We're all started.

You start.

We're all started.

OK. You want me to talk.

I want each of you to tell me your name first.

My present name is Frances Finkelstein.

OK.

In Europe, they called me Feigele Zankel. Zankel.

Now, you'll have to spell that.

Z-A-N-K-E-L.

OK. And your mother's maiden name?

Karger.

K-A-R-G-E-R?

Right.

OK. Where did you grow up in Europe?

Now, is this being recorded right now?

Yes.

It is?

The tape machine is on.

I would like to have first the date. Today's April the 13th, 1983. OK?

OK.

Because in case ever my grandchildren should come and look for it, I want them to know what date it is took place, this event. OK. I was born in a very small village in Poland. It's near Kolomea. But it's not important. That village was not on the map.

As a little girl I had a fairly nice life. I went to school, and I loved school enormously. And then when Hitler came, the school came to an end. We could no longer go to school.

Could you tell me a little bit about the town though?

The town, it was mainly of-- there were very few Jewish people, and mainly Polish and Ukrainian. But we lived there because my father had a business. And I went to public school. But for Hebrew we had a teacher coming into the house.

So you were tutored in Hebrew at home?

Tutor, right, that's what it was, a tutor for my brother and myself. And--

The children were just and your brother?

No. There was a sister. She was 10 years older than I. She was married. And she had a seven-year-old boy. And they were all-- they're all gone. Her husband, she, her seven-year-old boy, my father, my brother, and the uncles and their children-- I'm the only one that survived on either side. I think I have a slight amnesia because I don't remember my cousins' names. And many things I forgot, but the most important things I do remember.

Did all the family live in the same town?

No. Like, one brother of my mother's lived in the same town. And yet, I don't remember his children. And, as I said, when Hitler came in everything stopped. What I meant by stopped, that means education, freedom, business, no longer my father could conduct. They stripped us of our valuables.

What was your father's business?

We had a business where-- I don't know-- everything was available there, cigarettes and the sewing and-- really, it's like a general store. Everything was available. I really don't know how to describe it. It's not like here, you're assigned just for a certain area. But whatever anybody needed in the village, it was available there.

And we got along well with the Polish people and the Ukrainian, which I will tell you later. And this is my main reason why I want to be interviewed because there's something very important that I want to come to as we go along.

OK.

OK. And that's why I don't feel to put too much emphasis on the beginning as much as on the end.

Well, I'm just trying to get an idea of the setting. The town was not a very big town, you say?

No. No. It was entirely-- a Jew was like a thorn that you can really identify because we were very few Jews there.

Had your family been living there a long time?

I was born there. Yes.

Grandparents?

No. I don't remember my grandparents. Nobody was living when I was a youngster. They were gone already. I'd like to bring up to the point of the time during Hitler's time. My-- as I said, my childhood is not important because it was fairly good up until Hitler came in.

As I said, they stripped us of everything.

Well, when the war first broke out, what was the situation in your town?

Oh they started to throw rocks into our windows.

The townspeople?

We don't know who, but I suppose so. And breaking windows stealing, robbing, beating us-- beating up the Jews

because they knew who the Jew is. And they kept beating us. Thank God that I didn't go through that, but it was done.

And then finally, on a Saturday morning, we heard a knock on the window, and they're taking us into the ghetto. And when they took us into the ghetto, prior that let's say, my father made arrangements with our next door neighbors, the Polish people. Whatever we had left yet, he said to them, keep this and my children will escape from the ghetto. They'll come, and you will save them.

So he knew for a long time what was going to happen.

Oh, we knew that we are-- that it was a daily occurrences. We knew that we are going to be taken to the ghettos. There's no question about it.

This ghetto was where?

This was in Tlumacz, a different town. So he gave everything, whatever was left, to our next door neighbor with the agreement that my brother and I, when we escaped the ghetto, we should come and they should hide us and give us food. My father didn't want to escape the ghetto. He says-- he was religious. We were religious. In fact, I still am. And he said, I'm a man with a beard and payos and an old man. He was only 55, but in Europe, 55, he thought he was an old man.

And he said, I have no choice. I'll stay in the ghetto. But you children-- my brother was, at that time, maybe 18. I was about 14. We should escape and save ourselves. My sister could not do that because she had a little child, and she didn't have a choice either because nobody would give shelter to someone who has a child.

And so when we did come to that next door neighbor, instead of giving us shelter she wanted to turn us in.

You did escape, and you went back to the neighbor.

The escaping wasn't difficult. The difficulty was where to escape. Nobody would give you shelter because the danger was-- the penalty was death for keeping a Jew on their premises, although there were possibilities. Like, if they kept us somewhere, in the barn where nobody would see us, it was possible. But nobody wanted to endanger themselves.

And then again, Hitler's followers promised them that if they turn in a Jew, the price for a Jewish head was a pound of sugar, a pound of coffee. And Jewish life was very cheap. You could sell it for a pound of coffee. So instead of giving us shelter, they could have turned us in and received a great reward.

So when we came to this next door neighbor, we couldn't stay there because that's what happened. They were going to turn us in. So we escaped from there. In the meantime, my mother managed to get out of the ghetto. And she joined us. And we were three.

How did she find you?

She knew that this is where this place would be that we would find each other. Because it was a village of people that we knew. I grew up there. So we knew approximately where we could find each other. The only way we traveled was by night, not through the streets because that was forbidden, that was dangerous, only through the alleys, through the-- and not when the moon was bright because then, again, you could see. So it had to be only where nobody walks and nobody sees. And--

Until you met your mother, where did you hide out?

A day here and a day there. And then my mother came, and we split. My brother went to one family, and my mother and I were going from a day here a day there because nobody would give us shelter even if they wanted to because to take an older person in was a danger. In case of emergency, she could not run, although she wasn't that old. She was probably my age or-- probably, yes.

My brother was in a separate area. And my mother and I were struggling, as I said, a day here and a day there. I had a pair of boots. She had none. She only had a pair of rubber galoshes. Where I come from, the snows are deeper than-- above your knees. And we had to walk at night, every night, to look for a different area who would give us shelter or a piece of bread.

Were you staying in the same town?

In the same area, yes. And she would walk, and the snow would get into her galoshes, and she would walk on ice because the snow turned into ice. And that's how we would walk by night, from one area to another, hoping that if we approached this Gentile family, maybe they will open their door and give us a piece of bread or even keep us overnight. Or, we would take a chance that he may turn us in for a pound of sugar, a pound of coffee.

Did you have any way of--

We never had no way of knowing which way it will turn out. It came to the point where nobody would take us in any longer because they heard here and there that they were catching Jews on Christian premises, and both of them were killed. So nobody would let-- open the doors.

One day my mother and I came and joined my brother where he was staying at this family, who happened to be Ukrainians. Why did they take my brother? Was because, when you do something for someone, it comes back to you somehow, someway, someday, which happened.

This Ukrainian, his father needed money for a doctor to save a child that was very ill. And he came to my father. My father lent him money. We didn't know anything about it. But when my brother came to them and told who he, he says, oh yes, you can stay here because your father gave money to my father so he could take my brother to the doctor and so on. So he gave shelter to my brother.

But what happened, on one day this man, where we are staying, he noticed that up on the hill the Gestapo had very well-trained German shepherds. To this day, I'm petrified of dogs. I can't go near a dog. I cannot have a dog near me.

They were on top of the Hill with these dogs. And he came out, this man where we are staying only overnight. And he says to us, run into the woods because the Gestapo are on the hill searching. We ran into the woods. We had a code number, my brother and I. We said, instead of being caught by the Gestapo into their hands, it's much easier to be killed. So we made up that if we should ever have that situation, that we are being caught, we should run and be killed because that's much easier than being captured.

We were sitting under a bush, the three of us. It was quiet. My brother was impatient. He says, you know, it's quiet. I guess they're all gone. But it was daylight. He shouldn't have done it. I sometimes feel guilty. I used to blame my mother. Why didn't you stop him by telling your son don't go out.

Well, he just picked himself up, and he went over just a few feet away, beyond that bush. They never walked into the woods because they were afraid. You know, from the woods outside, you can see what's doing. But from the outside into the woods, you don't know what's doing. So they never went in into the woods. They would have never seen us.

But he got out from that bush and went out. And all of a sudden, we heard a commotion, and I heard a shot. And I said, oh, thank God that he was shot because, as I said, it was easier to be shot than to be captured. So I said, OK, he is shot.

And at night, I was walking through the woods and calling that code number that we had our agreement. I didn't hear any response. I said it's true. Then he was shot. However, when we returned at night to that person that we stayed overnight, he says, no, he wasn't shot. He was captured alive and taken. And ever since then, I always kept looking and looking and hoping maybe I'll find him, even he-- even here now at the gathering. But he had red hair. And he wanted so much to live, more than I did.

In fact, the following day, it was a Monday. He had plans to join a partisan unit the following day. And this happened, like, on a Sunday. I don't remember the day-- on a Monday, I suppose. And on a Tuesday he was planning to join the partisans. So he was captured, and our life was useless because we didn't know what happened with my father in the ghetto, with my sister, brother-in-law, and everyone else.

Now I am left only with my mother. And it meant nobody wanted to give us shelter. It meant, well, let's go out into the open, and here we are. You can do as you please.

And so one day we came to this Polish family that they used to be just customers of ours. One of the daughters, the youngest, went to school with me. That's all we knew them as-- fine, refined, intelligent, Polish people. Well, this is something that whatever the Polish people did, they made up for them.

These people were such an ideal people that you can't find anymore. They took us in. And we were sitting there in the barn, my mother and I, in one corner. In the other corner there was another young fellow, probably your age. Another Jewish woman with two daughters used to come at night and boil some potatoes for herself. And-- and we were living there, like, from day to day, not knowing what will happen because if they did not take us in, we had no choice. Nobody and nobody would let us in anymore.

And after losing my brother, there was no-- there was no need of my existence because, as I said, he was the one that wanted so much to live, much more than I did. I wasn't a fighter for life. I felt that if everyone else died already, why should I go on living. And I really didn't fight for life. In fact, I used to go out because these Polish people, they had no food neither. I had to go out during the night and look for a piece of bread somewhere.

What time was this? What year was this?

Still in the same town where I was born, still in the same town.

But this was 1940, though?

This is 1942. In fact, one-- as I said, we weren't allowed to walk on when the moon was full because you can see. And the snow and the moon, that's very bright. And one time I ran into this guy that he took over our house. And I stood face-to-face with him, as I am with you now. And I said, this is the end of me. But I don't mind my end, but I left my mother behind.

Well, I guess God wanted to protect my mother. So when this man saw me, instead of grabbing me and turning me in, he ran away from me. And he left me alive.

When I used to go out for that piece of bread, I used to be followed by stray dogs because in Europe the dogs were running around loose. And they used to attack me. And I'm so frightened of dogs all the time. And somehow I came back safe because my mother needed me. She was there all alone.

Every time I went out at night, I left her sitting there and endangering my life so I should come back safely to her. And God protected me that I should come safely. One time I brought two boiled potatoes-- no, four. We ate two, and two we saved for the next day. It was so cold there that the potatoes got frozen.

Or I brought the piece of bread, and I said to my mother, you eat it. And she said, no, you eat it because you are young. You have to survive. And I said, no. Because I'm young, I have more strength. But you're old, and you need it more than I do. So you eat it.

How did you get the bread? How did you?

I took my chances. I came through the back door to this-- to any people that used to be our customers. And they would recognize me. And they would give me a piece of bread. But I took chances because I didn't know if they wouldn't turn against me, that they wouldn't turn me in. It was taking a big chance by going out for that piece of bread. This was the

biggest danger that I would take, by going out and looking for that piece of bread.

But what I want to specify mainly is these Polish people, what they did for humanity. They endangered their lives. There was a husband, a wife, three daughters, a son. The daughter was married with a little three-year-old girl. They taught that three-year-old girl that she is not allowed to reveal the secret that we are there in the barn because if she does, all of us will be killed. And she kept that secret.

I still have a picture of her when she was three years old, not a picture, a painting actually because one of the sisters, her aunt, was a painter. They found-- those two daughters went out in December to pick some wood from-- to make fire, and they found a Jewish girl. She was frozen. She was 10 years old. They brought her home. She had sores. She had lice. They put her in the bathtub with milk, and they bathed her, and they brought her to life.

But then she insisted, the little girl, that she knows where her mother is. She wants to go out and find her mother, not knowing that her mother was turned in for a pound of sugar or whatever. Mother wasn't alive any longer. And so I don't know what happened to that little girl.

But from that Polish people, that Polish family, there is this young boy who survived. He lives in Minneapolis. This mother and two daughters survived, who live in Los Angeles. My mother and I survived. My mother died three years ago at the age of 90.

She never talked about the past as much as I do. She just turned it off. She just turned it off. And when I used to light a candle for my brother, a Yahrzeit candle. She never even asked me, who's it for? You know, although I lost my mother three years ago, that pain is not as strong as the one that I was 40 years ago.

And you know why? Because my mother died in my arms. I held her in my arms when she let her last breath. But my brother, my sister, my father, and everyone else, I often wonder what kind of death did they have? What did they do to them? And this memory, although it's 40 years later, I guess it will never end. It's always there. It's always-- I always think, what could have happened? How did they go? What kind of death did they have?

Were you able to find out any information while you were hiding out, to find out what was happening in the war?

No. I just knew that that ghetto was-- it used to be called Judenfrei. That means they got rid of the Jews. They cleaned it up. Where or what, I never found out where they cleaned them out, what they did with them. I don't know what they did with-- in that area, with the Jews.

How long did you hide out?

For over two years.

So that's 1944, then.

Yeah. I started-- I started, like, at the end of '41 until '44. And I never-- no, I never found out. In fact, I did go back to the village to see, to look. But I ran away immediately because--

Why did you go back?

I thought maybe I'll find somebody.

When?

When we were liberated. I was hoping maybe somebody is alive. But instead, I ran because I saw that the suspicion, the danger is still there. A lot of Jews were killed, even after the liberation, when they went back to their homes to look for survival.

Did you stay in the barn until liberation?

Yes. Then at the end, the Ukrainians and the Poles, they were always fighting with each other. And one night, the Ukrainians set a fire on the Polish people, including this barn where I was sitting. And it went up in flames. And so my mother and I, we ran out. And then right after we were liberated, liberated.

It wasn't really. It was still a danger. And you know, this Polish family, I had lost them for a while. And then I found them. And ever since, ever since I came to America, I kept sending them money and packages. And last year in May-- in fact, it took me three years I worked on it, that I went to Jerusalem and I had a tree planted at the-- it's called the Trees for the Righteous. You know, there is a--

Is that at Yad Vashem?

At Yad Vashem, at the Jerusalem Memorial for the 6 million, there is a special assigned area that the trees are being planted for these special people. There are very few, of course, that saved Jewish lives. And I was determined, although they are deceased already, that family, and I'm only corresponding with their eldest daughter and the other children too. But I felt, although, that they made up the difference for what the others did. And they were that 1% of the majority who are trying to help Jews for no-- I mean, we had no money or anything to give them or pay them or promise them. They just did it out of humanity to-- because they knew that what was being done to the Jewish people wasn't human.

And I felt that they endangered their life to this extent. So at least what I can do is remember them somehow, besides only by sending them a material way of remembering them. So I went to the extent as to have them honored by having that tree planted among the-- it's called the Valley For the Righteous. It's in Jerusalem.

I've been there.

Do you know about it?

I've been there, yeah.

Yeah. So last May, I went there specially, to have that tree planted. This is about all of my story.

Well, I have a few more questions I'd like to ask to fill in the information. But we're at the end of this side, so I'll forward us.

In the town that you grew up in, and I can't pronounce the name of it, so--

No, don't even try. No, nobody can pronounce it.

You said there were very few Jews. Was there much of a Jewish cultural life among those Jews?

No. No. We had to form our own cultural life. We were so isolated. Let's say, on Passover, I wasn't allowed to play with-- my best friend was a Polish girl, and I was so-- like I say, we kept to ourselves. The children, the Jewish children had to be separate. And the religion had to be enforced and all this environment.

Was there a synagogue in town?

No. No. No.

Was there one in a nearby town?

Yes, nearby. They had to go to a shtiebel, used to be called. But I'm a little-- you know, there's so many things that I don't remember. I think that all this living and reliving and nightmares and all that, I think I have a slight amnesia because I used to know the language, Ukrainian and Russian, perfectly. In fact, I was number one, a student in my class.

And now I can't speak it. I barely understand. So I don't remember too well. Somehow, I don't know what happened to me.

There's so many things that sometimes people say, you know this one or that one. I'm ashamed to admit, but I don't. It's just seems so many years went by, or perhaps all that-- the memory or what blocked it. I don't know why it is.

So most of the-- were there any other Jewish families that you would share some of the holidays with, go visit them?

Yeah, my uncle, my mother's brother. Yeah, my uncle and the cousins, we would go.

Were you able to keep up with the holidays because there was so few Jews--

Oh, yes, definitely.

--to get the matzah for Passover.

Oh, sure. Oh, yes. We were very religious, very observant. Everything was-- although we lived, but when there is a will, there is a way. There is no such thing. In those days everything was observed perfectly, to the extent that even during those crucial days of my hiding, I never ate treif, even when we were by these Polish people. And if they did make a soup which consisted of potatoes and water, that was the soup, that was the entire food and meal. And she cooked for us in a separate pot because she knew us, that we are observant.

And, yes, everything was kept very much so, very strong observant and dedicated to. Yes.

Did your brother go to cheder? Religious school?

No, we had a tutor come into the house.

For both of you?

Yes. And when he was in hiding, he used to carry with him the tefillin. [SIGHS] And he used to daven while we were hiding. He was tall. And when you have to stand [? sheminasa, ?] you have to get up to stand on your feet. He would endanger his life and walk down from the attic because he had to stand. That's how we were brought up, that it has to be just so.

The attic where? When you were--

We were-- like I said, we were wanderers.

Oh, before you were--

It was before, yeah. Because until we came to these Polish people, we were like one day here and one day there. We never knew what the next day will be and where are we going to wind up. There was no-- the only thing we had is hope. Maybe the next day, maybe. There was no radio or telephones or newspapers or anything. We didn't know. We only could hear the bombs, so we felt maybe something is happening there, that the Germans are getting defeated.

This was our hope. Like, nowadays we live a week is the same, and a month is the same, and a year is the same. At that time, every day was different. I used to write a diary, like Annie Frank, because every day was something else. I used to write poems in different-- in three languages, Jewish and Polish and Ukrainian.

Do you still have the diary?

No, I lost them. I thought I had it in the vault. It turned yellow. And I went to look for it one day, and it's not there. I had dates and everything was-- I used to write. In fact, one time my mother was- my mother and I, we were sitting in bushes.

And it seems like we moved, and the leaves made noise. And this Ukrainian was passing by, and he heard. And all of a sudden, he ran under the bushes, and he saw us sitting.

And we felt, well, this is the end because he was the Jew chaser. He was the one given the authority to catch Jews. Like there are these that catch stray dogs, he was the one that was supposed to catch Jews. So when he saw us, this was the end.

But I was writing poetry, and it happened so that I had in my hands the poem written in his language. And when he looked at it-- and I was young, 16 years old with braids. And I looked nice. So when he looked at that poem, it was written in his language. And he looked at me. He ran away.

I thought he ran away to get help and to take us away. He never showed up. Then in the evening, when we came to that place, to the home in whose bushes we were sitting, we said what happened? That chaser, he never came for us. And it didn't matter any longer because my brother was captured, and I didn't care for my life any longer.

So he says, when he saw the way you write, he didn't have the heart to turn you in. Even he didn't have the heart. So there was always meant something that, no matter how close to death I happened to stumble into, somehow I got out of it. I don't know why it meant to be that way. I guess that it had to continue. Our life had to continue because my two sons and maybe grandchildren and to prove that Jewish life has to continue.

What did your mother do before the war?

Oh, she's just a housewife. She used to help out in the store.

This was something like a dry goods store?

Yeah, something like that. Yeah.

Before the war broke out, what did you learn about what was happening in Germany?

No. We didn't know about that. But when the war broke out, some Jews were running away to Russia. And we didn't know. So my father said, I don't have to run, I'm a religious man, and I'm not a communist. So why should I run away? This I remember distinctly. He said, being I'm not a communist, so why do I have to be afraid of Germany?

We still were not aware what Hitler is doing to the Jewish people. We thought that he's only after Jews who are communists. And this is what threw us off. This is what my father made the mistake.

Did you hear about Kristallnacht?

Yeah. Well, no, not-- no,

So you didn't hear about that?

We didn't hear it. No we didn't know about it then. No.

When did you find out?

Oh, later, not really.

When did you find out?

Because there was no press where I come. Where we were in hiding, how would we know? We didn't know anything what was going on, Nothing at all. It was all we-- we lived here. We waited from day to day what's going to happen. But we really didn't expect it. You know, you never believe. It can't happen to me. It can't happen to me.

We didn't-- I mean, I can't say we because I didn't have what to say. But my father, he felt as long as he's not a communist, nothing will happen. And this is where the mistake was.

How long were you in the ghetto for?

In the ghetto, I wasn't long because we were thrown in there with so many families that we were like sardines. So to get out of the ghetto, it wasn't that difficult. It's only where to go. So I was there just a few weeks.

There was no food. Every minute there was a call for more corpse to be taken out and send out wherever. I don't know where, but they were taken. And we used to hide every time we heard something. So we used to hide someplace in a corner.

There was no food. There were-- people would go out and look for peels of potatoes. And from that we made soup. Like, before the war, I used to be such a poor eater. I would take the bread from around the rye bread, the hard area, and throw it away. I only ate the center. And during the hiding times, I'd say, oh, If I had that what I threw away-- until this day, I hate to throw away bread. When I have leftover, I'll freeze it, and I'll carry it someplace where there are some birds that I can give it away to them. [SIGHS]

How was your family set up for the short while you were in the ghetto? How was your family set up there?

Very bad. It was very bad. It was, like I say, just waiting for who's next. There were-- every day, they was making speeches. That one day made a difference because one day meant so many, so many lives. You know, there was a quota, that they were expecting so many, so many people from this ghetto, to deliver. So every day there were people missing, missing.

Do you know many, or any of the people, the other people [CROSS TALK]?

Oh, my cousins. When we were taken to the ghetto, it was my mother's brother had an apartment. And we were thrown into his apartment, plus other families with their children, with their grandchildren. His daughter, one of the daughters, they started to take her child. And she started to scream, if you take my child, you take me too. So she went too. I mean, what was a Jewish life? Didn't mean as much as this pencil, doesn't mean anything. [SIGHS]

But it's just it was all erased. And many times I wonder, it's unbelievable because on my father's side, there were so many that my father had brothers and sisters and their children. And on my mother's side, there were three brothers and their children. And every one was wiped out. I'm the only one left.

It's something unbelievable. I can't comprehend how the almighty, what kind of a choice. He made. Why? Sometimes I just wonder why this had to happen, that I am the chosen one, that I was left. And I really didn't fight too much. As I said, there were many times that I was close to death. And yet one time my mother and I, we were very deep in a barn, where they keep food for the horses. It's called, I think--

Hay?

Hay. Hay, right. And we were so deep, but not deep enough for this Ukrainian to go with a-- to dig in. If it was another inch, he would have picked us up with these--

Pitchfork.

Yeah, pitchfork, right. They were looking for Jews. And-- and we heard them on top, walking around with these pitchforks, looking for Jews. If he had maybe one more inch, he would have dug us up. And it would-- it-- as I said, it was like a miracle that so many times we were in danger, in danger, and every time I got out of it. It's somehow miracles happen.

What was the name of the ghetto were in again?

Tlumacz.

"Klumacz?"

Tlumacz-- T-L-U-M-A-- I think T-Z.

What town was it in?

That's the town.

Oh, that's the town.

Tlumacz, yeah. Tlumacz ghetto. There are few people, I think, left because I met someone in Israel that she's from there. But she was in Russia during the war.

In the days immediately after liberation, where did you go? What did you do?

That was another-- that was another calamity. We still had to keep running because we were liberated by the Russians. And then the Germans started to push them back again. So then we had to keep running already in the direction with the Russians so that we should not fall under the Germans again. But Thank God, it didn't take too long, and they were pushed back, the Germans.

So we met a group of survivors, and we United together. And we already, like, found each other, like, people started to come out from the-- from wherever somebody was hidden, wherever they were-- from each corner, and we started to find each other. And that's the way it started, our coming back to life.

Where were you at the time?

That time, it was again wandering from town to town. We even wound up in Romania because we had to flee the area where the Germans were coming back in. So we had to go. We had to follow the path of the Russians. So we went in as far as Romania. But then, Thank God, the Germans were cleaned out, bombarded out, and we were able to keep going in the direction where we intended to go.

So how did you, after the war was all over, how did you get from Poland or wherever you were at the time?

Then we had leaders. You know, somehow among us there were leaders. And they took groups of people, and they kept pushing us towards the areas as far as Germany. And we came to Germany, and they put us in a displaced persons camp.

Do you remember the name?

Yeah, actually, yeah. Today, this congressman-- forgot his name-- from Connecticut, in fact, he was born in that camp. And my son was born in that camp. Now he's a congressman of Connecticut.

Your son is?

No.

Oh, this other guy.

This congressman that I was listening to today. And so we came to Germany. And there, it wasn't-- I mean to compare what we lived through, this was heaven already because we got food, we had a room, and my son was born there. And then from there we came to America.

Was this camp administered by the US Army?

By the US, yes, the UN.

And how did you decide where you wanted to go from there?

Well, the decision had to be because my mother had two sisters in America. And again, I wouldn't have known. But because my mother survived, and she had-- she remembered, probably, the address of her sisters here in America. And she started to correspond, and that's how we came.

Where did they live?

They lived where I live, in Passaic.

Passaic, New Jersey?

Yeah. So that's how I-- that's how I came to Passaic, because of my mother's two sisters. They, like, sponsored us.

Did you come along with anyone else or anything else at the time?

No, my husband and my son.

Did you meet your husband in the camp?

No, after the war. After the war happened, in Poland. And then we got married in Poland, in Warsaw because that's where he's from. And in Germany, in Aschberg, my son was born. And then we came here.

We came with nothing. We came without a language, without a penny to our name. But we survived.

The very first place you went when you got here, where was that?

Right there, to Passaic. My cousin picked me-- picked us up from the boat and took us to Passaic, Passaic, New Jersey. And that's where we lived ever since. Did I put my address there? Yeah, on top.

Your address?

Yeah.

Right there we have your name and everything else. We seem to have a little extra time. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

No. You see, in Jewish we say-- you understand Jewish? No, you don't.

Hebrew, you mean.

No. I don't know Hebrew, unfortunately. But they used to say, [YIDDISH] but I never believed it, which means, I wish I could tell about it under good circumstances, in freedom. I never believed it, during that time, that this day would come, that I should be able to talk about it.

When we got off the boat here, I said to my husband, where are our papers? How are we going to enter a country? I don't have a paper. I don't have any ID. I have nothing. I'm scared.

I was still frightened. I thought here you have to walk around with papers and papers, you know, to show every minute

where you-- who you are. I thought that you can't even enter the-- you can't walk a street, a block, unless you have to show, you know, to identify yourself where you are. I was so frightened. It took a long time.

That fear will never disappear, I suppose. The fear is still there. The nightmare is still there, even though so many years went by. It left us all with some kind of a deficiency. No, none of us are well. We all have this nightmare. We all have these memories, no matter.

On the outside we laugh and we pretend. But it isn't so. It's like a nagging pain that it's there. It can't be forgotten because it's not natural. When somebody dies, like my mother died at the end of 90, I suffered greatly. But when I think about it, I figure, well, at least she died of natural cause. I was right there. I held her in my arms, and I watched when she left. Her last breath went out. But about them, I don't know how and when, by what means.

Have you tried to pass your memories along to your son?

No. In the beginning, I kept it. I didn't want to-- I didn't want to tell him. Up until recently, my married son asked questions. Why do you keep it hidden? Why don't you ever talk about it? Why didn't you tell me? I said, I didn't want to-- I didn't want you to know.

So he started to inquire about it. In fact, he wanted to come, but he couldn't make it. He started to question, my oldest son. My youngest son was born in America. He's a little bit different than my oldest son. My oldest son was two years old when he came here, but somehow he got a deeper engraved in him, our past, rather than my younger son it seems to.

So he questioned it. But I tried to keep it hidden. I don't know why. But I never talked about it until recently, the last few years when it became public, when he started to question it. But up until then, we never talked about it.

Think it's better that you have now?

If he hadn't asked, I don't think I would have told him. Perhaps because I wanted to protect him. I didn't want him to know of such horrible things that could happen to people. I really don't know why I did it. I think out of protection.

It's like a nightmare, so why? You know, if something is good, you want to share it with your loved one. But when something is so horrible, why should I share it with you? So I never talked about it.

Why do you think it's important, then, to record what you're saying now?

Well, now it became public, and I feel perhaps someday-- I see these young people, you, any, you are interested. And we don't want this to go, to be wiped out. When we are gone, we want that your children should know about it. So maybe this will go into a computer. Maybe my granddaughter will go somewhere sometimes and put it into the computer and get a readout on this so she shall know that her grandma went through this.

The reason for it is it should be remembered by the public, that this was history that should not be forgotten because history, this kind of history, God forbid it should never be repeated. This is why I want it to be known.

Otherwise, I felt it's my life, It's my story, I don't-- it's not important. But it is important for the future. That's all. OK, that will be it. I thank you very much.

Oh, I thank you. I thank you for sharing your story.

Yeah, it was a privilege, really. And we really appreciate your concern about us, that you are giving so much of your time. It's really-- it's a good experience for you to pass it on to your children later on. Instead of reading them a Cinderella story, you will tell them a real story. But we appreciate what all of you are doing. You're giving so much of your time for this.

Well, it's all.

Thank you. God bless you.

Thank you.