

Holocaust Survivor

Oral Histories

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July 12, 1989

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Could you tell me your name, please and where you were born?

Okay, my name is Erna Blitzer Gorman, I was born in Metz, Moselle France.

And how large was your family, your immediate family?

How large? My father, my mother, my sister, and I.

As for your extended family, how many people were lost in the war do you estimate?

(Sigh) Anywhere between fifty or eighty people I would say because my mother had a very, very large family many brothers and sisters there were two younger sisters but they were all married. I see grandparents and many cousins and my father had seven brothers and several sisters and many children out of which only one, only three children survived.

Three of his...

Three of his nephews and nieces.

And how did they survive?

Well, that particular family lived in Germany and those three of the four children were sent to different orphanages to Belgium and this is how they survived.

Of your immediate family, who survived?

Well, it depends how you look at it, umm three of my father's, my sister and I survived, but my mother died, at the end or the beginning, I don't know how to put it, she died... survived until 1944 1/2, I think, and then she died.

Just after you were liberated after the Russian troops came?

Well, yea uh huh.

You were just a child when the war began, do you remember anything about your life in Metz?

No. Nothing at all.

Your parents were originally from Metz?

No, my father was from Poland and my mother was Ukrainian and they met in Metz and married.

Your sister was older or younger?

Six years older.

How did your family and you get caught up in the war?

Well, I think that Metz was a very small town and I am not sure that my father was very aware of what was going on in Europe and his sister was getting married and he decided that we should all go to his sisters wedding and we did and I don't remember a train ride, but I know that we went to Poland and we were never able to return.

When approximately was this?

I think it was in 1939.

In the summer?

Perhaps, yea.

Probably, do you think maybe just before the war?

I am sure of it, I am sure of it, yes.

Where was your aunt getting married, in what city in Poland?

Uh, it was Vischnitza, a small town, near Auschwitz, yes. How far it is, I have no idea.

What are your earliest memories of that time?

Do you want me to speak of the family or what I remember of the house, or what I remember of the town?

Yes, where you were living then.

I remember a square and I remember a house which is still in existence as a matter of fact, uh, a cousin of mine saw it two years ago and it is how I imagined it, how I remembered it in my mind. It was a very large square house with a courtyard in the middle and there were apartments all around the courtyard and, umm, the house giving to the square where there were some little shops; and my grandfather's apartment was in the back of the courtyard and I remember that very vividly. I remember my a grandfather, not a grandmother but many uncles and aunts. I remembered it being sort of a busy place with my grandfather shouting; a very boisterous type of a person.

Was he a religious person?

Well, I think he was not quite, he was religious, but I don't think he was extremely religious, but he wore black, I see him in black and I see him with a beard and I see him quite tall.

Your parents, were they orthodox as well?

No.

That must have created some tension in the house do you think?

Well, my father and my grandfather had very poor rapport because I think this is why my father left for France, umm, my father being one of the youngest I think he was sort of a spoiled child of the family and sort of a playboy, what I gather, and umm, my grandfather had a lumber business, very extensive lumber business, I guess they were selling lumber to the Polish government and what I gather is my father didn't want to work, he was a bit lazy and didn't want to do too much except ride his horses, or whatever and play around and there was a lot of dissention between the two of them and one day the story goes is that my grandfather demanded something of my father and my father refused to do it and my grandfather slapped my father's face and my father left, decided to leave home and changed his name to Blitzer from Krolek. My name really should have been Krolek.

And they he moved to France to Metz?

Yes.

What did your father do in Metz?

He was a merchant, um, not very successful, um he was selling, what I have in my mind he used to call it a schmata business, which is clothes.

While you were living in your grandfather's home did you have playmates, did you and your sister play together?

I have no recollection of that, all I remember is my grandfather being constantly cross and yelling a great deal and got angry at me once, I don't know, I must have done something terrible, he threw me at the wall.

Violently, angry?

Yes, violently, he picked me up and threw me against the wall, I don't know what I did, but that is what I remember of him and I am sure he had, there were nice things but being I was so young, that is what stands out.

Did you have a close relationship with your mother or your sister?

At that particular time, I don't remember anything, no. I don't remember ever being held, or ever being talked to or whatever, maybe it was just too long ago and I don't remember.

Do you remember the Germans?

I saw Germans only a few times, um I remember just having an extreme fear of them.

Soldiers?

Yes, soldiers.

Any part of the war, gunfire, artillery, tanks, anything like that?

In the beginning? no.

You stayed in your father's home town for about how long?

Maybe it was a year, I don't know, what happened, but everyone disappeared, I remember we came into this house and the Poles had taken over the household. Maybe we went out for a walk, maybe I don't know, I try to remember what was happening and all I know was that Poles had taken over the house. We were barred from the house one day and everybody else disappeared and never saw again that whole family and I know that we were going towards Ukraine. How we got there,

I remember a train ride, I don't know if it was in that particular time or not, but I do remember a train ride.

This is just your parents and your sister?

Yes. The rest, everybody disappeared, I assume they were taken and were shipped to Auschwitz which was close by, or maybe they were shot right there, they were just not there. I was young.

You don't remember a ghetto experience?

Later, yes, but not there in Poland.

Your parents had made the decision to go to your mother's family.

Right to try and save ourselves.

What do you remember about there? Did you have grandparents there?

Yes.

What do you remember about them?

Them I remember...It must have been at least a year later because I remember them much more clearly, that grandfather he was much more religious than the other I think, um, I also think I remember him as being a very soft and sort of pudgy person with a beard, a grayish beard and he wore dark clothing too, brownish rather than black and he was very mushy and he would hold me on his lap and he would play with me. I remember him playing with me. I remember also my grandmother, she was a small person, very, very thin and with a sheenya on her head she had her hair pulled back very tight like and she would bake. There was this one wall that had a huge oven in it and she would stand there and bake bread, I remember that, baking

bread at that oven, I also remember in this household there was an uncle, a brother of my mother's and two sisters, yes, they were live in this little apartment. I remember that going to the synagogue with my grandfather, he was holding me by his hand, I remember seeing a lot of coats and black pants, I was small, I was standing probably next to him, and all I could see, I remember seeing people praying sachris, I remember going to the schvitz, the steam bath, with my mother and my grandmother, I remember a lot of heavy set women in this steamhouse and women beating each other with short brooms made out of leaves, they were hitting each other and I remember climbing the stair in the steamhouse and a woman, this must have been strictly for Jewish women, because there, I definitely knew that there was a Polish woman standing near the coals and activating the steam there, and I knew that she was a Polish woman, while all of us were Jews, I remember all of this flesh all around me.

It sounds like fairly fond memories?

Yes.

This would have been before the war reached the Ukraine, were there German troops there then?

Well, that I don't remember, I remember right after that, very shortly after that, that there was a lot of fear. A great deal of fear. I'm just trying to give a few things that I remember because I remember one Friday night I just see in my mind my grandmother and the two sisters running about trying to straighten up because it was Friday night and I knew it was Friday night and because Grandfather was coming

home from the synagogue. That kind of a feeling I have. But I remember having extreme fear in this household right after that and then I remember for a while we did not go out at all. Everything was totally silent in that room and I remember everybody all of us sort of huddled, I see in my mind only one room there was a bed on it but everybody sort of sitting round that bed and in extreme fear, extreme fear. From then on all I remember is just fear.

This was in Manastitza?

(Erna corrects the pronunciation, then says) it's near ??? somewhere.

So, east of Poland?

I cannot find it on the map, they must have changed the names.

Did you have playmates there?

No.

Your sister and you did not play?

No.

Before the fear?

I don't remember, no, I don't remember, I just remember playing with my grandfather, not with anyone else.

Do you remember when the invasion began?

Well, I think we were at first told to go somewhere else because they see another building another house and there was a lot of fear again, I remember being told that I should hide in the corner all the time and I can still see the corner as a matter of fact, um I remember told, constantly to be quiet, I know that the drapes were closed

in that room so that nobody could look in, I know that my uncle and my father started to lift up the floor boards in that room and at first I thought it were different people but now it is my uncle and I see him very clearly, he had thinning hair and he was very slight and he had a very refined manner about him. My father and him lifted up the floor boards and at night they were digging with cups, I would imagine we did not have shovels, and a cavity was made in that area and large enough to hold the four of us and there were two or three other people. Yeah, and the cavity had one or two steps, maybe only one step, and then you slid down into this cavity and the dirt was taken out at night where they put it I don't know, but I think that they did not want anyone to know that they were doing that. This was, I knew that we had to go down there if shooting would started to getting the Jews. We must have been in the ghetto by now. The name of the ghetto, I don't remember, I remember different buildings and different, ah so I was in different ghettos, but I don't remember any names to tell you.

So there was a fear of raids then of Aktionen?

Oh definitely. Already. Oh definitely by um, I just remember everybody walking around so terribly quiet, everybody sort of, being like a shadow, its just like maybe if your quiet and nobody sees you maybe nobody will know that you're there and that you will stay alive.

Did you ever have occasion to go into the bunker?

Yeah, yeah, um, I did. I remember being wakened up by shots and the panic that my parents, I don't see my mother's face yet, but the panic that I felt then, you know,

it was so gripping, and then my mother grabbed me and we went down um and I don't like to think about that part. It was very dark, it was pitch black, I don't remember any food and I don't remember any, any, any, air for that matter. It felt very oppressive. It felt, and I knew that I had to be quiet, totally quiet.

Could you stand?

No.

You had to lay down?

I was, my mother was, the first time my mother sitting on that first step and I was (pause) I'm gonna talk about it.

Tell me about it.

Well you know, I imagine that people used to, probably worried that this happened several times when I went down there. But I think that there was this fear of being that I was so young that uh, I would cry out or something which was natural you know. Anyway, there was this question with the pillow which um, she put my face into her lap and then the pillow on my back. Anyhow, I was very, it was my nightmare pillow all my life actually.

So in case you cried?

I imagine so, which was justified you know. I don't blame my mother for it although I did question what would happen if I did but um It's natural. I knew that everybody would die if I, you know your fear sets into you even when you're a child and you just don't cry out you know better than that.

Did you ever ask your mother? Did you ever ask your mother about the pillow?

No because my mother died -- ah.

During the experience you never...

No...

You never asked, but you knew?

Oh, I knew what it was for, at least I had the sense, it was not my favorite pillow. I was so petrified of it so I must have heard people talking or must have heard something because I um (sigh) it was a very difficult, that cavity, it was like a tomb and in fact it always felt like, when I think about it I just see this utter blackness of dirt around me so its like a tomb.

There would be shots?

Yes, right. We would run down there, I'm sorry if I um- You know that my uncle at least I have to, because he was never, he was not in the cavity. He would stay top side and he would close in the cavity and I don't know if he put a piece of furniture over it or something and you could hear shooting and you could hear, then people would walk like uh, top and you could hear the sound of the boots and the sound of um (sigh) you know they must have had rifles that they were because. You know this happened this cavity episode -- I'm so nervous -- happened several times because once I feel that I could hear wherever the soldier was um hitting with his rifle it sounded to me like it was hollow, that he knew it was hollow. I had that sense I mean this may be strictly my imagination but wherever he was pounding I think that he must have felt that was a hollow [nizeret?] because everything else must have been solid and I always had that feeling that this particular person knew that there was a cavity there and never gave it away. I don't know why but I did have that sense. So after awhile, I don't know how long we would stay there, the first time when we came out and um the uncle did let us out.

What was his name, your uncle? Do you remember your uncle's name?

Only by this name, its terrible, I feel badly, I've thought about this but it makes me feel very bad but I don't remember, there's no one to tell me from all these aunts and these the names of all these people. At any rate, um he would let us out and again I remember people lying dead as you came from the room or the building, people lying dead. And I remember once um we were all, well I was away but there

were people standing around these dead people and I can just see um like they were so silent. You know, they were not saying much. They were not saying anything and like being stunned. One time I remember somebody wanted to come into that cavity with us, somebody different and I know that they were not allowed in because there was no room or whatever the reason and I remember seeing them dead afterwards upstairs. But I didn't hear any gun shot wounds with those people, I mean any gun shots that I heard that they were shot. I don't remember.

Do you know these people? Were they family?

No, they were not family. They were not family. You know, um I guess we wore stars, I don't see myself with a star, and I don't see, my sister told me that afterwards that we did wear stars. I didn't remember the part that my father's head was shaven, but after she told me, after she told me, I do see him with a shaven head.

Still in the ghetto?

In that ghetto - Yes. I just remember constant hunger there. Then everybody disappeared again, and there were only the four of us left. Everybody disappeared. That uncle several times, as I said before, I apologize I'm being a bit incoherent, several times this uncle covered the top of the hiding place, but once he was shot and he never came back. So I don't know who let us out again or maybe just we pushed ourselves out maybe. But I know that he was shot while he was running away to try and hide himself.

So he would cover the bunker, the cavity with floor boards maybe put some furniture on top and then go and hide?

Or maybe a rug? Yea that's what he used to do. That's what he did, how many times again it's, I see myself going into this place, maybe five times. I just feel this oppression every time I think of it.

Do you dream about it?

I did um not dream about, I had nightmares until five years ago, nightly nightmares and um but they've stopped.

While you were in the ghetto, were you confined to the house, did you go outside? Did you go in the street?

Well I (pause)

What? You once told me you were playing in the street. Do you want to tell me about that?

Ah, you know I haven't been talking about this at all in my speeches at all but I will. I - I don't remember playing at all except this particular time and that must have been a different ghetto again, um I remember a low house and I remember um I was never definite if it was a boy or a girl, but it was a boy, and ah we were outside once and we were playing and uh I thought we were playing, anyhow, there was this man and this women and they were running by us and shortly after there were these soldiers that came, that ran after them, and they were asking what direction they went and we pointed.

Were these German soldiers?

Well they were uniformed.

They could have been Ukrainian police?

And we pointed and I um, you see the next, I knew, to this day I feel very um strange about it because I'm not responsible for their lives, for them dying but I do have a sense of being responsible but in effect I'm not, um at any rate, I know that the next day I heard some talk that this couple died. Whether it was this couple or not, I don't know but in a child's mind when you feel guilty for doing something like this in the first place um (pause).

Did you tell your parents?

No.

Grandfather?

No.

You didn't have your grandfather?

No at that time they had all disappeared already. (pause) I'm sorry. This is a very difficult, I've analyzed this and I don't blame myself, but yet I do -- at any rate.

And that was during the period that you kept going into hiding and into this cavity somewhere between...

No, that was a different place already.

It was a different place?

Yeah.

Afterwards?

Afterwards, that was afterwards. I remember, you know, did I tell you about, another a camp everybody was very sick, I don't know if I told you about that and there was typhoid. I assume it was typhoid because they all had, like I remember looking in

my father's throat. It had black spots and it showed and they were all very feverish and there was this room, everybody was laying around terribly, terribly ill, and uh my mother and I we were sponging everybody. I don't know if I told you that but, there was this tremendous outbreak and I know we thought my father was dying and I see my mother crying, I don't see her face but I see the tears falling down her face. Again, which of the ghettos, I don't remember. I know my father was taken away once and remember feeling that we thought that he was being shot or and my mother was in a panic and I think that he was taken away and when he came back, that's when he had his head shaven when he came back, and he said he was burying people in a mass grave.

He told you that?

I remember him saying that. And he knew some of the people that he had -- I remember, I remember my father and mother standing close to each other and crying. I don't know, maybe they saw their parents. I don't know.

So he was taken to do some forced labor. They shaved his head then?

Yes, that I never realized but now I do. That's when he came back with a shaved head [whispered].

Do you have any idea how long you were in one ghetto after another?

Oh yeah, the whole...and then everybody disappeared one day.

Was it when you came up out of the cavity everybody was gone? Is that what happened?

Yeah, I think then, yes. Because, or maybe we were just asked to go some place else but I don't remember going on a truck, or I don't remember going on a train. None of this I don't remember. I just remember these incidents.

What did you do then?

I don't know.

Where did you wind up next?

Oh, excuse me. Um, lets see where am I? Ok, well the next thing was the hiding place.

Tell me about the hiding place. It was in the Ukraine?

Yeah. Near one of the camps. I wish I could remember the names. I'm so sorry I never asked my father. (Sigh)

How do you think...This was a farmer?

Yeah

How do you think your parents knew or met the farmer?

I don't know. I don't know, I think we didn't have anything, I don't know.

So you had gone into the countryside?

No. No. No. We were in that camp and I think what happened is that at night we went out somehow, the camp I don't remember going through barbed wire. But I have the sense that we went out of the camp. How we did it I don't remember. And I remember it being at night. And the next thing I remember is, is, is, standing in front of the barn with a farmer and his wife and he was hushing us and he was opening up the barn, sort of pushing us in there. Do you want me to tell you...

Tell me about his family first of all.

Well, he had several children, whether it was two or three or more I don't know but there were children and because I used to hear them play outside but they didn't know that we were hidden in the barn only he and his wife. So um, as you can see we had to be totally silent because I know when we came in he closed the barn he put a lock on it and it was locked. The children only a year later or maybe whatever came in once or twice. So the barn was always under lock and key.

You were locked in?

Yeah.

Was his wife pleased about this?

No. Oh no. She, matter of fact, she - I think that he's the one that decided to hide people. You know I've thought it, why would a man risk his life like this because he was risking his life and his children's life and maybe my father - a thought occurred to me that maybe being my father had a sister in the United States, maybe he promised him something from the United States or to go to the United States even in those days it's possible I don't know that he decided to hide us but I know that the farmer's wife was terribly upset. She always, the whole period, was constantly a struggle for my parents begging the farmer and his wife to keep us another day another week, another day another week. I see this so clearly in my mind. I see my parents on their knees begging um the farmer because he wanted us to leave, but you know he probably had no idea that it would take that period of time he probably figured a few days a week whatever but who would have thought such a long time

and he knew that his life was at stake and he knew that his children would die and everything so I can...this was a marvelous human being. He was deeply religious I know that.

Do you think that may have had something to do with it?

Absolutely. That and the promise of something. I don't know what.

Did he ever talk to you?

No.

Just to your father then?

You know, I've tried to look at myself as I was then you know and all I see is a always silence out of me. I don't see myself talking or even crying when I had pain because I knew I shouldn't. It's true. I'm not trying to make something up and I asked my sister that and she says that we couldn't -- we would have died you know. Throughout the whole ordeal you didn't cry no matter what -- whether it was hunger or pain you didn't cry. Cause there was -- the pillow.

Huh? Because there was the pillow?

Yeah. There still is this pillow. At any rate.

He took you into the barn. What was the barn like, at least the part of the barn that you were in?

I can tell, you know I looked around, I can see my eyes scanning the whole barn when I came in and I see -- do you want me to say that my first impression of it? You know there was these huge bails of hay that I see in front of me. And on the sides he had bunches of leaves tied and hanging on each side of the walls of the

barn. It was from top to bottom I don't imagine it was very tall -- when your small everything looks very tall but the barns in Ukraine were -- probably not very, they are very tiny maybe shacks even. Who knows. But he was drying that for the purpose of smoking, so it was like tobacco. It was some sort of leaf that maybe he could smoke that was like tobacco leaf and um there was this wooden-made, matter of fact it was tied with ropes or maybe with from a tree - what are these called - vines - ladder and it was as you come in it was on the left hand side and as you looked at the loft there was a lot of hay. And that was the first impression that I had when I came into the barn.

What did it smell like?

Sweet smell.

The tobacco?

I don't know - sweet smell.

Then what?

Well, my father and the farmer went up the ladder, and after awhile they came down and when I came up there was this cavity that was made in the middle of the loft and there was this blanket which in my mind was brownish, so maybe it was a military blanket. At any rate, spread in the middle of it. And there was space between the blanket and the hay, but not much. Maybe 2 1/2 feet. On one side was the hay on the other side the roof was sloping down from the barn. It was a roof made out of, not made out of slate or anything, it was I can't figure out what kind, it looked like it was sheets of leaves, but maybe I'm wrong.

Could you stand?

I could. My father and mother were walking stooped around the blanket. There was very little space between the hay and the blanket and I see - I don't see my mother pacing so much but I see my father pacing back and forth but he was constantly stooped. My mother mostly sat by the blanket.

Was there a window?

No, there was no light at all except for a crack in the roof line and um I tried to imagine how long it was - um - I know that the two of us, my sister and I, could sometimes stand and look together through the crack and see the light on the outside. All I could see was the sky. I used to stand up on my tip toes because I wanted to see the children outside but I couldn't see the ground so the slope of the roof must have been such that all I could see was the sky.

But you could hear them?

Yes, oh I could hear them. I wanted to go out so bad.

How old were you at this point?

I don't know.

Six?

How probably a little ol -- it must have been in the middle of '42 or the beginning of '42. It must have been that so I would - seven, eight almost between.

Did you bring anything with you?

No.

You had nothing?

We had nothing. We had nothing.

So he locked you in the barn?

Yeah, so all of us had, the farmer and his wife went down and they pushed in like two huge bales of hay for the entrance like it was like an entrance to the cavity and they had these two bales of hay that they would push in and then all of the sudden there were just the four of us (pause) in the cavity.

What did you do?

I don't know. I don't remember what we did. I remember because it such a long time all of this so my memories, I can't remember...don't forget that we were there at the minimum two years so um I can't recall daily basis, I remember being hungry all the time but that was nothing new because I was hungry all these couple years whatever before, you know, constantly but I remember the children playing because we came in at night and then the next day I ran to the crack and I wanted to see the children and I couldn't go out.

Did you talk to each other?

I don't have any recollection of this you know. I remember that we whispered. First of all don't forget that the children did not know that we, in the beginning we whispered then after a while we didn't even do that. The children didn't know, so you had to be totally quiet and I knew it. I see my mother going with her finger all the time Shhh! You know, and so maybe I did talk in the beginning or whisper at any rate and I remember running very often to the crack at the later year I didn't

after awhile. Maybe it was a year later whatever, there was no sense to it anymore.
I couldn't get out anyhow.

Did your father ever go down to the bottom?

You know I, I, he did at night, in the beginning I see that when the farmer would come, he would come at night and bring us whatever he could. He used to bring these buckets that you feed horses so otherwise there were three buckets and I can still see them, and one of them was bashed in and um and one had a little water and one was for elimination purposes and one had whatever food he was to give us and at that time my father would go down the ladder and he would smoke downstairs and he would pace back and forth but I see him do this only for a very short time. After that, we never went down and I wondered how is possible, I asked my sister how is it possible that we never went down and she said we never did. So she did confirm what I had, you know sometimes you can you know. But anyhow, So I see him going down in the beginning but not after a while. But, so the farmer would come at night and change the buc - you know - take the bucket out and especially that we eliminated in.

So, I assume you didn't bathe regularly?

Oh, not at all.

Did you get sick?

Yeah, I was sick, I was very sick I remember I almost died once. I can see my mother being terribly upset. I can see that she was crying, she was sponging me and she, and the farmer came and I see my father on his knees and to bring something

for me. Anyhow, I obviously I didn't die, but again I don't know if my parents or my sister were sick I don't remember this. I just remember the things that were painful to me. I know that in the beginning I said I didn't talk and all this, but I remember in the beginning when I used to cry when I used to not be able to go downstairs. I remember that I, you know my mother, that's the only tender thing, although she did all these wonderful things, she used to take my face and she used to hug me and hold my face with both hands and um [whisper] she used to tell me to be quiet. She used to call me a little [kleinekädigen]. And I can still hear it, isn't that funny?

Were there vermin?

That is all I remember, you know, um, there was no way of washing, there was no water, just for drinking purposes and I see us day after day after day sitting and cracking lice off each other, I refer to this as monkeys do in the zoo, you know, that is the way we did it. I see, there was a special noise, and the blood would come out, but you had to do it, you know, there was everywhere we were covered, we were absolutely covered because it's not just a few days, we were there such a long time, that you decay and I remember my mother, again, see my mother, I remember by mother laying me down and my father from one side and my mother from the other side they were cracking lice on me, cleaning me up and I remember my sitting and doing this to my father, crackling lice, not see my sister, but that was a daily routine we had to do it, you know we all developed such a welts from the lice, they used to infect under the skin and it was very difficult, you had to push on the skin, like this before the eggs should come out, you know, or whatever.

Did anyone contract typhus from this?

There? In the attic, no. I remember the illness before in the camp.

Did the farmer begin to put more pressure?

Oh, constant...constant pressure. As a matter of fact, you know, my sister said, I don't remember that, but my sister said that he would constantly tell us to leave and you can't blame him, because you know, he would have been shot and his children. And I remember once my mother, um, they disguised my mother, that was probably in the beginning, when we were in the beginning of the two years, um as a peasant, she disguised herself as a peasant, she made herself look like the farmer's wife and she went somewhere, maybe the town nearby and because they wanted us to leave, but the town was filled with Germans and she somehow by a miracle slipped by and she came back and I remember my parents, say "no we are not going to leave", and I constantly see them begging the farmer. The wife was.. I think that the farmer himself was deeply religious and he probably couldn't face God or whatever, I think that is what my father held over his head, what if you die and how will you be able to face Jesus, whom he believes in.

It didn't seem to worry his wife though?

No, she was much younger, but he was old, she was a young woman and that is why they had the young children.

You never then met the children in all that time?

No, they never knew, once there was, it must have been the second year, um, he came in saying always that there is rumors that farmers were hiding Jews and he one

time he let the children open up the barn because he had it under lock and key and they must have been wondering, or maybe other farmers, I don't know, anyhow, once he let the children in below to take some things and re-locked the barn, once though, and I wish I knew when in that period it was, he came, I could see his face was absolutely in a panic and what we did is we crouched against the roof line and he put more hay into the loft area, so like even on the blanket, there was hay, so we were almost just like squeezed totally into hay, the militia came and the children were jumping on top of the loft, I can see them, I can hear them jumping and you could see the hay moving back and forth and there must have been all the Germans or the militia because one of the bayonets were near my head, but you could see them every few inches, they were going probably with the rifles, like this, now why did they not burn the barn? Why didn't they?...I ask myself this question, how, why did I survive? I don't understand it.

Didn't they usually burn the barn down? Didn't they always do that?

At least what I hear, I don't know. It is to me it is, there are all of these sequences, I should have died, all of these times. I just remembered another incident that I never even spoke of, it must have been in one of the camps, can I jump back?

Sure.

There must have been very much in the beginning because we were, is it okay? Is there anybody here?

We were talking about the arbitrariness of survival when the Germans came, they said they were searching with bayonets, searching the hay and almost narrowly missed you and you

were about to tell me of another incident that had taken place earlier in the one of the ghettos.

Yes, as a matter of fact, what I remember is that we were in a building. In front of the building was an apartment for German officials, and we had a small little room in the back of the building and um, when they were gathering the Jews, they were in fact coming for us and but when they saw that the German official lived in the front of the building, they did not come in and search for us and that was one way, it was strictly a fluke.

Do you think that the official knew you were living there?

I don't know, but I remember I have a feeling because I remember I think he liked my mother. I have that sense that she was very pretty.

So, he had at least talked with your mother?

I have that sense that he did, yes. Right, I have no concrete evidence? I think it was just luck.

Let me take you back to the barn again. Into probably the second year. Did they search more than once that you remember?

No, just once. The children were in once and then the search was once and that made it twice.

You were hiding in the hay?

Yes.

Do you remember what you felt at that point?

You know, um, I remember looking at the hay day in and day out. I remember sitting one night forward come and wait for that bail of hay to open the entrance to the cavity, I used, at that time I did not even go to the crack any longer, I used to just sit and wait for that one bail of hay to move and knew that the farmer was coming, um, I'm going to jump back to the beginning, I know that in the beginning that we my father to keep us safe, or maybe it was through the whole thing, to keep us sane beside cracking lice all day, he would whisper at times stories to us about King Franz Josef, and I think I told you about this once before, it was the Austrian King, I believe, he used to what I would call, embroidet in French which I would call embroidered a story. I used to make flowery stories about this King that he was a wonderful human being. One story was that he would disguise as a peasant and go to the market to look and see, I think I told you this, to look and see how his kingdom was, how his people was treated, whether they had any complaints, and therefore, he was this wonderful man that was looking for us, and I kept on waiting for him to come and find me and take me to his court. My father used to tell us these wonderful stories about this King constantly looking for us from one corner of the world to the other. I think that, thank God for those stories because we probably would have lost our sanity totally. Once he even described what kind of dress I wore when I went to his court. It was blue with white lace and I was very pretty he said and the King was very happy to have found me and I became one of his children, so you see, my sister remembers the stories, too. Except she wore a pink dress.

Did you mother tell you stories too?

You know, I have a lot of feelings about my mother because of the pillow, yet, I know she loved me a great deal and I adored her. I looked and tried to find, to me she was gorgeous, she truly was a beautiful woman, and I think she was, it was not just a child's imagination, because I remember people talking about how lovely she was, maybe she was just gentle and nice and I don't know. But I wish I had, I see her body and I see everything except her face and I think that maybe it was anger.

Do you have a photograph of her?

Yes, I have. My aunt in the United States had a photograph of, two photographs of her, she gave them to me now. That is the only thing that is left.

So they must have been very young photographs?

I would imagine they were in their thirties, those photographs.

You said that you felt you were decaying, as you were, did your health get worse?

You know, I don't remember after a while at all. I remember that there was no stories after a while, we did not go to the crack, at least I see myself, I know there was this one indentation, maybe the roof was like this, and I used to sit and just look against it part of the roof and I was so hungry all the time, and you know, you become numb. You really have no feeling after awhile, you are dead in effect, no emotions one way or the other, in the beginning you do, but after a while your just a piece of flesh and I see myself just sitting all the time, constantly sitting, in the beginning when it was hot the seasons, I know the seasons were drastic, Ukrainian seasons I think are very drastic, but anyway, when it was hot I could hear the children outside, and I thought I heard splashing and I would close my eyes and sort

of transport myself that I was in water or walking in the rain or something and I would actually feel the rain on me. So, um, I just remember this silence and remember the buckets, the smell of the buckets. The one bucket maybe he did not change it everyday, maybe only every other day. I remember I could not eliminate at all for a period of time, I must have, but I just remember not being able to go to that smelly bucket. I remember the chickens outside and they must have had pigs because I remember the honkings of the pigs and I wondered what they were like. I always tried to see what the outside of the barn was like. There was one piece of hay that was, one bail that had much courser hay then some of the others and I sort of would make houses in my mind from it. I don't remember very much, I don't remember any hugging of my parents if you want to know stuff like that. I don't feel anything at all except pain. We had no books, we had nothing, and we could not talk, I feel the sense that even at night you shouldn't talk because what if somebody crawls against the wall of the barn and hears you. So we really truly um, I said to my sister, we became animals and she was terribly offended by the parallel of us as human being with an animal. She said, "no we were just human beings that suffered beyond endurance." But we were animals at that point. At least I was. We were not human any longer and I think that had we stayed, I don't know how we survived all this time, how can a human being survive like that in such an enclosed quarters and they were small because as I said, all the space was, was perhaps two feet, two and one half feet around the blanket. How can you, I can't even imagine, I can't

even, um, you know, it's like um an invented, it cannot be reality. Why did we survive, how is it possible for a minimum of two years?

Why do you think?

I don't, God, don't know, I asked myself this a lot, um there must, there were hundreds of thousand of young girls that were brighter and could have contributed to life more than I think have, I am sure there were scientists -- there were all kinds of -- I don't know, that was my karma, whatever that is. Destiny. I ask myself that a great deal. And I have a bit of a guilt feelings about surviving and so many dying; and there shouldn't be any but I have that sense.

You don't see it religiously?

Religiously? No. No. If there would be a God he would have never allowed it. If you call, if you say "Good" God. But I don't want to offend anyone who believes in God, this is just strictly my... [Long pause]

You said the weather was extreme, the seasons were extreme, what was it like in the winters?

Well, it was drafty and very cold but you know the hay keeps you warm. Where I feel more unbearable was the summers, because the roof line was baking and sun must have been baking on the roof whatever the roof was made of and it was absolutely stifling. The stench, the hay becomes a different, it has a misty, it has a...ah I can still smell it, it wasn't sweet smelling like below, it was the smell of hell, I would say, if you would imagine hell. Excuse me, I'm sniffing, I'm sorry. [Pause]

Eventually, you did nothing.

Nothing.

You stopped talking,...

You know, I don't see any of us moving, I see us laying a great deal.

And moving just to eat?

There was no place where to move anyhow, you went an inch or two closer to the blanket. Um, it wasn't a question of moving from here to the corner of this room.

There wasn't -- you just shuffled, pushed yourself.

What did he bring you to eat?

All I can see is bits of potatoes, I see soup and some bread, very little bread, it is mostly potatoes.

This not moving, what did it do to your body?

Well, again, I can only tell you about me, you know, um, it totally gave way, we could not, it was asleep, it was state and atrophied I would say. I don't know, is that the word?

Your muscles atrophied?

Uh, Yeah.

And still with the lice, of course.

You know, we were so covered and they were constantly biting and they were... you could work all day long cracking but you could never get ahead of them. They were destroying us, as I said, we developed welts from them.

Did they get infected?

Well, I just remember, I had some problems, yes. I had, you know what happens is, a large welt, maybe it was an infection, and maybe it was the eggs or the larvae of the lice whatever would be underneath. What you had to do is push with your nail to find a spot where it would give and the stuff comes out and there was usually some pus and some yellow, I would imagine it was pus.

And you contracted some sort of infection from this worse than the others in the barn?

Well, yes, it was, my whole head, let me see where was it, um well, it was from here this whole side was one huge swelling. Um it was terribly painful and it took another, oh it took years to find, to get rid of it totally, but it was very painful.

While you were still in the barn?

I must have developed this towards the end of the stay in the barn, yes. It was very painful, it would press on my head and I couldn't lay it down, it would throb.

What did your parents do about it? Did they comfort you?

They used to press on it and pus would come out, but it would reinfect over and over again. I don't remember being comforted, I just remember pain.

And the farmer did not offer anything?

No, no.

There were no medical supplies, medicine or anything like that?

Oh, no. Nothing.

He brought the food and the bucket.

That's it. It was enough. Listen, we were grateful for that.

You were there for at least two years?

At least.

And then what happened?

Well, one day the farmer came and he said that the Russians were near by and that they were close by the road and we did hear some shots at a distance and so we tried to go down the ladder, my father wanted to make sure that they really were the Russians, but I somehow he knew that they were, I don't know how, but any rate we could not go down the ladder...

Why?

Because muscles did not work. Uh, so at first I thought that my father took me down but then we were carried by the farmer one by one, carried down to the lower level of the barn and I remember, you know, when I think about it, I can feel it even yet, um I remember trying to stand up and walk and um you know, the muscles had, were not functioning any longer so the needles that were going through your body, you just couldn't move. They were like millions of rods going through the bottom of your feet to the top of your head and it just felt so excruciating, you know, to make a step uh, and I guess everybody in the family felt the same way, but when we came to the outside of the barn we just crawled, and it was winter time, and it was in the middle of the night when we left the barn and I knew there was this sense of you must hurry, you know, kind of thing, and the cold was so extreme so it must have been, I would assume winter '44 just before, I am trying to figure out the time limit, maybe it was February or something like that. The cold was so extreme and we did not have any clothing and there was snow on the ground. We had to crawl, and I don't know if

it took a day or two or three or twelve hours to crawl to the road where the Russians were supposedly. I know that my, again I keep saying about me because I remember my body just being in contact with this extreme cold, I, my hands froze and I developed huge swellings within a couple of days and they burst open like because if snow comes in contact with the swelling, it creates a tension on your skin and it just cracks open. [Pause] Why didn't we freeze to death? Again, I don't know. You know, we did not have clothing, we were protected in the hay but I remember raw potatoes so, I do not know if my father went somewhere to field and got it or if the farmer gave us the food, the raw potatoes I don't know, but when we finally got to the road, we did not crawl during the day because we were afraid to. So it must have taken a couple of days. We were afraid that somebody would discover us maybe another farmer and shoot us.

What happened to the farmer?

I have no idea, since that day, I have never seen him.

Did he stay on the farm?

Yeah. He just made us go.

Then what?

You see the farmer wouldn't even tell the other farmers that there was sort of like a shame that you would do something like this. They were afraid they would be killed between each other. He wouldn't tell his neighbors or he would not tell his children the modest thing that he did, because I think he would have been petrified

for his own life -- or ashamed to have done a nice thing like that? Ukrainian people were difficult. [Pause]

You were crawling on the road, for how long?

I don't know.

Then what happened after that?

When we got to the road to where there were Russians, I see some people walking, I see people on the road. Who they were, I don't know -- whether they were other Jews -- nobody, we did not talk to anybody. I remember one truck or two trucks going by and they did not bother us, but who could see the katusha's in the distance? The sound and the fire in the sky of the katusha and we could hear rifle shots. Um, so, but then a jeep, I remember a jeep going by, or something that looked like a jeep, and they threw us a piece of bread. And um, that was the first time then a truck came along and they picked us up and they bandaged my hands and arms and feet and um... [Pause]

These were Russian soldiers?

Yeah.

Your mother was sick?

No, she was not sick. On that road, something happened, I don't know if it was an airplane again or if it was the front was right with us, we were made to leave the truck and run into the fields and my mother got hit. I don't know what happened. To this day, I see this blood running down, a great deal of blood, my sister said that she was not hit, but I am not sure that she did not say that for the reason to spare

me for some reason, but I see the blood on her, um and I don't see my father, my sister maybe they had run away to another cavity in the road, but I didn't stay by my mother. At any rate, how do I have to talk about this? At any rate she, the Russians came back, I don't know, I seem to think it was an airplane raid, maybe it was not, I sometimes, um, [Pause] but at any rate, the Russians came back and they took her to this infirmary or whatever and my father said that we found an abandoned like a destroyed house and my sister and I stayed in this destroyed shack or house or whatever. It was all stone and he went with my mother and then he came running for us and we had to be carried. Anyway, she was laying on this cot and she, they had bandaged her hip, but you know, [Pause] I cannot forgive her to this day. She was covered with lice all over the bandage all over the bed, all over her, it had multiplied. All I can see in my mind is one big, just like you see ants on a huge hill, that was my mother with lice and vermin, totally covered. They did not take care of her. She was a Jewess... [Pause] She died. [Pause] Anyhow.

While you were there she died?

Yeah -- I watched her die. She was dying and she knew it. She didn't say nothing - she didn't say nothing. Any rate, um [Pause] I didn't say nothing. I did not even cry, can you imagine that? Anyway these are things that should be forgotten.

Were your father and sister there too?

Yeah, I see all of us standing around her bed and you know I see other people and I look, when I look into this space, this picture, I see other people laying in their

beds not crawling with lice. Why didn't they take care of her? Anyway, I forgot a little sequence, I'm gonna skip this. It was a time with the Russians.

Do you want to tell us about it?

You know that Russian, that nice man, did I ever tell you about this? You know, I was with this infection in my head and at first they were attending to my hands and when they were removing the bandages, the Russians, this one soldier was holding me on his lap and another soldier would remove the bandages from my arms and because it was so painful because the skin would stick to the bandages, he would rock me on his lap and he would sing sort of whisper in my ear and try to make me sing and to divert the pain from the removal of the bandages of my arms and hands. This is just one of the good experiences of my life. The pain was excruciating but this marvelous human being, I don't know if that is important, I don't know, do you want to know about the cutting of my swelling on my head?

Did the Russians do it?

Well, my father held me, who did it I don't know.

In the Russian field hospital?

It was, yes. They just laid me down; cut it open.

Without anesthesia?

There was no anesthesia. Um, that was extremely, [Pause] I don't know, I guess I, there was a lot of physical pain involved in that whole -- that part is very difficult. But the Russians were very nice. I should get back to what we did with my mother.

We wrapped her in a blanket, we did not have any wood for a box and we buried her near the road there.

Just the three of you?

No, there was some other people there. I don't know whether they were Jews or not, maybe my father somehow got a few Jews together. I have no recollection. But I know, I see other human beings around. But what we did, we dug with our hands, we covered her up and then we went back on the truck, um... [Pause]

Did anyone say Kaddish for her?

I don't know. But you know, I didn't cry. But you know, somebody said, she is not even crying. But you know, I was dead in effect, I really was not alive any more. And, [Pause] but I should have cried for her. So now, where should I continue? Oh, boy, I think I forgot all kinds of things to tell you. We became scavengers with the Russians. Did I tell you that? We tried to find something because we had nothing, so the villages that we would come to wherever the houses were destroyed, we were always with the Russians, we were going back and forth you know, behind the front like, and when we would come to little villages or a few houses or whatever when they were destroyed, we would scrounge and look and see what we could find. Can you imagine me doing this? Ha.

Did the soldiers take care of you?

They were wonderful. Soldiers used to try and make me, they made camps after a while and they would make fires and they would try to make me feel, they used to sing and dance around the fire and they were very quite, that they always did, and

they would try and make me do that, but I was very solemn, very petrified of them and took quite a while before, with only that one man I was comfortable with ...
[Pause]

So you saw him?

All the time and I wish I remembered his name. I don't. Can you imagine? But he was, he always came because he changed my bandages, oh I remember, many, many times over and over again, and see the skin sticks to the bandage, whatever crust forms, so it would have been better to leave the bandages off and just let the air heal the [wound], but it would make it raw again. Um, what else can I tell you? So many things happened then. [Pause] Um...

How were you feeling at this point? Angry? Confused? Empty?

I was empty, is what I can tell you. The reason I know that I was empty is because you know the Russians used to catch people and they used to hang them, you know, whomever they caught. Um, I remember specifically two Germans because they were in their uniform, or was it five, and the uniforms, and they know they were crying and um they were being hung and I had that sense that I wanted to go and pull that rope I was so angry and yet I was unfeeling because I was sort of glad to see them being hung, so I maybe should tell you again of, you know, the way I was watching these bodies being hung and twitching, and the mucous coming out, and I knew that they were people. I should have felt sorry for them, but yet I didn't. So I had two things I just could think, they killed my mother, because I did not associate with that they denied my life til then because I was Jewish, I didn't know what it meant to be

Jewish. What did it mean to a child, you're Jewish, what is being Jewish? It did not mean anything to me, all I knew is because of them, all of this was happening and because primarily that my mother had died... I blamed them for that. But yet, I was unfeeling enough that I could take almost pleasure in watching them twitch on the end of the rope. So can you imagine, how old was I, ten by then, to have become so that you can watch people be hung and not feel and want to kill. That's horrible...

[Long pause]

Did you talk to your father or sister then? Did you talk to anyone?

No. I never told anybody about that kapo. Not until five years ago. Never told, No. You know, I think I probably forgot to tell you some things.

Were you thinking of going home?

Of going home where?

To Metz?

Oh, I've been back to Metz.

No, I mean then.

Oh, I did not even have any concept of Metz any longer.

Was your father thinking on those terms?

After the war? Oh yes.

So that's where you went?

In, um, the card that I found, which is the card repatrier is a somewhere in the middle of '45 so I was very ill, um so [sighs] I don't know why we didn't, some people got back early '45 right to their countries or wherever they were. I don't know why

it took such a long time, we were with the Russians all this time until we were sent back to, I think Katowice, where they started cleaning us. But I was with the Russian army that long of time.

Then they sent you, what, on a train, truck?

No, with a military plane, the plane was totally hollow, it went to Czechoslovakia and from Czechoslovakia to Paris. A military plane.

You went to Katowice before this?

Before the plane?

Yeah.

Yeah, I think from there we were sent. There were two or three different areas where they were de-licing us and cleaning us and whether they were doctors or people examining us and I hated that.

Always Russian?

I did not understand, no, not always, at first it was just a Russian infirmary and then it was other people that I didn't understand their language they were speaking. Maybe it was the Red Cross, maybe it was, I don't know. I had no concept of Red Cross, or this or if, I just saw people. You know, I was, don't forget that the war started for me at a very young age and you become just an animal, I became an animal, subhuman, when you are not talked to and when you are not fed, you are not allowed a normal way of life, so called normal, whatever normal is. Then I had no concept of anything, everything that I would encounter was like a new world for me because I was a child when I went in. Excuse my sniffing.

What next?

What next. When we were sent back you mean?

Well, while you were with the Russians, you at least had some comfort.

They were wonderful. They were wonderful, they would sing. They were kind to me. Uh, what my father did in those times I don't know, all I can see is the physical the constant changing of my bandages and that one time with that cutting open of my scalp which was extremely painful, I thought it was my father that did it, but no he just held my arms and head. But, they were kind. I hear stories that they say that they were not but I do not see one cruel thing the period I was with them and it must have been several months. I spoke Russian fluently after that when it was finished. See, I don't remember, I can't even talk about this time limits because I spoke Russian but then a child learns, they tried to make me, he used to sit me on his lap and whisper in my ears and he must have taught me.

Somehow you wound up in Paris?

Yes, and they cleaned us there again. I don't know who brought us there and I don't know which organization. They must have been some organization. We were then sent back by train to Metz and we were received in Metz by an aunt and uncle that had lived in Metz before the war with us except they did not go to the wedding. It was from my mother's side. They did not go to the wedding, so they ended up in Switzerland during the war. So they survived. Anyhow, we were received by them and we were given a tiny apartment, two rooms for the three of us. Life was really

unbearable then. That was another hell for me for many years to come until I came to the United States.

You went to school there?

You know, they sent me to school immediately in Metz and the first thing they did is that they this town had a school strictly for girls and I was put in there with all, and I was the oldest probably and I had to learn how to read and write, the basics of life which I didn't know and the girls used to dance around me in the courtyard, and they were calling me selgejuif and I didn't selgejuif and I just didn't understand what it had meant because I had forgotten the French. So I was told that it means "dirty Jew." And of course, I was dirty and of course I was pitiful looking because I did not have any nice clothing or, and I still had that infection on my head and whatever, but I lost control of my bladder in front of the children and that set me back totally because I was so frightened and I thought that I was again going to be going through the same thing and I decided I would never let my children be like those children. Right then, if I ever had children. No, it's true, I knew that I won't let my children become...

When that happened, did you tell anyone at home?

No. I think the teacher must have, you know the losing control of the bladder was very, you know, they were laughing and they took me -- they must have realized what was happening -- they took me out of that school and they put me into a small Jewish school which was probably just formed then, I don't know, with a teacher that I didn't like either but...[Pause]

Was there ever any talk of Palestine?

Later. Maybe the age of sixteen, but my father, you know, a lot of the people from Metz were going to Palestine. But you know, my sister was married off immediately when she was barely seventeen, to a man immediately, when we came into Metz, because my father could not feed us so she was married off to this man. That is another story. She is still married to him but it is has not worked... [Pause] But, at any rate, me, I would have wanted to go to Palestine, but you know, my body... [Pause] I still had the welts everywhere and my hands took until the age of sixteen to heal and my scalp as well. Maybe it took me this long of proper eating and I didn't even eat properly because my father could not feed us in Metz. He never recovered from those years. Maybe my mother's death or all these years of what you would call of detention of hiding or whatever. So, I had to feed him.

What did he do for a living?

He tried to do again the same thing, a merchant, but it did not work. He was becoming an alcoholic as a result of it and anyway that is a long story.

So in 1953, you had the choice of coming to the United States?

Yes, my father always wanted to come here because of his surviving sister.

Who moved here before the war?

Yes, in the early thirties, I think she was here.

So you came, the three of you?

Just the two of us. My sister was married so she stayed in Metz.

New York, first?

New York, first, which was hell because we were overwhelmed from a tiny town -- and I [had] never seen more than a few people -- to New York -- was overwhelming. Then we ended up in Detroit because of my aunt.

What were your relationships with your aunt like?

Not very good. We have always had difficult times because of my extreme pride. As well as in Metz, I suppose had we gone and asked for help from organizations, we would have gotten it, but I went to work. I was sewing for a tailor at night and it was the same thing here, I immediately went to work, so I feel cheated, because I have never really had very good schooling.

Did you talk to anyone, did anyone ask you about the war years? [Nods "no"] No one asked about it, not even your aunt?

Not even my aunt.

Do you think she talked to your father?

No, because, the last five years since I finally came to terms with that, when I did tell her, she was totally amazed. So I imagine not, it was unpleasant, who wants to hear stuff like that? Nobody wants to hear such a harsh cruel... [Long pause]

Did you want to tell her?

No.

Why?

Well, first for self-preservation because I was seventeen when I came and I needed to change my life. I felt many guilts, I think, I felt shame as well. That is a terrible thing to say, but, it's almost like you are branded, you're different, you lived a horror,

an indescribable horror and you were it. That's one reason. Another reason: I wanted to lead a normal life. When you think about all this, it can only give anger against the world for not doing something. You feel anger against, that's right, the whole world. So, it can make you bitter and I didn't want that. I didn't want it for me, I didn't want it for my family, I didn't want it for my children. I did not want my children to grow up to hate the Poles, even though I do, I cannot ever forgive them, I didn't want my children to grow up and hate Ukrainians as well. Now I want them to make judgments and to feel about the Poles and the Germans and the Ukrainians what they know about me. But when they were growing up I did not want them to become bitter and angry and develop those kind of feelings. So, and I didn't tell them until five years ago, as you know. My children did not know that I have lived all of this. They knew I was a survivor and they knew I was somehow in hiding, but they didn't know 99% of the stuff that I just told you.

Do they know it now?

Yes. My older boy always asks me how about tell us, tell us, tell us. And I said, someday I will but then I decided two things, when the film Holocaust came about, I think was, or maybe when the first gathering of the Holocaust survivors, which came first, whatever,

The film was first..

...the film. I didn't watch it and I was beginning to have the guilt feelings, my children didn't watch it. And I was beginning to feel tremendous guilt that was in me and I went into depression and I decided that what if I die, I must tell my

children all this. So, I went to a doctor and it took a year for me to piece the things together. Took another six months for me to make the tape, I made a special tape for them and it was Yom Kippur, as a matter of fact when we came back from Shul, I sat them down with my husband and I gave them the tape. My husband knew I was making the tape and he was very distressed that I could not share it with him I would not allow him to hear it even, I was petrified of my husband discovering all of this. I don't know why, because all my life I was, I had constant nightmares every night he would wake me up and hold me because I was screaming with nightmares so he knew some terrible things were in my life, you know, but I did not want him to feel pain for me, you know, [Lower's voice] I just didn't want him to feel pain. So anyway I put them together in this room and I left the house. I walked around the block and then I came back and I sat upstairs while they listened to the rest of the tape. They were devastated. Oh... [Long pause]

Did they ask you questions?

No.

Did they say anything?

Never. I didn't want them to. They never asked me a question since. They don't want me to be hurt. That is the only reason they don't ask. But they know.

Um, before we finish for today, you've told me a few reasons you think it is important for you to tell the story. You want to tell me again a couple of those reasons?

Boy, I don't remember, I'm sor.....

For example, are you worried these days?

Oh, absolutely, I didn't know what you were referring to. You know, recently, about three months ago, I think that I saw on television a skinhead and you know they make me feel like snakes and so I had said, I sometimes mix up and say snakeskins, but its the skinhead, a very young man, and you know, on television there must have been hundreds of thousands of people who saw this young man and he said, "I'm here to finish Hitler's work." Can you imagine that? Now, in the United States, where you think you might feel you are sheltered for life? You are going to be forever and ever protected? You know, total freedom, you see this young person telling you that you don't have the right to live? In effect that is what he was saying, he is going to finish Hitler's work he said, so who gives him the right to say that to millions of hundreds of thousands of people and deny my children to live in the future or my grandchildren? That's petrifying. It's starting all over again, and I don't quite know what to do about it except for maybe speak out. I would like to face this young man and ask him if he loves his grandmother, his mother, his uncles, his aunts and his cousins? If he loves them, would he like to trade places with me? I don't know who he is. I wouldn't be afraid to go and face this young man. This misguided, silly, inadequate in their own life human beings they are manipulated by somebody because of their own unhappiness. I wanna know if his mother is alive, if he buried his mother with his own hands, shouldn't I be afraid after I lived all of this?

And this you have told your children?

Yes.

You have talked to them about this?

Yes. I did too good of a job, they cannot hate. [Weeps]

Well, um I hope we have helped a little bit today.

I am sorry if I am crying this is going to come out terrible for you.

Um, thanks for telling this story here today. We can stop here.

Okay.