

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,740

2  
00:00:01,740 --> 00:00:04,200  
This is a continuation of  
the United States Holocaust

3  
00:00:04,200 --> 00:00:08,370  
Memorial Museum volunteer  
collection post-Holocaust

4  
00:00:08,370 --> 00:00:15,010  
interview with Ruth Cohen,  
and this is track number two.

5  
00:00:15,010 --> 00:00:17,020  
You were talking about  
your grandchildren

6  
00:00:17,020 --> 00:00:19,110  
and going to the  
Holocaust Museum.

7  
00:00:19,110 --> 00:00:19,610  
Right.

8  
00:00:19,610 --> 00:00:23,110

9  
00:00:23,110 --> 00:00:27,310  
I was wondering-- and we'll  
talk about the Holocaust

10  
00:00:27,310 --> 00:00:29,050  
Museum in a while.

11  
00:00:29,050 --> 00:00:32,049  
Do you feel that you are  
two different people, one

12  
00:00:32,049 --> 00:00:34,930

on the outside to the public  
and one on the inside?

13  
00:00:34,930 --> 00:00:37,120  
Not really.

14  
00:00:37,120 --> 00:00:39,430  
Not really, because I don't--

15  
00:00:39,430 --> 00:00:44,230  
I really, really don't  
live in the Holocaust.

16  
00:00:44,230 --> 00:00:44,770  
I live here.

17  
00:00:44,770 --> 00:00:47,570

18  
00:00:47,570 --> 00:00:52,280  
And I know that some people  
always talk about it, always

19  
00:00:52,280 --> 00:00:55,580  
remember it, always everything.

20  
00:00:55,580 --> 00:01:01,565  
Everything connected with today  
is connected with yesterday,

21  
00:01:01,565 --> 00:01:04,370  
and somehow I don't.

22  
00:01:04,370 --> 00:01:07,490  
I don't know why, but I don't.

23  
00:01:07,490 --> 00:01:11,400  
But what I did want to mention  
was that my granddaughter's bat

24  
00:01:11,400 --> 00:01:12,020  
mitzvah--

25  
00:01:12,020 --> 00:01:15,980  
I didn't know about this until  
a year ago or so-- two years,

26  
00:01:15,980 --> 00:01:17,330  
a year and a half ago--

27  
00:01:17,330 --> 00:01:20,400

28  
00:01:20,400 --> 00:01:23,730  
about sharing the bat  
mitzvah or bar mitzvah.

29  
00:01:23,730 --> 00:01:27,770  
No one told me about  
it until I found out.

30  
00:01:27,770 --> 00:01:32,330  
And then my granddaughter  
last January

31  
00:01:32,330 --> 00:01:40,630  
mentioned my brother and the  
two children who we had adopted.

32  
00:01:40,630 --> 00:01:42,880  
She-- what is it called--

33  
00:01:42,880 --> 00:01:46,330  
sharing her bat  
mitzvah with them,

34  
00:01:46,330 --> 00:01:51,190  
and then my other grandson  
who was bar mitzvah'd

35  
00:01:51,190 --> 00:01:56,520  
in July mentioned  
four of my cousins.

36

00:01:56,520 --> 00:01:59,310

37

00:01:59,310 --> 00:02:01,830

And now my youngest  
granddaughter

38

00:02:01,830 --> 00:02:04,080

will mention some  
others, and then we'll

39

00:02:04,080 --> 00:02:09,820

find some other  
children to share

40

00:02:09,820 --> 00:02:14,430

to make sure that all my family  
had sort of a bar mitzvah.

41

00:02:14,430 --> 00:02:15,660

Yes.

42

00:02:15,660 --> 00:02:18,510

A bar mitzvah-- because  
this is done at services.

43

00:02:18,510 --> 00:02:19,360

Yes.

44

00:02:19,360 --> 00:02:21,560

Yes.

45

00:02:21,560 --> 00:02:23,700

do you read a lot  
about the Holocaust?

46

00:02:23,700 --> 00:02:24,930

No, I don't.

47

00:02:24,930 --> 00:02:25,800

Purposefully not?

48

00:02:25,800 --> 00:02:27,500  
Purposefully not.

49  
00:02:27,500 --> 00:02:29,180  
It's too painful?

50  
00:02:29,180 --> 00:02:33,302  
Yes, and I don't want to  
see any movies either.

51  
00:02:33,302 --> 00:02:34,010  
[TELEPHONE RINGS]

52  
00:02:34,010 --> 00:02:36,056  
I hope my husband can answer it.

53  
00:02:36,056 --> 00:02:39,680

54  
00:02:39,680 --> 00:02:42,370  
I just don't need the--

55  
00:02:42,370 --> 00:02:45,020  
I don't need to live it--

56  
00:02:45,020 --> 00:02:46,620  
to relive it.

57  
00:02:46,620 --> 00:02:51,320  
I also don't talk about  
it at the Museum ever.

58  
00:02:51,320 --> 00:02:54,523  
In other words, I'm first  
person or any of that,

59  
00:02:54,523 --> 00:02:55,190  
I just won't do.

60  
00:02:55,190 --> 00:02:57,420  
You have not done first person.

61  
00:02:57,420 --> 00:02:58,430  
No, and I won't.

62  
00:02:58,430 --> 00:02:58,930  
I couldn't.

63  
00:02:58,930 --> 00:03:00,240  
And why is that?

64  
00:03:00,240 --> 00:03:02,540  
Because I don't feel like  
sitting there and crying.

65  
00:03:02,540 --> 00:03:05,307  
Oh, OK, because you know  
that's what you would do.

66  
00:03:05,307 --> 00:03:06,140  
Don't you see what--

67  
00:03:06,140 --> 00:03:09,270

68  
00:03:09,270 --> 00:03:14,540  
I did-- my grandson's fifth  
grade teacher pleaded with me

69  
00:03:14,540 --> 00:03:16,160  
to come and talk.

70  
00:03:16,160 --> 00:03:18,170  
So I gave in, and  
I regretted it,

71  
00:03:18,170 --> 00:03:23,660  
because there were 20  
children who watched me cry.

72  
00:03:23,660 --> 00:03:26,410  
And what for?

73

00:03:26,410 --> 00:03:30,213

Let them learn it  
from somebody else.

74

00:03:30,213 --> 00:03:31,130

Objectively, you mean?

75

00:03:31,130 --> 00:03:34,800

Right, or else somebody doesn't  
else who doesn't sit and cry.

76

00:03:34,800 --> 00:03:37,000

Plenty of people  
manage to do that.

77

00:03:37,000 --> 00:03:37,930

I don't know how.

78

00:03:37,930 --> 00:03:41,160

79

00:03:41,160 --> 00:03:46,290

So I just don't want to  
have them see my pain

80

00:03:46,290 --> 00:03:48,720

and be in pain because of that.

81

00:03:48,720 --> 00:03:51,460

There's no need for it,  
as far as I'm concerned.

82

00:03:51,460 --> 00:03:53,280

There is a need  
to talk about it,

83

00:03:53,280 --> 00:03:55,920

but I don't have to  
be the one to do it.

84

00:03:55,920 --> 00:03:58,140

There are lots of people.

85  
00:03:58,140 --> 00:04:00,280  
Did you ever need  
any counseling?

86  
00:04:00,280 --> 00:04:00,780  
For that?

87  
00:04:00,780 --> 00:04:01,920  
No.

88  
00:04:01,920 --> 00:04:03,215  
I really feel--

89  
00:04:03,215 --> 00:04:04,340  
You thought you handled it?

90  
00:04:04,340 --> 00:04:06,690  
Right.

91  
00:04:06,690 --> 00:04:11,210  
What were your thoughts  
during the Eichmann trial?

92  
00:04:11,210 --> 00:04:13,520  
Hope that they  
will get as well as

93  
00:04:13,520 --> 00:04:17,899  
the Demjanjuk trial  
or any of the others.

94  
00:04:17,899 --> 00:04:20,839  
But those were the main ones.

95  
00:04:20,839 --> 00:04:23,180  
Oh, I'm very happy to  
see that people are

96  
00:04:23,180 --> 00:04:26,042  
punished for their atrocities.

97



00:04:26,042 --> 00:04:27,550  
There's no question about it.

98  
00:04:27,550 --> 00:04:32,050

99  
00:04:32,050 --> 00:04:38,050  
I just don't feel like reliving  
things constantly, so I don't.

100  
00:04:38,050 --> 00:04:41,260

101  
00:04:41,260 --> 00:04:43,662  
Right or wrong,  
that's the way I am.

102  
00:04:43,662 --> 00:04:45,460  
That's who you are.

103  
00:04:45,460 --> 00:04:49,120  
But you said you do feel at  
this point very American.

104  
00:04:49,120 --> 00:04:50,530  
Oh, yes.

105  
00:04:50,530 --> 00:04:53,460  
I have for the longest time--

106  
00:04:53,460 --> 00:04:54,295  
a Jewish American.

107  
00:04:54,295 --> 00:04:56,120  
A Jewish American, yeah.

108  
00:04:56,120 --> 00:05:00,250  
And how religious  
was your home when

109  
00:05:00,250 --> 00:05:02,630  
you were raising your children?

110  
00:05:02,630 --> 00:05:03,740  
The same as now.

111  
00:05:03,740 --> 00:05:04,930  
We're traditional.

112  
00:05:04,930 --> 00:05:08,010  
We travel on Shabbat.

113  
00:05:08,010 --> 00:05:10,070  
But you observe Shabbat  
in the sense of--

114  
00:05:10,070 --> 00:05:11,290  
We observe Shabbat.

115  
00:05:11,290 --> 00:05:14,440  
We have Shabbat dinner  
here every Friday night

116  
00:05:14,440 --> 00:05:18,090  
with my family and friends.

117  
00:05:18,090 --> 00:05:22,060  
And we all go to services.

118  
00:05:22,060 --> 00:05:24,360  
Not all the time, but at times.

119  
00:05:24,360 --> 00:05:27,030  
We don't travel on Rosh  
Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

120  
00:05:27,030 --> 00:05:30,870

121  
00:05:30,870 --> 00:05:32,730  
And we have a  
strictly kosher home.

122

00:05:32,730 --> 00:05:37,080

123

00:05:37,080 --> 00:05:39,580

And did your father  
keep up his observance?

124

00:05:39,580 --> 00:05:40,650

Yes.

125

00:05:40,650 --> 00:05:42,210

He did.

126

00:05:42,210 --> 00:05:44,110

As I said, not to  
the same extent,

127

00:05:44,110 --> 00:05:47,540

and I can't even tell you  
to what extent he did not,

128

00:05:47,540 --> 00:05:50,900

but it was not the same  
as when we were at home.

129

00:05:50,900 --> 00:05:52,980

He wasn't as strict about it.

130

00:05:52,980 --> 00:05:54,595

He put on tefillin  
every morning.

131

00:05:54,595 --> 00:05:57,430

132

00:05:57,430 --> 00:06:00,530

I don't remember him going  
to services at night.

133

00:06:00,530 --> 00:06:03,860

He said what's going on at home?

134

00:06:03,860 --> 00:06:09,980  
But we did belong to a shul  
even while he was alive.

135  
00:06:09,980 --> 00:06:12,770  
What about your feelings  
about being Jewish--

136  
00:06:12,770 --> 00:06:15,590  
that you had to go through  
these terrible tragedies

137  
00:06:15,590 --> 00:06:16,960  
and terrible losses because--

138  
00:06:16,960 --> 00:06:18,870  
I'm proud to be Jewish.

139  
00:06:18,870 --> 00:06:20,000  
And even so.

140  
00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:20,810  
Absolutely.

141  
00:06:20,810 --> 00:06:21,340  
Even so.

142  
00:06:21,340 --> 00:06:22,590  
I wouldn't be anything else.

143  
00:06:22,590 --> 00:06:24,280  
Even though you lost so much.

144  
00:06:24,280 --> 00:06:25,241  
Absolutely.

145  
00:06:25,241 --> 00:06:28,610

146  
00:06:28,610 --> 00:06:31,210  
I can't think of anything  
else that I would want to be.

147  
00:06:31,210 --> 00:06:35,720

148  
00:06:35,720 --> 00:06:40,150  
I feel our religion is fine,  
except for some little things.

149  
00:06:40,150 --> 00:06:44,070

150  
00:06:44,070 --> 00:06:47,140  
Do you have many  
non-Jewish friends?

151  
00:06:47,140 --> 00:06:48,100  
Not here.

152  
00:06:48,100 --> 00:06:49,820  
Interesting.

153  
00:06:49,820 --> 00:06:50,820  
In New York I did.

154  
00:06:50,820 --> 00:06:51,940  
Did they ask you?

155  
00:06:51,940 --> 00:06:55,630  
Did you tell them  
about your life story?

156  
00:06:55,630 --> 00:06:57,970  
If they asked me, I told them.

157  
00:06:57,970 --> 00:07:00,040  
As I said I never--

158  
00:07:00,040 --> 00:07:01,630  
Bring it up.

159  
00:07:01,630 --> 00:07:03,440

I might bring up that I was--

160  
00:07:03,440 --> 00:07:04,570  
Yeah.

161  
00:07:04,570 --> 00:07:06,535  
--that I was in  
concentration camp,

162  
00:07:06,535 --> 00:07:09,616  
if the subject comes up or if--

163  
00:07:09,616 --> 00:07:12,320

164  
00:07:12,320 --> 00:07:15,050  
but I don't go saying  
my name is Ruth Cohen.

165  
00:07:15,050 --> 00:07:16,910  
I'm a Holocaust survivor.

166  
00:07:16,910 --> 00:07:18,920  
Did you get a number?

167  
00:07:18,920 --> 00:07:19,535  
No, I didn't.

168  
00:07:19,535 --> 00:07:22,880

169  
00:07:22,880 --> 00:07:26,000  
Nobody in that  
lager had a number.

170  
00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:27,740  
We were there to--

171  
00:07:27,740 --> 00:07:30,080  
we were in the  
Vernichtungslager,

172  
00:07:30,080 --> 00:07:31,520  
not in an Arbeitslager.

173  
00:07:31,520 --> 00:07:37,090

174  
00:07:37,090 --> 00:07:39,910  
I don't even know  
what to call it.

175  
00:07:39,910 --> 00:07:40,840  
That--

176  
00:07:40,840 --> 00:07:42,060  
Section?

177  
00:07:42,060 --> 00:07:45,860  
That 130 block  
section was strictly

178  
00:07:45,860 --> 00:07:52,500  
for Vernichtung, not for work.

179  
00:07:52,500 --> 00:07:53,920  
I was the only one.

180  
00:07:53,920 --> 00:07:56,220  
I and these few kids were  
the only ones who worked.

181  
00:07:56,220 --> 00:07:57,720  
As messengers,  
you're talking about.

182  
00:07:57,720 --> 00:07:58,240  
As messengers.

183  
00:07:58,240 --> 00:07:59,370  
Right, nobody else worked.

184  
00:07:59,370 --> 00:08:00,328

The others didn't work.

185  
00:08:00,328 --> 00:08:04,870  
No, my sister  
worked, but she was--

186  
00:08:04,870 --> 00:08:09,220  
very interesting thing happened  
as we walked into our barracks.

187  
00:08:09,220 --> 00:08:12,260

188  
00:08:12,260 --> 00:08:15,700  
This was when we first  
got there the first day.

189  
00:08:15,700 --> 00:08:18,680

190  
00:08:18,680 --> 00:08:24,380  
As we walked in, my sister and  
I, a woman came to greet us--

191  
00:08:24,380 --> 00:08:28,400  
greet her, and they  
hugged and kissed.

192  
00:08:28,400 --> 00:08:31,690  
They were in camp  
together in 1938.

193  
00:08:31,690 --> 00:08:32,419  
In summer camp.

194  
00:08:32,419 --> 00:08:33,390  
In a summer camp.

195  
00:08:33,390 --> 00:08:34,370  
Right.

196  
00:08:34,370 --> 00:08:40,250



She was from Slovakia, and we were from Hungary at that time.

197  
00:08:40,250 --> 00:08:46,800  
And she is the one who got me the job to be a messenger girl,

198  
00:08:46,800 --> 00:08:50,800  
and she had my sister help her with her cleaning

199  
00:08:50,800 --> 00:08:53,040  
and whatever often.

200  
00:08:53,040 --> 00:08:56,310  
So we were very lucky about that.

201  
00:08:56,310 --> 00:09:00,170  
Were you ever physically abused in any of those camps?

202  
00:09:00,170 --> 00:09:00,670  
No.

203  
00:09:00,670 --> 00:09:00,900  
You were not.

204  
00:09:00,900 --> 00:09:02,233  
You weren't beaten or anything--

205  
00:09:02,233 --> 00:09:03,780  
Nobody there was.

206  
00:09:03,780 --> 00:09:08,640  
She must have been this Blockalteste, because she

207  
00:09:08,640 --> 00:09:11,600  
was there from '40 or so.

208  
00:09:11,600 --> 00:09:12,600

Who knows where she was.

209

00:09:12,600 --> 00:09:15,090

She never talked to us.

210

00:09:15,090 --> 00:09:15,998

But we were not.

211

00:09:15,998 --> 00:09:16,540

You were not.

212

00:09:16,540 --> 00:09:17,790

No.

213

00:09:17,790 --> 00:09:18,820

Nobody was.

214

00:09:18,820 --> 00:09:21,450

You were abused emotionally.

215

00:09:21,450 --> 00:09:22,850

Yes, but I meant physically.

216

00:09:22,850 --> 00:09:23,470

No.

217

00:09:23,470 --> 00:09:24,720

No beatings?

218

00:09:24,720 --> 00:09:27,710

No we were not.

219

00:09:27,710 --> 00:09:32,810

Not that-- when we stood on  
Zahlappell and somebody wanted

220

00:09:32,810 --> 00:09:36,800

to use his leash--

221

00:09:36,800 --> 00:09:39,320

not his leash, his whip.

222  
00:09:39,320 --> 00:09:44,860  
Didn't just use it but for no  
reason, or nobody got beaten.

223  
00:09:44,860 --> 00:09:50,150

224  
00:09:50,150 --> 00:09:51,980  
Emotionally was a  
different story.

225  
00:09:51,980 --> 00:09:53,150  
Yes, of course.

226  
00:09:53,150 --> 00:09:59,090  
In the-- as we were standing  
by the gate, we the children--

227  
00:09:59,090 --> 00:09:59,890  
The messengers.

228  
00:09:59,890 --> 00:10:02,300  
And we all spoke German.

229  
00:10:02,300 --> 00:10:09,530  
The SS guys were talking  
purposefully loudly,

230  
00:10:09,530 --> 00:10:12,560  
telling us-- not telling us,  
telling each other horror

231  
00:10:12,560 --> 00:10:13,850  
stories.

232  
00:10:13,850 --> 00:10:15,350  
So we heard them.

233  
00:10:15,350 --> 00:10:16,970  
To frighten you, you mean?

234

00:10:16,970 --> 00:10:18,840

So to let them suffer a little.

235

00:10:18,840 --> 00:10:20,390

It wasn't a question  
of frightening.

236

00:10:20,390 --> 00:10:24,190

It was a question of torturing.

237

00:10:24,190 --> 00:10:27,040

They were talking about  
this person got killed

238

00:10:27,040 --> 00:10:28,870

that way or this person got--

239

00:10:28,870 --> 00:10:30,430

I see.

240

00:10:30,430 --> 00:10:32,330

Just so that we heard it.

241

00:10:32,330 --> 00:10:35,800

Yeah, they weren't nice people.

242

00:10:35,800 --> 00:10:43,640

But that was the kind of  
abuse that we suffered.

243

00:10:43,640 --> 00:10:46,730

Do you find that you've  
changed as you've gotten older?

244

00:10:46,730 --> 00:10:51,590

Do you think more about  
the war as you get older--

245

00:10:51,590 --> 00:10:52,570

have gotten older?

246

00:10:52,570 --> 00:10:53,070  
No.

247  
00:10:53,070 --> 00:10:57,200

248  
00:10:57,200 --> 00:10:59,470  
I said I don't want  
to read about it.

249  
00:10:59,470 --> 00:11:03,260  
I don't want any  
association with it

250  
00:11:03,260 --> 00:11:05,640  
that will remind me of it.

251  
00:11:05,640 --> 00:11:11,510  
And when we talk about  
the Holocaust Museum--

252  
00:11:11,510 --> 00:11:15,080  
Well, let's talk about  
the Holocaust Museum.

253  
00:11:15,080 --> 00:11:17,595  
When did you first  
go to the Museum?

254  
00:11:17,595 --> 00:11:18,095  
Oh.

255  
00:11:18,095 --> 00:11:20,630  
You first experience.

256  
00:11:20,630 --> 00:11:22,790  
I went there before I got here.

257  
00:11:22,790 --> 00:11:25,770  
Moved here.

258  
00:11:25,770 --> 00:11:28,280

Yeah, once.

259

00:11:28,280 --> 00:11:32,840

Because a friend of ours  
donated a large sum of money,

260

00:11:32,840 --> 00:11:38,140

and he invited friends  
and family for a tour--

261

00:11:38,140 --> 00:11:40,198

a complete tour.

262

00:11:40,198 --> 00:11:42,690

And your thoughts then?

263

00:11:42,690 --> 00:11:44,640

I still can't take it.

264

00:11:44,640 --> 00:11:46,320

Then they were the same as now.

265

00:11:46,320 --> 00:11:48,720

I don't look at certain things.

266

00:11:48,720 --> 00:11:50,145

I don't partake in certain--

267

00:11:50,145 --> 00:11:54,420

268

00:11:54,420 --> 00:11:56,810

I don't really go  
to the third floor.

269

00:11:56,810 --> 00:11:59,690

I don't really go  
to the fourth floor.

270

00:11:59,690 --> 00:12:01,210

The second floor, much--

271

00:12:01,210 --> 00:12:02,450  
the second floor, yes.

272

00:12:02,450 --> 00:12:04,370  
I even worked there.

273

00:12:04,370 --> 00:12:09,260  
But the third and fourth  
are kind of out for me.

274

00:12:09,260 --> 00:12:10,420  
I don't-- we don't.

275

00:12:10,420 --> 00:12:13,090

276

00:12:13,090 --> 00:12:15,370  
What kind of work do  
you do for the Museum?

277

00:12:15,370 --> 00:12:18,480  
I work on the fifth  
floor in the archives.

278

00:12:18,480 --> 00:12:21,250  
I do translation.

279

00:12:21,250 --> 00:12:23,950  
In what languages?

280

00:12:23,950 --> 00:12:28,420  
Now Hungarian, but I  
was doing Yiddish also.

281

00:12:28,420 --> 00:12:29,090  
Oh, really?

282

00:12:29,090 --> 00:12:31,150  
I can do both.

283

00:12:31,150 --> 00:12:36,520

But before that, I was  
doing transliteration

284  
00:12:36,520 --> 00:12:46,760  
of stories such as mine, and  
they were very difficult.

285  
00:12:46,760 --> 00:12:47,830  
Too painful?

286  
00:12:47,830 --> 00:12:49,720  
Yes.

287  
00:12:49,720 --> 00:12:54,630  
And for a while I was  
bringing my writing home

288  
00:12:54,630 --> 00:12:58,300  
and typed it out  
at home, and then I

289  
00:12:58,300 --> 00:13:01,750  
stopped, because I tended  
to do it in the evening.

290  
00:13:01,750 --> 00:13:04,770  
And I just decided not to do it.

291  
00:13:04,770 --> 00:13:07,480

292  
00:13:07,480 --> 00:13:11,380  
As I said, I really don't  
need to torture myself.

293  
00:13:11,380 --> 00:13:13,120  
So you are not--

294  
00:13:13,120 --> 00:13:15,680  
you're not doing the  
translating at the moment?

295



00:13:15,680 --> 00:13:16,180  
No.

296  
00:13:16,180 --> 00:13:17,514  
Because it was too painful.

297  
00:13:17,514 --> 00:13:19,210  
Yeah.

298  
00:13:19,210 --> 00:13:25,270  
But I do translations, and  
the translations are OK.

299  
00:13:25,270 --> 00:13:27,430  
You do translations?

300  
00:13:27,430 --> 00:13:28,270  
At the Museum.

301  
00:13:28,270 --> 00:13:29,040  
You do?

302  
00:13:29,040 --> 00:13:29,540  
Yeah.

303  
00:13:29,540 --> 00:13:31,678  
But I misunderstood you.

304  
00:13:31,678 --> 00:13:33,470  
I thought you said you  
don't do it anymore.

305  
00:13:33,470 --> 00:13:35,310  
No, no, transliterations  
of the--

306  
00:13:35,310 --> 00:13:37,450  
Transliterations, I'm sorry.

307  
00:13:37,450 --> 00:13:37,950  
Right.

308  
00:13:37,950 --> 00:13:39,390  
Transliterations.

309  
00:13:39,390 --> 00:13:39,900  
Of stories.

310  
00:13:39,900 --> 00:13:40,400  
Yeah.

311  
00:13:40,400 --> 00:13:47,430

312  
00:13:47,430 --> 00:13:51,495  
What are your impressions  
of the non-Jewish volunteers

313  
00:13:51,495 --> 00:13:52,890  
at the Museum?

314  
00:13:52,890 --> 00:13:58,920  
Oh, the non-Jewish volunteers  
I admire amazingly, not

315  
00:13:58,920 --> 00:14:02,210  
necessarily the  
non-Jewish workers.

316  
00:14:02,210 --> 00:14:03,340  
You make a distinction.

317  
00:14:03,340 --> 00:14:05,540  
Yes.

318  
00:14:05,540 --> 00:14:08,960  
The volunteers do  
it because they

319  
00:14:08,960 --> 00:14:13,050  
want to be there for a reason.

320  
00:14:13,050 --> 00:14:13,880

They want to--

321  
00:14:13,880 --> 00:14:16,670

322  
00:14:16,670 --> 00:14:19,940  
I suppose there are many  
reasons for it, one of which

323  
00:14:19,940 --> 00:14:22,070  
is to learn.

324  
00:14:22,070 --> 00:14:27,800  
One is to give, and  
self-satisfaction, which

325  
00:14:27,800 --> 00:14:30,250  
is the same thing as giving.

326  
00:14:30,250 --> 00:14:34,570  
But the non-Jewish  
workers I don't think

327  
00:14:34,570 --> 00:14:41,210  
have the kind of understanding  
of what transpired for them

328  
00:14:41,210 --> 00:14:42,710  
to be in certain roles.

329  
00:14:42,710 --> 00:14:45,630

330  
00:14:45,630 --> 00:14:48,570  
My feeling.

331  
00:14:48,570 --> 00:14:51,330  
Do they just need more  
training, is that what you--

332  
00:14:51,330 --> 00:14:52,110  
More learning.

333  
00:14:52,110 --> 00:14:55,030  
More learning.

334  
00:14:55,030 --> 00:15:00,300  
More comprehension, more  
understanding, more caring,

335  
00:15:00,300 --> 00:15:08,740  
more feeling, which I don't  
know whether the feeling

336  
00:15:08,740 --> 00:15:11,240  
part is possible.

337  
00:15:11,240 --> 00:15:13,940  
But somehow the  
people who volunteer

338  
00:15:13,940 --> 00:15:16,970  
are a different breed.

339  
00:15:16,970 --> 00:15:18,590  
I'm talking about  
the non-Jewish--

340  
00:15:18,590 --> 00:15:19,580  
Non-Jewish volunteers.

341  
00:15:19,580 --> 00:15:20,900  
Yeah.

342  
00:15:20,900 --> 00:15:23,750  
Are you a member of any  
of the survivor groups--

343  
00:15:23,750 --> 00:15:24,940  
outside groups?

344  
00:15:24,940 --> 00:15:28,955  
I just joined the--

345  
00:15:28,955 --> 00:15:31,510  
The local Holocaust survivors?

346  
00:15:31,510 --> 00:15:33,010  
Right, the JCC.

347  
00:15:33,010 --> 00:15:37,650

348  
00:15:37,650 --> 00:15:38,890  
That's it.

349  
00:15:38,890 --> 00:15:40,450  
So you go to their meetings?

350  
00:15:40,450 --> 00:15:42,460  
Sometimes.

351  
00:15:42,460 --> 00:15:43,630  
I never was--

352  
00:15:43,630 --> 00:15:49,670  
I never joined any  
groups of my hometown,

353  
00:15:49,670 --> 00:15:51,100  
which existed in New York.

354  
00:15:51,100 --> 00:15:53,800

355  
00:15:53,800 --> 00:15:58,630  
And that's all I'm a member of.

356  
00:15:58,630 --> 00:16:00,330  
Actually, that's  
all I'm a member of.

357  
00:16:00,330 --> 00:16:02,076  
I don't join groups.

358

00:16:02,076 --> 00:16:03,450

You're not a joiner?

359

00:16:03,450 --> 00:16:04,690

No.

360

00:16:04,690 --> 00:16:05,220

I'm a do-er.

361

00:16:05,220 --> 00:16:06,690

I'm not a joiner.

362

00:16:06,690 --> 00:16:11,010

If you meet other survivors  
here in Washington,

363

00:16:11,010 --> 00:16:13,800

would you encourage them  
to work at the Museum?

364

00:16:13,800 --> 00:16:14,790

I would, of course.

365

00:16:14,790 --> 00:16:15,450

You would?

366

00:16:15,450 --> 00:16:17,940

Sure.

367

00:16:17,940 --> 00:16:22,560

I think it's quite gratifying if  
you find the right thing to do.

368

00:16:22,560 --> 00:16:26,690

369

00:16:26,690 --> 00:16:29,200

So your feeling when you  
walk through the door

370

00:16:29,200 --> 00:16:30,620

when you come into the building.

371

00:16:30,620 --> 00:16:36,250

Do you have any visceral  
feeling when you walk in?

372

00:16:36,250 --> 00:16:38,260

I now do, because I just had--

373

00:16:38,260 --> 00:16:42,970

we just had a lecture about  
the building, which I never

374

00:16:42,970 --> 00:16:47,410

bothered to really learn  
about and find out about.

375

00:16:47,410 --> 00:16:49,670

It's quite amazing.

376

00:16:49,670 --> 00:16:51,543

So now I'm looking  
around to see.

377

00:16:51,543 --> 00:16:53,335

You're talking about  
the architectural part

378

00:16:53,335 --> 00:16:54,002

of the building.

379

00:16:54,002 --> 00:16:56,770

Right, right, right.

380

00:16:56,770 --> 00:17:01,060

Did anything strike  
you that you learned?

381

00:17:01,060 --> 00:17:02,620

Well, yeah.

382

00:17:02,620 --> 00:17:05,869

Anything specific that you--

383

00:17:05,869 --> 00:17:10,569

Specifically, the way it was designed.

384

00:17:10,569 --> 00:17:13,160

I can't remember the name of the person that designed it.

385

00:17:13,160 --> 00:17:13,839

James Freed.

386

00:17:13,839 --> 00:17:15,940

Right.

387

00:17:15,940 --> 00:17:19,950

Amazing, all the thought that went into it.

388

00:17:19,950 --> 00:17:30,423

The separation of the different areas and the entrance hall on,

389

00:17:30,423 --> 00:17:32,860

what is it, 14th Street?

390

00:17:32,860 --> 00:17:34,450

Or 15th Street?

391

00:17:34,450 --> 00:17:36,805

The side where the Washington Monument is,

392

00:17:36,805 --> 00:17:40,660

or the 14th Street?

393

00:17:40,660 --> 00:17:42,390

Amazing, I think.

394

00:17:42,390 --> 00:17:46,520

I always liked it, but I



didn't know what it was liking.

395

00:17:46,520 --> 00:17:50,930

And the outside architecture  
means so much more to me

396

00:17:50,930 --> 00:17:53,820

now than it did before.

397

00:17:53,820 --> 00:18:00,080

I think I should do that  
with every volunteer who

398

00:18:00,080 --> 00:18:02,240

signs up to--

399

00:18:02,240 --> 00:18:03,680

To have them take that tour.

400

00:18:03,680 --> 00:18:04,600

I think so.

401

00:18:04,600 --> 00:18:05,340

Yeah.

402

00:18:05,340 --> 00:18:06,810

But this wasn't even a tour--

403

00:18:06,810 --> 00:18:12,230

at the membership  
meeting two weeks ago.

404

00:18:12,230 --> 00:18:13,470

This was a lecture.

405

00:18:13,470 --> 00:18:17,090

Are you part of the  
volunteer writing group?

406

00:18:17,090 --> 00:18:18,190

Yes, I am.

407

00:18:18,190 --> 00:18:18,960

I am.

408

00:18:18,960 --> 00:18:20,840

I did join the group.

409

00:18:20,840 --> 00:18:22,860

Yes, I am.

410

00:18:22,860 --> 00:18:25,250

So you've done some writing  
my your experiences?

411

00:18:25,250 --> 00:18:27,180

I did, but I don't--

412

00:18:27,180 --> 00:18:30,810

I joined after they  
finished all the books.

413

00:18:30,810 --> 00:18:31,310

Books, yeah.

414

00:18:31,310 --> 00:18:32,180

Right.

415

00:18:32,180 --> 00:18:36,650

So now whatever writing I  
have is just loosely done.

416

00:18:36,650 --> 00:18:38,220

But some things--

417

00:18:38,220 --> 00:18:40,670

Now what kind-- what  
do you write about?

418

00:18:40,670 --> 00:18:44,540

About my life in the past and--

419

00:18:44,540 --> 00:18:45,380

During the war.

420  
00:18:45,380 --> 00:18:47,380  
-- my childhood  
and during the war.

421  
00:18:47,380 --> 00:18:48,890  
Yes.

422  
00:18:48,890 --> 00:18:54,060  
I think two or three of my  
papers are on the internet now,

423  
00:18:54,060 --> 00:18:55,190  
or are going to be.

424  
00:18:55,190 --> 00:18:56,872  
I don't know if it's  
started already.

425  
00:18:56,872 --> 00:18:57,372  
Yeah.

426  
00:18:57,372 --> 00:19:00,540

427  
00:19:00,540 --> 00:19:02,940  
I have a whole bunch.

428  
00:19:02,940 --> 00:19:08,550  
Were you in any way  
active in the Civil Rights

429  
00:19:08,550 --> 00:19:12,590  
Movement in the United  
States when you were younger?

430  
00:19:12,590 --> 00:19:14,610  
I mean, here your  
civil rights were

431  
00:19:14,610 --> 00:19:16,380

taken away from you  
and your family,

432  
00:19:16,380 --> 00:19:18,810  
and even more than  
that, of course.

433  
00:19:18,810 --> 00:19:22,660  
No, I was, but not as  
a member of anything.

434  
00:19:22,660 --> 00:19:25,800  
I mean, we did a lot of  
marching, and we did a lot of--

435  
00:19:25,800 --> 00:19:26,300  
You did?

436  
00:19:26,300 --> 00:19:30,870  
Yeah, both my husband and  
I and my children, too.

437  
00:19:30,870 --> 00:19:34,490  
My youngest son,  
especially, would

438  
00:19:34,490 --> 00:19:37,950  
be-- not especially,  
but not the oldest,

439  
00:19:37,950 --> 00:19:42,410  
but the youngest would be--  
the oldest one wouldn't be.

440  
00:19:42,410 --> 00:19:46,190  
He lives in Georgia,  
[INAUDIBLE]..

441  
00:19:46,190 --> 00:19:47,630  
Oh, yeah.

442  
00:19:47,630 --> 00:19:51,260  
But you feel you have more

knowledge because of what--

443

00:19:51,260 --> 00:19:53,840  
or more affinity  
for this because

444

00:19:53,840 --> 00:19:57,020  
of what you lived through, being  
deprived of your civil rights?

445

00:19:57,020 --> 00:19:58,730  
No, also that's the  
way I was raised.

446

00:19:58,730 --> 00:20:03,531  
I was raised that way by my  
parents from early childhood.

447

00:20:03,531 --> 00:20:07,590

448

00:20:07,590 --> 00:20:10,930  
I was raised that way.

449

00:20:10,930 --> 00:20:13,350  
Do you ever have  
feelings of anger

450

00:20:13,350 --> 00:20:16,910  
that you had to go through and  
had the losses that you've had?

451

00:20:16,910 --> 00:20:21,930

452

00:20:21,930 --> 00:20:26,020  
I don't-- I can't say what I--

453

00:20:26,020 --> 00:20:27,450  
yeah, I do.

454

00:20:27,450 --> 00:20:32,920

455

00:20:32,920 --> 00:20:36,390

I can't say that it's anger,  
but of course, I lost my mother.

456

00:20:36,390 --> 00:20:38,970

I lost my father because of it.

457

00:20:38,970 --> 00:20:43,780

I lost my brother and my family.

458

00:20:43,780 --> 00:20:44,860

How can you not be?

459

00:20:44,860 --> 00:20:46,250

But I'm not angry.

460

00:20:46,250 --> 00:20:48,370

I'm not hateful.

461

00:20:48,370 --> 00:20:49,030

Absolutely not.

462

00:20:49,030 --> 00:20:52,380

463

00:20:52,380 --> 00:20:58,040

Whereas I have friends who  
were terribly hateful, but--

464

00:20:58,040 --> 00:21:02,110

465

00:21:02,110 --> 00:21:03,610

These are friends  
who are survivors?

466

00:21:03,610 --> 00:21:05,839

Yes, of course.

467

00:21:05,839 --> 00:21:06,765  
Of course.

468  
00:21:06,765 --> 00:21:10,480

469  
00:21:10,480 --> 00:21:12,880  
Have the lessons been learned?

470  
00:21:12,880 --> 00:21:13,550  
No.

471  
00:21:13,550 --> 00:21:15,430  
Have they been?

472  
00:21:15,430 --> 00:21:16,840  
No.

473  
00:21:16,840 --> 00:21:20,860  
Look what's happening  
now in our country

474  
00:21:20,860 --> 00:21:23,960  
and everywhere in  
the whole world.

475  
00:21:23,960 --> 00:21:24,820  
That angers me.

476  
00:21:24,820 --> 00:21:25,770  
That angry.

477  
00:21:25,770 --> 00:21:33,370

478  
00:21:33,370 --> 00:21:39,510  
I get rather angry and  
frustrated about our country

479  
00:21:39,510 --> 00:21:45,600  
at this point, and about  
the world at this point.

480  
00:21:45,600 --> 00:21:49,680  
That includes not only Israel,  
but other parts of the world.

481  
00:21:49,680 --> 00:21:52,270

482  
00:21:52,270 --> 00:21:53,800  
So why hasn't the world learned?

483  
00:21:53,800 --> 00:21:59,290

484  
00:21:59,290 --> 00:22:01,850  
Who knows.

485  
00:22:01,850 --> 00:22:03,860  
Will the world ever learn?

486  
00:22:03,860 --> 00:22:08,540  
No, because we say  
and then we do.

487  
00:22:08,540 --> 00:22:09,040  
Right.

488  
00:22:09,040 --> 00:22:14,441

489  
00:22:14,441 --> 00:22:19,600  
Do you feel a need to  
bear witness to this?

490  
00:22:19,600 --> 00:22:24,310  
I do, but I can't go so far  
as to sit there and talk

491  
00:22:24,310 --> 00:22:26,150  
about it in public.

492



00:22:26,150 --> 00:22:28,290  
I just can't.

493  
00:22:28,290 --> 00:22:31,620  
My friends in Boston went  
from school to school

494  
00:22:31,620 --> 00:22:33,690  
to talk to children.

495  
00:22:33,690 --> 00:22:38,455  
I couldn't understand how they  
could do it, and I still can't.

496  
00:22:38,455 --> 00:22:46,350  
I can somewhat understand it,  
because maybe my female friend

497  
00:22:46,350 --> 00:22:48,930  
survived with her parents.

498  
00:22:48,930 --> 00:22:52,770  
And my male friend survived  
with his mother, who

499  
00:22:52,770 --> 00:22:57,210  
died maybe 10, 11 years ago.

500  
00:22:57,210 --> 00:23:03,600  
So that might make it  
easier, but I'm not sure.

501  
00:23:03,600 --> 00:23:06,750  
Because there are people who  
didn't survive with family

502  
00:23:06,750 --> 00:23:09,370  
and can also do it.

503  
00:23:09,370 --> 00:23:09,870  
I can't.

504

00:23:09,870 --> 00:23:12,510

505

00:23:12,510 --> 00:23:14,470

Did your sister have children?

506

00:23:14,470 --> 00:23:14,970

No.

507

00:23:14,970 --> 00:23:16,160

Oh, she did not?

508

00:23:16,160 --> 00:23:16,660

OK.

509

00:23:16,660 --> 00:23:24,910

510

00:23:24,910 --> 00:23:27,680

Well, is there any  
message you would want

511

00:23:27,680 --> 00:23:29,486

to leave to your grandchildren?

512

00:23:29,486 --> 00:23:32,460

Anything you want to  
say especially to them?

513

00:23:32,460 --> 00:23:36,400

Well, I've said many  
things to them, but--

514

00:23:36,400 --> 00:23:39,170

live in a much better  
world than we have now.

515

00:23:39,170 --> 00:23:43,150

Much better, and do whatever  
you can to make it so.

516

00:23:43,150 --> 00:23:45,180

And I hope they will.

517  
00:23:45,180 --> 00:23:46,160  
I hope so, too.

518  
00:23:46,160 --> 00:23:47,240  
Some of them will.

519  
00:23:47,240 --> 00:23:49,370  
Some of them will, I know.

520  
00:23:49,370 --> 00:23:50,695  
Some of them, I don't know.

521  
00:23:50,695 --> 00:23:53,370

522  
00:23:53,370 --> 00:23:56,020  
Anything you wanted to  
add before we close?

523  
00:23:56,020 --> 00:23:57,660  
Is there anything  
else you want--

524  
00:23:57,660 --> 00:23:58,890  
Just what I said.

525  
00:23:58,890 --> 00:24:01,490  
I would love to see the  
world a much better place--

526  
00:24:01,490 --> 00:24:02,190  
Yeah, yeah.

527  
00:24:02,190 --> 00:24:07,870  
--for the future, for  
children-- for everybody.

528  
00:24:07,870 --> 00:24:08,840  
Right.

529

00:24:08,840 --> 00:24:10,090

And what to do about it?

530

00:24:10,090 --> 00:24:10,725

I don't know.

531

00:24:10,725 --> 00:24:13,100

I'm not that smart.

532

00:24:13,100 --> 00:24:15,000

Smarter people than I  
don't know what to do.

533

00:24:15,000 --> 00:24:17,860

534

00:24:17,860 --> 00:24:20,620

Well, thank you very, very  
much for doing this interview.

535

00:24:20,620 --> 00:24:22,330

Thank you.

536

00:24:22,330 --> 00:24:23,350

Thank you.

537

00:24:23,350 --> 00:24:28,170

I think that alone will  
have helped maybe someone

538

00:24:28,170 --> 00:24:29,350

100 years from now--

539

00:24:29,350 --> 00:24:30,662

Listening to this.

540

00:24:30,662 --> 00:24:31,840

Yeah.

541

00:24:31,840 --> 00:24:33,550

Is that why you

were willing to do--

542

00:24:33,550 --> 00:24:35,030

Yeah, of course.

543

00:24:35,030 --> 00:24:36,000

For future--

544

00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:36,640

Right.

545

00:24:36,640 --> 00:24:37,140

Right.

546

00:24:37,140 --> 00:24:40,080

547

00:24:40,080 --> 00:24:44,990

Well, again, thank  
you for doing it.

548

00:24:44,990 --> 00:24:48,080

This concludes the United  
States Holocaust Memorial Museum

549

00:24:48,080 --> 00:24:51,400

interview with Ruth Cohen.

550

00:24:51,400 --> 00:24:55,000