

Why don't you say your name and then--

My name is Susan Farkas, maiden name Gotesman.

OK. Go ahead.

I was born in Czechoslovakia in Koshel'ovo, near Khust.

What year?

1930. And I had two brothers and one sister. I have one sister in this, what survive with me. My two brothers-- my two brothers didn't come home. We were taken in 1944 in the ghetto, on Pesach. Maybe you stop a little bit.

In 1934, Friday after Passover, they took us to ghetto Iza. And that was in April. And I left from home with my father, and mother, and sister, and one brother. My older brother, Yakov, went to forced labor. He got a-- he was called in to go to munka tábor. And he was already sick before. And he was hit by--

He was hit by a stone, from a--

From a classmate, a Gentile. And he was hit in the head. And he had an operation on the head. He was badly. My brother was better. And he got a-- when he was called into this services, my parents felt it's more safe than to go to ghetto.

And as they felt that maybe my younger brother should go. And then my father said, he's not changing the luck of them who was called, where goes. And they went in-- the older brother went on his certificate call and my younger brother with us. But we all got to Auschwitz. My parents were taken away.

My sister and I were chosen by Mengele to survive. And then my two brothers got in different camps. But they wound up together in Landsberg. But then somehow, they-- my sick brother was in, like, a Stubendienst. He didn't go outside to work when it was cold. And my younger brother, we used to bring him bread. And they lived, I know, from a friend, Mrs. Shep, she told me this. And it was the marches. My Yakov couldn't keep up. And he just fell.

My younger brother, David, he was in Warsaw in [? my apartment. ?] And he went to a bunker, like, and after that, a friend of mine, a landsman, Grossman saw him going. After that, he never saw.

In the Warsaw ghetto at the end?

No, not the ghetto. It just didn't-- in Warsaw. David-- this was already after the Warsaw uprising. But we left home in '44--

I thought yes.

--to Auschwitz.

Yes. I see. But you went to Warsaw after the whole [CROSS TALK].

Then my brothers wound up somehow back in Warsaw. They were always, when Allies were approaching or Russia was fighting back, so they were always taking the refugees with them. Anyway, I and my sister managed to be always together. And all-- we used to get up 5 o'clock in the morning in Auschwitz in the C lager to be counted. And sometimes, if the count wasn't there, we used to faint from hunger.

But we held on. We managed to keep everybody among us alive and to look that we're well. Because if the Germans while they were counting us and saw somebody sick, they would take you out. And we knew that it's going to

crematorium. Anyway.

So you were, at this time, 15 years old. And your sister was 14 or 13?

No, no, no. My sister was older. Yeah. My sister, Leah. Now, she's Leah Yutkowitz. My sister always was watching over me, that I was so young. So she always put me in back of the line so I wouldn't be seen that I'm so young.

And so we were-- then in September, we were going to take a bath. And the girls who were watching over us, like the Slovakian girls who were there from '42 said, don't be afraid. You are going now to labor. Usually, when you went to take a shower, it meant crematorium. Anyway, it was on Rosh Hashanah. We were selected to go to work. And we were sent out to Gorlitz Oberschlesien.

This is 1944 now?

Yeah. Yeah, still in 1944, yeah, in September. In other words, I was six months in Auschwitz. We went from there-- we went from there to Gorlitz. And there, we were 300 women in the camp and about 1,100 men on a different side. And we would go-- we did 12 hours of labor, like shifts-- one week at night, one week daytime. And we were building airplanes. We had a little bit more to eat. It was, of course, much better than Auschwitz.

And then at around April [INAUDIBLE], we was-- had to be evacuated all the time when the Allies were approaching. So they took us. But then we came back to Gorlitz. And then on May 8th, I-- we ran out. When it was like May 7, we ran out of the camps because we were afraid that they're going to kill us. And we went to the Gentile camps, the Polish. And I got up very early to go to the ladies' room, like outside. And I hear shouting in Russian. I spoke Russian. And [RUSSIAN].

That was-- we were free.

From the Russians, yes. Tovarich means friend, isn't it?

Yeah. Yeah, it's that. So that's when.

This was in Germany?

And were Oberschlesien, which is close to the Czech border. It was-- it's Germany.

Bavaria, I guess?

Yeah. It's Silesia. Silesia. Ah, yeah. And so we were there. After we were still-- there was one-- are you-- I'm on record?

Yes.

There was one Obermeister. He was a very nice German man. He was watching over us that we should produce the right was the stuff. But he was really very nice to us. And so after we were free, we-- the Russians opened up a big storage room with food. And we had bread, and noodles, and potatoes. So we gave him too to take home.

Anyway, the men's department, they were dying out very-- much more than-- we almost all 300 women survived. But the men, they were-- I met, there a cousin of mine. And he didn't come out.

You and your sister were still together?

Yeah.

And--

Then we--

--where did you go?

--about two weeks later, we hired a wagon back. And we went to-- it was not far from Bratislava. And from there, we went back to Czechoslovakia, to Carpathian, you call it. And I didn't find nobody.

You went back to your home, nobody there.

No, just the house with the windows taken out. The windows were taken. The cellar, the stone was gone. I was staying in Koshel'ovo for about two months. The Joint had arranged already that we had food. And then I went to go to the upper part of Czechoslovakia. And that for-- that was like-- I went to September. And then in October, it was already hard to get out.

My sister stayed behind because she thought, how can you live without anything? She maybe had the-- we were quite well-to-do before the war. And we had a lot of property. We had Dad's business. So she thought, we won't-- how can two girls live without anything? So but then I went up. And I got a job in a [NON-ENGLISH]. That's like toothpaste and soap.

So then she already had to go cross the border from there because the Russians were closing in. It was becoming Iron Curtain. So she came later. And from there, we went back to Germany. And I was in the US committee as a youngster. And so I came in 1947 here. And I went to the United States.

You spoke English already?

No, no, no. I didn't speak a word English. I went to school here at Webster Junior High in Newark-- Newark, New Jersey. And I was among children. I didn't speak any. But I just listened. And I was very hard to start to speak. When I was sure, I did very good work in writing, the spelling. And so I was one year.

And then in the summertime, between, I went to-- well, I knew how to sew. My father, when he heard what's going, he said, the girls should know something to do in case we-- because in 1941, all our area was taken from home. And we were supposed to send across the border to Poland and let us out, just like this.

And there was transportations. But none of our family was in it. We were all in hiding. And I was on a Gentile. And I heard that when they were talking like this, they went, they will never come here. And those who are hiding, we'll see to it that we'll finish them off. So that's why when I came 1944, didn't even try to hide no more. It's no use anyway.

Getting back, I came to the States. And I went to school. And then summertime, I went, I got a job in New York in the garment industry. And I started to make already \$58. So I made money because I wanted to send from-- my sister went back from Germany to Czechoslovakia because her boyfriend was there. And she got married there.

And so I wanted to send her some stuff. So that's why I went to work. And being I had a job, I figured that I can't wait and be supported by somebody else when I can do it myself. And so I worked and lived in New York. And I met my husband. And I got married.

Was he a survivor too? Were you in-- yes?

Yes. Yes. He is a survivor. He's not far from my town. But we didn't know each other before.

But he's from Czechoslovakia?

Yeah. Yeah.

Did you get your sister out?

To the States?

Yes.

She went till 1950, when it was the upper-- she lived in Carlsbad. And when Carlsbad was supposed to be annexed as Iron Curtain, she got out to Israel. They took along for whatever they had then. And when I became a citizen, my sister came in preference quota to me. She left the child and husband in Israel. And she came here. And then six months later, he came, her husband came.

So now you're all together?

I have my sister. And that's-- thank god for that. My sister and my children-- my daughter went to Barnard. And she works in a law office. My son is a electrical engineer that works for Bell Laboratories.

Thank god.

And they tried to ask you about the--

Yeah, very-- when they were little, and if I would say, eat. You don't know what it means, how to appreciate, they didn't like it, when you use this too often. But lately, they're very interested. My son is doing family tree. And my daughter, too, they are always-- even they followed Elie Wiesel's writings and such. And thank god now for this. But I don't know if this should be on the record. But I would like if people would know where my brothers were, if somebody would tell me what they was like.

And they really found out what happened.

How they were to the end.

What camp were they in last you know?

Landsberg.

Have you look for people here from Landsberg?

The one that was with him, she said-- she told me everything-- that she forgot now. It was very painful to do or anything. But for history's sake, we should do all we can. OK. Thank you very much.