

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Paula Gutter
November 13, 2015
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PREFACE

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PAULA GUTTER

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Gail Schwartz: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Paula Gutter. It is being conducted by Gail Schwartz on November 13, 2015 and is taking place over the telephone at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and in Fresh Meadows, New York. This is track number one. What is your full name?

Paula Gutter: My full name is Paula Gutter.

Q: And what is the name you were born with?

A: That was **Schwartzberg**. My family name was Schwartzberg.

Q: And when were you born?

A: I was born August 18, 1935.

Q: And where were you born?

A: Zamość, Poland. And I'll spell it for you. Ok, Zamość. It's spelled, it's in Polish but that's how it should be written. It's Z-A-M-O-S-C. Zamość. A little line over the S and a little line over the C at the end. It's Zamość Poland and this is the region is called Lubelski. If you want to write it down. The region is Lubelski but it's Zamość.

Q: Tell me your parents. Let's talk about your family. Your parents' names.

A: My mother's name was **Rela** Schwartzberg. And my father's name was Nathan Schwartzberg.

Q: How long had they been in Zamość?

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A: When the war started I was four years old. When the war broke out the Germans came in--

Q: We're talk about that but I'm talking about before the war, your parents' background.

A: They were born in Zamość.

Q: Ok so they were born in Zamość.

A: Sure. And the children and I, me and my sister and a brother, we were born in Zamość.

Q: What are their names?

A: My sister's name is Sara but in Poland she was called **Tsura** and my brother's name **Meir**.

Q: And tell me about your extended family. What about grandparents?

A: Oh the grandparents, they were all killed.

Q: But your grandparents originally were from Zamość also?

A: Also from Zamość.

Q: So how far back does your family go in Zamość? Many generations.

A: I only know about the grandparents.

Q: What kind of work did your father do?

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A: He had a horse and carriage and he was driving people to places. He had a horse and carriage. That's how we escaped Zamość when the Nazis came in with his horse and carriage.

Q: We'll talk about that. I want to get some before the war information first. So that's what he did as a full time job.

A: That's was his job, yes.

Q: And did your mother work?

A: No, she had one child after another.

Q: Did you live right in the center of town?

A: In the center of town yes, in the center of town. Yes.

Q: And were you in a house or an apartment?

A: It was a house. I even wrote down the name they sent me from Israel, the name of the street.

Q: Do you remember what the name of the street is?

A: Yeah, I have to look it up. Right now I cannot look it up. I have to look it up. I wrote it down.

Q: Your brother and sister, were they older or younger than you?

A: My sister was the oldest. The brother was next. I was the youngest.

Q: You were the youngest?

A: Yes.

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Q: Do you have any memories of cousins and aunts and uncles before the war? I know you were very young.

A: I was very young. I don't have any memories but they were all killed yes.

Q: Was your family, do you know if your family was very religious, your parents?

A: Not too religious, no. Not too religious. No, not orthodox.

Q: But did you let's say I guess you were too young to remember if you observed any holidays before the war. You were too young.

A: I was too young but I remember Zamość was burning. That I remember. The houses were burning, a few houses.

Q: Really, ok so that was – all right let's talk about the beginning of the war now. So your very first memory. Is that your first one of the –

A: Yes it was.

Q: Was this in 1939?

A: 19, summer of 1939 yes. It started that fateful day in summer of 1939. I was four years old then.

Q: And you saw houses burning?

A: Yes, I r -- you see things, when it's something terrible you remember. Other things I don't remember, but this I remember.

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Q: Do you remember what your parents said to you or –

A: No, I remember my mother said we are going to run from here. She was afraid of the Germans so she forced my father to take us to Lublin. In Lublin, they were not yet there. Lublin was next to Zamość, not too far. And it was a bigger town so we went to Lublin.

Q: Did your father, do you know if your father wanted to go to leave Zamość? You don't know.

A: No he wanted to go, whatever my mother said. He listened, yes.

Q: What about other relatives? Did they leave with you?

A: They didn't want to leave.

Q: So they stayed?

A: They stayed.

Q: So this is after September first 39. Right when the –

A: Right. 1939.

Q: Do you remember leaving Zamość and going to –

A: I remember.

Q: What did you take with you?

A: Whatever we could. We couldn't take too much because we had to do it very fast.

Q: Did you take a favorite toy or anything like that?

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A: No, nothing. No.

Q: You said you went in your father's horse?

A: Carriage, horse and carriage. We went to Lublin.

Q: You all fit in with your belongings?

A: Whatever we were able to take. Some clothes, but not too much. We left everything. Yeah.

Q: Do you remember being very frightened?

A: Very frightened.

Q: How did your mother console you? How did --

A: She calmed us down. We were crying. I remember the burning of, of the homes. I remember that very well.

Q: Now you get to Lublin.

A: To Lublin and we stayed in Lublin for about a month and they came to Lublin.

Q: Where did you stay in Lublin? With relatives or friends or --

A: I think it was to, some relatives, some cousins that we stayed yes. I don't remember exactly. Yeah, in a house where they had a house and they let us stay for a month.

Q: Ok and then the Germans came there.

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A: The Germans came there so we escaped. We took the train and we went to Russia.

Q: This is your mother and your father and your sister and your –

A: And the three children.

Q: The three of you?

A: Yes.

Q: But no other relatives?

A: No other relatives. They didn't want to leave.

Q: They didn't.

A: They didn't believe that something bad will happen like that. We, we didn't, but my mother said no. I am afraid of the Nazis. They are not, they're going to do harm to us. So she was right.

Q: Now you leave Lublin.

A: And we take the train and they took us where they can take us. They took us to **Kazan** Russia. And we went, it was fall already.

Q: Do you remember the train ride?

A: I remember the train ride.

Q: Can you describe it?

A: It was a poor train. It was not a nice, no seats.

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Q: No seats.

A: No. We were sitting on something. We had some clothes on the floor. It was like, like it wasn't a regular train. It was like a workers train.

Q: Do you remember how long the journey took?

A: I don't remember how long but it was a long ride. Yeah, I don't remember that.

Q: This is October 39.

A: Right.

Q: And so then you get –

A: Then we get to Kazan. That's where they took us. And they gave us a room in a building. We had one room. We were five people.

Q: When you say they gave us. Who is the they?

A: The Russians. The government. They knew that we escaped Poland. So they gave us an apartment house, one room. One room for five people. I slept with my brother. He was two years older than me. In one bed. Yeah. For five years. Yeah. We came 39. We left, it's actually almost six years. Yeah it was cold. One room. The kitchen was in that room. The beds were in that room. Everything was in one room.

Q: And where was the bathroom? Outside or in the building?

A: Outside. We had to go out to go to the bathroom. Yeah.

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Q: Ok well let's kind of talk about your experience there because that's very important.

A: Right.

Q: So you get there and of course as I said you're quite young.

A: I'm young. Four years old. I didn't go to school til I was six. So for two years I didn't go to school.

Q: Do you remember what you did during those two years, just nothing?

A: I stayed home. Sometimes my mother used to take me, she worked in a restaurant, a government restaurant. And she took me with her to stay while she was cooking and working there. The other two went to school.

Q: Did you have enough warm clothes?

A: Not enough. Whatever we had, we had some boots, old boots and coats but not warm. You know.

Q: What kind of work did your father do?

A: My father in -- after we arrived there, he worked you know also in a place where they built or they do things. He helped out but then they took him to Siberia. He should do the work. So he went to Siberia for a couple of years.

Q: Do you know what year he left Kazan?

A: Two years later.

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Q: Oh the first two years he was with you?

A: Right, right. They took him. You know they took the men to work in Siberia. It was very difficult.

Q: What was it like to say goodbye? Do you have any memories of that?

A: What was it like, what?

Q: To say goodbye to him when he left. Do you have any memories?

A: Oh yes, I have memories.

Q: What was it –

A: Very sad. Yeah and he had to go.

Q: How was your mother at that time? Was she –

A: She was upset. She wrote a letter to Stalin, to send him back. Yes, she wrote a letter. She made somebody write a beautiful letter. I remember it yeah, but they didn't let him go. Til, til finally they did. Yeah, finally. So then he came back and he wasn't very good after he came back from Siberia. He was very, not, not feeling good.

Q: What years were your parents born? Do you know?

A: Yes. My father was born in 1903. And my mother 1904.

Q: Now you're left with your mother and your two –

A: And the two, and my sister and brother.

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Q: Were there many other children?

A: No.

Q: No. From other families, nearby.

A: Oh children. Russian children. You mean in the building.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes, there were children.

Q: What about Jewish refugee children like you. Were there others like –

A: Not in, not in that area. We used to meet some of them in a different area.

Q: How would you describe the town you were – Kazan, what was it like? Was it?

A: Kazan? You know during the war it didn't look too good. It was very, it was a sad town. It was not good. Cold when the winter came it was so cold. Snow, wind. The apartment didn't have heat. It was terrible.

Q: There was no stove, no furnace.

A: There was a stove. So my mother put it on at night to warm up the house cause we didn't have the wood. We had to buy the wood. So we didn't have it to, for too long.

Q: Your mother got money from her job, right?

A: Yes.

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Q: That was the only money she had.

A: That's the only money, yes.

Q: Had she brought any jewelry from home or stuff like that?

A: No. No, nothing. Nothing.

Q: Was your mother able to read and write?

A: Yes. Yes, she, she was able to write a letter to Stalin.

Q: How much education did she have?

A: Public school.

Q: So the first two years you stayed with your mother and went to work and then you said you started school.

A: School when I was six years old.

Q: Tell me about the school.

A: Yeah it was a walking distance, not close. It was quite a long walk. I liked the school. They fed me in school.

Q: Was it a Russian school?

A: A Russian school.

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Q: Were there any other Jewish children.

A: I don't think so. No, I don't think so. No, they used to call me. Even the teacher once didn't call me by my name. She called me **Evreyka**, means the Jew.

Q: The Jewish child.

A: The Jewish child, right. Evreyka, that's how she called me.

Q: You went to school. Did you, and then you would come home? Did you go by yourself and –

A: No, no my mother walked me.

Q: Both ways.

A: Both ways. She went to pick me up and walked me there. So I was young still.

Q: What were the other children like? Did they –

A: They were able to walk.

Q: No, no, did any of the, was there any anti-Semitism that they showed?

A: Nu, sure it was. It was.

Q: What kind of things?

A: The older sister used to complain.

Q: What did she say happened?

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A: Things like the children were you know making fun and teasing her, yeah it was. Yeah she used to complain.

Q: And your brother, did he –

A: No, he didn't complain.

Q: He didn't.

A: No. A boy is different.

Q: Right. Any physical problems? Did anybody hurt you or your sister?

A: No, no, no.

Q: It was just all words.

A: They didn't hurt me, no. Words.

Q: Besides the teacher that called you Evreyka, what were the teachers like? Were they friendly to you or did they give you a difficult time?

A: No, they did their job but instead to call me Paula, they called me Evreyka. That's how they did it, yeah.

Q: You would come home and life kept going on like that/

A: Yeah for five years, almost six years.

Q: What did you do besides going to school? Did you do anything else?

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A: Nothing. It was, we played in the yard, summer time. We went and played in the yard, yes.

Q: Did the children invite you over to their house?

A: No, no. we played in the yard. We didn't invite because they all had only one room, like we had one room. The Russians had also one room.

Q: These were Russians who were brought there. They weren't –

A: They came, some of them when, this town was, it was a Tatar republic. I don't know if you know the Tatar like Uzbekistan. This was Tatar republic. So there were a lot of them also came to Russia, escaped from their country.

Q: Was there a big city nearby?

A: The big city was Moscow, was the big city.

Q: And how far away from Moscow were you?

A: By train, by train, I don't know. Probably a whole day riding.

Q: Obviously when you were growing up were you speaking, before you left Poland, were you speaking Polish?

A: With my parents?

Q: Yeah.

A: No, we were speaking Yiddish.

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Q: You spoke Yiddish.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you know Polish at all before you left?

A: I knew Polish yes. I understand very well but I don't speak it fluent.

Q: But when you were home, when you were very little, it was Yiddish?

A: Right.

Q: Ok now you're in Kazan and you have to learn Russian?

A: That's right.

Q: Were you able to pick that up easily?

A: Right away. Yeah, right away, yes. I spoke very good Russian.

Q: Were your parents able to pick up the language?

A: Yes, they were. Yeah they were young when we came to Russia, yeah they were in their –

Q: Late 30s weren't they?

A: In their 30s yeah. At that time it used to be not so young. But today, the 30s is very young.

Q: Did you parents have any communication with your grandparents?

A: They wished they could have. They didn't have.

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Q: They had no communication what –

A: No communication.

Q: Once they left.

A: When we left Russia, we went back to Poland to look if anybody stayed alive. Only one cousin from my mother's side. My mother's sister's son. We found and he was hiding in a sewer and he lived through the war.

Q: What was his name?

A: **Hyam Dornfeld.**

Q: While you were in Kazan there was no communication?

A: No, no, no we couldn't communicate no.

Q: Life just goes on. What about communication with your father after he left? Was he able to write to your mother?

A: Yes, he was able to write. Yeah, in Russia he was able to write. Not to family in Poland.

Q: So you knew he was ok.

A: Yes.

Q: What did he say he did in Siberia?

A: He worked hard.

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Q: Do you know what kind of work he did?

A: You know build buildings.

Q: Built buildings? How was his health in Siberia?

A: When he came home, he wasn't healthy but then he improved yes.

Q: How did your mother get food to feed you all from her –

A: She brought from work.

Q: From her job?

A: Yeah she brought whatever she can. Do you know she brought the peels from the potatoes, and she cooked those peels, yeah. Whatever she was allowed to take.

Q: Did you and your brother and sister stay healthy while you were there?

A: Yes, we were ok.

Q: Nobody got sick or anything.

A: No, we got sick with a cold but not serious.

Q: Nothing serious and did they have Russian friends, your brother and sister?

A: Yes, yes. I had some Russians friends in the building. I remember my mother took heavy, a heavy blanket you know made out of down and that she was able to take, two of those blankets. It was good to lay under it. It kept us warm.

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Q: Do you remember what your mother said about what was happening and why your father was away? How did she explain it to a young –

A: No she explained that he had to go, that's what they wanted, the government wanted him to go and help out over there.

Q: Do you know if she knew what was happening in Europe to the Jews? Did she know anything about that? At the time?

A: We found out later on.

Q: Later. You didn't know while it was happening?

A: No, no later on we found out that they are killing the Jews.

Q: Was there anybody else from Zamość with you in Kazan?

A: No. No.

Q: So these were all new people for you?

A: All new people. Yeah. Nobody from Zamość.

Q: Was there any dangerous times when you were there, any –

A: In Kazan.

Q: Any bombing or anything like that?

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A: No, no, no. In Kazan was quiet. Remember they tried to go to Moscow. And it got very, very cold so they backed up. You remember the story. Yeah, no, no they didn't come to Kazan. We didn't hear any bombing. It was at least safe that way.

Q: When you look back at it, was it a very frightening time or –

A: Very frightening time but you know when you go through difficult times, you learn a lesson and you appreciate what you have now.

Q: Yes.

A: We had it very difficult, very difficult. Yes. It wasn't easy, especially for my mother, was very difficult.

Q: Was her health ok during that time?

A: Yes. She went to work every day.

Q: She did?

A: Yes, she did.

Q: Did you observe any of the Jewish holidays while you were in Kazan?

A: No.

Q: No. Then your father came back. Do you remember what year that was he came back?

A: He came back two years later. And so we stayed in Russia til 45. At the end of 45 we went back to Poland.

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Q: How did you know that the war was over?

A: No it was in the streets a celebration. Sure we knew. All in the streets.

Q: You're ten years old so you obviously knew what was happening.

A: Sure, absolutely.

Q: What did it mean to a ten year old? Do you remember what your thoughts, any of your thoughts?

A: My thoughts were now it's going to be good, yeah. Til now it was very difficult.

Q: Did you celebrate yourself? Did you celebrate?

A: Celebrate?

Q: When you knew the war was over.

A: Oh sure we were running outside and singing and dancing.

Q: So then you returned you said?

A: We went back to Poland, to see if we find anybody so I told you we only found this cousin. And the streets in Poland were unbelievable. Bodies still laying. You wouldn't believe it. The end of 45. You'd see the skeletons. Terrible, terrible, very sad. Yeah. We didn't find anybody and so from Poland they took us in the DP, took us to Germany.

Q: Yeah but before that, did you go back to your house in Zamość?

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A: We didn't go to Zamość. We went to Lublin. To see if anybody is alive and they told us nobody.

Q: But you did not go back to Zamość?

A: No.

Q: Now you said, who took you to the DP camps?

A: I guess the, it was the Americans. Yeah they took us to a DP camp in Germany, called **Heidenheim**. And we stayed in Germany from 46 to 48. Two years. In that camp. And there they gave us canned food, all kinds of things from America and that's how we survived in Heidenheim.

Q: There obviously were other children your age who had gone through –

A: The same, gone through the same thing.

Q: And did you talk to them and did you each tell your stories to –

A: Absolutely.

Q: To each other?

A: Yes, yes. They went through the same thing. They also escaped to Russia yeah. Some of them were escaped from the concentration camps. Some of them. Yeah.

Q: You made friends as a ten, 11, 12 year old. You made some friends?

A: Yes and also I went to school in that DP camp. They had a Hebrew school, yeah and they taught us Hebrew.

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Q: Did they want you to go to Palestine?

A: They wanted us to go to Palestine. In fact my sister she went to help out. She went to Palestine, that time it was called Palestine. She went. They took her. She was already 17 when they took her. So we went to Israel after two years. We went in 48. We went to Israel.

Q: She went first or you all went together?

A: She went herself first. They collected you know teenagers.

Q: Teenagers yeah.

A: To help yes. Her, they took. And then we went.

Q: You were in the DP camp for a couple of years and what did your parents do? Were they working then?

A: No they were not working. Well you didn't have jobs there. We were just in camp. My mother was cooking and my father, I think he did some work. I'm not sure what he did.

Q: What was the living arrangements? Were in barracks or were you in apartments or what?

A: A little house. They gave us a little house but it was like an attached house so there were apartments in each section. Yeah.

Q: You had enough food and enough clothing and you were –

A: Had enough but it wasn't enough but it, I did some babysitting so I got paid a little. Yeah I was already ten years old, 11. So I was able to baby sit. Yeah.

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Q: Your sister goes off to Palestine. And then you and your family can go over there also.

A: And we meet her at the airport, yes.

Q: How did you get from Germany to Palestine?

A: By boat.

Q: I thought you said airport.

A: No. I think it was by boat.

Q: By boat?

A: Yeah, it was by boat.

Q: Did Palestine –

A: Yes, I remember it was a special boat that went from Germany to Palestine.

Q: Do you remember the name of the boat or not?

A: I think Zion, something like that.

Q: Were there a lot of other children your age?

A: Yes, a lot of -- filled, the boat was filled.

Q: Filled with children and families?

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A: Yeah, boats were coming constantly. Yes.

Q: Do you know what port you left from or not?

A: What port from Germany?

Q: Yeah.

A: No. I know we were driven by a car, a big truck to the port. Yeah that I remember.

Q: Now you arrive in Palestine. And what does that mean to you?

A: Oh it changed completely. It's like home. Yes it was like home. Yeah and we were, they took us to a field to collect oranges from the trees.

Q: Had the state of Israel been declared already?

A: In 48, not right away. Not right away. When we came was still shooting. Yes, not right away. Took, I think it took a couple months.

Q: Do you know what month you arrived?

A: We arrived I think in the fall.

Q: Of?

A: Of 40, the end of 48.

Q: No so it was the state of Israel by then because but they were still fighting?

A: They were still fighting yeah. Fighting, shooting.

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Q: Where did you live, where did you settle?

A: **Lod**, Lod, L-O-D, Lod.

Q: That's the town?

A: That's the town that's near the airport.

Q: Near the airport, near the port, yes.

A: Near the port, yes.

Q: Yes, near the airport. So you settled there.

A: For a short time. And then we went, so we lived in **Jaffa**.

Q: What was life like then? Did you father work?

A: Oh yes, he worked. And my mother worked.

Q: What did they do in Jaffa?

A: He got himself a horse and carriage, worked. He had it in Poland. So he got himself that and my mother she was babysitting. She was watching children when the parents went to work.

Q: Your sister and brother, what were they doing?

A: They went to school in Israel and after that they, my sister got married at a young age. And she worked also, she worked.

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Q: You were at school?

A: I'm in school yes.

Q: Did you know Hebrew before?

A: In Germany they taught me Hebrew so I knew, not fluent. But I knew. I knew how to write and read, yes. I still know how to write and read.

Q: Then you continue on until when?

A: Til ok then we got -- they gave us a little house in a suburbia, near Tel Aviv, so then we all moved to that suburbia. It was called I forgot, I forgot what it was called. But it was a nice little house. It was a settlement. All new homes from the government, yes. From the government.

Q: So you moved from Jaffa to there?

A: From Jaffa to their yeah. I forgot the name of the town. It was away from Tel Aviv. Do you know Israel?

Q: Yes I did.

A: It was near **Ramat Gan**. Ok, I forgot the name.

Q: You stayed in Israel for how long?

A: I stayed til I met my husband and he wanted to go, his parents were in the United States. They came from, straight from Russia to United States. They didn't go back to Poland. So they wanted us to come there. I met my husband in Israel.

Q: How did you meet him?

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A: I met him in Tel Aviv through friends. And so that's, we started going out. We married in Israel. And two years later we went to the United States.

Q: That was in what year?

A: 59, the end of 59.

Q: You got married in 57 then?

A: 50 -- I got married in 57, yes.

Q: You left in 59 to come to the United States?

A: We actually it was almost 60. It was December, the end of December in 59.

Q: How did you feel about leaving Israel to come to the United States?

A: I said I'm going but if I don't like it I'm coming back. Because I like Israel very much. Life is very warm over there. It's different.

Q: Your husband's name?

A: My husband's name is Fred. His Polish name was **Romick**. Fred, but I called him by his Hebrew name, **Ephraim**. Yeah.

Q: Where did you come when you came to the United States? Where did you –

A: Brooklyn, that's where my in laws lived. We stayed with them for a little while but then we rented an apartment. Yes. We lived in Brooklyn. Now I live in Queens.

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Q: You had children?

A: Right. After we came to the United States like my daughter was born in 6 – a year later. I had my daughter and then in 64 I had my son.

Q: You've been there ever since?

A: What?

Q: You've been there ever since?

A: I am here ever since. I went to Israel a couple times but now it's, I'm so used to the United States that I love it. I like America.

Q: Can we now talk about some of your thoughts and feelings about what you went through? When you think about your childhood which was so difficult.

A: Very difficult

Q: Do you feel you lost part of your childhood?

A: Absolutely. Absolutely yes. Very difficult but you know we didn't complain. And it wasn't things like it's happening now. Sometimes you hear children take drugs, take this, take that. This never happened. Never happened. Not with my brother, not with my sister.

Q: Did they stay in Israel, your brother and sister?

A: Yes, they lived in Israel. They passed away unfortunately yes. My brother passed away in 2012 and my sister 2008. They had cancer.

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Q: Did they get married and have children?

A: They had children yes.

Q: Can you tell me what your thoughts are now about Germany? Do you have any special thoughts about the country?

A: You mean about Germany after the war when we stayed in that DP camp.

Q: No just your general feelings now about Germany?

A: Oh the general feelings. Look it's not their fault what happened during the Nazis. Right now Germany is very, they are upset what happened. Germany itself is very against what happened. It happened during the war in 39. It was terrible, terrible what they did to people. Not only Jews. There were a lot of Christians killed. If they were hiding a Jewish person they were killed.

Q: Are there any sights or sounds or smells that remind you of your life in Poland and Siberia? Anything that brings back memories for you?

A: I'm not thinking about it because if I start thinking I get depressed. So I don't want to look back. It was rough, it was rough.

Q: When your children were growing up, did you talk about your childhood?

A: Yes. They know. My granddaughter wrote a whole thing in school about me. Yeah. I have it right in front of me. She writes my grandmother as born Perle Schwartzberg, American name Paula, but it's spelled different. In Polish it's spelled different and here it's spelled different. In Polish it's spelled S-Z-W-A-R and in here it's S-C-H-W. Right. But she wrote a whole **megillah**.

Q: So your name at birth was Perle?

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A: Perle.

Q: Not Paula.

A: No my name here is Paula. In Russia also was Paula, but spelled different, here it's P-A-U-L-A. In Russia it's P-O-L-A. Pola.

Q: Have you ever been to Germany?

A: No.

Q: Would you go?

A: No. Not to Germany. I would like to go to Kazan where I lived. Oh I would love it, but I'm too old yeah. I should have gone when I was younger. My nephew, my sister's son went to Poland to see the street where his mother was born and he wrote to me the name of the street. **Raya, Raya, Rushop.** That was the name of the street, yes.

Q: Do you get reparations?

A: I applied but it's not so easy. You have to be in concentration camps. They gave some money, those that had to leave Poland, but I didn't get anything, not yet. Maybe. Yeah I'm registered. I'm registered with an organization. It's called, what is it called, I forgot.

Q: Do you feel totally assimilated? How would you describe yourself? Are you American or –

A: No, I'm American. I'm all the way American. Yeah, I put out a flag when it's a, when we had the holidays. Every holiday I put out a flag.

Q: When did you become a citizen?

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A: In five years later, 1965.

Q: What was that like?

A: Beautiful. I answered all the questions. I studied. I went at night to a high school to finish up. So I studied. I knew.

Q: What language do you think in?

A: What language I'm thinking. In English.

Q: You think in English.

A: Yes, yeah I think in English.

Q: I guess you are totally assimilated.

A: Right, yes. But I also, I speak Hebrew and I speak Russian. Polish I'm not so perfect, but I understand very good. And I speak a little German. Yeah, you know I was in Germany for two, three years. I was young. You pick up fast the language.

Q: Do you think about your experience as a child more so now as you get older? Are you finding that you're thinking about it more?

A: As I'm getting older if I'm thinking about my childhood. Yes, I'm thinking. I'm always telling my grandchildren. You don't know how I lived through the war, being a child, how difficult it was. You have it very good, I tell them yes. They know, they know.

Q: Are you more comfortable around people who are also survivors, people who lived through the war than being around people who never had to experience any of that?

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A: No, I meet, I go to an organization where people from Poland, from Hungary from – it's called Self-Help I think. Self-Help is the organization and on Queens Boulevard. I belong there. We meet once in a month or sometimes twice a month. They came from different countries. No, I like Americans better. Yeah, I feel comfortable more.

Q: Would you be a different person today if you hadn't had the experiences you had as a child or do you think –

A: I think this taught me a good lesson.

Q: What lesson did it teach you?

A: To appreciate what we have now and what we went through before and not to complain yeah.

Q: I know you were young, but do you remember the Eichmann trial?

A: Eichmann trial, sure I do.

Q: What were your feelings during the Eichmann trial?

A: Oh he was, it was coming to him everything he got. He was a murderer and hiding in Argentina. Sure I remember. I am very, I listen to constantly to news to when they have something special and I'm very aware of everything. Yes, I -- Sunday I listen to, I watch Face the Nation, Meet the Press. It's very interesting for me.

Q: Did you work in the United States when you came and settled?

A: Yes, sure I worked. I worked in JC Penney as a sales girl. Yeah, I worked.

Q: For how long?

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A: Quite a few years. Yeah. I worked. After the children grew up and they didn't need me any more so I went to work. I didn't work while I, when I came you know and I had them right away, a year later.

Q: Your husband was able to support?

A: Yes, yes, yes. He was working as an electrician. And that's how it was. It was difficult time but I survived.

Q: Do you think the world has learned anything from that, those years?

A: I don't know if the world learned anything. What do you think? Does it look to you that they learned? Look what's going on now with ISIS. They still hate, hate the Americans and hate the, hate the Europeans.

Q: Have you been to the Holocaust Museum in Washington?

A: Oh sure, yes, yes. I have and the children have. My children went with their children, yes. Sure. But what do I have to see? I know. I know what, when I came back to Poland. I knew. I saw the streets with skeletons, bodies. They didn't clean up yet. Yeah so I know. It was a terrible war, terrible.

Q: Is there anything you wanted to say that we haven't covered?

A: What thing?

Q: Anything about your experience or your life today that we haven't talked about?

A: Oh, my life today. My husband passed away in 2002. Unfortunately he had a bad heart and

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they couldn't do anything. He had congestive heart failure. He died. He was too young to die. He was only 74. This was a difficult time. Otherwise, that's it.

Q: Do you belong to any other survivors groups?

A: In that Self Help, I belong.

Q: Besides that one, do you belong to any others?

A: No. I do get mail from them. They send me newspapers. I'm registered but that's the only one that I belong to. Yeah. Do they have any others?

Q: I'm sure there are other survivor organizations in different cities yeah.

A: I have to find out yeah.

Q: I want to thank you.

A: Thank you. I tell you. We had a long interview, an hour, yeah.

Q: Is there any message you wanted to leave to your grandchildren? Anything?

A: Oh I just want to leave them that I love them with all my heart and they are always on my mind, yeah and my children, always on my mind. They should have better than I had. They shouldn't have to go through what I, god forbid what I went through. Yes, it was difficult, difficult time. Very difficult.

Q: I really appreciate you --.

A: Ok it was good talking to you.

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Q: Thank you and let me just finish –

A: How, will my children get this and –

Q: You'll get a copy of the interview.

A: I will? Oh how wonderful. By mail.

Q: Yes.

A: Beautiful. Thank you so much.

Q: Let me just finish by saying this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Paula Gutter.

(end)