

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,810

2

00:00:01,810 --> 00:00:06,700

This is day two, side A,
with Frances Hirshfeld.

3

00:00:06,700 --> 00:00:13,540

I wanted to ask you how
long you were in Birkenau.

4

00:00:13,540 --> 00:00:16,900

Oh, I wouldn't remember
the exact time,

5

00:00:16,900 --> 00:00:25,930

but I was there from August
'43 till sometime early

6

00:00:25,930 --> 00:00:30,980

'44 when I was
transferred to Auschwitz,

7

00:00:30,980 --> 00:00:36,520

because my job was the reason
that they transferred me

8

00:00:36,520 --> 00:00:39,910

because we were working at
the munition factory from then

9

00:00:39,910 --> 00:00:40,900

until the end.

10

00:00:40,900 --> 00:00:43,480

11

00:00:43,480 --> 00:00:45,070

In Lager 1?

12

00:00:45,070 --> 00:00:49,790

You call it Lager 1, I
only knew it as Auschwitz.

13
00:00:49,790 --> 00:00:50,290
Yes.

14
00:00:50,290 --> 00:00:53,590

15
00:00:53,590 --> 00:00:55,570
I had asked you a moment
ago about what you had

16
00:00:55,570 --> 00:00:57,970
heard about the Warsaw Ghetto.

17
00:00:57,970 --> 00:01:00,820
I wanted to know, even
if what you were hearing

18
00:01:00,820 --> 00:01:05,860
was perhaps not the whole truth,
what other bits of information

19
00:01:05,860 --> 00:01:09,250
filtered into the camp?

20
00:01:09,250 --> 00:01:15,400
Well, the people
were being killed

21
00:01:15,400 --> 00:01:19,480
for trying to escape
even through the sewers

22
00:01:19,480 --> 00:01:30,980
when they were caught trying
to survive the final bombing,

23
00:01:30,980 --> 00:01:35,350
because the bombing
finally ended.

24

00:01:35,350 --> 00:01:43,580

The ghetto was absolutely
riddled with ground leveled.

25

00:01:43,580 --> 00:01:48,140

The Nazis came in and they
were shooting people alive.

26

00:01:48,140 --> 00:01:51,920

They were shooting
people without any mercy.

27

00:01:51,920 --> 00:01:53,720

They were killing them.

28

00:01:53,720 --> 00:01:57,580

And a few of them--

29

00:01:57,580 --> 00:01:59,980

I remember one
particular person that

30

00:01:59,980 --> 00:02:05,690

was not a Jewish
lady that was caught

31

00:02:05,690 --> 00:02:09,035

in the fight for survival.

32

00:02:09,035 --> 00:02:11,390

And she was the one
that came in and told us

33

00:02:11,390 --> 00:02:15,210

about the atrocities, what was
taking place in the ghetto.

34

00:02:15,210 --> 00:02:23,650

The Germans simply came in
and horrified the people

35

00:02:23,650 --> 00:02:26,800

with the rifles.

36

00:02:26,800 --> 00:02:32,590

When they were trying to even
shield their head from them,

37

00:02:32,590 --> 00:02:36,550

they would still knock
them down with the rifle

38

00:02:36,550 --> 00:02:39,685

before they even used a bullet.

39

00:02:39,685 --> 00:02:42,430

40

00:02:42,430 --> 00:02:44,530

There was a story
about a little boy

41

00:02:44,530 --> 00:02:49,420

who was trying to
go out and bring

42

00:02:49,420 --> 00:02:51,790

some bread in for his mother.

43

00:02:51,790 --> 00:02:55,480

And he was cut
down because he was

44

00:02:55,480 --> 00:03:01,105

caught while he was crawling
through some closed space.

45

00:03:01,105 --> 00:03:04,210

46

00:03:04,210 --> 00:03:09,730

There were so many stories
that I can't quite remember,

47

00:03:09,730 --> 00:03:16,150
but it was awful.

48
00:03:16,150 --> 00:03:18,190
So you knew about the
Warsaw Ghetto, at least

49
00:03:18,190 --> 00:03:20,170
you got pieces of information.

50
00:03:20,170 --> 00:03:22,090
Did you know about
the other death

51
00:03:22,090 --> 00:03:24,710
camps, or the Einsatzgruppen,
or anything like that?

52
00:03:24,710 --> 00:03:27,147
Did you have any idea that
anything else was going--

53
00:03:27,147 --> 00:03:28,480
anything like this was going on?

54
00:03:28,480 --> 00:03:29,530
We heard about it.

55
00:03:29,530 --> 00:03:31,950
We heard about it.

56
00:03:31,950 --> 00:03:36,340
But only when they
transferred, once in a while

57
00:03:36,340 --> 00:03:42,810
you could hear that
people came being

58
00:03:42,810 --> 00:03:46,995
sent from some other camp to
Auschwitz, or from Auschwitz

59

00:03:46,995 --> 00:03:47,790
to other camp.

60

00:03:47,790 --> 00:03:50,580

61

00:03:50,580 --> 00:03:56,040
Our news was very limited,
because we were only

62

00:03:56,040 --> 00:03:58,220
kept there for just that long.

63

00:03:58,220 --> 00:04:03,310

64

00:04:03,310 --> 00:04:07,210
Were you in any other camps
besides Auschwitz and Birkenau?

65

00:04:07,210 --> 00:04:07,790
Yes.

66

00:04:07,790 --> 00:04:14,260
After January 18,
1945 when we were

67

00:04:14,260 --> 00:04:19,940
told that we were
going out of Auschwitz,

68

00:04:19,940 --> 00:04:22,500
we were marching to
the train station.

69

00:04:22,500 --> 00:04:25,230
And that's the
famous death march

70

00:04:25,230 --> 00:04:29,040
that took place that time.

71

00:04:29,040 --> 00:04:31,840

We didn't know
where we were going.

72

00:04:31,840 --> 00:04:34,710

We only knew that we were
going to another camp

73

00:04:34,710 --> 00:04:40,510

because the Allied armies
were closing in on Germany.

74

00:04:40,510 --> 00:04:43,470

That was in the
beginning of 1945.

75

00:04:43,470 --> 00:04:47,130

And don't forget, the war
was not over until May--

76

00:04:47,130 --> 00:04:49,460

May 8.

77

00:04:49,460 --> 00:04:55,970

We were loaded-- those of us who
survived the death march, those

78

00:04:55,970 --> 00:05:01,310

of us who could survive
on a little bit snow,

79

00:05:01,310 --> 00:05:05,720

if they caught you to take a
little snow from the ground

80

00:05:05,720 --> 00:05:08,240

and put in your mouth,
they would shoot you.

81

00:05:08,240 --> 00:05:10,620

And some people
fell by the wayside,

82

00:05:10,620 --> 00:05:11,930
they could not survive.

83

00:05:11,930 --> 00:05:13,640
It was bitter cold.

84

00:05:13,640 --> 00:05:14,810
It was freezing cold.

85

00:05:14,810 --> 00:05:15,680
We were hungry.

86

00:05:15,680 --> 00:05:17,270
We were starved.

87

00:05:17,270 --> 00:05:19,340
We were naked.

88

00:05:19,340 --> 00:05:24,920
We came to a train and loaded
into an open cattle car--

89

00:05:24,920 --> 00:05:26,840
an open--

90

00:05:26,840 --> 00:05:29,660
and rode through the night.

91

00:05:29,660 --> 00:05:32,480
I don't remember
exactly how long.

92

00:05:32,480 --> 00:05:36,050
They took us to
Ravensbruck, which

93

00:05:36,050 --> 00:05:38,750
was a sheer hell on wheels.

94

00:05:38,750 --> 00:05:42,590
I'll never forget it where

they put us into an area

95

00:05:42,590 --> 00:05:44,960

where there was--

96

00:05:44,960 --> 00:05:47,570

it was surrounded

with barbed wire,

97

00:05:47,570 --> 00:05:51,170

but the area was like a pit.

98

00:05:51,170 --> 00:05:53,480

It had walls that were slanted.

99

00:05:53,480 --> 00:05:56,180

That in case you were

trying to escape,

100

00:05:56,180 --> 00:06:01,440

you had to climb that

slanted cement wall.

101

00:06:01,440 --> 00:06:05,810

But it was covered

with human excrement

102

00:06:05,810 --> 00:06:12,320

and nobody could get around it

to climb up to the barbed wire

103

00:06:12,320 --> 00:06:13,190

to be killed.

104

00:06:13,190 --> 00:06:16,070

So fortunately, we

weren't there too long

105

00:06:16,070 --> 00:06:19,670

because they shipped us

off after a few days.

106

00:06:19,670 --> 00:06:23,660
They shipped us to another
camp called Malhoff.

107
00:06:23,660 --> 00:06:27,890
Malhoff was a place where we
sat around and do nothing.

108
00:06:27,890 --> 00:06:30,230
It was not a work camp.

109
00:06:30,230 --> 00:06:35,940
It was just a stopover
that they kept us there

110
00:06:35,940 --> 00:06:40,960
for maybe two or three months.

111
00:06:40,960 --> 00:06:47,230
And the final transport came
when they took us to Leipzig.

112
00:06:47,230 --> 00:06:54,700
And Leipzig-- the
bombing was so severe.

113
00:06:54,700 --> 00:06:55,990
This is already--

114
00:06:55,990 --> 00:07:01,000
I'm talking about April,
three months later.

115
00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:07,630
In Leipzig, we were being
transported back to Dresden.

116
00:07:07,630 --> 00:07:11,020
And we were transported
during the night.

117
00:07:11,020 --> 00:07:18,550
While during the daytime,

they hid us in farmer's places

118
00:07:18,550 --> 00:07:19,390
because--

119
00:07:19,390 --> 00:07:25,210
different farms because we only
march during the night in order

120
00:07:25,210 --> 00:07:29,110
for the bombs not to see us.

121
00:07:29,110 --> 00:07:33,700
Maybe if they would
have bombed those camps,

122
00:07:33,700 --> 00:07:36,580
it would have been better
because maybe the war would

123
00:07:36,580 --> 00:07:37,480
have ended sooner.

124
00:07:37,480 --> 00:07:43,210
But anyway, we were
taken back to Dresden,

125
00:07:43,210 --> 00:07:45,880
and Dresden was heavily bombed.

126
00:07:45,880 --> 00:07:55,190
So during one of those
nights, I attempted my escape.

127
00:07:55,190 --> 00:07:58,640
Before we get to your escape,
I have a few questions

128
00:07:58,640 --> 00:08:00,448
about the camps
that you mentioned.

129

00:08:00,448 --> 00:08:02,990
You were only in Ravensbruck,
you said, for a couple of days,

130
00:08:02,990 --> 00:08:05,840
but can you tell me what
your living conditions

131
00:08:05,840 --> 00:08:07,347
were like there?

132
00:08:07,347 --> 00:08:08,180
There was no living.

133
00:08:08,180 --> 00:08:11,940
I just described, we were
in that pit, that's all.

134
00:08:11,940 --> 00:08:12,590
That's all.

135
00:08:12,590 --> 00:08:14,600
They kept-- for
orders, they waited

136
00:08:14,600 --> 00:08:16,790
for orders were to send us.

137
00:08:16,790 --> 00:08:19,030
What about food?

138
00:08:19,030 --> 00:08:23,150
Very, very little, just bread.

139
00:08:23,150 --> 00:08:25,610
Just bread, no cooked food.

140
00:08:25,610 --> 00:08:27,320
And in Malhoff, you
said you were there--

141
00:08:27,320 --> 00:08:28,860

Malhoff was the same.

142

00:08:28,860 --> 00:08:30,200

It was a vegetation.

143

00:08:30,200 --> 00:08:33,169

It was strictly a
vegetation in Malhoff.

144

00:08:33,169 --> 00:08:35,120

Nobody worked in Malhoff.

145

00:08:35,120 --> 00:08:40,070

We only waited there
for further transfer.

146

00:08:40,070 --> 00:08:42,620

What were your
living conditions?

147

00:08:42,620 --> 00:08:45,230

Where did you sleep?

148

00:08:45,230 --> 00:08:50,450

I think it was a brick building.

149

00:08:50,450 --> 00:08:55,400

And my memory from
those days is very vague

150

00:08:55,400 --> 00:08:57,960

because we didn't do anything.

151

00:08:57,960 --> 00:09:00,110

We just kept waiting
for the piece of bread

152

00:09:00,110 --> 00:09:04,880

to be handed out and
waited for the war to end,

153

00:09:04,880 --> 00:09:13,250

because we assumed that with
so much bombing going on, maybe

154
00:09:13,250 --> 00:09:14,150
it is the end.

155
00:09:14,150 --> 00:09:17,870

156
00:09:17,870 --> 00:09:22,280
OK, and you had gotten as
far as the bombing in Dresden

157
00:09:22,280 --> 00:09:25,040
and your attempt to flee.

158
00:09:25,040 --> 00:09:27,890
Yes, I was between
Leipzig and Dresden.

159
00:09:27,890 --> 00:09:32,870
In the middle of the night,
we were marching under guard--

160
00:09:32,870 --> 00:09:36,350
naturally-- five of us in rows.

161
00:09:36,350 --> 00:09:42,200
And we-- another girl
whom I had never met,

162
00:09:42,200 --> 00:09:46,460
she was with me in the lineup.

163
00:09:46,460 --> 00:09:49,520
She looked at me and we
decided that maybe we

164
00:09:49,520 --> 00:09:52,700
should attempt to escape.

165
00:09:52,700 --> 00:09:57,230

And we agreed on our plan,
but the first night, we

166
00:09:57,230 --> 00:09:58,460
didn't do it.

167
00:09:58,460 --> 00:10:06,200
The second night was April 14,
the night for the 15th, yes.

168
00:10:06,200 --> 00:10:13,400
Saturday night, we decided
to step out of the marching,

169
00:10:13,400 --> 00:10:15,530
because we only
knew that we were

170
00:10:15,530 --> 00:10:17,210
coming from that direction.

171
00:10:17,210 --> 00:10:19,970
We better not go back
in that direction.

172
00:10:19,970 --> 00:10:26,060
We stepped aside, and we
stepped into the forest

173
00:10:26,060 --> 00:10:33,330
and huddled between one another
and decided that if we survive,

174
00:10:33,330 --> 00:10:37,500
we're not going to admit our
real names because we were

175
00:10:37,500 --> 00:10:40,410
so afraid if they find out.

176
00:10:40,410 --> 00:10:43,260
It's bizarre when
I think about it,

177
00:10:43,260 --> 00:10:48,960
because my clothes that I
wore would spell me out.

178
00:10:48,960 --> 00:10:51,120
But we decided we were
going to tell them

179
00:10:51,120 --> 00:10:54,150
that my name is Maria,
her name is Johanna,

180
00:10:54,150 --> 00:10:57,720
and that's as far
as we could think.

181
00:10:57,720 --> 00:11:04,320
And when we spend the night
in the cold forest freezing,

182
00:11:04,320 --> 00:11:07,560
we decided in the
morning that we'll

183
00:11:07,560 --> 00:11:11,235
go in the opposite direction
away from the highway.

184
00:11:11,235 --> 00:11:14,340

185
00:11:14,340 --> 00:11:17,070
And here and there,
you could see

186
00:11:17,070 --> 00:11:21,720
people hiding under
bushes, under shrubs,

187
00:11:21,720 --> 00:11:23,850
who also attempted the same--

188

00:11:23,850 --> 00:11:26,340
had the same idea as we did.

189

00:11:26,340 --> 00:11:31,560
But we walked and walked into
this deep forest that Sunday

190

00:11:31,560 --> 00:11:36,840
morning and saw a
little clearing,

191

00:11:36,840 --> 00:11:38,580
then saw a little forest again.

192

00:11:38,580 --> 00:11:41,580
We didn't know, really,
where we were walking.

193

00:11:41,580 --> 00:11:45,540
But when we finally
noticed a church

194

00:11:45,540 --> 00:11:49,410
steeple, that was our guide
we decided we'll walk towards.

195

00:11:49,410 --> 00:11:52,335
All of a sudden,
we saw a truck--

196

00:11:52,335 --> 00:11:54,030
an army truck.

197

00:11:54,030 --> 00:11:57,270
And we thought, well,
we're walking into a trap.

198

00:11:57,270 --> 00:12:03,180
But when walking around
it, we were stupid enough--

199

00:12:03,180 --> 00:12:07,560

we were afraid that had
we gone inside the truck,

200
00:12:07,560 --> 00:12:11,430
maybe we would have found
some food, but we didn't.

201
00:12:11,430 --> 00:12:15,540
We walked away from it because
we thought we will be caught.

202
00:12:15,540 --> 00:12:19,080
And when we finally
walked into that village

203
00:12:19,080 --> 00:12:22,410
outside the church
steeple that guided us,

204
00:12:22,410 --> 00:12:27,520
we saw some women who were
coming through the field--

205
00:12:27,520 --> 00:12:31,020
several women-- who
were helping one another

206
00:12:31,020 --> 00:12:33,750
pick the potatoes in the field.

207
00:12:33,750 --> 00:12:37,620
And it was so cold,
and we were so hungry.

208
00:12:37,620 --> 00:12:40,140
They looked at us suspiciously.

209
00:12:40,140 --> 00:12:43,560
And we told them that we
were in a working camp

210
00:12:43,560 --> 00:12:48,240
and it was bombed the night

before, and we are so hungry,

211

00:12:48,240 --> 00:12:51,250
would we please ask them
to give us some potatoes.

212

00:12:51,250 --> 00:12:52,860
And when they gave
us the potatoes,

213

00:12:52,860 --> 00:12:55,230
they were so suspicious of us.

214

00:12:55,230 --> 00:12:58,800
They said if we would wait for
them when they get through,

215

00:12:58,800 --> 00:13:04,520
they would take us to their home
and give us a piece of bread.

216

00:13:04,520 --> 00:13:09,780
So we sat down by the
wayside and looked at those.

217

00:13:09,780 --> 00:13:13,710
They gave us the potatoes that
were dirt from the ground.

218

00:13:13,710 --> 00:13:17,910
You couldn't eat that, you
had to be able to peel them.

219

00:13:17,910 --> 00:13:20,850
So we waited and an old
man came from the village.

220

00:13:20,850 --> 00:13:23,190
And he said in
German, you girls will

221

00:13:23,190 --> 00:13:26,490
freeze if you don't go inside.

222

00:13:26,490 --> 00:13:28,980

And we told him what
we were waiting for.

223

00:13:28,980 --> 00:13:31,110

So he says, well,
that's my wife.

224

00:13:31,110 --> 00:13:34,890

When she comes, she'll give
you some hot coffee too.

225

00:13:34,890 --> 00:13:39,480

So when we were taking
into that little place,

226

00:13:39,480 --> 00:13:41,670

we didn't believe
ourselves that we

227

00:13:41,670 --> 00:13:45,060

are in a house where
it's warm, where

228

00:13:45,060 --> 00:13:52,230

we're given bread with syrup and
hot coffee with a little milk

229

00:13:52,230 --> 00:13:55,140

the first day away from camp.

230

00:13:55,140 --> 00:13:57,990

And some woman came in and
brought some coffee cake.

231

00:13:57,990 --> 00:14:01,560

That's how they treat each
other in the villages.

232

00:14:01,560 --> 00:14:05,850

So by noontime, I asked
them if they could permit

233
00:14:05,850 --> 00:14:08,260
us to cook those potatoes.

234
00:14:08,260 --> 00:14:09,930
So I remember,
they gave us a pot.

235
00:14:09,930 --> 00:14:14,550
I swear to you, it must
have been four liters.

236
00:14:14,550 --> 00:14:16,440
I filled it up
with the potatoes,

237
00:14:16,440 --> 00:14:20,400
and I asked my friend if
she thinks it's enough.

238
00:14:20,400 --> 00:14:21,840
And she says, yeah, I think so.

239
00:14:21,840 --> 00:14:30,090

240
00:14:30,090 --> 00:14:33,430
She acknowledged
that it was enough.

241
00:14:33,430 --> 00:14:38,220
But when we cooked those
potatoes on the peasant stove,

242
00:14:38,220 --> 00:14:42,810
they ask us to eat
with them at the table.

243
00:14:42,810 --> 00:14:45,370

244
00:14:45,370 --> 00:14:52,540

And they put a dishpan full
of potatoes and pork chops

245
00:14:52,540 --> 00:14:55,780
with sweet and sour cabbage.

246
00:14:55,780 --> 00:14:58,270
I'll never forget that meal.

247
00:14:58,270 --> 00:15:03,280
That we didn't die that
day, that was a miracle.

248
00:15:03,280 --> 00:15:08,180
And after the meal, we
didn't want to go anywhere.

249
00:15:08,180 --> 00:15:12,930
The old man offered us to
go upstairs in the attic

250
00:15:12,930 --> 00:15:15,390
and take a nap because
we must be tired,

251
00:15:15,390 --> 00:15:17,910
we stayed up all night.

252
00:15:17,910 --> 00:15:20,790
And we went upstairs on straw.

253
00:15:20,790 --> 00:15:23,670
He covered us with some
old blankets and coats.

254
00:15:23,670 --> 00:15:27,180
We went to sleep, and then
we were awakened at 4:30

255
00:15:27,180 --> 00:15:29,700
for coffee and cake.

256

00:15:29,700 --> 00:15:31,050
I'll never forget that.

257
00:15:31,050 --> 00:15:34,800

258
00:15:34,800 --> 00:15:36,360
I have two quick
questions for you.

259
00:15:36,360 --> 00:15:38,460
My first question is, what
happened to the friend

260
00:15:38,460 --> 00:15:40,650
that you had in the camp?

261
00:15:40,650 --> 00:15:42,090
She remained in Belgium.

262
00:15:42,090 --> 00:15:44,280
I have no connections with her.

263
00:15:44,280 --> 00:15:45,660
I have no idea.

264
00:15:45,660 --> 00:15:47,270
But she survived?

265
00:15:47,270 --> 00:15:50,370
She and I survived both, yeah.

266
00:15:50,370 --> 00:15:54,910
She talked me in
to go to Belgium.

267
00:15:54,910 --> 00:15:56,930
The woman that helped you
in the camp, the one--

268
00:15:56,930 --> 00:15:57,820
when you had the scabies.

269

00:15:57,820 --> 00:15:58,528

Oh, she survived.

270

00:15:58,528 --> 00:16:01,450

Yes, she's still in Germany.

271

00:16:01,450 --> 00:16:04,360

And my second question
was, the two of you

272

00:16:04,360 --> 00:16:06,280

had planned with
your escape that you

273

00:16:06,280 --> 00:16:10,180

would use German names.

274

00:16:10,180 --> 00:16:13,600

Was your German good enough that
you could pretend to be German?

275

00:16:13,600 --> 00:16:16,270

Mine was not as good
as hers, because she

276

00:16:16,270 --> 00:16:18,460

was born in Leipzig.

277

00:16:18,460 --> 00:16:21,190

She came from that area.

278

00:16:21,190 --> 00:16:24,790

And she took upon
herself that she's

279

00:16:24,790 --> 00:16:27,790

going to be the spokesperson,
which I was delighted,

280

00:16:27,790 --> 00:16:29,440

because I was helping

in the kitchen,

281

00:16:29,440 --> 00:16:33,370

I was helping with the
cooking and with the laundry.

282

00:16:33,370 --> 00:16:36,160

Mind you, my German
wasn't bad, but you could

283

00:16:36,160 --> 00:16:37,740

tell that I was a foreigner.

284

00:16:37,740 --> 00:16:41,250

285

00:16:41,250 --> 00:16:44,040

OK, you had just
finished telling me

286

00:16:44,040 --> 00:16:48,030

that you were awakened at 4:30
in the morning for coffee.

287

00:16:48,030 --> 00:16:49,715

4:30 in the afternoon.

288

00:16:49,715 --> 00:16:51,090

Excuse me, 4:30
in the afternoon.

289

00:16:51,090 --> 00:16:54,000

Yeah, for coffee and cheesecake.

290

00:16:54,000 --> 00:16:57,010

291

00:16:57,010 --> 00:17:00,220

That's unbelievable, yeah.

292

00:17:00,220 --> 00:17:08,859

But when we went

downstairs, and then there

293

00:17:08,859 --> 00:17:12,619
was some commotion going on.

294

00:17:12,619 --> 00:17:17,680
All of a sudden, they had
soldiers coming back and forth

295

00:17:17,680 --> 00:17:20,020
going from one
assignment to another.

296

00:17:20,020 --> 00:17:23,290
And everybody was
ordered to take

297

00:17:23,290 --> 00:17:25,300
in a soldier for the night.

298

00:17:25,300 --> 00:17:27,160
And we were scared
to death, we didn't

299

00:17:27,160 --> 00:17:28,960
know what was ahead of us.

300

00:17:28,960 --> 00:17:31,570
But he didn't pay
attention to us.

301

00:17:31,570 --> 00:17:37,270
We had scrambled eggs for supper
with fresh bread and butter.

302

00:17:37,270 --> 00:17:40,180
And he opened the
bag with candy.

303

00:17:40,180 --> 00:17:42,580
He didn't pay any
attention, even though he

304

00:17:42,580 --> 00:17:47,230

was placed in the old folks
bedroom upstairs next door

305

00:17:47,230 --> 00:17:51,340

to our attic place.

306

00:17:51,340 --> 00:17:54,700

And next morning when
we woke up, he was gone.

307

00:17:54,700 --> 00:17:57,100

He followed his instructions.

308

00:17:57,100 --> 00:18:02,890

But that's just a detail of--

309

00:18:02,890 --> 00:18:04,450

go ahead.

310

00:18:04,450 --> 00:18:06,890

I wonder, were you still
wearing those prison clothes?

311

00:18:06,890 --> 00:18:08,980

Yes.

312

00:18:08,980 --> 00:18:16,130

But during the stay
in that village,

313

00:18:16,130 --> 00:18:24,620

we went into the burgermeister--
to the mayor's home--

314

00:18:24,620 --> 00:18:27,260

and stole some clothes.

315

00:18:27,260 --> 00:18:29,570

We could have stolen
anything else.

316

00:18:29,570 --> 00:18:32,330

All I stole is a change of
clothes that I wouldn't--

317

00:18:32,330 --> 00:18:33,800

I would be able to throw away.

318

00:18:33,800 --> 00:18:36,650

That's when I got rid
of the prison clothes,

319

00:18:36,650 --> 00:18:39,365

when I got another
change of clothes.

320

00:18:39,365 --> 00:18:42,680

I stole a towel,
stole a blanket.

321

00:18:42,680 --> 00:18:45,080

That blanket and
that towel, I think,

322

00:18:45,080 --> 00:18:48,020

I donated here to the museum.

323

00:18:48,020 --> 00:18:58,200

But it's hard to
describe the agony

324

00:18:58,200 --> 00:19:02,500

of living in those
conditions when you

325

00:19:02,500 --> 00:19:04,420

had no other change of clothes.

326

00:19:04,420 --> 00:19:08,980

And when finally the war
was over and they began--

327

00:19:08,980 --> 00:19:13,600

well, three weeks after
our escape, the war ended.

328
00:19:13,600 --> 00:19:18,280
But by the time, they made--

329
00:19:18,280 --> 00:19:22,450
the Allies were exchanging
people from one area

330
00:19:22,450 --> 00:19:23,920
to another, like
people who wanted

331
00:19:23,920 --> 00:19:27,310
to go back to the Russian
side, or to the French side,

332
00:19:27,310 --> 00:19:29,350
or to the American side.

333
00:19:29,350 --> 00:19:32,560
That's when we decided that
we're not going to stay,

334
00:19:32,560 --> 00:19:37,510
because while the Russians
occupied that village,

335
00:19:37,510 --> 00:19:43,540
the mothers and grandmothers
woke me up during the night

336
00:19:43,540 --> 00:19:50,710
to come to help them because
the Russian soldiers were raping

337
00:19:50,710 --> 00:19:52,270
their daughters.

338
00:19:52,270 --> 00:19:56,050
But I could not do it, because
I would put myself in jeopardy.

339
00:19:56,050 --> 00:19:59,300
So my idea was to
get away from it.

340
00:19:59,300 --> 00:20:03,700
And she was then
successfully talking me in

341
00:20:03,700 --> 00:20:08,980
not to go back to Poland, but
to go to Belgium with her.

342
00:20:08,980 --> 00:20:11,260
She says, well, if you
can't speak French,

343
00:20:11,260 --> 00:20:13,960
she says, you don't have
to live in Brussels.

344
00:20:13,960 --> 00:20:17,260
You can go to Antwerp, there's
a lot of Jewish people.

345
00:20:17,260 --> 00:20:19,480
She didn't realize that a
lot of the Jewish people

346
00:20:19,480 --> 00:20:28,520
were already sent away from
Belgium and the Netherlands.

347
00:20:28,520 --> 00:20:31,660
So she found that
after she came back

348
00:20:31,660 --> 00:20:35,170
that her parents, who,
she and her parents

349
00:20:35,170 --> 00:20:40,840
and her brother,

they had left Germany

350
00:20:40,840 --> 00:20:44,800
trying to get away from
Hitler, settled in Belgium.

351
00:20:44,800 --> 00:20:47,230
And by the time she came
back from Auschwitz,

352
00:20:47,230 --> 00:20:50,410
they were already annihilated.

353
00:20:50,410 --> 00:20:52,025
She did not find them alive.

354
00:20:52,025 --> 00:20:56,380

355
00:20:56,380 --> 00:21:00,040
I wanted to ask you
about your liberation

356
00:21:00,040 --> 00:21:02,100
and your first
moments of freedom

357
00:21:02,100 --> 00:21:04,980
and what they were like for you.

358
00:21:04,980 --> 00:21:09,690
Well, actually,
when I find myself

359
00:21:09,690 --> 00:21:14,490
in the village the next
morning after escaping, to me,

360
00:21:14,490 --> 00:21:16,080
that was the liberation.

361
00:21:16,080 --> 00:21:20,310

We still didn't know how
long it's going to last.

362
00:21:20,310 --> 00:21:24,360
But for the three weeks,
we were living in fear.

363
00:21:24,360 --> 00:21:28,620
But when it first came, it was--

364
00:21:28,620 --> 00:21:30,830
we couldn't believe it.

365
00:21:30,830 --> 00:21:34,510
We were so thrilled that
we were finally free.

366
00:21:34,510 --> 00:21:38,650
That's when we went to
the burgermeister's house

367
00:21:38,650 --> 00:21:40,465
and stole some clothes.

368
00:21:40,465 --> 00:21:48,160

369
00:21:48,160 --> 00:21:50,820
Where did you go next?

370
00:21:50,820 --> 00:21:51,360
Pardon?

371
00:21:51,360 --> 00:21:53,940
Where did you go next?

372
00:21:53,940 --> 00:21:57,330
To Belgium, to Brussels.

373
00:21:57,330 --> 00:22:06,020
And I was under the Jewish
Welfare organization's care

374
00:22:06,020 --> 00:22:12,440
until some Jewish
families who survived

375
00:22:12,440 --> 00:22:18,000
offered to take in
people like myself,

376
00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:20,220
people who were homeless.

377
00:22:20,220 --> 00:22:23,520
And I was taken in
by a very nice family

378
00:22:23,520 --> 00:22:29,090
who gave me their maid's
quarters where I slept.

379
00:22:29,090 --> 00:22:32,120
And I ate with them downstairs--
very prominent people

380
00:22:32,120 --> 00:22:33,740
in Brussels.

381
00:22:33,740 --> 00:22:39,170
And I started to find my
family in the United States.

382
00:22:39,170 --> 00:22:41,870
I knew that my mother
had two brothers

383
00:22:41,870 --> 00:22:44,550
in America and one sister.

384
00:22:44,550 --> 00:22:48,200
And when I started, that
was a very difficult journey

385

00:22:48,200 --> 00:22:51,680
because I didn't have
the exact address.

386
00:22:51,680 --> 00:22:53,780
I knew the name and the town.

387
00:22:53,780 --> 00:22:56,780
But somehow, people
weren't very eager.

388
00:22:56,780 --> 00:23:00,320
Don't forget, those days,
there were no telephones

389
00:23:00,320 --> 00:23:01,340
like there were now.

390
00:23:01,340 --> 00:23:04,290
There were no
facilities whatsoever.

391
00:23:04,290 --> 00:23:06,410
So it wasn't easy.

392
00:23:06,410 --> 00:23:10,100
But when I finally, in
my search for people

393
00:23:10,100 --> 00:23:13,100
who would listen
to me, found a man

394
00:23:13,100 --> 00:23:18,380
who was representing
the Viennese Jews,

395
00:23:18,380 --> 00:23:23,570
he decided that he'll
listen to my flight

396
00:23:23,570 --> 00:23:29,570
and he would write to

his people in New York

397

00:23:29,570 --> 00:23:31,970

and gave them the
name of my family.

398

00:23:31,970 --> 00:23:33,320

And they found my uncle.

399

00:23:33,320 --> 00:23:35,940

It was enough to say Harry
Weinman in Jacksonville,

400

00:23:35,940 --> 00:23:37,670

Florida, and they found him.

401

00:23:37,670 --> 00:23:41,720

He was out of town, so
he was already located

402

00:23:41,720 --> 00:23:43,700

in New York at the hotel.

403

00:23:43,700 --> 00:23:46,010

And that's when
my uncle found me.

404

00:23:46,010 --> 00:23:48,200

He started to support me.

405

00:23:48,200 --> 00:23:53,270

And I moved from these people
into an independent apartment.

406

00:23:53,270 --> 00:23:58,760

And he began to
make the plans how

407

00:23:58,760 --> 00:24:04,550

to bring me to America, which
at the time sounded a long time,

408

00:24:04,550 --> 00:24:07,850
but it was only 15
months from the time

409
00:24:07,850 --> 00:24:11,750
that I found my uncle
that I came to Brussels.

410
00:24:11,750 --> 00:24:16,580
I came to Brussels
in June 13 of 1945.

411
00:24:16,580 --> 00:24:21,470
And in October, I sailed for
America of the following year--

412
00:24:21,470 --> 00:24:24,185
'46, October '46.

413
00:24:24,185 --> 00:24:27,720

414
00:24:27,720 --> 00:24:33,120
And how did you spend
your days, and what

415
00:24:33,120 --> 00:24:35,160
did you do during
your time in Brussels?

416
00:24:35,160 --> 00:24:37,890
How did you rebuild your life?

417
00:24:37,890 --> 00:24:42,720
I just tried to learn
a little French,

418
00:24:42,720 --> 00:24:48,480
had to go to various doctors
and dentists and meetings.

419
00:24:48,480 --> 00:24:51,630
Now the first thing I did was--

420
00:24:51,630 --> 00:24:54,660
it turned out to
be a smart thing.

421
00:24:54,660 --> 00:24:58,290
I used to get together
with all the other refugees

422
00:24:58,290 --> 00:25:00,540
and, what do you do,
and what do you do?

423
00:25:00,540 --> 00:25:03,930
And some of us decided
to go to Israel.

424
00:25:03,930 --> 00:25:07,890
And some of us, like myself,
wanted to go to America.

425
00:25:07,890 --> 00:25:11,790
And they said-- somebody said,
if you want to go to America,

426
00:25:11,790 --> 00:25:15,700
you have to register in
the American Embassy.

427
00:25:15,700 --> 00:25:20,380
So not having even contact
with the family yet,

428
00:25:20,380 --> 00:25:22,875
I went and registered
in Antwerp.

429
00:25:22,875 --> 00:25:25,794

430
00:25:25,794 --> 00:25:30,580
I just put my name that I would
like to go to America because I

431
00:25:30,580 --> 00:25:32,290
have relatives.

432
00:25:32,290 --> 00:25:41,380
So when my uncle reached
me the following October--

433
00:25:41,380 --> 00:25:45,010
no-- whenever,
three months later.

434
00:25:45,010 --> 00:25:47,140
It was June, July,
August, September.

435
00:25:47,140 --> 00:25:50,020
When I moved-- when my
uncle started supporting me,

436
00:25:50,020 --> 00:25:53,680
he started writing me that he
was told that I should register

437
00:25:53,680 --> 00:25:54,860
at the American Embassy.

438
00:25:54,860 --> 00:25:57,830
So I was able to tell
him, I already did.

439
00:25:57,830 --> 00:26:00,400
And that was in my
favor, because people

440
00:26:00,400 --> 00:26:02,650
waited a much longer time.

441
00:26:02,650 --> 00:26:05,140
Because you see, when you
are born somewhere else,

442

00:26:05,140 --> 00:26:07,720
you are on a quota.

443
00:26:07,720 --> 00:26:10,967
To come to America, you
are under the country

444
00:26:10,967 --> 00:26:11,800
where you were born.

445
00:26:11,800 --> 00:26:15,280
You belong to-- I was
under the Polish quota.

446
00:26:15,280 --> 00:26:17,980
German people were
under the German quota.

447
00:26:17,980 --> 00:26:19,900
And I was very fortunate.

448
00:26:19,900 --> 00:26:20,560
Excuse me.

449
00:26:20,560 --> 00:26:23,700

450
00:26:23,700 --> 00:26:26,170
Anything else we left out?

451
00:26:26,170 --> 00:26:31,080
I wanted to ask you, you didn't
go back home to Poland at all?

452
00:26:31,080 --> 00:26:33,510
Not at that time.

453
00:26:33,510 --> 00:26:38,465
Did you start meeting new people
making a life for yourself?

454
00:26:38,465 --> 00:26:40,590

I wanted to know a little
bit about how you started

455
00:26:40,590 --> 00:26:42,700
to rebuild your personal life.

456
00:26:42,700 --> 00:26:46,440
My personal life was--

457
00:26:46,440 --> 00:26:47,850
I was young, don't forget.

458
00:26:47,850 --> 00:26:51,075
I was still only, what, 24, 25.

459
00:26:51,075 --> 00:26:53,660

460
00:26:53,660 --> 00:26:55,490
I was enjoying freedom.

461
00:26:55,490 --> 00:27:00,130
I was going out to eat,
and I saw the young people.

462
00:27:00,130 --> 00:27:03,320
We enjoyed being alive.

463
00:27:03,320 --> 00:27:07,040
And I made contact
with someone that I

464
00:27:07,040 --> 00:27:11,390
knew from the ghetto, who
became my husband later.

465
00:27:11,390 --> 00:27:12,620
That's right.

466
00:27:12,620 --> 00:27:18,010
But I didn't work.

467

00:27:18,010 --> 00:27:19,570

I was very--

468

00:27:19,570 --> 00:27:21,288

I wish I wouldn't be so lucky.

469

00:27:21,288 --> 00:27:23,080

If I'd had worked,
maybe it would have made

470

00:27:23,080 --> 00:27:24,810

a different person out of me.

471

00:27:24,810 --> 00:27:27,490

But the uncle kept
sending me money

472

00:27:27,490 --> 00:27:32,140

and kept working towards
bringing me here.

473

00:27:32,140 --> 00:27:35,957

He had a personal friend
who was Senator Pepper.

474

00:27:35,957 --> 00:27:36,790

You don't know that.

475

00:27:36,790 --> 00:27:37,930

That was before your time.

476

00:27:37,930 --> 00:27:40,270

You're too young to
know him from Florida--

477

00:27:40,270 --> 00:27:40,780

senator.

478

00:27:40,780 --> 00:27:46,130

He was very, very helpful
in guiding my uncle

479

00:27:46,130 --> 00:27:48,440
about bringing me to America.

480

00:27:48,440 --> 00:27:51,010
And when I came to
America, I had to speak--

481

00:27:51,010 --> 00:27:52,930
I had to learn the language.

482

00:27:52,930 --> 00:27:55,660
That was my main objective.

483

00:27:55,660 --> 00:28:01,580
And now, also, I
had gotten married

484

00:28:01,580 --> 00:28:04,010
just before I left Europe.

485

00:28:04,010 --> 00:28:09,320
And I had a project to bring
my husband to this country.

486

00:28:09,320 --> 00:28:14,780
And that was not an easy
task because he was not

487

00:28:14,780 --> 00:28:17,650
registered as I was.

488

00:28:17,650 --> 00:28:19,690
You see?

489

00:28:19,690 --> 00:28:20,940
How did you meet your husband?

490

00:28:20,940 --> 00:28:21,607
Can you tell me?

491

00:28:21,607 --> 00:28:23,570

In the ghetto, in the ghetto.

492

00:28:23,570 --> 00:28:25,130

We were neighbors.

493

00:28:25,130 --> 00:28:26,900

We were neighbors.

494

00:28:26,900 --> 00:28:31,100

Yes, and then I never knew he
was going to be my husband.

495

00:28:31,100 --> 00:28:36,530

But it turned out that we both
survived, and he came over.

496

00:28:36,530 --> 00:28:40,250

When I finally
located him in Paris,

497

00:28:40,250 --> 00:28:41,810

he came over to Brussels.

498

00:28:41,810 --> 00:28:45,170

And that's when I learned
that I was going--

499

00:28:45,170 --> 00:28:46,550

that he wanted to marry me.

500

00:28:46,550 --> 00:28:53,860

501

00:28:53,860 --> 00:28:56,170

Can you tell me a
little bit about--

502

00:28:56,170 --> 00:28:58,570

your husband is not
alive anymore now.

503

00:28:58,570 --> 00:29:01,640

15 and a 1/2 years.

504

00:29:01,640 --> 00:29:04,090

He died in '81--

505

00:29:04,090 --> 00:29:07,420

1981-- in North Carolina.

506

00:29:07,420 --> 00:29:10,210

You mentioned that he
was also a survivor.

507

00:29:10,210 --> 00:29:11,847

Yes.

508

00:29:11,847 --> 00:29:13,930

Can you tell me briefly
how he came to be in Paris

509

00:29:13,930 --> 00:29:15,190

and how you came to find him?

510

00:29:15,190 --> 00:29:20,960

My husband was educated
in University of France

511

00:29:20,960 --> 00:29:23,780

when he was in college.

512

00:29:23,780 --> 00:29:28,150

He had a degree from
universities in Mulhouse,

513

00:29:28,150 --> 00:29:29,020

in Strasburg.

514

00:29:29,020 --> 00:29:31,900

He has his doctor's
degree from Strasburg.

515

00:29:31,900 --> 00:29:36,940

But when the war ended,

he was in Buchenwald,

516

00:29:36,940 --> 00:29:39,590

and he was very sick
with high fever.

517

00:29:39,590 --> 00:29:41,420

He was really thin.

518

00:29:41,420 --> 00:29:42,890

He thought that he was dying.

519

00:29:42,890 --> 00:29:47,560

He was in the latrine throwing
up, running a high temperature.

520

00:29:47,560 --> 00:29:54,670

And somebody ran through
and saw him lying down,

521

00:29:54,670 --> 00:29:56,470

and somebody almost kicked him.

522

00:29:56,470 --> 00:30:01,810

He says, don't move,
the war is almost over.

523

00:30:01,810 --> 00:30:04,540

And he stayed there
until it was over,

524

00:30:04,540 --> 00:30:08,080

until the Americans
liberated Buchenwald.

525

00:30:08,080 --> 00:30:11,990

And because he was
mumbling in French--

526

00:30:11,990 --> 00:30:14,740

he spoke eight languages.

527

00:30:14,740 --> 00:30:18,760
He mumbled in French because
that was his beloved language

528
00:30:18,760 --> 00:30:23,440
from his student days.

529
00:30:23,440 --> 00:30:28,610
They thought he was French,
and they sent him to Paris.

530
00:30:28,610 --> 00:30:33,730
And there, he, too, found
out that his family was gone.

531
00:30:33,730 --> 00:30:36,700
He lost a wife, he lost a
mother, he lost his daughter.

532
00:30:36,700 --> 00:30:38,770
He lost everybody-- a sister.

533
00:30:38,770 --> 00:30:40,300
He lost everybody.

534
00:30:40,300 --> 00:30:45,040
So he remained in Paris because
some friends of his family

535
00:30:45,040 --> 00:30:51,070
gave him a job so he
could sustain there.

536
00:30:51,070 --> 00:30:55,930
And that was '45.

537
00:30:55,930 --> 00:30:57,010
The war was over.

538
00:30:57,010 --> 00:31:00,632
In '46, he came
over to Brussels.

539

00:31:00,632 --> 00:31:02,090

I'm going to stop
you now because I

540

00:31:02,090 --> 00:31:03,720

have to flip the tape.

541

00:31:03,720 --> 00:31:04,220

OK.

542

00:31:04,220 --> 00:31:11,120

543

00:31:11,120 --> 00:31:15,050

This is tape two, side B. We're
interviewing Frances Hirshfeld,

544

00:31:15,050 --> 00:31:20,180

and you were telling me about
getting married after the war

545

00:31:20,180 --> 00:31:23,360

and trying to make your
way to the United States.

546

00:31:23,360 --> 00:31:26,720

And you said, you had
registered and your husband

547

00:31:26,720 --> 00:31:29,510

had not registered at that
same time that you had.

548

00:31:29,510 --> 00:31:34,500

So what difficulties
ensued because of that?

549

00:31:34,500 --> 00:31:38,790

He was registered in
1946, which was already

550

00:31:38,790 --> 00:31:42,420

six months after my
arrival to America.

551

00:31:42,420 --> 00:31:46,440

And I was, like I mentioned
before, I was very fortunate

552

00:31:46,440 --> 00:31:52,860

that I registered by coincidence
right after arrival in Belgium.

553

00:31:52,860 --> 00:31:56,100

But because I was
registered early

554

00:31:56,100 --> 00:32:02,580

because my uncle pursued all
the necessary steps to bring me,

555

00:32:02,580 --> 00:32:06,330

I was able to come
while my husband was

556

00:32:06,330 --> 00:32:08,400

waiting for his turn.

557

00:32:08,400 --> 00:32:11,010

Since he registered so
much later, he had to wait.

558

00:32:11,010 --> 00:32:15,060

And he was registering in Paris,
France, where there were maybe

559

00:32:15,060 --> 00:32:16,060

more survivors.

560

00:32:16,060 --> 00:32:16,755

I'm not sure.

561

00:32:16,755 --> 00:32:19,740

562

00:32:19,740 --> 00:32:23,910

So we had to decide, if
we're going to get married,

563

00:32:23,910 --> 00:32:27,930

that I better go to America.

564

00:32:27,930 --> 00:32:31,200

And I thought if I say
thank you to Senator

565

00:32:31,200 --> 00:32:35,610

Pepper and Congressman Blum,
they'll bring my husband too,

566

00:32:35,610 --> 00:32:38,320

but didn't work that way.

567

00:32:38,320 --> 00:32:45,720

He had to wait his turn,
and it was three years.

568

00:32:45,720 --> 00:32:47,720

Did you see him at all
during those three years?

569

00:32:47,720 --> 00:32:49,070

Yes.

570

00:32:49,070 --> 00:32:54,860

I went back after living
in Florida for a year.

571

00:32:54,860 --> 00:32:59,240

My uncle saw how unhappy
I was-- and I was.

572

00:32:59,240 --> 00:33:01,130

He offered me a trip.

573

00:33:01,130 --> 00:33:05,120

If I go to see my husband,

but I promised my uncle

574

00:33:05,120 --> 00:33:07,560
that I would come back.

575

00:33:07,560 --> 00:33:10,170
So I went to Paris.

576

00:33:10,170 --> 00:33:12,420
I couldn't get a French
visa because I was still

577

00:33:12,420 --> 00:33:15,270
a Polish subject.

578

00:33:15,270 --> 00:33:19,800
I was only in America as a
newcomer on my first papers.

579

00:33:19,800 --> 00:33:28,170
So I took a French transit
visa and I was going to Poland,

580

00:33:28,170 --> 00:33:31,080
because I was able
to get the permit

581

00:33:31,080 --> 00:33:34,750
to arrive in Poland with
my Polish passport--

582

00:33:34,750 --> 00:33:35,905
postwar passport.

583

00:33:35,905 --> 00:33:38,430

584

00:33:38,430 --> 00:33:42,330
And when I arrived
in France, my husband

585

00:33:42,330 --> 00:33:45,930

arranged that I could
postpone my departure.

586
00:33:45,930 --> 00:33:49,110
So I stayed there
as long as I could

587
00:33:49,110 --> 00:33:53,760
to be back in America before
six months was over, otherwise

588
00:33:53,760 --> 00:33:55,410
I couldn't re-enter.

589
00:33:55,410 --> 00:33:59,160
I went on reentry permit.

590
00:33:59,160 --> 00:34:01,710
The reason why I
went to Poland is

591
00:34:01,710 --> 00:34:08,199
because I wanted to put a
tombstone on my aunt's grave.

592
00:34:08,199 --> 00:34:12,040
My aunt who raised me
died just before the war,

593
00:34:12,040 --> 00:34:14,409
and I knew she had no tombstone.

594
00:34:14,409 --> 00:34:15,924
So that was my aim.

595
00:34:15,924 --> 00:34:23,219

596
00:34:23,219 --> 00:34:28,170
Having accomplished that,
I came back to Paris.

597

00:34:28,170 --> 00:34:29,940

And we had made
the decision when

598

00:34:29,940 --> 00:34:33,570

I came from America
that if I get pregnant,

599

00:34:33,570 --> 00:34:36,600

I'll go back to American,
because for any price,

600

00:34:36,600 --> 00:34:39,690

I wanted my child to
be born in America.

601

00:34:39,690 --> 00:34:42,389

If I don't, I
would remain there.

602

00:34:42,389 --> 00:34:45,670

And I did get pregnant
with my daughter,

603

00:34:45,670 --> 00:34:49,870

and I did come back to America
hoping that my husband would

604

00:34:49,870 --> 00:34:52,870

be following me.

605

00:34:52,870 --> 00:34:56,830

But it didn't work that
way, he still had to wait,

606

00:34:56,830 --> 00:34:59,580

and she was about a year old.

607

00:34:59,580 --> 00:35:02,340

Yeah, it was three
years after my arrival.

608

00:35:02,340 --> 00:35:13,890

I came in '46 in October
'46, and he came in July '49.

609
00:35:13,890 --> 00:35:17,820
But I had been with him
for six months in between.

610
00:35:17,820 --> 00:35:22,140
And my uncle, again, tried his
darnedest to bring him over,

611
00:35:22,140 --> 00:35:24,720
but it was a sheer coincidence.

612
00:35:24,720 --> 00:35:28,650
He had a tailor,
a Jewish tailor,

613
00:35:28,650 --> 00:35:32,640
who always asked about me
when I lived in Jacksonville.

614
00:35:32,640 --> 00:35:36,570
And he says to my uncle,
what about your niece?

615
00:35:36,570 --> 00:35:38,400
How about your nephew?

616
00:35:38,400 --> 00:35:40,880
So my uncle says, that's
the only problem we have.

617
00:35:40,880 --> 00:35:41,790
He can't come.

618
00:35:41,790 --> 00:35:46,290
He's waiting for his turn
under the Polish quota.

619
00:35:46,290 --> 00:35:49,890
So he said, I have a
niece who is married

620
00:35:49,890 --> 00:35:54,390
to a reporter for The
Saturday Evening Post,

621
00:35:54,390 --> 00:35:55,740
and they're stationed in Paris.

622
00:35:55,740 --> 00:36:01,140
Maybe your nephew should
meet my nephew and niece.

623
00:36:01,140 --> 00:36:02,910
And that's how it came about.

624
00:36:02,910 --> 00:36:08,440
My husband met the
gentleman and the lady

625
00:36:08,440 --> 00:36:12,430
and told him his flight.

626
00:36:12,430 --> 00:36:15,880
And sure enough, the
man wrote an article

627
00:36:15,880 --> 00:36:18,430
for The Saturday Evening Post.

628
00:36:18,430 --> 00:36:21,460
He was so touched by our
flight because I was here,

629
00:36:21,460 --> 00:36:23,080
he was there, and
the baby was born,

630
00:36:23,080 --> 00:36:25,900
and he couldn't come,
he had to wait his turn,

631
00:36:25,900 --> 00:36:30,460

that he wrote a quite powerful
article under the name "Uncle

632
00:36:30,460 --> 00:36:33,830
Sam Breaks Up a Home."

633
00:36:33,830 --> 00:36:40,850
And this did not do anything,
except that the man could

634
00:36:40,850 --> 00:36:44,150
pick up the phone and
call his friend who

635
00:36:44,150 --> 00:36:48,710
was the ambassador
from America in Paris.

636
00:36:48,710 --> 00:36:53,630
And only a telephone
call to Washington

637
00:36:53,630 --> 00:36:58,070
got my husband's visa, just
because who do you know,

638
00:36:58,070 --> 00:36:59,600
not what you know.

639
00:36:59,600 --> 00:37:00,890
It's who you know.

640
00:37:00,890 --> 00:37:01,880
So it helped.

641
00:37:01,880 --> 00:37:04,040
But this man who
wrote the article

642
00:37:04,040 --> 00:37:09,710
was helpful in bringing
my husband to America.

643

00:37:09,710 --> 00:37:14,690

And then when he came, the
baby was almost a year old.

644

00:37:14,690 --> 00:37:20,600

We decided that we're
going to start a new life.

645

00:37:20,600 --> 00:37:26,200

And he was a professional,
he was a textile scientist.

646

00:37:26,200 --> 00:37:29,260

And all I said to my aunt
and uncle, when he comes,

647

00:37:29,260 --> 00:37:32,060

will he make \$50 a week?

648

00:37:32,060 --> 00:37:34,280

I was just so anxious
to get him over,

649

00:37:34,280 --> 00:37:37,460

but we had a very,
very happy life.

650

00:37:37,460 --> 00:37:40,040

I had my son in North Carolina.

651

00:37:40,040 --> 00:37:44,250

And then we moved around a
bit because he was always

652

00:37:44,250 --> 00:37:46,200

bribed by the industry.

653

00:37:46,200 --> 00:37:49,000

They always gave him more money
from one place to another.

654

00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:51,750

And we lived in the
South all the time.

655
00:37:51,750 --> 00:37:54,660
And our final nine
years together

656
00:37:54,660 --> 00:37:57,900
were also in North Carolina
because an old friend

657
00:37:57,900 --> 00:38:00,810
brought him from
Alabama, where he

658
00:38:00,810 --> 00:38:04,060
retired from Monsanto Company.

659
00:38:04,060 --> 00:38:08,130
And unfortunately, I lost him.

660
00:38:08,130 --> 00:38:12,355
He was only 74, but he
died because of asthma.

661
00:38:12,355 --> 00:38:18,670

662
00:38:18,670 --> 00:38:21,910
I want you to tell me a little
bit about that trip to Poland.

663
00:38:21,910 --> 00:38:24,880
You gave a very
heavy sigh when you

664
00:38:24,880 --> 00:38:27,855
talked about going back to
Poland to put up the stone.

665
00:38:27,855 --> 00:38:28,730
What happened to you?

666

00:38:28,730 --> 00:38:30,790

What did you find in
Poland when you went back?

667

00:38:30,790 --> 00:38:36,740

At the time when I went back
in '47, I found the grave.

668

00:38:36,740 --> 00:38:39,860

I put up a tombstone.

669

00:38:39,860 --> 00:38:44,360

And the reason why I sighed
is because the following

670

00:38:44,360 --> 00:38:51,370

trip, which was only three
years ago, I found nothing.

671

00:38:51,370 --> 00:38:54,650

You could not even
find the grave.

672

00:38:54,650 --> 00:39:01,950

The cemetery is so
pathetically neglected.

673

00:39:01,950 --> 00:39:04,990

There's no one to
take care of it.

674

00:39:04,990 --> 00:39:08,370

And that broke my heart
because I went with my son.

675

00:39:08,370 --> 00:39:12,060

And I wanted in particular
to find my aunt's grave,

676

00:39:12,060 --> 00:39:13,600

but I couldn't.

677

00:39:13,600 --> 00:39:14,730
It was impossible.

678
00:39:14,730 --> 00:39:18,400

679
00:39:18,400 --> 00:39:21,850
When you went back to Poland
the first time in the 40s,

680
00:39:21,850 --> 00:39:22,990
was there--

681
00:39:22,990 --> 00:39:26,140
were you treated badly,
or were you in any way

682
00:39:26,140 --> 00:39:28,630
mistreated by the Poles?

683
00:39:28,630 --> 00:39:35,740
No, but I was afraid because I
was already speaking English.

684
00:39:35,740 --> 00:39:37,420
After a year living
in America, I

685
00:39:37,420 --> 00:39:42,490
spoke English and
I was looked down.

686
00:39:42,490 --> 00:39:46,240
I was afraid because
the Jews in Poland

687
00:39:46,240 --> 00:39:50,080
after the war were not
treated very kindly.

688
00:39:50,080 --> 00:39:51,670
They would say, for
instance, somebody

689
00:39:51,670 --> 00:39:53,410
who knew you before
the war would say,

690
00:39:53,410 --> 00:39:54,940
how come that you survived?

691
00:39:54,940 --> 00:39:57,490
How come they didn't kill you?

692
00:39:57,490 --> 00:40:03,610
You heard, probably,
of the Kielce pogrom.

693
00:40:03,610 --> 00:40:08,800
And when you knew
of that, you sort of

694
00:40:08,800 --> 00:40:15,010
felt like the whole Polish
country was anti-Semitic.

695
00:40:15,010 --> 00:40:18,410
And you sort of--

696
00:40:18,410 --> 00:40:19,380
you're afraid.

697
00:40:19,380 --> 00:40:22,430
You're afraid for your life
because you survived so much.

698
00:40:22,430 --> 00:40:24,260
You survived such hell.

699
00:40:24,260 --> 00:40:28,070
Why being killed after
the war by Polish people?

700
00:40:28,070 --> 00:40:33,400

701
00:40:33,400 --> 00:40:36,250
I have one or two last
questions for you.

702
00:40:36,250 --> 00:40:42,820
When you look back on your years
in the ghetto and in the camp,

703
00:40:42,820 --> 00:40:45,400
is there any person
that sticks out

704
00:40:45,400 --> 00:40:47,837
in your mind, or any event
that sticks out in your mind

705
00:40:47,837 --> 00:40:49,170
that you have not mentioned yet?

706
00:40:49,170 --> 00:40:54,580

707
00:40:54,580 --> 00:41:00,030
My sister who came
to Auschwitz after I

708
00:41:00,030 --> 00:41:04,180
did having lost her baby.

709
00:41:04,180 --> 00:41:09,300
I didn't tell you
what she told me.

710
00:41:09,300 --> 00:41:12,660
That her baby was an infant.

711
00:41:12,660 --> 00:41:18,270
What they did with infants,
they put them in potato sacks

712
00:41:18,270 --> 00:41:21,690

and tied the knot
and threw the bag

713
00:41:21,690 --> 00:41:26,220
of those babies on the truck
straight to Auschwitz, straight

714
00:41:26,220 --> 00:41:27,690
to the killing.

715
00:41:27,690 --> 00:41:33,960
And my sister and I were sitting
and killing lice in Birkenau,

716
00:41:33,960 --> 00:41:38,240
looking through the
clothing that they gave her

717
00:41:38,240 --> 00:41:41,750
and talking, reminiscing about--

718
00:41:41,750 --> 00:41:44,576
she was heartbroken-- so was I--

719
00:41:44,576 --> 00:41:48,370
that the baby was
killed in that manner.

720
00:41:48,370 --> 00:42:02,870
And we never could forgive
them, because how can anybody

721
00:42:02,870 --> 00:42:06,770
believe that people could do
such a thing to other people?

722
00:42:06,770 --> 00:42:10,100
How could-- even
now, what worries

723
00:42:10,100 --> 00:42:13,895
me is that there
are still people

724
00:42:13,895 --> 00:42:16,690
who are trying to deny it.

725
00:42:16,690 --> 00:42:21,220
And that bothers me very much,
because after our generation is

726
00:42:21,220 --> 00:42:25,270
gone, it's going
to be up to you,

727
00:42:25,270 --> 00:42:27,010
the children of the survivors.

728
00:42:27,010 --> 00:42:29,440
But you did not go through it.

729
00:42:29,440 --> 00:42:33,430
You can help educate the world.

730
00:42:33,430 --> 00:42:37,800
But there are, unfortunately,
too many people

731
00:42:37,800 --> 00:42:38,950
who try to deny it.

732
00:42:38,950 --> 00:42:45,620
And that is a worry, because
not only did it happen,

733
00:42:45,620 --> 00:42:46,930
we are the proof.

734
00:42:46,930 --> 00:42:51,160
I think the museum
is doing a great job.

735
00:42:51,160 --> 00:42:56,390
But when I went back the
second time to Poland

736
00:42:56,390 --> 00:43:02,280
and saw those cemeteries
that are no more cemeteries,

737
00:43:02,280 --> 00:43:03,750
that broke my heart too.

738
00:43:03,750 --> 00:43:09,763

739
00:43:09,763 --> 00:43:12,180
I want to thank you for doing
the interview with me today.

740
00:43:12,180 --> 00:43:16,020
I appreciate all the time
that you put into this.

741
00:43:16,020 --> 00:43:18,650
I do appreciate your work.

742
00:43:18,650 --> 00:43:21,680
You are incredible.

743
00:43:21,680 --> 00:43:23,070
And I do thank you.

744
00:43:23,070 --> 00:43:26,360
I hope you interview
many more survivors

745
00:43:26,360 --> 00:43:29,420
because our days are limited.

746
00:43:29,420 --> 00:43:32,580

747
00:43:32,580 --> 00:43:36,020
This concludes the interview
with Francis Hirshfeld.

748

00:43:36,020 --> 00:43:37,000