

I am Leatrice Rabinsky. We are continuing now with the interview with Freda Traub, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section.

Freda, you were telling us about your experiences in Auschwitz concentration camp, the fact that you didn't work for six weeks. What were some of the things that you and the other young girls talked about during your imprisonment in the barracks? Do you recall?

Most of the time, we didn't talk. We just sitting and waiting for the appell again, for another appell, waiting for a piece of bread. But when we talked, at the time, we talked will we survive, will we survive, will we ever come back to our home where we lived.

Oh, and if we will survive, how wonderful it will be to get a whole bread. We used to say to start from one end, at one time, finish by the other end, to be able to eat a whole bread for yourself. Because the hunger was so big and so great.

It's just the starvation was impossible to take, all you need's a little food, a bread. As I remember, you always took a bread, to have a whole bread to yourself, and one time to eat it up. We dreamed still, even as bad it was, maybe, maybe, maybe the parents are alive, maybe this. We hope someday we will see each other.

We also talked about things when we were in school. My friend told me her stories. I told her my stories, how we go to school with the friends, how we lived at home, the families, just to pass time, to pass time.

How many times a day did you have to go out to be called to the appell?

In most places, two times a day. But in Auschwitz, sometimes three times a day. But later, in other camps, it was two times a day.

Do you remember any specific blockalteste or any of the other people who were in charge of you, who perhaps were sympathetic toward you or who showed some kindness toward you?

Not in that time, but in the other concentration where I was. From Auschwitz, they send 500 woman they took, [INAUDIBLE] woman, and they send us to Ravensbrück. In Ravensbrück, we were also about four weeks. Because our destination was Mauthausen, where we were sent to work.

This was in Germany.

This was all in Germany.

Because Auschwitz was in Poland.

Yeah, that's right. This was all in Germany. Ravensbrück was very terrible, not much less than Auschwitz. The camp was really a Gypsy camp, all Gypsies were there.

They tried to steal a piece of bread. We got every day a piece of bread. They tried to steal from us. If we had it in our hands, they just came over and grabbed it. Not a Nazi did, but the Gypsies alone, they grabbed from us. It was very, very hard on us there.

But we knew that we are going to be sent someplace else to work. We just counted every day. We also were there on the appells, you know, two times a day, all the same things like in Auschwitz.

We suffered a lot in Ravensbrück. It was a very bad camp. Oh, you were in Ravensbrück? You were in Ravensbrück? Everybody knows it was very, very, very bad. But lucky we were only there a few weeks.

What were some of the things that happened to you there that were so bad?

It didn't happen exactly to me, but we were very scared. We knew that there in Ravensbrück, they experiment on the health, on the people.

Medical experiments?

Medical experiments, and we were very scared of it.

What kind of experiments did you know of?

Oh, they talk about experiments to color the eyes, [INAUDIBLE] for children, to sterilize woman, and the same, man. Many other things, which they did, a lot of medical experimenting things. So we were very scared. And well, when we were sent away from there already, we were already happy that we were going someplace else.

Do you remember somebody from Ravensbrück who maybe was kind to you at all?

No, not in Ravensbrück, not in Ravensbrück.

Were there any special people who were very close to you, who gave you some kind of friendship?

But not in Ravensbrück, I said. Because Ravensbrück, we didn't even have a place where to be. We were all in the street. It was just for the prisoners who passed there for a few days. The camp was only for the Gypsies.

So there was nobody really to help you, to do something for you. We were there this few weeks. But no one was kind to me, not there.

Later on, from Ravensbrück, the same 500 women we were, they sent us to Mauthausen.

How did you get to Mauthausen?

A railroad, also the same in those wagons, but it wasn't as terrible as it was from the ghetto to Auschwitz. No, at least it wasn't as bad as that. But it was bad, because we were all stuffed in in the wagons, and so on.

But we didn't travel too long at that time. It wasn't too long. When we came to Mauthausen, we were happy to come there because we noticed that it's not anymore like Auschwitz or Ravensbrück, only barracks and to sleep on the floor and this.

But there were, you call them pritsches, which is made like a bed, four pieces of wood put together. Everyone had his own.

You had your own bed, then?

That's, like, your own place to sleep, and we got a blanket. So it was much better. We knew we were going away to work.

We get a soup for working, which meant a lot. We also had more there conveniences to wash ourselves.

Was that right in the barracks where you slept?

In barracks?

In the barracks where you slept, did you have the convenience of washing yourself there?

In Mauthausen, it was nicer, better, yeah. We had a [INAUDIBLE] not too much, you know. There was some water there.

We could wash ourselves. We had soap. We had a towel there.

Because they really wanted us to work there. They needed the work. Because we worked in a factory, ammunition factory.

Where was that factory located, was it on the ground or underground?

I don't know. It was normal, a normal factory. We walked to work, which was very hard, about an hour and a half one way.

In the wintertime, it was very bad. We had no shoes. Some had all torn shoes, like, nothing. Sometimes I wonder how a person survived this. [INAUDIBLE] But they will say you have a coat and you catch a cold and don't go out without a scarf.

But we were happy. The morning, we had appell, the same thing, appels for an hour.

Is that to stand and be counted?

To stand and be counted, you had to stand and be counted an hour. Then we got our bread, a piece of bread to take with us. We walked to work.

What did you pass on the way to work? Do you recall what the scenery was like?

Small houses, fields, there weren't people living there. But there were no houses, no buildings. Walked on-- must have been, like, a highway or something.

Did you ever see any of the countryside people? Did they ever stare at you?

No. I don't think they even lived-- this was such a desertion place, something, like, a deserted place. Then we came to the factory. It was a very big factory.

Everyone learned something else. I remember I learned something to make very little, little screws, very tiny thing. This screw had to fit in another one, another little hole, and to fit in. We had to do a good job, to be very careful.

Did they teach you how to do that?

Yeah. They taught me how to do it. Then I did it for myself. We all worked. We were glad.

In a way, after you come from Auschwitz and from Ravensbrück, you already appreciate this. That this is wonderful. They didn't beat you so much.

You got your steady, every day, your soup and your piece of bread. And once in a while if something came in, like potatoes, you got an extra potato. I don't mean a cooked potato. I mean a raw potato, which was very delicious.

Did you ever try to take the potatoes?

We were standing in the line for the potato, and everyone got one potato. So me and another couple of girls, we decided we were going to stand another time, a second time, and maybe be lucky to have another potato. The other two girls got it, but I wasn't lucky enough.

The Nazi woman recognized me, that I was before there. She hit me so hard over my head, the first hit I felt it. But then I didn't feel anything anymore.

They told me, my friends from the same were that for two days I was out completely. They didn't believe I

would survive this. I was bleeding from my head, and I was unconscious for two days.

But when they saw me, that I became, they said now we know you will survive. You will be OK. Don't worry. Stay where you are. Don't move.

I was there for two days. I didn't go to work on the for days. I survived, again, the same. I survived.

Had to be lucky there, too, like the other two girls. Just happened she didn't recognize them. Me, she recognized. That's what I had trouble with.

But on the other hand, I had someone there who worked in the kitchen. She was always kind to me. Whenever she had a chance, she gave me a little soup.

Nobody, because no one, you know, the Nazis shouldn't see this, already told me stay there. Be there. I will be there.

She brought me a little soup. And that time, I met her there, and she was nice to me. So as I say, it wasn't so bad there. It wasn't so terrible.

I just remembered something, a little thing. I don't always say it in English. I had a wound here. [NON-ENGLISH] something, like, either it comes out but that wound.

A wound?

A wound, a very bad one here in this place. [INAUDIBLE]. This was very bad. It became very bad pain.

Was it infection?

It was infected, a real, very bad, you know. I didn't want to talk about it in the beginning. It'll go away. Because I didn't want to be taken to--

Where was it? Near your waist?

In Mauthausen.

No, no, on your body, where?

Here on this place?

On the side?

Exactly on the side in this place.

You don't know what caused it?

No, I don't know. I didn't want to talk about it. I thought it would go away. Because I didn't want to be taken to the Revier. Revier means like a sick house. Because we were always afraid from there we can be sent away already back to the crematorium or someplace, you know.

But it was very bad and I couldn't take anymore. I told the Gestapo this is.

You told the Gestapo that you had it?

Yeah, that I had it.

What did you hope that they would do for you?

They will help me, maybe. They will take me to a doctor and do something. I couldn't take anymore. The pain were too-- I couldn't take.

I'd rather die than to go on with the pain. It was impossible. There was no help.

One of the Gestapo, a woman Gestapo, was told to take me to a doctor. We walked very far, very far, it was very painful, and we came there. But when I came in, I realized what doctor this must have been.

I don't know things, what a doctor uses. I saw there a knife. I saw the other thing. But it was all primitive, or not primitive, less than primitive, like, nothing.

I showed him what it is. He said, he did tell me it will hurt a little. It won't take long. He just, like, a plain knife without anything, without any--

No anesthetic?

Nothing, who had anesthetic? He just cut out the one. I did scream, but somehow they let me scream. They didn't stop me, you know. I scream.

Then he took hint of cotton, something. It looked like cotton. I put it in it, you know, the hole should hold. Then we walked home. It was very painful.

You walked home after this surgery?

I'm many stronger than I am, you know. A person can go through so much in life, but you don't believe it. You just can't believe it happened, what's happened. I did walk home.

Then something good happened to me. I saw from far a apple on the ground. I remember, a little apple. I don't know how I did it, but I ran to the apple.

The Nazi woman didn't know what I was doing. She tried to hit me. Where are you?

She thought I'm going to run away. I said no. I showed her there's the apple.

So she let me go. I picked up the apple. To have an apple, this was a luxurious thing. I wouldn't eat the apple because this was too lucky to eat. So all the way I forgot my pain and I thought to myself, I'm going to change it for a piece of bread. I'm going to have a piece of bread.

Because the people who were sick couldn't even eat their bread. They were in the Revier, you know. I thought I'd give them the apple. This they would be able, something different to eat, and they will give me the portion of bread which they don't eat. That's what I did.

When I came home, I went to the Revier. And just the nurse, it was like a nurse there, I told her I have an apple. And with what? She gave me a piece of bread for it.

Oh, it was the best bread. Oh, my. I couldn't believe it, unbelievable. So I said it wasn't all so bad. It wasn't so painful. At least I got, for all the pain, I got a piece of bread, which was something.

So then you do have recollections of people who helped you during that time, and you were able to help each other?

There were some. There were some people who helped.

Do you remember friends who helped you?

Friends, no. I don't remember, especially, friends. But people, even strangers, did. Like, the woman in the kitchen with the soup, was a great thing she did for me. She kept me alive.

Freda, you mentioned that this was a sense of relief being in Mauthausen as compared to the conditions in Ravensbruck and in Auschwitz. Did you ever talk about that among the girls with whom you were, about the difference of what Auschwitz was like? Did you recall the crematorium and the gas chambers?

Yes, but we felt in that time, we will survive. Because if we are in Mauthausen, it's a way to survive. We won't die. After all, the war has to come to an end one way or the other.

As bad as it was, we did believe that time that we will survive, because the conditions were much easier, you know. But little did we know that as soon they heard, the Nazis, that the English were coming--

What was happening then?

Then they want to send us away. They didn't want we should be--

Evidence to the English, right.

English, whatever, and we should be, how to say, released from, you know-- they will help us.

When was this, already?

This was two months before. Because I don't know dates, that time. But it was two months--

Freda, you were telling us that the British were coming while you were prisoner in Mauthausen. Right. What happened then?

When the Nazis realized that the British are close, they tried to liquidate the camp completely. They send us, again, away. We didn't know where we were going to.

How did you evacuate?

We did know about it, that the British are close. That's why we felt very bad, terrible, that we are going, again, to be sent away someplace else. We hoped to be already liberated by that time, you know.

But we had to go. Where we're sent, we had to go. Again, we were stuffed in in those animal trains and the wagons.

We drove a longer time that time. As a matter of fact, a couple people died on the railroad. They took us to that time to Bergen-Belsen.

Did you know what Bergen-Belsen was? Had you heard about it?

I knew it's a bad place. I always compared it like Auschwitz. It's like Auschwitz. [INAUDIBLE]. But there was terrible. There was terrible.

They hit us. They hit us. Even some of them didn't give us even a piece of bread.

It came to a time, it's the first time since all the years of the war, that I really begged God that I want to die, let a bomb fell on where I am, and I couldn't take anymore.

I took it. But I just can't. The hunger was terrible. They counting us for hours, always standing on our feet. I had nobody. No one knew each other.

Wasn't your friend with you, still?

No, not anymore. Not anymore.

Did you work there?

Oh, no. We're just sitting, like in Auschwitz, sitting and waiting to get a piece of bread. Or as I say, or just to die. As I hoped everytime to die. I couldn't stand anymore on my feet. I was myself like a skeleton, you understand [INAUDIBLE].

Was there any food at all?

They gave sometimes a piece of bread. I don't remember getting a soup there. You already had to have.

But later on, I noticed I found someone. I didn't know him, but he knew me. He recognized me.

He worked, like, the place where they gave out the food. He did help me a few times with a piece of bread.

Was it somebody who had been in Łódź with you?

He said he was. He knew me, but I didn't know him. He said come here every day. This was after a couple of weeks being there, which I got.

But still, the circumstances were so terrible that I went for the bread because I was hungry and I wanted to have it. I don't want to miss it. But still, I didn't care to live anymore. I gave up. It was too much and too long.

Did you have any news about liberation? Did you have any ideas?

No, I heard the English are close. The English are close. But too close, how long will it take?

Were these rumors in the camp?

Rumors, yeah, but for those who still had a little strength, OK? I didn't have. I got sick.

I must have become very sick, but they took me to this Revier, which was hundreds, hundreds of sick people lying. In one place, there were four girls, one with the head, and two by the feet. There were people just dying every few hours or every day.

What did they do for you there?

They didn't do nothing. I just lying, you know. They didn't do nothing. Sometimes they brought me a little water to drink.

Every time they brought me a piece of bread, but I was already so bad I couldn't eat anymore. I remember this.

But every time when they took out someone from you which was dead, they brought another one. I thought maybe I'll be the next one. I wish I would be the next one to go.

All the years I wanted so much to live, to live. But then I couldn't take anymore. But it wouldn't have taken long, because I still lived.

One day I heard yelling, screaming, the English! The English! The English are here! The English! But it didn't mean anything to me.

Who was screaming?

People outside of the barracks were screaming. They were the same, the Jewish people, the prisoners, the same [NON-ENGLISH]. British are here.

They are throwing in through the windows things. For me, I thought they're throwing stones. The people, the Nazis are throwing stones.

But later I found out they threw in candy and chocolate and cigarettes and other things. But as I say, for me, it was too late. I couldn't feel anymore, enjoy.

So this was liberation for you?

This was the liberation. Do you recall when this was?

Girls running, the men, the boys singing, dancing, screaming. I didn't have strength anymore even to sit down or something.

You were lying in the--

Just lying [INAUDIBLE]. Then three people came into this barrack. I saw the two men and a woman dressed in white. I noticed they went to every pritsche, and they looked. Some pritsches, well, they bent down for a minute, and they went to another pritsche.

These were the makeshift beds, right?

What?

The beds, the pritsche was the bed?

The bed, yeah, we call it the pritsche. Call it-- I couldn't call it a bed, I tell you. I couldn't say the word bed for it. But it was, you know.

They were to every one and checked and looked. When they came to me, I noticed the two men were arguing, like. I didn't know they are doctors, but they're arguing.

They went away to another pritsche. Then one of them came back and bent down to me and made a Red Cross on my forehead.

Painted red?

Painted red across, painted a red. I didn't know exactly what he was doing at the time. But later when I looked at others, after they had taken me to a hospital. But I didn't know what's happening.

After this, they were standing, the English. Whoever had this red cross on their forehead, they took it out from the barracks. What it meant was, you see, they wanted to help, the English. But they could only do so much.

They didn't have so much space to take everybody. And then there was some no behind help, cannot be helped anymore. So they took those who they felt that they can be helped, that can get well. I was one of those lucky ones. [CROSS TALK] came back.

They thought you could be helped, right?

They took me, too, out. It wasn't exactly a hospital. It was a big building, which they made hospitals from all. This was in Bergen-Belsen. They took me to this building.

What did they do for you, Freda?

Really, they did very little. The only thing that we knew we were liberated. They didn't want to give me even too much food. They were afraid if I will eat more, I can die from the food now because my stomach couldn't take it.

So they gave me very little, a little sip, and a little this, and a bite. After a few days, after I already got more food, more bread and butter, and bread and jelly, I remember, and a good soup, and this, somehow I got better. I got better.

Do you remember anything that you may have said to them? Do you remember some of the first words you said?

Oh, I'm sure I said, if I don't remember, this is wonderful to be alive. Now I have to look for my parents and my family to get reunited. This was all already have time to think of it, I already had my mind to think of it.

But after a few days, I was told that I have tuberculosis. I had a spot on the left lung. They told me that all those sick people are going to be taken to Sweden. Sweden, they want to help. They want to nourish the sick people to health. We should come to Sweden. They said it's very good there.

For me already, the whole thing didn't make any difference. Let them do whatever they want me. But I am alive still. Let me find my parents, my family.

Was the war over by then?

Yeah.

The entire war was over?

When the English came to the Bergen. But there are still places where it was not. Where my husband was, he was liberated two weeks after me. It was later. But we were two weeks earlier. Oh, if it will be two weeks later, I wouldn't be here.

How did they take you to Sweden?

First, on a train, on beds, train. It was very nice. Was everything so clean and nice.

You had a bed, a--

Yeah, like, the train beds. Then we went by ship. Then, of course, before the ship we had to wait a few hours. We were taken off the train, so gentle and so nice with the beds.

We were waiting. To be called and the ships would come, and then we went by ship, and then, again, by train. We came to Malmö. This is the capital of Sweden.

The doctors, they checked us all. They diagnosed it how bad it is, where we should go. If we should go to a hospital, or we should go to a sanatorium.

So you have very fond memories of the people of Sweden?

The best. It's not just Malmö. They did so much for us. We are so grateful to them. I don't think there's another country in the whole world which would do what they did.

Oh, it's something we won't forget. We'll never forget. The whole countryside, everything, such honest people, such clean people, and they were so helpful to us. They were so good to us.

Anyway, I meet a doctor diagnosed that I should go to a sanatorium. I don't need a hospital, but better a sanatorium, a special for TB. They send me to Katarina home. And there, also, they made from schools, they made hospitals, but complete, like a hospital, everything.

They gave us food, as much as we wanted. We ate and we drank. There only one thing that I started to realize in that time, that whatever I eat was not kosher. And you know, I couldn't.

But I did it. This was the only food. I had to eat if I wanted to get well.

It was saving your life.

It was. My life was [INAUDIBLE]. I had to eat. After I was there for a few months and I got a little better, they sent me to another sanatorium, where there were less sick, which was Rosega. I still remember the name.

Then, when I got better, they sent me to a convalescent, which was Vikarbyn. There already, I started to realize I have to do something to have kosher food. Whatever is going to be, I already felt well and healthy enough that I don't have to eat the non-kosher things.

So I started to talk to the Swedish people for information. And you know, they told me that just about a year ago, or at six months ago, I don't remember exactly, that a new camp was opened in Farnabreick, and it's all kosher, there's only kosher food there.

So right away I registered that I want to go there. They sent me after I was convalescent, and I felt fine. Ah, the Swedish people are so good.

Was that the summer?

What?

Was that in summer of 1945 already?

Oh, it was already '46. This was already '46. This was already '46. They sent me to Farnabreick. There, I was at home.

I became more alive. I knew I have kosher food. I have prayer books. there was a life, like, for the religious people who wanted to pray, and to do, and to eat.

There was, like, a collective, you know? There was one kitchen for everybody, like a kibbutz, you would call it. The one was a cook. The other worked in the kitchen. The other worked here, and cleaning--

So everyone had a responsibility?

Responsibility, yeah, but there were some who didn't, who just enjoyed themselves. However, I was one of them. I didn't do much. Just we ate and drank.

But one thing, education came back. There were a couple of teachers there. They stuck us with whoever wanted. They had every day a few hours' education, also Jewish education.

We also learned before Swedish. When we went to sanatoriums, all we did were the Swedish language, which we loved. I used to speak very well. Because I was young at the time. I caught the language fast. I used it there.

But after a while, when you start using it, I completely forgot. There are only three words which I probably will never forget.

What are those?

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] I love you. And I also will never forget the word pojke, which means a boy. Because our son, I got married in [INAUDIBLE], was born pojke.

But anyway, where was I, so there, really, I started to live again. We started now, we started to order to find out about my parents and my relatives. So we had in Sweden books came, I don't know where they

printed them, from all the survivors. We looked at the names whoever was in the name, we knew.

Beside this I remember that I had an uncle and an aunt in Israel who left in 1937. So I asked the Swedish people there-- also there was a [NON-ENGLISH], Jewish people who worked with us, too, you know, Swedish Jewish people. They helped me to find the address.

I remember it was B'nai B'rith. My uncle was living. They found the address. They sent that telegram to him.

It didn't take long. I got a telegram back. They are there, and that a letter is in the mail, and they were happy that I am alive.

So I knew one thing. If someone else would be alive from my family, they all would write to my uncle. Because my whole family knew that he is there. So I always waited. Maybe someone I'll hear from someone else through my uncle.

Even the books there was made, I was still a possibility. Maybe, maybe, all the years I hoped maybe. But I never heard of anybody.

Did you think of going back home to Łódź?

To Poland.

No.

You didn't want to go back.

I only had bad memories when I think back of it. The Poles were not nice. They are not nice to us at all. I felt I don't want to see them again.

So you thought if there were survivors from your family, they would have contacted your uncle.

They would contact my uncle, whoever would survive. But of course, so now I understood afterwards, my sisters and brothers were very little. My youngest brother was one-year-old when the war started. How can you expect children to survive?

But then I still hope maybe my father, maybe my mother is still young people. I was the oldest. They could have survived. It could have been. It could have been.

But it wasn't. So it was hard to realize that you really have nobody. You're all alone.

What decision did you make then about your future life?

So far, I knew I'm in Sweden. But luckily enough, there in the camp in Farnabreick, I met a man which I fell in love with him. It was my husband. He fell in love with me.

When was this, in 1946?

'46, at the end of '46, the end of '46. We saw each other, of course, every day. Because we were together in that same camp.

He was also a survivor of the concentration camps?

Yes. The same, he was in different camps. He is one of 10 children. He has one brother who lives now in New York.

So the brother was very sick. He had tuberculosis very badly. So he asked the people in Bergen-Belsen, he wants to go with these people. He himself was also sick, but not so bad that he had to go there. But he said

he wants to be with his brother.

So they send him with his brother. And I was very happy to have him. Because you see in Sweden, there were very few men. There are all girls.

Let's see, after Farnabreick, we traveled to work to Stallarholmen, it was like a camp, but a good camp. We worked there in a paper factory. My husband also came there. So we were, again, together.

And then in Stallarholmen, we got engaged. But the thing was it was very special to me, meant so much. Because there were very few men in Sweden, very few. We were about 80 girls, 80 some girls in this camp, and we only had 10 men.

Though it was very hard to get married in Sweden. So afterwards, they sent a ship with girls to Germany, because there were more boys. They sent to Israel a ship. There were also more boys. So we got married in Sweden in 1947, March 25, 1947.

In what city in Sweden?

In Sweden, this was in Huskvarna. Because after this, we went to Susquehanna to work for a brush factory. You already made more, made a living, you know? It wasn't something. We didn't become rich, but we had our own money. We could live our own way. But we are still together in one big community, one kitchen.

A year later, our son was born, close to Huskvarna, the town [NON-ENGLISH].

You had your own little apartment?

No, not really. Everyone had our own. We had our own room. Because all of this belonged to the factory where we worked.

So let's say we were married, so we had our own room. But all the others had, like, three girls in one room, three men in one room. But at least we lived, it was a normal kind of life. We had water in the house and sinks and toilets. It was a normal time of life.

So finding him, I found my life. I had someone to take care of me, and we were happy that we found each other.

You had a little baby.

Then we had a baby. And then we decided we want we want to go to America.

What made you choose America?

I did hope that life will be a little easier. We went through so much that I really looked to have it a little easier if we can. We will work, we'll this, but it won't be as bad as in the camps, you know.

We knew America is a good country, a nice country. We were lucky to get affidavits from one who left to America before us, it's a Rabbi Meisels. He sent us affidavits from Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland.

Had you known him before?

This Rabbi Meisel, yes, we did know him. He sent us papers to come to America.

Right. That's the rabbinical--

A college here,

--college, right?

Yes, in Cleveland. That's why we came. The baby was six weeks old when we came here.

You came straight to Cleveland?

No. We came first to New York. We were there a couple months. We really wanted to stay in New York, because we only knew New York, New York, New York. Everyone wants to stay in New York.

But you couldn't have everything. Yes, this, of course, I forgot the most important, who sponsored all of this was the Jewish Family Service. They brought us here.

I don't know if as far as the travel from Sweden to America, but after we came here, it was a Jewish Family Service who took care of us. They brought us here.

How did they help you get started here?

They helped us a lot. First of all, they put us in a house. It was a single house with a few bedrooms. We had our own bedroom. We still had a kitchen together with two others.

In the beginning, my husband worked just-- yeah, we came here, my husband came here as a student. And I came as a visitor with my baby. So we didn't have anything how to make a living, nothing. You know nothing professional to make a living.

I remember my husband said listen. I will paint. Everybody, anybody can get some paint. He did paint for a couple of years. But he realized, the friends started to tell him, this is not for you a profession.

Why don't you just try to tell them, you know what, we are shochet.

That's a ritual slaughterer.

Right. This is something, you know.

Meat and fowl.

You are Orthodox. This is something that you should get into. At the beginning, my husband didn't care so much for it. But after a while, it was a opening for inspector in Swift Company here in Cleveland, the Swift Company, and he worked for them.

But before this, I had my son in Sweden. I had here a girl, then another girl.

So you had brought the baby over. Then you had two more children.

Two more, very nice children, very good children, good to us, good to him, and very Orthodox, all three of them. My son graduated from the Telshe Yeshiva here.

From that same rabbinical seminary?

Right.

My oldest son-in-law was also a student. From this, he also graduated yeshiva. My other son graduated in Israel from a college, a Hebrew college.

So you got your start through the Orthodox community here.

But really, the Jewish Family Service, they helped us a lot. They helped us a lot. They gave us our first start when we didn't have yet nothing. They supported us. They paid us.

The Jewish community was very nice. We are very happy that we came afterward to Cleveland. The beginning was hard on us because we thought it's all in New York. We can only live a Orthodox life in New York.

But here is a beautiful Orthodox community. I have all my friends are Orthodox people. I have other friends, too, but most of them. We lead our life the way, really, our parents did, and their parents before them.

You've had a remarkable experience, Freda. Let me ask you about telling the story of your life during the Holocaust. Have you and your husband shared these experiences with your children over the years?

When they were little, we didn't talk about it. We felt they are too little to understand. But as older they grew, we realized they grow older and we grow older. It should not be forgotten.

After all, my whole family perished in the concentration camps and my husband's. They should know. They became older, like 14 years, for example, we started to talk to them about it.

Even now, in the best of circumstances when we meet, we still talk about those things. I always say it was a miracle that I survived, as thousands of others in different ways [INAUDIBLE]. Because it's really unbelievable something to think that a person was in Auschwitz, and was in Bergen-Belsen, and was in Ravensbruck, and still survived the war. It's really a miracle. We do believe in God very much.

Do you attribute a great deal of your survival to your beliefs, Freda?

I do. Because I always believed, even in the worst times, I believed in God. That's how I raised my children. I wanted them to become good Jewish children, good religious Orthodox Jewish children. They did. They did become. Thanks God for this.

How do you feel your Holocaust experiences have affected your life today?

It's affected me that I don't forget this. I don't want to forget this. It made me realize that life is short. You never know what tomorrow brings, if this happened in such a way.

So I believe in two things. If you can, to do good things in life to help others, to help others. Help yourself as much as you can, to help.

We're very grateful to you, Freda Traub, for having shared your experiences.

Thank you.

This is Leatrice Rabinsky. Our Holocaust survivor today has been Freda Traub. This project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section.