this. When I was still wearing that-- the other people that were in Birkenau were wearing civilian clothes. All the civilian clothes-- the real good clothes, they were sent to Germany.

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And the old clothes, they gave us, they gave to the people that came into camp to wear. And they painted a big Red Cross on the back, on the clothes with paint. Well, I still had that clothes that they gave me, the prison clothes. And I remember, I was standing once. And I was-- they were counting us, again, counting, and counting, counting.

And that-- he wasn't the commander of the camp, but sort of also-- some sort of a big, important man. And he was counting us. And here, amongst all these people that are wearing civilian clothes, I was standing out with this prison clothes. So he called me out. When he called me out, I was sure that that's it. He's going to shoot me, or kill me, or whatever it was going to be.

So he says, why do you have these clothes? I say, well, I was on Budy. So he says, how long were you on Budy? I say, three weeks. I don't remember if I was three weeks or four weeks there. He says, and you are still alive?

He didn't ask me how I came. I suppose if I would have to explain him how I came-- by the way, I want to tell you that when I came back from Auschwitz and they brought me back, they gave me a pair of shoes. And I was lucky because all the other people, my people, my friends from my hometown that came, they gave them those wooden shoes.

And in those horrible, sinking-- oh, how do you call it-- the mud of Auschwitz, they were sunk in. And they-- most of them-- and a lot of them just died because they didn't have shoes because they couldn't walk in those wooden shoes in January, and February, and March of 1943.

Now, Sally, I've been to Auschwitz last year. And we were told there that not a blade of grass was allowed to grow, that anything green had to be plucked out.

Nothing. There was no--

And they wanted nothing but dirt, mud.

There was so much mud. I don't know. There was-- a lot of people got malaria there. And I don't know why. Because we in Poland, we didn't have malaria. But there was mud. There was purposely-- there was so much mud that we couldn't take our feet out that anybody who was weak enough and couldn't walk in the mud just stayed on there and just died like this, and constantly the dogs, and constantly-- and I have to relate something that perhaps I don't even believe in it.

I also want to tell you that a lot of people-- not as many as you probably would think now that they should have-- because we were surrounded with electric wire. And not that many people went to the electric wire. I knew that I'm not going to live.

As a matter of fact, when I came to camp, when I was in camp, I was glad that my parents and my brothers were dead. And by the way, the transport that my parents came with, nobody ever came into camp. They went to the gas chambers immediately.

And when we came, they didn't have right away the facilities that they had later on with the gas chambers. They used to bury them. They used to make holes. And they would bury the bodies. And later on, there was-- the Germans alone, they were afraid of-- they shouldn't get sick. So they put a lot of oil on the fields. And they would burn it. Because you could-- if you were walking-- and you would just walk into to humans.

And when I had this typhoid, and I came back once from work, and I figured-- and those shelves-- and those brick shelves, there were rats. And if you didn't have strength enough there just to chase the rats away at night when you were sleeping, they ate you alive. You went in at night. And you went to sleep with your friends in the morning, you got up, and both sides of you, your friends were dead.

And I had the typhoid fever. And I remember so distinctly, I don't know if it was something that I wanted to believe in. Must have been the crisis. I was burning up with temperature. And all of a sudden, I dreamed about my father. And my father was standing there. And he was crying. And he was wearing his prayer shawl.

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And I said, Dad-- I never saw my father cry. And I said, Dad, why are you crying. He says, my child, I want somebody should survive. And maybe it was just my imagination. Maybe I wanted to believe that there is something there.

And I got up in the morning, and actually, my temperature broke. And actually, I was well enough to go to work again. And I'm sort of digressing constantly. Anyhow, this Gestapo man saw me in the other clothes, and he says, you are still alive? And he says, well, I need strong people. I'm going to put you to work in the hospital.

Now, the hospital-- the hospital was such a-- it's, again, something that it's hard to believe. The hospital-- they had a hospital which was people that didn't go to work in the morning. They went to the hospital because they were sick, they couldn't go to work. They would come to the hospital. And they would put in this barrack in, let's say, 1,000 women, sick women that couldn't go to work.

And every week, Mengele would come. You probably heard about Mengele. And I was working there. I was supposedly working there. My work consisted of going three times a day or two times a day to the kitchen and bringing back those very, very heavy cans with food. Because they gave them some food.

Mengele is the German doctor was in charge of the selections on the platform?

Mengele, the German doctor, he was in charge of not only of the selections, he was in charge of all the experiments. When I was working in the so-called hospital, the hospital was a place where they gathered the people that in the morning, they wouldn't go to work, they couldn't go to work, they were too sick to go to work, or they had their eyes scratched out by the dogs the previous day.

So they would put them in the hospital. And then the hospital, they would stay maybe sometimes two days and sometimes a week. There would come Mengele and they would come Hessler-- or Hoss-- I even forgot his name, the guy from the-- the commandant of Auschwitz.

Hoss.

I think his name was Hoss. He would come with him. And he would make a selection. And they would take out 75% of the people to the gas chambers on trucks.

Just for the record, Mengele is, 1984, supposedly living in Paraguay. And Israel isn't that interested in getting him back now. They don't want to go through it.

Israel is not interested. I doubt if Israel is not interested. I think the world is not interested. They wouldn't-- listen, there are a lot of Nazis--

Yeah, Hoss was tried by the Poles and--

--that they avoid like that.

Hoss was hanged right away.

--hanged at Auschwitz.

Yeah, he was hanged at Auschwitz. But Mengele, he used to come every week. And he used to be by the selections. And he would stay there just like this, left and right. He wouldn't even utter a word. It was too much for him to say. And Hoss would stay. And he would stay.

I remember, one day, we had a lot of people, a lot of young women from Holland. And they were good-looking, beautiful bodies, young, beautiful bodies, naturally. When we were-- there was a long-- sort of like a long oven went through the barrack. And they would have to go all around.

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And those two, Hoss and Mengele, were standing there. And they would just tell them left and right, sort of. And they would-- I remember Hoss saying once, look at that good, fat body. She's going to burn well. And they had just a good laugh out of it.

And Mengele used to come. And they injected a few of the women that were there that they didn't take them away. Those people used to get a double portion of bread and whatever we had else with it.

They injected cancer into her. I remember, she had here a huge, huge boil or whatever it was. They injected them with all kinds of illnesses. And then they took them to Auschwitz to experiment on them. Because the experimentations were in Auschwitz, in the camp Auschwitz.

Do you know firsthand, of your own knowledge, of any other experiments there?

Yes, I have a-- I know somebody who is now in France. And she was castrated, whatever you call this. I have somebody in France and somebody in Israel, a friend of mine that I went to school together with, that he was castrated. I know firsthand a few people that survived and they were castrated. I don't know of any other experiments that they did that the people survived. This I don't know.

Do you know anything about Mengele's experiments on twins?

This I don't know. I don't know anything about it. But I know that he was experimenting all the time. I know that then, later on-- I just want the world to know one thing, that anybody who reads a book that says that the Holocaust was a hoax, dear god, please, don't believe in that. The Holocaust was not a hoax. I was working right there. Because I had lots of jobs.

My last job was that they sent me to Birkenau. And people that know about Birkenau, that's where the gas chambers were. I was working from the gas chambers maybe 20 feet away. We had a wires. We were separated with wires. And those smoke and that stench of the human flesh was constant. In 1944, when they brought the people from Hungary, perhaps more people survived that are Hungarians than others because until 1944, they didn't-- the Germans were not there. And they didn't bring those.

But they brought them because they had already exhausted all the labor force. They didn't have any more people to work for them. So a lot of the young people from Hungary came into camp. But all the older ones and all the people with their children, they went right to the gas chambers.

They had such a-- they were so-- trying to kill them off so quickly because, I imagine-- I didn't know it at the time, but the Russians were already crossing the Polish border. They were coming already closer to Auschwitz. And there were the fires at night. I worked from 7 o'clock in the evening till 7 o'clock in the morning because they brought the clothes from other people.

Tell us your work.

My work in Birkenau was already different and Brzezinka. Brzezinka was where the gas chambers were. And there, they brought the clothes from the dead people. They brought it in to us. We had-- again, it was, again, sort of like a separate camp. But I want everybody to understand that all this is Auschwitz.

And they brought it in. And we had to take off the Jewish stars because a lot of other countries had Jewish stars or whatever, any identification of Jewish. And we had to separate. And the good things went to Germany, I presume. And the-- whatever. We worked with all the clothes and all the belongings that the people brought from their homes.

You sorted all the suitcases?

We sorted. We sorted suitcases, we sorted cutlery, we sorted-- there was jewelry, there wear--

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Eyeglasses, shoes.

There were glasses, eyeglasses, and shoes, and anything that you want to hear of except furniture. It was everything because people didn't realize it. And if people think that we were not brave enough and we did not do anything, nobody knew that they are going to die.

I saw people that came in 1944-- as a matter of fact, there were-- I think that there were still yet people from LÃ³dz, which is a big city, a big industrial city in Poland. And these were the last remnants of the LÃ³dz-- from ghetto. And they came.

And I said, how could you come now? How could you let yourself bring now to Auschwitz? And they didn't know. People don't realize it, when people are free, how life is dear. Everybody wanted to survive. Everybody wanted to live.

Sally, there was one incident of mutiny in Auschwitz and Birkenau that you told me about, when a crematorium was blown up by the prisoners.

Yes.

I would like you to start to tell as much as you know, how they got their dynamite, how it was smuggled to them, everything you can about this incident.

I know very little about it.

Whatever.

I only know that one of my friends who survived Auschwitz, she's from my hometown. And she was married in the ghetto. And her husband was working. They were called-- the people that were working in the gas chambers were called the Sonderkommando. And every few months, they would take the Sonderkommando.

And they would kill them off because they saw too much. And they knew too much. And there was one crematoria. And I wasn't working at that time near the crematoria. But I only know that her husband worked there. And how they got any ammunition, I have no idea. I really don't know. But I know that this crematoria was blown up.

There were three crematoria at that point.

Yeah, yeah.

Crematoria 1 and 2 are still-- the rubble is still there.

The 1 and 2, I don't know, I hope one day to go back to Auschwitz and to see it. Because the 1 and 2, I was close by. That's where they took the people. I saw them coming by with the trucks and going right in there. And we didn't see our side of the camp, where we were, they didn't show where the people undressed. It was on the other side. There was a little-- if you have been there, there was a little woods there. Are there still woods there? Yeah.

Yeah.

And there, they would go there. And they would tell them to take off their clothes. They would tell the mothers, put together these shoes so when you come out from the bath, that you should have the shoes for your children. This was yet in 1943.

In 1944, as I said, when they were already-- the Germans were desperate. And they were-- and they wanted to just kill as many Jews as possible, so they just had-- they just took the children, they made big bonfires, and they just threw the little kids into the fire. They didn't even bother to gas them anymore. It's just that the adults, they would put into the

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showers.

Do you remember when it was, the crematorium was blown up?

I don't know. I think that the crematorium was blown up sometimes either in the beginning of '44-- I really don't know too much about it.

'44.

Yeah. We were--

Of all these experiences, Sally, which was the most painful to you?

I would say, the most painful for me was the ghetto. Because in Auschwitz, physically and mentally, I suffered that it's unreal. I mean, I don't see how I survived it. I can't believe that anybody can be so strong. Perhaps there is providence in it. Perhaps there's-- I was meant to survive.

I want to tell you that my dad had that big family. And they all were married. And they all had children. And the children and all of them perished. And I'm the only one who survived from my family, my father's family, my mother's family. And my mother had a sister. My mother had brothers. They all had-- they were grown. They all had children.

And nobody survived. I'm the only survivor of a huge family of cousins, and aunts, and uncles. And there's a whole tree of people. And the same thing goes from all my friends. There are an awful lot of families that everybody perished. From my hometown, I don't know if there are 50 people that survived.

What was your maiden name, your father's family name?

Yeah, my father's family name was Kubel. My maiden name was Kubel.

And on your mother's side?

Was Drexler. And everybody perished. And I want to emphasize, again, anybody who ever believes that the Holocaust was a hoax, anybody who reads-- writes a book that the Holocaust was a hoax, I would like to talk to them. I would like to spit at them. Because this is something that I can't take. I can take anything that is said. But anybody who will write a book that the Holocaust was a hoax, this I cannot take, even after all those years.

Sally, you were in Auschwitz up to January of 1945.

I was in Auschwitz--

What happened afterward?

I was in Auschwitz up to January of 1945. And in '45, when the Russians were nearing to Auschwitz, they took us all on a death march. This meant that we were-- the remnants that were still there, that were still alive started to walk towards Germany.

We walked-- I don't know how much we walked. A lot of our people died. Some of our people escaped because they felt that the liberation is close. But most of us didn't. We walked. And they took us, again, on those cattle trains.

I remember, one day, they brought us to a town. It was a big city. It was an industrial city. It was called Magdeburg. And at night, they left us there on the station.

And then and at night-- this was the night when the Russian bombs came-- they bombarded the station. And quite a few of us were killed. They locked the trains. We couldn't get out of there. And in the morning, the ones that survived, they

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took us again. And we walked. Then they put us on trains again. It's so incredible.

Where did you go?

And they took us to a camp which is deeper into Germany, which was called RavensbrÃ¼ck. And in RavensbrÃ¼ck, there was already an awful lot of chaos. We were just laying there on the ice and the snow. I don't know. I think that we were there maybe a week, maybe two weeks. I don't remember how long we were there. And they sent us to a camp that was called Malchow. And there in that camp--

Deeper in Germany?

It was in Germany. And there in that camp, they had-- in the underground, they had factories that were still-- they were making ammunition. And they took us to work there in those factories. And we worked there for a short time. I don't know why, but they took us out again from that camp. And they took us. Again, we were on the road.

Now, I want to tell you that on the road-- when you tell those stories, it seems that-- now, how in the world did you survive? Now, there were a lot of us that on the-- as we were walking, that they didn't survive. They were killed. If you lay down, if you couldn't walk anymore, then they just shot you.

It was incredible. I don't know. I think that the human body is extremely strong. I don't know. Somehow, it seems to me that there are certain things that when I recall-- and I myself, I just cannot understand how in the world we survived, even the ones that did survive.

Because I want you to know that there are a lot of people that survived, that thank god, thank god that they had they were in hiding, or they were on Polish papers, or they were in the partisans.

But if you will see the people from Auschwitz, that were in Auschwitz, and especially in the year of 1942, there are just a handful that survived. Most of the survivors will be Hungarian Jews, thank god that they did, because they came later on. And they had more-- they had the strength yet. And I want to emphasize that we were all young. There were nobody who was middle-aged in camp.

And the day came, naturally, it was coming closer. They took us from Malchow. I don't know why. They took us to another camp, which was called Taucha. This was-- I think right now, it is Germany. I think the Russians are occupying it. It's Germany right now.

And there, we were there a couple of weeks. And from there, they took us again on a march. And we marched again I don't know how long. This was already in April of 1945. And we're marching, and we're dying, and we're marching.

Marching toward the west?

Well, we were told that they had some gas chambers left somewhere. I have no idea. I don't know if they did or they didn't. And to me, it's an enigma that they didn't shoot us all then and there. I don't know why they didn't. But there weren't that many left of us anymore. But there were still-- we still had the guards, women, and we're still marching.

And then one day, it was April 27, we were sort of-- they took us somewhere in a meadow on a road, by a road, a meadow. And they-- all of a sudden, we didn't see any guards anymore. And suddenly, we saw Jeeps coming by. And we saw the soldiers coming toward us. And we didn't even know. We didn't know who those people were. They spoke to us in a strange language. And those were the Americans.

By then, I was-- I don't know, probably-- maybe I weighed 60 pounds, maybe not even that much. Don't think I was coherent then anymore. I know that I woke up later on. They evidently took me to a nearby hospital. I don't know.

And I woke up. And I was free. And the Americans liberated us. There were a lot of people that still could walk. And the Americans had their rations. And they would give them their food. And they died. They started to eat too soon.

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Perhaps I was lucky because I just couldn't eat anymore. And I was so sick. And I was so completely emaciated that that's how I survived. Because they took me and they probably gave me-- fed me intravenously.

And then the part of Germany-- this was-- I was liberated by a town, it was called Grimma. It was near Leipzig. The Americans came in there. And then they said that the Russians are going to occupy this part.

And I was liberated by the Americans. And the Americans who liberated me, and the doctors, and the hospital or whoever it was, they said, no, we are not going to leave you here. We are taking you with us. And there was a Jewish chaplain. And he took me. And I had-- later on, I found my two friends that were-- they were also on that march. And he took us to the part that was later on and still-- now, it's West Germany.

And they took us to a town which is called Bayreuth. This is-- people that know about music, this is the Richard Wagner Festspiele houses there. And then I was-- started to look around for family. And I realized that there was no more family. And my closest family was killed.

Did you go back?

As a matter of fact, in Auschwitz, I was never thinking of committing suicide. I knew that I'm not going to live. And whenever they're going to take me, they'll take me all right.

But when I was liberated, I suddenly-- I just-- I was liberated. I expected the whole world to rejoice with us, the few remnants. And all of a sudden, I saw that it isn't so. And I really-- I seriously thought about committing suicide. I just-- I don't know. I didn't even want to live. But luckily, I got--

All through the war, you stayed away from any thought of suicide.

Yeah. Would you believe that?

And once the pressure was off and you were liberated, you thought about it?

I didn't want to live anymore. I had terrible times in the United States. You know that? It was-- to me, it was so painful when the American hostages were taken in Iran and they came home. And I don't take anything away from them. They suffered hell to be there for a whole year, not knowing what's going to happen the next day.

And the Americans-- and they still think, how could they be normal again? How could they live a normal life again? How can the people that lived through Vietnam? And I understand it. Dear god, how I understand it to live through a war, what it means.

And many times, I think, I don't know how normal I am to have gone all this hell through, and to see so much death, and to be surrounded with death, and to have lost everybody, and all of a sudden-- and I know that I was here in the United States perhaps 10 years.

And after 10 years, I had a tremendous-- a terrible nervous breakdown. I had a tremendous depression. And it haunts me. And my husband had always those horrible dreams. It haunted him. My husband wasn't like I. My husband jumped from the train. That's how he survived. He survived in hiding.

Sally, how did you come to Cleveland?

Well, we found that my husband had some cousins in Cleveland. And that's how we came to Cleveland here. This was the-- right after the war, a lot of us wanted to go to Palestine. But the Britons occupied Palestine. And it was illegal to go to Palestine. The people that went, they landed up in Cyprus.

And the American people that liberated us, they said, you are not going to go to Cyprus again. You're not going to go to

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a camp again, not what we saw-- how we saw how you looked. You are going to go to the United States.

And we couldn't go to the United States. You had to have somebody who send you papers that you wouldn't be a burden to society. But then there was-- I believe that there was-- Truman came out with some sort of a law that he left-- he let the refugees in. And that's how we came.

And we started to build a life again. My husband was working for-- when he came here, he start to work for Forest City. And we rebuild our lives again, our broken life. My husband came from a family of father, and mother, and six children, and all of them married, and all of them with children, except. And none of his family survived either.

Sally, this has been gracious of you to share all this with us for years in the future. We thank you very much, appreciate it.

You're welcome. And again-- are we off the air already? Please, remember, don't forget what the Jews had to go through in Europe.

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