

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

GENIA KLAPHOLZ

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Lucille Fisher  
Date: July 29, 1981

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Melrose Park, PA 19027

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GK - Genia Klapholz<sup>1</sup> [interviewee]

LF - Lucille Fisher [interviewer]

Date: July 29, 1981

*Tape one, side one:*

LF: Mrs. Klapholz, tell us a little bit about where you were born, and when, and a little bit about your family.

GK: I was born in Poland in a small town near Krakow.

LF: And what was the name of the town?

GK: It was called Wisznicz.

LF: Spell it, would you?

GK: Wisznicz, W-I-S-Z-N-I-C-Z. [Wisnicz] This is very close to Krakow. My family, we were four sisters and one brother. We weren't very rich, because in this time in Europe it wasn't so good like it is now in the United States, but we were a very happy family. My two sisters were married; my brother was married, my brother had two children. One of my sisters had three children, and the other of my sisters had one child and she was pregnant with the second, and she was deported. I had one younger sister. She was very dear to me; we were very devoted to each other. In September 1, 1939, when the war broke out between Poland and Germany, it was on a Friday morning, my mother got up very early, like 6:00, and she saw that the Polish Army are walking out. So she came in the house and she called my father. My father's name was Leibish. "Leibish, Leibish, *eppes via Rikhtsug!*" [something...like a withdrawal] And my father said, "*Akh, di vayber, zehen si shvart's aus.*" [Oh, the women with their gloomy outlook.] And my mother said, "Look, look, the soldiers are going back!" In the morning about 7:00 we saw the first patrol and the Germans came in.

LF: You weren't expecting them or...

GK: We didn't even know it was war. We didn't have radios, we didn't have television. We had only the papers, and the papers was written there was going to be a war. But before we got the papers that there's going to be a war, the Germans were already in Poland. They surrounded...we weren't so close to the German border, but they surrounded around wherever was easier to coming in. Anyhow, Poland was sold to the Germans. So right away, this was on a Friday morning, the same Friday the German when they came in, they made the *Sperrstunden* [curfew].

LF: Like a time limit. I can't think of the word, but I know exactly what you mean.

GK: You couldn't go out after...

LF: Curfew.

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<sup>1</sup>née Flachs or Flaks.

GK: Curfew, yeah. See, this slipped my mind. It was right away curfew. To 2:00 we were allowed to go out. From 2:00 every Jew suppose to stay in the house. 6:00 we hear a voice that we can go out for two hours, from 6:00 to 8:00, so the men can gather in the synagogue. Like usual Friday night they went to services. And by 8:00 the military surrounded the synagogue, and they said that tomorrow all the beards has to be cut. So it was, of course crying, lamenting...Saturday for Jews in small town, such a religious town, so to cut the beard... But somehow, they postponed, I don't know who interviewed<sup>2</sup> but it was postponed. The young mens were taken to clean. And our town was one of the biggest...

LF: Industries, one of the biggest...

GK: What they have now in Camden?

LF: Housing projects in Camden?

GK: Umm...

LF: We can think about it. I know, a prison.

GK: A prison. Isn't that something that my mind gets blank! It was one of the biggest prisons in Poland. So the military ordered in there in this prison, and the Jewish boys were taken to clean the toilets. I'm ashamed to say that they had to clean the toilets with bare hands. No brushes were used, and it wasn't toilets like it is here to flush with water, but it was different. And then every day they caught boys and girls to work in the prison, for the soldiers. They killed chickens, the girls did clean the chickens, and packed, and they sent to Germany, to the families, or I don't know what they did with them. Then came, after a few weeks didn't take long, we have to give up all the furs. It wasn't a rich town like I said, but everyone had the fur coat; it was the style. Women had diamond engagement rings, had a golden chain in a watch on the neck and so, first we had to give up the furs. Then, a week later, we had to give up all the silver what we had. Of course, some Jewish people did hide in bunkers. For example, by us in the house, my father made a bunker, and he did hide candlesticks, flatware, kiddush cups. Every poor family had some silver from wedding gifts, because it wasn't this hard to give money to the wedding; whoever came to the wedding they gave a gift, a kiddush cup, a thing.

So he made a bunker to hide this because we thought maybe the war was going to be over. As a matter of fact, my father was hiding there with three other people in this bunker until he was killed. Then, when was to give up all the silver, and the gold, and the diamonds, and every possession, whatever somebody had, you have to give it away. A year...this took place, almost a year, a year, because this was like the ghetto place from Krakow, when was made the ghetto in Plaszow, so a lot of Jewish people came to Wisnicz to hide, because Wisnicz was the whole town the ghetto, and all the Jews from around wherever it was *judenrein*. This mean free from Jews. So the ghetto in Wisnicz, we had yet what to eat and what to drink, because it was a big problem, food, during the war.

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<sup>2</sup>Perhaps "intervened" is meant.

LF: Sure.

GK: And when he gathered all the Jews in Wisnicz, they made Wisnicz *judenrein*. Without anything, it was said that the next day in the morning everybody should come to the *Appellplatz* for roll call in the middle of the town. It was such a big place. But my father hide himself in the bunker. My mother went in the woods, nearby little village, and my two sisters went with the transport. They said that the young people they will take to work. As a matter of fact, my oldest sister had the children by a Christian family. She gave everything from her possession, whatever she had, that they should keep the children.

LF: How many children did she have?

GK: Three children. And when we were standing on the roll call, she came with the children. So, of course, the children were in a terrible way. You wouldn't even believe that this could happen. A little baby, she was six months old, a soldier took her and hit her with two feet in head, and then with this little angel head, he knocked on a tree. This picture I always had before my eyes, because people wouldn't believe that such an intelligent nation like the German, they could do such a terrible thing to innocent children. Then they went, me and my younger sister escaped from this place. I don't know how. I don't know where I got this ambition, but like somebody would pull me away, we two, the two of us, we went in the neighborhood village. We was hidden there for eight days. We were laying on the ebbek [perhaps, attic] from a house. It was, I knew her from before. So laying there straight, and at night, she used to bring us a little bit food and drink. Of course, I paid her very, very well for it. And when it came after a week, she said she can't hold us any more, we have to go back to the ghetto. In the meantime, Wisnicz was *judenrein*, and everybody moved to Bochnia. This is a neighborhood city. And in Bochnia was a ghetto, too. So we moved all in this ghetto and we start a new life. A new life...

LF: Do you want to stop a few minutes...?

GK: Before it was *judenrein*, when it was announced the next day all the Jews has to stay to the *Appellplatz*, this means to the roll call, we had a lot of Torahs and whatever, from all the synagogues. So all the Jews gathered the Torahs, and they buried on the Jewish cemetery, and it was looking just like a big funeral. All the Jews from the whole city gathered together and to cry how we buried the holy scrolls. The next day was the roll call and was *judenrein*. So the younger people was chosen to go to work, and to cut woods in [not clear]. This was a little wood, a forest, called [unclear], and there my brother-in-law was working, and the other brother-in-law was working there, but there sisters went to a transport, and we didn't know where they went. They never came back, of course. Neither my mother came back to Bochnia to the ghetto, because the Polish people saw her and they told her, "If you don't go right away from here, we will tell the German that a *Jude* is here." How come that so many Jews went because of the Polish people. They didn't help. The little boys, they learned one word, "*Jude, Jude*," because the German didn't recognize. The Jewish people in Europe looked very much alike the German women, and they did not recognize which woman is Jewish and which not. But the little, the boys and girls, point

with the finger, “*Jude, Jude.*” When they said, “*Jude,*” so they had their share. So they told my mother, “If you don’t go right away, if you don’t leave this place, we will call the police, and we will tell that you are here. So my mother came to Bochnia, to the ghetto. I did not recognize her.

LF: How long hadn’t you seen her?

GK: A short time, but the way she looked...

LF: Just a short time.

GK: Maybe two months she was hidden in the forest. She looked so skinny. She lost probably half of her weight. I don’t know because at home we didn’t weigh, we didn’t care about the figures but she was so skinny in her face, it got so changed, so black from not eating, not sleeping, not washing, and not changing. So, we were, my younger sister, my mother, and me were in Bochnia in ghetto. Through somebody who I knew from before, he tried that I should work in a factory where they make the soldiers the Army...

LF: Uniforms.

GK: Uniforms. This factory was called...

LF: Well, it doesn’t matter.

GK: I worked there, my younger sister, and my mother. We were in Bochnia, in ghetto, for a year. It was a terrible time, because one time they came around that we couldn’t cook, special when come Friday. We didn’t have gas stoves but coal stoves, so the chimney, through the chimney came the smoke...

LF: Smoke.

GK: So they saw that here in this house is somebody cooking. We weren’t allowed to cook. We weren’t allowed to go out. Once we weren’t allowed all different things. They wanted to *mutche* out [torment], you know, to drop dead without use a bullet. After a year, my mother again tried to hide in a bunker, but the bunker was recovered. So she, we was told everybody should come again in Bochnia, to the roll call. So the elderly people, they made one line, the middle aged, they made another line, and the young people another line.

LF: Yes.

GK: And I was lucky enough to be with my younger sister in one line. So we were chosen to go to Szebnie. Szebnie is called a *Durchgangslager*. [transit camp] Nobody all the thirty years talked about Szebnie. Szebnie was a small camp, and not too many Jewish people were there, but I will tell you what happened there. That is why the people should know what they did. My mother was chosen with all the elderly people, elderly, my mother was 52 years, she wasn’t elderly but...

LF: No.

GK: But by them it was elderly. So I wanted to go together with my mother, because we all knew we will had the execution; we waited for the execution because everybody had to go, one thing we knew. We didn’t have anything to fight with. So when I want to go to my mother, they were standing with a big dog, and a dog jumped at me, and

he caught a piece of my leg. But it didn't matter, and he pushed me back that I should go to my row, where I belong. From there this was...Next month is going to be the memorial, what we are keeping on Bochnia, on *the Bochnia evacuation*. We came to Szebnie. It was a roll call in the morning, and there was...the *Lagerführer* was Zhimik, his name was Zhimik. He probably was a *Volksdeutsche* [of German origin] because the name Zhimik is not a real German name. So, like usually, with the finger point, "Right, left, right, left," and my little sister was chosen "Left." We didn't know, because this was the first time what we saw with the "Right, left," because until Szebnie, we didn't know what this means. A day...At this time, this people who was chosen "Left" was barracked in a different barrack, and we were in a different barrack. But at night I went to my sister and I hugged her and I said, "Oh, dear God, thank God that you are here." So she said to me, "Listen, we are all here for counted days. We know what is waiting for us." And the men start to pile a big pile of woods, and we didn't know yet for what. Next morning, early in the morning, came an open *Auto* with...I don't know a mistake or not, I think, 200 or 400 people, Jewish people...young, beautiful, from Tarnow. This was not far from Szebnie. Szebnie is a little town near Jasno. So these people who was chosen in Szebnie together with the other people from Tarnow was taken. And it was made a very big fire, and alive they was throwing in this fire. And nobody could hear even this crying, the pain, what they went through, because we were like paralyzed. I did write in Jewish a little about Szebnie. It was published in our bulletin from the New Americans.<sup>3</sup>

LF: Do you have a copy of it?

GK: I have it, here.

LF: Would you give it to me?

GK: I have the book. It is in Jewish.

LF: Before I leave could I have a copy of it? Would you like to read it into this?

Do you want to read it?

GK: [Yiddish spoken here].

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<sup>3</sup>Association of Jewish New Americans.

*In Udenk mine Shvester Sara in Szebnie Lager*

*Oh-szhebnie, ich Ken dich nisht fargessen.  
Dos host mine shvester groiszam oifgefressen.  
Ich tsind dos Licht fahr dine nishomeh.  
Oh Gott in himmel, vee iz dee nehkumeh.  
Shtil in Lager, ah moireh fahlt  
Plitsling hert zich ah gellald  
Alles Arois, Shnel oif der frai  
Zay Shtayen nebech tzoom Lesten mohl in der Rai  
Tzvaigen Tachreecheem zay dee bletter  
Fahr dee mames, fahr dee shvester  
Meh haste undz tsu zingen troier Lider  
Fahr dem toit fun undzer breeder  
Dos nemen bahld zich dos holtz Trogen  
Ruik shtill tuen mir Vidiv zogen  
Tzvai hundert fuftzik yungeh Lebens Tsuzamen  
Varft men lebedik in dee flahmen  
Es brent dos fie-er  
Yiddish leben iz nisht tie-er  
Kine Kerper iz nisht gebliben tzu bagroben  
Vile der vint hot dos ash tzetrogen  
Oh Zshebnie, ich Ken dich nisht fargessen  
Dos host mine shvester groiszam oifgegessen  
Ich tzindt dos Licht fahr dine nishomeh  
O Gott in himmel, vee iz dee nehkumeh.*



In Memory of My Sister, Serl, of Szebnie Camp  
by Genia Kalpholz

O Szebnie, I cannot forget you.  
You have cruelly devoured my sister.  
I light a candle in memory of your soul,  
O God in heaven, where is revenge?  
It is quiet in the camp,  
A terror descends.  
Suddenly there is heard a scream.  
“All out! Quickly, outside!”  
Alas, they stand in a line for the last time.  
The leaves weave for them shrouds,  
For the mothers, for the sisters.  
They order us to sing songs of mourning.  
On the death of our brothers.  
Where can we find quickly the wood to carry,  
Silently, and quietly, we look for shovels.  
250 young lives together, are thrown alive into the flames,  
The fire burns,  
As Jewish life is not precious.  
No body remains to be buried  
For the wind has carried afar the ashes.  
O Szebnie, I cannot forget you.  
You have cruelly devoured my sister.  
I light a candle in memory of your soul,  
O God in heaven, where is revenge?

Yiddish [with Hebrew characters]

LF: When did you write this?

GK: 1974.

LF: In 1974. I think it's important that you recited that into this, and, if you will, I'd love to have a copy so we could put it along with what we need to put it along with.

GK: So in Szebnie, we were only for three months. After three months...

LF: Did you work there?

GK: Yes, I worked in a sewing factory. But I didn't do any sewing. I was a cleaning woman in the office. I clean, whatever somebody could find any work. We did not mind.

LF: Did most of the community work that way?

GK: This was no community; it was just a camp.

LF: Just a camp.

GK: There was no civil people. And most of the people were working in the uniform-sewing factory, and some was in the cleaning department.

LF: How many people would you say were in that camp?

GK: In the camp was about between 2,000 and 2,500. And from there after three months, we stood again at the roll call...always with these roll calls...and Zhimik, he said, "*Ich bin euer Vater. Ich geh mit wie ihr geht, geh ich mit euch.*" [I am your father. I go with you. As you go, I go with you.] This was true. He went with us but we went to Auschwitz, and he went also to Auschwitz, but whatever he did and whatever [they] did with us was two different stories.

LF: Two different jobs. If we stop right here, I'm going to turn this tape over because I think we're coming to the end of it.

*Tape one, side two:*

LF: All right, I think you're ready to talk a little bit more. You ended where?

GK: From Szebnie we went to Auschwitz.

LF: Let's go back a little bit. When you were in your town, was there a Jewish Council, a *Judenrat*, in the town?

GK: Not in our town.

LF: Not in your town.

GK: In Bochnia was a *Judenrat*.

LF: So there was none in your town?

GK: No, in our town there was, until was *judenrein*, was more or less free, in the Polish magistrate...took care.

LF: Was there any communication between the outside world by the newspapers?

GK: None whatsoever.

LF: None whatsoever.

GK: No, no, we had a newspaper, *Nowy Dziennik* [New Daily] it was called, but we did not receive as soon as the Germans came in. We were completely shut out of the outside world. The only thing what we knew, when the people came in from different cities where it was more dangerous than by us, so they came in, so they told, "The Germans is doing this, the Germans is doing that." One told a story, the Germans came in his house and he had a beautiful daughter. They told her she should undress completely and stand on the table, and they made with her all different exercises, and he said it was terrible for him to see. So, all different stories what...we heard.

LF: What you were told.

GK: Yeah, what we were just told.

LF: Well, tell me, was there any underground in the ghetto that you knew about?

GK: Not in our town. It was underground, but not in our town.

LF: Not in your town. And...

GK: It was a little farther than other states, in other...

LF: Did the Poles help the Nazis to prosecute the Jews?

GK: Yes, that's what I told. They learned to say "*Jude*." This was their thing, "*Jude*." My mother would survive, my father would survive, because my mother spoke a very beautiful Polish, and they really would not recognize that she is Jewish, only that she was wearing a wig. All the Jewish women that was religious they was wearing a *sheitel* [wig]. Of the Poles...my mother went and my father was discovered from the bunker. My father was, I forgot to tell you, my father and six other Jews were in the bunker, and they took them out, and they were shot in middle of...before the city hall. They were lined up, they were all shot, and two children. The Poles then told me, and they were all buried in

one hole. Not even a grave, in one hole. They were put in tar. You know what this is? This is the black on the roofs.

LF: Yes, tar.

GK: Yeah, they put in this hole, tar, and they make a fire, and they were dancing and laughing, "This is what happens to Jews who want to do bad things to the Germans." The Jews going to fight against the Germans with their bare hands...

LF: And then, then it was Auschwitz.

GK: Now we are...I forgot where I am. Now I am in Auschwitz.

LF: Now tell about how you got to Auschwitz.

GK: When we, from Szebnie, Zhimik went with us...

LF: The leader, yes.

GK: The leader, and coming there was the same, "Left, right, left, right." We didn't know we were in wagons, that even cows have better wagons, because at least they have a window. We were completely dark, a little bit straw on the floor, and nothing to wear, just the one dress that you had...

LF: What year was this?

GK: This was in 1942.

LF: 1942.

GK: Yes, then was *judenfrei* Szebnie. They cleaned up, they cleaned up already Wisnicz where I was, they cleaned out [unclear] because before I was in [unclear] and then they cleaned up Bochnia, and now they cleaned up Szebnie. So from Szebnie we went in the wagons. A lot of people fainted, some died, and we didn't have no water to drink, and from eating, forget about it. And no sleeping, only one on each other; we had to go in the bathroom, we just made. Excuse me for my expression, but this was the truth. You wouldn't believe it. Sometimes I ask myself, how could I go through all this, and still be a human being and still want to live, and to have everything what my eyes can see that I can afford. I mean I don't want things, but how can I...it's impossible to believe. We were sitting, and we were making, one and two, like where we were sitting, and we didn't have no paper, no nothing. Worse than cows or horses.

LF: This was...you were with your mother...?

GK: No. Nobody.

LF: No, your mother had already...

GK: Nobody, my mother was taken already in Bochnia.

LF: And you didn't see her any more.

GK: If somebody was taken, it was good-bye. You never saw again, and my sister was taken in Szebnie. So I was by myself, survival, which I expect that my end is going to be in Auschwitz. But somehow when he turned left and right, I was in a row to go to the camp, and the others went straight to the crematorium. My cousin was there, my friends...and they went right to the crematorium. Coming to Birkenau...this is Auschwitz, but near...so we went to the sauna. The sauna is the shower. First, there, they cut completely

the hair, like I had beautiful long, curly red hair, and my curls fell on the floor and I start to cry, and the girl who cut my hair, she said, "What you crying? The hair is nothing. You see, everything goes to the oven." I don't...cry. Then we went to the *sauna*, take a shower. They gave us five minutes cold water and during the five minutes you couldn't even wash up. Then they put us on the uniform, long dresses in stripes, gray and blue, and on the head a handkerchief, a kerchief, and they gave us one pot, one pint pot. This is for our dishes and our furniture and...out in the row, to stay in line. I stood in line and I asked what is next to me, I said, "Who are you? Who are all these old women?" So she said, "Genia, don't you recognize me? I am Velsa." My girlfriend, what we were together in home. We went to school together and we were in the camp together. We were in the ghetto together, we were in Auschwitz together...But...

LF: She had changed.

GK: Taken off the hair and put on this uniform we didn't look like women, we looked like witches. Worse than a witch, even. Not like human beings. Then we went in the camp. We had six weeks quarantine. Quarantined, that means not to go to work, not to go to the oven to wait. What did we wait? I don't know. Till *Mashiach* [Messiah] will come and he will liberate us? Nobody will listen to us, nobody looked for us, nobody wanted to liberate us. And the six weeks was terrible. Everyone of us, we were all young girls, had *durchfall* [diarrhea]. I'm getting very nervous here; we all had diarrhea. And to have diarrhea in Auschwitz was completely like a dead person, because it was no toilet, excuse me for expression, no anything to clean up, excuse me, for I express myself, and a toilet was outside, a room, maybe twenty holes, and we went in and we did and that's all. Nothing else. We didn't have any water to wash up. So we were sleeping four in a *koye* [wooden bunk]. The *koye* was as big as this table, so the four was laying on one side, one next to each other. If somebody want to turn, all four had to turn because it wasn't place that one should lay on the bed or on the belly. Everyone had to lay only on the right side or on the left side, and on the *koye* it wasn't so beautiful too, because nothing to clean up, so we made up between each other, every morning we would take the tea, what we getting, and one portion of tea we would divide between the four of us, and three portions of tea we would wash our shirt, our...

LF: Clothing.

GK: Not the clothing, our undershirt. Nothing else. Pants we didn't wear, underpants, just the undershirt. And so this went on for six weeks. After six weeks, I was chosen to go to a factory to work. This was ammunition factory. We did make *Einsatzstücke zu Zündbomben* [probably, inserts for incendiary bombs] for a German firm. During the time, when I was working, I was working next to a *Pulverraum* [powder storage room] where...so the girls smuggled out *Pulver*, how you say in English, this powder, this powder to the mens...and the mens did...

LF: Was it gun powder?

GK: Gun powder, yeah.

LF: And they smuggled it to the men's...

GK: They smuggled it to the men's...

LF: Side.

GK: Also the...workers there.

LF: Workers.

GK: Workers there, and they were in...[pause] girls smuggled out the gun powder to the mens, and the mens tried to blow out one crematorium. Unfortunately, it wasn't 100 percent done like they was planning to do, but they were caught, and the four girls were hanged in Auschwitz. This was very short before we were liberated.

LF: How long were you in Auschwitz?

GK: Almost two years, not quite. Not quite. During...when I was in Auschwitz, three times I was chosen to go to the crematorium, but somehow a good angel always pushed me away and I escape. I want to tell you one incident, it's a shame to even talk what they did, not to listen, but even to talk...

LF: It's important that you talk.

GK: In January, it was in the month of January, I think it was 1943 or 1944, I don't recall exactly, anyhow, they wanted make *Entlausung* [delousing], general cleaning. So everything we had to take off, naked like we were born, and we went out, outside, and in Poland January outside is not like here. There is snow at least four or five inches high, and completely naked without shoes, without stockings, the whole *Block* was then standing. Who was inside, so they warmed up, one to each other, the back to the front. And who was outside, around, so you made a round to stay close to each other, that we should warm up. And these soldiers were standing a little bit farther, and laughing, and they were shooting from the thing, not to us, they were shooting, just so, to make, scare us, that they going to shoot us. And, I don't know how they could do this. Now you would ask somebody to go out, you don't know what mean winter, because here is no winter compared to the winter in Europe. And to go out naked and to stay for an hour...that we weren't frozen stiff, frozen, with this food, the nourishment what we had, only what we had, maybe, the foundation what we had at home. I don't know, it's a miracle. It's just a miracle. Like all other miracles that they said with the Jewish people. Once, I had swollen feet because of the [unclear], probably, and my feet got swollen. And so I came to work, so the *Kapo* told me that I limp a little bit. She said, "What you limping." So I showed her I had here something, so she said, "O.K., come into the doctor." I went into the doctor because this *Kommando* protect the company, protect where we worked, protect the *Häftlingers* [prisoners]. So he protect us. So in there, there was a doctor. So we can imagine he made the operation, from here to here, without freezing, without any anesthesia, without nothing, just to cut in the [unclear]. Going home I limped because my feet hurt more than before yet, so, of course, that's when they told me "Left." I have to go in another barracks, so tomorrow is going to be a transport to another crematorium, so I go with them. So the whole night I didn't sleep, I didn't cry that I should survive. I prayed to God that I shouldn't suffer too long, that the death should

come in one second, that I shouldn't suffer this thing because some...we were in the *Block* where the chimneys were burning and the fire we see, day and night we did see the fire. And the smell of the bones and on the flesh, it was just terrible. But, somehow, in the morning I didn't ask nobody nothing and I got up, and I went in the line, and I went to work. And so nobody remembered me, even. There is so many things what I went through in this Auschwitz that is unbelievable. When...

LF: Do you still dream, do you still dream?

GK: Now, since my husband died, it's a year ago, I start to dream and the camp...I dream every night about my husband, but till then I dreamed every single night, and especially now in this time, this time of the year, every year was a different episode. So we went through different tortures.

LF: You relived it.

GK: Yes, so this time of the year is the worst time of the year. When in 1945 in January, we closed the camp, Auschwitz.

LF: You say, "We closed." What do you mean?

GK: All the *Häftlinger*, all the Jews who was still alive, because the Russian came in. In 1945, they were already in Krakow, and this came to our knowledge. I mean the girls around. We were very close with each other. As a matter of fact, when we were sitting at work, so what we was talking? About food, nothing but food. Oh, when we will be liberated! So the only wish was mine...Everyone said that we have a small table in a small room and a whole bread on the table and a piece of butter and a coffee. And when we going to make a party, so we will cook, potatoes with meatballs and borscht. This was a Polish dish. And our wish was only to have a whole bread. In Auschwitz I took sick. I had typhus. I had high fever, I didn't know how high, but I didn't know what's going on with me, so I couldn't eat for two days. So...

LF: Were you hospitalized, did you have medical care?

GK: What else? What you think, I was in paradise? I was in Auschwitz!

LF: There was no doctor?

GK: No, God forbid, I would go to the hospital, they would put me in the crematorium. So I was laying on this bed, so-called, and didn't eat for two days nothing, so the girls who were sleeping with me, they took my bread and my soup and whatever we had there, and one of the girls said, "I will give you something." So she give me half of her carrot. Not washed, not scrubbed, with all the dirt. I ate it, and this brought me to life. To this day, whenever I am sick, I'm taking a carrot, but, of course, all different style, to eat it. When I was sick, I couldn't go to work, so the oldest from the *Block*, she said, "If you don't go to work, you know you're going to be sent, you know where." So I said, "O.K., I will go tomorrow to work." I couldn't go to work, but I went. We were sitting there.

I go now back to the end of Auschwitz when, when these girls were hanged, so we were in the first line. We, this means the girls, because we were working in the next room from the gun powder. So the oldest said, "You see the girls now are hanging because they



wanted to blow the crematorium. Next, you are coming.” They mean, us, that we are coming. So all of us, the girls, we were twenty girls around this table what we was working, so said, “Oh, now it is our time, thank God that we wait so long, that tomorrow is going to be our day.” But, in the meantime, the Russian was rushing too much, and they came in January to Krakow...so they moved the camp from Auschwitz to deep Germany. I don’t know what for they needed us, what for they made so much fuss with us. But, anyhow...and this. And this was called death march of Auschwitz, because it was in the wintertime, January 18, 1945. I have written...you want me to read this...

LF: Yes, I do, and I would like to change the tape on this so that we will be sure to get the whole thing on.