

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,000

2  
00:00:07,000 --> 00:00:09,580  
This is a continuation of  
the United States Holocaust

3  
00:00:09,580 --> 00:00:12,400  
Memorial Museum Volunteer  
Collection interview

4  
00:00:12,400 --> 00:00:13,810  
with Tilda Finzi Cohen.

5  
00:00:13,810 --> 00:00:17,530  
This is tape number  
two, side A. And you

6  
00:00:17,530 --> 00:00:20,260  
had been talking before  
about leaving Split, going up

7  
00:00:20,260 --> 00:00:23,080  
into the mountains.

8  
00:00:23,080 --> 00:00:26,300  
And just to backtrack a  
little bit, you slept outside.

9  
00:00:26,300 --> 00:00:28,190  
What was that like?

10  
00:00:28,190 --> 00:00:30,050  
Well, it was September.

11  
00:00:30,050 --> 00:00:33,370  
We had the blankets.

12  
00:00:33,370 --> 00:00:38,060  
I slept-- my mother, my  
father, and I slept there.

13

00:00:38,060 --> 00:00:42,110

And it was kind of  
almost like camping out.

14

00:00:42,110 --> 00:00:43,790

Had you ever slept  
outside before?

15

00:00:43,790 --> 00:00:46,150

I had never slept  
outside before.

16

00:00:46,150 --> 00:00:47,900

I never had camped out before.

17

00:00:47,900 --> 00:00:48,850

So it was interesting.

18

00:00:48,850 --> 00:00:49,950

It was kind of--

19

00:00:49,950 --> 00:00:52,090

I don't remember being afraid.

20

00:00:52,090 --> 00:00:53,920

That is the interesting part.

21

00:00:53,920 --> 00:00:57,110

Now, the fear came  
when my father left.

22

00:00:57,110 --> 00:00:57,610

OK.

23

00:00:57,610 --> 00:00:58,735

Now, you're at the village.

24

00:00:58,735 --> 00:00:59,980

At the village.

25

00:00:59,980 --> 00:01:02,530

And they collect  
the partisans and I

26

00:01:02,530 --> 00:01:05,290

was seeing all the men  
have to go to fight.

27

00:01:05,290 --> 00:01:09,640

They have to be militarized and  
trained, and we got to take--

28

00:01:09,640 --> 00:01:16,750

and we said goodbye to my  
father, and my uncle, the one

29

00:01:16,750 --> 00:01:21,460

that I used to take food  
to jail, Uncle Chaim.

30

00:01:21,460 --> 00:01:25,750

And one of my grandsons  
is-- has his middle name.

31

00:01:25,750 --> 00:01:31,450

And we said goodbye and  
they left for the front.

32

00:01:31,450 --> 00:01:33,970

I don't know for where, but--

33

00:01:33,970 --> 00:01:38,320

and mother and I were  
left there alone.

34

00:01:38,320 --> 00:01:40,327

Mostly women were left there.

35

00:01:40,327 --> 00:01:42,160

Did you say anything  
special to your father,

36

00:01:42,160 --> 00:01:44,890

or did he say anything  
special to you when he left?

37  
00:01:44,890 --> 00:01:46,250  
Don't remember.

38  
00:01:46,250 --> 00:01:48,560  
I don't think so.

39  
00:01:48,560 --> 00:01:51,640  
I think maybe may God bless you,  
something my father said to me.

40  
00:01:51,640 --> 00:01:54,550  
No, it wasn't anything.

41  
00:01:54,550 --> 00:01:57,940  
There was no-- and they--

42  
00:01:57,940 --> 00:01:59,050  
he left.

43  
00:01:59,050 --> 00:02:05,260  
And about a week later, we  
were up there kind of managing,

44  
00:02:05,260 --> 00:02:09,430  
living, sleeping outside with a  
lot of other women and children

45  
00:02:09,430 --> 00:02:11,230  
and getting food.

46  
00:02:11,230 --> 00:02:12,783  
And it was OK.

47  
00:02:12,783 --> 00:02:13,450  
I mean, it was--

48  
00:02:13,450 --> 00:02:15,100  
What did you do during the day?

49

00:02:15,100 --> 00:02:19,240

Play with the kids, just  
play with the children.

50

00:02:19,240 --> 00:02:21,610

These are non-Jews and  
Jews mixed together?

51

00:02:21,610 --> 00:02:22,600

Definitely.

52

00:02:22,600 --> 00:02:23,200

Definitely.

53

00:02:23,200 --> 00:02:25,150

Because people had escaped.

54

00:02:25,150 --> 00:02:26,690

They were escaping the Germans.

55

00:02:26,690 --> 00:02:27,880

So, yeah, it was--

56

00:02:27,880 --> 00:02:30,460

though, I think we were in  
a small Jewish group, kind

57

00:02:30,460 --> 00:02:32,470

of a small Jewish  
group from Split.

58

00:02:32,470 --> 00:02:34,430

We were kind of taking  
care of each other.

59

00:02:34,430 --> 00:02:36,770

The women were taking  
care of each other.

60

00:02:36,770 --> 00:02:39,320

Was there a leader  
of this group?

61  
00:02:39,320 --> 00:02:41,680  
I don't remember  
this, the leader.

62  
00:02:41,680 --> 00:02:45,970  
Now, the command  
of that small town

63  
00:02:45,970 --> 00:02:50,740  
was under the command of a  
cousin of my father, Jachel

64  
00:02:50,740 --> 00:02:56,240  
Finzi, who was a big  
commander, and he had escaped.

65  
00:02:56,240 --> 00:03:00,600  
He had escaped from Split  
year-- a couple of years before

66  
00:03:00,600 --> 00:03:01,810  
and was up in the partisans.

67  
00:03:01,810 --> 00:03:07,640  
And he was commander.

68  
00:03:07,640 --> 00:03:09,680  
And actually, I  
think he even took--

69  
00:03:09,680 --> 00:03:11,680  
he was going to  
Split and foolishly

70  
00:03:11,680 --> 00:03:14,860  
enough-- can you believe it,  
he has gone back to Split.

71  
00:03:14,860 --> 00:03:18,130  
And foolishly enough,  
he asked my mother

72

00:03:18,130 --> 00:03:22,510

if she wanted to pick up  
some things from the house.

73

00:03:22,510 --> 00:03:24,850

And she left me there alone.

74

00:03:24,850 --> 00:03:26,260

She went back to Split.

75

00:03:26,260 --> 00:03:29,020

For a couple of hours,  
because he was going by car.

76

00:03:29,020 --> 00:03:30,280

He was a big officer.

77

00:03:30,280 --> 00:03:34,070

But the other-- on the other  
hand, there were so many,

78

00:03:34,070 --> 00:03:34,810

many--

79

00:03:34,810 --> 00:03:37,272

they could have shot that car.

80

00:03:37,272 --> 00:03:38,730

And my mother would  
have been shot.

81

00:03:38,730 --> 00:03:39,670

And I was left--

82

00:03:39,670 --> 00:03:42,790

but my mother came back that  
evening and brought, I think,

83

00:03:42,790 --> 00:03:48,950

sweaters and coat just because  
she felt like, OK, this is--

84

00:03:48,950 --> 00:03:50,680

she came back that evening.

85

00:03:50,680 --> 00:03:54,610

And about a week later,

I don't know how or why,

86

00:03:54,610 --> 00:04:00,080

and if the cousin Jachel Finzi

had anything to do with that,

87

00:04:00,080 --> 00:04:01,720

my father came back.

88

00:04:01,720 --> 00:04:03,730

They said that he was too old.

89

00:04:03,730 --> 00:04:08,650

Was 1943, my father

was 43 years old.

90

00:04:08,650 --> 00:04:13,960

They said he was a little too

old for being in the mountains

91

00:04:13,960 --> 00:04:14,560

and so forth.

92

00:04:14,560 --> 00:04:17,140

My uncle, of course,

Chaim stayed.

93

00:04:17,140 --> 00:04:18,490

He was younger.

94

00:04:18,490 --> 00:04:20,290

And of course, we

never saw him again.

95

00:04:20,290 --> 00:04:24,910

He died fighting

with the partisans.



96

00:04:24,910 --> 00:04:27,760

Did your father talk about  
what he did in those few weeks?

97

00:04:27,760 --> 00:04:29,230

They said they  
trained him-- they

98

00:04:29,230 --> 00:04:31,510

were training them,  
the military training.

99

00:04:31,510 --> 00:04:32,620

That's all.

100

00:04:32,620 --> 00:04:36,370

He didn't-- by the week, I  
think, a week and a half.

101

00:04:36,370 --> 00:04:39,100

Because by this time--

102

00:04:39,100 --> 00:04:40,360

and--

103

00:04:40,360 --> 00:04:42,920

Had you been in contact  
with him after he left?

104

00:04:42,920 --> 00:04:44,050

No.

105

00:04:44,050 --> 00:04:46,070

No, no, no.

106

00:04:46,070 --> 00:04:47,320

They were up in the mountains.

107

00:04:47,320 --> 00:04:49,990

There were no  
telephones, nothing, no.

108  
00:04:49,990 --> 00:04:52,405  
We didn't know where  
he went, what--

109  
00:04:52,405 --> 00:04:54,200  
How did your mother handle that?

110  
00:04:54,200 --> 00:04:56,050  
Now, she was very upset.

111  
00:04:56,050 --> 00:04:58,480  
That's when my  
mother was very sad

112  
00:04:58,480 --> 00:05:02,380  
and cry, was very,  
very fearful what

113  
00:05:02,380 --> 00:05:05,300  
was going to happen to us, what  
was going to happen to him.

114  
00:05:05,300 --> 00:05:07,580  
The separation was very hard.

115  
00:05:07,580 --> 00:05:10,580  
How did that affect you?

116  
00:05:10,580 --> 00:05:14,650  
You become the parent, that's  
what you become, really.

117  
00:05:14,650 --> 00:05:20,890  
You start taking care of  
your parents, your mother.

118  
00:05:20,890 --> 00:05:23,920  
Somehow you have  
to be the one that

119  
00:05:23,920 --> 00:05:27,340

makes her feel better  
and [? safer ?]..

120  
00:05:27,340 --> 00:05:30,200  
My father came back  
within a week or so to--

121  
00:05:30,200 --> 00:05:30,700  
something.

122  
00:05:30,700 --> 00:05:33,640  
I don't understand-- I don't  
remember the time sequence.

123  
00:05:33,640 --> 00:05:38,170  
But from the time we left home  
till the time we went to Italy.

124  
00:05:38,170 --> 00:05:41,740  
And then they started  
saying that the Germans were

125  
00:05:41,740 --> 00:05:42,610  
coming after--

126  
00:05:42,610 --> 00:05:44,350  
we have to move further.

127  
00:05:44,350 --> 00:05:48,370  
Then it was the decision  
was made that all the Jews--

128  
00:05:48,370 --> 00:05:49,930  
Tito made the decision.

129  
00:05:49,930 --> 00:05:51,460  
And did my cousin--

130  
00:05:51,460 --> 00:05:55,970  
did my father's cousin have  
anything to do with that?

131

00:05:55,970 --> 00:05:56,845

I don't know.

132

00:05:56,845 --> 00:06:01,610

133

00:06:01,610 --> 00:06:04,760

But either-- oh, by the  
way, this commander,

134

00:06:04,760 --> 00:06:06,710

my father went  
back to Yugoslavia

135

00:06:06,710 --> 00:06:12,020

a year before he died in '78,  
visited with this cousin who

136

00:06:12,020 --> 00:06:13,970

had become a big professor.

137

00:06:13,970 --> 00:06:17,930

He was an architect of the  
University of Sarajevo.

138

00:06:17,930 --> 00:06:20,900

And I have this  
beautiful handmade bag

139

00:06:20,900 --> 00:06:23,952

that he gave to  
my father for me.

140

00:06:23,952 --> 00:06:25,410

And it's hanging  
in my living room.

141

00:06:25,410 --> 00:06:28,040

So it has-- but I  
don't know if he

142

00:06:28,040 --> 00:06:31,970

had anything to do at the time

that he was hiding in Split.

143

00:06:31,970 --> 00:06:34,160

Before he went  
into the partisans,

144

00:06:34,160 --> 00:06:38,150

my parents had helped him with  
food, with clothing, and so--

145

00:06:38,150 --> 00:06:41,300

but it was a  
natural thing to do.

146

00:06:41,300 --> 00:06:43,890

What were your  
thoughts about Tito?

147

00:06:43,890 --> 00:06:46,420

Very positive.

148

00:06:46,420 --> 00:06:50,070

He was-- he saved the Jews.

149

00:06:50,070 --> 00:06:53,310

Yeah, he-- here he-- some  
of them he wanted to fight,

150

00:06:53,310 --> 00:06:56,200

but they wanted  
to fight with him.

151

00:06:56,200 --> 00:07:00,060

And so here he took all  
the Jews-- just the Jews--

152

00:07:00,060 --> 00:07:03,270

and said, we're going  
to transfer him to--

153

00:07:03,270 --> 00:07:07,600

transfer the Jews to the  
islands near the-- in Dalma--

154  
00:07:07,600 --> 00:07:11,820  
on the Dalmatian Coast and  
try to get them as far away

155  
00:07:11,820 --> 00:07:14,970  
from the Germans as possible.

156  
00:07:14,970 --> 00:07:18,570  
Then it was decided that  
the men were going to walk--

157  
00:07:18,570 --> 00:07:20,760  
the men and the  
strong women were

158  
00:07:20,760 --> 00:07:25,050  
going to walk through the  
mountains back to the coast

159  
00:07:25,050 --> 00:07:26,830  
up north or south of Split.

160  
00:07:26,830 --> 00:07:28,350  
I guess, north.

161  
00:07:28,350 --> 00:07:31,800  
But-- so that we could catch  
the little boats at night

162  
00:07:31,800 --> 00:07:35,280  
and start going from  
one island to the next.

163  
00:07:35,280 --> 00:07:41,730  
The women and children were  
going to go by trucks, camion.

164  
00:07:41,730 --> 00:07:44,460  
And so my dad, we  
said goodbye, OK.

165

00:07:44,460 --> 00:07:48,000  
He's going to walk and  
we are going to go by--

166  
00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:50,020  
and we could take  
some of our things,

167  
00:07:50,020 --> 00:07:53,040  
so that gave us more things.

168  
00:07:53,040 --> 00:07:54,450  
We were carrying the things.

169  
00:07:54,450 --> 00:07:55,650  
He was walking.

170  
00:07:55,650 --> 00:07:58,530  
Took blankets, took  
this, took that.

171  
00:07:58,530 --> 00:08:01,140  
The few things, I mean,  
maybe a valise or two

172  
00:08:01,140 --> 00:08:04,770  
in a small luggage since my  
mother had gone down by car,

173  
00:08:04,770 --> 00:08:08,040  
remember, was--

174  
00:08:08,040 --> 00:08:11,350  
and we went down.

175  
00:08:11,350 --> 00:08:13,110  
And now we're  
going to the coast.

176  
00:08:13,110 --> 00:08:16,860  
We went down the mountains  
from where we were, back

177

00:08:16,860 --> 00:08:18,090  
on the road towards Split.

178

00:08:18,090 --> 00:08:23,850  
And now we're going to  
go towards the coast up.

179

00:08:23,850 --> 00:08:27,570  
And they got the message  
somehow that the Germans

180

00:08:27,570 --> 00:08:28,440  
were advancing.

181

00:08:28,440 --> 00:08:35,220  
So they dropped us all off,  
took the tracks towards Split,

182

00:08:35,220 --> 00:08:39,659  
and said to us to walk the  
other direction away from Split.

183

00:08:39,659 --> 00:08:45,060  
And they were going to  
get some of their people.

184

00:08:45,060 --> 00:08:46,950  
There were-- they  
were afraid of going

185

00:08:46,950 --> 00:08:49,260  
to be caught by the Germans.

186

00:08:49,260 --> 00:08:51,520  
When you say they were  
going, and they told you to--

187

00:08:51,520 --> 00:08:54,270  
The partisans,  
partisans told us, OK?

188

00:08:54,270 --> 00:08:56,550



This is the end, walk  
towards the-- you're

189  
00:08:56,550 --> 00:08:59,790  
going to get there, just  
keep on walking maybe

190  
00:08:59,790 --> 00:09:02,880  
three or four hours,  
you'll get there.

191  
00:09:02,880 --> 00:09:05,000  
This is the group of  
women and children.

192  
00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:05,580  
Yes.

193  
00:09:05,580 --> 00:09:10,050  
And they dumped us  
there, left us there,

194  
00:09:10,050 --> 00:09:12,210  
and they were going  
towards the city trying

195  
00:09:12,210 --> 00:09:15,000  
to pick up some  
of their soldiers,

196  
00:09:15,000 --> 00:09:16,690  
some of the people  
in the city they

197  
00:09:16,690 --> 00:09:20,040  
were, because the  
city was being invaded

198  
00:09:20,040 --> 00:09:22,080  
or they were occupied  
by the Germans.

199  
00:09:22,080 --> 00:09:25,140

They didn't expect it  
quite to happen so fast.

200  
00:09:25,140 --> 00:09:26,820  
So we started walking.

201  
00:09:26,820 --> 00:09:28,770  
Of course, we couldn't  
carry because my dad

202  
00:09:28,770 --> 00:09:30,670  
didn't carry anything.

203  
00:09:30,670 --> 00:09:33,120  
So there we were dump--  
we dumped things,

204  
00:09:33,120 --> 00:09:37,380  
and we arrived only with the  
blankets and very few things.

205  
00:09:37,380 --> 00:09:42,380  
In the meantime, my  
poor father arrived

206  
00:09:42,380 --> 00:09:45,300  
there expecting us to be there.

207  
00:09:45,300 --> 00:09:47,120  
We were not.

208  
00:09:47,120 --> 00:09:48,630  
Because they were the walkers.

209  
00:09:48,630 --> 00:09:51,440  
They walked through  
the mountain.

210  
00:09:51,440 --> 00:09:56,060  
And he was-- so  
as we are walking,

211

00:09:56,060 --> 00:09:59,720  
and walking, and walking, we  
see this man walking towards us

212  
00:09:59,720 --> 00:10:01,400  
after three or four hours.

213  
00:10:01,400 --> 00:10:05,540  
He was walking, looking  
for us, feeling that we had

214  
00:10:05,540 --> 00:10:06,740  
to come from that direction.

215  
00:10:06,740 --> 00:10:08,840  
He knew the direction.

216  
00:10:08,840 --> 00:10:11,630  
Of course, we had dumped many--  
but things were not important.

217  
00:10:11,630 --> 00:10:13,650  
That was not important.

218  
00:10:13,650 --> 00:10:16,460  
We were very happy  
to be reunited.

219  
00:10:16,460 --> 00:10:18,980  
Even to a 10-year-old,  
things were not important?

220  
00:10:18,980 --> 00:10:19,700  
Excuse me?

221  
00:10:19,700 --> 00:10:21,530  
Even to a 10-year-old?

222  
00:10:21,530 --> 00:10:22,340  
Absolutely.

223  
00:10:22,340 --> 00:10:23,760

It didn't even occur.

224

00:10:23,760 --> 00:10:27,740

It just-- it was not even--  
it's a strange thing,

225

00:10:27,740 --> 00:10:29,330

no, absolutely not.

226

00:10:29,330 --> 00:10:31,910

How did you know that  
as a 10-year-old?

227

00:10:31,910 --> 00:10:34,340

Somehow, I knew we  
were-- the Germans

228

00:10:34,340 --> 00:10:36,470

were coming in behind us.

229

00:10:36,470 --> 00:10:38,900

I mean, we didn't  
want to get caught.

230

00:10:38,900 --> 00:10:41,180

So we wanted to walk faster.

231

00:10:41,180 --> 00:10:45,163

And things-- we  
couldn't, absolutely.

232

00:10:45,163 --> 00:10:46,580

Did you stay close  
to your mother?

233

00:10:46,580 --> 00:10:48,620

Definitely stayed  
close to my mother.

234

00:10:48,620 --> 00:10:52,280

But all the groups stayed close  
to each other walking, I think.

235

00:10:52,280 --> 00:10:54,997

Some of the older women  
walking more slowly.

236

00:10:54,997 --> 00:10:56,330

We were walking a little faster.

237

00:10:56,330 --> 00:10:59,040

But we were also  
worried about my father,

238

00:10:59,040 --> 00:11:00,590

because how worried will he be?

239

00:11:00,590 --> 00:11:02,780

It's always how worried  
will he be for us?

240

00:11:02,780 --> 00:11:04,220

It's an interesting thing.

241

00:11:04,220 --> 00:11:05,810

Were women helping other women?

242

00:11:05,810 --> 00:11:08,690

243

00:11:08,690 --> 00:11:11,840

I think they were  
encouraging, not helping.

244

00:11:11,840 --> 00:11:16,720

You couldn't carry  
someone else's things,

245

00:11:16,720 --> 00:11:18,580

because you couldn't  
carry your own things.

246

00:11:18,580 --> 00:11:20,110

But I think we were encouraging.

247

00:11:20,110 --> 00:11:21,930

If somebody got  
tired and sat down,

248

00:11:21,930 --> 00:11:23,170

you said, come on, get up.

249

00:11:23,170 --> 00:11:24,670

We got to-- better go.

250

00:11:24,670 --> 00:11:26,050

You don't want to stay behind.

251

00:11:26,050 --> 00:11:26,650

Come on.

252

00:11:26,650 --> 00:11:30,010

In that case, we were  
carrying each other--

253

00:11:30,010 --> 00:11:33,220

yeah, we were  
helping each other.

254

00:11:33,220 --> 00:11:35,360

Did people share food?

255

00:11:35,360 --> 00:11:36,850

I don't remember of food at all.

256

00:11:36,850 --> 00:11:38,440

I don't remember being hungry.

257

00:11:38,440 --> 00:11:41,860

I don't remember food  
at all during the trip.

258

00:11:41,860 --> 00:11:43,360

I don't remember that.

259

00:11:43,360 --> 00:11:45,580

I think we didn't have--

260  
00:11:45,580 --> 00:11:49,000  
we didn't probably have food.

261  
00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:50,680  
But we were just walking.

262  
00:11:50,680 --> 00:11:53,770  
It was not more than  
three hours or four.

263  
00:11:53,770 --> 00:11:57,480  
And when we got to the  
village where the--

264  
00:11:57,480 --> 00:12:02,080  
there where we-- my father  
then met us and we walked.

265  
00:12:02,080 --> 00:12:02,920  
There was food.

266  
00:12:02,920 --> 00:12:05,440  
There were coffee shops.

267  
00:12:05,440 --> 00:12:08,570  
I mean, by coffee shop, I mean,  
restaurant, little places.

268  
00:12:08,570 --> 00:12:09,910  
Is this on the coast?

269  
00:12:09,910 --> 00:12:11,350  
On the coast.

270  
00:12:11,350 --> 00:12:13,023  
And then we had to wait.

271  
00:12:13,023 --> 00:12:14,940  
What was the name of the  
village, do you know?

272  
00:12:14,940 --> 00:12:15,760  
I don't.

273  
00:12:15,760 --> 00:12:17,980  
All these places you  
were there just--

274  
00:12:17,980 --> 00:12:23,410  
it was just one of these  
little, tiny [INAUDIBLE]..

275  
00:12:23,410 --> 00:12:26,620  
And we had to wait  
till night time

276  
00:12:26,620 --> 00:12:30,580  
so that we could  
take this little boat

277  
00:12:30,580 --> 00:12:34,990  
to go to one of the islands.

278  
00:12:34,990 --> 00:12:40,420  
And it was night and I had had--

279  
00:12:40,420 --> 00:12:45,460  
we just got on this damn boat,  
a little rowboat or something

280  
00:12:45,460 --> 00:12:46,960  
like that, and rode.

281  
00:12:46,960 --> 00:12:50,120

282  
00:12:50,120 --> 00:12:52,310  
I don't know for how  
many hours, but probably

283  
00:12:52,310 --> 00:12:54,950  
as soon as it



turned dark we went.

284

00:12:54,950 --> 00:12:57,725  
And then got there about 12:00,  
1:00 in the morning, 2:00

285

00:12:57,725 --> 00:12:58,350  
in the morning.

286

00:12:58,350 --> 00:12:59,400  
I don't remember.

287

00:12:59,400 --> 00:13:01,492  
You said your father  
caught up with you.

288

00:13:01,492 --> 00:13:01,992  
Yes.

289

00:13:01,992 --> 00:13:05,630  
Did you ever think he would not?

290

00:13:05,630 --> 00:13:08,690  
Well, basically,  
we felt my father

291

00:13:08,690 --> 00:13:11,060  
and my aunt and uncle  
who walked were--

292

00:13:11,060 --> 00:13:12,900  
they were much  
safer than we were.

293

00:13:12,900 --> 00:13:14,930  
They were in partisan territory.

294

00:13:14,930 --> 00:13:19,970  
We were kind of going  
down, because I think

295

00:13:19,970 --> 00:13:21,510

we were not worried about him.

296

00:13:21,510 --> 00:13:23,510

I think he was the one  
who was worried about us.

297

00:13:23,510 --> 00:13:29,030

He realized either we were  
caught, something happened.

298

00:13:29,030 --> 00:13:31,850

Because we should have been  
there by the time he arrived.

299

00:13:31,850 --> 00:13:33,410

Because they were walking.

300

00:13:33,410 --> 00:13:36,240

Was an eight hour-- it was  
a seven, eight hour walk.

301

00:13:36,240 --> 00:13:38,390

But then they started  
early in the morning.

302

00:13:38,390 --> 00:13:41,510

They expected us to be  
there and waiting for them.

303

00:13:41,510 --> 00:13:47,120

This was-- and then I think  
started my mother had not

304

00:13:47,120 --> 00:13:48,500

wanted to go by.

305

00:13:48,500 --> 00:13:51,200

She wanted to go walk, but  
he was worried about me,

306

00:13:51,200 --> 00:13:53,450

a 10-year-old walking again.

307

00:13:53,450 --> 00:13:56,210

308

00:13:56,210 --> 00:13:57,980

But we went to one  
of the islands,

309

00:13:57,980 --> 00:14:02,240

and basically, things then  
at the islands, we were.

310

00:14:02,240 --> 00:14:03,710

Did you help row?

311

00:14:03,710 --> 00:14:04,860

Oh, no, it wasn't a row.

312

00:14:04,860 --> 00:14:07,250

It was like maybe  
a small motorboat.

313

00:14:07,250 --> 00:14:09,910

It felt like a real  
boat with a motor.

314

00:14:09,910 --> 00:14:11,750

And there were a few  
boats, and we all

315

00:14:11,750 --> 00:14:14,360

got to one of the  
islands, and then

316

00:14:14,360 --> 00:14:17,270

we were put up in  
one of the schools.

317

00:14:17,270 --> 00:14:19,790

The partisans had occupied this.

318

00:14:19,790 --> 00:14:22,070

And we were put up

in some schools.

319

00:14:22,070 --> 00:14:28,250

And there was a big place to  
eat, one of these mess halls.

320

00:14:28,250 --> 00:14:34,250

And I slept in the  
school rooms and just--

321

00:14:34,250 --> 00:14:36,440

and our blankets.

322

00:14:36,440 --> 00:14:40,280

And then the next night, we were  
transferred to another small

323

00:14:40,280 --> 00:14:45,770

island, I think BraÄ  
B-R. the Island of BraÄ .

324

00:14:45,770 --> 00:14:51,430

And I remember having  
Rosh Hashanah in one

325

00:14:51,430 --> 00:14:52,630

of these islands.

326

00:14:52,630 --> 00:14:54,400

And I was telling  
Sandy last night,

327

00:14:54,400 --> 00:14:55,900

we were talking about something.

328

00:14:55,900 --> 00:14:58,960

Maybe-- I remember  
that we-- my mother

329

00:14:58,960 --> 00:15:05,290

prepared something and took  
it to a bakery, bakery ovens.

330

00:15:05,290 --> 00:15:09,820

You could put it in the oven in  
the bakery and bake something.

331

00:15:09,820 --> 00:15:14,720

And some of the restaurant,  
like-- it was a small town.

332

00:15:14,720 --> 00:15:19,280

We just ate outside in  
the restaurant outdoors.

333

00:15:19,280 --> 00:15:21,810

But ate our food because  
it was Rosh Hashanah.

334

00:15:21,810 --> 00:15:23,120

It's-- we still--

335

00:15:23,120 --> 00:15:25,640

the feeling was there.

336

00:15:25,640 --> 00:15:30,840

And I don't know, we  
spent maybe a week there.

337

00:15:30,840 --> 00:15:34,260

And it was like the  
vacation islands now.

338

00:15:34,260 --> 00:15:35,530

It's on the sea.

339

00:15:35,530 --> 00:15:36,880

It was fun.

340

00:15:36,880 --> 00:15:38,040

It was fun.

341

00:15:38,040 --> 00:15:42,540

It was-- we were afraid,  
but the Germans would come.

342  
00:15:42,540 --> 00:15:43,950  
Then again--

343  
00:15:43,950 --> 00:15:45,370  
Did you have  
freedom of movement?

344  
00:15:45,370 --> 00:15:46,500  
Complete freedom.

345  
00:15:46,500 --> 00:15:50,400  
Well, you didn't want to move  
because in case they said let's

346  
00:15:50,400 --> 00:15:52,290  
take you to another island.

347  
00:15:52,290 --> 00:15:54,630  
Freedom of movement,  
the partisans were--

348  
00:15:54,630 --> 00:15:56,970  
we were-- we could do anything.

349  
00:15:56,970 --> 00:16:01,228  
We-- I mean, the partisans gave  
you freedom we didn't have.

350  
00:16:01,228 --> 00:16:03,270  
Did you feel that they  
were your real protectors?

351  
00:16:03,270 --> 00:16:04,050  
Yes.

352  
00:16:04,050 --> 00:16:05,890  
I really felt that  
they were protected.

353  
00:16:05,890 --> 00:16:08,880  
So much so I had some

knee problem and one night

354

00:16:08,880 --> 00:16:14,560

I started crying that my  
knees hurt from-- somehow,

355

00:16:14,560 --> 00:16:16,148

something-- my  
knees hurt terribly.

356

00:16:16,148 --> 00:16:16,690

I don't know.

357

00:16:16,690 --> 00:16:17,470

I was crying.

358

00:16:17,470 --> 00:16:20,220

I don't think so with  
the growing pains

359

00:16:20,220 --> 00:16:24,390

or was it something  
to do with my tonsils

360

00:16:24,390 --> 00:16:27,630

that the operation took  
place a little too late.

361

00:16:27,630 --> 00:16:29,920

Because I didn't-- it was--

362

00:16:29,920 --> 00:16:33,030

oh, and Sandy asked  
me why didn't I have--

363

00:16:33,030 --> 00:16:34,710

where did I have my operation?

364

00:16:34,710 --> 00:16:36,460

I said, in the doctor's office.

365

00:16:36,460 --> 00:16:39,060

He says, Ma, they  
took your tonsils off

366  
00:16:39,060 --> 00:16:40,560  
in the doctor's office?

367  
00:16:40,560 --> 00:16:42,390  
I said, yeah, Jews were not my--

368  
00:16:42,390 --> 00:16:45,000  
I said, well, Jews weren't  
allowed in the hospital.

369  
00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:48,260  
Didn't for-- they  
forgotten that.

370  
00:16:48,260 --> 00:16:49,830  
Now, when was that?

371  
00:16:49,830 --> 00:16:51,180  
That was probably 19--

372  
00:16:51,180 --> 00:16:54,670  
early 1943.

373  
00:16:54,670 --> 00:16:59,960  
But some of this infection  
had gone into my joints,

374  
00:16:59,960 --> 00:17:03,010  
it was a type of  
rheumatic fever, I think.

375  
00:17:03,010 --> 00:17:06,609  
So much my knees  
were hurting and my--

376  
00:17:06,609 --> 00:17:10,150  
and I remember arriving in one  
of the islands and one night.

377



00:17:10,150 --> 00:17:12,130

And one of the  
partisans was taking us

378

00:17:12,130 --> 00:17:14,380

to the school,  
one of the school.

379

00:17:14,380 --> 00:17:15,440

And I started crying.

380

00:17:15,440 --> 00:17:17,770

And he says, [NON-ENGLISH]?

381

00:17:17,770 --> 00:17:19,990

Why is this little one crying?

382

00:17:19,990 --> 00:17:22,150

And my mother says,  
her knees are hurting.

383

00:17:22,150 --> 00:17:23,424

Her knees are hurting.

384

00:17:23,424 --> 00:17:26,079

385

00:17:26,079 --> 00:17:29,170

And he says, she shouldn't  
sleep at that school.

386

00:17:29,170 --> 00:17:32,360

Let me go and check if  
somebody has a room.

387

00:17:32,360 --> 00:17:34,180

So he knocked on  
somebody's house

388

00:17:34,180 --> 00:17:38,380

that he knew, says, do you  
have a room for a couple,

389

00:17:38,380 --> 00:17:40,720

the little girl is sick.

390

00:17:40,720 --> 00:17:43,630

And we stayed there for  
four or five, six nights--

391

00:17:43,630 --> 00:17:46,000

I don't remember--  
in a beautiful room,

392

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:47,500

a beautiful garden.

393

00:17:47,500 --> 00:17:51,700

That beautiful room-- I mean,  
relatively beautiful room.

394

00:17:51,700 --> 00:17:54,730

And so they were  
definitely our protectors.

395

00:17:54,730 --> 00:17:58,110

Tito's partisans were  
definitely our protector.

396

00:17:58,110 --> 00:18:00,360

And then the last  
trip was to the Island

397

00:18:00,360 --> 00:18:02,910

of Vis in the middle  
of the Adriatic--

398

00:18:02,910 --> 00:18:06,210

not middle, practically  
middle of the Adriatic.

399

00:18:06,210 --> 00:18:07,800

And we were there for--

400

00:18:07,800 --> 00:18:10,170

don't remember how many days.

401

00:18:10,170 --> 00:18:14,670

The whole thing from September  
11 till October something.

402

00:18:14,670 --> 00:18:16,020

Because for Yom Kippur--

403

00:18:16,020 --> 00:18:18,990

what-- oh, tell  
me how many days?

404

00:18:18,990 --> 00:18:20,250

10 days?

405

00:18:20,250 --> 00:18:22,710

Oh, my God, so it  
was very quick.

406

00:18:22,710 --> 00:18:28,530

We were on one island  
already for Rosh Hashanah.

407

00:18:28,530 --> 00:18:30,640

Or on the second island  
maybe for Rosh Hashanah.

408

00:18:30,640 --> 00:18:33,030

So in Vis we couldn't  
been very long

409

00:18:33,030 --> 00:18:40,410

because we arrived in  
Bari, Italy a day before,

410

00:18:40,410 --> 00:18:41,960

or two days before Yom Kippur.

411

00:18:41,960 --> 00:18:44,550

So it wasn't-- and then--

412

00:18:44,550 --> 00:18:46,440

How did you-- how  
did you get to Bari?

413

00:18:46,440 --> 00:18:47,430

OK.

414

00:18:47,430 --> 00:18:55,020

The Italia-- the, I think the  
Allies had sent the ship over

415

00:18:55,020 --> 00:19:01,290

to Vis to bring  
the wounded, the--

416

00:19:01,290 --> 00:19:04,230

Tito's partisan's  
wounded people wounded

417

00:19:04,230 --> 00:19:05,730

and with the frozen limb.

418

00:19:05,730 --> 00:19:06,720

I mean, all the--

419

00:19:06,720 --> 00:19:12,420

they were taking them to  
allied hospitals in Bari.

420

00:19:12,420 --> 00:19:14,940

Bari was already established.

421

00:19:14,940 --> 00:19:17,640

So what happened--

422

00:19:17,640 --> 00:19:21,345

Bari is a refugee camp on  
the Adriatic Coast of Italy.

423

00:19:21,345 --> 00:19:24,080

Bari is-- Bari is  
a city, not a--

424

00:19:24,080 --> 00:19:26,730

I meant a city in which  
the camp was established.

425

00:19:26,730 --> 00:19:27,630

Yeah.

426

00:19:27,630 --> 00:19:29,280

They were camps, refugee camps.

427

00:19:29,280 --> 00:19:37,200

But basically, Bari was a city  
in the big port, major port.

428

00:19:37,200 --> 00:19:41,430

And the Allies had landed  
there, or gotten there.

429

00:19:41,430 --> 00:19:46,740

And basically, they were  
sending a ship over to Vis

430

00:19:46,740 --> 00:19:51,030

to bring the pris-- not the  
prisoners, the wounded people,

431

00:19:51,030 --> 00:19:54,480

the partisan soldiers  
wounded that-- so they could

432

00:19:54,480 --> 00:19:59,130

be treated in allied hospital.

433

00:19:59,130 --> 00:20:01,890

And at that point,  
somehow the decision

434

00:20:01,890 --> 00:20:05,310

came that the bottom  
of the boat were--

435

00:20:05,310 --> 00:20:09,480

was going to be filled  
with these Jewish people

436  
00:20:09,480 --> 00:20:11,190  
and sent to Bari.

437  
00:20:11,190 --> 00:20:12,760  
Do you know who  
made that decision?

438  
00:20:12,760 --> 00:20:13,380  
No.

439  
00:20:13,380 --> 00:20:15,810  
I think some of the  
partisan leadership

440  
00:20:15,810 --> 00:20:17,550  
made the decision  
that they didn't

441  
00:20:17,550 --> 00:20:22,740  
want to deal with the  
Jews being caught,

442  
00:20:22,740 --> 00:20:24,450  
the ones that had escaped.

443  
00:20:24,450 --> 00:20:28,290  
And they were going to send  
them to Italy to the Allies.

444  
00:20:28,290 --> 00:20:31,470  
So they filled the boat  
with as many wounded,

445  
00:20:31,470 --> 00:20:34,950  
and we flew a Red Cross  
flag floating out--

446  
00:20:34,950 --> 00:20:36,920  
what is it-- sail.

447

00:20:36,920 --> 00:20:41,340

It was a Red Cross flag so  
that we couldn't be on top deck

448

00:20:41,340 --> 00:20:43,860

ever except at night,  
because they couldn't

449

00:20:43,860 --> 00:20:47,800

see there were people there.

450

00:20:47,800 --> 00:20:51,130

They were just-- it was  
almost like a hospital ship.

451

00:20:51,130 --> 00:20:54,700

But we could come  
out at night and so--

452

00:20:54,700 --> 00:20:56,125

but we had to be under.

453

00:20:56,125 --> 00:20:58,700

454

00:20:58,700 --> 00:21:01,050

Do you know about how many  
people were on that boat?

455

00:21:01,050 --> 00:21:05,930

456

00:21:05,930 --> 00:21:08,420

I'd say about 40, 50.

457

00:21:08,420 --> 00:21:09,680

I don't really.

458

00:21:09,680 --> 00:21:10,650

Total.

459

00:21:10,650 --> 00:21:11,150  
Total.

460  
00:21:11,150 --> 00:21:12,020  
No, no, no.

461  
00:21:12,020 --> 00:21:13,590  
I'm talking about Jewish people.

462  
00:21:13,590 --> 00:21:14,420  
Oh, no, no.

463  
00:21:14,420 --> 00:21:16,400  
I don't never saw the  
pris-- prisoners were

464  
00:21:16,400 --> 00:21:19,160  
in a completely-- not  
prisoners, the wounded

465  
00:21:19,160 --> 00:21:21,710  
were in a completely  
different area.

466  
00:21:21,710 --> 00:21:23,820  
They work like a hospital.

467  
00:21:23,820 --> 00:21:26,650  
And we were just under  
whatever-- what is it called,

468  
00:21:26,650 --> 00:21:28,010  
the underneath the ship?

469  
00:21:28,010 --> 00:21:29,670  
God, I don't know what it is.

470  
00:21:29,670 --> 00:21:31,340  
Anyway, whatever it is.

471  
00:21:31,340 --> 00:21:34,640  
But we could come out at night.



472  
00:21:34,640 --> 00:21:35,510  
When it was dark.

473  
00:21:35,510 --> 00:21:38,740  
When it was dark so that if  
somebody was flying a plane,

474  
00:21:38,740 --> 00:21:40,730  
the Germans were  
flying plane, they

475  
00:21:40,730 --> 00:21:46,520  
were hoping that they would  
not bomb or something a Red

476  
00:21:46,520 --> 00:21:48,260  
Cross, a hospital ship.

477  
00:21:48,260 --> 00:21:51,240  
Now, what was your state  
of mind at this point?

478  
00:21:51,240 --> 00:21:53,420  
I really don't know  
what my state of mind.

479  
00:21:53,420 --> 00:21:56,990  
I don't-- the state of mind  
was there were kids there.

480  
00:21:56,990 --> 00:21:59,330  
We used to play.

481  
00:21:59,330 --> 00:22:00,500  
There was food.

482  
00:22:00,500 --> 00:22:02,930  
We weren't particularly  
hungry or anything.

483  
00:22:02,930 --> 00:22:05,000

It was not good food,  
but it was something.

484  
00:22:05,000 --> 00:22:07,730

485  
00:22:07,730 --> 00:22:10,340  
And again, you stayed  
with your parents.

486  
00:22:10,340 --> 00:22:12,660  
Both my parents were with me.

487  
00:22:12,660 --> 00:22:14,370  
I was with both my parents.

488  
00:22:14,370 --> 00:22:19,410  
And it was-- we're  
coming to a new--

489  
00:22:19,410 --> 00:22:22,900  
was an overnight trip, I  
think, or day, something-- day

490  
00:22:22,900 --> 00:22:25,630  
and a night or something  
like-- it wasn't very long.

491  
00:22:25,630 --> 00:22:27,600  
The ship was going very small.

492  
00:22:27,600 --> 00:22:28,100  
OK.

493  
00:22:28,100 --> 00:22:29,470  
Another thing, the  
motor was-- they

494  
00:22:29,470 --> 00:22:30,940  
had-- they were  
sending it to Italy

495

00:22:30,940 --> 00:22:32,587  
because the motor  
was having problems.

496  
00:22:32,587 --> 00:22:34,420  
So they were sending  
the wounded, the motor,

497  
00:22:34,420 --> 00:22:36,160  
I mean, everybody was sick.

498  
00:22:36,160 --> 00:22:37,630  
And--

499  
00:22:37,630 --> 00:22:40,090  
Would you describe  
yourself at that time

500  
00:22:40,090 --> 00:22:43,510  
as being an optimistic child?

501  
00:22:43,510 --> 00:22:46,660  
It's very interesting you  
should ask that, because I mean,

502  
00:22:46,660 --> 00:22:48,520  
considered always a pessimist.

503  
00:22:48,520 --> 00:22:50,620  
Everybody in my family  
thinks I'm a pess--

504  
00:22:50,620 --> 00:22:52,810  
I always look at the  
dark side of things.

505  
00:22:52,810 --> 00:22:53,590  
I wonder why.

506  
00:22:53,590 --> 00:22:59,010

507

00:22:59,010 --> 00:23:02,370  
It seems like you've adjusted to  
these changes as a young child

508  
00:23:02,370 --> 00:23:03,690  
as you were going through them.

509  
00:23:03,690 --> 00:23:05,730  
Yes, I adjust to changes easily.

510  
00:23:05,730 --> 00:23:07,320  
I learn languages easily.

511  
00:23:07,320 --> 00:23:08,700  
I-- and all this.

512  
00:23:08,700 --> 00:23:11,880  
But I always look--

513  
00:23:11,880 --> 00:23:14,010  
I really don't remember.

514  
00:23:14,010 --> 00:23:18,210  
Just being together with my  
parents, my mother and father,

515  
00:23:18,210 --> 00:23:20,490  
meant so much.

516  
00:23:20,490 --> 00:23:23,010  
Just being-- because  
there were a lot of people

517  
00:23:23,010 --> 00:23:26,890  
there without their spouses.

518  
00:23:26,890 --> 00:23:31,290  
So that already families  
had been fragmented

519  
00:23:31,290 --> 00:23:32,310  
in different directions.

520  
00:23:32,310 --> 00:23:34,410  
To me, having my  
mother and father--

521  
00:23:34,410 --> 00:23:37,080  
being an only child, my mother  
and father were my world.

522  
00:23:37,080 --> 00:23:39,240  
So I didn't--

523  
00:23:39,240 --> 00:23:41,660  
Were there other children  
there without any parents?

524  
00:23:41,660 --> 00:23:44,830  
No, there were no  
children-- it was--

525  
00:23:44,830 --> 00:23:47,620  
without-- there were many  
children with one parent.

526  
00:23:47,620 --> 00:23:50,890  
Some parents had been  
taken to concentration camp

527  
00:23:50,890 --> 00:23:51,940  
from other cities.

528  
00:23:51,940 --> 00:23:55,120  
You see, from Sarajevo,  
the mother and the child

529  
00:23:55,120 --> 00:23:57,100  
had escaped.

530  
00:23:57,100 --> 00:24:04,300  
Some had gone-- younger people  
than my parents had been

531

00:24:04,300 --> 00:24:04,930  
taken--

532  
00:24:04,930 --> 00:24:08,170  
had stayed in the army  
fighting with the partisans,

533  
00:24:08,170 --> 00:24:11,570  
with the Tito's  
partisans so that--

534  
00:24:11,570 --> 00:24:14,470  
so I really don't  
remember as being--

535  
00:24:14,470 --> 00:24:15,460  
I was not sad.

536  
00:24:15,460 --> 00:24:18,340  
I was glad to be  
leaving someplace

537  
00:24:18,340 --> 00:24:20,500  
where the Allies were.

538  
00:24:20,500 --> 00:24:23,830  
Can't believe what we thought  
of the Americans and the Allies.

539  
00:24:23,830 --> 00:24:26,290  
It was like these  
were the saviors.

540  
00:24:26,290 --> 00:24:29,980  
They were going to come and save  
us in Split if they ever came.

541  
00:24:29,980 --> 00:24:31,750  
So we were going to them.

542  
00:24:31,750 --> 00:24:35,020  
I mean, we were  
going to be fine.

543  
00:24:35,020 --> 00:24:39,250  
And we arrived in  
Bari, landed in Bari.

544  
00:24:39,250 --> 00:24:42,040  
And there were-- the first  
time I ever saw a Black person.

545  
00:24:42,040 --> 00:24:47,200  
And they were there handing  
out corned beef cans,

546  
00:24:47,200 --> 00:24:51,630  
handing out chocolates as  
we-- and the boat to us.

547  
00:24:51,630 --> 00:24:53,005  
As you're getting off, you mean.

548  
00:24:53,005 --> 00:24:55,120  
No, almost-- they had to--

549  
00:24:55,120 --> 00:24:58,360  
no, they were somehow reaching  
up, throwing these things.

550  
00:24:58,360 --> 00:25:00,940  
It was like we were--

551  
00:25:00,940 --> 00:25:02,380  
and--

552  
00:25:02,380 --> 00:25:03,830  
These are allied soldiers.

553  
00:25:03,830 --> 00:25:08,260  
Allied soldiers,  
mostly Americans.

554  
00:25:08,260 --> 00:25:10,090  
Did you know any

English at that point?

555

00:25:10,090 --> 00:25:14,610

No, none whatsoever, not a word.

556

00:25:14,610 --> 00:25:18,660

And took us to  
the-- some school.

557

00:25:18,660 --> 00:25:21,990

It's always the school because  
schools get closed during war.

558

00:25:21,990 --> 00:25:24,340

So the schools are used  
for different purposes.

559

00:25:24,340 --> 00:25:26,050

So here we go to a school.

560

00:25:26,050 --> 00:25:29,250

They give us straw to sleep on.

561

00:25:29,250 --> 00:25:31,530

We have our blankets, though.

562

00:25:31,530 --> 00:25:34,410

And-- but then the cots came.

563

00:25:34,410 --> 00:25:37,710

They gave us cots, and  
we slept in schools.

564

00:25:37,710 --> 00:25:43,590

The food was like army  
type of food, or whatever.

565

00:25:43,590 --> 00:25:44,370

But it was fine.

566

00:25:44,370 --> 00:25:46,390

We were--



567

00:25:46,390 --> 00:25:50,500

Are you still wearing the same  
clothes over and over again?

568

00:25:50,500 --> 00:25:55,600

Very few clothes, probably maybe  
a couple of pairs of underwear.

569

00:25:55,600 --> 00:25:57,910

The clothes were  
basically the same.

570

00:25:57,910 --> 00:25:59,650

Maybe had a change of blouse.

571

00:25:59,650 --> 00:26:04,140

Then my mother encountered  
somebody from Split who said,

572

00:26:04,140 --> 00:26:05,710

the pajama, I remember.

573

00:26:05,710 --> 00:26:08,940

And she says, the pajama top,  
do you want a pajama for her?

574

00:26:08,940 --> 00:26:13,450

My mother said, pajama for her,  
the pajama top can be a blouse.

575

00:26:13,450 --> 00:26:18,040

So already people were coming  
and we were sharing clothes.

576

00:26:18,040 --> 00:26:25,120

And somehow things were--

577

00:26:25,120 --> 00:26:30,160

we were in a strange city, but  
there were a lot of refugees.

578

00:26:30,160 --> 00:26:36,190  
We ran into people we had  
known from Yugoslavia,

579  
00:26:36,190 --> 00:26:37,420  
people that had come--

580  
00:26:37,420 --> 00:26:40,060  
remember that first  
boat that left

581  
00:26:40,060 --> 00:26:44,090  
and that we didn't make the  
second, couldn't get on.

582  
00:26:44,090 --> 00:26:47,960  
There were people there  
and we started sharing.

583  
00:26:47,960 --> 00:26:50,140  
I think they land--

584  
00:26:50,140 --> 00:26:52,840  
loaned my father some money.

585  
00:26:52,840 --> 00:26:56,590  
Maybe very little,  
but just a little.

586  
00:26:56,590 --> 00:27:00,070  
And we were starting kind of--

587  
00:27:00,070 --> 00:27:03,220  
I think my father even  
didn't want to be in a camp.

588  
00:27:03,220 --> 00:27:07,430  
So we would be  
halfway in a camp.

589  
00:27:07,430 --> 00:27:10,160  
And it was interesting.

590

00:27:10,160 --> 00:27:13,910

591

00:27:13,910 --> 00:27:18,200

It was just not the danger,  
it was a strange place.

592

00:27:18,200 --> 00:27:20,540

I mean, there was always--

593

00:27:20,540 --> 00:27:23,120

I wonder where my  
parents got privacy.

594

00:27:23,120 --> 00:27:23,940

I wonder.

595

00:27:23,940 --> 00:27:27,230

But I always shared  
a room with them.

596

00:27:27,230 --> 00:27:31,430

And I remember one  
night, one afternoon--

597

00:27:31,430 --> 00:27:34,440

this maybe shouldn't be  
said, but I think it should.

598

00:27:34,440 --> 00:27:37,730

One of the friends  
said, you know what?

599

00:27:37,730 --> 00:27:39,890

I'm going to take all  
the kids to the movies.

600

00:27:39,890 --> 00:27:44,150

And I wonder why he was taking  
all the children to the movies.

601

00:27:44,150 --> 00:27:46,620

What-- he was taking  
all the children

602  
00:27:46,620 --> 00:27:47,720  
were going to the movies.

603  
00:27:47,720 --> 00:27:49,100  
He was going to sacri--

604  
00:27:49,100 --> 00:27:51,620  
I'm taking all the  
children to the movie.

605  
00:27:51,620 --> 00:27:55,430  
And we all went to the movies,  
about four or five of us,

606  
00:27:55,430 --> 00:27:59,150  
children younger than I, and I--

607  
00:27:59,150 --> 00:28:00,830  
about three or four.

608  
00:28:00,830 --> 00:28:05,450  
And we are in the  
middle of the movie,

609  
00:28:05,450 --> 00:28:08,690  
and there is a horrendous noise.

610  
00:28:08,690 --> 00:28:09,740  
A bomb fell.

611  
00:28:09,740 --> 00:28:11,960  
They were bombing the city.

612  
00:28:11,960 --> 00:28:16,550  
Then from the movie,  
we went to a shelter.

613  
00:28:16,550 --> 00:28:19,250  
And it was the kind

of thing that you

614

00:28:19,250 --> 00:28:23,870

think back now when  
there was the all clear,

615

00:28:23,870 --> 00:28:26,450

we walk into the street  
and everything is glass.

616

00:28:26,450 --> 00:28:27,890

You walking-- all  
the windows had

617

00:28:27,890 --> 00:28:31,580

been broken of all the  
houses, all the buildings.

618

00:28:31,580 --> 00:28:35,720

And my poor mother is  
waiting for us to come home.

619

00:28:35,720 --> 00:28:37,760

And my father-- it's just--

620

00:28:37,760 --> 00:28:39,650

and I was worried  
that I was sure

621

00:28:39,650 --> 00:28:41,060

that my parents were not alive.

622

00:28:41,060 --> 00:28:45,540

I felt like I was 10 years old.

623

00:28:45,540 --> 00:28:48,600

And-- but they were  
fine, and I was fine.

624

00:28:48,600 --> 00:28:50,970

And we started living in Bari.

625

00:28:50,970 --> 00:28:51,656

It was--

626

00:28:51,656 --> 00:28:54,332

627

00:28:54,332 --> 00:29:00,990

Was this explosion when the  
Germans dropped the bombs

628

00:29:00,990 --> 00:29:03,110

and there was-- on  
ships in the harbor

629

00:29:03,110 --> 00:29:04,790

and the poison gas exploded?

630

00:29:04,790 --> 00:29:06,970

This was-- I was there  
for the poison gas.

631

00:29:06,970 --> 00:29:10,140

This was later--  
this was, I think,

632

00:29:10,140 --> 00:29:13,530

this was more like in  
'43, the end of '43,

633

00:29:13,530 --> 00:29:16,300

probably at the end of '43.

634

00:29:16,300 --> 00:29:16,800

Was when--

635

00:29:16,800 --> 00:29:21,300

And the bomb, the gas, the--

636

00:29:21,300 --> 00:29:22,530

what kind of gas?

637

00:29:22,530 --> 00:29:23,490

The poison gas.

638

00:29:23,490 --> 00:29:24,115

The poison gas.

639

00:29:24,115 --> 00:29:25,150

There was name for it.

640

00:29:25,150 --> 00:29:28,610

That was, I think, in '44.

641

00:29:28,610 --> 00:29:29,900

You have it differently?

642

00:29:29,900 --> 00:29:31,650

It's listed as

December '43 when--

643

00:29:31,650 --> 00:29:32,150

OK.

644

00:29:32,150 --> 00:29:35,090

Might have been-- it

listed as December '43?

645

00:29:35,090 --> 00:29:37,490

Yeah.

646

00:29:37,490 --> 00:29:39,770

December 2, 1943.

647

00:29:39,770 --> 00:29:41,750

But this was another explosion.

648

00:29:41,750 --> 00:29:45,390

This was-- this

was just a bombing.

649

00:29:45,390 --> 00:29:47,930

Let's talk a little bit about--

650

00:29:47,930 --> 00:29:50,722  
so when you first  
got to Bari, were you

651  
00:29:50,722 --> 00:29:53,180  
moved around, or did you just--  
were you taken to one place

652  
00:29:53,180 --> 00:29:54,500  
and you stayed?

653  
00:29:54,500 --> 00:29:55,970  
Well, we were taken to a school.

654  
00:29:55,970 --> 00:30:00,750  
We were free to do anything  
we wanted to do, anything--

655  
00:30:00,750 --> 00:30:02,720  
I mean, within the city.

656  
00:30:02,720 --> 00:30:04,010  
There was no--

657  
00:30:04,010 --> 00:30:08,990  
So there wasn't-- it wasn't a  
refugee camp with a boundary.

658  
00:30:08,990 --> 00:30:12,230  
There was a refugee camp that  
you could go to, because you

659  
00:30:12,230 --> 00:30:14,750  
couldn't support yourself.

660  
00:30:14,750 --> 00:30:18,110  
The refugee camp was  
not that you had to go.

661  
00:30:18,110 --> 00:30:23,870  
It was a camp that if you didn't  
have money, you went there



662

00:30:23,870 --> 00:30:27,110

and you were given food  
and shelter, and maybe

663

00:30:27,110 --> 00:30:28,730

some clothes.

664

00:30:28,730 --> 00:30:32,900

But my father had ran into  
some friends who loan--

665

00:30:32,900 --> 00:30:36,860

lend him some money  
that he-- whenever he--

666

00:30:36,860 --> 00:30:39,680

lended in the sense of give.

667

00:30:39,680 --> 00:30:45,630

And it was the kind of  
thing that we actually--

668

00:30:45,630 --> 00:30:47,340

So you lived in  
the town of Bari,

669

00:30:47,340 --> 00:30:49,170

not within the  
refugee camp limits.

670

00:30:49,170 --> 00:30:50,190

Yeah, for a while.

671

00:30:50,190 --> 00:30:54,630

Then later things got  
a little bit more--

672

00:30:54,630 --> 00:30:58,240

but basically, we always  
had a place to live.

673

00:30:58,240 --> 00:31:01,650

He rented a one room  
in somebody's house.

674  
00:31:01,650 --> 00:31:04,650  
And we lived with this woman  
whose husband was a prisoner

675  
00:31:04,650 --> 00:31:07,020  
of war, non-Jewish, and--

676  
00:31:07,020 --> 00:31:08,280  
for a few months.

677  
00:31:08,280 --> 00:31:11,190  
Then the bombs got very bad.

678  
00:31:11,190 --> 00:31:13,320  
They started bombing  
and we got fearful,

679  
00:31:13,320 --> 00:31:16,200  
and we went to a small  
village around Bari

680  
00:31:16,200 --> 00:31:20,250  
and rented a room with  
a few other families.

681  
00:31:20,250 --> 00:31:22,500  
And then rented a house.

682  
00:31:22,500 --> 00:31:25,920  
Actually, a house with three  
or four other families.

683  
00:31:25,920 --> 00:31:28,050  
And we were just hiding--

684  
00:31:28,050 --> 00:31:31,420  
not hiding-- basically, hiding  
from the bombs, not hiding.

685

00:31:31,420 --> 00:31:34,800

And my father used to go in  
the City of Bari every day

686

00:31:34,800 --> 00:31:37,500

and work on the black market  
selling that little gold,

687

00:31:37,500 --> 00:31:39,600

selling cigarettes,  
selling something

688

00:31:39,600 --> 00:31:43,170

to make money to support us.

689

00:31:43,170 --> 00:31:46,590

How did you react to the bombs?

690

00:31:46,590 --> 00:31:49,560

That's-- I think for  
many, many years,

691

00:31:49,560 --> 00:31:54,450

I was very afraid of  
loud noises and thunder.

692

00:31:54,450 --> 00:31:56,290

I think till my  
children were born,

693

00:31:56,290 --> 00:31:59,820

I was afraid of-- very  
fearful of thunder.

694

00:31:59,820 --> 00:32:01,950

I still maybe now--

695

00:32:01,950 --> 00:32:04,260

no, no longer do I react.

696

00:32:04,260 --> 00:32:07,050

But I think I'm on beta blockers  
to keep my blood pressure down

697

00:32:07,050 --> 00:32:08,700  
so I'm a little calmer.

698

00:32:08,700 --> 00:32:12,090  
But I think I am--

699

00:32:12,090 --> 00:32:13,680  
I am still fearful.

700

00:32:13,680 --> 00:32:18,090  
They always say, calm down,  
my family, calm down, ma.

701

00:32:18,090 --> 00:32:19,310  
Don't overreact.

702

00:32:19,310 --> 00:32:22,680  
What did you do as a child  
when you-- if you heard bombs?

703

00:32:22,680 --> 00:32:25,890

704

00:32:25,890 --> 00:32:28,220  
What did I do as a child  
when I heard bombs?

705

00:32:28,220 --> 00:32:33,620

706

00:32:33,620 --> 00:32:35,660  
Did you run to your parents?

707

00:32:35,660 --> 00:32:36,590  
Were there shelters?

708

00:32:36,590 --> 00:32:37,520  
What happened?

709

00:32:37,520 --> 00:32:40,170

We went in-- we always  
went to shelters.

710  
00:32:40,170 --> 00:32:44,690  
And I think stayed very quiet.

711  
00:32:44,690 --> 00:32:47,570  
You-- I think it mostly  
internalized this,

712  
00:32:47,570 --> 00:32:48,670  
the fear is internalized.

713  
00:32:48,670 --> 00:32:51,410  
You don't want your  
parents to worry about you.

714  
00:32:51,410 --> 00:32:54,230  
It's this constant  
concern for your parents

715  
00:32:54,230 --> 00:32:57,620  
not to be worried  
about you and always

716  
00:32:57,620 --> 00:32:59,840  
making them feel comfortable.

717  
00:32:59,840 --> 00:33:03,680  
Everybody was trying to make the  
other person feel comfortable.

718  
00:33:03,680 --> 00:33:05,390  
That's what I remember.

719  
00:33:05,390 --> 00:33:08,690  
I don't remember screaming  
or anything like that.

720  
00:33:08,690 --> 00:33:10,630  
Where were the shelters?

721

00:33:10,630 --> 00:33:14,030

Oh, they were usually  
underneath the houses,

722

00:33:14,030 --> 00:33:18,230

and inside the buildings  
there were shelters.

723

00:33:18,230 --> 00:33:20,300

But that's why we  
left Bari because it

724

00:33:20,300 --> 00:33:22,110

was somewhat uncomfortable.

725

00:33:22,110 --> 00:33:26,150

And I think the fear was  
that we had survived the war.

726

00:33:26,150 --> 00:33:28,130

Almost-- we felt  
we were liberated.

727

00:33:28,130 --> 00:33:31,760

The war was-- and for all  
intents and purposes--

728

00:33:31,760 --> 00:33:33,800

over for us.

729

00:33:33,800 --> 00:33:37,850

And we wanted now not to  
be bombed by the Germans.

730

00:33:37,850 --> 00:33:41,930

What did you do  
on a typical day?

731

00:33:41,930 --> 00:33:45,770

Typical day, play,  
help my mother cook,

732

00:33:45,770 --> 00:33:47,330

and stuff like that.

733  
00:33:47,330 --> 00:33:50,210  
Any-- in one, it's  
very interesting.

734  
00:33:50,210 --> 00:33:55,550  
In one of the houses we  
rented, there were books

735  
00:33:55,550 --> 00:33:57,770  
and I started--

736  
00:33:57,770 --> 00:33:58,595  
I missed school.

737  
00:33:58,595 --> 00:34:01,520

738  
00:34:01,520 --> 00:34:07,120  
I started looking at grammar  
books, learning Italian better.

739  
00:34:07,120 --> 00:34:13,449  
So much so that I am such  
a fanatic about grammar.

740  
00:34:13,449 --> 00:34:16,270  
I even find the mistake  
in the published letter

741  
00:34:16,270 --> 00:34:17,949  
from the Holocaust Museum.

742  
00:34:17,949 --> 00:34:21,190  
They didn't use the subjunctive  
and I reacted to it violently.

743  
00:34:21,190 --> 00:34:24,130

744  
00:34:24,130 --> 00:34:26,230

So I started to  
actually concentrate.

745  
00:34:26,230 --> 00:34:28,900  
I found grammar books and  
started very interested

746  
00:34:28,900 --> 00:34:29,620  
in grammar.

747  
00:34:29,620 --> 00:34:31,540  
I don't know why.

748  
00:34:31,540 --> 00:34:33,820  
Were you picking up any English?

749  
00:34:33,820 --> 00:34:38,630  
Not yet, not at that time.

750  
00:34:38,630 --> 00:34:47,037  
But then now, I remember  
this thing is later

751  
00:34:47,037 --> 00:34:48,120  
what you're talking about.

752  
00:34:48,120 --> 00:34:51,150  
I remember it as a  
year almost later

753  
00:34:51,150 --> 00:34:58,470  
what you talk about where there  
was a mustard gas explosion.

754  
00:34:58,470 --> 00:35:01,780  
But I remembered because  
we were back near Bari,

755  
00:35:01,780 --> 00:35:05,160  
and I was already going  
to a house school.

756



00:35:05,160 --> 00:35:07,410  
Somebody was-- the  
schools were not open,

757  
00:35:07,410 --> 00:35:09,840  
but I was going  
to a house school.

758  
00:35:09,840 --> 00:35:13,020  
A teacher who was running  
a school from her house and

759  
00:35:13,020 --> 00:35:15,990  
had like two grades,  
not Jewish, nothing.

760  
00:35:15,990 --> 00:35:19,650  
And I started going taking  
these private lessons.

761  
00:35:19,650 --> 00:35:21,840  
And my mother was  
paying for the school.

762  
00:35:21,840 --> 00:35:23,950  
Schools were not open.

763  
00:35:23,950 --> 00:35:27,300  
And again, then gave an exam.

764  
00:35:27,300 --> 00:35:30,000  
They were just to--

765  
00:35:30,000 --> 00:35:32,785  
and I was admitted  
to the middle school.

766  
00:35:32,785 --> 00:35:34,110  
I started going middle--

767  
00:35:34,110 --> 00:35:37,290  
but that's when I remembered  
the mustard gas explosion

768  
00:35:37,290 --> 00:35:39,450  
with so many dead bodies.

769  
00:35:39,450 --> 00:35:42,030  
And I even at some  
point wondered

770  
00:35:42,030 --> 00:35:46,290  
if some of the health  
problems that my family had

771  
00:35:46,290 --> 00:35:48,700  
were not-- because my  
father was in the city.

772  
00:35:48,700 --> 00:35:50,010  
It was like a black rain.

773  
00:35:50,010 --> 00:35:52,020  
It was horrible.

774  
00:35:52,020 --> 00:35:57,510  
My mother was-- and help me  
with my train of thought.

775  
00:35:57,510 --> 00:35:58,010  
I'm lost.

776  
00:35:58,010 --> 00:36:01,910  
Well, the Germans had bombed  
some ships in the harbor

777  
00:36:01,910 --> 00:36:05,570  
and that's where this  
poison gas all over.

778  
00:36:05,570 --> 00:36:08,510  
There were a lot of dead  
bodies cover-- they were just

779  
00:36:08,510 --> 00:36:09,680

taking them by trucks.

780

00:36:09,680 --> 00:36:11,540

You could see was arms and legs.

781

00:36:11,540 --> 00:36:15,890

And I was at this woman's  
school in the city.

782

00:36:15,890 --> 00:36:18,200

Now, there is no transportation.

783

00:36:18,200 --> 00:36:21,990

I was supposed to take a  
tram home to my mother.

784

00:36:21,990 --> 00:36:23,940

I don't know where my father is.

785

00:36:23,940 --> 00:36:26,750

And somehow, the trams  
were not running.

786

00:36:26,750 --> 00:36:28,550

Everything was-- it was a big--

787

00:36:28,550 --> 00:36:30,770

I walked home by myself.

788

00:36:30,770 --> 00:36:34,280

And I was what, 11 12?

789

00:36:34,280 --> 00:36:37,820

How does a child adjust to  
seeing a sight like that,

790

00:36:37,820 --> 00:36:40,010

of bodies all over the place?

791

00:36:40,010 --> 00:36:41,610

It wasn't all over the place.

792

00:36:41,610 --> 00:36:43,310

It was in these  
trucks passing by.

793

00:36:43,310 --> 00:36:44,810

I didn't even know  
they were dead.

794

00:36:44,810 --> 00:36:46,393

But I knew they were  
dead because they

795

00:36:46,393 --> 00:36:47,990

were on top of each other.

796

00:36:47,990 --> 00:36:53,930

Was arms-- and I thought all  
these people were wounded.

797

00:36:53,930 --> 00:36:56,030

But I didn't know.

798

00:36:56,030 --> 00:36:58,310

I didn't-- we do--

799

00:36:58,310 --> 00:37:01,010

we did feel that everything  
was covered in black rain,

800

00:37:01,010 --> 00:37:02,630

we called it.

801

00:37:02,630 --> 00:37:05,120

So did your family  
stay in Bari then?

802

00:37:05,120 --> 00:37:06,440

Yeah, we stayed on.

803

00:37:06,440 --> 00:37:10,550

Because some people left because  
of the poison in the air.

804  
00:37:10,550 --> 00:37:12,110  
No, we stay.

805  
00:37:12,110 --> 00:37:13,788  
We actually were  
not in the city.

806  
00:37:13,788 --> 00:37:15,080  
We were not living in the city.

807  
00:37:15,080 --> 00:37:16,910  
We were living maybe  
five miles away.

808  
00:37:16,910 --> 00:37:29,030

809  
00:37:29,030 --> 00:37:31,400  
This is a continuation of  
the United States Holocaust

810  
00:37:31,400 --> 00:37:33,980  
Memorial Museum Volunteer  
Collection interview

811  
00:37:33,980 --> 00:37:35,870  
with Tilda Finzi Cohen.

812  
00:37:35,870 --> 00:37:40,400  
This is tape number  
two, side B. Let's

813  
00:37:40,400 --> 00:37:46,940  
talk about your experience in  
Spring of 1944 with Passover.

814  
00:37:46,940 --> 00:37:50,120  
I think maybe we'll  
backtrack just a little.

815  
00:37:50,120 --> 00:37:54,380

While we were in Bari, before  
the bomb, during that period,

816  
00:37:54,380 --> 00:37:56,450  
I think, when one  
of the bombs fell,

817  
00:37:56,450 --> 00:38:04,010  
my father ran into  
someone who was Israel,

818  
00:38:04,010 --> 00:38:06,950  
a British soldier,  
appeared to be

819  
00:38:06,950 --> 00:38:11,570  
a British soldier, who started  
questioning him, asking him--

820  
00:38:11,570 --> 00:38:14,000  
questioning him in the  
sense, where are you from?

821  
00:38:14,000 --> 00:38:17,120  
I think maybe my father  
appeared Jewish to him.

822  
00:38:17,120 --> 00:38:24,050  
And he said he was an Israeli  
that was in the language.

823  
00:38:24,050 --> 00:38:27,090  
He was from the  
Ukraine originally,

824  
00:38:27,090 --> 00:38:29,450  
so they had the  
language more or less

825  
00:38:29,450 --> 00:38:35,270  
in common, which was  
Ukrainian and Serbo-Croatian

826

00:38:35,270 --> 00:38:36,170  
is somewhat similar.

827  
00:38:36,170 --> 00:38:38,870  
They could communicate.

828  
00:38:38,870 --> 00:38:42,470  
In my father spoke some German,  
and this man spoke some German.

829  
00:38:42,470 --> 00:38:45,890  
So this became kind of a--

830  
00:38:45,890 --> 00:38:48,090  
Chaim was his name.

831  
00:38:48,090 --> 00:38:51,410  
We never could locate him  
when we went to Israel.

832  
00:38:51,410 --> 00:38:54,050  
But we don't know what  
happened because he was sent

833  
00:38:54,050 --> 00:38:55,460  
to the front, or something.

834  
00:38:55,460 --> 00:38:59,240  
But he was very good to us.

835  
00:38:59,240 --> 00:39:01,520  
Army clothes that  
we made, and this

836  
00:39:01,520 --> 00:39:05,720  
is how we got the contact  
with the Israelis.

837  
00:39:05,720 --> 00:39:07,580  
And then we were  
in a small town,

838

00:39:07,580 --> 00:39:13,670  
in one of the small towns  
in Bitetto, near Bari.

839  
00:39:13,670 --> 00:39:17,910  
And there was a whole  
contingent of Israeli.

840  
00:39:17,910 --> 00:39:20,690

841  
00:39:20,690 --> 00:39:23,300  
There were actually map maker.

842  
00:39:23,300 --> 00:39:26,090  
They made maps for the--

843  
00:39:26,090 --> 00:39:27,740  
for the-- OK.

844  
00:39:27,740 --> 00:39:30,230  
And they were having a seder.

845  
00:39:30,230 --> 00:39:35,210  
So they wanted the youngest  
child that could read.

846  
00:39:35,210 --> 00:39:36,530  
They had to say--

847  
00:39:36,530 --> 00:39:39,960  
ask the fourth  
question in Hebrew.

848  
00:39:39,960 --> 00:39:45,830  
So why they chose me, I was  
the one who could read--

849  
00:39:45,830 --> 00:39:48,140  
not Hebrew-- could read.

850  
00:39:48,140 --> 00:39:51,680



And they were going  
to teach it to me.

851  
00:39:51,680 --> 00:39:55,070  
And so every day for a  
week or two or three,

852  
00:39:55,070 --> 00:39:59,000  
I was going to this  
big army school--

853  
00:39:59,000 --> 00:40:00,830  
they had taken over a school--

854  
00:40:00,830 --> 00:40:04,220  
where they would--  
the head of this thing

855  
00:40:04,220 --> 00:40:05,790  
was teaching me "ma  
nishtana ha-la."

856  
00:40:05,790 --> 00:40:08,450

857  
00:40:08,450 --> 00:40:16,080  
And then I was put on  
a chair, on a table,

858  
00:40:16,080 --> 00:40:19,920  
and had to say this "ma  
nishtana" now because now,

859  
00:40:19,920 --> 00:40:23,820  
all the Israeli soldiers  
from the whole area

860  
00:40:23,820 --> 00:40:25,110  
came to this seder.

861  
00:40:25,110 --> 00:40:26,490  
Because this was a whole--

862

00:40:26,490 --> 00:40:29,110

some were dispersed,  
few here, few there.

863

00:40:29,110 --> 00:40:31,948

This was the map  
contingent, the map making.

864

00:40:31,948 --> 00:40:32,490

I don't know.

865

00:40:32,490 --> 00:40:38,105

It was a whole group of Israeli  
soldiers with a British Army.

866

00:40:38,105 --> 00:40:40,230

I was going to say, this  
is the Palestinian brigade

867

00:40:40,230 --> 00:40:42,630

of the British army that  
you're talking about.

868

00:40:42,630 --> 00:40:45,750

Now, did you say this was  
in the town or in Bari?

869

00:40:45,750 --> 00:40:49,590

No, this was in an outskirt,  
because they were, I think,

870

00:40:49,590 --> 00:40:52,410

in a small town, Bitetto.

871

00:40:52,410 --> 00:40:55,500

And so we became  
friends with all these--

872

00:40:55,500 --> 00:40:57,540

the Jews and these--

873

00:40:57,540 --> 00:41:00,120

and of course, we were  
invited to the seder.

874  
00:41:00,120 --> 00:41:03,210  
And I had to say for--

875  
00:41:03,210 --> 00:41:05,970  
I felt like there were  
hundreds of people, probably

876  
00:41:05,970 --> 00:41:08,040  
there were, maybe  
there were hundred or--

877  
00:41:08,040 --> 00:41:10,470  
but there was a  
big, many tables.

878  
00:41:10,470 --> 00:41:13,830  
Because all the other Israelis  
said there was very positive.

879  
00:41:13,830 --> 00:41:17,220  
So immediately, we were  
already in the Jewish

880  
00:41:17,220 --> 00:41:23,100  
and we were in contact with  
the Israeli soldiers and--

881  
00:41:23,100 --> 00:41:25,170  
well, the British  
soldiers, which are

882  
00:41:25,170 --> 00:41:27,300  
part of the Israeli brigade.

883  
00:41:27,300 --> 00:41:28,260  
So it was wonderful.

884  
00:41:28,260 --> 00:41:31,020  
And whenever the children  
like the other night

885  
00:41:31,020 --> 00:41:33,300  
managed, it just--  
it feels like I

886  
00:41:33,300 --> 00:41:36,930  
am taken back many,  
many, many years

887  
00:41:36,930 --> 00:41:40,320  
when I was maybe 12 years old.

888  
00:41:40,320 --> 00:41:44,250  
It's a wonderful story, yeah.

889  
00:41:44,250 --> 00:41:45,840  
So then you were in this town.

890  
00:41:45,840 --> 00:41:48,490  
And what about schooling, or  
what did you do during the day?

891  
00:41:48,490 --> 00:41:53,210  
No, mostly helped in the house.

892  
00:41:53,210 --> 00:41:57,510  
I helped my mother  
cook, help clean.

893  
00:41:57,510 --> 00:41:59,820  
Unfortunate, had  
very little schooling

894  
00:41:59,820 --> 00:42:03,960  
in the sense of really  
formal schooling.

895  
00:42:03,960 --> 00:42:08,140  
And in three  
different languages.

896  
00:42:08,140 --> 00:42:10,740

Something that it's kind of sad.

897

00:42:10,740 --> 00:42:13,260

And-- but I don't  
think it's particularly

898

00:42:13,260 --> 00:42:14,820

noticeable at times.

899

00:42:14,820 --> 00:42:18,300

But self-taught,  
I did go to the--

900

00:42:18,300 --> 00:42:21,900

I went to college here  
in the United States.

901

00:42:21,900 --> 00:42:24,000

What about the high  
holidays, the previous-- you

902

00:42:24,000 --> 00:42:27,240

had gotten to Bari  
just before Yom Kippur.

903

00:42:27,240 --> 00:42:29,325

Do you remember that  
first Yom Kippur in Bari?

904

00:42:29,325 --> 00:42:32,280

I remember vividly  
this first Yom Kippur.

905

00:42:32,280 --> 00:42:36,300

The first Yom Kippur, we  
had finally gotten into--

906

00:42:36,300 --> 00:42:39,810

my father had rented something,  
but it wasn't a room.

907

00:42:39,810 --> 00:42:43,080

It was a big hall where they

had a regular double sized

908

00:42:43,080 --> 00:42:44,850

bed, big bed.

909

00:42:44,850 --> 00:42:46,780

And with one of these--

910

00:42:46,780 --> 00:42:48,360

what do you put--

911

00:42:48,360 --> 00:42:50,070

if you want to separate a room?

912

00:42:50,070 --> 00:42:50,640

Screen.

913

00:42:50,640 --> 00:42:51,390

A screen.

914

00:42:51,390 --> 00:42:54,240

With the screens around the bed.

915

00:42:54,240 --> 00:42:57,930

And we had to start our fast.

916

00:42:57,930 --> 00:42:59,740

But there was no place to go.

917

00:42:59,740 --> 00:43:01,240

We didn't know where to go.

918

00:43:01,240 --> 00:43:03,850

But remember, the soldiers  
had given us the corned beef

919

00:43:03,850 --> 00:43:04,350

sandwich.

920

00:43:04,350 --> 00:43:07,440

I don't know if it was kosher

or not, but we started--

921

00:43:07,440 --> 00:43:10,740  
somehow they had handed  
some matzo from some place.

922

00:43:10,740 --> 00:43:13,800  
So we started our  
fast in this bed.

923

00:43:13,800 --> 00:43:20,850  
Behind the screen was a can  
of corned beef and matzo.

924

00:43:20,850 --> 00:43:22,860  
And we didn't know--

925

00:43:22,860 --> 00:43:26,640  
we didn't even question it,  
but we did start to fast.

926

00:43:26,640 --> 00:43:29,760  
And we fasted the whole-- my  
parents fasted the whole day.

927

00:43:29,760 --> 00:43:32,100  
I don't think I did.

928

00:43:32,100 --> 00:43:35,400  
And you had matzo at  
the time of Yom Kippur?

929

00:43:35,400 --> 00:43:36,130  
Not matzo.

930

00:43:36,130 --> 00:43:36,970  
What am I saying?

931

00:43:36,970 --> 00:43:37,780  
Forgive me.

932

00:43:37,780 --> 00:43:39,000

It must have been some bread.

933

00:43:39,000 --> 00:43:40,500

Now, see-- yes, OK.

934

00:43:40,500 --> 00:43:43,590

No, it must have been  
something, but I remember eating

935

00:43:43,590 --> 00:43:46,582

the corned beef-- can of corned  
beef that you didn't need a can

936

00:43:46,582 --> 00:43:47,290

opener, because--

937

00:43:47,290 --> 00:43:49,260

The key that opened it.

938

00:43:49,260 --> 00:43:51,170

And some bread probably.

939

00:43:51,170 --> 00:43:52,560

Wasn't matzo, it was--

940

00:43:52,560 --> 00:43:54,360

Did you have matzo at  
the time of Passover

941

00:43:54,360 --> 00:43:57,720

in '44 with a  
Palestinian brigade?

942

00:43:57,720 --> 00:44:00,870

Oh, definite-- that  
was probably-- oh,

943

00:44:00,870 --> 00:44:03,600

yeah, this was a regular  
Swiss soup and everything.

944

00:44:03,600 --> 00:44:06,630



Matzo was-- it was a definite.

945

00:44:06,630 --> 00:44:08,280

I mean, they had  
the whole thing.

946

00:44:08,280 --> 00:44:10,770

It was-- it was [INAUDIBLE].

947

00:44:10,770 --> 00:44:14,610

I mean, it was complete  
Passover, yeah.

948

00:44:14,610 --> 00:44:18,150

And so life went on  
for you in this manner

949

00:44:18,150 --> 00:44:19,140

of helping your mother.

950

00:44:19,140 --> 00:44:19,260

Yes.

951

00:44:19,260 --> 00:44:20,460

I'm helping my mother.

952

00:44:20,460 --> 00:44:26,430

And somehow we were staying in  
a house where there were books.

953

00:44:26,430 --> 00:44:27,990

I don't understand.

954

00:44:27,990 --> 00:44:30,790

The wife was a  
teacher or something.

955

00:44:30,790 --> 00:44:32,220

And we were renting this place.

956

00:44:32,220 --> 00:44:33,810

And they had left the books.

957  
00:44:33,810 --> 00:44:40,530  
And I was just reading a lot  
and trying to actually learn

958  
00:44:40,530 --> 00:44:41,730  
Italian, the grammar.

959  
00:44:41,730 --> 00:44:44,640  
How a 12-year-old does  
this, I don't know.

960  
00:44:44,640 --> 00:44:47,100  
But I'm known as knowing  
that Italian grandmother.

961  
00:44:47,100 --> 00:44:49,630  
I mean, it's one  
of these things.

962  
00:44:49,630 --> 00:44:56,550  
And then I took  
an exam to put me

963  
00:44:56,550 --> 00:45:02,400  
in what they consider first  
year of high school, which was--

964  
00:45:02,400 --> 00:45:06,050  
Now, is the war still going  
on in Europe, or has the war--

965  
00:45:06,050 --> 00:45:08,940  
I'm not-- basically, the  
end of '44, and things

966  
00:45:08,940 --> 00:45:10,560  
had normalized by then.

967  
00:45:10,560 --> 00:45:13,680  
It hasn't ended,  
but the schools are

968

00:45:13,680 --> 00:45:16,000  
being given back to the people.

969

00:45:16,000 --> 00:45:19,530  
So the schools are  
opening and they--

970

00:45:19,530 --> 00:45:23,040  
whoever wants to come and  
get-- take an exam to make up,

971

00:45:23,040 --> 00:45:25,440  
see if they learned  
anything through this year.

972

00:45:25,440 --> 00:45:29,130  
And I basically am behind.

973

00:45:29,130 --> 00:45:32,100  
I am 12, I think.

974

00:45:32,100 --> 00:45:36,030  
1944, nineteen--  
I was born 1930--

975

00:45:36,030 --> 00:45:38,010  
11 something.

976

00:45:38,010 --> 00:45:45,820  
And by 19-- by maybe  
1945, I gave this exam

977

00:45:45,820 --> 00:45:50,110  
where said that I finished  
the four years of school.

978

00:45:50,110 --> 00:45:52,520  
So I was one year behind.

979

00:45:52,520 --> 00:45:56,600  
And went to what's considered  
scuola media, middle school,

980  
00:45:56,600 --> 00:46:02,600  
or kind of where I started  
going to school regularly.

981  
00:46:02,600 --> 00:46:04,790  
Well, tell me what it was  
like when the war was over

982  
00:46:04,790 --> 00:46:08,120  
in Europe in the spring of '45.

983  
00:46:08,120 --> 00:46:09,020  
What was it like?

984  
00:46:09,020 --> 00:46:11,990  
All the refugee-- all the  
people that had escaped

985  
00:46:11,990 --> 00:46:13,280  
started coming back.

986  
00:46:13,280 --> 00:46:18,590  
It was-- some people  
didn't, but how

987  
00:46:18,590 --> 00:46:21,630  
we connected with the  
family, I don't understand.

988  
00:46:21,630 --> 00:46:23,600  
That's what I still question.

989  
00:46:23,600 --> 00:46:24,860  
They all came to--

990  
00:46:24,860 --> 00:46:28,010  
they knew Bari was the  
center where people are,

991  
00:46:28,010 --> 00:46:29,900  
so everybody came to Bari.

992  
00:46:29,900 --> 00:46:35,010  
And here my mother  
found a brother.

993  
00:46:35,010 --> 00:46:38,750  
The brother was with his sister  
and his daughter and his wife.

994  
00:46:38,750 --> 00:46:39,920  
And they came to Bari.

995  
00:46:39,920 --> 00:46:43,980

996  
00:46:43,980 --> 00:46:47,420  
Another-- who else came?

997  
00:46:47,420 --> 00:46:48,860  
Trying to think.

998  
00:46:48,860 --> 00:46:50,450  
It's funny.

999  
00:46:50,450 --> 00:46:53,330  
Yeah, somewhere-- yeah, OK,  
so they didn't come to Bari,

1000  
00:46:53,330 --> 00:46:56,570  
they went straight  
back to Yugoslavia.

1001  
00:46:56,570 --> 00:47:03,560  
Another brother and  
my father's brother

1002  
00:47:03,560 --> 00:47:07,100  
from Yugoslavia, who  
was in the army who

1003  
00:47:07,100 --> 00:47:09,860  
lost his wife and

his child, he came.

1004

00:47:09,860 --> 00:47:11,520

But he came only on business.

1005

00:47:11,520 --> 00:47:14,570

He was already in the  
Yugoslavian government.

1006

00:47:14,570 --> 00:47:17,270

So things are starting--  
started to normalize.

1007

00:47:17,270 --> 00:47:18,020

And the fam--

1008

00:47:18,020 --> 00:47:20,270

Was there any celebration  
when the war was over?

1009

00:47:20,270 --> 00:47:21,510

I don't think so.

1010

00:47:21,510 --> 00:47:23,670

I don't remember  
any celebration.

1011

00:47:23,670 --> 00:47:26,000

I really don't.

1012

00:47:26,000 --> 00:47:29,710

Because now, we  
realize the camp--

1013

00:47:29,710 --> 00:47:32,040

people are starting  
coming back from the camps

1014

00:47:32,040 --> 00:47:34,500

that we heard about  
all the atrocity.

1015

00:47:34,500 --> 00:47:37,740  
How many and everybody who  
had been hoping that somebody

1016  
00:47:37,740 --> 00:47:40,300  
would come back never came back.

1017  
00:47:40,300 --> 00:47:45,840  
So there was no celebration  
that I remember at all, no.

1018  
00:47:45,840 --> 00:47:47,760  
I think there was  
a lot of sadness

1019  
00:47:47,760 --> 00:47:52,290  
because we were realizing  
what had happened.

1020  
00:47:52,290 --> 00:47:55,920  
We didn't-- we were coping  
against hope, I think,

1021  
00:47:55,920 --> 00:47:58,800  
that some of the  
people would come back,

1022  
00:47:58,800 --> 00:48:01,740  
like my mother had an older  
sister that had died during

1023  
00:48:01,740 --> 00:48:05,130  
childbirth and  
left two children,

1024  
00:48:05,130 --> 00:48:09,120  
and always felt guilty that  
somehow she didn't save these

1025  
00:48:09,120 --> 00:48:10,590  
children.

1026  
00:48:10,590 --> 00:48:13,800

And of course, they  
never came back.

1027  
00:48:13,800 --> 00:48:15,600  
And so those are  
the kind of thing--

1028  
00:48:15,600 --> 00:48:17,340  
I don't remember celebrating.

1029  
00:48:17,340 --> 00:48:21,600  
I remember more of  
kind of getting--

1030  
00:48:21,600 --> 00:48:24,600  
the parents getting--  
having a few drinks

1031  
00:48:24,600 --> 00:48:29,550  
and eating before when  
the hope was still there.

1032  
00:48:29,550 --> 00:48:33,210  
People would congregate,  
have wine, and cook.

1033  
00:48:33,210 --> 00:48:35,340  
And I mean, the hope  
was still there.

1034  
00:48:35,340 --> 00:48:37,320  
But then there were  
also some people

1035  
00:48:37,320 --> 00:48:39,450  
that came back from  
concentration camp whose

1036  
00:48:39,450 --> 00:48:41,760  
wives had found other men.

1037  
00:48:41,760 --> 00:48:44,040  
And this was a



very painful thing.

1038  
00:48:44,040 --> 00:48:45,600  
And we had friends like that.

1039  
00:48:45,600 --> 00:48:50,657  
The wives-- it was a very  
difficult time, very painful.

1040  
00:48:50,657 --> 00:48:51,490  
That's all I remem--

1041  
00:48:51,490 --> 00:48:58,830  
I mean, there was  
no great enthusia--

1042  
00:48:58,830 --> 00:49:00,690  
I don't remember this.

1043  
00:49:00,690 --> 00:49:02,430  
It's just the end of the war.

1044  
00:49:02,430 --> 00:49:04,830  
Did you stay in Bari  
after the war was over?

1045  
00:49:04,830 --> 00:49:06,420  
We stayed in Bari.

1046  
00:49:06,420 --> 00:49:09,650  
And actually, things normalize.

1047  
00:49:09,650 --> 00:49:11,970  
My father couldn't find a job.

1048  
00:49:11,970 --> 00:49:13,080  
Why did you stay in Bari?

1049  
00:49:13,080 --> 00:49:15,060  
Why didn't he want to  
go back to Yugoslavia?

1050

00:49:15,060 --> 00:49:19,860

Oh, well, the situation  
in Yugoslavia was bad.

1051

00:49:19,860 --> 00:49:24,030

My uncle and aunt and cousin  
that had kind of-- the other

1052

00:49:24,030 --> 00:49:27,750

sister that had come from  
the northern part of Italy,

1053

00:49:27,750 --> 00:49:31,860

my uncles Solomon Montilio,  
and [? Sari, and ?] [? Kai, ?]

1054

00:49:31,860 --> 00:49:39,390

and [? Lea, ?] they went back to  
Yugoslavia directly from Bari.

1055

00:49:39,390 --> 00:49:42,930

And they wrote us and said the  
situation was very difficult.

1056

00:49:42,930 --> 00:49:43,680

Don't come.

1057

00:49:43,680 --> 00:49:45,210

You're well off where you are.

1058

00:49:45,210 --> 00:49:46,560

Stay where you are.

1059

00:49:46,560 --> 00:49:47,400

Don't come.

1060

00:49:47,400 --> 00:49:50,490

Did you want to go back to  
Yugoslavia, your hometown?

1061

00:49:50,490 --> 00:49:55,050

By this time-- by this

time, I had been in Italy.

1062  
00:49:55,050 --> 00:49:57,060  
I spoke Italian fluently.

1063  
00:49:57,060 --> 00:49:58,320  
No desire.

1064  
00:49:58,320 --> 00:50:01,320  
I was a teenager, 13.

1065  
00:50:01,320 --> 00:50:04,440  
I was very good in school.

1066  
00:50:04,440 --> 00:50:06,690  
I-- this was I belong.

1067  
00:50:06,690 --> 00:50:09,060  
I found-- no, no desire at all.

1068  
00:50:09,060 --> 00:50:13,440  
Did you feel Italian  
or Yugoslavian?

1069  
00:50:13,440 --> 00:50:18,570  
You see, the Ustases the  
whole thing I had never--

1070  
00:50:18,570 --> 00:50:19,500  
I still do.

1071  
00:50:19,500 --> 00:50:27,190  
Croats are like-- so  
I was not that thrilled.

1072  
00:50:27,190 --> 00:50:29,130  
I think I wanted  
to go to Israel.

1073  
00:50:29,130 --> 00:50:34,610  
But then I felt more  
Jewish than Yugo--

1074  
00:50:34,610 --> 00:50:36,290  
I didn't feel Yugoslavian.

1075  
00:50:36,290 --> 00:50:39,120

1076  
00:50:39,120 --> 00:50:42,090  
And we were considering  
going to Israel.

1077  
00:50:42,090 --> 00:50:46,440  
Some of the families from  
Yugoslavia went to Israel.

1078  
00:50:46,440 --> 00:50:49,380  
And they were having a very  
difficult-- very difficult

1079  
00:50:49,380 --> 00:50:52,660  
time, initially, working  
as maids, college grad,

1080  
00:50:52,660 --> 00:50:54,330  
university grad working.

1081  
00:50:54,330 --> 00:50:56,130  
So they suggest, don't come.

1082  
00:50:56,130 --> 00:50:58,230  
Stay where you are.

1083  
00:50:58,230 --> 00:50:59,640  
Stay where you are.

1084  
00:50:59,640 --> 00:51:03,000  
So we stayed in Italy  
as long as we could.

1085  
00:51:03,000 --> 00:51:12,100  
And stayed in Bari until 1948.

1086

00:51:12,100 --> 00:51:15,760

My father still worked on the  
black market dealing in dollars

1087

00:51:15,760 --> 00:51:19,740

and gold and stuff like that.

1088

00:51:19,740 --> 00:51:20,240

And--

1089

00:51:20,240 --> 00:51:21,198

And you went to school.

1090

00:51:21,198 --> 00:51:22,300

Did you do anything else?

1091

00:51:22,300 --> 00:51:26,000

I went to public school.

1092

00:51:26,000 --> 00:51:29,110

I had a Jewish group  
that met in the--

1093

00:51:29,110 --> 00:51:30,158

A Jewish youth group?

1094

00:51:30,158 --> 00:51:30,950

Jewish Youth group.

1095

00:51:30,950 --> 00:51:36,280

We met in that little building  
or something occasionally.

1096

00:51:36,280 --> 00:51:39,550

Had actually Jewish friends,  
a group of Jewish friends

1097

00:51:39,550 --> 00:51:40,810

and non-Jewish friends.

1098

00:51:40,810 --> 00:51:41,543

Not mixed.

1099  
00:51:41,543 --> 00:51:43,210  
I had a Jewish-- group  
of Jewish friends

1100  
00:51:43,210 --> 00:51:47,080  
and a group of non-Jewish  
friends from school.

1101  
00:51:47,080 --> 00:51:51,850  
And did a lot of Jewish things--

1102  
00:51:51,850 --> 00:51:55,270  
Purim and just-- like there  
was a Jewish congregation.

1103  
00:51:55,270 --> 00:51:57,820  
There is no Jewish  
congregation now.

1104  
00:51:57,820 --> 00:52:02,860  
There was no Jewish  
congregation before 1943.

1105  
00:52:02,860 --> 00:52:06,790  
But in that-- because there  
were so many Jews in Bari.

1106  
00:52:06,790 --> 00:52:11,260  
And then towards 1946, '47,  
'48, the city started--

1107  
00:52:11,260 --> 00:52:12,490  
the Jews started leaving.

1108  
00:52:12,490 --> 00:52:14,860  
They were-- the refugees  
started leaving.

1109  
00:52:14,860 --> 00:52:17,680  
The Italians, who  
had been refugees,

1110  
00:52:17,680 --> 00:52:19,780  
they come from-- can  
come from the north.

1111  
00:52:19,780 --> 00:52:21,670  
They went back north.

1112  
00:52:21,670 --> 00:52:23,230  
So basically, the city became--

1113  
00:52:23,230 --> 00:52:26,580

1114  
00:52:26,580 --> 00:52:30,120  
as far as Jewishly, my  
parents wanted more.

1115  
00:52:30,120 --> 00:52:34,080  
But I went there to this  
middle school for three years

1116  
00:52:34,080 --> 00:52:37,680  
and really learned  
Italian and did very well.

1117  
00:52:37,680 --> 00:52:40,170  
Especially, in school.

1118  
00:52:40,170 --> 00:52:42,660  
And then went to the--

1119  
00:52:42,660 --> 00:52:43,920  
we moved to Milan.

1120  
00:52:43,920 --> 00:52:45,660  
Why to Milan?

1121  
00:52:45,660 --> 00:52:47,490  
Why Milan, specifically?

1122

00:52:47,490 --> 00:52:53,340  
I think there was many Jews  
there marry Yugoslavians there,

1123  
00:52:53,340 --> 00:52:54,370  
Jewish Yugoslavian.

1124  
00:52:54,370 --> 00:52:56,250  
We always talking about  
Jewish at this point.

1125  
00:52:56,250 --> 00:52:58,230  
Now, the Jewish thing.

1126  
00:52:58,230 --> 00:53:03,180  
And this was a  
difficult period for me.

1127  
00:53:03,180 --> 00:53:05,910  
Milan, it's interesting,  
because now I'm

1128  
00:53:05,910 --> 00:53:10,700  
starting to feel I want--

1129  
00:53:10,700 --> 00:53:13,400  
my parents want to  
put me in day school.

1130  
00:53:13,400 --> 00:53:16,940  
Now, I have to deal  
with learning Hebrew.

1131  
00:53:16,940 --> 00:53:17,840  
Jewish day school.

1132  
00:53:17,840 --> 00:53:20,420  
Jewish day school.

1133  
00:53:20,420 --> 00:53:22,610  
And they already been--

1134



00:53:22,610 --> 00:53:25,110  
and the war has just  
ended three years before.

1135  
00:53:25,110 --> 00:53:28,220  
So some of the students  
are really good,

1136  
00:53:28,220 --> 00:53:32,100  
plus I am now competing  
with smart Jews,

1137  
00:53:32,100 --> 00:53:35,060  
and with Italians  
who are not so smart.

1138  
00:53:35,060 --> 00:53:37,260  
And was a very-- and  
I got sick with--

1139  
00:53:37,260 --> 00:53:39,860  
it was just a bunch of things.

1140  
00:53:39,860 --> 00:53:40,398  
It's not--

1141  
00:53:40,398 --> 00:53:41,940  
It's the middle of  
adolescence, also.

1142  
00:53:41,940 --> 00:53:44,450  
You're 15 and a half, 16, yeah.

1143  
00:53:44,450 --> 00:53:45,980  
Yes, yes, yes.

1144  
00:53:45,980 --> 00:53:49,490  
And I developed  
pains in my stomach,

1145  
00:53:49,490 --> 00:53:51,440  
have emergency appendectomy.

1146

00:53:51,440 --> 00:53:52,550

I mean, the whole thing.

1147

00:53:52,550 --> 00:53:56,810

So I lose time in school  
and I'm behind in school,

1148

00:53:56,810 --> 00:53:58,830

and I'm behind in Hebrew.

1149

00:53:58,830 --> 00:54:01,550

And I just couldn't-- this  
is the first time I failed

1150

00:54:01,550 --> 00:54:02,775

in my life.

1151

00:54:02,775 --> 00:54:05,390

It was a very painful thing.

1152

00:54:05,390 --> 00:54:09,710

I did not pass two  
of the subjects,

1153

00:54:09,710 --> 00:54:11,270

and I had to go in September.

1154

00:54:11,270 --> 00:54:12,590

This is the painful thing.

1155

00:54:12,590 --> 00:54:14,360

It is funny.

1156

00:54:14,360 --> 00:54:17,090

It was one of those things  
that just destroyed.

1157

00:54:17,090 --> 00:54:22,535

Somehow I was-- thought of  
myself as being able to do

1158

00:54:22,535 --> 00:54:23,780  
every--

1159  
00:54:23,780 --> 00:54:26,840  
You had also lived through very  
demanding times before then.

1160  
00:54:26,840 --> 00:54:29,910  
Well, this-- I was like  
the best student in class.

1161  
00:54:29,910 --> 00:54:33,050  
And you-- you're the big  
shot in class all the time.

1162  
00:54:33,050 --> 00:54:37,850  
And all at once, you're  
behind, and it's very painful.

1163  
00:54:37,850 --> 00:54:40,730  
And I changed schools.

1164  
00:54:40,730 --> 00:54:43,100  
Left to keep the day school.

1165  
00:54:43,100 --> 00:54:47,330  
And did wonderfully  
again in regular--

1166  
00:54:47,330 --> 00:54:49,910  
but I couldn't deal  
with the school program.

1167  
00:54:49,910 --> 00:54:53,390  
Because I had so much  
catching up to do.

1168  
00:54:53,390 --> 00:54:55,792  
And--

1169  
00:54:55,792 --> 00:54:57,500  
It was something your  
parents understood.

1170  
00:54:57,500 --> 00:54:58,220  
Oh, yeah.

1171  
00:54:58,220 --> 00:55:00,500  
There was no-- no forceful.

1172  
00:55:00,500 --> 00:55:04,580  
I mean, it's basically-- it's  
funny, I directed my own life.

1173  
00:55:04,580 --> 00:55:06,500  
They allowed me this.

1174  
00:55:06,500 --> 00:55:09,200  
I came to the States.

1175  
00:55:09,200 --> 00:55:12,170  
Then 1950, the decision  
was made that we would come

1176  
00:55:12,170 --> 00:55:13,400  
to the States, as I told you.

1177  
00:55:13,400 --> 00:55:18,200  
My father want to make sure  
I was 17, that I would not

1178  
00:55:18,200 --> 00:55:21,290  
marry a non-Jewish boy, because  
I was already dating somebody

1179  
00:55:21,290 --> 00:55:23,240  
from Med school who was not.

1180  
00:55:23,240 --> 00:55:26,120  
A young man that was going  
to Med school who was not.

1181  
00:55:26,120 --> 00:55:28,220  
At that time, you  
dated guys that were

1182  
00:55:28,220 --> 00:55:30,770  
five years, six years older.

1183  
00:55:30,770 --> 00:55:31,770  
They liked young girls.

1184  
00:55:31,770 --> 00:55:33,570  
He was very serious.

1185  
00:55:33,570 --> 00:55:36,150  
He was not Jewish.

1186  
00:55:36,150 --> 00:55:40,790  
And my father decided it's time  
to go to the United States.

1187  
00:55:40,790 --> 00:55:44,765  
So we-- and every-- many  
people were leaving.

1188  
00:55:44,765 --> 00:55:47,330

1189  
00:55:47,330 --> 00:55:49,250  
Milan was a good experience.

1190  
00:55:49,250 --> 00:55:50,240  
I made friends.

1191  
00:55:50,240 --> 00:55:52,520  
I had friends, but  
it was painful.

1192  
00:55:52,520 --> 00:55:54,320  
The school was not--

1193  
00:55:54,320 --> 00:55:56,850  
it was very demanding.

1194  
00:55:56,850 --> 00:55:59,870

I was not prepared.

1195  
00:55:59,870 --> 00:56:03,140  
The southern schools, just  
like here, the southern school

1196  
00:56:03,140 --> 00:56:05,690  
was not as good.

1197  
00:56:05,690 --> 00:56:08,870  
I was-- they had already  
been functioning there

1198  
00:56:08,870 --> 00:56:09,680  
for three years.

1199  
00:56:09,680 --> 00:56:11,450  
The Hebrew school was very--

1200  
00:56:11,450 --> 00:56:14,000  
the day school was  
very demanding.

1201  
00:56:14,000 --> 00:56:17,480  
And came to the States.

1202  
00:56:17,480 --> 00:56:20,180  
What did you think about that,  
coming to the United States

1203  
00:56:20,180 --> 00:56:22,100  
when your parents  
presented you with that?

1204  
00:56:22,100 --> 00:56:27,230  
By the way, I must admit, in  
Bari already, during the war,

1205  
00:56:27,230 --> 00:56:31,025  
my mother got a private teacher  
for me to learn English.

1206

00:56:31,025 --> 00:56:34,100

1207

00:56:34,100 --> 00:56:36,420

Because she knew that  
maybe in the future--

1208

00:56:36,420 --> 00:56:39,020

Everybody had to speak  
English at this point.

1209

00:56:39,020 --> 00:56:40,670

The future was English.

1210

00:56:40,670 --> 00:56:43,430

So I had a private  
tutor that came on twice

1211

00:56:43,430 --> 00:56:47,810

a week with an hour  
to teach me English.

1212

00:56:47,810 --> 00:56:49,190

Were you able to pick that up?

1213

00:56:49,190 --> 00:56:52,400

1214

00:56:52,400 --> 00:56:55,400

I guess I did, but I didn't  
know at the time that I did.

1215

00:56:55,400 --> 00:56:56,490

It was painful.

1216

00:56:56,490 --> 00:56:58,580

It was painful in  
the sense I hated

1217

00:56:58,580 --> 00:56:59,960

the teach-- normal things.

1218

00:56:59,960 --> 00:57:02,630

But I did, I took my  
lessons faithfully.

1219

00:57:02,630 --> 00:57:05,270

And I continued always  
with my private English.

1220

00:57:05,270 --> 00:57:10,460

That's partly why when I came  
to the States, I spoke not well,

1221

00:57:10,460 --> 00:57:11,690

but I spoke.

1222

00:57:11,690 --> 00:57:14,387

I understood a little.

1223

00:57:14,387 --> 00:57:16,470

What was your thoughts  
when your parents told you,

1224

00:57:16,470 --> 00:57:18,240

you would be coming  
to the United States?

1225

00:57:18,240 --> 00:57:21,840

Here, you're moving, again, this  
is a child has moved and moved

1226

00:57:21,840 --> 00:57:22,810

and moved.

1227

00:57:22,810 --> 00:57:23,310

OK.

1228

00:57:23,310 --> 00:57:24,300

It's a new language.

1229

00:57:24,300 --> 00:57:25,140

I know a little bit.

1230



00:57:25,140 --> 00:57:27,780  
I've been prepared in that way.

1231  
00:57:27,780 --> 00:57:30,630  
Some of my friends  
had already left--

1232  
00:57:30,630 --> 00:57:33,720  
some for Venezuela,  
some to Argentina.

1233  
00:57:33,720 --> 00:57:36,615  
Some of my Jewish friends,  
the ones from Yugoslavia

1234  
00:57:36,615 --> 00:57:38,310  
are the ones, yeah.

1235  
00:57:38,310 --> 00:57:42,490  
My Italian Jewish  
friends were staying.

1236  
00:57:42,490 --> 00:57:42,990  
It was--

1237  
00:57:42,990 --> 00:57:45,610  
To an adolescent, friends  
are very important.

1238  
00:57:45,610 --> 00:57:47,970  
And here you say friends  
went to all different parts

1239  
00:57:47,970 --> 00:57:49,035  
of the world.

1240  
00:57:49,035 --> 00:57:50,580  
Did that depress you?

1241  
00:57:50,580 --> 00:57:51,840  
Did that-- did you miss them?

1242

00:57:51,840 --> 00:57:54,390

1243

00:57:54,390 --> 00:57:56,910

It was part of life.

1244

00:57:56,910 --> 00:57:59,460

It was-- it was  
just part of life.

1245

00:57:59,460 --> 00:58:04,160

But when I-- we come to  
the States and I knew

1246

00:58:04,160 --> 00:58:05,480

there were a few people here.

1247

00:58:05,480 --> 00:58:09,080

1248

00:58:09,080 --> 00:58:14,330

So I was thinking, well, there  
is [INAUDIBLE],, there's this,

1249

00:58:14,330 --> 00:58:15,050

there's that.

1250

00:58:15,050 --> 00:58:17,030

I'll manage.

1251

00:58:17,030 --> 00:58:19,130

And as soon as I  
arrived, we were still

1252

00:58:19,130 --> 00:58:23,810

put off the ship in a school.

1253

00:58:23,810 --> 00:58:25,130

What ship did you come on?

1254

00:58:25,130 --> 00:58:28,340

On the Vulcania.

1255  
00:58:28,340 --> 00:58:30,890  
And it was not there--  
again, my father

1256  
00:58:30,890 --> 00:58:34,880  
didn't know I was starting a  
new world was a transport ship.

1257  
00:58:34,880 --> 00:58:37,490  
No, he booked passage.

1258  
00:58:37,490 --> 00:58:40,250  
He was going to come as  
a gentleman, he said.

1259  
00:58:40,250 --> 00:58:42,890  
A little bit of money  
he had saved a few.

1260  
00:58:42,890 --> 00:58:44,450  
He's going to come  
as a gentleman.

1261  
00:58:44,450 --> 00:58:46,250  
Oh, I'm so sorry, Gail.

1262  
00:58:46,250 --> 00:58:47,330  
I scratched you.

1263  
00:58:47,330 --> 00:58:48,230  
I'm sorry.

1264  
00:58:48,230 --> 00:58:52,010  
And we came and--

1265  
00:58:52,010 --> 00:58:54,940  
but HIAS met us at the boat.

1266  
00:58:54,940 --> 00:58:57,320  
What was your first sight  
in the United States?

1267  
00:58:57,320 --> 00:58:59,660  
I think the Statue of  
Liberty as you come in.

1268  
00:58:59,660 --> 00:59:02,092  
And then they met  
us, HIAS met us.

1269  
00:59:02,092 --> 00:59:04,550  
Did that mean anything to you  
seeing the Statue of Liberty?

1270  
00:59:04,550 --> 00:59:07,100  
To be honest, no.

1271  
00:59:07,100 --> 00:59:10,460  
If-- I could be dishonest,  
but I'm going to be honest.

1272  
00:59:10,460 --> 00:59:12,050  
Not a thing.

1273  
00:59:12,050 --> 00:59:14,360  
By that time, I was 17.

1274  
00:59:14,360 --> 00:59:16,880  
I had had a ball  
on the crossover.

1275  
00:59:16,880 --> 00:59:20,660  
I swam, I picked  
up American guys.

1276  
00:59:20,660 --> 00:59:21,500  
I danced.

1277  
00:59:21,500 --> 00:59:23,300  
I had a ball.

1278  
00:59:23,300 --> 00:59:26,690  
America seemed like a good

place because the crossing

1279

00:59:26,690 --> 00:59:27,650  
was wonderful.

1280

00:59:27,650 --> 00:59:30,650  
People were paying  
attention to me.

1281

00:59:30,650 --> 00:59:32,420  
And I was-- I  
already had picked up

1282

00:59:32,420 --> 00:59:35,660  
somebody who was teaching  
me English on the boat.

1283

00:59:35,660 --> 00:59:38,750  
17-year-old, yeah, it  
was that kind of thing.

1284

00:59:38,750 --> 00:59:41,180  
And-- but I arrived and the--

1285

00:59:41,180 --> 00:59:46,370  
HIAS took us to a school on  
Hudson Street, just horrible.

1286

00:59:46,370 --> 00:59:49,510  
And men and women  
sleeping separately.

1287

00:59:49,510 --> 00:59:51,290  
And my father said,  
this is not for us.

1288

00:59:51,290 --> 00:59:53,670  
We're going to try to  
find a room someplace.

1289

00:59:53,670 --> 00:59:56,300  
One-- back to one room--

1290

00:59:56,300 --> 00:59:58,940

one room, the three of us.

1291

00:59:58,940 --> 01:00:00,320

Did your parents speak English?

1292

01:00:00,320 --> 01:00:02,900

No, not at all.

1293

01:00:02,900 --> 01:00:04,130

So you were their translator.

1294

01:00:04,130 --> 01:00:07,610

I am now the head of the family.

1295

01:00:07,610 --> 01:00:11,780

But I am the one that

does all the trans--

1296

01:00:11,780 --> 01:00:16,790

is in charge of transactions,

is in charge of doctors.

1297

01:00:16,790 --> 01:00:19,820

But my uncle and aunt

had come earlier,

1298

01:00:19,820 --> 01:00:22,610

and they living on Broom Street.

1299

01:00:22,610 --> 01:00:24,110

God, why?

1300

01:00:24,110 --> 01:00:27,890

On Broom Street in lower--

1301

01:00:27,890 --> 01:00:30,230

lower Manhattan.

1302

01:00:30,230 --> 01:00:30,920

Lower East Side.

1303  
01:00:30,920 --> 01:00:31,710  
Lower East Side.

1304  
01:00:31,710 --> 01:00:33,350  
Thank you.

1305  
01:00:33,350 --> 01:00:38,840  
But under them lives an old  
boyfriend from Yugoslavia

1306  
01:00:38,840 --> 01:00:41,400  
from Italy, very exciting.

1307  
01:00:41,400 --> 01:00:42,500  
I mean, he's there.

1308  
01:00:42,500 --> 01:00:44,360  
The world is a perfect place.

1309  
01:00:44,360 --> 01:00:49,010  
And my first weekend he  
says, let's go to a movie.

1310  
01:00:49,010 --> 01:00:52,400  
So it wasn't all bad.

1311  
01:00:52,400 --> 01:00:58,970  
And we were good friends  
and a little more maybe--

1312  
01:00:58,970 --> 01:01:00,050  
definitely.

1313  
01:01:00,050 --> 01:01:03,710  
And somehow I had to practice.

1314  
01:01:03,710 --> 01:01:05,970  
This was too much  
of what I wanted.

1315

01:01:05,970 --> 01:01:08,990  
And I went to high school.

1316  
01:01:08,990 --> 01:01:10,010  
I registered.

1317  
01:01:10,010 --> 01:01:11,570  
HIAS felt I had to go to work.

1318  
01:01:11,570 --> 01:01:12,800  
I was 17.

1319  
01:01:12,800 --> 01:01:14,670  
I said, I'll go to work.

1320  
01:01:14,670 --> 01:01:21,890  
So I went to high school  
and finished high school

1321  
01:01:21,890 --> 01:01:24,600  
within a year and a half.

1322  
01:01:24,600 --> 01:01:28,040  
So I was 18 and a half when  
I finished high school.

1323  
01:01:28,040 --> 01:01:33,040

1324  
01:01:33,040 --> 01:01:34,630  
And did well.

1325  
01:01:34,630 --> 01:01:36,380  
And you're still living  
with your parents.

1326  
01:01:36,380 --> 01:01:39,030  
I'm still living with  
my parents, of course,

1327  
01:01:39,030 --> 01:01:41,350  
on West side.



1328  
01:01:41,350 --> 01:01:42,140  
So I'm just--

1329  
01:01:42,140 --> 01:01:45,320  
104th Street, West side,  
they rent an apartment

1330  
01:01:45,320 --> 01:01:51,200  
and I helped them set it up,  
go to the Salvation Army--

1331  
01:01:51,200 --> 01:01:52,670  
Salvation Army furniture.

1332  
01:01:52,670 --> 01:01:53,940  
But it was OK.

1333  
01:01:53,940 --> 01:01:55,910  
What was your father doing?

1334  
01:01:55,910 --> 01:01:57,890  
My father is not working.

1335  
01:01:57,890 --> 01:02:00,410  
HIAS is supporting  
us with minimum.

1336  
01:02:00,410 --> 01:02:01,700  
But I am working.

1337  
01:02:01,700 --> 01:02:05,180  
I'm going to high school and I'm  
working as a waitress from 3:00

1338  
01:02:05,180 --> 01:02:07,760  
in the afternoon-- no,  
from 3:00 in the afternoon

1339  
01:02:07,760 --> 01:02:10,070  
to 7:00 or 8:00  
at night, and then

1340  
01:02:10,070 --> 01:02:13,670  
going home, helping,  
and giving all my money.

1341  
01:02:13,670 --> 01:02:16,680  
It was a lot of money at the  
time, was making \$30 a week.

1342  
01:02:16,680 --> 01:02:19,730  
It was a lot of money  
because tips were big.

1343  
01:02:19,730 --> 01:02:21,020  
Was your mother working?

1344  
01:02:21,020 --> 01:02:22,710  
No, she couldn't find anything.

1345  
01:02:22,710 --> 01:02:23,480  
So it was like--

1346  
01:02:23,480 --> 01:02:26,030

1347  
01:02:26,030 --> 01:02:29,090  
and my father  
couldn't do anything.

1348  
01:02:29,090 --> 01:02:31,460  
No English, no this, no that.

1349  
01:02:31,460 --> 01:02:34,400  
But I was the one that was--

1350  
01:02:34,400 --> 01:02:39,410  
HIAS was helping a little, and I  
was bringing in the \$30 a week.

1351  
01:02:39,410 --> 01:02:43,070  
Think the rent was about \$60.

1352

01:02:43,070 --> 01:02:45,560

And-- but I was going to high school, regular high school.

1353

01:02:45,560 --> 01:02:47,540

Not nighttime, daytime.

1354

01:02:47,540 --> 01:02:53,990

But I was working as a waitress and I did fine.

1355

01:02:53,990 --> 01:02:56,120

And then I graduated from high school.

1356

01:02:56,120 --> 01:02:59,580

1357

01:02:59,580 --> 01:03:01,440

Did you want to go to college?

1358

01:03:01,440 --> 01:03:02,310

Yeah.

1359

01:03:02,310 --> 01:03:04,770

I applied to Hunter, got admitted,

1360

01:03:04,770 --> 01:03:09,780

only with the requirement that I take extra courses--

1361

01:03:09,780 --> 01:03:12,810

an extra repair course in English.

1362

01:03:12,810 --> 01:03:14,445

Graduated fifth in my class.

1363

01:03:14,445 --> 01:03:16,260

Had to-- have to boast.

1364

01:03:16,260 --> 01:03:17,040

May I, please?

1365

01:03:17,040 --> 01:03:18,000

Absolutely.

1366

01:03:18,000 --> 01:03:19,890

Absolutely.

1367

01:03:19,890 --> 01:03:21,780

I had the highest  
ratings in math

1368

01:03:21,780 --> 01:03:24,570

that anybody ever had  
in that high school--

1369

01:03:24,570 --> 01:03:26,940

99 or something.

1370

01:03:26,940 --> 01:03:29,220

And my teacher adored me.

1371

01:03:29,220 --> 01:03:31,800

I was teaching for Italian.

1372

01:03:31,800 --> 01:03:33,180

Which high school was this?

1373

01:03:33,180 --> 01:03:34,470

High School of Commerce.

1374

01:03:34,470 --> 01:03:37,440

But I went to the honor high  
school, Lincoln Park High

1375

01:03:37,440 --> 01:03:41,670

School, and graduated  
fifth in my class.

1376

01:03:41,670 --> 01:03:44,640

Got the only  
scholarship they gave.

1377  
01:03:44,640 --> 01:03:46,740  
When you were in high  
school and talking

1378  
01:03:46,740 --> 01:03:49,680  
to the American  
teenagers, did you

1379  
01:03:49,680 --> 01:03:52,800  
tell them about what  
you had gone through?

1380  
01:03:52,800 --> 01:03:53,640  
Never.

1381  
01:03:53,640 --> 01:03:55,020  
Why not?

1382  
01:03:55,020 --> 01:03:56,940  
I don't think nobody  
wanted to hear it.

1383  
01:03:56,940 --> 01:03:59,640  
I didn't feel that was part of--

1384  
01:03:59,640 --> 01:04:01,020  
but I had, again--

1385  
01:04:01,020 --> 01:04:03,030  
again, I had to go groups.

1386  
01:04:03,030 --> 01:04:06,000  
I had my group that  
had come from Europe,

1387  
01:04:06,000 --> 01:04:08,040  
which I saw on a regular basis.

1388  
01:04:08,040 --> 01:04:09,990

And I had a group  
from high school.

1389  
01:04:09,990 --> 01:04:12,390  
The other kids, like  
this [INAUDIBLE]

1390  
01:04:12,390 --> 01:04:14,100  
who was my boyfriend,  
he unfortunately

1391  
01:04:14,100 --> 01:04:19,300  
died about 20  
years, 15 years ago.

1392  
01:04:19,300 --> 01:04:22,690  
He got his engineering  
degree and everything.

1393  
01:04:22,690 --> 01:04:23,680  
He did fabulously.

1394  
01:04:23,680 --> 01:04:25,580  
Went into business  
and everything.

1395  
01:04:25,580 --> 01:04:28,360  
But he was working and  
going to school at night.

1396  
01:04:28,360 --> 01:04:31,790  
So I was in two  
different worlds.

1397  
01:04:31,790 --> 01:04:35,560  
I was in a world of these kids  
that worked during the day,

1398  
01:04:35,560 --> 01:04:37,570  
went to school at night.

1399  
01:04:37,570 --> 01:04:42,170  
And I was in the high school

world and college world.

1400  
01:04:42,170 --> 01:04:43,030  
So--

1401  
01:04:43,030 --> 01:04:46,780  
Did you-- with your  
friends from Europe,

1402  
01:04:46,780 --> 01:04:48,670  
did you talk to them  
about what you all

1403  
01:04:48,670 --> 01:04:50,980  
experienced during the war?

1404  
01:04:50,980 --> 01:04:54,550  
I don't think-- we all  
experienced it together.

1405  
01:04:54,550 --> 01:05:00,710  
We wanted to look forward,  
look ahead, not to look behind.

1406  
01:05:00,710 --> 01:05:02,680  
I don't think we ever did.

1407  
01:05:02,680 --> 01:05:04,630  
We maybe spoke  
Italian sometimes,

1408  
01:05:04,630 --> 01:05:05,860  
sometimes Serbo-Croatian.

1409  
01:05:05,860 --> 01:05:07,780  
We even started  
speaking in English,

1410  
01:05:07,780 --> 01:05:09,400  
which was very interesting.

1411  
01:05:09,400 --> 01:05:14,650

We were going to become  
part of this world.

1412  
01:05:14,650 --> 01:05:17,123  
Did the American teenagers  
ask you questions

1413  
01:05:17,123 --> 01:05:18,040  
about your background?

1414  
01:05:18,040 --> 01:05:20,340  
They were very-- some  
of them were interested.

1415  
01:05:20,340 --> 01:05:26,230

1416  
01:05:26,230 --> 01:05:27,760  
I don't think too much.

1417  
01:05:27,760 --> 01:05:30,160  
But I had made some friends.

1418  
01:05:30,160 --> 01:05:31,720  
I can't say that I had stayed--

1419  
01:05:31,720 --> 01:05:35,590  
have stayed in touch with  
any in my high school.

1420  
01:05:35,590 --> 01:05:38,140  
Did your parents talk  
about the war years

1421  
01:05:38,140 --> 01:05:39,490  
after the war was over?

1422  
01:05:39,490 --> 01:05:41,450  
It was always before and after.

1423  
01:05:41,450 --> 01:05:44,360  
Before the war,



and after the war.

1424  
01:05:44,360 --> 01:05:46,510  
They talk about what  
happened during the war?

1425  
01:05:46,510 --> 01:05:47,830  
They would say, oh, he died.

1426  
01:05:47,830 --> 01:05:50,080  
It was always he--  
unfortunately, he died.

1427  
01:05:50,080 --> 01:05:55,780  
Here they did talk about it,  
but I don't think we suffered.

1428  
01:05:55,780 --> 01:06:00,010  
I wanted to say we  
didn't suffer enough.

1429  
01:06:00,010 --> 01:06:02,020  
We didn't suffer the  
way the people that

1430  
01:06:02,020 --> 01:06:05,850  
were in concentration camp.

1431  
01:06:05,850 --> 01:06:09,170  
So it's-- I don't think we  
always kind of didn't-- we were

1432  
01:06:09,170 --> 01:06:12,530  
not the ones that suffered at  
all, except for the losses,

1433  
01:06:12,530 --> 01:06:17,600  
my mother lost  
brothers and cousins--

1434  
01:06:17,600 --> 01:06:20,700  
brothers, mostly.

1435

01:06:20,700 --> 01:06:26,610

And-- but New York  
was a good place.

1436

01:06:26,610 --> 01:06:28,590

I was working and  
I was going to--

1437

01:06:28,590 --> 01:06:31,563

then I graduated,  
went to college.

1438

01:06:31,563 --> 01:06:33,730

Did you live at home when  
you were going to college?

1439

01:06:33,730 --> 01:06:34,790

I always lived at home.

1440

01:06:34,790 --> 01:06:35,540

I went to Hunter--

1441

01:06:35,540 --> 01:06:36,870

I always-- I never left home.

1442

01:06:36,870 --> 01:06:41,460

Please, I was helping at home,  
helping support the family.

1443

01:06:41,460 --> 01:06:44,520

By this time, my father  
got a job in the mailroom

1444

01:06:44,520 --> 01:06:46,410

as a mailroom clerk.

1445

01:06:46,410 --> 01:06:48,440

And they discovered  
that he was very smart.

1446

01:06:48,440 --> 01:06:51,280

He became the supervisor

of the mailroom.

1447  
01:06:51,280 --> 01:06:52,620  
By then could speak English.

1448  
01:06:52,620 --> 01:06:53,370  
Some.

1449  
01:06:53,370 --> 01:06:55,920  
He never spoke  
English very well.

1450  
01:06:55,920 --> 01:07:00,360  
Till the day they died, I was  
the translator, the go-between.

1451  
01:07:00,360 --> 01:07:04,140  
Even when they were ill, I  
always had to fly to New York

1452  
01:07:04,140 --> 01:07:06,990  
to be there.

1453  
01:07:06,990 --> 01:07:09,390  
And-- but I went--

1454  
01:07:09,390 --> 01:07:11,250  
What did you study at college?

1455  
01:07:11,250 --> 01:07:13,530  
Basically, I was  
interested in math, what--

1456  
01:07:13,530 --> 01:07:18,180  
I was taking math and  
languages, feeling

1457  
01:07:18,180 --> 01:07:19,890  
that I could do something.

1458  
01:07:19,890 --> 01:07:22,470  
I met my husband

two years later.

1459

01:07:22,470 --> 01:07:24,960

Was he in college  
at the time, also?

1460

01:07:24,960 --> 01:07:28,200

He was actually in grad  
school in Pittsburgh.

1461

01:07:28,200 --> 01:07:29,070

How did you meet?

1462

01:07:29,070 --> 01:07:33,660

Well, one of my high school--  
one of my college friends,

1463

01:07:33,660 --> 01:07:36,120

who by college, I  
had made friends.

1464

01:07:36,120 --> 01:07:39,540

Iris Feigen was a friend of  
mine who invited me to a party

1465

01:07:39,540 --> 01:07:40,980

at her house.

1466

01:07:40,980 --> 01:07:44,490

And her mother somehow  
fell in love with me

1467

01:07:44,490 --> 01:07:47,580

and wanted me to meet her son.

1468

01:07:47,580 --> 01:07:49,800

There wasn't him.

1469

01:07:49,800 --> 01:07:53,640

Boyd Feigen, she wanted  
me to meet her son.

1470

01:07:53,640 --> 01:07:57,030  
And her son try to--

1471  
01:07:57,030 --> 01:07:58,410  
he was just not my type.

1472  
01:07:58,410 --> 01:08:00,780  
He was a very nice man.

1473  
01:08:00,780 --> 01:08:02,850  
She said, OK, you  
don't want to meet my--

1474  
01:08:02,850 --> 01:08:04,920  
you don't want to take  
out-- go out with my son.

1475  
01:08:04,920 --> 01:08:07,280  
My nephew's coming to town.

1476  
01:08:07,280 --> 01:08:09,510  
Says, you have to  
come to dinner.

1477  
01:08:09,510 --> 01:08:10,920  
So they invited me to dinner.

1478  
01:08:10,920 --> 01:08:12,420  
That was my husband.

1479  
01:08:12,420 --> 01:08:18,420  
And I met him in July.

1480  
01:08:18,420 --> 01:08:19,270  
I didn't want to go.

1481  
01:08:19,270 --> 01:08:20,939  
I had an exam.

1482  
01:08:20,939 --> 01:08:22,800  
But anyway, that's how life is.

1483

01:08:22,800 --> 01:08:24,359

And by January, we were married.

1484

01:08:24,359 --> 01:08:25,680

He was 27.

1485

01:08:25,680 --> 01:08:27,090

He was much older--

1486

01:08:27,090 --> 01:08:28,260

seven, eight years older.

1487

01:08:28,260 --> 01:08:29,520

He did not want to wait.

1488

01:08:29,520 --> 01:08:30,330

That was a mistake.

1489

01:08:30,330 --> 01:08:31,920

I never finished college.

1490

01:08:31,920 --> 01:08:33,880

Oh, so you--

1491

01:08:33,880 --> 01:08:34,380

OK.

1492

01:08:34,380 --> 01:08:35,460

So you got married.

1493

01:08:35,460 --> 01:08:37,189

And then where did  
you-- you moved--

1494

01:08:37,189 --> 01:08:38,279

We lived in Pittsburgh.

1495

01:08:38,279 --> 01:08:39,689

He finished grad school.

1496

01:08:39,689 --> 01:08:42,060  
And he started working.

1497  
01:08:42,060 --> 01:08:46,240  
And we lived in Pittsburgh,  
then went to Denver for a year.

1498  
01:08:46,240 --> 01:08:49,080  
Then my husband became the  
Executive Director Jewish

1499  
01:08:49,080 --> 01:08:50,220  
Family Services.

1500  
01:08:50,220 --> 01:08:53,189  
He is a social worker  
in Atlanta, Georgia.

1501  
01:08:53,189 --> 01:08:54,450  
And we moved there.

1502  
01:08:54,450 --> 01:08:57,300  
And the children were  
born-- two in Pittsburgh

1503  
01:08:57,300 --> 01:08:58,350  
and one in Atlanta.

1504  
01:08:58,350 --> 01:08:59,840  
And you have three children.

1505  
01:08:59,840 --> 01:09:02,649  
We have three daughters.

1506  
01:09:02,649 --> 01:09:06,450  
And they all, thank  
God, doing well.

1507  
01:09:06,450 --> 01:09:10,500  
I'd like to ask you  
some questions--

1508

01:09:10,500 --> 01:09:12,310  
not historical questions.

1509  
01:09:12,310 --> 01:09:13,000  
Please do.

1510  
01:09:13,000 --> 01:09:17,970  
But do you feel that you  
would be a different person

1511  
01:09:17,970 --> 01:09:20,370  
if you hadn't gone  
through the experiences

1512  
01:09:20,370 --> 01:09:21,930  
that you had as a child?

1513  
01:09:21,930 --> 01:09:24,029  
It's a very interesting  
question, Gail.

1514  
01:09:24,029 --> 01:09:25,140  
That is wonderful.

1515  
01:09:25,140 --> 01:09:27,270  
Because I told Sandy  
that I had read

1516  
01:09:27,270 --> 01:09:29,819  
an article that  
some gay people who

1517  
01:09:29,819 --> 01:09:33,390  
said if you could take a  
pill, would you take a pill

1518  
01:09:33,390 --> 01:09:34,229  
and not be gay?

1519  
01:09:34,229 --> 01:09:35,760  
And they said, I would.

1520



01:09:35,760 --> 01:09:39,359  
And most people said,  
I don't think I would,

1521  
01:09:39,359 --> 01:09:41,085  
because I wouldn't  
be the same person.

1522  
01:09:41,085 --> 01:09:44,790

1523  
01:09:44,790 --> 01:09:46,910  
Now, tell me what  
questions do you ask me?

1524  
01:09:46,910 --> 01:09:49,109  
Do you think you would have  
been a different person

1525  
01:09:49,109 --> 01:09:51,276  
today if you hadn't  
been-- if you hadn't

1526  
01:09:51,276 --> 01:09:52,359  
gone through what you did?

1527  
01:09:52,359 --> 01:09:54,120  
Very different.

1528  
01:09:54,120 --> 01:09:56,850  
I don't know if I would  
want to be that person.

1529  
01:09:56,850 --> 01:09:59,190  
That is the interesting part.

1530  
01:09:59,190 --> 01:10:03,280  
I am kind of proud of speaking  
three or four languages.

1531  
01:10:03,280 --> 01:10:08,510  
I'm kind of proud that  
when I come here and seeing

1532  
01:10:08,510 --> 01:10:11,670  
this husband, Elliot,  
has all these Europeans

1533  
01:10:11,670 --> 01:10:14,100  
people, all these people  
from all over the world,

1534  
01:10:14,100 --> 01:10:16,600  
that I fit in so easily.

1535  
01:10:16,600 --> 01:10:18,090  
So would I?

1536  
01:10:18,090 --> 01:10:23,130  
Well, I would have been a very  
different person, yes, I think.

1537  
01:10:23,130 --> 01:10:25,230  
I don't know would I've been--

1538  
01:10:25,230 --> 01:10:26,700  
would I have been happier?

1539  
01:10:26,700 --> 01:10:28,350  
Probably.

1540  
01:10:28,350 --> 01:10:29,640  
Would I want that?

1541  
01:10:29,640 --> 01:10:30,660  
I don't know.

1542  
01:10:30,660 --> 01:10:33,570  
But I would have  
been very different.

1543  
01:10:33,570 --> 01:10:36,690  
Do you feel that you lost  
part of your childhood?

1544

01:10:36,690 --> 01:10:38,790

I definitely lost  
most of my child--

1545

01:10:38,790 --> 01:10:41,090

I didn't have a childhood.

1546

01:10:41,090 --> 01:10:45,750

That's why when my children  
were young and teenagers,

1547

01:10:45,750 --> 01:10:48,360

they always said they don't  
know why my house was always

1548

01:10:48,360 --> 01:10:52,650

open to many kids.

1549

01:10:52,650 --> 01:10:56,250

They could come in at 1:00 in  
the morning and knock on the--

1550

01:10:56,250 --> 01:10:59,520

knock on the children's  
windows, the boys--

1551

01:10:59,520 --> 01:11:03,030

and they were always the  
Jewish kids, the [INAUDIBLE],,

1552

01:11:03,030 --> 01:11:05,730

and the house was  
always open to them.

1553

01:11:05,730 --> 01:11:08,670

I think because I lived--

1554

01:11:08,670 --> 01:11:09,540

which is not good--

1555

01:11:09,540 --> 01:11:12,240

I lived my childhood through

them, my teenage years.

1556

01:11:12,240 --> 01:11:13,350

The-- it's--

1557

01:11:13,350 --> 01:11:14,880

I-- there was--

1558

01:11:14,880 --> 01:11:17,490

I loved having all these  
kids around the house

1559

01:11:17,490 --> 01:11:19,080

because it was--

1560

01:11:19,080 --> 01:11:23,010

I could live vicariously  
in the freedom--

1561

01:11:23,010 --> 01:11:25,860

in the children's lives.

1562

01:11:25,860 --> 01:11:28,590

1563

01:11:28,590 --> 01:11:35,760

When your children were younger  
than that, pre-teenage--

1564

01:11:35,760 --> 01:11:38,310

1565

01:11:38,310 --> 01:11:39,930

eight, nine, 10--  
when things started

1566

01:11:39,930 --> 01:11:42,900

to get difficult for you when  
you were 8, 9, and 10 years

1567

01:11:42,900 --> 01:11:45,570

old, did that-- and

they reached that age,

1568

01:11:45,570 --> 01:11:49,183

did that bring those  
difficult times back to you?

1569

01:11:49,183 --> 01:11:50,600

Do you understand  
what I'm saying?

1570

01:11:50,600 --> 01:11:52,130

Oh, I know exactly.

1571

01:11:52,130 --> 01:11:58,140

Did it-- I always heard of this  
is somebody who had been abused

1572

01:11:58,140 --> 01:12:03,140

that this is with time  
that when the children--

1573

01:12:03,140 --> 01:12:05,590

I don't really think so.

1574

01:12:05,590 --> 01:12:07,430

I was so intent--

1575

01:12:07,430 --> 01:12:11,010

I was really so intent.

1576

01:12:11,010 --> 01:12:11,840

Maybe you're right.

1577

01:12:11,840 --> 01:12:14,960

I was intent in having  
them do well in school.

1578

01:12:14,960 --> 01:12:17,750

This was my obsession.

1579

01:12:17,750 --> 01:12:21,800

Because you felt it got you

through the difficult times?

1580

01:12:21,800 --> 01:12:23,810

Somehow, I wanted them to do--

1581

01:12:23,810 --> 01:12:28,230

I don't know why, but I wanted them to do well in school.

1582

01:12:28,230 --> 01:12:30,800

They always said, what would I have done if my children had

1583

01:12:30,800 --> 01:12:31,790

not been bright?

1584

01:12:31,790 --> 01:12:33,680

How would I have handled that?

1585

01:12:33,680 --> 01:12:37,040

1586

01:12:37,040 --> 01:12:41,770

And they-- I pushed hard, probably too hard.

1587

01:12:41,770 --> 01:12:46,710

That's the only-- I think, that's the mistakes that

1588

01:12:46,710 --> 01:12:50,280

were made, yeah, I pushed.

1589

01:12:50,280 --> 01:12:52,630

And I see [PERSONAL NAME] rushing around home

1590

01:12:52,630 --> 01:12:55,170

and I think to myself, is this what I created?

1591

01:12:55,170 --> 01:12:58,090

This what-- would  
these my expectation?

1592  
01:12:58,090 --> 01:12:58,920  
But I think--

1593  
01:12:58,920 --> 01:13:01,710

1594  
01:13:01,710 --> 01:13:03,420  
I've lost my train of thought.

1595  
01:13:03,420 --> 01:13:03,960  
I'm sorry.

1596  
01:13:03,960 --> 01:13:04,680  
That's OK.

1597  
01:13:04,680 --> 01:13:10,380  
Are there any sites today,  
or sounds, that remind

1598  
01:13:10,380 --> 01:13:12,630  
you of the wartime  
years, something

1599  
01:13:12,630 --> 01:13:17,570  
that triggers you to  
think back 50 years ago?

1600  
01:13:17,570 --> 01:13:22,460  
Anything-- I told you yesterday,  
the cot in this fancy,

1601  
01:13:22,460 --> 01:13:27,920  
very fancy one of these  
books, they were these cuts--

1602  
01:13:27,920 --> 01:13:30,080  
200, I said.

1603  
01:13:30,080 --> 01:13:31,550

I started laughing.

1604  
01:13:31,550 --> 01:13:35,270  
But I mean, they  
were small things.

1605  
01:13:35,270 --> 01:13:38,000  
Butter, I told you  
about, I adored butter.

1606  
01:13:38,000 --> 01:13:39,830  
And I'd die for butter.

1607  
01:13:39,830 --> 01:13:41,390  
And I feel still--

1608  
01:13:41,390 --> 01:13:43,940  
I see butter, I  
want to smear it--

1609  
01:13:43,940 --> 01:13:46,990  
butter is something  
that we didn't have.

1610  
01:13:46,990 --> 01:13:48,980  
Is this the kind of things?

1611  
01:13:48,980 --> 01:13:54,050  
Of course, my cholesterol's  
300 so I can't have butter.

1612  
01:13:54,050 --> 01:13:59,430  
But what kind of memories  
trigger little things?

1613  
01:13:59,430 --> 01:14:02,160  
Little things transport  
me in a different world.

1614  
01:14:02,160 --> 01:14:05,730  
Words sometime, a  
word that I hear,



1615

01:14:05,730 --> 01:14:09,170  
or something I cannot think  
in English and I'm immediately

1616

01:14:09,170 --> 01:14:12,420  
transported into another world.

1617

01:14:12,420 --> 01:14:17,810  
You never quite-- it transported  
back into the war years

1618

01:14:17,810 --> 01:14:24,990  
very easily if you see a  
separation of families.

1619

01:14:24,990 --> 01:14:30,570  
And in TV, families  
are reunited somehow.

1620

01:14:30,570 --> 01:14:34,860  
That brings me back  
immediately somehow.

1621

01:14:34,860 --> 01:14:40,710  
Or my husband dealt a great  
deal with new Americans,

1622

01:14:40,710 --> 01:14:43,620  
refugees from Russia from here.

1623

01:14:43,620 --> 01:14:47,120  
And people used  
to say, you would

1624

01:14:47,120 --> 01:14:50,210  
be wonderful to help  
them, teach them English.

1625

01:14:50,210 --> 01:14:53,640  
I teach English, too.

1626

01:14:53,640 --> 01:14:55,410

And I have tried.

1627

01:14:55,410 --> 01:14:56,880

It is so painful.

1628

01:14:56,880 --> 01:15:03,630

It brings me back right into  
that first few days, the pain.

1629

01:15:03,630 --> 01:15:07,690

I see them and I see the pain  
of a new country of no language,

1630

01:15:07,690 --> 01:15:08,190

of--

1631

01:15:08,190 --> 01:15:10,020

see, I forgotten the pain.

1632

01:15:10,020 --> 01:15:14,980

But I am immediately thrown back  
into learning about a culture,

1633

01:15:14,980 --> 01:15:17,440

teaching my mother that  
the butter dish does not--

1634

01:15:17,440 --> 01:15:18,740

you don't put the butter--

1635

01:15:18,740 --> 01:15:22,110

remember the cover  
of the butter dish?

1636

01:15:22,110 --> 01:15:25,380

You have butter  
and you cover it.

1637

01:15:25,380 --> 01:15:28,660

And my mother bought a butter  
dish and put the butter in it

1638

01:15:28,660 --> 01:15:30,900  
and left it uncovered, upward.

1639  
01:15:30,900 --> 01:15:34,140  
And all these kinds of things  
that we really didn't--

1640  
01:15:34,140 --> 01:15:37,020  
or my father and I  
walking sort of the street

1641  
01:15:37,020 --> 01:15:38,165  
and eating grapefruit.

1642  
01:15:38,165 --> 01:15:39,540  
Every time I think  
of grapefruit,

1643  
01:15:39,540 --> 01:15:43,280  
peeling a grapefruit like  
an orange and eating it,

1644  
01:15:43,280 --> 01:15:44,310  
people looking at us.

1645  
01:15:44,310 --> 01:15:46,770  
Nobody I did-- now,  
people are eating grape--

1646  
01:15:46,770 --> 01:15:50,180  
so all these trigger memories.

1647  
01:15:50,180 --> 01:15:52,000