

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Ruth Rosicka**  
**October 22, 1993**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audiotaped interview with Ruth Rosicka conducted on October 22, 1993 by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's volunteer collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

**RUTH ROSICKA**  
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**Beginning Tape One, Side A**

Question: – please to tell me your name.

Answer: My name is **Ruth Rosicka**. I am born in **Czechoslovakia** on the 13<sup>th</sup>  
August, 1919.

Q: Where?

A: [**indecipherable**] Nowice(ph)

Q: Okay.

A: **Nowice**(ph), that means in German is [**indecipherable**]

Q: Could you tell me a few words about your experience as a child, about your  
family, about your school years?

A: Yes. My – I've lived only – I lived like a small girl, the **Czechoslovakia** with  
my parents and we were – we went to **Poland** to **Bielsko-Biala**. My father was  
coming from – from there. My mother was coming from **Czechoslovakia**. And my  
father has been an engineer of electro(ph), but he had the small – a small fabric –  
fabric –

Q: Factory.

A: Yeah, factory, a small factory of [**indecipherable**] with a companion, and he  
was very much working for the Zionists.

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Q: Could you tell me please which is the year when your family left from – from **Czechoslovakia to Poland?**

A: It's – it's funny, but I don't know quite – because –

Q: What year?

A: Yes, I think I have been three years, because in **Nowice(ph)** now we are living, the – the parents of my mother and we were coming very often to them. So I always was between **Bielsko-Biala** and **Nowice(ph)**.

Q: At what kind of school did you go?

A: I was going in a public school in – in Jewish, with the langu – five classes in **Bielsko**. The language was German, in German. And afterwards I was going to the Polish gymnasium and only there I have – I could not go speak – go and speak Polish before I think, only with the – the children on the – on the street, because my parents in my di – the family of my parents, we were speaking German. But I have learned as a child Hebrew for – for – for many years, yes, because my father was very, very engaged, and wanted to send me and to go with – for this – to send the children to **Pales – Palestine**.

Q: Tell me please, how were your relations with the – with Polish children?

A: Not much. I would say that in **Bielsko** there were very many Jews – Jews. And I was going to the Jewish public school and my friends were all Jewish.

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Q: How about the gymnasium?

A: The gymnasium, it was mixed, but we were ever [**indecipherable**] with the Jewish students.

Q: Tell me please a – a few words about the first days of the war and how this impacted on the life of your family.

A: Yes, 15 days, I think two weeks before the first September where the war were **beginning** – beginning, or begun, we went off of **Bielsko**, we – because in **Bielsko** were very many German, and g – was going to **Kraków**. And **Bielsko** has been in the first days – the German army has been in **Bielsko**. In **Kraków** – they came later to **Kraków**. And the war began at the first September with bombing. We ish – we tried at once to run away, it was with my parents, it's a – it's a [**indecipherable**] and it was a – a very – the – the German were coming and bomb – bombardier very much. It was dreadful. It was my first experience of a war at all. So then we were running away, at the beginning with train. Afterwards the trains were not going more. We were going – my father bought a – a horse and cart and we were going away. And we were coming til after the river **San**, and there we were very tired. For many days and nights we are going, running. And then we –

Q: So river **San** was a border between –

A: Yes. It was not yet.

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Q: It was not –

A: Yes. But afterwards we were – we were very tired, we stayed in a small village in – between woods. And then we heard that the Russian are coming, and we went back to **Kraków**. And that was September, because clearly I don't know quite sure what date it was, of course, but I think it's the second half of September, we were again in ro – in **Kraków**. We saw all the **blitzkrieg**, all the poen – the Polish soldiers are very – very tougher, yes, but they had nothing. And in **Kraków** we were living. To **Bielsko** you could not go again. **Bielsko** was occupied all, we lived at once. At the beginning we lived in the flat of my – of my aunt. She lived in **Kraków** with her children, and afterwards some – some friends of my father, which were – who were going out o-of the way, I don't know where, they – we could live in their flat. And so I – I was under the German occupation til the 17<sup>th</sup> November. We have been – we have been in **Kraków** and my father was very engaged in the **[indecipherable]** already, in the Zionist organizations. He was known with **Weizmann**, I know, I remember that he was corresponding with him and was doing very much and was very known, and now known in – in **Israel**, too. And his name was engineer **[indecipherable]**. And I wanted to go away from the occupied **Kraków**, and I was 20 years old, just t – 20 years. And my father brang – and I was going to **Lvov**. Of course, it was through the river **San**, it was in the night, it was

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waiting for many days there, with the refugees. And the Ukrainians were thi – taking all our things. And then we came one night through th-the river and on the other side of the river it was night, of course, and it's dark, we had to wait,

**[indecipherable]** the morning was coming and then found us the Soviets, okay?

And they took us together in one school, I think, or something in wi – in a little village on the **Oder**, and was – and were interviewing every of us. And I – many people which they were – how to say it? **[speaks foreign language here]** they sent away into – into lager, yes. And I – I remember that I had no s – I had no idea what it all is, I was very stupid, I think. And I was sitting in a – on an interview, too, and – and I – and a – an interview and such a small officer with eyes, a Mongol or something else, yes, was interviewing with me and I said all how it was and how – where I am coming – going and so on. The only thing he – I – I remember I had some chocolate from **Switzerland**, some small types. Every type has some

**[indecipherable]** and some yes, and ha – he said to me, opened of course my

**[indecipherable]** say, a-and asked – like a child he was, he asked what is it, and I said this is chocolate and wanted to give him or to taste it. No, he didn't na – take

anything. And this was very funny because he had in – at his side was a

gramophone, an old – with such a – how i-it – with this old, like trumpet, you know, and I-I think he had seen it – it for the first time in his life, and he was – all the time

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he was interviewing, it was playing some music. So – and then I was going with some young peoples, unknown peoples who were always gether – toge – tog – gether – together with [indecipherable] are a Jew. And we are coming with train to **Lemberg**, the – the station **Lemberg** was quite [indecipherable] and then I came to – to some friends of my father and so on, but we didn't – they were not interested in me. They were glad when I went out of their flat, when I have slept there one night. And then I was working as – as a – as a help in some household with children and so on because I had no money. Yes, but I ha – was feeling pretty – I was always these few months under German, it was dreadful and also there was – had not been **SS** yet, there had been only **SR** in **Kraków** in this time. And interesting is that my father had sent for me in – it could be April or May, I don't know what, one man to bring me back to **Kraków** because he had the hope that we were get, very soon, papers to go out.

Q: This – this was April or May 1941, correct?

A: N-N-No.

Q: No?

A: '40.

Q: '40.

A: Yeah.



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Q: Okay.

A: '39 and April, May '40.

Q: All – all right, '40.

A: And I know afterwards I heard now in **Israel** is his sa – is his **[indecipherable]** of my father and my cousin that it – it was too late. They – they tried to get him to **Israel** with the family, but it was too late. And I didn't want to go back with this man. I – I – and – and at – and at – I think it was J-June or July? The end of June, they said Russians were coming to the night in the trains for – for **[indecipherable]** and bring us very many people with children and – and families an-and – and **[indecipherable]** very, very far away. The people had been in **Ural**, in **Yakutskaya**(ph) and so on.

Q: So – so basically, the Soviets took the refugees –

A: Yes.

Q: – in June, July 1940 –

A: Yes.

Q: – and they deported them –

A: Yes.

Q: – to **[indecipherable]**

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A: It was **Siberia**, it was **Ural**, it was [indecipherable] **Mariskaya** [indecipherable] that means that is on the [indecipherable] the **Volga**. It means **Volga** [indecipherable], yes. And there was – we were in a camp where – where Russian men, workers, working only in the summer [indecipherable] and so on. And they brought us to this camp, and we were there. It was – we were under [speaks foreign language] that's about 10 kilometer ride, 12 kilometer ride, maybe [speaks foreign language]

Q: Now let's switch back to English please.

A: Back to English. And we could not leave the camp without **allowness**, yes, mi – leave, that means only 10 kilometers because we have some things from [indecipherable] yet, and we could exchange for water, for something, or for honey, yes. But it was no possible to escape there. We – for there were hundred and hundred kilometers only of wood. And –

Q: Forests, yeah.

A: Forests, only of forests. And we were – always we had then one commandant and [indecipherable] and two [indecipherable] who were looking for us, yes, and the men who – who were going far into there, to tens kilometer and so in the forest, they were always under the [indecipherable] yes. And when the war – when the

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war began between **Germany** and the Russians, means '41, they amnestied us, and we could go – could go away.

Q: So where – where did you go?

A: And I was going with a group of young people to the south. We had no allowed to go where we wanted, yes. We had always to say we were going this way and we had some paper for it, and – but we have to – yes, to go on farther, again paper and so on. And see, we were going because in the camp has been til minus 35 degrees **Celsius**. We go – we had to walk in the forest and pi – and there were sometimes even minus – minus 52. And – and we were going to the south with the – with the **[indecipherable]** it was the **Sava** river to **Volga**, with **Volga** to **Astrahan**(ph). In **Astrahan**(ph) we waited for a couple of days, waited for the ship, the ship brought us to **Akras Novotski**(ph). That is **Turmenskaya**(ph) as I said. **Akras Novotski**, we're going to **Tarshken**(ph), from in – near from **Tarshken**(ph) we were walk – working in a – in a **sofhaus**(ph), in a – in a uze -- **Uzbaken**(ph). **Sofhaus**(ph) for vinegre – for the grapes, yes, for the harvest of the grapes and afterwards we were – were going on and we are coming to – to south **Kazakhstan**. And there I was in south **Kazakhstan** til – til I get the – til I go to the army. To army to **Buzalok**(ph).

Q: So you were drafted into which army, please?

A: I was drafting which – Czechoslovak army –

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Q: And this was when?

A: – army. I was grounded in **Buzalok(ph)**, yes.

Q: Where was this –

A: In Russian, it's **Samaria**.

Q: **Samara**.

A: **Samara**, mm-hm.

Q: [**indecipherable**] and which was the year?

A: That was – I was coming to the army in – in October, 16<sup>th</sup> October, '43.

Q: Who was the commander of the army?

A: Then that was **Dutchkarl(ph)** that was – I have been so – I have been at the reserve, at the beginning and I was working in the medical, yes. And in the medical was Dr. **Winter(ph)** and **Dutchkarl(ph)** was the chief there of – of – of – that was not of the whole brigade, this was of our – of our reserve.

Q: I understand. He was the commander of the whole brigade?

A: The whole brigade, it all, of the whole army was General [**indecipherable**]

Q: All right. So you –

A: It was not brigade because every brigade had his own, then I have been at the [**indecipherable**] brigade. At the second brigade, that was General **Shikril(ph)**, but [**indecipherable**] was commander of all the brigades.

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Q: All right. So what happened next?

A: Next we were going – I have – had been to – trained for a soldier, yes, and in – in January '44, we were going to **Yefraimov**(ph). That's [indecipherable] near of the town **Tula**(ph). [indecipherable] town and there we were working, following our – yes, that's – that's difficult, that [indecipherable] for – were coming very many Slovaks who were work – who work in the [indecipherable] on the side of the – of – of the front, yes, and went over the front to the Russian. And the Russian had examine – examined them and – and – and then – and then they sent them to **Yefraimov**(ph). And that was the beginning of the second brigade of par-parachute, yes. It had the – their [indecipherable]. And I was in the medical section too, but not in the brigade yet. I met my husband in – in [indecipherable] and he had going to **Yefraimov**(ph) too, so we were together [indecipherable]. You wanted to be together, it was possible not to live together, but to be near. And from – he ha – he had [indecipherable] parachute [indecipherable] and afterwards we were going in – we were going in – now something is obviously not clear, ni – from **Yefraimov**(ph) we were going in the summer to brus – no, no, no, no, in May, to **Bruskurov**(ph). Let's see, today is [indecipherable] on the 29<sup>th</sup> June, I – I got married. I got married on the **vax**(ph). That's – that's on the registration and was that – allowing of the – of the brigade, it was brigade. They said we are allowed that

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– that – to go marry. It was funny, of course, I had no gown, I had nothing. Oh – had no nice shoes, no nice **hosen**, the – the girls borrowed it to me because I always was small and they had no that's so small [**indecipherable**] enough for me. And then from **Bruskurov**(ph) there was no training more parachute. It was too near of the front. There was much bombing, too. And then we were going – we were – they were ta – taking us to pole – it's not **Poland** [**indecipherable**] to – to the **Carpaths**(ph).

Q: To the **Carpathian** mountains.

A: **Carpathian** Mounties, yes, to the front. And we have been between it, we have been in **Shaymasil**(ph) yes, that's on the river **San**. And afterwards, from **Shaymasil**(ph) the soldiers, we were all by feet going to – to the mountains. And we have been in – in – it was [**indecipherable**] the – the – the reserves, the medical [**indecipherable**] we were – have been there only for 10 days, I think. And then we – they take us – at the six October, we were flying to Soviet camp. Once got the [**indecipherable**] it wasn't – not the – it just was [**indecipherable**] that is near – ria – near [**indecipherable**]. And there we were landing, we were not going with parachutes down. We are in – even had no parachutes with us in the plane. We were landing and then our boys were going to – to fight again. And – but it was – there was well, this w-were the last – one of the last weeks that it – the German had

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become – the Slovaks had called for the German to come because there was no German army in **Slovakia** [indecipherable] are not occupied, yes? They were coming and going and – and – and – but this – but this were not occupation. And they came to – and struggled down yes, and we were going at the 28<sup>th</sup> of October already, we're going into the mountains. It was a – we was going through [indecipherable] **Donavalli**(ph).

Q: Why did you go into the mountains? Can you – can you explain why did you go into – into the mountains? What was the main reason?

A: Yes, we had to – we – we – were going organized, because the whole brigade was going, because we had to go to – to – to join with th-the – the fight in the mountains. We could not go – we could not – we – be in **Slovakia** no more.

Q: Because the Germans were advancing?

A: Yes, of course, the wer – Germans were, of course.

Q: And how long did you stay in the mountains?

A: In the mountains I was staying til the end of February. I think it was the **twentieth**.

Q: February 1945.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what happened after?

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A: And after, after the brigade was gathering together and going to **Kashmarok**(ph) that's in – in eastern **Slovakia** and I get ill in **Kashmarok**(ph), I was very – was very hot, I got ill. And I – my – ma – end of the war was – when the war was ending, I was in the high **patra** in **Markiati**(ph) because they send me to – to – to be healthy again, so –

Q: What happened to you after the war?

A: Yes, after the war, we were, at the beginning in [**indecipherable**] and afterwards we came to **Moroskot Shabawa**(ph). My husband – I alre – I was yet in the uniform, and in **Moroskot Shabawa**(ph) in May '45, the – I – I went out of the army. I didn't want to end because I was in – I was pregnant. I did not know, what I did not know they had – that they have no right to leave me out when I am pregnant, because I had to end my pregnancy in this job I had at that time. And then was born my son in September '46. And my husband was going afterwards il – in '48, in – was my husband said – my husband stayed in the army. He wanted not to stay, but they said it's your – you should. Yes, we need you and so on and so on. And he was sent at March, I think, '48 to study in **Kalanin**(ph) in the **Soviet Union**, that was for [**indecipherable**] high school. And I was with my son, we went to **Prague**. W-We went to **Prague**. We – I've – I had friends in **Prague**, we had the



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flat and I was with my son these three years alone, you only come twice a year to a short [**indecipherable**] and –

Q: Thank you very much.

**End of Tape One, Side A**

**Conclusion of Interview**