

**Interview with Helen Goldkind**  
**February 21, 2001**

**Beginning Tape One, Side A**

Question: This is the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goldkind**, conducted by **Gail Schwartz** on February 21, 2001 in **Bethesda, Maryland**. This interview is part of the museum's project to interview Holocaust survivors and witnesses who are also volunteers with the museum. This is a follow up interview that will focus on **Helen Goldkind's** post-Holocaust experiences. In preparation for this interview, I read the detailed summaries of the interview you conducted with the Jewish Community Council of Greater **Washington** on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1985 on audio, and the video **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1990. I will not ask you to repeat everything you said in those interviews. Instead, I will use this interview as an opportunity to follow up and focus on your post-Holocaust experiences. This is tape number one, side **A**. What is your full name?

Answer: My name is **Helen Goldkind**.

Q: And your maiden name?

A: Was **Helen Lebowitz**.

Q: And where were you born?

A: I was born in **Czechoslovakia** in a small town by -- **Volosyanka**.

Q: And when were you born?

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A: I was born in 1928, July the ninth.

Q: You've already gone in detail in your previous interview, so before we begin, I will summarize some o-of your experiences. You came from a large, religiously observant family, of which you were the sixth of seven children, and you had many extended relatives. When the Germans occupied the town in 1944, you and your family were forced into a ghetto and then after one or two months transported by cattle car to **Auschwitz**. You and your sister **Sylvia**, who was three and a half years older than you were in **Auschwitz** for five weeks. And the other members there of your family did not survive. Then with a group of 1,000 girls, you and **Sylvia** were taken to **Germany** to work in an ammunition factory, being exposed to the burning gun powder. You were then transported to **Bergen-Belsen** where you were liberated by the British on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Before we continue, I'd like to clarify some things. How would you describe yourself as a child? This is, of course, before the war. Were you very independent, were you physically strong? How would you -- what would you say you were?

A: Well, I think I was very strong and that probably saved my life when I got to **Auschwitz**.

Q: Were you very independent?

A: Well, when you're in a family of seven, you got to be independent.

Q: Did you have a close relationship with your sister **Sylvia** before the war?

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A: Yes. We were a close-knit family. I was very close to my whole family.

Q: Mm-hm. And with your parents, before conditions got worse, were they the kind of people that you could talk things over with?

A: Absolutely. Now looking back on it, I think my parents were trying to hide many things from me, that things will get better. I mean, I remember when they were saying, honey, don't worry. Things will get better.

Q: When **Hitler** came into power in 1933 and until the Germans occupied your -- your country, did your life change in any way? Preceding the time that the Germans occupied your town.

A: Well, **Czechoslovakia** became **Hungaria** in 1939. It had changed somewhat, but not to the extent what has happened in 19 f -- when the Germans came.

Q: So life went on for you, relatively the same?

A: Not the same at all. Was not --

Q: What -- what were some of the changes?

A: Well, I think the Jewish kids did not have the same opportunity going to school as the non-Jewish kids, where -- and I lived under the Czechs, my uncle was a Czech officer, and after we'll be finished with this interview, I'll show you a picture of him. So th-that -- that we lost. And we started sort of educating ourselves on our own. What happened was we were allowed to go to school, but we wal -- we had to sit in the back and we were never called on. So what my father did is he

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got a -- a teacher and we -- we s -- he -- he -- he was teaching us. And after awhile, the whole communities, you know, the Jewish kids came to our house. So when a -  
- I think back, I feel like our house became the school, actually.

Q: What was it like for you as a young person to experience anti-Semitism? What did it mean to you as a young child?

A: Well, when you're young you don't understand a lot of things. Here you had friends today and tomorrow you lost them, and you wondered why. And that was very painful for me.

Q: And did you talk this over with your -- your siblings or your parents?

A: We did. We constantly talked about it because we worried about it. But we were always living in hope that things will get better, but they didn't get better, they got worse.

Q: Did you know earlier that -- what was happening to the Jews in other countries, before the germ -- like all of this is before the German occupation of your town. Did you know what was happening?

A: Well, you know, we had a radio and that was taken away from us. So people, some people took a chance in keeping their radios, but you could have been punished for it. So we gave our radio away. But there was some people took the -- a chance on keeping it, so during the night they would be listening to the news. So

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the news would come through, but we -- we -- we couldn't understand, we didn't understand how severe the tragedy was.

Q: Did you have any other interests? You were still young, but besides school, did you -- music or reading, anything th-that you did to occupy your time besides schoolwork?

A: Constantly reading. Matter of fact, I loved books and well, actually our house al-always was full of books. And I had a little brother, he was six years old, and he had a little book, they called it "**All of Base,**" it's a **ABC** book and poor kid, he was carrying this book with him until he came to **Auschwitz** and they told him to throw this little book into a -- the -- the pit there. It was very difficult for him, he cried a lot about it, but --

Q: And when it was time for you to have to wear a yellow star, what were your feelings about that?

A: My feelings were awful. I feared for every minute. At that time, no matter how my parents wanted to protect me, it just was right there in front of me. I could no longer -- I'll -- I'll never forget that. I -- my uncle gave me a quarter to go and get myself ice cream, to a place where I used to go and get this ice cream, it was a big treat for a child. And I got there -- at a certain time, we couldn't walk out of the house, I believe it was between five and six. And I got there, they told me they

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cannot sell me the ice cream because I was a Jewish child. Came home crying and I didn't understand it. So the pain was there.

Q: So what do older relatives say to children your age to comfort them?

A: Pardon me?

Q: You -- wha-what did your relatives say to comfort you when these things happened?

A: There was very little to comfort me because everything was staring in my face. How -- what could they say to me when a little kid comes home crying they didn't get a ice cream, even though I had my quarter. It was -- it was sad.

Q: Yeah. Was the yellow star sewn on your coat, or pinned?

A: Yes. No, on my arm.

Q: It -- it was an armband?

A: An armband, yes.

Q: While you were in the camps, you had said that your sister kept you going.

Where do you think she got her strength from? What do you attribute that to?

A: Well, when we parted in **Auschwitz**, I don't know if I should mention **Auschwitz**, how we parted. Can I an --

Q: Absolutely.

A: Well, when we got to **Auschwitz**, we came with the whole family and my -- you know, my parents -- but the two older brothers were taken away already for

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work, to s-s -- t -- t-to the Russian front where they were picking mines. And my father, and I had an older sister, and she took care of my grandmother, and my grandfather came and my little brother and my mother and my sister that survived. In **Auschwitz** they pushed my mother with my sister because she looked fairly young, but they pulled my little brother out of her hand. So my mother heard him cry, so she ran back to him and pleaded with the Germans to -- to let her go with my little brother and they beat her up, and after she was bleeding, and they kicked her into the left lane. And she was screaming, please tell the world what is happening to us, if you survive. Try to survive. Actually her words were like that, try to survive, and if you do, tell the world what happened here. And of course, you know, my grandfather also had a terrible experience there. I don't know if I can go on talking about it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Can I talk about it?

Q: Whatever you wish.

A: Okay. Well, my grandfather came -- well, they took him from home. He -- he had the Torah scroll with him, because when they closed our synagogues, he managed to take out a Torah scroll. So our house became a school and I think his house became a house of worship. And when they told us we have to leave the house, he took the Torah scroll with him. And when we got to **Auschwitz**, he came

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down from the train with this Torah scroll and they made -- they -- they told him to -- to throw the Torah scroll into the ditch and he wouldn't do that, so you know, he -- they were beating on him and we ran over to him and pleaded with him, please, please throw the Torah scroll down and he just wouldn't do it and they kept on beating on him and then th -- they really -- you know, they beat him to death and right in front of us he fell with the Torah scrolls, and -- so we saw this tragedy right in front of us, and I think in -- that's what f -- then they took my grandfather and they threw him in a truck. And I think she kept that in mind all the time, that she needs -- she has a need to tell this to someone. And that -- I think that -- that made her stronger, to say I have to survive to tell it to someone what happened, because I don't think they'll believe it.

Q: Were there any other examples of women helping other women in the camp while you were there? Can you -- do you know of any other situations? Your sister, of course, helped you. Did you see that relationship between any other women, or other women to you?

A: Well, you must understand, when people are put in a situation where survival is the only thing, so it was very difficult to help each other because we were all in the same boat, with the same thing. But we -- we did try. You know, if we saw somebody fainted we were there for them, of course. But there was nothing we really can do to help them, they probably, you know, they were fainting out of



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hunger or -- or weakness. And it was -- it was very, very difficult. It wasn't that one had more than the other to be able to help each other, it wasn't like that. When my sister tried keeping me alive when I was giving up, she just gave away her little piece of bread. You know, she like bribed me, sort of, to -- to want to -- to want to surv -- you know, that I should survive. But I -- I -- I think what happened to me, I emotionally did not want to do it any more. And a -- and a -- of course, I was very weak because I had to work so hard in the munition factory.

Q: Mm-hm. When you were in -- in the camps, did you talk about what was going on with the other women, outside of your sister?

A: We saw it. We were right there with them, we were in one barrack.

Q: But I meant, did you exchange feelings with each other, the other women?

A: I think everybody was just numb, and everybody -- everybody just didn't understand what is happening because we -- we weren't treated as human beings any more. So --

Q: Were you with women from your town, or were you with women from other town -- towns and villages when you were in **Auschwitz**?

A: When I was in **Auschwitz**, the time when I was in **Auschwitz**, I was there with a lady and my next door neighbor and her daughter. And I don't remember, somebody else there. But then when they took us to work they took them someplace else and they took me and my sister someplace else.

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Q: What -- what was the -- or -- the name of the munitions factory? Do you know where -- where in **Germany** it was, or what the name was?

A: I really don't. I should really find out because it'll -- probably I have to -- I -- I -  
- I -- I've -- I'm going to try to find out where it was, but I don't think it was far from **Bergen-Belsen**. It wasn't far from **Bergen-Belsen**, but I don't reme -- I-I just don't know, you know. I don't know.

Q: Now, you were almost 17 years old when you were liberated by the British. Did you know what those tanks meant when you saw them at the time of -- the British tanks? What -- what did it mean to you to see them?

A: Well -- well let me tell you first what position we were in. We -- we were full of life, we were thrown in with other people that were half dead, and i -- I was burned up from the m -- from -- from the **spring** stuff. From the gunpowder, or whatever, I -- I remember it was yellow and very hot and while I was filling these bombs, you know, of course some of it went on top of me. So we were really like half dead. But my sister, you know, she noticed them first. And I sa -- you know, so she tells me, you know, there are some tanks out there and they don't look like they're German tanks. So I said to her, you know, maybe this is the end and things will be better. So she says, it'll be probably be better for the world, but for us it's too late. So when the Germans came, we really didn't have the strength to be happy and --

Q: When the British came, yeah.

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A: When the British came, that my -- yeah. They came a little bit too late for me -- actually for a lot of people. My -- when they came my sister was already sick in that room, I remember she was delirious. And then the British opened up the barracks, and when they looked into the barracks, it was terrible because they wouldn't let us out to the bathrooms. Everybody was doing everything they needed at -- in the barracks and a lot of them were very sick. It just -- they opened -- they probably thought it was worse -- it was -- really was worse than a crazy house. So they were asking us what they can do for us, and they tried very hard to help us, but as I said, it was a little too late. They took my sister and I didn't know where she -- they took her. So she didn't return a few days, I went out to look for her because at that time -- after the English came in they posted names who died in **Bergen-Belsen** and I couldn't find her. But the sight I've seen in **Bergen-Belsen** I still have nightmares about it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: These big mountains of -- of corpse and everything. Anyway, I couldn't find my sister's name, but in the meantime I fell somewhere there on the street. I -- I don't remember how they picked me up and how I got to the hospital. They took me to the hospital but I don't remember nothing of that. **[phone ringing]**

Q: What languages did you speak then? What -- what did you understand? Did you understand German at that point, or English?

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A: No, we spoke -- we spoke j -- Yiddish and Czech.

Q: So when the British came, you did not understand them.

A: No, I -- we didn't. No, I didn't. But -- but you know, you could see that they wanted to help us.

Q: How could you tell?

A: Oh, because they acted different than the Nazis did.

Q: In what way?

A: They acted like human beings, where the Nazis acted like they were monsters, in every which way. In every which way.

Q: Did you, at the -- at that point think about going back to your hometown?

A: Not when I got sick, when -- I-I was in **Bergen-Belsen** for a few weeks in the hospital because I got typhoid, it's a high fever, and --

Q: What was your physical condition at the time of liberation?

A: Horrible. It wa -- you know, I -- best to describe me as I looked like a skeleton with a heartbeat. I mean, in a short -- it was awful the way I looked like. You know, I weighed -- I don't even know how much I weigh -- I -- I was like a skeleton taken out of the earth.

Q: Di-Did you know what you looked like? Could -- did you ever see yourself?

A: Of course, I-I was so weak, I couldn't -- I couldn't breathe, I couldn't eat, I mi -  
- I mean I couldn't eat, and I was sick, you know, I got sick. Got sick. I don't even

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remember how I got to the hospital, I just fell there fro -- on the street and what happened was the ambulances were going around the s -- these s -- the street -- on the streets and whoever, yet whoever's heart was beating, even though they looked like they are dead, they were picking them up and trying to save them. And so I wound up in the hospital and I-I just -- after many, many weeks -- I remember asking for my sister, not for my family, because I -- I was just heartbroken that she was tr -- you know, she didn't want to s -- she would tell me that I have to survive because she doesn't want to stay -- be alone. And after all that, I found myself alone. So I was crying all the time and they asked me why -- you know, I'm crying. I says, I had a sister and she died here and I wa -- in **Bergen-Belsen**. So they really put an effort in to look whether she's dead or she's someplace. And you know, they found her in another hospital. They had these makeshift hospitals and she was very weak and I was very weak and sick, but they put us together.

Q: What was that like to -- to get together with her again?

A: It was like giving someone life, because I again didn't think [indecipherable] surviving. You know, even though I was liberated, I still -- because I knew what happened. I -- I didn't want to believe it too much, but we knew already what happened, so --

Q: You were saying that your sister **Sylvia** had said that you, **Helen**, had to stay alive because she didn't want to be alone. Can you talk a little more about that?

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A: Well, one day I just didn't want to go out to the **c'est l'appel** because I just didn't have the strength and it was cold. So I was laying there and she saw not getting up, she lifted me up and she started shaking me. So I thought that she went crazy or something. And she says, you know, you're not going to leave me alone. And because she knew by the time she would come back, I -- they would do away with me. And I got up and I went to the **c'est l'appel** and she was trying to hold onto me so I shouldn't collapse out there and dragged me to work and then she came to help me out. She was running back and forth and I didn't think she'll survive, you know, to help me a little bit, hard job. And that's how it went.

Q: Before the war, did you -- di-did she exhibit these -- this strength that she had during the war, in any way? Were there any situations pre-war that she showed how strong she was?

A: Ye -- I think she -- she -- she did show some strength, but I really don't think that that would have kept her alive. I think it's the idea of what she saw and the message from my mother, I think that kept her alive. I -- I really think so, cause I saw stronger people and just not the su -- not survive.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. So when you and she were together, did you talk about going back home?

A: In the hospital?

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: We didn't know what we want to do. But what happened was the Swedish Red Cross agreed on taking in the very sick ones to **Sweden** and we were lucky and we were picked because we were very sick. And then when we got to **Sweden**, I -- there was another shocker, for me anyway, because I think I almost lost my o -- belief in humanity. And when they took over, I -- again, I hate to repeat myself, I looked like -- I still looked like a skeleton because I was so sick, and they nurtured me, they bathed me, they fed me, I had no strength to eat. And I was looking at them that maybe they're not on this earth, they -- they -- that they -- they just came from heaven or something. It's hard to describe. It is very hard to describe my feeling when I got to **Sweden**. I -- every time, every day I get up, I bless them, cause you know, I -- I think that if I would have to take care of myself and I would have a normal life, I wouldn't want to take of me, because the way I looked.

Q: When -- before you left for **Sweden**, had you and your sister ever talked about going to **Palestine**? Did -- was that something important to you or your family?

A: Well, the f -- the things that I remember in **Europe**, they had the **chalutzim**, they called these kids **chalutzim**, but don't forget, we were -- I-I was next to the youngest, which was six years old and then she was, so my father was trying to get the older ones to i -- to **Israel**, but i-i-i -- you know, it was closed. Y-You had to wait for a quota, you know. Ou-Ou-Our -- our life was like, you know, they -- how

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shall I say? There was no place to go. Even we knew the horrible things, but there was nothing to do and no place to go.

Q: Had your parents, pre-war, been strong Zionists?

A: Yes, they have. Even though they were religious, but they have, yeah, yeah.  
Yeah.

Q: So, let's talk a little bit about **Sweden** now. So there you are with your sister.

Are you with anybody else that you knew, pre-war or during the war?

A: Yeah, it was so funny. I was in **Sweden** -- wi -- the [indecipherable] I-I -- when I was in be -- I have to backtrack a little. When I was in **Bergen-Belsen** looking for my -- for my sister, I saw a man that was pulled by the ankles, because they thought he was dead. And I took a look at him and I -- it looked like my cousin, and I was yelling to him, **Freddie, Freddie** and he opened up his eyes. But of course then I collapsed, I don't remember anything. So when I saw my sister, I says, you know, I -- **Freddie** is alive and he -- he -- I saw him **Bergen-Belsen**, they were pulling him on that mountain with the dead. She says, oh, you were sick, you don't know what you're talking about. So at this point I really don't know whether it was **Freddie** or it wasn't **Freddie**. He was the one that was very sick and they took him to **Sweden** too, and we met him there in **Sweden**.

Q: What -- what was it like to see another member of your family?



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A: Oh, you -- you wouldn't believe that. His name was **Milbauer** and our name was **Lebowitz**. So when we met him, we were so scared that we're going to be separated again that he says, I'm going to become **Lebowitz** and they're not going to separate me. So what happened was he became **Lebowitz**, he says he is **Lebowitz** and we were there together as **Lebowitz's**. But then my sister found me in the papers in -- in **Brooklyn**. They took our names and they asked us whether we have anybody out of **Europe** and I knew I had a sister. So, she found us in the papers, but --

Q: When had this -- what was your sister's name in **Brooklyn**?

A: My sister's name in **Brooklyn**, **Arler**. But wi -- she was mar --

Q: Her first -- her first name?

A: First name was **Frances**.

Q: And -- and when did **Frances** leave to go to the **United States**?

A: Just before the war in 1938. I had an uncle there and we were begging to be, you know, taken out, but he didn't want to -- you know, he couldn't take out nine people, because it was -- you know, it was very difficult. So he took my sister out.

**End of Tape One, Side A**

**Beginning Tape One, Side B**

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goldkind**. This is tape number one, side

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**B.** And you were talking about how your sister was in **Brooklyn**, and you and your -- and you and your sister **Sylvia** was in -- were in **Sweden**.

**A:** Right. So then she sent us affidavits. Now here is the problem with my cousin, bec -- he -- he was **Lebowitz** and he had a -- a -- a aunt in -- i -- also in **Brooklyn**. So her name was **Milbauer**. So there was a big problem because he had to change his name in **Sweden** to **Milbauer** in order for them to send an affidavit. So he remained in **Sweden** for awhile, and then that aunt of his sent him an affidavit and he came out to the **United States**.

**Q:** When you were in **Sweden**, and you were with other survivors who were being taken care of the way you were being taken care of, did you and they talk about what your wartime experiences were? Did you share with others what you and your family had gone through while you -- during the war, while you were in **Sweden**?

**A:** Actually no, because -- I didn't talk about it for a long time. It was very difficult. It was very, very, very difficult. And then when we were in **Sweden** a-- after we were in that sanitarium, I -- we felt better, of course. They fed us and they made u -- you know, they gave us dark beer, I remember. A -- you know, just to gain some weight. And then we got s -- I got separated from my sister and I wasn't so happy about it, but they were explaining me and reassuring me that I was -- they says I was under-aged and I have to go to a school, and my sister went to work. But

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they treated her very nice. I mean, they paid her for her work, and -- and life was very good in is -- in **Sweden**.

Q: So di -- di -- you did not live with her once you got out of the hospital?

A: No. I was in **Fielgarden** and she was in **Göteborg**.

Q: And how did you stay in contact with her?

A: Oh, we -- we could -- you know, we could write to each other. We had our i -- we lived normal, you know, it was a normal life, you know, to each other. And she knew where I was and I knew where she was and --

Q: Was it hard to be away from her after all you had been through?

A: Very. Very. But you know what happened to us, all the girls? I mean, all these girls that I was with in school, I don't remember how many we were there --

Q: This is school in **Sweden**?

A: Right. In **Fielgarden**. And we became like sisters, and we -- you know, everybody lost everything, so we would say to each other, you know, we're going to be sisters now. And we did things together and we were -- I think we were ev -- trying to be even closer than sisters, you know. So it was wonderful, it was wonderful. Our teachers were great. They -- they tried being like our parents, more or less, too.

Q: Did you live in a dormitory or in people's homes?

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A: No, I lived in a dormitory, yeah. But we were maybe seven, eight kids in a dormitory, but -- but there were -- you know, there -- more -- there were a lot -- a lot of kids. It was like a house and it had these different rooms, yeah. It was --

Q: And -- and what did you -- did you study Swedish, or English? What did you study?

A: I studied English and Hebrew, and everything else, math and all these other things that ne -- you know, that I missed.

Q: Who were the teachers?

A: The teachers were also survivors and they were teachers before, and they volunteered to do that. Of course they were taken care of, they g -- you know, they had shelter and food. They gave us -- you know, they fed us very nicely and it was a beautiful place.

Q: Did they teach you Swedish at all?

A: Not really. We tried talking Swedish sort of, but i-i-it -- it -- it wasn't -- I think they had other plans for us. I don't know if the Swedish at that time took us in to be their citizens. I think they took us in there to take care of us, but I don't even remember or I don't even know what the deal was with them. I don't know.

Q: Now, at that time, did you and your sister talk about going back to your town at all?

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A: Sa -- some people did try to tell us that it would be nice if we would come back. But we -- we really felt in our hearts that we have no place there. We had no place there.

Q: And what made you think that?

A: Well, all that that we had to go through from 1939 til -- to -- until the Germans came. I mean, it wasn't just the Germans, it was how our life changed even before the Germans. See, **Czechoslovakia** was sort of a -- tried to be a democracy in **Europe**. But the rest of the countries were -- you know, everybody made their own rules and their own laws, especially in the war. It wa -- you know, we knew we -- we -- we were pointed out as Jews, that we are not wanted there, but we had no place to go. The world was closed for us.

Q: Did you feel Czech at that time, or Jewish? How would you have described yourself?

A: Well, I was very small in 30 -- how old was I in '39?

Q: 11.

A: 11. Well, I knew that I'm Jewish because I -- I -- I -- you know, as I said, that we had -- we -- we -- we were religious. But I loved being where I was, in the position I was in, because I had a big family, I had my own support system, and I -- I -- I -- we didn't experience the anti-Semitism that much, because a Jewish child

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could, if -- if he was really smart, he could reach to be educated. But later on it was closed completely.

Q: Oh. So you -- you felt Czech also, besides being Jewish?

A: Oh, definitely. If anything I -- I wanted to be Czech and nobody else -- I mean, I -- I was Jewish and I always feel like I want to be Jewish. But the Czech, yes, but not the rest of them.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And then when I -- it became a part of **Hungary**, did you feel any Hungarian connection?

A: We -- not -- it's hard for me to explain because I was a child and I was trying not to be -- I mean, y-y-you know, in a child you sort of try to see the bright side of it, see? But you know, I couldn't help feeling that I was not accepted. The only thing I think that really saved me is because, you know, my large family, as a child. I didn't feel -- I didn't need the outside to accept me and love me because my own family did that for me.

Q: How long were you in **Sweden**, you and your sister?

A: I was there over a year, yeah.

Q: And then you said your -- your aunt tried to arrange for you to come to the **United States**?

A: My s -- my sister.

Q: I'm sorry, your sister.

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A: My sister. And then it took no time, I think we were the first ones from the survivors to come out here to the **United States**. I think it took her maybe four or five, a half a year maybe, and we were here after she contacted the Red Cross in -- in **Sweden**.

Q: Did you want to come to the **United States**?

A: Well, I had a big problem again, you know, I didn't want to leave my sisters there, you know, because I already connected with them. And I thought I'm going to spend my life with them, they're gir -- my family. So --

Q: Oh, these are the other survive -- when you say sisters you mean there this --

A: The other survivors -- children.

Q: -- the other survivors.

A: Although I knew -- I remembered her, that she's my real sister, you know, here in the **United States**, **Frances** was my real sister. But believe me, if I would be given a choice, I think at that time I would have rather just stay with my family, the m -- with my friends. Because, I says, whatever will happen to them, it'll happen to me, because I no longer had a home and I didn't know what -- where I am, where I'm going to be. And it felt comfortable to be with these girls. But of course, you know, my sister says, look, she is our sister and she wants us out there, and we have to go, and we went.

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Q: So how di -- what was it like to say goodbye to these friends, these sister friends?

A: It wasn't easy. I tell you, it wasn't easy. I tell you it wasn't easy. We kept on promising each other we'll -- let's be in touch, we want to know about each other. And I was in touch with many of them, and then, you know, after years go by, you lose touch, and you see a different world. You see that they were your friends, and -- you know? And we came va -- when I came out here I-I had a terrible -- both of us, I think we had little breakdowns. Because you know, when I saw a man with a beard, I would say, is he -- you know, I s -- how come he wasn't destro -- you know, it was -- e -- if I her -- if I heard a kid cry, I thought he's being destroyed, not that he's unhappy. I had a difficult time. I had such a difficult time when I came out here, you can -- you can't imagine. The -- what can I tell you? What can I tell you? It was very difficult for both of us, even though, you know, to be with my sister, but was difficult. Then reality set in, you see? While you're on the road, you sort of survive every day. But when you knew this was your last place that you're going to, it's -- reality set in and we realized we lost everybody and everything, I think this is when we s -- really started mourning, to tell you the truth, when we got here. Yeah.

Q: When you were -- so you ca -- how did you come to the **United States**?

A: We -- well, as I said, my sister sent us the papers, and --



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Q: Yeah -- no, did you come by boat?

A: Yes. With th -- I think it was the **United States**. I forgot the name of the boat -- with a boat.

Q: And -- and when -- when was that?

A: When was that?

Q: Was it 1946?

A: I don't even remember, I co -- have to look it up. I don't remember whether it was '46 or not [**indecipherable**] in between. Do you want me to --

Q: No, that's okay. And so you -- you c-came by boat and you landed where?

A: In **Brooklyn**. Na -- na -- in broo -- you know, I di -- we saw the Statue of Liberty. It wasn't **Brooklyn**, it's -- it's --

Q: **Ellis Island**?

A: **Ellis Island. Ellis Island**, you know.

Q: Had you seen pictures of the Statue of Liberty before?

A: No, no, no.

Q: Did you know what it represented?

A: Well, I was told on the boat, I was told. I was told on the boat.

Q: Was the boat filled with survivors?

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A: I don't know. I do -- I don't think so. Because we came from **Sweden** and there weren't that many survivors in **Sweden**. I don't think so. No, they weren't all survivors.

Q: And so then you -- you got to -- you landed. What was like to -- to put your foot down on American soil?

A: A miracle, to ex -- describe it, really. A miracle, because i-it took me, at that time -- when I got to the **United States** it looked like it's the world. And when I was in **Europe**, I -- I thought I'm in hell. That's how I compared it. I don't know how else to describe it. I don't know. But I was just thinking, I don't think hell could be that bad.

Q: Oh. Hm. Who -- and your sister met you at the boat?

A: Yes, she met us at the boat. She had two kids, beautiful, beautiful, two boys and -- but you know, she wasn't a wealthy woman, so she took us in to her apartment, she had a one bedroom apartment, walking up three flights. But she was so happy to have us there and we were so happy to be there together. I remember we slept in the living room on a bed that closed up, you know, because she couldn't keep it open, then the kids wouldn't have where to play. But it was very nice. I mean, you know, she was just wonderful, she was just wonderful. And, you know, I wanted to go to school but I saw that I had to go and provide for myself. You know, you couldn't help seeing it. So, I went to school at night and I went to look -- actually, I

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think what really saved me from not mourning there forever is because I knew I have to get out and get a job. And so I tried getting a job, and you know, I wasn't trained for anything, and I -- I -- although I-I-I was learning how to speak English for n -- for close to a year, but still -- I understood most of it but I couldn't speak it too well. So there are so many drawbacks for me to get a job. Well, it took me about two, three weeks going every day. My brother-in-law, he would take me and paid for my carfare, for my token because I had no money. And I was going around and he helped me, he came with me at times, and they were telling me they would love to hire me, but I'm not trained for anything. And of course, you know, when I came from **Sweden** I didn't have money to buy clothes, so I was walking around with this big -- these big sweaters and these heavy pants. You know, I didn't really look that presentable, either. So one day I -- there was a big place, a fur place, and my brother-in-law took me up there to ask for a job and I went over to the boss and I asked for a job and he looked at me, and I told him my problem and he was very sympathetic, but he says to me, I wish I would, but I don't know where to put you because you do -- y-you don't know what to do. I mean you -- where -- wa -- how - - I says, I'm going to do anything you want me to do, just -- just please give me a job. He looked around and sadly said, I'm sorry. So, I wanted to see how this factory looks like because I heard so much about it and how it works and all that. So from the office I sneaked into the factory. I opened the door and I see that's the

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factory. So I walk in there just to see the factory and while I was passing, I saw there an old man standing and he had a beard and he wasn't working, he was just standing, looking around. And I said to mys -- you know, in my -- my grandfather came in front of me, he had a black hat like my grandfather ha-had, but he was a little shorter than my grandfather, my grandfather was very tall. So I walked over to him and I -- I felt that I can speak Yiddish to him and I did. And I told him my story. I-I says, you know, y -- I don't know if you know the tragedy on what has happened to the Jews in **Europe**, but I survived with my sister and I came out here, and I have a sister, but I -- I can see she cannot feed me or take care of me, I'm forced to get a job and I don't know what to do. And the man listened and listened and listened. And then he says to me, wait a minute. So I said to myself, why not? I'll wait. I have no place to go and no -- nothing to do. I'll wait at -- and a -- I -- I -- I was watching where he was going and I saw him go to the same man that just told me that he doesn't have a job for me and I thought I was going to faint. And he was standing there and standing there with this man, and standing there and talking to him. And then he finally comes back and he says to me, come back tomorrow. I says, tomorrow? What time? He said nine o'clock. When I came back, I stayed near the door, eight o'clock I was already there waiting the door -- for the door to be opened. And finally I went in there, into the office. Shall I continue? A -- so anyway, I went to the office, they took one look at me and as I said, I didn't look

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so presentable. It was a problem. And he must have promised his father, that was the son of this old man, he was the boss and I didn't know at that time. So this man wouldn't leave the son until he would promise him he'll give me some kind of a job. So they looked at me and they had -- it was a very big place and they had their own designers and were so many secretaries in this office. So the de -- I don't know, I think she was one of the designers, or whatever. She takes one look at me and she says to me, you never go shopping. I s -- wi -- I said to her, you know, there is a problem, I don't have no money. She takes another look at me, she says, well don't worry about it, we'll -- we'll bill it to the -- to the company. So I had no choice, I go with her and this lady, I tell you, she knew exactly what to do. She knew exactly what to do with me. She -- she took me in. I remember they were smaller stores. Now that I know there's -- was **Macy's** and everything, but she didn't want to waste time. So she took me into these smaller stores and took out different dresses. And every time she brought a dress for me to put on -- first of all, I -- you know, I didn't have a bra, I didn't have anything. Sh -- so she got me a little bra and stockings, she put stockings on me, I never had stockings in my life. And she -- we -- we bought a pair of shoes with a little heel, I think it was an inch and a half, or -- and she tells me I should get dressed and then she brings these dresses. I says, you know, they're so expensive, I -- you know, and I don't have any money. She says, don't worry about it, just put it on. So I put it on and I tell

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you, I looked like a different person. You know, I just looked like a different person. Then she went and took my -- my hair was raw, you know. She took my hair and put it in a bun, and then she put a little lipstick on me. And she bought a lot of clothes that I wasn't paying much attention because it was scaring me. And we went back and we got into the office and -- and I tell you, I did look different, I must say. And so the boss came in and he took a look in the office because he was in the main place, you know, watching the workers. And I saw him looked at -- looking at me twice, like to say well, is that the same girl? So, anyway, then they gave me a job. They had a v -- like a [indecipherable] house, where very rich ladies came in to pick out skins for their coats. I didn't realize how rich these women were at that time. And they were training me on what to say to them and how to deal with them and in no time I was so anxious to hold this job that -- and then I-I didn't mind staying after the time, or I never went down for lunch. I would -- my sister would give me a **Jell-o** sandwich, I would quickly eat it right there, and I was trying my best they should keep me there. And after awhile -- after awhile they saw how -- I became a good thing for them, too. You know, they paid me, they paid me well and I became a good thing for them too, because whatever they needed, or -- they could do with me. And then had models when -- whenever a buyer would come from a different city, they would call a -- a model, or a few models, matter of fact, and they came in, it was a very big place. So one time I

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became lucky and a model didn't show up, and you know, that lady, she says, well, why don't we call in **Helen**? So they called **Helen** in and I came there and they said to me, listen, put on this coat and take a walk. You know, on a walk. I put on the coat and I took a walk, and you know, I was younger, taller, I tell you. A- Anyway, I took a walk and this buyer said to me, take another walk. I smiled at him and I took another walk. And it went well, you know, it went well. So finally that lady said to the boss, let's send her to modeling school. So -- so they send me to modeling school for a few hours, but I still had to come into work to get my paycheck. After a few weeks, what happened was they told me the same thing, yen -- you know, put your chest out, you know, lift your head, walk graciously. You know, how many times do you need to be told what to do? So I walked over to her, I says, listen, I don't mind going there, but it seems to me like I know everything already what to do. And I did it, you know, I sort of did it -- evidently a good job because then, when a buyer would come in, they would ask, is **Helen** going to be there? Somebody tipped me off that a -- a buyer was asking about me, then I felt already secure with the job. Then I felt so happy. I was so happy, you have no idea. Anyway, I wound up with a beautiful job and people were very nice to me and they paid me a lot, I thought at that time, they paid me a lot. I think I was getting 75 dollar a -- a week. You see, and what happened was, they paid these models by the

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hour. And here I'm willing to anything they want me to do for 75 dollars a week.

But they paid me overtime if would come in on Saturday. And I ju --

Q: What -- what -- what was the name of the firm?

A: **Modenstein** and company.

Q: I'm sorry?

A: **Modenstein** and company.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yeah.

Q: Now did you continue to live with **Frances**?

A: Yeah, I continued to live with **Frances**. I paid for my room and board becau --  
you know, I paid f -- and then on the weekends, you know, we helped her wash  
clothes and clean the place and --

Q: What kind of work was your sister doing?

A: My sister w-was working by fur, too, but she had another job, yes, because my  
brother-in-law was a furrier. That's where -- how we went into that field, t-to -- to -  
- to -- to that. I think I was very lucky when I came over here.

Q: When you -- di-did you feel different than other people because of your history?

Did you feel other Americans accepted you? I -- I'm talking outside of the office.

Or did you not have much contact with them at this time? Did you f -- in other  
words, did you feel very different than other Americans on the street?



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A: When I first came over, of course I felt different. Of course I felt different, much different. When I started working and I saw how the people were really nice to me, I think it's because they realized where I came from, what I went through. And I don't know if I should tell that. I felt th -- maybe because, you know, where I came from that rejection was difficult for me. There were two nephews, you know, young boys that worked in that place, the bosses, and they felt like they were big shots. And even though I had a beautiful job, you know, one was pretty nice to me, and the other one, for a reason or another, he was constantly bugging me. And I thought this is my problem, but then I -- I -- you know, my sister says, what do you even bother looking at him? I -- I says, well he's the bosses nephew and he keeps on coming in to the showroom and constantly bugging me, you know, telling -- you know, he was -- he wasn't a nice person, I think. So that was about that I felt at work. You know, everybody else was nice, somehow, everybody else was very, very, very nice.

Q: And how about your English, was that improving?

A: It's much better, because I was going to night school, and I started speaking. I had the background of English, but I didn't ta -- speak it. So -- matter of fact, I still have the English dictionary brought from **Sweden**. And -- so I got along well. I -- I -- I picked it up quickly. I -- I did better than my sister, because she didn't have the

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basic, you know, eng -- you know, she -- she was never taught English in a school.

In --

Q: Are you talking about **Frances**?

A: No, no, no --

Q: **Sylvia**?

A: My sister, **Sylvia**, yeah.

Q: Oh right, because she was working in **Sweden** --

A: Right.

Q: -- whereas you were going to school, yeah.

A: Right.

Q: Then how long did you work at this furrier?

A: Oh, I worked there for over a year and I don't know if you want me to go into that story. I met -- shall I tell you what happened with me privately? I -- my -- my th -- a-after a few month, after I got the job -- after I got the job, you know, as -- so I -- I had pretty clothes because th-the -- the company gave me this clothes and I di -- matter of fact, they even gave me a fur coat. So -- so I -- my sister says, you know, why don't you just go out of the house on a Saturday night? You know, you sit in here and crying all the time, and just get out. So we -- my sister came with four friends and I was the fifth one. Nobody came from the school at the time I -- when I came. So we were like together five, and we kept together again because

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we had this background. So finally on Saturday night, we decided we'll go to **New York**. And as we walking th -- in **New York**, we heard music. So --

Q: [indecipherable]

**End of Tape One, Side B**

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**Beginning Tape Two, Side A**

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goldkind**. This is tape number two, side

**A.** And you had begun your story about your life outside the furrier business and -- and your friends.

A: So anyway, one Saturday we did go to **New York** and we heard this music there and we peeked in to see people were having a wonderful time, with dancing and all that, and we felt, let's just watch and see how people are living, you know? That was the first time we went out into this world where we saw people living normally, sort of. The youngsters, anyway. So we stood there for awhile. In the meanti -- but you had to take your coats off in order -- you know, and check it in. So we took our coats off and we checked in the coats and i -- you know, we were standing there and a few guys came and asked these other girls to dance. But somehow nobody asked me to dance. So anyway, I stayed there and two young man walked over and they talked to me and they saw I have an accent and they -- their par -- ha -- their parents were Hungarians, and they knew a few words Hungarian, so they were -- sure enough they were having a good time. And me being so depressed, I was looking at them, I says, why are they so happy? What is to -- so funny? You know, saying a word in Hungarian, I looked at them like they're a -- you know, I didn't understand them. I didn't understand that they're

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just normal, happy young man. So they stood with me for awhile, but then they walked away again. And I was waiting there for awhile, waiting for these girls to come back, so a man with a girl comes over to me and he says, would you like to dance? I says to him, no, I don't dance. So he detected a -- an accent and he looked at me again and he wondered why I been standing there alone and I'm not dancing, what are you doing here? So he says, look, would you like to have a drink? I says, no, I don't drink. I was -- I was thinking, you know, I'm waiting for the girls. I don't want to -- you know, start in with anything. So this girl that he came with had to say goodbye because she had to go home. In the meantime, this -- this young man is not leaving, a-a-and so he says to me, like he -- he -- then he got like, would you like to -- would you like a **Coke**? I says n -- well, I don't know if I can go and have a **Coke** because I'm waiting for my friends and they're supposed to come soon and we're gonna go home. So I says -- so he says, well come, we'll just get a **Coke** and we'll come right back. So that's what happened. In the meantime, I had to tell him who I was, that I'm a survivor and I just came from where -- well, then I became an object to him, that he wanted to know what happened because he -- I was the first survivor that he came -- he came in contact with. Well, I want to tell you something, he started asking me questions and every question he gave me, it just -- I wanted to really hit him, because -- and he didn't realize what he was questioning. And then he -- he -- so I told him, you know, you're talking to me like

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it's -- like you're cross examining me. He says, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I just want to know what happened there, do you understand? And I wasn't ready to talk. And the more I resisted not talking, the more he wanted to know. So our meet -- first meeting didn't go too well. He -- he -- and like, you know, he -- he would ask me - - he -- he really didn't mean to hurt me or anything, but he didn't know how to deal with me. So he says to me, you know, I read in the papers that they were taking young women for the Germans. I says, y-you heard right, but they were taking -- what happened was whenever they -- they took the Czech girls, they picked them up from the street if they saw a Czech girl, a Polish girl, they did use them for the - - for the arm -- for the army, but the Jews were picked to be killed, not you know, taking them there. At -- so I -- I said to myself, a lot of Jewish girls probably would feel lucky if they -- you know, just to survive -- to -- to -- to be able to do that. Anyway -- but it was very, you know, it wasn't -- it wasn't good. So then he finally says to me, listen, I want to take you home. I says no, you're not taking me home, cause I'm going to go home with the five of these girls. So the girls finally came. I -- I think hey kept on staying there because he wanted to pull out words from me, you see, because I wasn't ready to talk. I couldn't talk. And finally the girls came and you know, we are finished having a good time and we says, let's go home. So he says to the girls, listen, I want to take you all home. So the girls says yeah, take me home. We were five of them. So I was between them, so -- he had a car. He had

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a car. Matter of fact, he had a new car, a -- a **Buick**. So he sa -- we -- he took us home and finally he dropped them all off and my sister and I were the last one and he still wanted to talk and the guy says no, no, I have to go, you know, we're late, my sister is going to worry, we're supposed to be home. So I -- I -- he says to me, I'll come and see you tomorrow. I says -- I heard him say it, but I didn't even answer him, I just wanted to go in, because I was annoyed with him, the way he talked. So finally we went in and my sister says, you know, I worried -- and then my sister told us not to go into a car and we came in a car and we didn't want to lie to her. So we -- we told her what happened and nec -- next day I was washing the kitchen floor and I forgot about him, because I wasn't too nice to him. A-And the bell rings, and -- see, we didn't have a telephone in the apartment, a telephone was downstairs and if there was a telephone for us, you know, somebody picked it up and rang our bell. And my sister was busy with the kids and I was washing the floors. But -- so my sister says, **Helen**, run down and see who's on the telephone. So I run down there barefooted, you know, because I was washing the kitchen on my hands and knees. And I see this man standing there, I said to myself, what happened here? Well, I did -- he did tell -- say that he's gonna come back, but I just wasn't paying any attention, my mind was so preoccupied with other things. So he came back and he wants to go upstairs. I says look, I'm in the middle of washing the kitchen floor. I-It's very busy there, my sister is busy with the kids, I don't

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think you can come upstairs. So he says, I'll tell you what, I'll wait in the hallway until you finish washing the floor. So he comes up and he stays in the hallway and my sister says, who is he? So I says, you know, this is the guy that **[indecipherable]** yesterday. I told him that he can't come because we're busy here, but he said -- he chose to stay in the hallway, so he's in the hallway. So my sister was very nice, you know, she was normal, you know, she wasn't like me, you know. So she walked out and she says, who are you, what are you? So he was very good friends with the family of the **Bestform**. The -- their name was **Benenfeld**. You see, he la -- he **lan** to the yeshiva with the **Benenfeld's** son-in-law. They had one daughter and that son-in-law was a nephew of the **geera rabba**. So today **geera rabba** don't mean anything, but in **Europe** it was a big situation. And my sister knew the **Benenfels**, so she says -- so she felt a little embarrassed, she says, well as soon as she finishes washing the kitchen, come on in. Because the kitchen wasn't that big, the apartment wasn't that big. So he came in and he talked, and my sister talked to him, you know, my sister talked to him. At that time -- at that point he wasn't no longer a stranger, but he -- sh -- he made connections with my sister, actually. And he stood there, he says he's got to go to **Richmond**, he was from **Richmond**. He told me the truth, he had a place in **Richmond**, but then he -- he -- e-everything he said he told the truth, but it didn't connect with me. So that night he left for **Richmond** and he said that he wants to come back, and --



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Q: What was his name?

A: **Abe Goldkind**. And so when he went to **Richmond**, he telephoned me a few times and then he says he is sorry that he cannot see me this week because -- but did I get the flowers? I says yes, I got the flowers, but you know what? I don't want you to send me any flowers. Because they were roses and you know, after three days in this apartment, the roses started dying. And don't ask, I couldn't deal with that. To me those roses represented life and all of a sudden I'm faced with death again. So anyway, he -- he just didn't understand what I was talking about, nobody did. And then he -- he did come to see me and -- but my sister wouldn't let me go with him because, you know, I was so young and you see, even though I was 17 - 18 years old at that time, right, I was still like a child of 12. I had no experience with -- you know, interacting with what -- so I didn't go out with him becau -- you know, he was just come to visit me in my sister's house. And after awhile he got tired of it, he says, I want to take her to the **Benenfelts**. So my sister says, well, you're telling me you're going to the **Benenfelts**? So she says yes, so he got a cab and we went to the **Benenfelts** and I saw that, you know, he knows these **Benenfelts** and they were four brothers and they were, you know, very close friends, from home yet. So yeah, came back, I says, here I was in the **Benenfeld's** house and -- and after awhile he wants to take me to the movies, you know, a few weeks later when he came from **Richmond**. So now my sister said no, sh -- you

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can't take her to the movies. So she says, okay. So he says, fil -- you know me already, you know, you -- you must understand, I have a background. And I wouldn't hurt her, she was hurt enough. At that point he already understood who I am, where I come from. So my sister says, all right, well if you take her with a cab, I'll let you go. And he had to park the car downstairs and take a cab, and we went to see **Al Jolson**. And that's how it started, you know. So actually, I think what the beginning was he -- he really wanted to know what happened there. He was a very curious person, and --

Q: Was he your age?

A: No, he was a little older. He was a little older.

Q: And was he born in the **United States**?

A: No, he came from **Poland**, from **Lódz**, just before the war.

Q: Oh.

A: Yes.

Q: So had he lost relatives in the war?

A: Yeah, he -- but he was lucky, he came here with his family, with his parents and sisters and brothers, yes.

Q: But he lost extended family?

A: All of them. All of them. All of them, yeah.

Q: Do you think that's why he kept asking you what --

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A: Yes --

Q: -- what happened, because he was thinking of his own family?

A: -- yes, yes, yes, he really wanted to know. He really wanted to know what happened there. I -- you know, there were lots of articles, but they were in the -- they were on the -- on the back pages. Nobody made a headline out of it. So -- you know, and people were skeptical. If somebody would come and tell you they're taking hi -- little kids to the gas chamber, would you believe that? It has never happened before, so people, even though they heard it, but they says, oh it's something, you know, that doesn't make sense.

Q: When you and **Frances** and **Sylvia** would be together in the apartment, would you talk about your parents and life before the war?

A: Oh yeah, a lot, a lot. She wanted to know what happened and we had to tell her what happened, we had to tell her the truth and -- and yeah, they were sad stories, it was a very sad time, you know. It was like a mixed situation. It was -- it was a mixed situation, it was -- I felt lime -- like again betwe -- I felt like I'm again with people that **Hitler** didn't destroy. I thought **Hitler** destroyed the world, to tell you the truth. I really thought **Hitler** destroyed the world. And when I came here, I found the world. And you know, I was -- but still, it's very hard to explain, when you lose one person, yo-you know, like you lose your mother, you -- you -- you mourn and my mother, my mother. But when you lose 89 people at one time, it's

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just -- there is no **compacity** in you to bear it. I want to tell you that. And but you -  
- I think if w -- when I -- a-and of course, I got married. I -- you know, of course,  
after awhile, after he was coming to see me from **Richmond** and he already felt  
like he would want -- you know, he got interested in me, actually, after he was  
finished with the stories of World War II, he moved his pla -- he had a -- a navy op  
-- army-navy store in **Richmond** and he said that I probably wouldn't want to live  
there, so he moved it to **Baltimore**, just to show me that he will do anything I want  
to, because I told him I'm not leaving my job, that he's got to get a job in -- in -- in  
**New York**. And he says, you know, I-I-I'm not a type of person to work for other  
people, I need to work for myself. And back and forth. I didn't want to give up my  
job, my job meant so much to me because I was so happy there. I was so happy  
there. But anyway, after awhile we came to an understanding, we will ga -- he  
wanted to get married. Now, I -- you see, I -- I don't think I was ready to do that,  
you know. I -- I wanted to -- I don't know what I wanted to do, I don't know, I  
don't know, I just wanted my job and I wanted to work and I wanted to go to  
school, and -- but anyway, I agreed that -- you know, we all agreed because he's  
really -- he really was a person with depth. He -- I just lost him two years ago, in  
May.

Q: When did you get married?

A: We got married November the ninth.

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Q: What year?

A: Yeah, I -- I'm ashamed of it, but I can look it up. It -- it doesn't matter, does it?

Q: So -- and what was your wedding like?

A: Oh, you know, I -- even though I made up -- some money, but he wasn't a rich man either. He came here in '39, right before the war. But he was very educated. So we had a small wedding that we paid for because there was nobody else to pay for. And then I moved to **Baltimore**. But --

Q: Was it hard to leave your two sisters?

A: Very. Very hard. Th -- actually then I -- you know, after I -- I realized I have to live in **Baltimore**, I -- I asked him that my sister please syl -- well, it's another long story. My si -- I lost my sister **Frances**, yes.

Q: Whe-When was that?

A: When was that? Maybe -- maybe three years after we came.

Q: Oh.

A: So there was another shock in my life that one sister should have lived, my s -- yeah. Anyway, but after she died I says, le -- you know what, I can't deal with this world any more. I need my sister near me. So he opened up a store for my sister in **Baltimore** and she came to **Baltimore**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yes.

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Q: What -- what did **Frances** die of?

A: Kidney disease. Today she probably could have lived, they have dialysis and all this, so yeah. So then she left these two little kids, so we took care of the --

Q: So you moved to **Baltimore** and your sister came to **Baltimore** also --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- and then you -- and you had children?

A: Yes, then I had three children. But I really feel when my first child was born -- matter of fact it's sort of -- to me this kid represented not only life, but sort of like my -- that -- that I -- I'm alive again. You know, I ti -- I don't know how to explain it. So anyway -- and I looked at this kid and I said to her, I need to protect you from my past, because I was afraid that if I'll be talking to her what I went through, it's -- it's going to be a punishment to this kid. So I -- I promised myself I-I -- I no longer have the luxury on being preoccupied with it. I need to put it away.

Q: Ha-Had you been preoccupied with your past up to that point?

A: Yes, I --

Q: And how -- how did that manifest itself?

A: All the time sad. You know, my husband really went through a tough time with me too, but he sort of understood it. I had nightmares. He was very understanding. I was married to a very good guy. And so I said to myself, I'm going to put all this in an iron box and I'm not going to open it up. And I was raising her and I kept on

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-- you know, she -- I gave her all my love, for the people that I no longer had. You know, there is a little bit too much is no good either. You know what they say? I would never put her down. I carried her around constantly. I mean, I carried her around constantly, so what happened, being I didn't put her -- I was afraid the floor is dirty, I was -- I was so afraid I'll lose her. So -- and then she was born with big -- we had a problem, she was born with big adenoids and she couldn't take her bottle. So I ha -- we had a doctor come in every day to the f -- when we fed her, they couldn't -- like this she was healthy, but -- but she had this problem, she couldn't take the bottle. So we had a doctor come in every day to look at her and finally the doctor saw the kid can't breathe when she closes her mouth. He took a look in the nose and her nose was clutter -- she made history. They took her to **John Hopkins** and they opened up her nose and that's -- she could have died if this doctor wouldn't of -- I would have lost her. And the doctors kept on saying that I was the crazy mother. But then they found that I wa -- you know, I had a reason, because I saw the kid is losing weight and can't eat. So that was that, and --

Q: And her name?

A: Is **Rose**. Right now her na -- her name is **Rose Shainus**. And so I -- I raised this child and by ne -- never putting her on the floor she didn't know how to crawl or she didn't know how to walk. So again with the doctors I keep on saying -- she was already -- she was already 20 months and this kid wouldn't walk. So I take her to

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the doctors and the doctors see a healthy child. They didn't know what to do with her. And -- so one day a doctor says to me, tell me, so how do you deal with her? So accidentally I said to him, you know, I -- I -- I love to hold her so much that I never -- I always hold her, I said to him, I always hold her. So he says, well, fa -- try putting her down the floor. Ee -- I -- e -- I says, but she's going to cry. So he says, well let her cry a little bit, and move away from her. So I did that. You know, she started crawling. Then she was looking, how can she get to me. So at 20 she started crawling. And then, you know, eventually, when I knew what the problem was, I already, you know put her in a little wagon, and anyway, we dealt with the problem. It was my problem, that I created, but this is the kind of mother I was. I just never put her down. Even I -- I was, you know, cooking, or I was giving my husband to eat, she was always in my hands, she was like my hand. I could never put her down. It sounds crazy today. I never put her down. Anyway, but she grew older and she's -- she's fine, she --

Q: And then your other children?

A: Then I had another daughter, her name was **Michelle** and I knew already more what to do. And then, four years later, we had a lit -- a son, **Larry**. So that was a happy time of my life and I had my children, and of course I was forced to get rid of my past that I -- I didn't have that luxury to deal with it any more. Do you see what I'm saying?



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Q: What do you mean by that?

A: What I mean by that is that I wallowed in my past and it made me a very hap -- unhappy person. And I felt I need to raise these kids [phone ringing] [tape break] Well anyway, I try very hard to live for the future and not for the past, and I was -- because of my kids. I wanted them to have a better life than I had and I wanted them to grow up to be better people than I encountered in my young life. So this was my decision and this is wa -- what I was out to do. I felt that -- that that was my job now and I raised them and I was very, very happy with them. They were wonderful kids. They tried so hard. I never talked about my past, but I think that they knew that it -- something in my life wasn't talked about. So -- so they really -- my husband and my children made my life. And I went on raising them. My oldest daughter -- shall I tell you where they went to school or whatever? I should tell you -- okay. My oldest daughter, she went to **Brandeis University**, and my younger daughter went to ithic -- no, sh -- she went to -- not **Ithaca**, there was another college, I'm sorry.

Q: In **Ithaca**? **Cornell**?

A: No. Anyway --

Q: That's okay.

A: Huh?

Q: That's okay.

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A: A-And my son went to **University of Pennsylvania**. And my older daughter bec -- got a **PhD** in psychology and my younger daughter has got a **PhD** -- no, my older daughter has a **PhD** in microbiology and my younger daughter has a **PhD** in psychology and my son is a gastroenterologist. And they have families and I'm blessed with 10 grandchildren that I l -- that I love them all.

Q: When you say when you raised them you didn't talk about their -- your background, did they ever ask you, and if so, how did you answer them?

A: They started asking me after they went to college, wi -- believe it or not. They started reading books. As --

Q: They didn't say anything during high school years?

A: They va -- they would throw out, but I did not volunteer my past with them. I didn't [indecipherable]

Q: So what did you say about their -- their grandparents, or their aunt? How did you answer them?

A: That's a good question. Well, I told thi -- told them that I lost them, but I did not go into details on how -- what had happened. But when they started reading books, you know, I had to be honest with them, and I felt at that time that they were capable of dealing with this tragedy, where before I was afraid if I'll tell them what has happened, they'll be very angry, and -- angry people, I'll bring up angry people because -- so -- and this is not what I wanted to do. So when they came to ar --

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when they read the books -- actually, what -- what -- what happened was, when books came out that this tragedy never happened, then they started questioning. You know, they read the books -- I don't know the name of the professor from **Princeton**, he was trying to -- he was trying to convince the world that that couldn't have happened. So they came questioning me, how could it have happened, and actually that's how I started with -- you know, telling them how it happened and how it -- you know, what happened.

**End of Tape Two, Side A**

**Beginning Tape Two, Side B**

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goldkind**. This is tape number two, side **B**. You were talking about your relationship with your children and it was only when they were older that you started to tell them about what happened to their family and your family.

A: Well, just to give you a example, when the museum opened, the Holocaust Museum opened, I was a volunteer and she says, Mommy, I want to go with you and I'll visit the museum. So I went to my job and she went upstairs to, you know, look around. If -- at that time she already had three kids of her own, imagine. She went upstairs and about 15 - 20 minutes later she came downstairs, pale. And so I said to her, what happened honey? Wha -- you know, you look so pale. She says,

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Mommy, I think I saw you in these pictures. And it wa -- she didn't -- I -- I'm not in these pictures, but I said to myself, my God, if I would have fed her with al -- with this tragedy when she was young, I know the kid probably would have not survived, if she couldn't deal with it at that point.

Q: What about with your grandchildren?

A: Well, we didn't talk -- we didn't talk about it to my grandchildren either. That -- w-we made these decisions actually, because we did not want to bring up angry kids, or -- you know. Matter of fact, my daughter would say to me, Mommy, when I'll grow up, I'm going to do something so I can help people. I says -- oh, you'll be proud of me, I'll ca -- I-I'll help people. I says, sweetheart, I'm already proud of you, you're wonderful. Anyway -- so anyway, she is the one who became a microbiologist so that she can help people. So I'm just -- I -- I-I'm delighted that they grew up that they would rather help and not hurt. Because once you start hurting one group, you wind up hurting the whole world.

Q: Do they know your whole story?

A: Oh yes, now -- now they all know my story. I would just -- can I talk about my grandchildren a little bit, too? Because it means so much to me in my life, maybe more than anything else that I -- me -- as a survivor could raise three kids that -- I don't know how to say it -- that are real human beings. I would be heartbroken if my kids would have wound up hating, because I saw what hate does. And -- and

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they sort of go around with their normal life. I am forever thankful that the **United States** gave me this chance to -- for a new life, but my reward to them are my children and my grandchildren. You know, I'm so glad I brought them to the **United States** and they are good citizens and that makes me very happy. And now you want to know about my grandchildren. I have two grandchildren that graduated from **Princeton** and three grandchildren that graduated from **Columbia University**, and four little grandchildren that go to the Jewish Day School. So I'm very happy about it.

Q: Do your children live nearby?

A: I have my daughter and son -- one my daughters and son living here in **Washington** and one of my daughters live in **Tampa**.

Q: When -- wh -- when your children were growing up and they -- let's say your daughter **Rose** reached the age that you did when things got very difficult for you as a child, was that a more difficult time for you? Did it bring back memories of what you had gone through, when she was, let's say 12 - 13 - 14 - 15? When -- when life was so hard for you during the war, and when she reached that age, did that trigger anything for you, when you would look at her and think what were you doing when you were her age?

A: Mm, mm-hm, I understand what you're saying, but my answer on that would be this, I was so afraid being that I wasn't born here, and I have an accent that

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somehow another my children m-might suffer from it, that I will not be able to guide them, you know, to the right places and do the right things. So I was concentrating more or less on what's happening in their life. I was always on top of it. I always wanted to know how they're doing in school, and I always wanted them to -- to go to Girl Scouts. And I always wanted them to do everything that other kids in the **United States** did. So this is where my energy went in, not saying -- well, I'm delighted that my daughter has it better. I mean, I was delighted that my daughter has it better, but I felt that I -- I -- I shouldn't touch that part. That was a no-no for me to think back and say, what did I do when I was 12, because it wouldn't be good. I used to get these crying spells and I would just, for no reason, nobody would say much to me, I would cry and I couldn't stop for nothing. And that bothers me even today. I would cry and cry and I couldn't explain it and I couldn't stop. So the ki -- poor kids, they were such good kids, they would say did -- did we do something, Mommy, you're crying, did we -- I said, no, you're wonderful. I was trying to reassure them it's -- has nothing to do with them. But they were just sad to see me cry. And here if I would start talking, it would be a bigger problem. I could have contr -- you see, what happened was, I could control my mouth, the talking, but you can't control emotion, you can't control the nightmares. You can't control the -- I couldn't control the crying. I don't know how to explain it, because you know, I wanted to stop because I didn't want my

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kids to see me that way. I couldn't control it until I cried myself out, for days, you know, and then all of a sudden it like, stopped. It relieved me. I think maybe cause I couldn't talk, so this was my outburst.

Q: You had said something before about your sister and you -- **Sylvia** and you didn't -- couldn't really start mourning un -- for your family, your lost family until you came to the **United States**.

A: That's right. That's right, because you see, we were in so much trouble that we didn't think we'll survive either, til the last minute. My sister got typhus and you know how many people died in -- in **Bergen-Belsen** and -- and we didn't even think -- one of us wanted to survive to tell the world, but it wasn't in our power really, completely to control it.

Q: But even in **Sweden**, you -- did you feel you could mourn your family?

A: Not really. First of all, we were separated and then I had the responsibility of studying. And we were iso -- we -- not isolated, you know, isolated --

Q: Separated?

A: Separated, yeah. We were separated from society there. It was a little town, **Fielgarden**, I don't know if it's on the map, even. So my -- I think my energy went in to bond with these girls, you know. And of course we studied. We studied. No, it was no time to mourn. It was no time --

Q: Do you still get these nightmares?

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A: Occasionally, of course. Of course. If I see a document, or a -- it comes all back, yeah. It comes all back.

Q: Are there any other sights or sounds or smells that -- that trigger your memories, besides a documentary? Anything, any sounds, or s --

A: You know, you -- I don't know how to say this either, in order for people to understand it. When we got to **Auschwitz**, there was such a smell of burning people that there was a smell. It was a s -- definite smell. Sometimes when I walk into something, you know, like the light goes on, it's the smell of **Auschwitz**. It's hard to explain what happens inside of me. You know, there is -- there are certain things that are in there -- in -- in -- i-in -- you know, things trigger it off, for different reasons, for different -- if I see a chimney today, I have a reaction. A tall chimney. **[phone ringing][tape break]**

Q: You were talking about what sights or sounds or smells trigger your memories of the war and when you see a chimney that brings back memories. Anything else?

A: You know, it just depends, it just depends. A swastika. You know, when I see a swastika I feel I'm in danger. It s -- it sounds crazy to other people, because other people are not affected at all by a swastika. That swastika cannot hurt you. But what represents to me is something else. Well, you know, a lot -- a lot of things, a lot of things. To say that I completely have a pain free life, I don't. It feels that --



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you know, I have -- I have s-so many nice things in my life right now that I try to focus in on that.

Q: If you have -- if you had had a different life, a different childhood, do you feel you'd be a different person today?

A: Absolutely. First of all I think I would be more of an educated person. I -- I hate to say it about myself, but **Hitler** took my years of education away from me and I miss that. I remember when I -- I used to feed my daughter with a bottle, I would tell her stories. Some mothers tell their children, you know, all kinds of wonderful things and I would tell her sweetheart, when you'll get -- grow older, you'll go to college. And looking back, she didn't know. She -- she would look at -- I think I was telling myself that -- I was trying to comfort myself because that was robbed from me. And the simple reason that my children and my grandchildren are such overachievers, it might have something to do with it, but I'm not sure, I'm not sure, I'm not sure.

Q: You had said that you were a strong child before the war. Did that --

A: I think my sister was stronger than I was. My sister was much stronger than I was.

Q: I'm talking physically and emotionally.

A: I-I -- I think -- I think emotion -- I think physically I was strong. Emotionally, because -- emotionally I don't think I was strong as my sister because I cracked

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faster, I gave in faster. And a lot of people when they did that, they just took their lives. I remember in -- the first night in -- in **Auschwitz**, when I saw a lot of people hanging from these -- on these electric wires. I believe today that's what, they cracked and they fel -- they -- they knew that the -- there's no way they can escape. They just did away with themselves the best way they knew how. And if not for my sister I ba -- wonder if I wouldn't have been hanging on these wires, believe me. There are many times I think about it.

Q: Where is your sister today?

A: Yeah, I just spoke to her. She's in **Florida** and she's not well. She's not a well person and --

Q: D-D-Do you -- do you and she talk still about the war?

A: She can deal with it less than I can, would you believe it or not? We were in **Yad Vashem** and sh -- together, she couldn't walk in there. I walked in there, and she couldn't. I don't know why.

Q: Does she have children?

A: Yes, she's got two children and they're both married and all have a nice family.

Q: What are ye -- let's talk a little bit about your religious outlook, because of what you went through, had to -- did it make you more religious, less religious? Your feelings about being Jewish, because you suffered because you were a Jew?

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A: Okay. I'm trying to figure out how to explain it best. I would say that I take my Judaism very serious because I paid a big price. And a sad thing happened that I cannot be as religious as my grandfather and my father was. But what I did is put my hope in **Israel**, because I feel if we will not have **Israel**, we Jews are not safe. So therefore, when something goes on in **Israel**, it puts me through a lot of pain, the fear of losing **Israel**. I think I made my peace with God. I have a lot of questions for him and maybe one day he's going to be able to explain, or something -- somebody will be able to explain -- why. The reason why the children come to my mind is because when I look at my little grandchildren and I say to myself, these -- kids like them went to the gas chamber and they never had a chance. So I want to know why. I would very much like to know why. If there is a reason, I would like to know. I don't know, I don't know. This is how I live today. I don't think it made me more religious, it didn't. But I -- I respect everybody, whatever they believe in and whatever, because the truth is we really don't -- you know, unless somebody's a real believer, can he feel, you know, what you really read? But you know, in the other hand, y-y-you know, God gave us a brain that's -- y-you know, you -- you also think and examine things. E-Everything we read, actually, you know, wa-wa-was -- it was written by humans and so many years ago. So I sometimes think, you know, I -- I -- I'm very happy that we have these things in -- in orbit. Maybe through that we will find out really, maybe something

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more than w-we know now on earth. I'm hoping anyway, I'm really hoping for it, but it's probably my great-grandchildren will know a little bit more than I know of, as far as the religions are going.

Q: Do you -- do you still practice in any way, religiously?

A: Yes, I belong to a synagogue. And I don't know whether it is a habit, or whatever, I light candles on Fridays and whenever I can I go to synagogue. And of course the holidays, which are the toughest for me because I remember what happened at home. It was such a happy time with my family. And -- and I'm afraid to complain, I'll tell you the truth, because I feel like God gave me a lot back, and I'm always scared something shouldn't happen to my family, cause I don't think that I could survive any more, you know? So -- so I don't -- so most of the time I just say thank you God for what you gave me and I hope they stay well and go on with their lives.

Q: Are you angry that you had to go through what you did, whereas other people, let's say in the **United States**, didn't have to?

A: Well, I don't think I'm angry because they didn't have to. Matter of fact, I feel happy that they didn't have to, because m -- why so much suffering? And unnecessary suffering. What we went through is not because I was a bad person. It isn't because I committed a crime. So it doesn't make sense for me to be angry. Matter of fact, I'm the other way. I'm happy that there were some people that did

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not have to go through this. But I'll tell you the truth, I live in fear. I'm hoping that my grandchildren, great-grandchildren shouldn't have to go through what I have gone through. And therefore, when I go to the museum, I want to teach society, please don't hate. Please don't hate. The outcome of it is no good, no good. I think this is the message I would want to give the world. Don't hate.

Q: Would your children today be different if you had not gone through your wartime experiences?

A: I really can't tell. I really can't tell, to be very honest. I can't tell. I think perhaps I -- I-I -- I don't know. I think perhaps -- you see, everything too much is no good. I think I was s -- too protective of them. I lived in fear they shouldn't get sick. I didn't have a normal day because I feared what will happen to them. But, in the end --

Q: Th-This is all three children? In other words, it did not lessen as you had th -- more children?

A: No, no, it didn't. Each and every one was different and just to tell you I was so on top of my children, I remember my younger daughter, I was watching over her and she fell and she hit her lip. And so I rushed her to the doctor and I kept on crying because it's my fault, I didn't watching -- you know, another mother would say, well it happens. And this was my big fault, because my child fell and hit her lip and cr -- and -- and I couldn't forgive myself. So imagine my children what

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they had to go through having me on top of them all the time. I think, you know, that was a -- not the best thing for them. You know, I -- I should have I -- I should have given them maybe more elbow space. See what I'm saying? I should have given them a little bit more elbow space.

Q: Do you feel like you're two different people? Someone on the inside -- the true person on the inside and someone on the outside, facing the world?

A: Yes. Yes. Because there is no way -- there is no way -- I would constantly want to live my inside. So what I do is try to focus in on what's around me. And that's how I'm surviving. Don't forget, I have some responsibilities to my children, too. It's not just me any more. So I think I am. There's a lot of sadness in me, although there is so much for me to be happy. I don't have to -- I already mentioned that. But there's a lot of sadness in me. And I really think even the happy things, even the happy things are ... the hap -- I think I get -- I get it from both sides, like, you know? There is this sadness in me and -- and there is -- there is the good things that I -- I -- I enjoy. That's why my kids keeps on saying, Ma, why you so sad? Look at the beautiful things you have. I says, you're right, you're right, I shouldn't be sad. But you can't say this to your soul, you know? You can say this -- I can say this to you, but I can't say this to my soul. Yes, my sou -- I would say my soul is sad. Sad.

Q: Have you ever gotten counseling, or di -- have you just handled this yourself?

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A: When we were in **New York**, maybe just came over, my sister cou -- didn't understand how to deal with us, so we had a little counseling, yes, in the beginning. But then we also didn't have the money to pay for it. And at that time there wasn't such th -- I mean, just -- we didn't expect any help or anything. So there was no money and we just had to pull ourselves out and go on with our lives. And I really began feel that s -- right away, after a -- a few months, so many nice things happened to me. That -- that helped me. That helped me.

Q: What are your thoughts about **Germany** today? **Germany**, and **Germany** today.

A: Okay, now let me tell you something, how I feel. You know, I always say, please God, don't punish my kids for my sins. So I have to give them the same -- the same feeling. When I see a young German today, I'm willing to deal with him one on one, it depends what kind of person he is. But let me tell you something, when I see a person in my age, I -- I doubt. I say, I wonder what you did. And I can't help it. It's not that I would want to do anything to him, but crosses my mind, how could you have been such a monster? Well, I don't know how to call it. I don't know. That's what comes to -- crosses my mind. And then, I'll tell you the truth, I am hoping even for the -- even for the German's sake -- I mean, the Germans were destroyed too, **Hitler** took them down the road also. So I'm hoping

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they learned a lesson. I hope they learned a lesson, that we need a different society.

That's what I'm hoping for the Germans.

Q: What about political situations here, for instance, the Civil Rights movement.

Was that something you paid particular attention to, because in mentioning **Hitler**, who took away other's civil rights, were you more attuned to this?

A: You know, you brought up such a good point, but there wasn't enough of us, I think, as survivors. We -- we felt the depth of this wrong thing. We felt it. But I think a lot of people couldn't feel it like we did, because they never experienced it. So all I remember, the riots and I remember all these things and I kept on saying, I'm -- I raised my children with the idea this is wrong and, this is wrong. My children were brought up that this was -- this was a terrible thing in our life.

**End of Tape Two, Side B**



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**Beginning Tape Three, Side A**

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goodkind**. This is tape number three, side **A**, and we were talking about the Civil Rights movement.

A: Me as a survivor, I wasn't happy about it at all. I thought it was wrong, and you know, I -- I raised my kids not to be bigoted and to understand that we are all made in the image of God. So i-it was a thing that bothered us in the family, a lot. And I'm happy to say that my kids are -- are people that always, always stayed on the side of the oppre-pressed people. I don't know ho -- I -- I don't know if I want to -- whate -- you know, whoever was oppressed, they were there for them.

Q: Can you give an example?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Can you give an example?

A: Well, if there -- if there was a -- you know, a march or something, they would go. I would beg them, please don't get -- don -- don't go as far as being locked up, but they would, you know -- they would always talk about it in the schools and they -- they -- how shall I say it? They -- they right away knew, even when they were little that this is -- this is something that we shouldn't -- we have to pri -- we have to right this wrong. And I told them if you're not going to right this wrong, it's going to be awful. The world will come to an end. I saw it this way, because I

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saw already the end in **Europe** and I was afraid there's going to come an end here in the **United States**.

Q: Do -- do you think there could be something like that in this country?

A: Well, you know, you can't have -- you can't have people and oppress them.

You've got to give them the freedom of, you know, what they are. If not there are revolutions and killing each other and one will figure out how to make a gas chamber, to gas the other. I-I-Is -- just doesn't work like that. Or will become a jungle, the stronger animal will eat up the -- th-the weaker one or whatever. I -- I just didn't see it.

Q: Do you think that could happen in this country still?

A: Well, I have more hope now. I have more hope because I think that people do have a chance. I -- I -- I'm not saying that, you know, everybody should get a palace, but I think everybody should have the opportunity to do with themselves what they possibly can, and not being denied of it. This is exactly -- I am the -- the -- the pr -- I am the person that was denied of an education. Can you imagine how I feel when I see another child would be denied of an education? It would be awful, it's awful.

Q: What were your thoughts during the **Eichmann** trial in **Israel**?

A: Mm.

Q: Did you follow it?

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A: Matter of fact, I was in **Israel** at that time and I went to one session. You know, all these witnesses that were there, I-I -- I felt like I'm a part of this witness anyway, I knew everything. It's just that I was trying to look at him and trying to figure him out, how he was created. Was he really created by God, or were there mon -- are there monsters in heaven? Bec-bec-because -- how -- how can anybody take again, kids, put them in wagons to a gas chamber? How could any human being do that? You know, be -- I always want to talk too, about the kids. You feel adults, you know, had maybe a chance to life, but kids never did. How -- how could this man -- I was looking at him and my mind was just going a mile a minute, where he comes from, why is -- was he the way he was? Of course, I never figured it out, I don't know. Have no answer. But to my mind he didn't look -- you know, when I looked at him, in my heart, I said, it's maybe in my eyes he looked like a human being, but to my soul and my heart, I saw -- I saw a monster, a scary monster. It's hard to explain because other people wouldn't understand it, unless you go through this. I don't know. I don't know. So that's the way it is. You know, the few years that I've have left -- the few years that I have left to live, I -- you know, I go and work in the museum and I talk to children. I really think that if -- if -- if I could just help a little bit, that much t -- help society to be a better society, I would like to do that, very much so. If not -- if a -- if I leave this earth and I didn't change anything in my small way, I think I'm going to die with a fear what will

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happen to my great-grandchildren, because I already know what human beings are capable of. And if you let it go, it does no good. That's really -- that's how I live today. You know, I don't know if I too -- I was talking to little kids and I was telling them about my little brother and I really, you know, I was making it mild. I just told them how we got separated and how, you know, he brou -- he -- he -- he l -- you know, he had to give up his book, and how sad he was. And there was a lady and -- with two children a-and I really didn't know who she was, because people were coming and going and then after I had my say to the kids, this lady came up and she said to me, you know, I'm an SS man's daughter, and well, he didn't tell me that it was so bad. And imagine, I didn't even scratch the surface when I was talking to these little kids. She had two beautiful little girls with her and -- and she said that to me and it's like she would hit me over the head. And I said to her -- I didn't have time to debate it with her how good or bad it was, so I pulled her aside and I say to her, listen, I'm so glad that you came in here, because I need to ask you some questions. Tell me, did your father tell you what his job was as an SS man? We didn't talk about it. So I says, you know, in **Auschwitz**, where I was, there came a million and a half children to **Auschwitz**. And you know what the -- the SS people, they had their families there with their children, you know what their job was? Did you ever wonder what their job was? She says no. Watching over the people she says to me. I says, not really. Their job was to take little kids

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like yours -- I pointed my finger to her children -- to the gas chamber. These kids had no -- nobody had any mercy over them and they knew where these kids are going. And they were living there very happily with their own families. So I -- I -- I don't know how more to explain it to you, how good and bad it was. You know, she started crying. I think I scared her a little bit because I showed my f -- pointed my fingers to her children. So I said to myself, you know, I -- I [indecipherable] to -- as angry I was in the beginning for her to saying this to me, I -- I -- you know, I was really upset. Well, I said, if she's starting to cry, maybe I touched a nerve in her. So I was going to hug her, and she stepped back. She says to me, you know, I will never forget you. And I said to her, you know what? As long as you will never forget me, please remember what I want to tell you. If you see any children when their lives will be threatened, speak up. Because your father didn't. And that's how she walked out. Now, re -- now I feel that I touched her, I touched one person. And that makes me feel good, that maybe if she's going to see a child in danger, whether it's a Jew, or a non-Jew, or green or yellow or purple, maybe she'll be there and say wait a second, we cannot afford of doing that, we shouldn't do that. And you know, it makes me feel like maybe I touched someone. I would like to touch the whole world and tell them don't hate.

Q: Let's talk a little bit more about your experiences as a volunteer at the Holocaust Museum. When did you begin working there?

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A: All right, I beca -- I became -- I became a volunteer there right away, as soon as the museum has opened. And then my husband retired and we moved to **Florida**.

And so I -- w-we moved and as I said before, my husband died -- it'll be two years in May, and --

Q: So you started working in 1993, or --

A: Yeah, as soon a -- as soon as it opened.

Q: -- th-the building --

A: Yeah, when it was --

Q: -- wa -- wa -- you did not work with them preceding the building?

A: -- when it was finished I worked in there. And --

Q: Wha-What ins -- why did you go to work for them?

A: Why I went to work for them? Because I think through this museum, hopefully people will get the message what not to do to each other. And it's very important to me. You see, I cannot bring back my parents, my family. There's nothing I can do. But what I -- there is left for me to do is perhaps it shouldn't happen to other people and other children. And if I can do that, I would -- you know, this is my main priority at this point in my life, anyway.

Q: What kind of work do you do at the museum?

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A: Now? I am at the donor desk, the membership desk, I work. And then I also -- I'm on the speaking bureau. And whenever they need me, if they call me, I make it a priority to go there.

Q: An-And where have you given talks?

A: Well, in high schools. And sometimes I talk to kids when they come in, they surround the desk there, and I will talk to them when they come in, if the teachers request it.

Q: And -- and you tell them your story?

A: Not the complete story, because it's impossible to tell the complete story. I just focus in perhaps on -- I give them a -- I -- I give them a responsibility. I tell them that it's in their hands to make a better society and what they saw there is reality. It's not a motion picture, it was real -- reality. And to go out and make a better world. That's what I'm hoping they do.

Q: Do you think working at the museum has affected your life?

A: I --

Q: Or -- or your memories of the Holocaust? Has it affected those memories?

A: I think working in the Holocaust is giving me a chance to take my mother's message to people, and so that makes me feel good. And I don't know, I just -- I think I -- I enjoy working there, don't ask me why, but I -- I enjoy working there. I talk to people, different people, and I like it. Some people have questions and I

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don't blame them. If I probably wouldn't live through what I did, I probably would have lots of questions. So I try to explain it the best way I know how that makes sense. And as you know, the Germans were very, very suf -- e-efficient, by keeping -- by keeping track on where the Jews were going and what happened and all that. So if they doubting my words, they can always go and pick up with some documents that were -- that we have today. We don't have it all because it wasn't just **Auschwitz** that they were killing people in the **Einsatzgruppen**. And --

Q: Are there any other special insights that you bring to the museum because you are a survivor?

A: Special insights. Gee, I didn't think about it. The only th -- the -- well, the only thing that I feel I can explain this horror more than anybody else, because we all read about it and we all heard about it and we all saw -- see the documentaries that they have today of it, but I lived it. And I think the person that lived it can really, really get it across somewhat a little better maybe than the educated and the teacher can. And I tell them my purpose on earth today, and I hope they take me serious. You know, as I said before, I would just like to see a better society, and if I can do something about it I would like to, the best way I know how.

Q: So you feel society could be made better?

A: I think so. I'll tell you the truth, being that I was lucky enough to bring in three kids i-into this world and given the chance to mold them, I think we can have



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a better society, because I know exactly how my kids feel. I remember going to work in **Germany** and kids would be -- you know, near their picket fences in the house. You know, kids 10 - 11 years old, something like that, playing. And when they saw us pass by, they started spitting and screaming [**speaks German here**]. You see now, when kids are being brought up with this hate, I don't really think they're capable of loving other people, even though at that time they were hating the Jews. But I think when you bring up kids hating, they eventually hate. Their life will be a hate. It's very destructive, very destructive. Very destructive. So now I -- I really feel if my kids would be different people, I -- I -- I would say well, you know, there's nothing we can do. I understand -- I understand, being that my daughter is -- you know, she's got a degree in microbiology that she -- she tells me a lot of people are, you know, born with certain genes, and I understand that. I understand that, but you still have to nurture that gene. And he -- he might -- he might have the gene of having red hair or black hair or whatever. But the nurturing to make a person, I think it -- it -- it's a big job. To tell you the truth, I think if I would have known all that, maybe I would be afraid that I'm not capable of doing it, at that time, anyway. But -- so I -- I definitely feel that if we can just somehow erase this hate, we will definitely have a better society, I do believe in that. I do believe in that.

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Q: When you meet other survivors, or friends of yours who are survivors, do you encourage them to work at the museum as a volunteer?

A: I do. But it is hard to explain. As much as I talk about it, I still have difficulties. And a lot of survivors grew older and weaker and they just cannot deal with their past, it's too painful. It's very painful. So everybody does the best they know how, but I can also understand it. It's a painful situation.

Q: Do you belong to -- outside the museum, do you belong to any survivor groups?

A: Yes, I do. I do, and we get together and we try to support each other. Don't forget, we survivors -- I mean, thank God that I -- you know, I have children and they made -- they made their own little families, one or two children, but we have nobody else on the outside. So, believe it or not there's some survivors that are dying, and if they -- you know, and if by some reason they could never have a child, or they had a child and unfortunately it's not here, they really don't have anybody. So we -- we become their family.

Q: Wh-What is your relationship with the other volunteers at the museum who are survivors or witnesses to the Holocaust? Do you -- you --

A: Yes. How shall I say it? I have such strong, good feelings towards all the people that work in the Holocaust, whether they get paid or not, because I feel n-not only are they do -- especially the volunteers, they are trying to right the wrong by coming there and working there. I once asked a gentleman, why -- why are you

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working here in this museum? I call it a cemetery. You could go out and get a job anyplace, at a happy place and have a happy day. But I have to understand that other people that didn't go through what I did, they have a different feeling. But he -- he told me a story about his life. He says, you know, I have a child -- I have a child that I love dearly and she is not as focused as another child is. And when I think, would I have had this child in **Germany**? I would have lost her. And she makes my life. She means so much in my life. Because, as you know, the Germans were gassing their own children first, the sick ones. Well, I don't know whether this motivates him to be there, but I said to myself, if he told me this story, there must be a spark underneath there. So everybody that works in this museum is trying to right the wrong, I think. That's the way I look at them, and I -- I love them all. I feel very comfortable with them. I almost feel like they're my relatives. I -- okay, no big deal. I'll just take a towel and wipe it off, no big deal. **[tape break]**

Q: We were talking about the -- your relationship, and even with the non-Jewish volunteers and staff at the museum.

A: Absolutely. Absolutely. Matter of fact -- I don't know if I should say it, the Jews, I expect them to be there, y-you know, but when I see a non-Jew as a volunteer, I really -- I really feel very good about it, very good about it. Yes, I do, and I feel close to them, yeah.

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Q: Have you exchanged your story with other volunteers that -- survivor volunteers at the museum?

A: Well, we all had different experiences, I want you to know. We come from different places. The truth is that we're -- **[phone ringing][tape break]** -- yeah -- yeah, I -- I -- I like them all. I like them all.

Q: And then I said something about -- talking about your experiences with the other survivors, but -- do you exchange your stories?

A: S-Somewhat, but we really do not. What we do is talk about our grandchildren. Can -- I just feel bad that I forgot my daughter's college. Can I just mention it --

Q: Course.

A: -- it was -- she went to **Syracuse**. And **Mishy**, please forgive me, but sometimes my mind goes blank. And -- and I have another grandson that went to **Ithaca**. So **Brian**, again, please forgive me, but I always think about you anyway. My mind sometimes goes blank.

Q: You -- you did talk about some very memorable experiences you had in the museum, such as talking to that woman whose father was an **SS** officer. You -- you had told us about this special experience you had with this woman whose father had been an **SS** officer. Are there any other memorable experiences that you've had at the museum when you were down there volunteering?

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A: Oh, I have a lot. You know, it will take forever for me to talk about it. Well, th -  
- that experience with this lady, it wasn't in the Holocaust Museum, it was in the  
Children's Museum on -- on -- you know, on **Third Street**, I spoke there, too. In  
the Holocaust Museum, I -- at one time -- he was from **Germany**, you know, and  
he was very upset, and he s -- comes over to me and he says to me, you have a  
nerve to -- to -- to have this Holocaust Museum here in the **United States**. Why  
don't you have a museum what you did to the Indians? I s -- and I saw he was very  
upset and I knew I can't make a lot of noises there, because people will come over  
and will make a scene. I begged him to sit down. Actually, you know, I was trying  
to be very nice to him to calm him down. And he did -- he did sit, he sat down and  
he was shooting off at the nu -- **United States**, I'll tell you, it's not enough that I  
was hurting from the Holocaust, but then he started about the **United States**, I'll  
tell you -- I -- I mean -- but I knew that I have to be patient with him, that I am in  
the museum and I cannot afford on having a -- a scene there. So after he stopped  
talking, I said to him, you know, I let you talk now for about five, six minutes,  
right? And now, allow me to say something, and I'm not going to talk for five, six  
minutes. I just want you to know that the **United States** talks about what happened  
to the Indians. In the **United States** we teach our children what happened to the uni  
-- to the Indians. Tell me, do you teach your children what happened in the  
Holocaust, what your ancestors did? So don't tell me -- and come telling me what

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the **United States** has the right to do and not the right to do. And as you see, we in the **United States** constantly are trying to right the wrong. Are you doing the same thing? Even today, you know, there is a lot of Arab -- you know, different countries people, there are -- still discriminated. They still cannot tolerate them. We have a melting pot here. People from all over the world, they come here and they find a -- a secure place. At least their life are -- aren't threatened. Does your country do the same thing? Well, then he left. Well, I -- you know, you get in different characters. I-I'm not blaming all German society about it, but you get these people in. Some of them are very happy, some of them -- some of them -- well, I get so many, you know, I could talk for a di -- shall I tell you what happened once? That was in the museum. You know, we work right there as people come down from the museum, and she was a -- she was a mature lady and she came down and I see her cry, so I thought maybe she got sick, so I took a chair and gave it to her to sit down and sh-she just you know, goes back and forth. I says, lady, you know, I would very much like to help you. And she looks at me and she still wouldn't talk to me. And then she stays there and cries. I says, you know, I wish I could help you. So I pulled her over to the desk and I says, please sit down. Then, after awhile sort of, she loosened up and she says to me, she's so upset. I says, tell me, why are you so upset? She says, well you know -- she must have been a religious lady. She says, you know, **Jesus** was a Jew, and when he'll find

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out what happened to the Jews, how will I explain it? I says -- at first I didn't catch on, but then I says to her, what do you mean? She says, well you know, when I die, I'll meet **Jesus** and he might ask me and I will not know how to explain. I says, look, lady --

**End of Tape Three, Side A**

**Beginning Tape Three, Side B**

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goldkind**, and this is tape number three, side **B**, and you were talking about the woman who was so upset about after she died and she would have to tell **Jesus** what happened to the Jews.

A: So I said to her, you know, I-I'm Jewish, I said to her. But in our religion everybody is responsible of their own actions. So please, did you kill any of these Jews? She says no, I wouldn't do that. I says, believe me, I know you wouldn't do that. And -- so don't just -- maybe you'll tell him you didn't do that. And she still couldn't swallow it, sh-she couldn't swallow it. But she was sitting there for awhile and we were exchanging what she believes in and what I believe in and somehow I made her feel that, you know what? There are some very -- you know, there are a lot of guilty people. I mean, I don't want to say -- you know, I have to say first there's a lot of guilty people, but also you know, we're all responsible. And I think that's the way she felt. That's exactly the way she felt, that we are all responsible. I

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think her religion made her feel like that. And I thought that was a nice lady, and I don't think I'll ever forget her either.

Q: You mean that we're all responsible for each other? Ri -- is that what you mean, or responsible for the guilt?

A: In a way we all responsible because you see, if there would be enough people to say, we cannot gas a million and a half children, then the world would hear it, but there was a silence. So they didn't take the responsibility of -- of saying it. That she -- he or she carries the responsibility, she is saying, wait a minute, I don't like that. If there would be more people crying and saying that, i-i -- you know, a tragedy like this wouldn't have happened. So she sticks out in my mind. I hugged her and we parted as friends, sort of, and I was glad that I got an opportunity to talk to her, and it was a good experience for me too, yeah.

Q: When you come into the museum, when you walk into the building every time, do you have a special feeling? When you cross the threshold, when you walk in?

A: Your -- your -- you're not going to believe this. Wi -- you know, I walk in here, I walk in there and if I see people coming, it makes me very happy. And if I see that people stop coming, I s-say to myself, oh my God, I hope these doors never close, because we need to learn, this place is so important. You know what, I think perhaps it's even more important than I -- you know -- even though, you know, I -- I think universities are very important, especially to me, because I'm not an



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educated person, a-and -- but I think this museum is even more important because maybe we can educate people to be better. And you know, there are -- the reason why I say this is this, because at this point today we know that the uneducated people were trying to save the Jew, and the educated people, like **Mengele** and thousands of others could commit this at-atrocity. You se -- you understand what I'm trying to say? So, you know, I think if a person isn't educated, but if h-he is brought up with the idea that we should be different and we can be different, it's very important. We think we're very sophisticated and you know, as human beings, but we're capable of doing a lot of unthinkable things, and that needs to change.

Q: Are there any particular parts of the museum and their exhibits that you identify with?

A: All of it, what shall I tell you? All of it. I went through all this, believe it or not. All this, it's hard to believe. It's hard to believe, all this, wherever I go. I look at the little windows and I remember I -- you know, every little thing has got a story for me there. You know, as we were going to **Auschwitz** we didn't know where we were going. So I was li -- you know, y -- a -- next to my brother, I was, you know, the yo -- the younger. And they pulled me up to look outside, I wanted to see what's going on outside, and we were passing farms where people were working on the farms. And they're motioning with their hands across their throat that we're

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going to be, you know -- and when I said it, I didn't even think about it twice, because who would think, I'm a healthy person, that somebody is going to want to kill me. I just didn't think about it. To tell you the truth, I wasn't affected by it. So, the window -- then I see these farmers, they're motioning this to me -- everything, everything, everything. I take a look around and I see my life. Everything, yes.

Q: So you intend to keep working at the museum as long as you can?

A: Definitely. Absolutely. I think I want this to be, how shall I say it? My last breath. Maybe I'm too strong about it, but as long as I can do it, I'll -- this is where I want to -- I think that's where I belong. Sometimes I go with the subway and I say to -- you know, there's a funny feeling [**indecipherable**] says, you know, I think I'm gonna -- I'm gonna visit my family, you know? I get such crazy thoughts. I don't know why, but it's silly.

Q: You mean you -- you feel when you go in there you're visiting your family, is that what you mean?

A: Sometimes, sometimes, sometimes. I reach out to them, in my head, in my heart, I don't know, it's -- you know, I hate to say it because it doesn't sound normal, but sometimes yes.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: Mm-hm, yeah.

Q: Have you been back to **Europe** at all?

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A: My husband wanted to go to see **Auschwitz** and I really didn't. I really didn't, I was fighting it off and finally he says, you know, ra -- **Helen**, I understand it's difficult for you, but I have to go. [coughs] Excuse me. And so what -- he decided that he has to go, I says, well, I have to go with him. So we went once to **Auschwitz** with a group. And he -- he made a prayer there, for all of them actually, for all of them. Anyway --

Q: Did -- did you go -- you went inside the camp? You were able to do that?

A: Can you cut it, or not?

Q: Yeah. [tape break]

A: The most important thing in my life I already lost, so whatever, you know, I don't take it to -- you know? Some people get upset, sometimes I look at them -- over really things they shouldn't. So I --

Q: We were talking about that you went back with your husband to **Auschwitz** and I asked if you went inside the camp when you went on your visit.

A: You see, people that go to see this camp, really, they took apart the camp. They left there a few barracks. The gas chamber was there. For me, I saw the whole thing the way it was, but my husband didn't really see it the way it was. So -- course everybody was sad and crying there because we knew, we all knew the loss and what went on there. But it's different. It's different than when I was there. It's different. And I was so upset, let me tell you that. They have a -- like a museum, at

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least when I was there, I don't know what's going on there today. They have a museum there with pictures, and names. And we had a guide, and I looked at these pictures, because you know, it doesn't matter whether you're Jewish or not Jewish, you look the same to me. People look the same. But then I noticed there was a lot - - that there wasn't any Jewish names that you would call. And I look around and I spend some time there, I couldn't believe this. So I said to myself, it's -- maybe it's me, because you know, it's maybe -- but there weren't any Jewish names under these pictures. So I go over to the guide, I says, listen, can you explain me something, because I don't understand it. You know, I'm the one who was here in **Auschwitz** and I brought here my whole family, 89 people, tell me how come that there isn't a name that has a -- sort of a Jewish name. She says to me, well you know -- you know, you remember when you came to **Auschwitz** you had to take your valise and throw it in the ditch? I says yes, I remember, I -- I do remember. And so we don't have any documents who came here as a Jew, but we do have the documents who came here that weren't Jews. So I said to her, you know what? You told me something new that I didn't realize. I didn't know that there were some s -- because this is a destruction camp, and I didn't know that there were some non-Jews came here to be destroyed. I knew there were in different camps, some people that resisted **Hitler**, but I didn't think they came all the way to **Auschwitz**. So you just told me something new. So it's okay, now I will

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understand it. But [**indecipherable**]. So she told me there are no Jewish names because there is no record of it, that Jews were sent to **Auschwitz**. I says, you mean to say a million and a half children that you know went to the gas chamber here and there wasn't one name of a child? I was so upset there, you have no idea. I was very, very upset. I don't know what they did with the rest of it there now. I don't know what's going on, but I better don't go there because today I can't take the pain any more. I-I'm too old. So when you talk about this Holocaust Museum, we scraped here a few documents, there a few documents. I mean, they can say a hundred years from today it doesn't even happen because we don't have no documents of any kind. So I think that's important there.

Q: Well, the --

A: That's my experience with **Auschwitz**.

Q: Did you go back to where you lived? Did you go back?

A: No, they didn't le-let us go there because the Russians were there.

Q: Oh.

A: So we -- I couldn't go there and I really didn't want to go there to face these people, I don't think I could.

Q: Why not?

A: Because it would be very difficult for me. It would be very difficult for me. Not that it wasn't difficult to go to **Auschwitz**, but it would be more -- it would be just

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as difficult over there. Don't forget, these people lived there for generations and generations and generations and generations. In the wit -- with -- way they made us -- way they made us look, like we were less than rats to these people. So how can they look at me and have any respect for me? And why should I go there? The world is plenty big and it will take generations and generations to come for **Europe** to recuperate to see a Jew as any other normal person, I want to tell you that. The damage that was done there, that's the way I feel.

Q: Do you get reparations?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: What is your feeling about that?

A: Oh well, I'll have to tell you the story about it. In the beginning I didn't want to hear about it. Oh, when I heard it, I -- I c -- I cried, I carried on, and I says, there is no money to pay me what they took away from me, it's ridiculous, I says, I -- I don't want it and I was fighting it. It took me maybe two years with my husband back and forth. You see, he -- I was emotional about it and he was realistic about it. He couldn't reach me and I couldn't reach him. So finally, what did the sale from him, where he, you know, sort of hit the nail o-o-on the head, is telling me, you know, **Helen**, I know you don't want this money, but what you should do is take this money and help other people that are suffering. And I said to myself, now maybe -- maybe I'm just -- maybe reality, that's what the -- realistically that's what

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I should do. But for a long time I was very emotional about it, that I couldn't even think realistically. So -- but that's what I did, that's exactly what I do. I never use a penny of it, never, because I would feel like I want to, you know. So then I says, you know, I did send this check there and there and I'm hoping that m-made somebody feel better. I do that. I do that.

Q: What was it like for you to become an American citizen?

A: Well --

Q: And what does it mean to you today?

A: I need to get on my va -- vocabulary isn't too big, and I need -- sometimes when I'm looking for a certain word I have to think about it, and I still don't get it. I was delighted to become an American citizen. I -- I -- I bless **America** as much as -- you know, to me, being a -- I'm not saying it's perfect, but for a person like me, I see the **United States** a little bit different than other people do, different. Because the other people feel that this is the way life is, and that's the way, you know -- I love the **United States** and I am delighted that I, you know, i-if I want to make myself feel good, as I said before, I -- I says, I gave the **United States** three kids that are the best of citizens and a -- I -- I-I really love the **United States**. And you know what? If I hear somebody complaining, which there's plenty complaints, I very patiently listen, you know, I listen, and -- but I always want to debate it. I don't let it just go. I feel th -- I showed the other side of the coin and I have so

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much material to show on the other side of the coin, but I never let it go. Just like I would speak up for this child that is in danger, that's how I feel about the **United States**. I need to speak up, and I do. I do.

Q: Well, speaking of these three wonderful citizens that you gave to the **United States**, is there any message that you wanted to leave for your children or your grandchildren?

A: I wish I could find some words of wisdom. I used to tell my husband to do that. Well first, I'm just lucky to have -- to ha -- you know, I know life comes to an end, I'm just lucky that I had the opportunity of experiencing even to have my children. And not only are -- are they wonderful children to me, but they're just -- they're just very good citizens. I feel if my children are around someplace or somewhere where somebody will be [indecipherable] I have a feeling that they will want to be there the first ones. My grandchildren are like I can't believe it. They're such a big part of my good feeling in. They're such nice kids, all of them, all of them, all of them. And well, in the end, I -- you know, I just want to say that God took away a lot from me, but he also gave me back a lot. And my hope and pray is that they take good care of themselves and they continue in this world, being a model for society.

A: Are your children named after anybody in particular?



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Q: My daughter, when she was born there were so many names. In the meantime I didn't have a mother and **Abe** didn't have a mother. So, how do -- what do we do with all these names? I wanted to name her a dozen names. So I se -- I said to **Abe**, well, you know what? Today we'll ma -- you know, Monday we'll call her this, Tuesday we'll call her that. It was such a crazy thought to me, honestly, I remember. So he was laughing, he says, you know you're not being realistic. We need a name. So finally he said we'll -- half of my mother's name and a half of my husband's name. So that was the compromise. My second daughter came and **Abe** had his father. So here I -- I wanted to name her after my father, because I didn't think I'm gonna have more children. We just thought of having two children. So that was big problem. Here this beautiful little kid is born and we want to name her after my father. And so my husband went all over the city to look for a name that you can translate from a man's name to a Jewish name. He went to the synagogues, to the library, he brought me all kinds of books to the hospital. And finally we found the name, and so she is named after my father, and we named her **Michelle**. This is my second. But I'll tell you, it was such an anxiety every time we would have to pick a name, because we needed to give these kid -- kids 16 names, like never before, you know? So it was a big thing to us, my husband spent a few days on figuring out how should we name this beautiful child. So it -- and then my son. So then my son came and, you know, so already my father had a name and of

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course my oldest brother also got killed by picking mines. So I wanted that name badly and my husband was trying to accommodate me because e-even though he had a big loss, too, you know, all of his relatives were in **Europe**. But he knew that meant a lot to me, so he says okay, we going to name this child after your family, he ga -- so he says -- so I says, you know, I want to name him after my oldest brother, something. He says, but you know, in the Jewish faith, you cannot name a child after a young person. So he says, I'll tell you what, let's name him after your brother and after my grandfather, so [indecipherable] his name is **Larry**. So -- but it was a bi -- you know, you brought up a very good point, that was a big thing in our lives, how we planned on these kids, so --

Q: And what are your grandchildren's names? You can just go down the line.

A: Okay, now -- who their name is -- who their name aft --

Q: Well, if you [indecipherable] fine.

A: Okay, the first grandchildren that were born, they were all named after my husband's father, because that -- you know, he died. So this is her -- was his wish. And of course, as good as these kids were, they wanted to please him, and that's what it was. And with **Evan**, my son-in-law's grandma died when he was born, so **Michelle** said that would be nice to do, because -- but of course, he was a boy, they called him **Evan**. And then **Brian, Brian** my --

Q: Number two grandchild?

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A: -- number thr -- num [phone ringing][tape break]

Q: We were talking about the names of your grandchildren, so can you go down the line and name them?

A: Okay. My oldest daughter's children are **Jason, Edina** and **Fefy**. My younger daughter's children's name are **Darren, Evan** and **Brian**. My son's children are **Josh, Clifford, Jessica** and **Matthew**. And they are the greatest, all of them. All -- all are the greatest kids. I'm just lucky having them, the truth, that's the truth.

Q: Is there anything that you would like to say that we haven't covered today?

A: I-I'm glad that I had an opportunity to be recorded and heard. And I -- I hope whoever's gonna listen to my tape that will learn something. And again, I mentioned it so many times that I wil -- that they -- they'll try and make the world a little better, and I don't know, that -- that's what I would like to do.

Q: Well, that's a wonderful note to end on. Thank you very much for doing the interview. This concludes the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Helen Goldkind**.

**End of Tape Three, Side B**

**Conclusion of Interview**