

Young, Eva (née Miodelska)
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Abstract

Eva Miodelska Young was born on October 27, 1926 in Lipsko, Poland, a town of 10,000 people, with several hundred Jews. When war started in 1939, the Germans began shooting Jews, beginning with the most religious families. German established a ghetto and a curfew for Jews. In 1942, Eva was taken to the concentration camp at Skarzysko-Kamienna to work in the ammunition factory. She thinks her parents were sent to Treblinka. She never saw them again.

Her parents had told her that they would leave valuables for her with a neighbor who had promised to care for her. Eva ran away from the camp and went home but the neighbor abandoned her in the woods. Germans found her, beat her, and eventually sent her to Majdanek for ten weeks. She said that of some 15,000 people, only 150 survived. She was sent back to Skarzysko-Kamienna. She worked at ovens, where the heat reached 200 degrees, and applied lacquer to bullets. She and other inmates were beaten daily. When guards saw one male speaking with a female, the guards forced them to have sex in front of the other inmates. He was later beaten to death. Eva had a diamond in her tooth, and had it pulled without anesthesia, so she could sell it. She used the money as a bribe for a better job, working in the kitchen.

In 1944, she was sent to Krups factory in Leipzig, to work with ammunition. In April 1945, she was sent on a death march. She escaped after about ten days and made her way to the home of a German man who hid three other Jewish girls. While working in fields, they came upon Russian soldiers who wanted to kill them, thinking the girls were spies, and then tried to rape them. Eva yelled 'Sh'ma Israel', and a Russian Jewish soldier told his comrades to stop, and leave.

After liberation, she went first to Holland, and was among the first survivors there. She began working with *Berihah* to organize survivors for passage to Palestine. They sent her to France.

She decided to go to Palestine, where English soldiers incarcerated her and her shipmates in a camp for ten days in March 1946. She says she was pressured strongly to work secretly, building Molotov cocktails for the 1948 war. She married and had two children. The family emigrated to the United States and settled in Brooklyn in 1959. Her husband died and later she remarried.

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Side A

My name is Eva Miodelska from birth; now from marriage, Eva Young. I was born in Poland, Lipsko---(3), K---. I was born on October 27, 1926. I had a sister, whose name was Tina Miodelska, and two brothers, Moshe, Vanhil. My father's name was Israel Miodelska and my mother's name was Zelda Miodelska. My father was a businessman and my mother was a housewife.

What kind of business was he involved with?

Well, we had leather goods and some kind of a factory. We bought wood in the forest and we made like thin, like sheets, thin sheets---

Like kindling or something?

Thin sheets from wood. They were used for shoes. In 1942, there was a ghetto in Lipsko. It was a small town. I was taken to a concentration camp in 1942. I was taken by force, of course. They came in with big cars and they threw us in like cattle. They took us to the concentration camp at Skarzysko-Kamienna which is near Radom. It was an ammunition factory. They were bringing people from Warsaw and places nearby. We worked there in very, very terrible conditions. There were about 1500, or between 1200 and 1500 people in one room which was called "*augrin*" (21). There was a lot of typhus, a lot of terrible things going on and every time they came and they put us in the line in the roll count, they took out people to kill. Nobody knew if he would survive the following day. But they picked us out. Certain people went to work for all kind of factories, all kind of parts in the factory's sections. I was working, but I ran away from there. That time I went back to my little town, my hometown, because my father had told me that we had a neighbor, a Polish family, who would help me. They probably would be gone; they were talking that they would be evacuated and taken to concentration camps or killed. I should be aware of the fact that they left money, gold, quilts, linen, for me. In case I survive, I should have where to go and the neighbor would take care of me because it was a close friend of his. So it was constantly on my mind that I had where to go, in case my parents would be--with the brother and sister--would be evacuated. So one day, I ran away from there and I went back to my hometown after the evacuation of my parents. I didn't hear from them. But when I was in Skarzysko, we saw people in the railroads, on the trains, taking them to Treblinka. From this part of Poland, they took them to Treblinka. We saw them when we were crying, they were crying and we were--we knew that they were going somehow to the gas chambers. But after we saw the transport, that was in September, close to September, I didn't hear from my parents any more. I knew that they probably went to Treblinka with the transports we saw them bringing--passing by with the trains. I ran away from the concentration camp, from Skarzysko and I went back home.

How did you arrange that?

I just walked out.

Just walked out?

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I was a child; I walked out. It was toward the evening and I walked. I had some money with me because--.

Was it a camp that was heavily guarded? Or--?

It was guarded but not as heavily, not as heavily guarded. I had some money because my brother, my younger brother--he was at that time, ten years old. His name was Moshe. When the war broke out, there were bombs. In the city, they threw bombs, the Germans. They ruined, there were a lot of broken houses. So it was a fire; the whole city was like in fire. He was, after that, the following day was quiet, or a few days later, I don't recall exactly the dates but it was approximately that time. He cleaned up the bricks and put them together and put them like--stored them. Later on, the people--he was sitting and doing that instead of playing and running around, he was doing this kind of a thing. When it quieted down, people started to build their houses from the ruins, so he sold them the bricks. He was in business being ten years old. He was a very smart boy. When they took me to the concentration camp, he was running after me. He said, "Here is my money from the bricks I sold. Maybe this money would help you to survive." I didn't want to take it but he insisted that I should take it and he threw it in the car where I was. He was a child; they did not take him but they beat him up and he went home. So I had some money from him and I decided to go home to look for the Polish guy which my father wrote and told me would guard me and be like my family.

This was after you left the concentration camp?

I had it constantly in my mind. So I left the concentration camp, escaped, with the money to my little town. When I got there, my parents were not there, but I went to this Polish family which was right next to us. He kissed me and he hugged me and they said, "Oh my child, I will take care. There's no problem, I promised your father I will take care of you." I was very happy--they gave me food to eat, they put me to sleep. I did not tell them where I came from but I just--here I am. The following day, he said in the evening he's going to take me someplace, so I was very happy. I didn't care where he was going to take me as long as I knew somebody was going to take care of me. In the evening, he put me in a buggy, a horse and buggy and he took me to a forest. He went in a little bit, maybe 10, 15 minutes deep to the forest. He left me there. He said, "My child, you sit here. I have to go someplace. I will be back in about half hour or so." He never came back. I was traveling; I was walking through the forest at night until the morning. It was like six, seven o'clock in the morning, I found myself on a road. The German buses were passing by, loaded with German soldiers. [Male voice: in trucks]. In trucks, big trucks, open trucks, like for the military. One, they stopped, one car stopped and they went on and they said to me, "What are you doing here; are you Jewish?" I said, "No, I'm not Jewish." I was speaking fluent Polish so there was no sign that I am Jewish. But one said, "I think she's Jewish," and they started beating me up. One German said, "Well, don't beat her up. Take her with us and we'll bring her over to the people from the Warsaw ghetto resistance." That time I went with them. They started to joke around but I made believe that I didn't understand what they were saying. When we got there, to a concentration place, where they concentrate all these people from Warsaw ghetto, that was in April, probably in the beginning, must be the tenth of April or the--must be before, about the 8th or the 9th-

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Sometime in April then?

That's right because the 15th of April, I found myself in Majdanek with the transport. There where I was in Majdanek for ten weeks.

Do you remember, just to go back just a little bit--. When you left the concentration camp and you went to this person's house, you left for the forest. Do you remember about what time that was? What year?

Well, I do remember because in the concentration camp, I mean in Majdanek, I went in '43 in April. That was probably--[September '42]--by the end of '42. (unclear whether April 1943 or September 1942.)

The end of '42, you were in that --- (93)?

They were taking, in September, they were taking the parents. That was before Rosh Hashonah, before the Jewish holidays. That time--I'm still lighting a candle in the memory of my parents before Rosh Hashonah because that was the time when I saw them taking them on the railroad with the trains. The railroad was right next to the camp at Skarzysko. We could see the faces; it wasn't that far. We had a gate, we couldn't go over the other side; it was on the other side of the gate. But right behind the gate, there was the train, the railroad. That time I was in Majdanek for ten weeks. They started to select us every day. There was, of course, waiting for the dead because they were putting us on a count-row (102). Every day they were counting us; this day we're out every fifth one; the following day, people were afraid to stay in the fifth place because maybe they would take you. But we knew that the one who was going to be the fifth would be dead. Then they picked the seventh or the eighth. One never knew when would be his time to get killed. We were at that time, about 15,000 people, survived by 150. From my particular camp, place, there were more people. But our people, they started selecting us and taking us to all kinds of camps, all kinds of different concentration camps. I was lucky. They sent me to Skarzysko; they sent me back to Skarzysko. That time I fell into a very difficult job. I had a very difficult job. I was working at ovens where they used to lacquer the capsules from the bullets. The reason they lacquered them was because they used to make the capsules from aluminum, from copper. But they ran out of copper--they couldn't get any more copper so they started doing it with aluminum. In order not to get rusted or wet from the rain or from the snow, they had to lacquer them to prevent them from getting rusted.

From corroding, yes.

That's right. I was working by the ovens--it was a very tough job and a very difficult job because it was constantly staying eight hours in one spot, taking off the capsules. We had to pick them up like in a comb, a big, long comb. They were falling down. They were made like a board which they folded down. Every capsule folded down this way and we had to pick them up. They had to be full. In order not to do any sabotage, not to erase the little teeth, they had to be all picked up at the same time. That was about--over 200 degrees. We had to stay there and face the heat. In the beginning, in the morning they used to give us gloves in order,

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not to protect our hands, but to protect the waffen (128), to protect the capsules. But they got burned in no time so we still had to work without anything, with hot hands. Even today, I can take fire in my hand and it wouldn't burn me because I'm so used to the hot things. It was a very terrible thing to work there.

Can I ask you a question? Can we go back just a little bit?

Sure.

When you were on the train to Majdanek, did you go by train to Majdanek?

No, they throw us in --.

They threw you in the trucks; that's right.

In the trucks, they threw us in the trucks. They took out horses or cattle and they threw us in there. And straw, there was straw on the floor. We were sitting on the straw, one on the other, on top of the other because there were hundreds of people in a wagon, in one wagon like that. [Male voice: No, it was a railroad car.] Railroad? [No, it was not a truck, it was a railroad car]. The railroad cars. They took us in the railroad cars. It's like a train, right. They took the horses out and the cattle--like a freight truck. Like the freight, that's right, the freight trucks.

Can you tell me your first impressions of seeing Majdanek when you got off the train, what was happening?

We were so confused that we were happy to get out from there. Being there for a few hours or a day, we were cramped up, one against the other. When we got out, that was April, we smelled the fresh air. We didn't know what to do. We only thought that they're going to take us to better places if they let us out. But they started selecting. Put us all in one barrack.

That selection happened right after you got off the train?

Well, the following day.

The following day?

The following day, yeah. They gave each of us a piece of bread and the following day, they told us to stay on the roll call and they started selecting people right away to the crematorium. They gave us work to do. The ones who were not selected, they had to clean up, to carry stones from one place to another. Stones from this place to another place.

To keep them busy?

To keep us busy, right, right. And to clean, to work and maneuver to work in anything. They didn't know what to do with us. They were beating us. The people--we were very happy that we could do something--not to stay and wait for the dead. A few days later, it didn't take too

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long to find out that we were there to face the gas chamber. Like every day, every hour, whoever was close to each other, we made friends with strangers. We didn't know each other but we became, in no time, we became like one family. We were kissing each other; we'll be alive tomorrow, maybe we'll see you tomorrow maybe not. If not, go and pray for us, whatever.

Can you describe to me a little bit about Majdanek? About how it was guarded? Was it a large camp, how it was situated?

It was a large camp because there were hundreds, thousands of people there. Yes. It was very heavily guarded, very heavily guarded. There were two barracks, two small barracks; with the barracks was the crematorium. First they said to the people that you going in to take a shower. They didn't tell them they're going to gas them. You had to leave the clothes here. I wasn't inside because if I would be inside, I wouldn't come out. So I don't know how it was inside. The people who were inside never came out. We just assumed that that was going on. We had witnesses. I had witnesses in different camps when we went in. In Leipzig, for example, they said we should go in, take a shower and leave everything here. When we finished taking the shower, they told us to go out one other door. When we got out from the other door, we had to pick the striped clothing with a number on us to go in and register and get a number on the sleeve. My number was 804 in Leipzig, which I called out. We never went back and we never had anything. That's all we had because several people had hidden gold, money whatever they brought from home. But we couldn't get back, we came out from a different door and we got different clothes. We never saw the same door. That was -- in Majdanek, was heavily guarded, very heavily guarded. When they took us, they said that they would bring us--transfer us to a different camp, they could only--. Everybody was very happy because it could only be better. It couldn't be any worse. Here we were sitting and waiting to die and over there, either they will take you there and die right away or we'll survive. There was only one question. Either they will kill us the same day, there will be no pain any more so we were happy, we were very happy that they took us out from there. Where we went, we didn't know. But later on, we find ourselves in Skarzysko, where we saw a lot of people. It was a big camp.

They took you there by train?

Yes, that's right, by train.

Were you working there? Is that why they took you, for labor?

That's right, the labor, sure. It was a very, very tough job. My boss was a Volks German. His name was Maiefski (190).

He was Polish though?

Polish, a German; he used to live in Poland. He beat us up to death. He was beating us, blood was pouring from us every day. No reason, just no reason. He came in and he knew that he had to do his job. We had a very hard job.

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This is the place where you working at the lacquer, the ovens?

That's right, in Skarzysko where I was working. They call the place Lacquerna (195). I was on Work R, Work A. Because there were three works, three camps, three camps. In Skarzysko, there were three camps. One was A, the second B, and C. C was the worst. C, people were working in a nicotine or quas (200) like acid, where people got yellow and green. There was no way of surviving. It happened that this winter I was in a--get-together from Skarzysko and I found over there two men, who said they were in Work C. I looked at them and I started crying. I said, "I don't believe you." He said, "Yeah, I was there." I said, "How did you survive? How did you get out alive?" He said, "Well nobody believes it but we are alive." I went over to the wives and I said to them, "You don't even know what your husband's been through because I was in the concentration camp and I saw them passing every day to work." I was crying constantly, that time I was crying. When we got together, looking just at the two men. Everyone has a different—we were hard at work. I had a diamond in my tooth. I took out the diamond and I sold it to a lady who was, her name was Plachowska. She used to work with me in the lacquer room. She was sitting there, and she got paid. She was an outsider because there were Polish people--

This was at Skarzysko?

At Skarzysko-Kamienna. She was from Skarzysko. She was working for a Jewish family and she had a sentiment--they left her everything. But she came into work, she got paid. This lady, I told her, she was the only person I could have talked to and trusted to get me some money for the diamond, was her. I had no way, access to anybody. I was talking to her and I said I have a diamond in my tooth and I know I'm going to die here because I was beaten constantly. Throwing the empty shells on my face, because I fell asleep because the hot, the heat from the oven staying for twelve hours working. I fell asleep while I was standing. They couldn't work because if I didn't pick up the shells, they couldn't put it in to come down. So the machine got broken. They got punished so they threw this, the empty shells in my head; they were sharp to wake me up. I was bleeding constantly, every day like that. I had a lady there. She said, "You know what? I will work here for you on two machines." Later on she married my uncle because she said she liked me so much, she wanted to be in the family. She wanted to adopt me as her child. She died of cancer. She helped me a lot, at least five minutes, ten minutes, to relieve me to go and wash my face from the blood. That was going on for a long time until one day I decided there's no use to keep a diamond in the tooth. I will have to sell it. Who's going to sell it for me? What am I going to do with the money? Where am I going to go? I found out, nobody told me but I just was thinking that the best place for me would be the kitchen. In the kitchen I would have food, I would work twice a day, two shifts, for the day shifts to cook and then for the evening shift to cook. But at least it would keep me alive. I don't know if they wouldn't kill me but I would have something to eat. The lady, I told her, there was a doctor from Piotrkow a dentist. He took, pulled my tooth out. Of course, it was out without anesthesia, without anything. He took out the diamond and I sold it. I got 1500 zlotys the lady gave me for the tooth. There were two sisters. I was washing clothing for them. They were working in the kitchen. They were dressmakers and they were doing the dress--

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They weren't part of the camp, were they?

They were a part of the camp.

They were a part of the camp?

But they worked in the kitchen. They knew from hometown, they came from Wierzbinek, a little small town. These two sisters were sewing, clothing for the wife of their German boss. He was an SA, he wasn't an SS; he was SA. They told her that they have a cousin and they would like very much that I should work with them. But they got the money; the girls got the money from me. She said okay, I like you very much because you're two nice girls so you bring your cousin in. I went in. They told me that something is going to be worked out. When I sold the diamond, I got the money, I gave the girls the money and they said that I can come in to work in the kitchen. But the boss from the kitchen said that I have to have a permit to come; that he's releasing me from the lacquer room. The other guy said why, Eva? She must pay you off. That's what he was thinking. He was very much afraid. He didn't want to ask for me, he didn't want; he wouldn't want to let me go. I said either way, one or the other, I will die. I picked myself up and I came into work one day to the kitchen. I left the lacquer room and the boss was searching, looking for me. The first day, he didn't know what happened to me. He thought I got killed. They put somebody else in my place. The following day, he found out that I was there because he requested to check. He knew which barrack I was in. They said I was there. He came in and I start crying and I told him, "That's all I have is these two cousins and I want to be with them. I know I'm going to die sooner or later." The boss said, "Don't worry; she's not going to survive. You don't have to worry; they will die, sooner or later." I went in and I started working in the kitchen. That was very good. At least I had food. I worked twice a day. In the morning we had to cook, like I said before, for the daily shift and in the evening, for the night shift but I was very happy. I was there, working very hard. I helped a lot of people with food, with this, with that. But in 1944, they transferred us to Leipzig.

So you were in Skarzysko--?

From Skarzysko-Kamienna to Leipzig.

So you were there for almost--well into the--you said you went to--?

Yeah, I was in--. They brought us, I don't know what time--.

You said you went to Majdanek in April, April 15. Then you--?

Of 1943. In 1944, they transferred us to Germany, to Leipzig. Krups factories.

I know the name, yeah.

So I worked in Krups factory. A few friends of mine survived. Then from Krups factory, that was in April again. Beginning of April, they took---

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What did you do in the factory?

Working by ammunition. Controlling anti-aircraft, for anti-aircraft. In 1943, 1944, I was working there in very difficult conditions, because we had to get up at four o'clock in the morning, sometimes barefoot, to walk to work for two hours and two hours back. It was winter, snow, rain, shine, we walked. During the night, they bombed Leipzig. England and the Americans, they bombed. We were constantly running back and forth the whole night and four o'clock in the morning we had to go to work. At work, we had to constantly be aware, in the wake of everything. We didn't have food; they gave us very little when we got back from work in the barracks. There was no time of resting whatever. Like a constant machine, working back and forth. Then on the 15th April, yeah, April 15, everything happened on April the 15th, it looks like. They put us together and they said we had to run. In Poland, in Ch--- (302), there were, the people from Skarzysko, they emptied out the camps, Skarzysko, they closed up the camp. I was the last one. They sent me to Leipzig because we were cooking for the people who were working with the transport, transferring the machinery to Germany. We were the last ones, but the whole camp, everyone went to Czestochowa (?) (307). They were liberated in January in Poland.

In 1944?

Or 1945. We, in Leipzig, they put us on the death march. In April 1945, 15th.

That was April 15th of 1944?

It was the 14th because ten days was the death march and I was liberated in 1924, I mean in April of 1945, April 24, 1945.

Oh, so you were evacuated from--you were sent on a death march in April of 1945?

April 1945 I was on the death march. They took us about April 14 because ten days was the death march on the Elba.

Where did you go?

Just from one place to another one.

People were dying--

You were always marching or were you--?

Always marching, without food, without anything. We had--I don't know where they got food but somehow ten days without food, you can't survive walking. But people were dying and they were throwing them in the valleys. There were valleys where we were going by the forest. They were pushing in the valleys like throwing them down. I was--my feet were swollen and I was young. I could walk. But my feet were swollen and blood was from rubbing one foot against the other. There was bleeding and I couldn't even walk. I decided, we were resting in

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a forest--. The Germans, there were very, very many German people, they ran away too. So we were very much under strict control. They were watching us, very much so. The German women took off, when they saw probably the news and they heard what was going on, they took off their dresses and they put on them, like make-believe, they are the ones that come from the concentration camp. They threw away their clothing in the forest. I said to a friend of mine who was standing right next to me, I said, "I'm not going any further. I'm staying in the forest resting. When everybody will leave, I will stay there. Either they will kill me because either way, I'm not surviving. It doesn't make any difference to me." She said, "I'm staying with you." We were staying for a few hours by ourselves until everybody left for the march again by the Elba (340). There was a death march going, back and forth, all around. They didn't have any specific place where to take us. Just walk without any reason, without any place to go. That time, when we were left in the forest and everybody left, I said, "Now we are free. Not exactly free but at least not on the march." There was a little river. I couldn't swim. My friend could swim so she jumped in the river, pulled me by my hair and she pulled me over to the other side. In the water, she said, "You hold on to me." That was Clara (K349). I got out on the other side. My dress was full with water and it was a heavy dress so I had to wrinkle it out from the water and it was April, it was very cold. We were shivering, we had nothing underneath, just the dress. But we survived; it looks like we survived. I am here. We went there; we were walking and we got into a little village. We came upon a German family. We asked for pity, maybe they could help us. We escaped. We didn't say we are Jewish, that we just escaped from concentration camp. Because we had the dresses on, we couldn't say that we didn't come from the concentration camp.

You speak German or--?

We speak German good, yes. Not as fluently as Polish but we spoke. We said that we know Jewish, but we are Polish. By the way, we made the sign of the cross, we crossed ourselves. We made the prayers and said God sent us to you and you should save us. In German, he said, "Well children, it's okay. Don't be afraid. I have some more people upstairs in my attic. Go upstairs and you will find some more people like you." We came up and we found over there three Jewish girls. They were Ruth Charlon (368) and her two sisters, who later went to Belgium.

He was hiding all of them, yeah.

He was hiding them. No, he wasn't hiding them all the time. They had run away too, because they were in the concentration camp too. Somehow, we were five already. He said that we will go to work--. But they had run away a few days earlier because they'd been going to work, to the field, to work with the Germans. He gave them sandwiches and they were happy. In the evening, he gave them food. We got in the same category like the three other girls. In the morning, he gave us a sandwich and he sent us; we went with them to work on the field. They must have given us different clothing because we couldn't go with the same clothing with the stripes. I don't remember what happened but I must have gotten clothing from them. She must have given me a dress or whatever and my friend, too. Anyhow, now we were free, not exactly free but we were free. We had no striped clothing on and we were working in the field. But when we heard an airplane, we ran away. We were so scared because in Leipzig, all the time, the planes, they were bombing. There was no day, they shouldn't bomb and we shouldn't--. In

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the evening, most of it was in the evening time when we were scared. In the factories, we didn't hear so much because they were running with us together. That time, we worked a few days in the field. One day, as we were going home from work towards the evening, Russian soldiers came across us. A friend of ours, one of the girls, was running away. She knew Russian because she was from Kovel' (Ukraine) (394), and she spoke Russian very well. She started talking to the Russians. They thought that she was a spy, a Russian spy in Germany so they wanted to kill her. I started screaming, "We are Jewish. We just took off the striped dresses." She happened to know a little bit of Russian, but we were in the concentration camp. They believed me more than her. They felt sorry and asked if there were more Jewish people. I said, "Yes, there are three more." They came with us. They wanted to rape us but we started screaming. There was one Jewish boy. I said 'Sh'ma Israel' (402) or whatever. He was one Jewish man, soldier and he said, "Leave them alone. Leave them alone and let's go someplace else." They left us. The following day or two, we were afraid to go in the field any more. He didn't let us because when we got back there were white flags on his house hanging outside. So we said, "We are safe. Now we are saved." He said that the guy, the German guy told us that he heard, maybe he had a radio or whatever, that in Leipzig, they are concentrating the survivors. They would send them to different parts of the world, whoever wants to go, wherever they want to go. We went there, we walked. I don't know how many hours we walked there. We got to the camp. We registered ourselves. Over there in the camp, there were already American soldiers. They registered us and they asked us where we wanted to go. I was thinking of going to Argentina because my father was, before the war, in Argentina, in Buenos Aires. I didn't want to go back to Poland. I was afraid. It was still in my mind that the guy who had brought me to forest, left me there, I would find him if I went to the city. I was afraid to go there. I was afraid to go back to Poland. I didn't trust the Polish people because they were working together with the Germans. I came from a small town and they all -- the whole town, was working with the German people. I wasn't going back. I figured I had an uncle in Argentina. My father had been there and he came back before the war. I remembered his address and I wrote him a letter. Because I remembered my father used to send us letters so I had the address, I remembered the address. I wrote him a letter and he answered me. But in the meantime, I started working. It was a few days later when I was liberated, the 24th of April and I went to register in Germany, in Leipzig, two days later, they asked me where I wanted to go. I said that I didn't want to go to Poland and I didn't want to go to Russia. They said there was a transport with soldiers with prisoners of war going back to Holland, if I wanted to go to Holland. Two other girls and I said yes, we wanted to go to Holland. Three of us came to Holland. May the 1st, we arrived in Rotterdam, Holland. The Queen Wilhelmina came to greet us. Not us, they came to greet the soldiers but we happened to be in the same bus. We were the first survivors in Holland. They looked at us; they had posters made up of the three of us. Put on the walls all over. Over there I was a year. One year, and then I started working with the brigade, with the *Berihah* (450). This was the Jewish brigade, the soldiers from England. They were working, the Jewish soldiers, the *Berihah*, and I started working with them. They sent me in different places. I was in a kibbutz like, sending people through the organized groups and sending them to Israel. I was working with children, getting together the children-

This was all in Holland, right?

No, that was--in Holland I was a year working with them but they sent me out later to France. I

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was in a kibbutz in Ville-Seger near the Pyrenees.

Oh, in southern France?

In southern France, near Spain over there. We had our concentration, kibbutzim from the people because it wasn't far from Toulouse (463), from Marseille. There were transports from the people concentrated over there, sending them through Marseille with the boats to Israel. That was with the children too. A lot of children we sent to Nahalal Kibbutz. Nahalal accepted a lot of children. I was working that time with them. Then I decided to go to Israel. I changed my mind; I didn't want to go anymore to Argentina. I wrote my uncle a letter that I belonged in Israel and I wanted to go to Israel. I suffered so much as a Jew and I didn't want to go any place else. I was working with them in 194-. Was liberated in 1945 and that was 1946, in March, beginning of March. I came with the boat to Haifa, right after Exodus, the first boat after Exodus. The English soldiers picked us up. On the boat they caught us, and they-- in order to subtract affidavits for us because there was a quota, they put us in a camp in Alit (484) near Haifa. We were there ten days. Later on, everyone who had a family wherever they wanted to go, to a kibbutz, they were transferred. But England captured us for ten days in the concentration--like it's a camp.

The English?

The Englishmen. The English soldiers, the English government, whatever. They probably got orders from the government. They didn't do it on their own.

At that time, they were in control of Palestine?

That's exactly. There was Palestine. There was not the mandate. There was a mandate, it was Palestine. It wasn't Israel yet.

So you arrived in Israel in 1946 in March?

In March, I arrived to Israel, in 1946.

Spent ten days in a camp?

In Alit, near Haifa, in a camp. I thought, here I am again in a camp. I just got out from a camp and I am again in a camp. In Israel I was working--.

After the ten days, they let you out though?

They let us out. Then I met there, I met a gentleman and I married. I had two children. That was in Haifa. I stayed in Haifa but in 1948, the war broke out. I was working with my child. I had only my oldest son, who was nine months old. He was born in 1947 in May. I was working and I met two men. They looking at me and they said, "Oh, that was in Haifa. I used to live in K ____ (512). They said, "Eva, we're looking for you. Where have you been?" I said, "Why are you looking for me, what did I do?" I didn't recognize them. They were in

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their uniforms and here they were in civilian clothes so they looked different to me. I got scared. They said, "We need you because we are desperate for people like you. We have to work with ammunition and we don't have people like you. We need people like you." They almost forced me to go to work and I was working in the factory Vulcan (522) in Israel. That was the war in 1948. There was, that time there was a kibbutz Yagur (?) (525) who used to produce, manufacturing weapons. But somebody, it was a Jewish guy from Czechoslovakia who told the English government or whoever was in charge that there was a factory with ammunition. He got paid a lot of money and they took over everything and they broke everything. So they did not have any weapons to work with, to fight with. I was that time working in Wulcan, by Molotov bottles in the whiskeys.

Molotov cocktails.

Cocktail bottles, right. I was working there. I made the forms for the casting. With sand, with the sand imported from Belgium. It was like silky sand, special sand. I was working making 350 pieces a day and I was teaching how to do it. That time I was very much involved in it. It was very--. I had people bringing me home and picking me up. Nobody knew what I was doing because we were very much afraid.

In secret?

In secret, was very secret. I was trusted with a lot of things. Later on when the war was finished, thank God, we won the war, so I stopped working. I was a housewife.

When did you come to this country?

To this country, I came in 1959, October 2nd.

And you settled in New York? You lived in New York?

I settled in Brooklyn. I mean in New York, right, I'm sorry, in New York and my husband passed away. He passed away, then I remarried. Twelve years later, I remarried. I married Mr. Young. He's a nice gentleman and a happy person. He survived too from a concentration camp in Russia. My husband has two children so we have four altogether. My oldest son is an engineer by profession but he is in business, he is not practicing that. My youngest son Bruce (569) is a doctor, an M.D. My daughter-in-law is here. He's practicing in Maryland; he has a practice. My husband's daughter, she's a director of research in advertising and the son is working with the customs. A custom broker, yes. He is married, has a family. The only one who is not married is the daughter but we hope soon she's going to get married because she's going out with somebody.

Very nice.

We live in Manhattan and it's one happy family. That's the story of my life.

Let me--can I ask you? I know that you just started off and you got going and I couldn't stop

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you.

I'm sorry.

No, it's not your fault. That's fine, it's perfect. But I want to ask you a few questions about your childhood. Can we go back to that part?

Sure.

You said--you talked about your brothers and sisters. You talked about your parents. Can you tell me a little bit about the town that you grew up in? What it was like and where it was situated?

Yes, sure. The town was Lipsko. My mother came from Zwolen. It's a bigger town. Lipsko. (594). Lipsko, my father came from...

Can you--I wanted to have you spell these out for me so I can find them on the map, if that's--if we can do that.

L-a-p-s-k-o.

[You said L-a]

L-i, I'm *sorry*.

Okay, Lipsko.

That's where your father was from?

That's right. Yes, my father was from Lipsko and my mother was from Zwolen. Z-v-o-l-e-n. Poland. It was...

Side B

...that it was my fault that something was wrong with me. When I start telling some people what I've been through, they didn't believe me. They said, "How can a young child like that make up a story like this?" Nobody believed me, so I stopped talking about it. As years passed, I had nightmares and I just didn't want to talk about it at all. I made up my mind that I wanted to forget the past. I don't want to think about it, I don't want to talk about it, I don't want to mention. Even today, I don't go--I cannot see a movie which involves concentration camps, German soldiers, German uniforms or anything what has to do with the war, with the Germans. I can still not face it and I will never watch a movie. I said my children should watch it; my children should know it. I don't have to go and torture myself to see it again and again to bring back the memories. The children, the grandchildren who have never seen that and they don't know what, all about it, just reading it and they're learning now; I would like them very much to see and to know about it. But recently, I don't know what got to me, that I

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decided to bring it out--to tell the story because as the time goes by and I'm getting older, I don't know how long I will be living. When I am gone, I would like very much for them to know; not only them. In general, people should know what children could go through. But children growing up without parents and being alone in the world and suffering so much--. By the way, when I went to Holland, after the war, I went to high school. When I got to Israel, I went to graduate seminar. When I came to America, I went for business administration even though I had the two children. I constantly, I was hungry for knowledge and for education. But now I stopped. I'm already in my sixties and I don't know how long I will be here so I decided to tell my story. In the beginning, I wanted to write a book because I had more information, I remembered more--the German, the names and the places and every little thing. But every day I remember less and less and less. I am very happy that I can bring out what I still remember. It's not too much but whatever it is, it's important.

Let me ask you about your town where you grew up?

It's Lipsko.

Lipsko, your father was born there and you were also born there, in Lipsko?

I was born in Lipsko. My father was born in Lipsko. My mother was born in Zwolen.

L-i-p-s-k-o.

What area of Poland was Lipsko?

Lipsko was near Radom, Warsaw, around.

Around there.

So it was in central Poland?

Center, what I said, center Poland. They called it congress (32) Poland.

Can you tell me a little bit about the town? How big it was?

Yeah, the town was a little--a small town. It was a historical town. It was a very interesting town. It was located, the little town, it was like a--there were mountains, forest, and the water. It was a historic town because in Poland, was once a bottle which the name was Kashimirtz (36). The king was Kashmir. He married a Jewish woman by the name of Esther. The crown is still there in Kashimirtz, in the synagogue, till today. That he was fighting in Lipsko, it was a historic city. A very little tiny city but a historical city and a very beautiful city. There were about 10,000, not even, I don't think 10,000 people, but there were a few thousand Jews. The Jews were located like in a--I would say, a ghetto. They were living all together in one place. They were not spread out there and here but just living in the center of the city. A lot of people were, most of the people were business people. The city, in general, the business people, the rich people, were poor too. If they owned a house, a little house and they could

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survive every day and they had money to marry off a daughter, which you have to pay a dowry and prepare her clothing and everything else, so--he was already rich. There was just elementary school. There was no high school but most of the children attended Jewish schools, like private Jewish schools. A cheder; they used to call it a cheder.

Cheders are usually for males?

The cheders were for males but there were for girls, Beit Yaacov, the House of Jacob. In Zwolen, I went to school in Zwolen as I grew a little older, when my father was in Argentina. My mother went from Lipsko to live in Zwolen with her parents.

When did your father go to Argentina?

He came back a year before the war broke out, 1938. He was two years there, 1936.

So he left in 1936? Did he go there on business?

He went there actually it was business. He went, a sister--his sister died. He was in charge of the money. She left \$100,000. There were sisters and brothers, the government took some money, a lawyer took some money and he went there to settle. When he came back, he brought \$10,000. Before the war, \$10,000 was like a capitalist – was very rich. So we were not that poor. We were quite comfortable. But people were not talking about it. People were afraid to say anything, whatever it is.

You said you had a brother –

I had two brothers and one sister, right.

Were you the oldest?

I was the oldest. At that time, I was 14 years old, my sister was 12, my brother was 10, and my younger one was 8. They were two years apart from each other.

You said that your father had a leather business and also the factory?

A factory from wood.

They were separate? They weren't together?

Yeah, because in the factory from the wood, to make the little cork, I would say, right, there were gentile people working there. They were cutting the trees and doing it. We bought it all from somebody and that was already a running business; not in a big scale, in a small scale. But it brought in some income. Later on this was legal, but the leather wasn't legal. We had to give up the leather thing.

Oh, later on when the war started?

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When the war, during the war, the leather was not legal but the wood was legal.

Did your mother help also with the business?

No, she didn't help. She was a housewife, having four children.

That's plenty of work in itself.

There were no maids, they couldn't--maybe we could afford it but we were not supposed to have anybody working for us. We used to live in one room. There was everything, the bedroom and everything was in one room. When we were in Lipsko, when we got back from Zwolen, our house was burned (---?)(79).

Let's see, you lived in Lipsko until--?

Until 1938.

Then you moved to Zwolen?

Then in 1939, when the war broke out, we went back to Lipsko because the house was burned in Zwolen.

Oh, I see.

Over there, we had a house. My father was there. My aunt, my father's sister, used to live in our house.

So you moved in 1938--?

We moved in with them. They took us in.

So in 1938, you moved to Zwolen and then when the war broke out--?

We got back.

You went back to Lipsko?

That's right.

Okay. And you moved in with relatives?

Right. With my aunt. That was our house but she occupied the house.

I see. The house in Lipsko, do you remember what street it was on? Do you remember the name of the street?

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The number was 12. I think it was Kashmirzka (87), if I'm not mistaken. Kashmirzka 12.

Were you involved in any youth organizations or that kind of thing when you were younger?

Well, I was, as a child. As a matter of fact I was involved in Betar. It's like Girl Scouts. I went to Hebrew School, by the way, to Tarboot (92) and I went to Beit Yaacob. Well, I was still young so it didn't mean anything to me. It was a scout thing.

Can you tell me a little bit about when the war broke out in 1939? What you did and what your family did when--and what happened?

Well, when the war broke out, there was nothing to do. The Germans came in right away, a few days later, the Germans came in. First they started out with the Jewish people. They are not supposed to have this, they were beating us up, going into stores, emptying out the stores, looting the stores, taking away everything, coming into Jewish families. Then they said this is a...you are not supposed to go out---a curfew. That's right, it's a curfew. You're not supposed to go out after a certain hour; you're not supposed to go out. Not supposed to cross the bridge, not supposed to go there, not supposed to go here and they started looting and coming into the houses and taking out, beating. They took the nicest, and they said, "Who are the most religious people in the city?" They took them, they put them against--in the center of the city; they put against a wall and they shot them all. Rabbis and the children, whole families, they shot. Not women and children, just the men first. Then they started shooting other people, killing other people, taking others to transport. It didn't take too long, they were beating up and---. There was a ghetto. There was no access, you couldn't go in and out. So whatever we had, we had to live on.

So the ghetto was sealed, and there was no access?

It wasn't sealed; it was an open ghetto but it was--there were the guards, there were guards there watching.

Was it a large ghetto?

Well, the whole town was small so it wasn't---. They didn't have to say anything, they just said from this part of the city up to this street and this side of the city---. They just gave us the streets which we could go up to. They didn't have to make any bars around, nothing.

Was the ghetto there that they set up basically the Jewish part of the town anyway?

Just for the Jewish people, yes. They took out the Jewish people from other places and they put them in there. There were no gentile people mixed in, in the ghetto. Because people who used to live a little farther, they had to leave their houses and come in to live there.

Did--do you remember when the ghetto was set up in the town? About how long after the

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invasion?

I would say, the war broke out in September 1939, was it so, yes, September 1939.

September 1st was when the war broke out.

That's right. Of 1939, that's what I know, September, I remember that. Therefore, I set the candle for September. Maybe the ghetto they started doing about two or three months later. I would say about 1940. So difficult to remember all these dates.

I know. Do you remember how long you were in the ghetto? How long you remained there?

Well, about two years.

You stayed there until 1942, until you were sent--?

Until I was taken to the concentration camp, right.

That first concentration camp that you talked about, that you said that you walked away from?
Yeah, I ran away from.

Was Skarzysko.

That was Skarzysko and then they ended up sending you back there?

That's right.

Do you remember when you were originally sent to that camp?

Which camp?

To Skarzysko.

That was in July...that was in July of 1942. I know we had vacation. There was no school.

I meant to ask you to spell this before, but can you spell Skarzysko?

Yes. S-k-a-r-z-y-s-k-o.

Great, thank you.

You're welcome.

Now--and then you were sent--you walked away from there in sometime early April in 1943.

That's right.

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So you stayed in Skarzysko for about a year? You said you came in July, almost a year, maybe about ten months?

Right, right.

Can you describe Skarzysko for me a little bit? The camp and how it was?

The camp wasn't too big. But where we went to the camp, it wasn't huge, no, it wasn't. But we were walking to the factory. The factories were quite--we walked to the factories about a half hour walk or maybe longer. There were different factories. The factories were huge, they were very big. But the camp by itself was not too big. There was a gate around the camp.

So basically, it was a labor camp and then they took you out from there to go to work?

Every day in the morning and then when we walked back, they counted us.

To make sure you were all there?

That's right. They counted us going out and they counted us going back. There was one--the people lost weight, they got skinny. So one man was working in a factory by bush and they (158) they call it, I don't know what it is in German, in Polish was a ---. So he took off a belt, a little belt and he made it on his pants because they kept falling down, since he had lost a lot of weight. The following day the Germans came and they saw the belt was missing. They took him and they hanged him in front of us. Everybody had to go--they called us an appel and everybody had to...they called us on a roll-count and...

Yeah, I know what an appel is.

You know what an appel is. They stood--everybody had to face the guy and--

Had to watch?

They had to watch him, how they hanging him because he took off this piece of leather to make the belt. There were all kinds of different incidents. They found a man talking to a woman, to a girl, and the Germans...made perform sex in front of everyone. Anyway they beat him; later on they beat him to death. We were children, and we had to stay and to watch it, everyone. We had the killing, the beating, there was no limit, whatever. We never knew if we went to work if we would come back. We never knew that.

What kind of work was--what kind of factory was there that you were working in?

Ammunition.

Ammunition?

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Strictly ammunition, strictly ammunition.

I think that's all the questions I have. If you want to say anything else before I turn it off--.

I cannot remember.

Okay, good.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

Go ahead.

I wrote this poem when I was in Majdanek in '43. It says ___ (180). (Continues in Polish)
This, I wrote when I was 14 years old.

Sounds beautiful.

Thank you.

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