

I'm Peggy Nathan. Today we are interviewing Freda Salick, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section. OK, Freda, we're back at the point. We'll pick up our story, your story, at the point where you left Auschwitz and apparently the Germans are afraid the war is coming to an end, and they want to get people away from there.

And they put you in a boxcar again, a train. And they take you where?

To Kratzau. This is a town in Czechoslovakia.

Again to Czechoslovakia. OK. Now what happens there?

Then they got--

You said it was much nicer barracks, everything was much nicer.

Yes, it was smaller, less people there.

You knew some of the people from Auschwitz, of course? Or were they strangers again? I think they were strangers.

Freda, how old were you at this point?

That was in '45.

'44, toward the end of the war. Really didn't know it was the end of the war, '45. So you're already 31 years old.

Yes.

OK. Now what do you do in this camp? Will you spell the name of this camp? Kratzau?

Kratzau.

This is I think it is a C, a C or maybe a K, a K, an R, a U, will be Kru-- zau.

T-Z-O-W maybe.

Yes.

This is in Czechoslovakia. It's another concentration camp.

This was--

A work camp?

A work camp.

A work camp. I see.

They had over there Germans, the Nazis around. Yeah.

They were still guarding you?

Sure, guard, oh yeah.

You still had to come out for roll call in the morning, every morning?

Yes. They took every time in the morning we stood, and then we went to work. They guard us.

What kind of work did you do in this camp, Kratzau?

In this camp, in Kratzau, we did all kind of work. We work in a factory for the Germans, the military mask, gas masks. We sew over there something for them. And then they took us for the work for the Germans. There was a canteen. There was over there a place where the German people went over there to eat.

I see. A canteen.

A canteen. Yes.

Yes, and you had to work in the kitchen? No, we didn't allow to be there. We just they gave us the chores for the potatoes and a cover they kept. The worst thing was over there, they got apples. And the smell from the apples.

Oh rotten apples are terrible.

It was so hungry, and we couldn't touch this.

Oh, and it was wonderful, a wonderful apple smell.

Now potatoes over there, they are so big, maybe one potato weighed 2 pounds.

Oh really?

And you had to prepare the food.

We have to take out the rotten potatoes, and throw them out.

Yeah. Yes. And did you steal some of that food maybe to eat? If you could.

Yes. We did. Once they caught us.

Oh, did they punish you?

With food. They didn't give you food. All day long. They take away your food, your portion from the food.

So this already was early 1945.

Yes.

So you're there for how long, Freda?

We were there till a couple of months.

And then what happened?

When we were in Kratzau we was working there in all the kind of places. And once I came home after work, and there was over there a place where you can wash yourself, a shower. I run over there, and I saw was over there warm water.

Now there was already the time that you was not allowed to be there. So I ran to the barrack and take something, a bucket and the water.

First time you had warm water in years, I bet.

Yes. I took the water and the bucket and I ran. This I remember. It was winter time. It was snow over there, very cold. And I went with the bucket with the water in my room, in the barrack. Take off my clothes. And I start to wash myself, the body. Then comes in the lageralteste, the German Nazi. And she caught me. And she said, Freda, that's not allowed.

Not allowed to make yourself clean.

Clean and to take the water from over there. What she did with me, she didn't let me dry me up. Now how I was naked, wet. She took me with the water, with the bucket. It was far. We have to walk maybe, I don't know maybe 25 minutes, and to take out the water from the bucket over there. I beg her, let me put something on. I will catch pneumonia. She said, no. I have to go like I am, naked with the bucket, and [NON-ENGLISH], put out the water from the bucket.

This is what I will never forget.

Of course not.

And I went home. I didn't cough once.

God was taking care of you.

This was the my biggest thing when I was in the Kratzau what she took me naked.

In the cold.

In cold.

She was dressed beautifully, warmly.

Yes. Next day--

This is maybe the winter of '45?

Yes.

OK.

And next day she took us, you know what she did? There was over there not enough animals, when they needed to shop the groceries for the people where they got the canteen to prepare the food for them. So they took people, 10 people to a wagon. And they put them like horses with strings, to pull the wagon.

There was in the front four people or six and in the back.

Were you in that line sometimes?

Yes.

To pull the wagon. To act like an animal?

Yes.

And she comes to me and she says, Freda, that I don't pull enough. I say, I don't have the force. You couldn't say that you are sick.

Don't have the strength. Yes.

And I say I am cold. I cannot do this.

Did they give you any other clothing?

No. Just the same rags that you had.

Rags, yes. And I pull, we pulled the wagon in place of the animals. So an animal was worth more than a human being.

Right, yes.

Yeah.

So all right, this is then getting through the winter of '45. What else happened in that camp for you?

In Kratzau?

Yes.

We was over there in the barrack. And when they hear and saw that they are losing the war, the Germans, they were every day, every hour worse to us. And they say they will put mines under around the house.

They would put what?

They explode the house out with us.

I see.

I don't know how it happened. The Russians were near already Kratzau. And they from the airplane they with piece of papers notes.

Dropped papers.

Dropped, and they say if something will happen, the whole town will go if they will touch us.

Oh, they wanted the Germans-- They

Warn the Germans--

Not to kill, do any more killing.

--not to kill us, and not to do nothing to us.

I see.

They told them. And they--

These were pamphlets that came down from the airplanes.

Yes, from the airplanes. And they take away the stuff from the barracks.

It was written in German, so the Germans could understand this language.

Yes.

So what did they do?

They right away, they changed clothes, all the Germans where they was with us around the barracks.

Yes.

They chose, they put in civilian clothes. They run away. They left us.

They left you alone without any guards anymore. They were afraid they would be killed.

Yeah. And in this way we was liberated from the Russians.

Who liberated you?

The Russians, the Soviets.

Do you remember the day? What day was that?

That was in May 8.

May 8, 1945.

Yeah, May 8.

All right, the Russians liberated you.

We was liberated.

You so what did they do with you?

What they do? We was in there, they bring in food. Most of the people--

Were they kind?

Oh, yes. They were very kind people. The people there was something the people faint.

Of course.

They die.

From overeating.

From overeating. We always said we want to have a soup for the spoon that will stick and stay in this. And we want to have two or three loaves of bread, that we have enough to eat.

Now people were so hungry they overate. They got typhus. They were all. I was sick too. I was very sick. And I did come out.

Tell me, how long did you stay in this camp then after you were liberated? Did they move you right away?

No. No, we stay in the camp. And they start organizing us to go back.

To go back to your homes.

Yeah, and we couldn't. The war was going on there. And the soldiers with all the things. And first, we were there maybe, I don't know, a month over there. And we were sick.

Did they bring--

The Germans, later on, they did come out and they gave you bread. They gave you soup. So, you never saw them.

The Germans?

They never do. The Germans, they were living in Kratzau.

I see.

Yeah. They did bring you something to eat.

But you were there then till when?

We were there I think the month of May, took us three or four weeks to come back to Krakow.

Then how did you get back to Krakow?

With the train. Did you have any papers, you had money?

We didn't have nothing.

Well, how did you get on the train.

I don't know. Maybe the Russians, they just got us on the train.

All right. You went back to Krakow, and you're looking for family, right?

Right?

And do you find anybody?

I didn't find nobody. And they did-- it was there a committee, the Jewish already in Krakow. Well they prepare for the haftling, for the people that did come in.

Right.

Yeah. So we got over there room. I don't know for four or six people. They are people you could work. Now they said I work enough. I don't want to walk anymore. I want to relax.

Right.

Now when the people--

But you're still very thin.

Yeah.

And you're sick and you look terrible.

I look maybe 90 years old, so I look.

And you're still weighing 70 pounds.

I weigh less than 70. Yeah, 69.

How could you move, you wonder? It's a wonder. And they, the minute they know I was maybe two days, they know that I am a dressmaker, they come to me to make them something. They didn't got what to wear. I don't know if they bought it, they got. And they pay me. And the first time for a couple of years, I feel money in my hand. I was a human being.

Right, right.

And your hair is growing out by now.

Yeah, they start to grow a little.

And you got some clothing. Where did you get clothing?

I think we took it over there from the Germans. We got something to change the rotten things that were smelly, dirty.

So how long-- then you're back in Krakow and you're working.

Yeah, and over there was already organized the Jewish-- I don't know what you call them, the Haganah or what. It was an organization.

Like the HIAS.

The HIAS, they took in all the people.

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and various organizations.

Yes.

So you went and registered?

There yes. They registered us. And I was over there already I got plenty of work already. They want to keep me.

Yes.

So in the meantime, somebody told him that there was a town what they call Zakopane. And they come in with the children, where they find like I say, somewhere by all areas, the orphans.

Orphans.

Yes.

Yes.

And they took them together.

They make a home for the orphans.

Make a home in Zakopane in Poland over there.

How far was this from Krakow?

A couple of hours.

So they said that they wanted you to come there?

Yes. Yes. Who was in charge of this? Who said this to you?

I forgot. The people.

The Jewish organization?

The Jewish Organization

They thought maybe you could work there with the children?

Yes, right away. They told me I will work over there. I will have food. They will not pay me. Now I will have food and shelter.

And so you go there--

We went there.

--to make clothing for the children.

Yes.

I see.

And they come in a lot of in America.

A lot come from America.

Oh, Yes in America, clothing.

Oh, you mean I see. They're already sending things.

They send. In America, they sent out plenty of food and clothing.

Oh, wonderful.

And it didn't fit, the children all the kind, just from two years, to 10, 12, 15 years. Yeah.

Now where did they find all these children?

They find them. They find. There come people in Israel.

I see.

And the minute they know something they hear that somebody has a Jewish child. They come in.



You mean these were--

The Haganah.

I see. And these were Gentile people who kept the little Jewish children during the war? They were kind people.

Yes. Who wanted to help.

They want to keep them forever.

Oh, they didn't want to give them give them back. They wanted to make them into Christian.

There was a story with my niece.

Oh.

When that was in 1942, I forgot to tell this. My sister-in-law was pregnant. And in 1942, in July, she went to a hospital and she got birth to a little girl. There was [NON-ENGLISH] fire from the sky. That was terrible. You couldn't face this what is was.

It's the middle of the war. You mean bombs and so on.

Yes, bombs and besides this, a Jew couldn't go out. And she kept this infant six months. And later on they want to go to a forest. And they got a tenant. They were wealthy, my brother, this was my younger brother with his wife and they got three children. There was a boy. He was 11 years old. The girl was seven. No he wasn't 11, he was nine. And the girl was seven. And the little baby was six months old.

And she was hidden in an oven for a couple of months. And later on, they decided it's not the life. They will go to a forest. And the tenant said he will buy him a gun. He will bring him the gun. He never bring the gun.

Who said he would bring the gun?

The tenant, the Pole.

Oh, the tenant, the Polish man. Yes.

And he went to the police. He told him that they wanted to go.

They were going to escape.

And they took him. First, they took my brother. And he know that he will not. And how there was a day before, we was talking to my brother. And he says, who will stay alive, they will take the baby. And I remember clearly I would be today, how he was talking. He was so intelligent. He wanted to live and see that he is [INAUDIBLE] and Hitler, but nothing. He didn't live to this time.

They took him. They beat him up over there first. Then they bring my sister-in-law, and beat them up both. And they kept them, beating him. And they took him to another town. And the little girl was seven years old. She stood on a place. And she saw how the parents was walking there through her. And I stood too I saw him. They took him over there. They dig a grave. And there was dogs where they ate them up alive. They digged and dug. There was 20 people over there.

The dogs. The dogs and the German. They didn't kill him, but that was horrible. When I talk about this--

It's just like seeing it all over.

I see it all over. So this way I lost my younger brother. And my older brother died in Mauthausen. Both brothers.

All right, now let's go back now. You're liberated and you're working. You're in a camp, a displaced persons camp.

Yes.

There was a house, a big house.

It was a big house.

But they took teachers. Well, there was children. What they had--

Whoever was free.

You didn't got right to go to school by the Germans.

Yes. So there was children was the age when they--

Right, there were many years they had no schooling. Right.

Yes, so there was teachers. And they teach them. There was maybe 8 or 10 teachers. It was 150 children.

Oh, this is where you were working with these children. So there were teachers there. You were doing. Now, how long did you stay there working?

I think close to a year.

Close to a year.

Yeah, that was in '45. 1945.

Yes.

In June, let's say, and we came to later '46, yes.

What happened in 1946 then? Why did you leave there?

Well, like I say, when they started to the Poles and the Ukraine, like here the Ku Klux Klan. But they cannot stay. Maybe they find they are Jewish people. There

Are still people who hated the Jews?

Yes, they hate them. And they throw over there bombs, grenades.

Even though the war is over, but they want to kill wherever there are any Jews.

Yes, so the director from them, she come in contact with here from America from the Haganah. Not Haganah. Yeah, the Agudath.

Agudath.

Yes, and they started to take us from over there. It took time.

I see. So where did you go from there? From over there, we went to France.

You went to France with all the children?

With all the children we went first to Prague. We was in Prague.

You were in Prague for how long?

For a short time.

A short time.

A short time we was in Prague. And then from Prague we went to France.

To Paris?

Yeah. Without not legal.

Without papers, without anything? So you're there with all these children, or is everybody making his own way?

No, no. We went the whole group.

The whole group together.

All the people.

Well, who put you up then in Paris? Who took care of you?

Like I said, the organization.

I see.

We didn't do nothing by ourselves. The organization.

They took you to Paris.

Yes.

They thought that was just a stopping point.

Yeah. And they said, who wants can go to Israel.

I see.

And when we was in a suburb, in Paris.

A suburb of Paris, yes. So many of them went to Israel?

Later, the children, yes.

Well it was not Israel yet. It was 1946, so it was this illegal immigration to Israel.

Yes.

You did not want to go?

I have a nephew, like I mentioned my nephew.

Yes.

But he was in the concentration camp. And he told me that this is not a place for me.

Israel?

Yes. I am not so young. They needed people, young people to work there. It's very hard.

And to fight really.

And to fight.

Yes.

And I after all the camps, I am not able. He said I should stay in France.

So you stayed in France. And did you stay with this whole group, the rest stayed, or were you making your own way?

No, no I was, and maybe I was over there a year over there. I come to me over there the food, and the beautiful place.

So you got healthy again. You gained weight, and you became a person again.

Yes. So once I went. I don't know. I got some.

And you're learning French, the French language? You're going to school.

Yeah, I went from over there by the train. I went to the Alliance Francaise to learn the language.

How far was that?

A half an hour.

I see. Oh you mean just a school, actually?

Yes, a school. And later, I met somebody and they said, why should I be there. I can be here in Paris and have a good job, and start to earn money? But I didn't earn money over there, just food and shelter.

I see. So you went back to Paris. But meanwhile, you were going to school and you met this-- you got a boyfriend.

Yes, I went to school and I met my husband there.

Yes.

And there was other people, but I was very attractive. I was. I come to me when I was healthy.

Do you have any pictures of yourself at home in those days?

I have at home, yes.

So you met your husband. You met this man. And did you marry very shortly after that?

No.

You went together for how long?

Oh. We met I think in '46.

Yes.

And we married in '47.

I see. It was in the beginning '46, in the end, in December in '47.

That's when you married in December of '47.

Yes.

And then you're living in Paris with your Husband

Yes, yes.

And you had babies. And I got when I start, I did work.

You worked for a while.

I work for a living. I got. Then later--

What kind of work did your husband do there? Did he get a job?

We was living-- no, he was with his sister.

But after you were married, what kind of work did he do?

I did open a shop.

You opened a shop?

Yes. A shop, and I was working, I got in my house like in Paris, you can do this.

I see.

Here you cannot. They give you all the stuff, the materials you design. When I design something and they like it, later, they make a-- yes, make 100 dresses, 200. Yes and I got a machine, and a place and we start. We produce dresses.

You were in a factory. You had a factory out of your home.

Yeah.

And your husband helped you with this?

Yeah.

So all right. But you're still there without papers, without anything.

No, the papers we got right away from the organization. We couldn't in the beginning I was working. Now, they couldn't take me when this went from month to month. He didn't got papers. Later, they gave us for three months. We can stay three months.

After the three months was six months, and later they gave us for a year, later when I got married. And I got a child already, they gave us for 10 years a passport.

I see.

Yeah.

So then you lived there and you have two children. Why did you decide to leave France?

We was well off. We got food. We was working. We went for two months for vacation.

How lovely.

Yes. Over there is-- in Paris. You don't need two cars over there or three. First, it's in winter time. You already think where to go for vacation.

Can you imagine? Things were good.

Very good. We don't make so much let's say money like in America.

No, you don't need it over there. You have everything.

So why did you decide to leave France?

Now like I say, in '57, they started with the Russians. And we was afraid they will come into France, and they will take you then to Siberia.

To Siberia.

Siberia. Oh, the Russian--

We are born in Poland.

There was no war or anything. But I didn't realize this. The Russians were taking over territory.

Yes. It's like when they entered Hungary, right? Is this what you mean? You were afraid they were going to come to France too.

And a lot of people, a lot of the businessmen, everything, they left their factories, the houses everything what they got, and they run.

I see. They didn't want to go through another Holocaust.

Yeah, and they run. They go to Australia, they go where they could.

I see.

Yeah, and later, they come back. Now when we went, we couldn't go back, what we got already a family, two small children.

Right.

My older daughter was 6 and 1/2 and the younger was 4 and 1/2.

And your sister had come to the States already?

Yes. 10 years before.

I see. So after the war, she got to the States. You were in touch with each other.

Yes. And you felt that something terrible was going to happen in France. So you were afraid to stay there.

Yes.

So how did you get papers to come to the States?

Well, when we were in France.

In Paris.

In Paris, we started already, like I got the sister. Yes, and they said in America you're going to have to work. You will Paris is a golden land. In 1957, still already they were saying that you don't have to work. You come and find gold in the streets.

Yes.

Your sister didn't say that though.

My brother-in-law says, well, I don't have to work. I can work six hours. I can work four hours. And we was working very hard in Paris.

Of course.

So make in the beginning very hard. I got two small children. And I did run the whole-- my husband wasn't. It's not his profession.

Right.

He was in Poland a businessman. So he learned from me all the tricks. And I have to do everything. Keep up with the house, two children, is a different with two years. And then later, sit by the machine and saw and iron.

All night long.

When he did then know that we work are hard, he said, why you should work over there so hard? Come to America. And you will work six hours.

This was a brother, or brother-in-law?

This was my sister's husband.

Your sister's husband. Right. OK, so you got papers and you come to the States.

Yes. And how did you come here, by a ship?

By the ship, we come to New York. We could stay in New York. No, like I have the sister here in Cleveland.

Yes. So we went to Cleveland.

So you came to Cleveland. And she met you.

You came on the train, I bet?

Yeah, she came over there.

From New York.

Yes. We came from the train to Cleveland.

And she was there.

All right. So you came to Cleveland. And there you are, your husband and you. You already are in your mid 30s. And you have two little girls. And you have you have suitcases. You have accumulated things already.

Yeah.

And you're going to make a new life in the United States.

Yes, it was very hard.

And you're looking your husband is looking on the streets. And you're looking for the gold. And it isn't there.

Yes, no.

And we got over there so much work, my God.

When you first came here?

There was, no, I mean we left in France--

Oh, in France you left so much.

There was a good season in France. It was very good this time.

Yes, after the war, times were good already.

Very, here wasn't good. Was Eisenhower's time. The people was without work here.

Oh. So you came here and you all moved into your sister's house?

We moved here, to the time, they find for us a place where to live.

At the same house you're living in now, or no?

Oh no.

Where did your sister live when you came here?

She got her own house.



Where? Was in how was this? I forgot the name. I forgot the street.

OK. So then you got a house of your own.

Where was your first?

It took us took us a couple years.

Oh, you lived with your sister?

No we lived with the sister, a day or two.

Oh, but then who helped you find a place to live? Did any of the Jewish organizations?

Yeah, the Jewish organization helped us to find a place.

What organization, do you know?

The Jewish Family.

The Family Service. They found you an apartment maybe?

They found an apartment first. And there was over there the Black people.

Already the Black people?

Yeah, and we were so afraid. The children.

You had never seen Black people?

No.

So we was afraid. And we told them we don't want to live there. And when we came here in May, no we came here in April 8.

1957.

And the children, they went my older one, Renee, she went already to school over there. And the little one was in kindergarten. And all of a sudden, no school, no language, no nothing. So we want to have near a school. And we find a place. And they start to go to Roosevelt school. It was a good school over there.

On Lee road.

It wasn't.

No. No. that's a junior high school.

It wasn't on Lee Road. It was on the Third street, I don't know something, somewhere.

123rd?

Yes, there was Superior is. Somewhere there.

Superior through, all right, fine.

No. They started to in the beginning, she was crying, my older, Renee. She didn't want to go. You see, she did remember. She was a good student in France. She got over there they count in points. She got 10 points. 10 is very good.

The best?

Yes.

And she was getting 10s.

Yes.

So it was not a happy situation where you were living.

No, unhappy. My husband couldn't find work.

He could not find work?

There was the time was very bad here.

Yes, 1957.

1957.

And did you do some dressmaking maybe or no?

I didn't do nothing. I had small children. And I have to take them to school and from school.

Did the organizations help you a little bit or not much?

Not too much.

Did your husband, was he ever able to go to work here?

Yeah. He works where he works. One day, he didn't work the second day. He work. All the kind of works.

But did he ever get a steady job here?

Yeah, well my brother-in-law was a knitter.

A knitter?

Yes.

And he went over there and worked for knitting.

Tell me. How much older? Was your husband the same age as you? He is two years.

Two years older. I see.

He's in '12 born.

1912 he was born. So the children grew up. And did you during the war years, let's just go back to that a little bit. Did you think you would survive? Were there times you thought I can't live through this?

No. When I saw that my brothers, they were athletes.

I'm sorry. I didn't understand you.

My both brothers, they were so strong and so healthy.

Yes.

And they went.

My older brother he lost this. He said, Hitler will not leave nobody. He will take everybody.

He was sure about it. That's what Hitler wanted to do.

Yes. And he how long he could, they live. There were people what they stuck away money, but never find the money. Now they demolished houses. They want to find. The people.

So actually, only the three girls survived?

Yes, your older sister, your younger sister, and you.

Yes.

As I say, did you think you would survive this, or you just didn't know?

No.

How do you think you survived?

I don't know.

What gave you the strength and hope?

I don't know.

Were you very religious person?

Yes. I am.

You still are today. You feel that your faith in God was helpful?

Yes. Yes. Yeah, you see this is in me. Like I was raised by my aunt.

Yes, you told me. And I believe in them, in God holds his hand over me.

How beautiful.

Yes.

To have such faith.

I do.

When you first came here, what did you think about? Did you immediately join a shul, a temple?

In the beginning, it was very hard for us, very, very hard.

That life was not--

This life--

It wasn't what you expected.

Yes. Well, the children were, like I say, very small.

Yes.

And when you take children from another country, and they don't have the same language, they don't have the children to play.

Right.

It is this very, very bad.

Sure, a parent feels. You only want your children to have things nice.

We speak French. We were speaking fluently French. And they didn't got with who to play and who understood them. They just speak French. So I was with them.

Did you go to school to learn English?

Here I started. I started.

You speak very nicely.

I didn't, no in so many years. I never work with people. But you can pick up better.

That's right. When you're working. The accent stay with you how long you live.

Yes, that's true.

Children is different.

Yes.

They go to school and they pick up. They did speak French very good.

Do they now? Do they still remember the French? They remember. When my daughter Renee, she went to college, she took. She got an A.

Sure.

In French. Now, when she needed a short time, so she understands French. She can read French. She can speak now not so fluent, like she should. Yes.

So eventually you became naturalized. And the children grew up and things got to be happier.

Yes, we send them to college. We did what you could.

Did your husband finally find a steady job?

Yes.

What kind of work did he do?

He was late, when he was a cutter. He cut--

In the knitting mill?

No he was in the clothing, men's clothing. On the West side.

I see. Actually, it was something he had learned from your dressmaking.

Yes.

Right.

Yeah, and he was over there a couple of years he worked there.

It was hard for him. The older, when you are older.

He's getting older. It's not easy.

When you were older, you cannot do the same what you do when you are young.

Well, of course. Of course. So when did he stop working?

When he was 65.

I see. Well, I think that's wonderful. That you did all these things, and you were able to send both your daughters to college.

Oh, yeah.

Did you ever go to work, Freda?

No. I did--

Did you take dressmaking?

I did for a short time. And they, I did work for Franklin and Simon.

I remember that story, yes.

But did you ever do anything at home?

I did in the beginning.

Alterations or no?

I am not used to alterations.

You're used to make from the beginning.

Yes. I see.

I put in too much time. And this you cannot. It wasn't good. But you are not paid. I know I put in so much time. And what I am asking for the customer was a lot. And for me it was little.

Right. That's yes. I think the one lady come to me and she said to make two pieces. She was in Russia, and she bring a piece of material what she liked it. And her friend, they was living on Desota. And she says to me, I will do it.

I said, yes, OK. And I make her a nice two pieces, costume.

I put in a lot, a lot of work. How much she did pay, I didn't got. I'm not made to make alterations. Like I was working by Franklin and Simon. I make over there, they did like the finger, like they say. They say they never got a person what they know so good the profession.

Yes, right, right.

No, it's not pay. It's better to work somewhere else. You do less complicated work, and you are good pay.

No, I did not want to leave my children when they went for lunch come home, and to an empty house. So I sacrifice everything. Maybe I didn't do good.

No.

There are a lot of women. But with my profession I could make a lot of money.

Well, this is true. But they didn't have children. And you did.

And I, like they say in the older years, you have children you're always with them. And to this day on.

Tell me. Are your friends today people who are survivors of the Holocaust?

Very little.

I'm a person that I don't go out so often. And I don't know. The people what I did know.

You don't have friends.

Do you talk about this very often, your experiences with your friends or no?

When I, where we are, a little. They are people but they don't like to hear.

They don't want to hear these terrible things. Do you think that the Holocaust has affected your present physical health? You seem healthy but--

In the beginning, I got very bad dreams.

You dreamed terrible nightmares, of course. Of course.

For years I got this. I did run, and they run after me. And I saw everything. And now when I have some aggravation,

when I have something, I have again the dreams after so many years. And they stay in me. This will stay forever.

Of course.

I can never, never forget what.

I'm sure of that. I'm sure of that.

Do you think that survivors of the Holocaust are different from other Jews?

I think so.

In what way?

This bring them back. They always have something in, where they live, this live with you. When you are between people and then they are a moment when you are away from them, you are out.

You've had different experiences, so that your outlook is different you feel?

Yes. So we know now how this means. You have, you are wealthy. You are somebody. You have everything. And all of a sudden, you lose everything. And you lose the most important is the family. When they come, the worst thing is when it comes to a holiday, to stay the picture. I remember.

When I listen to the Jewish news, when they say the prayer I cry.

Of course. You remember when your whole family was together for a beautiful holiday and now there's so few of you.

And I say I see the picture.

Mm-hmm. Did you help anyone else to survive, Freda? Did you think that you were helpful to others?

I did.

In what way, dear?

Oh, I did help, how I could in the camps. I did.

Well, when you told me you hid your sister and her friend. You brought food to those who didn't have any.

Yeah, I remember there was once a rafle, where they knock on the door. The break the doors. And all of a sudden, I look in the window and I see a face that I know, a girl, a young girl I went there, opened the door and I let her in. And she could never forget.

Otherwise--

Do you ever hear from her? Has she lived all these years?

I don't know.

Are you in touch?

I don't know what happened to her. I am not in touch. I don't know what happened.

Are you in touch with anybody who were your friends in all these different places that you went?

There, no. No, in Israel there.

You do have someone in Israel.

Yes.

Maybe someday you'll go to see them.

I hope so.

Do you write to each other?

No.

Not very often.

Not very often, no. What I say, I have a nephew. I have a niece that she was last year here.

And you told me you just lost your sister. Your younger sister died this past summer.

Yes.

So that you actually your other sister is gone too.

The other sister, she was a nurse. She was in Poland. She came to Israel. The older sister was she was hidden by the Pole. And then there was the little baby that my brother got and the tenant what they took out, took her. And he didn't want to give her back. So my sister went to the court.

Went to where?

To court.

To court, yes.

And wanted to have the baby back.

It was her niece.

It was her niece.

Yes.

Now, she didn't get help to help her out in the boat. But they took the baby.

She was in Israel at this time?

She was in Poland after the liberation. She wasn't maybe in January.

This is when she tried to get her niece a baby from the tenant?

Yes.

Did she get her?



She lost. But she, no, she couldn't have him.

What they did, she took the baby once. And she run with her. And that man went, I got a cousin there. And they got a little girl. They took the girl. And he said if my sister will not give back the baby, he will kill the other.

Oh, dear.

So she come to my sister and say to her, Hella, give the baby back. I won't have my child.

And she gave it back.

So you don't know ever what happened to that child?

I know. Oh, sure I know. She was over there. She was very talented in music. This was she inherited from the family, because she's a beauty. And she went. And they make her for a Christian, the girl. And she went to school. And she went to school to Paris, the conservatorium there. She got her doctorate. And she met a man.

Did she play an instrument, or she sang, or what?

She piano. And she met over there somebody too in the music.

Yes, a Jewish man? No.

And they marry. And they they are not Jew. And they have--

How do you know all this that happened to her?

How I know? I know when my sister lived, the older sister. She was I put this all together. She was in Israel, my sister.

Yes.

I send to her, when I was in Paris, I sent each week something to Poland, kind of the cosmetics, the perfumes.

To the girl in Poland or to your sister in Israel?

I send to the girl too stuff.

Yes.

And she, I was thinking she will make money, sell this and help her, and she come. And also she went to Israel. And she was over there a nurse, my older sister.

Yes.

And later on, we start to communicate. I wrote her and to come to Paris to visit me. We send her a visa for three months. And she came to Paris. She was with us three months. And later, the younger sister from America, she wrote her. She said she want to have her there. She want to see her. So she went to America, and still have the visa from Paris.

Yes.

So she already, in the meantime, we came to America. So she was here in America. So everybody finally ended up here, the sisters.

Yes. And she was a nurse, and late she was sick. She got cancer.

And she married?

No.

She never married.

And the younger sister lived in Cleveland?

Yes.

And she had a child. And you just lost her this past year.

Yes. She have a daughter, and she is 33 years old.

What made you decide to share your experiences with us?

I did hear a lot. My daughter told me, of ours a friend, he came from LÃ³dz. And he did make it the same thing.

Same thing.

And when my sister died and I was over there sitting shiva, so we met. And we started talking. And my sister, she got an interview, not like me here, no just a written in the paper something.

I see.

And then they told me that I can have the same what he got, the friend. So when my sister die, and they say I am the only from the family, maybe I can leave something there.

That's right. A legacy.

People will know.

It's wonderful that you have done this. Do you have any personal message at all that you think you would like to share with us regarding the Holocaust?

No, I think you do a very nice good job. This will stay forever.

That's right. That's right. It will stay forever, Freda. And the younger generation.

Nobody, we shan't forget. Isn't that what we say? We must not forget.

This is what I always said to my children. That they should never, never forget what happened to the Jewish people.

You're absolutely right, dear.

They should always remember what we suffer. I say, when I will not be around, they should remember.

They will remember. I'm sure they'll remember. And we thank you very, very much for participating in this project. You have done, it's been very difficult I know. And we know and appreciate so much your living through this again, because it isn't easy. And we do thank you again, so very much.

Am I saying it correctly again, a Holocaust survivor. I'm Peggy Nathan. The project has been sponsored by the National

Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section. Thank you again, Freda. It was lovely. There's a Kleenex over there if you need it.