United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Suzanne Foldes
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PREFACE

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Transcribed by Shelly Lind and Julianne Mitchell, National Court Reporters Association.

SUZANNE FOLDES
January 25, 1996

Question: The following is an interview of Suzanne Foldes [ph]. It is taking place on January 25th, 1996 in Silver Spring, Maryland and is being conducted by Gayle Schwartz [ph]. Could you tell us your full name?

Answer: Suzanne Foldes [ph], with the middle initial M. for Martha.

Q: And your maiden name?

A: Was Morway [ph].

Q: And where were you born?

A: In Miskolc [ph], Hungary.

Q: And when were you born?

A: June 23rd, 1921.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about your family, who made up your family?

A: It was a very small family. I was a only child. My father then already came back from two years of World War I in Russia, and after that two years as POW. My mother was from the other part of Hungary and they got married right after World War I where the country was split between two parts, Communist part and a non-Communist part. And they had to start all over after that again. But they had been very successful. My father as a businessman was very, very well off.

Q: What kind of business was he in?

A: They had men clothing which entailed tailoring which entailed upper coats and suits of every fashion. Not [haphhazard ?] like here. That was the line of my first husband's

family. But they were strictly men clothing and they were three partners to it, three young men who learned the trade together and at the same place and became very good in the trade.

Q: Would you describe your family as upper class or middle class?

A: Middle class, and my father was really a self-made man. He was the son of a [sem?] religious teacher who had a lot of children and constantly moving on from one place to the other where there were enough Jewish boys to teach and prepare. So while my father was the oldest boy, he went out and had no chance of education, formal education, but he was working only that his younger brothers all should have and he was able to give that to them and was always [shortening?] the whole family. Not that it meant too much of a -- how should I say -- really not miss anything because of that. It was different in my mother's parents' case. My mother's parents were the richest wholesalers in Watz [ph] where they lived, which changed drastically in the 1930s when my mother's sister married a man who ruined the families, so much so that they left the town and moved up to Budapest and didn't want to be seen and known by nobody that they are having financial problems they didn't have because their sons and daughters made sure that they should not miss anything, but, of course, they were not in the way they used to be and they were suffering -- they were ashamed not to live the life what originally was meant to be lived by them.

Q: Can you describe the town that you lived in? How big was the town?

A: Miskolc [ph] is the capital of Northern Hungary. It's a big well, well run place which had a lot of factories around it. So business was always a capital place where people came from the whole surrounding. And it had over 10,000 Jews.

Q: Out of -- do you know what the overall population --

A: It was 60,000 population, which came -- became later 100,000 with the outer parts growing into it. The -- the Jewish community had different synagogues, from orthodox to where the rabbi only spoke Yiddish, to another one which had a rabbi who had the doctorate and spoke Hungarian, and the third one which was so religious a small-town religious like Southmar [ph] is and they lived separately in their own little ghetto within it. Within the --

Q: Did you have a large extended family in the town?

A: My father's family lived there. He had sisters and brothers and, of course, the sisters' and brothers' children.

Q: Did you get together with the family on holidays and --

A: Not really. Not really. But yes, of course, we went to visit them in the synagogue. Yes, we met them time to time. Of course we went to visit at their house. But it was not a close relationship. My mother and her in-laws were just fine but in a cool way. It never warmed up to a level where they were really fine with their family, and so, of course, I was not part of the family there.

Q: How religious was your family? What kind of religious background did you have?

A: We had strictly orthodox kosher house, but it was mainly to in respect of the parents who wouldn't have eaten otherwise at our house. And then I was 17 and both of my set

of grandparents died within a year. After that it was still kosher because they were used to having their ways, but it was no such thing anymore that I couldn't bring into the house something what before couldn't be brought in.

Q: Did you celebrate holidays, --

A: Oh, sure.

Q: -- religious holidays and --

A: Oh, sure.

Q: -- observe Shabbat?

A: Yes. Well, observe Shabbat, yes, but my father's store was open. It wasn't open only on [shoppershu] and the three days of the high holidays. Yes, my --

Q: Did you go to Hebrew school? Did you have any religious training?

A: There was -- there was in -- not Hebrew school, but in the regular school where we went we had a teacher come in and give us twice-a-week religious lessons which was not taken too seriously, neither by the congregation to send a proper teacher, nor the children who, of course, went as much for it as the families went for it. But it was more than the American children had.

Q: What kind of school did you go to? Was this a public school?

A: No, none was public school. I first -- elementary school I went to the Jewish elementary, which was huge. It was for 1,000 children, which meant up to six grades they had. I went there four grades and from there I went to the Protestant gimnazium because that was the school to go to. The Jewish children had to pay double of the

quarter. The Catholics one-and-a-half times only. But we were different, definitely different, but we were allowed to go at least.

Q: What -- what part of the school was Jewish, do you remember, approximately?

A: Well, it depended on classes.

Q: Yeah.

A: My class, out of the 50 we had 18 Jewish girls and we were fighting because by the time we grew -- we were growing into first [Jewish low Hitler] and some girls in the summer went to Germany to camp, others had the Nazis of Hungary with rings on their hand and we were fighting fistfights with them. [They have -- with their debt].

Q: Mm-hmm. Um, what about your friends? Did you have --

A: The friends were Jewish.

Q: Were Jewish?

A: Not true, because I did have one or two non-Jewish friends, but they were not that close because the children could have been very close and we went to school together and everything was fine, but the parents of that group did not really want their daughters to mix so much with the Jews, so we were not kept very close with them.

Q: Did you live in a Jewish neighborhood?

A: No.

Q: So it was a mixed neighborhood?

A: It's a very mixed neighborhood.

Q: Was there any problem in the early -- obviously we'll get to the '30s later on, but in the beginning was there -- do you recall any problem?

A: No, there was not.

Q: (Inaudible) -- child?

A: Actually there was no problem where we lived until 1944 when they pushed us in the ghettoes.

Q: Okay. And did you have any hobbies?

A: Oh, God knows. I wouldn't have called it hobbies.

Q: Other interests besides school?

A: I believe that my life is depending on that we go to the Olympics. I was a sports person and yes, I was prepared for the 1936 Olympics and Hitler didn't want me.

Q: In what sport?

A: Gymnastics.

Q: Gymnastics. So you took that very seriously?

A: Very, very seriously, and I was very talented too.

Q: And you had -- did you have private instruction?

A: No, but I belonged to a sport club of which teacher was my teacher at school, too, so we were just going into that and get all the meets what sportsmen have right there. We had sports clubs there. We had training grounds there.

Q: And you thought -- and it was thought that you were good enough to possibly qualify for the --

A: I was.

Q: That high?

A: Was expected that I will qualify for the high school, the academic that I would be going there, but, of course, Jew couldn't go there by the time.

Q: But you were of the caliber to be able to compete. Yeah. Um, what -- did you belong to any youth groups?

A: Yes, but it was unorthodox way because the Girl Scouts were not supposed to have Jews, but the Girl Scout leader, the teacher leader, wanted me to go along with them because I was so good and I was ready to pull the kids up if they had difficulty going up on a mountainside, so I was with them.

Q: So you were a member of the non -- the Girl Scouts?

A: An unofficial member, because officially I couldn't be. A Jew couldn't be.

Q: And how did you -- you were a young girl. How did you feel about that? Did that bother you --

A: Probably.

Q: -- that unofficially --

A: Probably didn't even realize that that's holding me back from anything, because it didn't hold me back. It was probably more showing that my friends are in Jewish communities and not there, but I was really comfortable until I -- I was part of it.

Q: Yeah. Did you belong to any Zionist youth groups?

A: No. No. There was one, and I don't know why, but they were only boys, men, and there was a tennis club which was Zionist. We went sometimes to play on their courts, but that was a (inaudible). We belonged to them as friends but we never part of the -- as a organization. Pardon me.

Q: Okay. It's 1933 and Hitler has come into power. You were only 12, so you were young. Did you -- were you or your parents aware of situations changing?

A: I have in my memory a picture what I will never forget. My father sitting on the side of his bed going to sleep and on eleven o'clock the evening when the radio came through that Hitler became --

Q: Chancellor?

A: -- the chancellor, and I can hear his voice clearly: "That's the end for us." And that memory is so clear in my mind. I can see him in his underwear. This is the nightshirt. Clearly, clearly see him.

Q: Did he talk to you about this?

A: He made this as a statement to my mother and me as we were listening to the radio. Came through and --

Q: No, but I meant after that, did he talk to you about Hitler? Did you talk it over with him?

A: I am sure we were talking a lot about him and everything.

Q: Do you -- do you remember as a young girl being frightened about this man Hitler?

A: Not then. Not --

Q: Not at that point?

A: Not at that early age, but later when I was listening to his tirades.

Q: On the radio?

A: On the radio.

Q: How did that make you feel?

A: Sick. Sick in the stomach. And we kept wondering, how can these people believe in that? How can they go with him so blindly? But -- the only thing was, you know, that we thought that we are so embedded Hungarians that nothing can come to us and nothing can hurt us, and awful for all these people who are bothered by it. But it cannot happen to us.

Q: What languages did you speak?

A: I started to speak German before I spoke Hungarian because my father felt that a person is as many persons as languages he speaks. So they spoke to me in German only until I was five. Of course I understood in the meantime Hungarian because we had a maid. We had this coming to the house, that coming to the house, but they weren't talking to me in Hungarian until I was five, so by the time I go to school I should be really good by children and I should speak that language too.

Q: And your school was taught in Hungarian?

A: Yes. Although the second grade we speak -- picked up German and then, of course, in gimnazium we picked up right away German as first grade, and the third grade French, and I had also private instruction by then in French, and at 16 I started to learn English, British English, and in the meantime I had Latin, too, under -- in everything from fifth grade to eighth and we had [???] all three languages -- or four languages: Hungarian, German, French and Latin.

Q: Anything that you specifically remember in the middle '30s that you want to talk about, any specific incidents, or did life just go on --

A: Our life went on --

Q: -- in a normal sense?

A: -- except that around us there were already ugly happenings.

Q: Such -- that you were aware of?

A: Where we were very aware of.

Q: Such as?

A: A good friend of our son, who right now lives in Syracuse and he is now 85, 86, was able yet to get to the University in Debrecen and he may have said something, I don't know anymore how it started, but a boy who -- whose family turned much earlier, so he felt that he is not a Jew, said something of humor, [???] and he gave the guy a slap in his face. They threw him off from the university. And his father, who was so proud that his son was able to make it, got a heart attack on that account and died. So, yes, that was quite close. And yes, the -- by the time we were 15, 16, and started to go with boys who were older than us and they couldn't go to the university or they were in law school, and that was a lesser degree school than the other universities were. They already had problems and the first Jewish laws started to come in effect in 1938. It was already time when a lot of this was -- had to let go from companies because it had to be just a percentage of Jews. And from there on it was coming closer and closer.

Q: How was your father's business affected in 1938?

A: In '38, not yet.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: But by 1940, '41 it was affected. They did not get all the merchandise they wanted to buy. Not everybody was allowed to sell, and once the war broke out, it was a good

excuse why they are excluding some but why is less merchandise available, so the Jews should be getting less. The real problems came in 1942 when -- in 1940, first my father was to go to work camp, but that was a very minor and --

Q: We'll talk about that. I just want to go a little bit chronologically.

A: Okay.

Q: Were you aware of Kristallnacht?

A: Most probably, yes, but I cannot now tell you when I --

Q: Heard about it?

A: When and how.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: But it was with me. I knew about it later. But again, it was something awful happening somewhere very far. The closer the more vivid, tragic effects came when Hitler came into Vienna and the Viennese Jews, who were original from Hungary, tried to come back and came back in droves and were telling us what's happening there and -- or so they couldn't go back.

Q: And you were 17 years old, so what were your -- do you remember what your -- some of your thoughts were then?

A: By then we were very involved and we tried to help these people and we made -- instead of the winter balls and the musicals and big entertainments, we started to get monies together, help them to get the people who did not have a trade to learn a trade so they should be able to make it, and we tried to help them. From there on we were actively trying to help them.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: And there were always more and more to be helped. Plus more and more people were taken out to work camps. First inside Hungary to work, which is -- entailed road building and you name everything what was not meant for a Jew to do, and later they took them out to go out to Poland and Russia with the armies and, of course, many, many stayed there forever.

Q: Um, so then the war broke out. Do you remember that, hearing --

A: In 1938, September 1st --

Q: 1939.

A: '39. Excuse me. Sure. '39. I was glued to the radio and listened to Italian news because that -- I could get Milano on my radio and I was translating from the Italian, which was so close to my Latin, which I knew then very well, to the family what the rest is talking about. Yes, we were very aware of it, and few days later the Polish people started to come through. We had taken in people from the street.

Q: Into your house?

A: Into the house.

Q: Did you live in a private house or an apartment?

A: It was a big apartment house, but it was a low -- 'cause the wall side was always a huge apartment and the side was smaller apartments.

Q: Right in the center of town or on the outskirts?

A: No, it was not outskirt, but it was not center center. It was rather a nice area where parks were around us.

Q: So you took people --

A: I like it.

Q: You took people into your --

A: We found a family, a (inaudible) who came with a young boy whom they didn't know whose child he was, only he was a private child on the road. And they picked him up and it was -- they were -- the woman wanted to give us some gold items of what she was carrying in gratefulness that we let her have a bath and the child and change and wash their things. They had nothing but what they had on them. They were running. Most of them didn't want to stop before Paris. They wanted to go at least that far, that smartly, but they were coming in droves. There were thousands and thousands of people. And the stories what they had to tell was just plain unbelievable. And there were a few earlier who came over from that area, which is outside of the Hungarian border towards the east, which was [routine?] land, halfway belonging sometimes to Romania, sometimes to Poland, and this was very orthodox Jews, so it was a pocket of very orthodox Jews lived there, and they slowly started to come over into safer place as Hungary was. At this point now they started to get them together who wasn't a citizen and were tossing them out of the border. And the stories what we heard that they are putting them right to death. And some girl, she was around 19, saw her family being killed and she was -- she -- she fled because she was so afraid of what -- and realized later that she's [laying down?] under the bodies and she was able to come back to tell all this. But again, if you asked my father or anybody in our [?], that cannot happen to us because we are Hungarians. We

had put together the citizenship papers, this kind of paper, that kind of paper. We were almost as proud of being Hungarian than the Mayflower Americans.

Q: So at that point your father didn't consider it time to leave?

A: No. He never did. Never consider leaving. I wish they did. My mother wanted once and not because of that. He had -- she had absolutely no such bad feelings about it, but then the American [?vertswere?] was in 1938, '36? I wouldn't know now.

Q: '36.

A: Probably '36.

Q: '36.

A: She wanted to come over. She wanted to see that because she really liked the idea (inaudible) and my father said, my wife will be there working there for others. [?quona?], what kind of -- never anything happened to it.

Q: So you were -- while this was happening and these refugees are coming in and telling the stories, you're still at school. Were you still a student?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And now let's --

A: But I was not in school anymore, then I also had to learn a trade because it became --

Q: When did you finish school?

A: In 1939.

Q: 1939. Okay. And you had to learn a trade you said?

A: Because it became clear that even if they -- my parents could find -- and my mother had found -- somebody who was in big job and could bring me into the academy, they

would kill me in a year because they would just not let me live there. They would just make me overdo it and my life was in danger if I went there. So I just had to give up. And then --

Q: Can we go back to --

A: Okay. Sorry.

Q: Just interested in 1936 when you realized you couldn't be in the Olympics. What were your thoughts?

A: Oh, it was a pain. It was a --

Q: Here you were trained?

A: I was trained at that same year that -- not the same year. The year before there was a -- that club which I belonged to became 150 years old and one of the arch princes came from -- from -- (inaudible) came for whom we had to make a big show. Everybody was to get a golden --

Q: Medal?

A: -- medal. And they were saying there loud that everybody who participated got a gold medal and then -- that was early summer and we already went back to school and there was nothing of it. It turned out that for the Jews they didn't give the medal. Jews couldn't get it. So, no, it was a pain. And yes, it brought the action, of course, and I didn't want to participate anymore in any of the game, but because I was a good friend with this teacher who was our coach, I still did and I still did everything mature, but the feeling wasn't in there anymore.

Q: Um, okay. Let's jump ahead back to 1940, I guess we were.

A: Well, just to finish that thought. For 40 years I didn't do any sports. I just couldn't bring myself to, so I became a couch potato in that sense. It was a reaction.

Q: You were talking about 1939, 1940, and hearing these stories and the refugees coming in, and then you started to learn a trade. What did you -- what trade was that?

A: It was -- the trade was fitting into our future. The – my first husband's family, as I mentioned, he was in (inaudible) shirt business, so I learned how to make custom-made shirts, pajamas, elegant underwear for men, and I went through that so if --

Q: Did you go to a training school?

A: No. There was a school, but beside the school you had to go for one year into a shop to learn the trade and you had to --

Q: Had you gone to the school first?

A: No. During the year when you went to the shop, every second afternoon I had to go for two hours to the school too, but that was it.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: Not even serious thing. It was just telling you what a worker is expected to do.

Q: Mm-hmm. And you're still living at home at this point?

A: Oh, yes. And my first husband, we were in love. I think I was 16-and-a-half when I met him.

Q: How did you meet him?

A: In the first ball that I was introduced, after midnight, the midnight dance, five young men came over, were introduced by one of them who knew me, and out of the five, two became my husband.

Q: Oh, my. Oh, my. Um, so you were working and living at home?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then what was the next change or --

A: I got married.

Q: Oh, when was that?

A: First of all, the first change that might interest you was 1940 when my father was taken to this work camp I mentioned to you.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: Which was only for a summer long, and the C.O. was my Latin and history teacher, who was really very nice gentleman and was suffering from this idea that he has to be now bossing this all Jews. These men were already in the late fifties. What they were there for, it was not for work. They were just there to be killed and the put-down, the shame on them. Nothing else. (Pause.)

(Tape one, side two.)

Q: Tape one, side two. And you were talking about how your father had to go off in the summertime to a labor camp. What was your thoughts about seeing your father having to go away, to be taken away?

A: We kept going with him. It was some 60 miles from where we lived.

Q: You went with him?

A: And every day we taxied out there to be with him. We didn't let them go. We didn't let them be alone. But you have to live as then we were still very much in charge of what we wanted to do.

Q: This is summer of 1940?

A: 1940. Yes.

Q: Did you have contact with him when you got there?

A: Yes.

Q: You could talk to him?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: What kind of work did he do?

A: Practically nothing. It was just to sit around in a dusty place, to stand up and stay at the (inaudible) -- and sit --they were really just annoying the people and didn't let them do what they wanted to do, they supposed to do in their own businesses. Just pulled out.

Q: What happened to your father's business while he was away?

A: Well, we tried to keep it according to their orders moving on. They have plenty of good and dependable employees to run it, and it didn't last long. It was some six weeks I (inaudible) told you about, but it was something what you don't forget 'cause the little peasant man who's now -- God knows what kind of rank he has. He is so old. He doesn't know what to -- who these people are. He only knows that I am now in charge to tell them that now it's time to go to sleep and now to wake up and now make your bed and things what they haven't done already for last 30 years or so.

Q: What was the name of the location of the labor camp?

A: Hatvan, H-A-T-V-A-N.

Q: And did you bring him anything when you would go visit? Did you bring food or --

A: Most of the time we still went there to restaurants, we were able to get here. We could order people to bring when we come next day this kind of food, fruit, whatever they needed. It was rather easy to take care of them there.

Q: And then he came back?

A: Yeah.

Q: And resumed his work?

A: Sure.

Q: And you were, um, still living, you said, at home?

A: Yes. I lived home until I got married, then actually even after that because --

Q: When did you get married?

A: 1942.

Q: Oh, 1942?

A: March of 1942.

Q: Anything else in 1940? Any more restrictions that you felt? Were you restricted?

A: We were already restricted. If -- I couldn't go to the university. If I had to work now as -- near what the sewing machine, that was not what I was made up for, made for.

Q: Yeah. Any restrictions on hours, being outside?

A: No, not --

Q: Not at that point?

A: No, not that yet. You see, the war did not start seriously while the Germans went ahead. The problems --

Q: Hungary was an ally of the Germans?

A: Yes. But then they were coming back after Stalingrad. That's where the war came (inaudible) us.

Q: So now 1940 went on after your father came back and you were working 19 --

A: I think another Jewish law came which made things a little bit more insecure, but again, this -- all these was not affecting me, the girl, in that comfy home. And having my husband then, we were very optimist. Very, very optimist.

Q: And your husband's name?

A: Paul Barkovich (sp).

Q: Paul Barkovich. Okay. And now it's 1941. Things are going on as they were. In 1942 you said you got married?

A: Yes.

Q: Did your life change? You said you stayed living at home?

A: Well, we stayed living at home because -- because of the war. There were no more buildings going on, so there was no apartment available. And my in-laws gave us a lot on which the two boys -- they had two sons -- should build for themself modern homes as the war comes to an end, and again it's a possibility which we could comfortably wait out in my parents' house. And we lived there together with them.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: But six weeks after my wedding they took my father out now, and now they took all these -- all the men -- not only all the men, all the professional people and the business – the better business people. The ranked business, because we are ranking everything. There's a layer up there and another layer and a third layer. So not the -- not to

(inaudible) to camp. (Inaudible) state. The bosses went to camp, but now they were taking them out to [?] and they did not come back for another 16 months. After 16 months, we were able to pull enough strings to bring the older ones together. My father was the 58 and close to 60. What do they want to do to these men? And then --

Q: Did you have any, um, communication with your father while he was away during those 16 months?

A: Yes. These -- these Hungarian peasants who were now over them, who were giving rank and they were -- how should I put it -- put in charge over them kept coming back home for a visit to the officer's house. The officers should -- and each time we were able to bribe them to bring letters and to bring them letters and also some food and some clothing when winter came. I mean, when they went away it was June. They called them in in May, and I think by June 10th they were not in the country. And some of them, the younger professionals in one group, were sent straight to -- oh, God. Now you better stop that machine because -- so these young professionals were [?state?] sent on minefields instead of [dogsaur].

Q: Do you remember where your father -- do you know where your father was taken specifically?

A: Yes, he was in barmitzva (inaudible) in the Ukraine.

Q: And, um, that was for 16 months you said? So what did you and your mother do, and your husband?

A: We tried to run the business and, of course, these ladies never had any word in the business, so whatever they did and whatever -- the way they had seen life, because you

could not -- and these -- our three old men would never have thought of holding back merchandise, not to sell it, to keep the money's value, and, of course, the ladies were happily selling out everything and then when they couldn't get merchandise for it, then my mother's brother came down, who was the lawyer, anyway lived in Budapest, and they made a deal with him that he's buying a condominium apartment in Budapest on that money so the value. When the old men came home and heard about that, they were, how can you do such a thing? They ruin the business. They were running four stores. My parents' business was such that they were the first chain store in this line. They had stores in three different cities in the -- in Hungary too. So they just couldn't believe that what the -- what these women are thinking, and, of course, they -- they were not how -- they were too honest, too straight to know how -- how to live during war time.

Q: You -- you had enough food and --

A: Yes.

Q: -- your health was good --

A: Yes.

Q: -- at this time?

A: We were able to do everything.

Q: And your husband was still with you?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes.

Q: And then the next change?

A: 1944.

Q: Well, okay. Then your father came back?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Right. And he --

A: They took over and they just lived their life the way that they meant to supposed to do.

Q: And you stayed with your husband with your parents?

A: Yes.

Q: And your husband worked in his father's business?

A: Yes, and I was there with him.

Q: Right. And were you also now getting reports from what was happening in other parts of Europe, 1942, '43?

A: Sure. Sure. Except that, you know, but you're talking about getting news or what's happening somewhere. Yes, you hear about everything, but history is being painted differently by different people. If you pick up two history books, they will not see the same thing. And so we did not get only what the Germans allowed to get and the Hungarians allowed to get, except when I was -- as told you, when you listen to Free Europe, you practically play with your freedom because if they catch you on it, then they jail you, but that was the only way to try to get some information, and that information was not true information either. That was propagandA: So we -- we pedaled through that.

Q: How was your father's health when he came back from 16 months?

A: Well, he was a sick man since 1920. When he came back from Russian POW camp, he was not a healthy man anymore and he didn't become healthier during that time, except it helped him that he lost a lot of weight. He was a overweight man before and definitely in that sense it was a good way of losing weight. Well, he was not a healthy man and he did not act healthier. But he was able to work.

Q: Now comes 1944.

A: Now comes 1944, and 1944 was quite a year. What I didn't tell you, that very soon after I got married I became pregnant, and my husband, rest in peace, was so smart. He said, we have plenty of time. We are so young. I don't want you to have a child and leave it here and I being taken out. I don't want to leave a war widow and this child goes. So my father's peasant soldier who was coming back from the front was asked by my father to see us all, that he wants him to bring picture of all of us, not picture picture, but that he spoke to us, each and every one of us. So because I was in bed, they had to bring him up to my house, and my father kept asking enough questions from that man that what the man didn't know why I'm in that bed. He figured out and wrote us back awful letter, what did I dare to do. Anyway, I just wanted to tell you that we went through that, too. My husband has a sixth sense that this is not the time. Then while my father was still out there, the Italians had stepped out of the war, and that brought to us hope that now they're falling apart and now we don't have to hold out too much longer. Still nobody, so -- and nobody could imagine that the Germans coming, and even if they coming that they can do anything to us. So when they came in on March 19th and they arrived, we were very organized. They organized the Jewish leaders of the city to give them names. They

organized the Jewish (inaudible) to tell them that there's nothing to worry about and they are having guarantees that we just give the Germans every half and nobody will bother us. And then they needed apartments and we were put into the ghetto, and in the ghetto a officer of the army who was in charge of this work camps came into the ghetto and pulled all these men out hoping that if he puts them in the camp that we're safe then. And he knew that the best will be taken out from the country and he hoped that with these he saves them they can stay in the country, and he did. He did it quite wrong from May to December when [sourshit] took over, and then when in Budapest they found the last ones and pulled them altogether, he helped them to safe places.

Q: When was the ghetto formed in your city?

A: In May.

Q: In May. And, um, what -- what was your first impressions when you saw the Germans? Do you remember that?

A: Tragedy, tragedy, tragedy. We were very, very scared. But again, the scariness of it was that they are there. The scariness of it was that they can do harm to people, that they can -- there. (Inaudible) there. But that they can't take out somebody from the country but still did not.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: Just did not come to possibilities. Not the very latest from the city ghetto, from where my mother, my father, and my husband was taken out now. Mostly women stayed behind were taken out now to a outside-of-the-city ghetto, which was a brick factory, and in that brick factory they not only made us wait, but they pulled altogether from the

whole area. So some 60,000 Jews were taken out from Miskolc from that brick factory to Auschwitz.

Q: Um, yeah. So how long were you in the -- the first ghetto in the beginning?

A: Almost two months.

Q: Two months?

A: No, no, no, that was less. Probably just about five weeks, but during that time the gendarmerie was beating all of the Jews, the secrets where they had put their monies and the --

Q: Valuables?

A: And that was everyday affair that they did not come out alive from there, and some who knew that they could not handle that killed themself before going in there.

Q: Was your family questioned at all?

A: No, and that was strange, because somebody from that office, which was right across, as we kept hearing the screaming from there, came over and my father became so scared that he got the diarrhea and was sitting in an outhouse, and they went by and pulled the people from the next two buildings. Nice memories.

Q: What was the condition like in the ghetto? Was it near --was the ghetto near where you had lived?

A: The first ghetto in the city was that very, very just Jewish area, so my father had a friend who had a house nearby that some eight families went to live with that family.

Q: What did you take with you? You were a young, young woman.

A: I don't know. Lot of things from grits to coats to summer wear to -- it was spring, so you needed sweaters, summer wear. You name it, we were taking it. Then somebody came in there and said that you cannot use that here. There's no room here. Give it to me. I -- trust me, I keep it for you. Which, of course, they didn't, but they took it from our hand not to have our hand over strength used. The -- these people who had to live there together, that means that two, three family in one room of the apartment, one corner, this family live on this mattress. That family live -- it was not fun.

Q: There were four of you, your parents and you and your husband?

A: Yes, at the beginning, but that was very short time because I said the two men had been taken out but the other families' men went too then, and probably another week or so we lived there with less people, but again, with jittery nerves because the one bathroom really couldn't take care of all of us comfortably.

Q: Did you go out on the street?

A: Yes, inside there, in the ghetto, but outside of the ghetto you didn't go there and (inaudible). I went with my husband from this first ghetto to agricultural work. The city had a gardening establishment and we were given them to garden there and --

Q: What kind of work? You did gardening work?

A: Yeah. Sometimes we were -- sometimes we were to pick flowers in the flower area, and during the time when I was in one of the parks where we were supposed to work but we never got to it, the American came with a (inaudible) from one end of the city to the other and we were the one which they bombed. They missed the -- the train station and

they missed the -- what establishment was that? It was something what was for the army. Some big building. So they missed that, too, but they --

Q: Headquarters or something?

A: -- but they had gotten us, and one of the young girls from our group was pulled different little pieces. But again, there I (inaudible) my husband wasn't there. Then I was out of the alarm and we were turning the dirt, he was still with us. That wasn't near to the station, the train station.

Q: So then the men left your ghetto and you and your mother were there and then you -- the two of you were taken?

A: And then we went to that brick factory.

Q: The brick factory?

A: They took us on the morning on June 6th when the Normandy --

Q: Oh, the D-Day. Yes, the Normandy invasion.

A: And so the people yelled in that you don't have to hold out too much longer. The Americans are staying. But we didn't have the time. Now, many people were able to escape from there, and earlier from that --

Q: From the --

A: -- city ghetto, even from brick factory, and when I first mentioned it to my father, actually we were in our apartment yet because the first question came up. People were turning Catholic in big numbers.

Q: Jews were turning Catholic?

A: Because they hoped that if they are changing them they will be saved from worst to a lesser bad. And then my father, my mother turned to us and said that we don't mind if you do it, if you feel like doing it, and my husband and I said no. We don't do this. But my father's partner, himself and his daughter and son-in-law, all changed with no help. Of course none came back. But that was the first step. Then we were asking my father if we should not try to go up to Budapest, and he said, how can I? Who is here on the train who doesn't know me? Who is there who doesn't know your mother? How would a – idea. This idea came back just before they took us to the brick factory. We got a note from my uncle from Budapest that he can send somebody for us who could take us to them and we shall consider going, and my mother said, I'm not going to go nowhere. If your father cannot come, then how can I go? No, we don't go. So we stayed. That's how we wound up in Auschwitz.

Q: How far was the brick factory from the ghetto?

A: Oh, about eight, ten miles.

Q: And how did you get there?

A: Walked.

Q: You walked?

A: Walked through the city. Walked through the city.

Q: And did the Hungarians look at you, or were the citizens looking --

A: Some very happily, some less happily. As I said, some yelled in that it won't take too long and don't worry, but others, well, quite happy.

Q: And what --

A: The Hungarians hate Jews, you know. Just about as bad as the Poles who haven't seen a Jew, but they hate them.

Q: Um, and what did you take with you onto the brick factory now? What did you have with you?

A: Only as much as you were able to carry, so there is already some pasta, some dried pasta, because what are we going to eat? Potato we find somewhere and we put a little pasta in it and we make soup and we live on it. Very little else.

Q: Yeah. Did you have any valuables with you?

A: The valuables were taken off us before we went. In that city ghetto they took the last ones off us.

Q: Did you take anything very personal with you, sentimental value?

A: I don't know. I really don't know.

Q: Photographs or anything?

A: I don't know. I don't think so.

Q: So how did your mother manage walking to the ghetto?

A: Well, she was a young woman. She was healthier and better looking than I was ever and -- but when we arrived to Auschwitz where we unpacked, she said, we don't survive this one. I said oh, yes, mom, we will. She said that well.

Q: So now you're in the brick factory. What were the conditions like there?

A: It was plain awful. It was just you sit in the dust. The brick stands there to dry. That makes you have walls, and above it it's empty and the air flies through and the flies fly through and God knows what smells fly through. Here you are already in big, big

groups, and my second husband's first wife and child was there. The baby was then about 16 months old and heavy. So he survived sometimes with caring (inaudible) and the mother-in-law picked him up, then the other sister-in-law helped, we went over to help. And it was no life anymore. But I still had cigarettes in there.

Q: Were people -- what was the feeling about of the people then, the Jews in the brick factory?

A: Scared. And the ones who had more -- more smell -- smell than they gave somebody something what they still had with value and left. And left us there. It was awful stupid -- how should I put it to you? It is possible thing not to try to escape because what worse can happen to you? They grab you and put you on other end.

Q: Did you know that?

A: No. No.

Q: Did you consider trying to escape?

A: I asked my mother. I found a [shawndar?] who would have helped and she said, what will your mother -- your father say? Your father said that we cannot go, and so we stay -- we stay together.

Q: So you were there with your mother for how long in the brick factory?

A: About six to eight days only.

Q: Six to eight days. Yeah.

A: June 6th we went, and on June 12th they packed us, so exactly six days.

Q: What was June 12th like? How did you know that you would be moving?

A: They were coming in [shawndars?] and pushing us into one direction and we were at the train.

Q: To a train station?

A: It was not a train station. It was the train which could come in into the brick factory.

Q: Into the brick factory. I see.

A: It was nothing serious. We went then together in it, then they pushed it out to the regular station.

Q: Yeah. And what kind of a train was it?

A: There was only one kind of train there.

Q: It was the cattle car train?

A: Yes, (inaudible). Yes.

Q: And, um --

A: By the time we got to the railroad station we were already thirsty and were begging for water, and the friends of ours sister and her family were in that same (inaudible) who was -- who had diabetes and we had seen her without food there going through all the worst way you can see somebody slowly dying.

Q: Did you know many other people in the –

A: (No audible response.)

Q: Was this mostly -- this was women, mostly women?

A: Mostly women, because a lot of men were taken, but really it was not a special train for women only and men only were separated.

Q: Right.

End of File One

Beginning File Two

Q: This is tape two side A. And you were talking about how you and your mother were leaving the brick factory and had gotten on the train with other people that you knew. How long did the train trip take?

A: Over two days. It was a very long trip.

Q: Did you know where you were going?

A: No. We were sure we are probably going to the other side, western side of Hungary. That's where we are going to work. Then when they took us through the border, it must be here somewhere in Germany they will need us on the west. Again thought went west, never thought of going toward east now. And there was the train stopped and we were at Zakopane. Did you hear that name? That was the Czech Alps most beautiful ski area where you only wanted to go in style. That was a luxury to go to Zakopane. I looked up at my mother and I said we come back here once on our own.

Q: What were the conditions like in the train?

A: That was something that you cannot ____. It was just plain awful. 120 people in that train in the summer. With the one -- what do they call that ____? What was for everybody to --

Q: Bucket?

A: Bucket.

Q: Were you able to sit down and rest or?

A: We were constantly sitting in a corner at the very end of the train against the wall pulling our legs in because there was no room for that. You couldn't take somebody else's room up.

Q: Were people helping each other? What was the --

A: I don't think so. I think that probably you could only say that they were trying to suffer as quietly as possible not to bother the next one. I don't think that there was anything we could really help each other with. The most was that if somebody still probably had some water from somewhere and somebody was so sick that they were yelling and screaming for something then probably they were able to wash his face probably. More than that there was not a chance to do for anybody anything.

Q: Were there any children in the car?

A: Plenty. Plenty. From tiny little ones to teenagers or every kind. Every age group what you can imagine just haphazardly thrown together.

Q: Were you always next to your mother?

A: Yes. We were next to each other all our lives. She was my best friend. I didn't need girlfriends or such because she was everything for me. She was young and beautiful and understanding and full with interest.

Q: Did she support you at the time that you became pregnant --

A: Oh yes. Very much --

Q: And needed to terminate the pregnancy?

A: Oh yes. She was with me all the way, every step of it. Oh yes.

Q: Was that a difficult -- just to go back to that time for a moment, was that a difficult --

A: Decision --

Q: Procedure to have done to terminate your pregnancy. Were you able to get a doctor?

A: Well, yes. There was only one non-Jewish doctor anymore in town who was ready and willing to have Jewish women to get rid of their pregnancies. All the Jewish gynecologists were already out in Russia or Poland, or they didn't live anymore. And so one friend of mine who needed this kind of help was giving me the word that this was the man to turn to. And yes he was very decent and willing. That it did not work out so well that that was my private --

Q: You had complications?

A: Yeah, that was bad luck.

Q: But you got good care?

A: Yes. My mother was taking care of everything. She was there and she was with me.

Q: Do you recall anything special that your mother said to you when you were going -- leaving in the train car? Anything special?

A: Nothing on the train. I only remember clearly when we arrived to Auschwitz and they were unpacking us that she said we won't survive that one.

Q: What was the arrival like?

A: They were throwing you out. First you the person and then the packages came after. That would stay to the Canada. But we didn't know that and --

Q: Did you know where you were?

A: No. We had no idea what that is. We just read the --

Q: Sign --

A: We knew that this is going to be a work camp because it said "arbeit macht frei".

Q: Right.

A: But as I said, my mother fell on the right side behind -- now again I can't remember the most easiest word. They were people who looked like they were crazy. We thought that probably these are moved over to that side, they are wearing this uniform --

Q: This is right after you got off the train?

A: Yeah. Right across us as we were on this --

Q: The platform --

A: On the other side of the rail. These people were yelling and screaming that to my mother that you should put a scarf on your head. I don't understand that they tell you to put -- I wouldn't be crazy enough -- it's hot enough in this coat because she was wearing a heavy coat. Her hair here up front started to gray. She had that little gray on there. And they knew what they were telling us. We just didn't understand. And then they made us standing in line of five. So we stood in line of five. We saw that the men were put separately. We had no men in our group. None of us. It was my mothers two -- my father's partners' wives. The two women and the young married daughter of one of the partners. The one who turned Christian earlier. We were the five in that row. This mother who I mentioned to you that she was with them in that row she was a petite person, very tiny. Very elegant little lady. But she was so small that they looked upon her as a child so she went with the grown ups right away to the left side. I was the only one who was thrown to the living side.

Q: And then where did you go after that?

A: They took us into a building which and into a large area inside which had very interesting furnishing. It was just low ____ nothing else. And we were told to put down decently our clothing to the place so we can find it and everything is to come off. And then we were taken to the next room and they were getting into our hair and the hair under our underarms --

Q: Your body --

A: And the body hair from everywhere. And they did not do too luxurious job on it and sometimes your body went with the skin and all. But they said --

Q: Who did that to you, men or women?

A: These were women. These were the Slovak girls who were still survived. See by then there were very few of them who survived still. They were there for three years. And these were practically all animals already because they were ready to kill each other, their own mother for surviving. And they were telling you why they were cutting your hair, where your mother went, what's happening just right now on the other side.

Q: Did you believe her?

A: Not only I believed her, I started to cry and I didn't stop crying for three days. I didn't have anymore moist to it and I didn't have anymore tears running. It was a dry, hoarse cry which I could not stop for three days. It was at that point when we all realized how stupid we were. Where we came. And they were telling us that we are the lucky ones which we came so late that we will survive that. Not like their families. And how good that they had taken our body hair off because now they are going to use a powder on it and so we will not get lice. Which is very important. Let me assure you, yes it's very important not

to get lice. Because the ones who got lice got ____ and they were gone. They were the goners first because there was no way there to keep clean.

Q: Were you able to say anything to your mother when she went in the other direction?

A: Not a thing. And this is what kills me to this day, back 50 years. Not that I didn't tell her anything, that I did not get in argument to Mengele. I spoke German. Why didn't I start telling him that she's as young as I am and let her come with me. What would happen to me? But I didn't give it a try. And I'm living with that for over 50 years and cannot forgive myself. I came home, my father's first word was what did you do to your mother. And I was telling him just like I told you now. And I was telling this a few times later and everybody was telling me stop saying that because -- and no I can't stop this because nobody can feel what I feel and nobody knows how I can see the situation that yes I could have given it a try. I have to live with that. And it's not easy to live with that. And whatever life had for me what was bad I deserved because of that, I think. She was not just a mother, she was somebody wonderful. And not even to try to save her. It's more than one can survive. And so we came out from that area and they took us for a shower. And on the other end we were coming out and they were throwing toward us little packages. Instead of our clothing this was now become our clothing. So what I received was probably for a ten-year-old girl. It was that long. My private body was showing and there was no panties given. That was that. I was given a shirt and this dress and that was that. Luckily for me I was carrying my shoe because I am very sensitive, I cannot step down with -- so I was carrying my shoes.

Q: Your own shoes?

A: My own shoes. And that survived with me all the way until we left Auschwitz. I carried it everywhere.

Q: Just to get back, how did you know it was Mengele that was at the station?

A: I didn't know he was the one. But there was that man in that uniform and he was showing this way and that way. And the people were carrying the people out. Then later when he was coming to our camp then we knew names and --

Q: But at that point --

A: It became very elegant. Oh, we knew everything.

Q: So then you got your short dress and you had your own shoes and where did they take you? Where did you go then?

A: That's when we went to our camp. It was B-3, barrack five. Which was the outer shell of a barrack really, nothing more. It had two big doors on the two ends and on the side it had windows without glass. And there was nothing in it. We did not get the elegance like shifts on which you sleep five in an area and you are above ____. No we didn't have anything. We just wrap them --

Q: On the ground?

A: On the ground. They took us in rows of five and they said these ____ to the right these ____ to the left. So when you lay down you will be like forks. One body this way, one body that way. So my legs went in between the legs of the other person and that kept me warm. And my arm became my pillow together with my shoe and when you wanted to go out to the latrine then you try to go through these bodies who were completely next to each other. And in the dark when you wanted to make it to the window so you can go

through it, step through it in the shortest way out then you stepped on somebody's face, on somebody's arm, on somebody's legs. Somebody was screaming here and either you had time to get out in time or you didn't. And you gave them all the beauties of what your body was relieving. If there ever was something what take to cure humanity away from you where you felt so bad that you thought any animal is living a much more -- I can't even think of -- but every life, every animal can have more decency and more respect, self-respect than you can. What are you? What kind of animal are you who you would do that to your neighbor? These were the nights there. If it rained outside, it rained inside. It only had not ceiling, nothing above us just it kept coming in. And for hours after it stopped raining outside it was still coming down and you were sitting in it laying in it in that wetness. There was nothing. Nothing, no chance, no one to turn to. At the other hand, at the one end of the barrack there was a little room in which the blockalteste where the two stubendiest lived. And they had all the quilts there dry. I don't know how dry but definitely they always found something dry for themselves. We didn't have that kind of chances to own something what would keep us warm or dry or whatever. And that's where we lived for six weeks.

Q: What did you do during the day?

A: Standing in Appell or laying on the floor, on the ground. A ground which was completely naked, not even a speck of grass or anything on that. And on one end there was some water coming up standing there together. Ugly, dirty water. That's what you drunk if you wanted to drink, no matter they told you not to drink it. That's what you washed your clothing in or yourself in. And some people just refused to. So they became

sick fast. Not well fast. I tell you honestly I wouldn't have cared and did anything for myself either. When we got to Auschwitz I met a girl who was working in my mother-in-law's house for the last year and a half. She was an escapee from that area from ____ where I mentioned to you. Three daughters the parents threw into Hungary that they should save themselves. And they worked as maids in Jewish houses where somebody was ready and willing to give a Jewish girl the dirty work. My mother couldn't do it. She would not. She would not have a Jewish woman working for her. No way. But my mother-in-law had such a girl and she I met there in this camp and she started to look after me. She pushed me to go to wash. She took my clothes off to wash it because I was just sitting there completely letting go. And she didn't. And she was there for about four, five weeks. And during this time --

Q: What was her name?

A: Monsi Margaret Jacobowich(ph). She offered, volunteered to go for the food. You had to go over to another camp for that. They were such wonderful chaps taking out the sick people from the barracks, throw them on the carriage which was taking them to the ____. So she offered herself that she goes for food and carries the food cans back to ours. And during this time she was looking around and yelling to people if they knew somebody from her family. She was looking for them. And sure enough in the C Camp she found two of her younger sisters. And then she told me that she wants to go over to them if I take care of myself, and there was some woman who wanted to come over to this camp she will be changing place with her and then the number will be all right and that will

come back. So until then I was with her and I think that saved my life because I would not have done anything for myself during these weeks.

Q: What were the Appells like?

A: Appells were -- it was dark when we went out and stood there for three, four, five hours until they counted and counted and recounted. And if they missed somebody at one block then the whole 14 or 17 blocks would be held there in this camp and all standing there. So three, four hours minimum after which they gave the breakfast. And then you were told to go and either you were back to the barrack which usually they threw you out from and so you had to go some place around. And then they called you again to Appell to have the dinner -- the lunch and then the same time they were handing out bread which was the dinner. So for that you were again for three or four hours and then they counted. They counted.

Q: Do you know how many people they were counting?

A: How many people were they counting where?

Q: In the Appell.

A: All of them. All of them. See, in one barrack was about 500 people. If somebody was so sick they went over to the revere, which was the hospital, and they didn't find her or God knows where they stood in line in the other part then you were standing until they found her.

Q: Did you have to do any work?

A: No. There was no work --

Q: No work there --

A: This was a Vernichtungslager. You know that much German? No? Vernichtungslager is where they want you to disappear. You were going to be killed slowly with not eating, with not having drinking water. You will die out. This camp was when they needed workers somewhere this is where they came to get them together from and this is how one escaped from there. And during the times where while we were there there were other people who worked and mostly men who were crossing our camp going from work to camp or the other way around. And during that time of course you kept yelling and calling out names so I was calling my husband's name out, his brother's name out, my father-in-law's, my father's name. And then a little paper came sometimes was thrown over to me by somebody who said no they are not here but Andrew Freed is here, who became my second husband. And he was looking for of course all of his family. And then my father-in-law's store manager was there. Sent me a message that he's there. But our folks were not there. They were gone straight -- my father-in-law, mother-in-law. The men were not there. They did not get there yet. Rather didn't get there period because they did not go to Auschwitz. So I was there until August 2nd and the last week of that was when they killed the gypsy camp. We were standing outside on Appell and the sky was yellow and red and the screaming was just unbelievable. They were throwing them as people tell us living into the fire. And then came the morning when Mengele and some three other officers came to and stopped at every block, barrack and pulled out certain people to work and the other one was left behind. So I was very light body all my life. I was very thin. So sure enough the first thing was that I was left behind. Everybody from my line, my first cousin and my aunt and my first cousin's two sister-in-laws, a younger

one and a grown up, were in my line. They all went to work and I was staying behind. So I got back into my dress ran over to another barrack --

Q: They had made you take off your clothes?

A: Yeah. You walked completely naked. You hold your clothing up there somewhere and you walk with your arms up so they can take a good look at you breast and all.

Q: How did you feel by that point?

A: Like animals. Not humans. That's so dehumanizing. You know, by the time you got there it doesn't even hurt anymore. But what hurts, the knowledge that you're left here behind and you know what that means. So if you still have some energy to live that life then you go on and try to get into the next barrack and stand in the line there with that people. So while they were in the middle barrack I got to the next barrack and I got undressed with the rest of them and stood in the line and again they put me out. So it wasn't funny. No, I didn't bother even dressing too much. I ran over to the next barrack. And when they pick my arm that it's not enough and then I put my muscle that I have this side. By then my barrack was way outside, outside of the gates. How do I go to them? So there was only one way. The big avenue of the camp which had the --

Q: Gate?

A: No. The soldier with the --

Q: The guard?

A: Yeah, but this guard had something with -- I'm looking this way but I cannot remember. Stop it please. So on the main avenue of the camp there was this soldier with the machine gun and I figured there's only two ways. Either I stay here or he shoots me. I

haven't got many choices. If I manage to go and I'm fast enough by him then I probably get out there. And sure enough I was still very fast at running. And I got to the gate and they were yelling and screaming to me to come from the other side they saw me coming. And the officer of the German women and the Slovak blockalteste were coming in and one grabbed me and gave me flap in the face and said what barrack are you from. She wanted to know the numbers. She was only interested in the numbers. Where in which one somebody went missing. How many to count. So I got out there and we went to the Birkenau and we got into place where we got to shower. And we were instead of 1,000, that later turned out to be they wanted 1,000 workers. We were 1,070. Oh, so 70 had to stay there. So here was guard who was working for Mengele pulling out another 70 now. There were now women there in this group who were pregnant who already could show that they were pregnant. You see, some people came to Auschwitz without knowing that they are pregnant and some who knew that they were having starting pregnancy but didn't show so they got there. And now they were picked out who already showed and some were. The woman who was sleeping across me during these weeks there she was pregnant. And I had such a nice warm body to my feet to warm it while we were sleeping. But I lost her there.

[Interview interrupted by turning over tape.]

A: You think it didn't work?

Q: It's tape two side two and you were talking about being in Birkenau and they took the pregnant women.

A: Yeah. We now had 1,070 and out of all of us got a shower. But 70 was not allowed to come out from there. They stayed there in that room and right there they were gassed. You know that this is the same place you can either throw in gas or you give shower. Most comes from the same. So then we were given uniform --

Q: Did you know about gassing at that -- then?

A: Oh yes, by then we knew it. When they were cutting our hairs the Slovak girls were telling us about the gassing. They were telling us what's happening to our mothers and to our sisters. They couldn't be happier to see us going ____ sick from what they were telling us. As I told you these people were animals already. They were absolutely happy to see us suffer. And they many times pointed out that you are lucky because you came so late that you will still survive the end. We came here four years ago when you went to balls and you had 5 o'clock tea said you just didn't know what to do in your very comfort and warm houses and you were looking for the luxuries of life. Yes, we were. True. That was our fault we were because we had no idea what they are going through. But even if they would we couldn't have believed it anyway. It was unbelievable for human beings that this is happening to the other human being. Like when we went arriving at Auschwitz what we saw there on the other side, we thought that these people were crazy. They are mentally sick and they were thrown into this camp because they had to be kept away from -- otherwise why would they be behind that -- behind what? Again I cannot think of the word.

Q: Fence or wires or --

A: Yeah.

Q: So now there were 1,000 of you. They had taken the 70 away?

A: Yes. Then we were taken into a train which was taking us across Germany to ?Thuringen? and then from there this was Buchenwald's outer-commando where we went to work.

Q: And this is August 1944?

A: Right. And there everything was just beautiful and luxurious compared to whatever we had seen before. Here there was a barrack which had rooms. And in each room there were eight times double beds. One about each other. There was nothing else there but they gave blankets, one underneath and one above you like military. And there was a long table in that room and two -- on two sides there were two -- what's what you sit on?

Q: A chair?

A: No.

Q: Benches?

A: Benches. And that was that. And there was even a little stove in it. We didn't know what the stove will do for us, but in the winter it was really wonderful to have it. In the summer also we were sometimes trying to steal some coal and make a little hot water to wash ourself. But they were giving half number of food compared to Auschwitz. Probably luxury food compared to Auschwitz. And there was a campsite and there were not hours and hours standing outside in Appell. It was probably just an hour, hour and a half was in Appell. And then there was a factory about four miles away where we went to work. That was ?IG Farbenindustrie?.

Q: How'd you get there?

A: Walked.

Q: So you walked four miles to the factory and four miles back?

A: Yeah. It was about an hour walk each way. I guess it may have been about four miles. And we had dogs to walk with the SS people with us and it was a decent big set up where the prior people who were there working died out because the factory has been working with saltpeter salt and that ruined the livers. So when this group died out they wanted another 1,000 people and that's it. They had to have the workers.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: It was a _____. We were filling the bomb bodies with that -- should I try to find English?

Q: That's okay. And so you went -- what was a typical day like there?

A: Well, it depends what you were doing. Most of the time I was working in the mill where this saltpeter came in as big bags and solid and it had to be worked up to powder it up. So you were to bake it up, somebody broke it, the other one was throwing it into the mill, and then others had to shovel the powder away into other bags in which they were taking it to the part of the factory where they are mixing that with other things to make that filling. And some people sometimes were working to put away the filled bombs. Or it was more of from this size on to big ones you were to carry from one place to the other where they would put the filling into it so what makes it --

Q: Hold together?

A: The other way around. To break up --

Q: To explode?

A: To explode, okay. Explosive, it has to be put at the end. Then they were put into the packaging of it of which we were very diligently taking, stealing the two sides what was to hold it because we knitted that into stockings. And if not knitting then we were crocheting something. You needed something, you were cold. It was fall coming and it was ____ and we were standing out there it was not funny. But we managed. We stole as much as we could and we were some of us was quite good at it. I was really good at stealing coal. My hand fit into between the wooden planks and some people were quite good at stealing some potatoes. I was good at going for seconds in the way that I was ready and willing to pack off extra trunks which came in and if you worked too fast to remove the merchandise from it they gave you another soup. Very important thing because out of the 14 there was somebody who wasn't able to go out, or 16 of us, who wasn't able to go out to get his meal. We're hungry, I mean we're always hungry.

Q: So you found that the women were supporting each other and --

A: Yeah --

Q: Helping each other --

A: Yeah, we were a good group together, the 16. But we were not all 16 but there were mother with two daughters there in our room. And the five of us, that's eight. There was another mother with her daughter who she didn't know that she was pregnant and who was taken out several months later from us. And her the mother's daughter younger sister was there with her two younger sisters. So there were four of them. Okay. Four, and we were five, and there were three. And there was a Rebbetzin from ____. What's Slovakia's capital now? Anyway, originally we went to work the same place in this mill. Then my

aunt complained that she cannot do it. Although I was working in a lot of her work and also my cousin --

Q: You say, so you were with other relatives?

A: Yes.

Q: Had you been with these relatives all along?

A: Yes. We were together in -- these were the five in Auschwitz who out of that four stayed together and I was taken back. This is my father's youngest sister, another sister's daughter, and that daughter's two sister-in-laws. Quite young one, the one was 12 years old the smaller one. And the other one was already at my age. So there we worked. And then my cousin and my aunt both wanted to get out of that factory work. And they somehow got into the sewing room. Which probably was better suited for somebody who is soft and they didn't have to march out and back. That happened right on campus. And slowly we managed to get through this time. Less and less food. More and more deep air raids. So there was no steam coming from Marburg then we couldn't work. We were just sitting out there and do nothing, but we had to be brought out and brought back. You have to go, you know. And so slowly winter came and we were stealing left and right pieces of material so we sewed together something what should be stocking to cover our bare legs. Then from this bags of which the saltpeter was thrown out we made raincoat that was five times deep paper. So we cut out something where you put your head in and two arms room and you were covered with that at least on the way out and back. Not all the water was in your coat only the half of it. Well, we were working this way through

next spring. But by next spring it was very little work. Very little material coming into the factory.

Q: What was your health like?

A: Well we started to become yellow, our skin and also our eyes from this material what was catching us. Because that was coming out not only inside where you worked with it but they were horse made -- well I should have started better. The factory was on the ground. It was covered with roads and was covered with forests, and forest was made from that was all fake. Just --

Q: Artificial trees?

A: Yeah. Just so that from the airplane it should look like it's a --

Q: Like a camouflage?

A: Sure. And so you walked through that and all over little horse brought up that bitter almond kind of poisonous gases which you inhaled. You inhaled inside and you inhaled outside. This is the reason these factories were never bombed. We were praying that when the planes went by. We were praying, we didn't expect to get out alive from there. Why shouldn't we then finish it now? No, we were never bombed. They didn't know we were there. So in March by then we were cleaning all the places where used to be merchandise. We had to saubermachen, to make it clean. To wipe it, swipe it, do something with it. It's a real German thing to make you do nothing with cleaning and cleaning and cleaning. They don't give you anything to clean with, but you're cleaning.

Q: How did you clean?

A: With your hand, with your leg. You got something together from under the trees they had some leaves on it and with the leaves you were, you tried. You tried to do like you're working. Then when there was no work whatsoever inside then they made me and a few others build roads. So we were having this little carriages taking the stones, throwing it out, other ones started to put them down. The third one had to go through with that musher, which mushed the roads. But that was no work either because there was no need for that road. There was no need to do anything there, but they made you do something.

Q: Did anybody try to escape?

A: From there there was no escape.

Q: No escape?

A: It was all completely covered. Completely covered. We did see human beings outside walking when we were standing on the Appell, on the Appellplatz on the other side there was a road on which sometimes peasants with horse carriages went by. They knew we are there. Don't tell me they didn't, we knew that they were there. But there was no way of getting out. Then one day in March it was a nice morning like that very bright and we were out there doing practically nothing. At around 11 o'clock-ish they came that we have to go back fast into the camp. Fast we going, going, going because of leaving. And that evening we left the camp. We started to walk. And it was a big long walk.

Q: This is everybody?

A: The whole camp. And then they stopped us one place where we -- what I didn't tell you that we had one lady with us in the kitchen who was a Rebbetzin who was counting the Jewish calendar. And was telling us when it was Rosh Hashanah, when it was Yom

Kippur. Nobody eat on Yom Kippur. It didn't matter. What we had was staying there, nobody will take it from us. And so the last day -- last night when we were in the camp she said that it was first night of Pesach. And we went to her room and she made from some flour what she stole in the kitchen some flat bread and she was giving us all a little bit of it. And we were reminding ourself that it is holiday. It turns out that she was only wrong with one day. The next night when we were out on the road that was really the first night of Pesach. That was very important.

Q: What did you feel like when you were eating that flour and water?

A: I don't know. We just thought that -- we thought back to that tradition how it looked at home. It was something to help a little. Of course you realize that by then very few of us was friendly enough with the One above us to believe that we are having this holiday because of Him. But there were two little girls also on the kitchen, the small kitchen which was peeling potatoes. They were a ____ two beautiful little daughters. Some 12 and 13-year-old redheads with lots of locks in their hair as their new hair grew out. And these two girls have not eaten anything what look like meat piece or bone piece in that food what they had all year long. They kept tried to be kosher. They were very kosher after liberation I heard of them. They lived a very kosher life. But very few stayed with that belief. I didn't. Anyway, as I said these holidays they were really something in that surrounding. Anyway, we decided after that second night when we were again together outside there and we were holiday that next night we are going to try to get together. We will try to find each other and we will get together. And that night when we started to wake we saw that a lot of the SS people were in civilian clothing. Or one was still with

the big ____ cape but had been on a bicycle. So from their carriage all these things got off and they started to go in every direction. At that point I said to my cousin that I go too. If they go, I go.

[Interview interrupted by phone ringing.]

A: Sorry. So on that point my aunt and my cousin said that I'm crazy and they both left me. I said you cannot keep me. So I started out from that little road where we were from which there was a little forest on this side, quite a few trees, I shouldn't call it a forest. But it was still very early spring you could see too that on the other side of that there's a road on which I could see military going. So I said this is not the place I want to be at. I want to go from here. And I, I just went.

Q: By yourself?

A: By myself. After which point they started to run after me. And by the time we first stopped we were nine of us. Of the nine of us only my cousin and I spoke German. And we were walking across a field and we pulled out some sugar carrot kind of what still is there. This is animal feed for the winter. So with that we put some and we ate some. By then we didn't see bread the last ten days. So it was good to have something and we had a knife. I could slice it up and everybody got a slice of that. We weren't that hungry anymore. And we walked with it into the next village and on the edge of the village at the last house we stopped and went into a peasant court.

Q: What was the name of the village, do you know?

A: No. I certainly know it's Frielendorf and ____. And we stopped there and the German peasant came out and they didn't know what to make of us. They knew what we are

except they didn't know if they want to throw us out or not. And we said we will not bother you just let us have rest here where your animals are, and he did. And actually he made us go up so we can be up where it's dry and warm and nice. And we laid down there and we rested ourself and evening came. And all of a sudden we heard speaking. And the speaking went on and it was clear that the German guy who also escaped from the military wants to hide there and wanted to come up. And the guy from there was just telling him that this is not a good spot here, he takes him to another spot. And we were very comforted. We were very ready to jump and go, but they ran away. And the next morning the peasant's wife came out and said you will have to leave. We said oh we will we just needed this rest and we are very thankful and we go. And then we brought back the group backwards where we knew now where the fields were, made them sit there and wait. And my cousin and I started to go from house to house and tell them that we are hungry and we would ask for some bread if they can spare. And everybody was able to spare some. Some had some cold cut to add to it. Some didn't. But everywhere they were cooking. We had no idea, but it was Good Friday. And that afternoon, of course when we came back we told them all that we cannot eat it all here because our sisters are waiting outside for us and we want to share it with them. And they accepted. Some gave us an extra piece of bread because of it. Some just let us go. So we went back and we again got some of this carrot kind of things. And with that the bread was very good. And that afternoon we heard a lot of noises, motors and big machinery noises. And as we looked toward the west they were stopping in front of this peasant's house. So we looked out,

saw the main street over the guy's house where we spent the night before. And we saw that he has a white underpants on a --

Q: Pole --

A: Stock outside hanging out on the street. And they are also hanging out there. And there are a lot of other stores have something white hanging out there. And we looked back and we saw there's a kind of star on this machinery. Yes. They stopped there that the rest should come up to them. And we ran out to them. These were the first American G.I.'s who arrived there. And it was a magnificent, magnificent afternoon. When they heard who we are, they started to look for something to give us, food. And whatever they had it was only from the breakfast ration what they had left over. So we asked for a cigarette. And eight of us smoked one Camel and all eight of us had seen stars at broad daylight. Oh it was strong. It was very, very strong. But it was wonderful. And they kept jumping to find some chocolate and there was some God knows what what was still left over from the breakfast. And then they got each other soap came our way. They saw that we need some. And by the time we turned around the peasant's wife was coming that we should come into her kitchen. She had a huge dish of hot potatoes, fresh potatoes in its skin. It was just I didn't understand how it went away so fast. You should have seen this group taking care of that potatoes. And then we went again out to the street and from everywhere around seeing how was in our little valley. And not big mountains but the mountains had all people come out from there. Russian girls who were in P.O.W. camp, black African, French guys who were working as -- they were not P.O.W.'s and they were not in concentration camp but they were something in between. They were able to get

Red Cross packages once a month. They were handled quite different from us. They were half human. And they were not very nice. They were kissing our hands saying hello to us like we are human being now again. And it was a gorgeous, gorgeous afternoon. I don't have to tell you that Good Friday will always remind me of that. That was a beautiful Good Friday. Next day though we started to be very scared because the American troops started to go backward and we begged them take us along. We thought that --

Q: You were speaking English? You could speak English?

A: Well, it was not really English. I haven't used them for six, seven years. And now I was full with my German so it was a mixture. But yes, I was the one who was telling them who we are and what we are. For all of us I was the only one who spoke some English. It wasn't ____ English and many times I heard a G.I. say your English isn't ____. Well, I tell you why, what I didn't know how to say, but I knew how to say it a French way. I was using the French way. I mixed it with a lot of German. Luckily they were coming from France so what was French was not so strange to them, but my English altogether was. But they had fun with it and they were so good to us. They were so wonderful. If you imagine what it is to feel human again. That people count you into the human race, not more, just that much. Then the mayor of the city was ordering a kindergarten to be emptied for us. It didn't matter that every furniture was this small and the toilets were also half of a normal outhouse size and that low, but we had it. And the American G.I.'s started to come to look us up. And we had one of the two people with us in this group was also a young mother with her daughter. The daughter was 12 and we got into camp. Now she was big 13-year-old. A gorgeous girl, but of course you couldn't

see that then, just something. And she was just laying there on the ____ and they were asking what she would like to have and she said chocolate and salami. So this young 18, 19-year-old G.I. ran away to the PX and brought chocolate and salami and put it into her mouth and held her head to eat it though together that way. You can imagine how sick she was, okay? It was close to putting us away with all the goodness, but they were wonderful. Then they heard who we are, what we were, it was stories to tell, right? And when they heard that we haven't seen meat.

End of File Two

Beginning File Three

Q: You were talking about liberation and the GI's, the American GI's trying to get you some meat.

A: They went out to shoot deer. They found in the kitchen some of their comrades who was able to skin it and clean it and prepare it. And they brought it like here is dinner. The people of the city were ordered to everybody bring some cooked food to a certain place where we were fed. So everybody brought a huge ____ with that. They threw it together, mixed it together. It was wonderful. It was all the veggies in it and somewhere probably were some, some meat or bone or whatever will give it some smells. And of course now they came with the questions of what we now needs are. I know they cannot do more but we had to get normal rooms and the post office was cleared away for us. And across the post office was a hotel and that was cleaned up for us. And the Germans made us clean. So they were to clean for us and cook for us which they didn't like to do. And we didn't like their food but now we started to be strong enough to have opinion about food. And

we lived there until August. The American soldiers were not allowed to mix with Germans, with German girls. They couldn't see any. They were not allowed to meet the Russian P.O.W.'s so only the Jewish Hungarian refugees were partners for them. So they were allowed to make dances and invite us to go to dances. And of course that meant that we made friends. And they brought the cigarette and brought some food. And they had resting groups close to the outskirt of Frielendorf where they could go to the beach too. And on the beach there was no one allowed to go with them but us. Not the Germans, not who lived there, not nobody but we. So there I will have to tell you first a story because this is a good one. There was a man on the pool side sitting all completely dressed up to his everything on him and was sitting there alone and looking ahead of him and doing nothing. And all the rest was enjoying the rest and the sun. So it didn't take too long that my friends were pushing me to go and talk to him. It turned out that he was Ralph Kutz from Cleveland. He had gas stations. When he had to leave his wife home they had their son the day before. He was allowed to go to the hospital to see them once and right after that they got on the ship and went over, shipped out. So he didn't have another chance to see his wife and child but that one, that little son of his. And he was crying on our shoulder and we were crying on his shoulder which he felt wonderful about. He never had sisters. His mother always wanted to have daughters and never had. And as we became more and more friends during the summer he kept coming practically daily to us. He came to ask first of all to try to make a Friday night for him. So he brought everything from the PX. He brought from the candles from the ____ everything you name it, everything. The soup in the big can. And we had holiday and we were crying into his

handkerchief so he had to buy handkerchiefs and handkerchiefs and handkerchiefs because we needed lots of handkerchiefs. And we became so close friends that he was asking me and my camp sister who was in the same room with me that we should go to be his sisters. Go to live with his mother and he will guarantee he will marry us off. It was awful hard for him to understand that we still hope to see our husbands so we will go back to Hungary and not straight to America. And then from Hungary I wrote him and I got married to Andy. Probably not even then but right after that when I was already pregnant and yes and I asked him if they had any of the baby things left over after that first baby. I will very appreciate because there's practically nothing available here. Then I didn't hear of them. I knew that in November he went back, he gave address and what not and that's where we wrote. And we also sent a picture my girlfriend and me two of us a picture. But that was later. Because that ended everything. The package what came in was this large. I was seven months pregnant when that arrived one morning. It was some 80 pounds, huge. There was one piece on the top of it what was a huge piece which was kind of christening outfit. All the rest was packed in a department store. And the department store's paper was put on the top of it and they wished well. They sent me a robe, they sent me slippers. And we sent this picture to him. And by then he wrote of another baby. They have the second one. So Andy and I where we started to physically be in better shape we bought something but we thought it's a nice gift item and we had mailed two of it. One to his mother, and one to his wife. Not ever since then I got a word from them. Either they got hurt that I want to pay back what they did or God knows what now I don’t know. Or the wife became jealous because seeing our pictures. Now we

turned around from what Ralph had seen and I can very well imagine that she did not like that friendship. And since we are not going to become his sisters, I got married and my girlfriend got married the same time, same day under the same ____ and we did not go to them. But the man there on that pool side fully dressed because he's an Orthodox Jew he wouldn't get undressed.

Q: So you stayed, until -- how long did you stay?

A: Well, it was almost beginning of August when we came home not because we wanted to stay --

Q: Right --

A: But because Hungary didn't ask for us. Now some in our group were from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs had asked for the Jews. And for them buses were given by the army. And somebody, a young officer who wanted to find his relative in Theresienstadt, came down to be the head of the group and there was enough room for us a few from Hungary that wanted to go with them and we could come with them. So we came back home.

Q: So you went back to your town, to your city. What did you find when you got there?

A: First I went to Budapest. And we arrived to Budapest I looked up my cousins and my aunt's and uncle's place. And I saw that my aunt's apartment had a hole on the edge on the corner. But I went up anyway and I found my aunt there and she was screaming your father's home. Now this I did not expect. I had mentioned to you my father was a sick man from World War I time. I certainly did not expect him be the survivor. But he was the only survivor. And so next day I got on a train and made it down to my hometown.

My father knew of me alive since the spring. They listened to the Red Cross radio and somebody in the city picked up my name and came to tell him. But of course he didn't know that I am coming now. And didn't know if I'm coming at all. He just knew that I'm alive. And he was mighty happy that his only daughter was alive.

Q: You just came home and he was there, is that when you --

A: I went to the store. And the store was open. The three old men were there. I stepped into the store and his first question was where did you leave your mother? And the second was that I'm ashamed to show them that I had arms like that. It was ____ but it looked so good, so healthy like I was full with life. And he was ashamed to tell that I'm pulled from concentration camp I look so good. He was very happy that I am looking so good.

Q: And then what happened?

A: Then we -- he had already by then invited a lot of people who didn't have home where to go home to. And here was his big house and there was nobody in there. Except he brought my aunt down, my mother's sister, to cook for them and clean for them. Because in Budapest there was nothing to be eaten. They were hungry. And he thought that he always will be able to make enough in the store that we should have food and all these people put moneys together for my aunt to go to the market and whatever she can buy to buy. And so they were living with her.

Q: What about your husband, your first husband?

A: There was not even a word then about him. Much later --

Q: You still didn't know?

A: It was in the fall first when somebody came home who told me that he was with him between Gunskirchen and Mauthausen as they were marching them over Gunskirchen and that he looked good and he was in good shape but then next morning the Germans made them get up from that stop where they were resting fast and go. And who did not move fast enough they shot. Nobody could tell me what happened to him. But that was the most probably way that we never heard of him again. And according to all the records that's what happened.

Q: So you stayed in your village -- in your town?

A: Yes, with my father. And they wanted me to take over the house, which I couldn't do. I couldn't. I wouldn't move with him in my mother's house what was natural for her to do. But then my aunt went home. And one morning when there was market day our old maid came to visit the city to see if somebody is home and when she found me there she begged herself that she doesn't want to get paid just food with us and live with us and she wants to come back. And she came back to work for me. We had plenty to work there. The Germans were in that house. First Hungarian officers, then Germans. Then the ____. The ____ were the underground Hungarian left. And after that the Russians. And the Russians were dancing on the top of the table. They pulled out the wood for cooking. You name it, they did quite a job on it. So we had quite a time to clean the house.

Q: You stayed how long?

A: I stayed there until 1950 when all of us then my father's store was nationalized by the commoners. My husband's business was in danger.

Q: So at what point did you remarry?

A: Oh, '47.

Q: And how did that come about?

A: Andy came home and out of Rosh Hashanah of 1945 the egg farm was about 20 miles out of my city. And his brother was already home much earlier. He came home from the Russian front with the army and he was it was still wintertime and he was already free man there. And then Andy came into the city and went into my father's store and was telling that he doesn't want to spend the time out there. This is a little room and farming left for them. That it's too little for him alone and not just speaking about his brother. The brother was married by then. He was leave it for his brother out there. He doesn't want to stay there. He's looking for a place to stay at so my husband invited him to stay at our house --

Q: Your father --

A: Has a room there --

Q: Your father?

A: Yeah. And we have a room there and he brought him furniture and it got furnished. His first thing was that he went out and exchanged farm products for glass and they put glass into our windows because it was kind of cold in wintertime without windows. And the next thing was that he exchanged something else. It was all exchange there was nothing in that part of the world but exchange items. And then my father one nice day stood in front of me and said my daughter I want to tell you something. You were not supposed to know about that because the two friends would have been forever enemies if they knew but Andy loved you and he told so to your mother and your mother told him

not to ever mention a word to you because you don't see anybody but poor Andy. It would be just hurting everybody. But I can see my father said to David he will stop and talk to you about it. His wife didn't come home with his child. You're here alone I can see that soon he will talk to you about it. And I tell you I would be very, very happy to know that if I died I have a man like him with you. It didn't matter where I stand. There were two men who would be happy, my father and Andy, and I cannot be happy anymore in this life. I lost my happiness. So why not? And when soon Andy talked to me I agreed. And so May of ‘46 we got married and he had only one request to have again a child as soon as possible tells him that he'd like the one already had. That is what he missed. And yes quite soon I became pregnant. In April of ‘47 I had my son.

Q: And your son's name?

A: Paul, after my first husband.

Q: And then you stayed in Hungary for --

A: Yes we stayed in Hungary. First we stayed in Hungary, Miskolc until 1950. Then as I mentioned to you, my father's business was nationalized. Half of our apartment was taken away. And Andy felt that this is the time we escape, we go. So he gave me money that I shall buy an apartment no matter what it costs and where it is in Budapest and it is away from here. That was enough for me. And then we went up to Budapest in October of 1950 and that was the time when they were putting the people out of their apartments of their homes. All around us they were stopping during the night, a truck came and just everybody went. So we tried that too. We had to fight not only the Nazis, we had to fight the commoners too. My father died in 1955. For our tenth wedding anniversary we

decided we give each other that we are making his stone having the names of everybody from the two families. And we did. And we had the stones.

Q: This is gravestones?

A: And six weeks later the revolution broke out. And we took advantage of it. We left Hungary then, ‘56.

Q: And you came to the United States?

A: Yes. We waited a long time in Austria before we could come because we didn't have close relatives here. But then we came here.

Q: The three of you, your husband and your son. And where did you settle first?

A: New York. We had a friend there. And because of that because they tried to make us as comfortable as possible and as Jewish ways as possible they didn't let us go out to Arkansas where the ____ wanted us to go because my husband's diploma was to be useable there much better. He was a Doctorate in Animal Husbandry. On Park Avenue, on Fifth Avenue there's no animal husbandry, you know. But by the time we settled ourselves my son became a little American boy and we stayed in New York. And then I retired and my husband retired and Paul was already down here since 1969.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: I did office work always because of that little English what I had it had me not to start as a physical worker. And then in ‘68 I got to the Ford Foundation and I was with them for 16 and a half years before I retired.

Q: And then you moved to Washington?

A: Not then because my husband still worked. He was working until 1986 for the Deutsche Bank and then he retired too. Then my son says oh what are you doing still there? Let's go down. And that's when we came down.

Q: Was it hard to adjust to life in the United States?

A: Well, let me put it this way. Not for me because I loved Americans. I mean I had manic everything what was American was okay with me. My husband had a very, very hard time and never could go back to his profession, I think of a profession. But he who had a doctorate who could not do anything. Friends here didn't know what to do with it either. Should he have known the Ford Foundation would have given him a nice job. And he would have had a gorgeous future being in charge of third world countries agricultures. There was lots to do here in New York except nobody knew what to do with this. Yes, we were refugees. We were very proud that nobody gave us anything. We were a perfect welfare case but we didn't know about it and we didn't want to know about it. And what I have what you see we the two of us worked together and I don't owe anybody, okay? That was very good.

Q: If we can now talk a little bit about the effect of all this. How is this, your experiences effected your feelings of being Jewish?

A: I never would have changed out from Judaism. But I did not have anything to do with the religion and a God which let that happen as it was. And I completely lost all interest in it. Until my baby first moved in me. That brought me back to it and accepting that there's somebody above us who knows more than we do. No I never really became a religious Jew in that sense. But I know a lot probably more than most of the girls had

known of religion. My father was very proud of that. He always hoped for a boy and he didn't have a son so he taught me. And he felt good about me knowing some. And I felt good about myself that my grandparents were so happy with me.

Q: You had talked about how your thoughts, you still have thoughts 50 years later about your mother. In any other way has your experience stayed with you in other ways?

A: That experience stays with you forever. You try to forget it. You try to push it out of your mind because you cannot live constantly with this. My husband whenever he had heard or seen something. He could not watch on a television a show which started with a train and that was that for three weeks he had the nightmares. He was yelling and screaming each time he had a cold and he had a real temperature. He was fighting, he was seeing himself going through what he went through. He went from Auschwitz to Dachau and the ____ people had hurt his back. He went through his own hell. So we had tried to not to talk about it. And definitely did not want to talk about it in front of our child. We did not even know that our child knew where we were before. Until in 1969 the first time he went back to Europe after he finished, graduated from engineering school –

Q: This is your son?

A: The first place he went was Dachau. He stopped in ?Meiningen? and asked our friends who lived there how to go out to Dachau and he went to Dachau next morning. I still to this day I don't know how he knew, who mentioned that in front of him, or who else told him because we certainly did not. I couldn't imagine that I can hurt my child with pain like that I shall be telling all these what I was telling you or even more to him. I wanted to save him from that forever. I just couldn't bring myself to talk about that. The first time

I was talking about all that was in 1990 we were sitting in front of the operating room and his father was operated on at Georgetown University Hospital where I first talked to him about where I'd been. He came home once earlier and said I belong to the second generation and they are encouraging us to ask you to give us oral history. And I jumped up from the chair where I was sitting I run out to the kitchen and he knew that he cannot ask me again about it. It's been much later in the ‘70s sometimes when I first was able to talk to non-Jewish people mentioning where I was. I kind of it just came out of me. It was I don't know what I wanted to do with them if I wanted to scare them or what I wanted. But I couldn't say that to anybody who was Jewish. I just didn't want to talk about it at all to Jewish people for years and years and years. And when they were talking about the Holocaust Museum my husband and I were both dead set against it. I couldn’t see it. I still cannot understand it. I still feel to a certain degree that this is guilt money from the American government and from the American Jews. They all feel much easier to put the moneys into something than their hearts. And we will be always different. We cannot be understood by the Americans, and the Americans cannot be understood by us totally. I still have that bitterness. My -- I had a boss in the end of the ‘50s whose family also perished there. And says to me Suzanne you will have to tell me how my relatives perished. So at lunchtime when he was sitting on the switchboard and I was brown-bagging my lunch and was eating at the desk he said tell me. And so I started to tell him that ?Mr. Rosengarden? I don't know I didn't know your relatives so I don't know how they, I only can tell you what was the average. And I started to tell him and in three or four minutes he stopped me he said Suzanne don't say that it hurts too much. And I think

this is what any American Jew feels. I spoke to quite a few just lately who said they don't want to go down to the museum. They don't want to see it. And they don't know nothing about it. There is a lady here who I appreciate very much as an intelligent, deep feeling, good person. A few months ago in somehow it came to me that she was asking about how Andy lost his wife. And I said well how, she had ?Steve? on her arm. She looked at me and I said don't you know that everyone who went there with child perished? No, I didn't know that. And I became so very, very angry on that that I wanted to organize a seminar here that a few people who I know were survivors should talk to these people. I don't want them to hear all the most awful things. I'm ready to tell them some story which probably makes them even smile sometime. But they should know some of the feelings we went through. They don't want to know it. So that's all I can tell you. I am not a good person. I am still angry.

Q: Thank you so much for speaking of your experiences. This concludes the interview of Suzanne Foldes. It took place on January 25, 1996 in Silver Spring, Maryland. It was conducted by Gail Schwartz.

Q: This is tape three side two and we were talking about your feelings and your reflections about your experience. You said you're still angry?

A: Yes. I think that's depression which won't leave me until I'm alive. I cannot find solace. Nothing can give me solace. Not Yad Vashem, not this museum, not ____. None of them. None of them is enough. But the one in Yad Vashem would be just the right thing to be at. I don't think that these small little things are not breaking it up, making it

less a whole tragedy. Make it small tragedy. Make it something what where justice appear.

Q: You had talked earlier about how devastated you were about what happened to your mother and this other person helped you, looked out for you. After that what kept you going? What do you think kept you going through this terrible, terrible time?

A: There's only one thing I can tell you, what I told the people around me. I was trying to keep them alive. I kept telling them that think about it as a badly administered ____ excursion. We were through with it, we will get through with it. It's just ugly and we have to be in it now. But we will get out of it. And I did believe that if you let yourself go, you cannot live. And the only way to do it is if you keep yourself clean and clean and clean. Wash as much as you can. Clean as much as you can. That's the only thing. It's not eating, it's cleanliness. Because once you get lice you go. In our room in the camp which was the outskirts I mean the outer-lager of Buchenwald we had this little lady, the rabbi's wife, she kept on her head a turban constantly. Never removed it, never washed. It was full with lice. And we just decided that we won't get in danger because of her. And we decided she was never out working. She never came out. Somehow, I don't know how, she managed that she never had to come out. And we decided in the factory that we are going to take home some what's the, it's a fluid what you clean with, petrol. Petrol from the factory and we will wash her head with it. And we did. And we threw away her turban and she was screaming. And she thought about it and we got another turban for her and we washed her. Now that's the only, only, only way you could stay alive. And what kept you alive. And of course I had my aunt there. Not that I loved her so dearly,

but she was still the sister of my father. So you wanted to take care of her. You wanted to bring her home. And I did.

Q: Did you form any close friendships with people, not your relatives, but new --

A: Oh yes. There were two ladies, who I became very close friend of. The one I mention to you as a lager-sister who got married the same day I did. And she lived in our house until she got married. And another one who was a her husband and family had a bakery in Miskolc and she was -- she was a strange lady. She was not well educated but she had such a smooth way of being friend. Probably she was too feminine to that I would today think about her that I want her for friend, and I would have rather second thought that probably she was lesbian. She was that kind of lady. But then she was very good to be a friend there. We were carrying the bombs together and we were remembering old songs, old poems. We had to use our praise, you know. That was also very important. We were trying the ____ whatever we needed to remember things. And she was good for that.

Q: Are there any sounds or smells that bring thoughts back to you?

A: That bitter almond. There's a drink which is made of an almond flavor. I can't take it. And of course I never learned how to wash something clean white. Everything becomes gray in my hand. And I was washing there and all my fingers were bleeding but I couldn't make it white. There are two things my mother never made me learn around the household to wash an item. She said for that you always will have somebody do it for you. How wrong she was. But everything else she wanted me to know how to give orders. She said you cannot give orders unless you knew how to do it. And she always expected me to just to be ready to give orders.

Q: Do you get reparations?

A: No. I got a very little in the late 50's or early 60's. A minimal amount was given and since then whenever I asked I was negated fast. There was no words of something somebody was telling us that there is something being now given. But I didn't even go to make a telephone call to ask about it. I'm not interested anyway. It hurts too much when they say oh you don't. Why? Because again still the Germans are deciding. And then there's always a group of Jews who are serving them very well, you know. Just like they were in Hungary when the Germans came in and the Jews were congregations giving out names, giving out who is the rich out of them, you name it, everything. They gave the synagogue buildings for them to horde all the goods, the silvers, and the golds. There always will be Jews who are serving the Germans. They usually will be Germans Jews though.

Q: Is there any message you want to leave your family with, your grandchild? Anything special?

A: My grandchild is a wonderful child. The child of a non-Jewish mother who two years ago was his father and I were talking about something and his father was saying that only the two of us will be there who were born Jewish. Well, he meant me. And my grandson chimed in and me. He feels Jewish when he's with us. He's always spending the holidays with us. And then he spends the other holidays with his mother at her house and the grandparent's house. He's a sweetheart, he loves us dearly. I never talked to him about all this. I didn't dare and I was not encouraged later. However he was here a few months ago. And God knows how, he said something where I said did you go to see Schindler's List?

And he said yes. And then he was completely wiped out by it. And I dared to ask which I had asked his father sometimes ago and he does not have the nerve to face the holocaust museum either. And I asked Michael and he said no he would like to go and want to go with his father. So I said if he wants to go would you tell me about it. And I asked if his school shouldn't go and he said it's a good idea probably it should. But then since then I haven't spoken to him about that. It felt good that now I know that he was. When his friends were bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs and we kept going to them. His father was asking me if he doesn't want to become this, then his grandfather was still alive. And he said to his father that he would have nothing against it except going up there. I just have to accept it this way. It hurts. He got the bigger birthday present on his 13th. We had given to him with telling him that if he was now Jewish he would have a mark on his birthday but without that a Jewish boy is bar mitzvah at 13 no matter what.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add before we finish? Any thought, final thought?

A: No, I don't melt away. I don't want to melt away now. Thank you very much.

Q: Well, thank you for doing the interview. Thank you so very much.

End of File Three

Conclusion of Interview