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Mrs. Rosenberg, as we were finishing up the last tape, I was starting to ask you about what your life was like living in hiding in Haarlem after you had to really go into complete hiding.

Well, I felt at first very secure because I had the passport. But soon, I realized, it's very superficial. And even in The Hague, where I was in hiding, there was house-to-house search. The same thing continued on for the Jewish people even though they were less mobile and seen on the street.

But the Germans were very much aware that people had gone underground. And there were sometimes the Germans came house to house searching. They'd go for double closets and other things like that. So I knew that my safety was just very temporary. And I was convinced that it was a very short duration.

And since the war didn't seem to come to an end, and the Germans were gaining more and more, I was very desperate. I wasn't totally aware of what I had perceived. But I had a friend of mine's radio. And so I couldn't remove planks in the floor.

And I knew when the BBC was broadcasting news. And I remember distinctly in '41, when Churchill spoke of the plight of the Jews in the slaughterhouses in the East. So we knew what would be expected and, going in transport, what we would end up in the Third Reich's [INAUDIBLE]. So there wasn't much [INAUDIBLE] left. It became more and more of a wrath. And people that were sent on transports were never heard.

My question remains of the four years that I was in hiding. If the British were that well-informed of what's going on in those so-called slaughterhouses, why wasn't the train, equipped with bombs and the track on which these trains traveled night after night from Holland, Belgium, and France, cattle car that were rolling into the East, why weren't those tracks bombarded?

True, answers might have been they can't spare a plane. They needed it to bombard Poland or other very important targets. But this would have saved maybe not six million Jews, but at least three million Jews because the means of transportation was strictly by cattle car over these tracks.

Well, in that same vein, the figures that I have for the Jewish community in Haarlem is that at the beginning of the occupation, including those Jews like yourself who had fled from Germany into Holland, that there was as many as 140,000. And it is estimated that 20,000 were able to survive. So that's a lot of human lives.

I think those estimates are correct because the Germans kept their own absolutely meticulous records of who survived and who was killed-- rather who was killed and then who'd [INAUDIBLE] the consequences. But Holland was particularly hard hit, even though the Dutch were wonderful in their cooperation to help us.

Would you follow that up by telling me a little bit about one of the key families that brought you into their house and allowed you to stay there over time in hiding? In other words, what was that family like?

They were a family with three boys. And the boys were of an age that they could not really be told of my presence because they didn't on purpose tell in school, we have all of a sudden somebody living there who never goes out, never puts on a light, never goes to the bathroom, never eats.

So in other words, it had to be done very quietly, without knowledge of the children. They wouldn't have understood what the danger would have been if my presence would have been known to others but the couple who were responsible for my safety. The various hiding places I had were [INAUDIBLE] small, a bed,, no bathroom.

I remember, to this day, means of washing were practically nonexistent. But a basin was brought in occasionally. I didn't have a mirror. I didn't know what I looked like. And means of going to a bathroom were in front of a green vase. And that was emptied out at night.

Oh, it varied from place to place. Some places that I was in hiding were a little bit more luxuriously as this place. The

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fear, however, wherever the hiding place was, was incredible because any day, you could be arrested.

There was a new twist came about. Not only did we hear the planes going every night. The rural airports going to Cologne right over The Hague was their flight pattern. But all of a sudden, there were new noises introduced to us. And since we couldn't see, or ask, or do anything-- I'm talking about people in hiding in general.

Sure.

We heard this noise like thunder showers every day, but so severe that it was just shattering the windows and everything, which turned out the V-1 and V-2, which cleverly, the Germans shot out from moving vehicles. And why moving vehicles? Because they did not want the British bombs at a certain place.

Hiding there.

So every night, it was from a different street in The Hague. They were shot off, shot towards England from a different street so that the British never knew exactly where they originated. Sometimes, these things went up with a horrible noise and came right down again because there was some misfunction and came down on houses where people were hidden.

And that's how some of the Jews were detected. Something was fired and burned broadly in the hands of the Germans. That was an additional fear that was not thought about until V-1 and V-2 came into existence.

The day-to-day life in hiding consists of moving flags. By that I mean, the only thing I remember was a map on the wall. And as the Germans advanced into Russia, where they were located, we knew, from clandestine radio under the ground. So we knew exactly where what was. And the flags were moved consequently. And the more the Germans got in towards Leningrad, the more afraid we were we'd never survive. That was one part that kept me busy.

But other parts kept me busy. In the beginning, it was very interesting to get a lot of books that were supplied to me by other people and by various means. It was wonderful to read. But in the wintertime, it got dark at 4:00 or 5 o'clock, and since I couldn't put a light on ever, and the windows were pasted with some type of a paper that you could not look out of, nor anybody could look in, after 5 o'clock, you could not do anything but sit around.

And blankets weren't always sufficient. And you kept dreaming of windows with beautiful, big stuff that you never saw again. And generally speaking, it was a very, how should I say, inhuman existence. You saw sometimes animal life.

I used to think of what was seen, and not breathing, and not walking. A girl who provided me with my papers was the only link to the outside world. And once in a while, if she could sneak in at night-- she knew where I was, also through underground, this was. My only link to the outside world was her stories, what she was doing, and who she was dating. We were young girls.

And that kept me like a book or novel, her escapades. And some of it, I think she made up just to keep me amused. It was a very unnatural, unbelievable existence for a young girl of those ages-- oh, 20, 21, when you feel uneasy and you didn't know from day to day if you still would be there and what would take place.

Would you mind trying to describe the physical surroundings of one of those rooms during this [INAUDIBLE]? And because I'm going to ask about how did they bring the food? Let me ask the questions in turn. First, can we begin with the room itself?

The room was very sparsely furnished. There was a bed. And there were some shelves with books, what I remember. And there was another shelf with some type of little knickknacks. And that was it. There was nothing else, I mean, a window that was really pasted up with paper. And there was one short time I was-- and my mother I spoke of before had a clothing store.

Yeah.

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And upstairs was a sewing department, where the made-to-order clothes were made. And on top of that was an attic. I was there for a very short time. Of course, my mother could never see me because the work people came in and out. And they didn't know I was in the house.

So when I was there, my mother at night would bring me food. But the food my mother had at that time was so minimal. And when the business ceased to do business, and nobody was really interested in buying clothes, she took all the cloth and everything in existence and exchanged it for rice, and potatoes, and cheeses so that she could survive and whatever she could spare for me as well.

But I did in a very short time [INAUDIBLE] for long. There were various places. But by and large, I don't even remember walking the streets from one place to another because fresh air was something unheard of. And you couldn't open the window all the time because it was all too dangerous for the outside world.

And as far as food was concerned, in the beginning, I remember, I had a ration card flagged by underground. But after a while, that was impossible too because the ration cards ceased to produce food for the inhabitants of town. And if you recall, after D-Day, that only half of Holland was liberated in 1944, there was a counteroffensive in 1944, the Battle of the Bulge.

Yep.

And the Allied troops were only able to get to Arnhem, for whom that famous book, A Bridge so Far.

Sure.

The bridge at Ramagan and so forth. So the bridge at Arnhem was where they were stopped on the northern part, where we were located at that time. It was the hardest winter, 1944-1945. The complete Dutch population was shut off from any food, any coal or means of heating possibility because there was half of Holland liberated and half not.

That was the winter where I would say more people were killed than in the three years were prior-- more suicides, more deaths from starvation, more deportation because people went mad from hunger and exposed themselves. Some went out to the streets and got really mentally deranged and got caught that way. That was, actually, the most scary winter.

And I must confess, the last few months before liberation, I remember very little. I believe it was from October. I mean, I had lost weight, a tremendous amount. And sometimes, a quarter of a piece of bread a day was all that people could spare because they didn't get it themselves.

And they lived on tulip bulbs cooked, sugar beet syrup that they extracted from sugar beets. Well, in details, they were incredible. And if you are a lot of the tulip bulbs, you got terribly [INAUDIBLE] was a hairy substance. But well, between the tulip bulbs and the sugar beet syrup, there was very little nourishment.

Your communication with the family, somebody brought you whatever it was for that day there. Somebody had to take away that vase with the--

Yes.

--in the toilet. When they did, was there a chance for you to see another human face?

Yes. I saw the family after the children were in bed. When I was with my mother, I saw my mother way after hours. And when I was placed in another household, yes, there was communication-- very, very limited. It was, well, quietly, but hardly [INAUDIBLE] even we couldn't well converse.

The girl who came to visit was really the one I conversed with. And she was with me whenever the kids were in school or when it was possible for her. She had contact with the people. And they knew exactly when she could come and

when that wasn't possible.

How in the world did you keep yourself occupied? How did you stop from going mad in all that isolation?

That's a very good question. That's one of those questions that will never be answered because there was always that hope that the Germans would be stopped somewhere, that it had to end. It can't go on. It just lasted much longer than we thought was humanly possible. Of course, their whole advance in Russia sort of contradicted that hope. But then we never gave up the thought that the Allies would do raids from Belgium or France, somewhere.

Yes.

Of course, we were totally aware of the invasion in June of 1944.

Was that because they had the radio?

Yes. And we thought-- at that point, I personally was still in fairly good shape physically. I can't say in good shape because I was never in good shape from 1941 on. But at that time, I thought, well, another five days they'll overrun and we'll be free.

The fact that it went for another year, that was the worst of all because during that year the worst transports for the worst betrayal came. People became more hungry and searched more for Jews who had money to get rewarded by the Germans. They're more desperate the harder it was on them.

And also, the constant bombardment that the British tried to bombard unsuccessfully [INAUDIBLE] in The Hague was a [? mattress firm. ?] It was never, the target was never reached. But everything in the surrounding was bombarded. And I said, well, some day, we will even get the bombs out from our friends.

There were so many factors that, actually, you were beyond fear. You knew it would end badly. And then you have these type of daydreams-- when will I see my father back? Will I ever see him back? And what will he say? What will he be like? And will I see my cousin back? And I wonder who's going to be still living? It was a very weird type of thing.

And you played games, Ouija board-like, where is this and where is that? I played with this girl on Ouija board. And the Ouija board answered. It became more type of a individual. Hallucinations were daily occupation.

And dreaming of bakeries, dreaming up recipes, that was all we could think of-- food. And we were so hungry that it was a hallucinatory state. It really wasn't natural. And that's how it was. The hope from day to day, something had to come. It came, but very late, and much too late for many people.

When liberation finally did, where were you? How did you know? Did you realize how close the Allied forces were? Did the Germans withdraw first?

I really can't answer that. I only can answer that with what I have heard, not what I was. At that point, I was so weak, the only thing I really remember that there was a Canadian occupation force. I was on the list. I was in hiding. I remember doctors saying, well, I don't know. She looks awful small and yet very swollen from edema. I don't know if we can put this all together. It was all very, was vague. I knew we were free. But I didn't really believe I was alive. I had made it into freedom.

Yeah.

I knew I had made it to this day. But whether there was a future physically or mentally for me, I really didn't know. And after that, it was, well, am I going to see the members of my family? Is this really all true? Or did this all happen that they were killed? Then there are two recollections I have after liberation.

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One was that the Canadian troops were there, that there was a notice given of droppings from airplanes from the Red Cross with white bread and foodstuffs, which came never into our hands because the police who were supposed to surround those planes that landed were themselves so hungry, by the time that was supposed to be distributed, there was nothing left.

The Canadians brought with them for the survivors vitamin-laden ration that we could not have because after being starved to such an extent-- I think I was 65 pounds at that time-- I would have eaten these things with lard on them or vitamin-laden crackers, I think that would have killed us right then and there.

They were very kind. They gave us-- for instance, sugar was very important for female deprivation because as a woman, that turns into fat. And that puts together a natural thing for them. And they gave us cans with ham instead. And all the rich foods which we could not possibly digest--

I'm sure.

--that and also cigarettes was a very big thing. We needed cigarettes at that time. They could not even comprehend what we were looking for, for nice things. And then beyond that point, was the trains were coming back with a handful of survivors-- people going to the train to see who was coming.

And after that went on for a couple of weeks, we knew who was coming back and who wasn't. And when we began really to hear stories of what took place. And some of my friends came back who had worked as a prostitute to the German Army or the officers in Auschwitz. And then little by little, we really found out what we were taken from.

Yeah. At what point do you remember feeling better? Do you remember not being just taken care of, but start planning your own future, starting to put your life together?

That was, I would say, started more or less in the summer of that year. I got well. I think because [INAUDIBLE]. And I got injections left and right, and calcium, and all possible things that were available to us not everything was available. But what was available, medically speaking, came our way. That was very well taken care of.

Then came another factor. I got in touch with this friend who visited me in Holland. That was a very strange thing. After Pearl Harbor, our correspondence ceased. But I had an address in Claremont, New Hampshire. And the post office in Claremont, New Hampshire was kind enough to forward my letter, who was addressed to Claremont, informing him on the paper his mother was reading what I wrote, forward this to his sister in New York.

He had left a forwarding address because he was then in the United States Navy and was serving in China. Of course, because he spoke German, they sent him to China, but that's a whole other story. And consequently, I and my now-sister-in-law saw to it that I got some clothes, some medicaments sent from New York.

I also had an uncle whom I contacted in New York, who was a physician in New York and saw to it that things were sent. So slowly but surely, things normalized. Then what am I going to do with my life from that point on? That must have been August, September.

I had very little schooling and a very traumatic few years behind me. And I decided I want to do something with my life. And I went to school to learn typing, and shorthand, and such. And I really was bound and determined to finally, instead of being sick which even at that point was difficult to get a job, and so forth, and so on. I was bound and determined to become a Dutch citizen, which incidentally, I never became because the correspondence with my husband ensued. And I had to have an affidavit of support.

And I went to Sweden. And I recovered. And then eventually, that led me to the United States. But the year spent in Holland was spent really recovering, and working in office to get my skills perfected, and starting a seemingly normal life, and still having hope that my family would return, that there was a mistake made.

At that time, we were not in possession of all the Red Cross documentation. That came much, much later. In fact, that

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didn't come till the late '40s into my hands, when I was already in the United States. So in the year that I was in Holland, there were still always we will hear. Maybe they escaped. And maybe they're in Russia. Or maybe these dreams kept reoccurring. It can't be. They are somewhere still. And maybe they are too weak till they get back on their feet to come for us. And maybe they don't know how to find us.

And the hope stayed for a very, very long time. And really, every time there was news of someone, we hoped to hear it. The movies that came from then were not public knowledge either. That came much later. And a lot of people at that time worked for UNRRA.

Yes.

That's who occupied this all. And they were actually searching. Like the step-sister of my mother, who was in hiding in Belgium and was in a nunnery, she went immediately because she was very fluent in languages and went to UNRRA for a job to find people-- well, really, that specific purpose to get to the Eastern European countries to search. And she enlisted first thing.

When were you united with your mother? When did you see your mother again?

Right after the war. Right after the war. She knew at all times. Since she was in a much better position, due to her Dutch papers--

Yeah.

--nobody really knew she was Jewish, she was only in semi-seclusion, but could be in contact indirectly. And she saw to it right after the war that I got proper and treated medically. And frankly speaking, she at that time needed much more medical care than I. Due to starvation, she had open sores. And she needed a gallbladder operation very urgently. There was already trouble with her spleen that they couldn't remove because penicillin wasn't available and proper medication wasn't available.

And consequently, which is very tragic, that she survived the war, we were reunited. And she died of leukemia. And I would say, probably most of the [INAUDIBLE] leukemia originate. But the starvation might have paid a price. She died in [INAUDIBLE]. And I thus did take care of her the last two years of her life here left on a visit. She knew that she had her last years left here.

Mrs. Rosenberg, when did you come to the States and get together with your husband?

That is a story one does not tell their children, but I will now. My now-husband urged me, then, to come to the United States and saw to it that I got the affidavit, or passport. I traveled from [PLACE NAME] on the [INAUDIBLE], British-American line to the United States. He met me in New York.

And I lived for five days with my uncle in New York. And he lived with his sister. And since he had just started, after the war, to a new job in Claremont, New Hampshire, there wasn't much time to be wasted in New York.

And within five days, we decided, we are going to spend our lives together and got married in five days that our [INAUDIBLE] was taken. And the day after we got married, by the justice of the peace, a handful of people present, we started on our journey to Claremont, New Hampshire. I had some odd job. And then everybody is themself. And here I am, 48 years later.

My goodness. I want to thank you very much. And it's very important to me.

I think it's important. I thank you for listening because I think it's very important for warning people to know what really took place. And I hope to do more of it, since I feel that's the only way to prevent it happening ever again, for all of us to hope.

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Need their hope.

Right.

Thank you.

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