

This is a continuation of an interview for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection. We are interviewing Guta Jacobson. This is tape two, side A. And you were telling me about Auschwitz, your first hours in Auschwitz. And I wanted to ask you how long it took before you realized what was going on in this place?

No. I knew that I am in a crazy house. Because I saw people sitting without motion, without any hair. No matter how beautiful you are, no matter how young you are, when they shave your hair, they give you no clothes. Those [NON-ENGLISH]. So no, I figured that's the end. [? We're ?] in a crazy house. I didn't figure we came to [? work ?] no more.

You said that somebody in the barrack told you what to expect. What was it that they told you?

Well, they said that there'd be [? cell ?] Appells every morning. That we should obey. We shouldn't hide. We'll be very hungry. And who won't be able to withstand, they're going to be gassed. I didn't even know what that means, they're going to be gassed. So I figured, OK, they're going to be killed. And that was the first things we came into that barrack, the first greeting.

That was a young girl. Running around was such a long thing. She was running from one place to the other all day to obey. If we'll get food, it's good. We have to go-- it's going to be a kibel outside. We cannot go to the bathroom. It's going to be a kibel that meets a pen outside. We could go outside to the bathroom and come in back.

I didn't know what to think. We cried. But we were happy mother is with us. That was my first impression. That we're in a crazy house. Plain crazy house. And among them, we're going to be dead.

You said there was a long thing. You mean inside the barrack?

Inside the barracks was like a long-- I don't know what it was.

Was it-- were their chimneys in the barrack?

Chimneys, yeah. That long thing. And she was running from one place to the other, from one place to the other. So I figured we're all crazy. She's crazy too. That's all.

What else do you remember about your first day or days in Auschwitz?

[? Cell ?] appell.

Explain what that means.

We had to go out at dawn. When it was winter, I was quite a long time [? there ?]. When it was winter, the climate in Auschwitz is lime. You know what lime is? When you put your foot in the lime, you cannot take out the foot. That was the climate. It was very cold.

We had to all get out, and he was counting. And if it didn't count what it was yesterday, they were looking all over if somebody didn't hide themselves. Sometimes we stayed there for two hours.

I remember very well Dr. Mengele. I saw him every morning. I could recognize him in my sleep. Now he's dead already, but I could recognize-- good-looking guy.

How did you know it was Dr. Mengele and not somebody else?

Well, then we heard, this is Dr. Mengele. Dr. Mengele is coming. So I figured this is the Dr. Mengele-- extremely good-looking guy, very good looking.

He was wearing a uniform and a dog, and he was coming with the other ones, with a stick. I'll never forget it. He took

away my mother.

When he took away your mother, you said a few months ago, you said you were there about two weeks before they took her away?

Two or three weeks it was, yeah-- more than two weeks. Three weeks, probably-- yes.

By then, did you know where she would be going?

Yes, exactly.

When did you come to realize? As I said, when did you become to realize what was really happening in the town?

Right next day from Auschwitz. What is gas? What do you mean they're going to gas people? You know, so curiosity, and then I realized.

I had one encounter in Auschwitz. They were taking away, taking away. Then companies came and took people to work from Auschwitz.

We were told that they need 200 people, 100 girls, to work. And we didn't have the mother anymore. I have a very, very good-looking sister. She's in California now-- very, very ill, very.

So me and my sister, we left the other sister in the barrack. We went. I say, let's go to work.

Enough Auschwitz. We're going to get killed here anyway. So let's go to work. Worse than here cannot be.

So what do you think we will find out? In the crematorium. Do you believe it?

Right away, we were in the crematorium. You had to go in by number. If they needed 100, they didn't took 101.

So I don't know how much they needed that day. Was it 100, or was it more? I don't know.

So we were staying outside. And we asked the guy, the German guy in German, where are we going? He showed us we're going to the-- this is the crematorium.

He took out my sister right away. She started to terrible cry, and she pulled me to her. All the rest went to the crematorium. Four of us went back to the barracks-- four of us.

We were staying there. They didn't know what to do with us. And one came over. He says, [GERMAN]. We should run.

So we went back to the barracks. Nobody stopped us. We came back. My sister was there.

So from two barracks, there make one barrack. They took people from the other. So we came back to the barracks until we all went to work a few weeks later.

But I was in front of the crematorium. I knew it when I there, because they picked out such a nice girls, little, nice girls from Ukraine, from Czechoslovakia. So we're going to work, but we didn't.

The other women that were with you in the barrack were from different countries. Did you, when you were in the barracks together, talk about your lives before the war?

I was, towards the end, I was a lot with Ukrainian-- with the Hungarian girls. I was afraid to talk. I remember always going behind the barracks and sit like the other one was sitting-- like this. That's when I came in. That's what they saw.

Then I saw myself. And I figured, God, give me strength. I need to see Hitler's destruction? Then take me away. That's how I prayed.

Then one day they came. They needed 1,000 women. But this, I saw a little different, because it was civilians came, too, not only the Germans.

They said they need 1,000 women to go to work. And all three of us-- we didn't leave my sister anymore-- all three of us [YIDDISH] to this transport. And we went out from Auschwitz.

I'm going to ask you to translate what you just said in Yiddish.

We didn't-- what did I say? That we didn't leave my sister behind. We took her with us. She was the oldest, and she was sick. She was sick in the ghetto already.

And we went to work. They took us out from Auschwitz. Because we saw the same way we came arbeitslager, we went out.

Before I let you leave Auschwitz, I want to ask you a couple of clarifying questions. Your barrack, what was it made of? You mentioned that there were two chimneys inside--

Yeah.

--and a long thing. What was the building itself made of?

Wood-- made of wood. And we were sleeping on the floors. It was made of wood. But the only thing, that long thing, was the chimney, that long thing where she was working back and forth-- a stick of wood. It was very cold in the wintertime.

You know what I did once in Auschwitz? And the Germans, that time, I saw the Germans watching. No, I'm sorry. It wasn't Auschwitz.

We'll save it for later, then. While you were in Auschwitz, did you have any idea how the war was going for Germany?

We heard rumors that the Germans losing in Stalingrad. They froze in Stalingrad. So, look, it was only rumors. Who knew?

The only thing, that some girls of ours-- I was not among them. Otherwise, I wouldn't be ashamed to say it, because you do everything for food and maybe if you survive. I wasn't among them. Polacks were working there-- c

That was Auschwitz. Auschwitz was a town. And the girls, maybe they lived with them. I don't know. Nobody revealed it.

The only thing I know, they brought some food back from the Polacks. That was the rumors. So they probably knew from the Polacks. Polish people were working around there.

While you were in Auschwitz, did you witness beatings, executions, or suicides?

Yes. I came with a girlfriend from Lodz. You must hear that. I came with a girlfriend from the Lodz.

Her father was a banker in Lodz. I always admired her, because I came to her house. We weren't that rich. She always had such beautiful clothes and such nice food.

I met her in Auschwitz. She was the one who went on the barbed wires. She got killed. She committed suicide in Auschwitz, because she came from a luxury.

But ours was a luxury. Here, it wouldn't be called a luxury, but this was a luxury. She committed suicide. People did commit suicide, yes.

Before I have you leaving Auschwitz, is there anything else that stands out in your mind about--

About Auschwitz? Yes. How cruel the Germans could have been at first Yom Kippur. It was a holiday.

That's a day before when my mother was taken away. That's why I have here with her. I have [INAUDIBLE] took her away. I have no [INAUDIBLE], but I figured it out. It's the same day.

We had [? kibble, ?] or [? kibble ?] I say. You know what [? kibble-- ?] what it is? A big-- a garbage pail, a big garbage pail, like you throw out a garbage. So it was clean.

And the soups were all over the outside from the barracks. You could of ran and get yourself as much as you wanted. You know why? Because it was Yom Kippur.

They wanted you to eat Yom Kippur. And there was a lot of food, because they took away a day before a lot of people from the barracks. This, I'll never forget.

It was so much food. But if you were smart, you didn't eat. It wasn't pleasant food, but being that your stomach is not used to that.

I was so skinny. I didn't eat anyway. So whenever I had a little bit, I had enough. This is outstanding.

When did you leave Auschwitz?

I left Auschwitz-- I really don't remember exactly when I left Auschwitz. But when I left Auschwitz for that transport, I went to BirnbÄumel. This is a town.

[CRASH]

I have no idea what that noise was. Please continue.

Please don't worry. This is a town in Germany that took us to devote to make okopas. You know what okopas? When a tank goes through, it should fall through, you know?

So like a trench?

A trenches, yeah, but this was for military. We were 1,000 women, and we would shovel the trenches until here in water.

Let me just clarify one thing, and then we'll get to this next camp--

Yes.

--and the work that you did. I asked you when you had left Auschwitz. It was after Yom Kippur. Was it very long after Yom Kippur, or do you remember this season?

I left Auschwitz. I cannot tell you exactly the date. I had it written down some place at home.

But when I left I Auschwitz, it was almost empty. Either they had killed the people, or they took out the people. It was almost.

I would say in my barrack was empty. We went almost towards the end, because we knew. We were afraid.

We didn't trust them that they're going to take us to work, because what there already once. And there was nothing to stay anymore, because it was almost empty. So we left.

Do you happen to remember what the weather was? Was there snow?

It was very wintry. Because when we came to that food, it was winter.

When you left Auschwitz, how were you transported to the other camp?

With the trains. We went with trains. And then they took us, 1,000-- there were 2,000 women. 1,000 women, they took another place, and 1,000 women, we were together-- with the Czechs, with the Hungarian, with the Polish girls.

But by that time, when we went to the camp, they gave us over there to-- they dressed us. They gave us food. We worked there. And we were-- from the barracks, we worked.

And during the-- in the morning, where we worked, the people who lived there, the German people, came out. One, they came out with a piece of bread. One, they came out with a cigarette. One came out with a potato. They did come out.

The only thing, when we left that working place to go to Bergen-Belsen, that place was empty already. No Germans, nobody, was there.

Tell me about the physical camp, what it looked like, and what the barracks were like. Describe the camp for me, please.

The working camps you're talking now about?

The second camp where you worked.

The second camp. Well, the second camp was better than Auschwitz. We had the women watching us, the SS women. There were very bad, very bad.

You know what I did in order to please you? I worked nice with my hands. And the water was [NON-ENGLISH], such a green things. I opened up that green things an inside was such a white-- like a-- I don't know how to describe. And I made little flowers for the German girls.

And I asked them to put lipstick on it, and it was I gave everybody a flower, you know? So they had me already in mind at one time. But we were watched a lot from the German, from the Wehrmacht. It was not the SS anymore. It was the Wehrmacht.

So I personally would go out, and it was snow. And I would dress myself to the hip. I didn't even see it in the back of me. And I washed myself with the snow.

And at one time, he approached me. He says, [GERMAN]. So I was such afraid, because I was half naked. He say, [GERMAN]. Do this every day. So you're going to be warm this way.

He didn't do nothing to me, but he had me on his eye. At one time, he threw a piece of bread for me, but that was never. But it was not that bad. It's just the water. What we were-- [INAUDIBLE]. We were-- we wanted the water.

We were cutting the trees in the woods. And then when the tanks are going to come, they should go into the water. You know what? The Wehrmacht saved themselves like this.

They took us to work. And this way, they saved their lives, because they didn't go to the front. They didn't go to the army. That was my opinion, but I didn't say it.

Over there, I got hit. They broke three teeth, my teeth. Because I saw that-- I had, as I mentioned, I had a very good-looking sister-- extremely good-looking. She's now very sick.

One Wehrmacht, one guy, gave her cigarettes, food. It was Christmas. She got a whole package from him. The girl squealed on her, and they brought me into the office.

And they wanted me to see, the tell, which one did it and what. I said, she found it on the floor. Somebody threw it in the tanks, and she picked it up. I wouldn't tell which one did it.

So he gave me one shot in the-- in fact, the German pay for my teeth. And that's when I got hit. And then we went out from there.

Tell me about the living conditions in this camp.

This camp was a lot better, as I mentioned, than Auschwitz camp. Because we got a little food. They took some of our girls into the kitchen. They worked in the kitchen.

But outstanding was a lady from Czechoslovakia. She knew how to type in German. They needed her in the office, because all these German SS, nobody knew how to type.

She was treated like a diamond, and I'll tell you what we did with her when-- I'm going to go out from this place. I'll tell you something. And she was very good with me.

She saw me, how they hit me, and she was very good with my sister. So she brought us whatever was left over there. Like I would go into the woods, and I was-- I knew, being that I was living in Poland.

At one time, I lived in a small town in Poland. I went to the woods, and I knew all the pilze. You know what pilze? Mushrooms.

I knew which mushroom is poison, and I knew which mushroom was good. Because I was-- I brought the mushrooms. They sent me to the woods, the German, the SS ladies, and I brought them mushrooms, mostly for Sundays. They had mushrooms with eggs.

So I knew every mushroom. That's what I say. I taught my daughter how to survive in the woods, because mushrooms could be very dangerous.

So she got all the mushrooms that was leftover, that girl from Czechoslovakia, and they were told that she should give me these mushrooms. That was so delicious. That was the biggest delicacy in five years I ate.

But mushrooms, real mushrooms, not these cultivated mushrooms, what we have here. That was good, yeah.

You said you had lived in a small town. When was this?

Before, when I was a little girl. My father used to work in a small town before Lodz. I was born in Lodz.

Then we went out. His boss moved to Constantine, and soon later, we moved back to Lodz. So I don't pay attention to that.

How long were you in this-- the second camp?

In the second camp, it was still June, December. December. I was there by June, September, October, November. November and December, I was there in the woods.

I was good two month, five weeks, there until that was close to 45. And they took us out. The Germans were afraid of themselves.

But we also had a little hospital in that camp. It was a room where when we got sick, we went into the door. And that girl-- I don't remember her name-- good-looking girl from Czechoslovakia-- she took very ill. And she was in that-- how you called this, infirmary? Oh, yes, I got it-- like a room, an infirmary.

So I went to see her once. When we left this camp, the infirmary, they didn't touch it. Nobody left the infirmary. They left behind two soldiers, the Wehrmacht. All the rest went with us to kill them.

None of them got killed. Only that girl, they took her out, and we had to carry her on that things, because they knew what they're going to do with the other girls. But nobody got killed, because they had to run away, because Russia was already approaching.

As we went, they went with us, the Germans. The Russians were approaching, and we left. We went.

At one night, we stopped. It was almost empty, the town, a town, a woods, some place. And they took me, and my sister, and other-- no. One more thing I have to tell you.

As we were walking-- put on that tape. That's very important. As we were walking, it was no more 1,000, because it was left in that infirmary, a nice, few people. Whoever was in the back, the Germans took them out to the woods and shot them-- whoever didn't meet the front-- and shot them. I saw it.

And that girl we were still carrying, they didn't shoot her. That's what a German is. They needed her.

So this, I couldn't-- so when we stopped in that town, and we were-- there was leftovers-- the potatoes there, and carrots, and all that. We were making a fire. We were making the potatoes. And not far from there was a lake, a deep lake.

When we're going to pass that lake, they're going to go to Bergen-Belsen. But our girls, they dumped in the lake, all of them that didn't live to go to Bergen-Belsen. That 1,000-- we went out from Auschwitz 2,000. The first thousand, nobody lived.

The all killed them in that lake. They didn't kill them with the guns. They killed them now, our girls.

I went out. When we went out to make the food for the people, we hid my sister, because she couldn't go out. She was sick already. Me and my sister, there is another girl-- we were five girls-- we went into the woods to a hiding place. We didn't go with them next day no more.

My sister stayed back in that camp, and they found my sister. They beat her so much, but they still-- they were worried about their own life. She went to Bergen-Belsen.

They beat her, because she should give out where are the two sisters. She just said the right thing. They left, and she doesn't know where they are.

We went to the woods. It was a hunting place. They were hunting there, but there was nobody hunting there, and it was like a shack. And we stayed in that shack 48 hours, till nobody was there already.

The whole transport left. We went out looking for my sister, but we says we're not going to go back. Whatever happens to her happens.

And we went out, and we opened up a house where nobody was there. Everybody was evacuated, because the Russian was coming. And we were in luxury-- in luxury.

There was so many preserved. There was so much food in the house. All the Germans had left.

Now, listen, what you do, you have to go out. We went out as peasants. Somebody's there.

That's fine. Please continue.

We went out as peasants next day. We slept in a bed. Nobody was there. We went out as peasants, and there were cows going around.

We wanted to show them what it means, you know? We're working. We're Polacks. We're not Jews. We're Polacks.

I spoke very good Polish. My sister spoke a perfect Polish. And we start to milk a bull.

She took a bucket. And she was the older than me, and she started-- and a guy came over, a Polish guy, who was left to watch this. And he says-- he knew German. [GERMAN]

So we says, we're going to milk the-- he says, this is not a cow. This is a bull. We say, oh, we did not know.

He says, who you are? I says, I'm a Polish. [POLISH] It's not far from Lodz. We knew the place he was.

You have to translate all of this.

Yeah. From where you are? From Poland.

He says, what are you doing here? We says, we're Polish girls. We were working here in another town, and nobody's there. So we start to walk, and that's where we wound out, right here.

He says, you could have got killed, because this wasn't a cow. This was a bull. My kids know about that, because I always say. [LAUGHS] I talked about it after the war.

And no sooner then we were afraid of this guy. I said to my sister, we're going to leave. We're going to go further into the woods.

No sooner we went to the woods, another two days, we saw soldiers. That was the Russian soldiers. And you know what? We met a Jewish officer.

And he says, you know what they're going to do to you, Jewish or Polish? We told them that we're Jews. We ran away with this transport. We told them where they should go to look for the people.

And he took us. He left the whole-- he took us with his van, a wagon with horses, to a place, and he put us in to a trolley car. And he says, you go out with the trolley cars as far as you go, and you go back home. You go back to Poland.

Because this was February. And in May, Lodz was liberated. And it took us so long till we came to Lodz back. It was liberated already-- the two of us.

And the third, my sister went to Bergen-Belsen. And how they didn't kill her, because they were-- and you know what? On the way, we met the German soldier who we knew. He recognized us. He begged us, we should hide him.

Yeah. So I said to my sister, look, we cannot hide you, but we're not going to give you out neither. He was the Wehrmacht. He wasn't the SS.

Throw away your gun. Throw away your uniform. Go into a German house. Get dressed, and go whenever you want to go. He didn't kill, and we give him up.

So the Russian soldiers had warned you that something was going to happen to you. What warning did he give you?



They're going to rape us. That's the biggest warning. They're going to-- they wouldn't case us. These are soldiers.

They had know they raped all the German girls on the way, whoever they met. They're going to do this to you, too. So when we find out that this is a Jewish boy, it's like a heaven, and he saved us from the Russians.

He took us away from the whole Russian-- it was like a regiment. I don't know how you call it-- away, away from that regiment. And then we found ourselves with the Polacks.

So we speak Polish. We did reveal that we are-- as I said, in Auschwitz, I had saved my hair and my sister's hair. So we didn't look so bad. Don't ask me how I saved my hair.

What were you wearing?

What was I wearing?

When you made your escape, when you were hiding, what were you wearing?

Oh. We had to throw off the things from the camp. We were naked. We were almost naked in the winter.

But at night when it was dark, we went to the town, and we were stealing. And we came back, and that's how we were-- and the third or the fourth night, we were now ready to sleep in their homes. That's where my sister was milking the bull.

We're going to pause so I can change to tape. Just one moment. This is a continuation of an interview for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection. We are interviewing Guta Jacobson. This is tape 2, side B.

And you have been telling me about the death march and your liberation. You mentioned, when you were talking about the death march, that people who could not continue to walk were taken to the side, and--

To the woods.

--to the woods to be executed. Was there any shooting right there on the spot of people who couldn't continue?

Yes. I saw it. People could-- they took sick. Their legs were swollen. They took them right away to the woods and they finished them off.

They killed them. We heard shots. I saw it. And they were laying there, and we kept marching. We kept going.

That was the worst thing in my life, and that's why we ran away. Once we stopped, and we had a little bit freedom because we were cooking the potatoes and whatever we found there, we ran away to the woods. And I think they knew it. I think they saw it. They didn't care.

But they only cared when they found my sister. That's when they cared. And then we have to thank the Russian soldiers, that particular soldier who took us out. Because he says, well, where we're going, we're going straight into the war. That's where the soldiers kept coming on.

So he took us out from the front, let's put it this way. That's how you call it. They took us-- he took us out. Then he went back, and then we met Polish workers already and thinks we spoke Polish.

And that took us about a week to get back to Poland, because we were walking. We were going with wagons. There was no transportation. It was a horse. And we came back to Poland to Lodz. That was already a few days after the war in Lodz, after the war.

One last question. How long were you on the march, the death march?

With the transport?

With the death march. How long were you marching?

I would say a week. I would say a week, yes.

So you came back after the war to Lodz. Can you describe what you found when you returned?

Of course, we went right away where we used to live. And they recognized us. And one gave us a letter from-- this is the one.

But when we went up, then we went to the ghetto. When we ran up the steps in the ghetto-- and I cannot even now forgive myself that I didn't go into the house. Because the picture was laying there, my mother's and my father's picture, right on the step. Take it, and go away.

So my sister and me, we start terrible to cry. We took that photo, and we ran away. We should have went into the house and find a lot of other things-- it wasn't destroyed-- but we didn't.

We were frightened. We were young. We were-- had no place where to go. When I met my husband, I met him in about two weeks knowing him. I had no place to go.

How were you treated by the Poles when you returned?

Well, in Lodz, we wasn't treated too bad, because it was a big city. And I right away from a Jewish commentate. So we had a place where to go and to put our names, because everybody was looking for everybody.

We put our names. And my sister met somebody that she knew. And we took over a Polish apartment.

You know what? I was told from the Polacks in my apartment house I should not take over the-- the Jewish commentate wanted to give me my apartment from the mother. But the Polack said I shouldn't do it. They probably wouldn't.

It was a scare to us or anything. So we said, no, we're not going to take over nothing. Because Polish people were living there were ready five years more.

And we left them right away. We never came back to this place anymore-- not to this place and not to the ghetto place. But we were staying in Poland, because we were planning to go to Palestine.

You said everybody was looking for relatives.

Yes.

Did you at that time know what had happened to your father?

Yes. That time, my father, when he registered himself to go away from the ghetto, to go out, because he couldn't survive on that piece of bread and that rationing. He would have died anyway. All his friends died. They were laying in the street.

So he went. He went to Oberschlesien. We knew where he went. Because in the beginning, we got one letter from him to the ghetto.

And in the letter he said that he's very hungry, that he was building the [? bahnhof ?]. He was laying [? bahnhof ?]. How you called it in English?

Where the bahn is going. That's what he was working on. It was a very hard job. They had to carry this on their--

Rails?

Rails. He was working on the railroad. You see, I forget sometimes the words when I'm so-- and they were very hungry.

We should send them some [INAUDIBLE]-- this is the [INAUDIBLE] thing-- and something to eat. But we couldn't do anything anyway. The ghetto didn't let it out anything. That was right in the beginning, and that's where he died--

Do you know--

--on [INAUDIBLE].

Do you know, excuse me, if the camp where he was had a name? Or did you have any idea where he was working?

Oberschlesien. In Oberschlesien, how much was the workers, the DP workers, in a band of what they were building? It must have been one thing, one group. That's where he died, in Oberschlesien. People say him dead, yeah.

Tell me about reunions that you had with people that you knew before the war, other Jews that had survived.

The best reunion was when my sister came from Sweden. She had the typhoid in Bergen-Belsen. She ate that less-- and she ate up less bread, what they were giving them. Besides this, she had typhoid.

So she only had a piece of that bread and that soup, whatever was the poison there in Bergen-Belsen. When the American soldiers came in, she was laying dead, and they took her out, but she was still alive. And they took her, and they shipped her to Sweden for overhaul.

And over there, she got better, and better, and better. And then she came back to Lodz. That was the best thing, because we hide her. We didn't know what happened to her.

Either they threw her into that lake, what I say, or they took her to Bergen-Belsen. Because we knew when we're going to cross that lake, we're going to go to Bergen, if we're going to cross that lake. That was the lesson-- stop in that dead march, and we knew about it.

So we went away. She couldn't go with us. She-- we wait.

And that-- look, then I met a few Jewish people. And he said that that was the 500 Jews. Among those was my husband.

Now I'm going to ask you to explain about the 500.

My husband had a job in the ghetto. There was one trolley car in the ghetto, and he was the trolley car man. So he probably took me out to Auschwitz. [INAUDIBLE].

So when the ghetto was empty already, and these people who worked to clean up the ghetto were there, they couldn't take them out anymore. They maintained to clean the ghetto. That's how he went in, and he took out my brother lost that exhibit and other things.

But in the last minute, they wanted to kill all the 500 people. So they made hideout places for them, and they all were hidden. They didn't have time to kill them, because they had to run away. All the Germans had to run away, and that's how they were alive.

And we came back. He was alive. And I met him.

How? How did you meet him?

I met him. My sister knew his brother. Not Leo. The one other brother, the middle brother, what I say. He wasn't raised by Rumkowski.

She knew him from the ghetto. He had already occupied a German apartment in Lodz, because they ran away. So my sister went to him to live with him, and they got married right away.

In the meantime, I lived with her. When his brother came in, we married-- two brothers and two sisters. My sister is a Jacobson, and I'm a Jacobson.

When his brother came to visit him, he saw me. He was alone, too, and he wanted me very badly. But I had the Jewish upbringing. And I say, I cannot go with you until we get married.

So maybe after two weeks came a friend who knew to say something in Hebrew. [HEBREW] You know how you get married? And he married us.

And believe me, I didn't have a ring. I found a piece of tin, and that's how I got married. I had it for so long, but now I don't know where. I put it like this, and I married him.

Now I say, I could go with you to bed. It's not like my kids they do now. And I won't be ashamed of my mother. The whole thing was concentrated on my mother, because she was something. She was-- not even to talk about it-- came from such a family, my god.

Her father, my grandfather, I saw him once in my life. My grandfather, he lived in Kozhnitz with the Kozhnitz rabbi. He had such a beard.

He went out in the street with his tallit. And he told them they should kill him, and that's how he died. He never went to Auschwitz. He never was sick. They killed him, because he wanted to be killed.

And I remember his father. That was the Kozhnitz rabbi. I came once to Lodz, and I was a small little girl. And it was a line of people.

Every Jewish person in Lodz went to see the Kozhnitz rabbi. And when he saw, he heard, that Ita-- I talk about Ita, I have a daughter, my oldest child, her name is Ita-- that Ita is here, Ita [? Shienfeld ?]. He left everything and out and took my mother by hand. And I went with her, because I was the baby. She dragged me with her.

And he put this hand on her things. He blessed her. I'll never forget this. You could see only once [INAUDIBLE]. Like to say, that's old Rabbi [INAUDIBLE]-- what was his name-- that I blessed, he gave the-- you never saw in your life a child should go through what I saw. And how could they take her and burn her? She didn't do anything wrong, as you know and I know. I only cry when I talk about my mother, because there was so much respect for her-- there was so much.

[INAUDIBLE]

You told me that you had gotten married. What other steps did you take to build a life for yourself again after the war?

What should I tell you, I should reveal? I went to Germany. I went back to Germany.

I lived in [PLACE NAME]. This was Schlesien. And then I left everything, and I went to Germany, because my heart was to go to Palestine. As I mentioned, as a child, I belonged to Hanoar Hatzioni.

But the war broke out in Israel, and my husband came to Germany. We met again in Germany. I left him in Poland and went to Germany by myself.

And I became pregnant. My daughter was born in Germany in 1948. She was born. And I figured, what? I'm going to go.

I have a big family in Israel. My mother's sisters, brothers, were still alive. My mother's sisters still alive in Germany-- in Israel and Palestine.

They went to Palestine after World War I. We all was very big Zionists, very big Zionists. And when I was pregnant and the war broke out in Israel, but Leo went to Israel from Germany. And he wrote a letter to Germany, we should not come, because in Israel it's very bad, the situation is very bad.

People go to war. Who knows if he's not have to go to war. And we shouldn't come.

So we came right after this was an aliyah to come to America, to register to America. The Joint came, and I registered to America. And no sooner, we got the visas to come to America. So we came to America.

My husband had [INAUDIBLE]. She's dead. The uncle is dead, but he still has cousins, see. So we came to America. That's how we came.

When did you come to the United States?

The beginning of April, April 23. 1948, my daughter was born. As you know this, I was born April 23.

You want to hear something? My Stevie just got a baby seven months ago-- that's his first baby-- was born on his birthday. I have a son in San Francisco, Neal.

He adopted a child not knowing-- he took out the child from the hospital-- was born the same day on his birthday. And my daughter was born on my birthday. This is ironic for one family.

So I came to America, and I had a very big [INAUDIBLE] in America. I gave birth to a handicapped child, and I have a handicapped child in San Francisco-- severe handicap. But there's a lot of talk about Neal. His name is Neal Jacobson.

If you see him on television, if you see him in any place, he might going to come here. They wanted him to come here to work. He is-- would you like me to show you what he is?

Maybe later. Let's finish the interview first.

He is the vice president of the Wells Fargo banks. He finished Hofstra University, made Phi Beta Kappa. He's a genius in the United States. What kind of genius? Computers-- very high in computers.

I cannot tell you his life, because it has to take another tape. Because I'm going to tell you only my life. And I raised Neal by myself without a parent.

I had to get a child after what I went through. That was the biggest, biggest thing, but I'm glad for him. He's doing wonderful.

Where did you settle when you came to the United States?

New York. In New York. Yeah, in Coney Island, in Brooklyn.

How did you, your family, support yourself when you came?

My husband was a tailor, but he never wanted to go to tailoring. Because his uncle was a tailor, a [INAUDIBLE], in New York. And he wanted him in the worst way to teach him how to be a [INAUDIBLE]. But he told himself he'll

never be-- he worked in the ghetto, and he knew. He was in the ghetto, and he knew what it means to be a tailor.

He went with a [? scissor ?] to my uncle, and he find out in a supermarket. Not knowing English, they took him in-- a very fine person, that intelligent man. They took him in, and then we opened up a supermarket on [? Ramsey ?] Avenue.

And then we opened up a supermarket on Cropsey Avenue with a partner, and they made out very nicely. But he had a heart condition, and he had the first heart attack when he was 49 years old-- then the second heart attack and the third heard attack. By '59, he passed away, 1959-- 1979 he passed away.

Why would I say 1979? The first heart attack, he had 1949. And he passed away in 1959.

When you came to this country, did you get any help from any of the Jewish agencies?

The Joint helped me. I lived in Morrissey Hotel on Broadway, but a very short time, because we didn't want any help. And right away, he worried, and then we lived in New York. And it was OK. We made a living. Even if he made \$50 a week, we made a living.

I couldn't work, because I had a handicapped child. Then after this, I had Stevie, but I made necessary on Stevie. Due to not having a cesarean, my son was born with cerebral palsy. And if you know what cerebral palsy is, it's a brain damage.

When you first came to the United States, did anybody ask you about your experiences in Europe?

They did ask. They did ask, but the people were so nice when we came, so different from now. I don't know why they changed.

Everybody offered us help. We felt we could speak Jewish to them, because we didn't talk English, and they were very, very nice. I encountered warmth when I came here, and then I started to build up.

I came with a baby in my arms. She was 18 months old. And we build it up ourselves.

You said that they asked about your experiences in Europe. What did you tell them about what happened?

I didn't want to talk about it. I didn't want to talk about it. I wouldn't talk about it till now.

My daughter, she's a very-- she's a schoolteacher-- very, very intelligent personality, very nice. She lives in Long Island. You know Long Island. You know Sands Point-- very swell place.

She was a very delicate person. She saw me crying a lot, but she never asked. The only thing she asked that I have an aunt in Israel.

By the time I went-- because my husband had a heart attack very early. By the time I went to Israel, my aunt was that dead already, but I met all my cousins. We found our cousins through the registration, through the papers.

When it was the first gathering in Israel, that's when I went-- from the Holocaust survivors. That's when I went to Israel. And by that time, my cousins knew already that we are alive, because they found out. They were looking for us.

And then I had a little family. I still have a little family in Israel. Some of them died already, but I still have a nice little family. Since then, I was already four times [INAUDIBLE].

What did you tell your children about your childhood and your life in Europe?

When there were small, when they were small, I didn't talk about it. When they start to-- oh, there is blinking. When they start to ask about-- well, after all, I had once a mother and a father. They knew already about the World War II.

So once they knew about the World War II, they didn't want to hurt me. They didn't talk until my daughter saw a magazine. And she summoned me via at breakfast. And she said to me, now, sit down. I want to know everything.

I say, there were times when you didn't want to. You only knew when I said, I was once so hungry. You eat everything what I'm cooking. Don't you throw away a bite.

Because I was-- till today, they talk about it. My mother was hungry. You have to eat everything. Then they start to realize.

But the most interested who was in the Holocaust was my handicapped son, the most interested. He's an extremely intelligent person. I told you, he finished Hofstra University.

Now, he's going to go back to Berkeley. He did some work for Berkeley. What was the work? They have to change the computers now. You know what's going on with the 2000, so Berkeley ask him to come.

And they wanted to pay him. He doesn't want it. So he's going for his doctorate. They're not going to charge him anything.

What made you decide to tell your story and give your testimony now?

My son. I never wanted to do-- I never want to leave anything. My son now says that I have a friend, and you're going to be here, and you was in the museum already. And you know, I want to have a tape. I want my children to hear the tape.

And that's what makes me say yes. Till now, I refused everything. I'm going to show you telephones like this. I refused, because I cannot take it, no.

Is there anything that you'd like to add before we conclude? Anything that we didn't talk about that you would like to talk about?

I hope this will never repeat in future, future generations what we went through. I hope this is a lesson for the whole world. They should never forget. Although, there's a lot of atrocity going around now still in the world.

And I hope we'll never lose Israel. Because if we would have Israel at that time, it could have happened, but not in such a scale. Everybody turned away their ears. Nobody saw, nobody heard about it, which was wrong. Everybody saw, and everybody knew about it. That's what we know now, but we didn't know then.

And that is my hope. My children, and new children, and all the children will never see and hear something like this.

I want to thank you for speaking with us today.

Thank you, because let them have that tape. Let my children have that tape.

And this will conclude our interview today. Thank you very much.