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HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

LORY CAHN

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Marian Salkin
Date: May 4, 1981

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LC - Lory Cahn[1] [interviewee]
MS - Marian Salkin [interviewer]
Date: May 4, 1981

Tape one, side one:

MS: Please tell me where you were born, Mrs. Cahn, and when, and a little about your family.

LC: Well, I was born the 17th of May 1925. I came from a family there were two children, my brother and I - do you think this is loud enough? My brother is 4 years older and he fortunately got out in time. My parents had the foresight to send him to England; he was a very brilliant student and he couldn't go to University any more in Germany so they went to England. I was supposed to go to England in 1938 just before this all happened. Since I was the only one left, my father pulled me off the train.[2] He couldn't bear to live without me, and they felt I should remain with them. My father was a lawyer. Fortunately, we lived in very, very comfortable circumstances.

MS: What city were you from?

LC: From Breslau. Breslau which is in Germany, which is now Poland. It is Silesia and this is now Poland. It never was before, but it is after the war, with the Poland pact and all that, it was completely taken. It's on the side of the Oder River, which is completely separated now from Germany. That part was completely taken over, and it's not under Russian territory or Polish territory. It's actually Poland today. We lived, like I said, fortunately my father was quite well-to-do, and we were very comfortable in our own home. It was just my mother and father and my brother and myself, and we had servants, which is something you don't know too well over here (laughing), but we did have it. My father had a big office which was at the very end, actually just working from home. Officially, he could not really do any kind of big practicing as far as law was concerned because this was already forbidden here and forbidden there, but my father was a hundred percent disabled from the First World War. He was a captain in the Army and that is one thing, if they did not respect anything else, but they somehow respected that to the very last. And when they were taking the servants away from the Jews, our girl was allowed to stay with us because my father was one hundred percent disabled. When we had to leave our home, they made sure that we could get something as comfortable as it would possibly be, that we wouldn't be in our house but it was a small apartment. It wasn't, of course, where we wanted to live but it didn't matter, but they were still kind of considerate about it.

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[1]née Grünberger. The interviewee's former first name was Hanna Lore.

[2]Mrs. Cahn was to go on the Kindertransport. She tells in detail the story about being settled on the train and her father pulling her out the window of the train as he was saying goodbye to her in the film, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*. Warner Brothers, 2000, DVD.

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MS: This was the Germans?

LC: The Germans. Oh, yes. Yes, in our native town. I stopped my schooling November 9th in 1938, so actually from '25 to '38, is barely 13 years. And the synagogues were burned, the schools were burned and that was the end of everything. But, as the war broke out, I went into the Jewish hospital and I was trying to become a nurse, because I was too young so I was kind of volunteering and doing this. This is what I always wanted to be, either a doctor or a nurse. So this is the equivalent to it so I was always very busy, keeping myself busy in the Jewish hospital. My parents were trying to emigrate to South America, to Argentina. My mother had two sisters who were sending us papers to come to South America, and everything was coming along quite well. I do not know exactly when it was, I think it was late '39 or '40. We gave up our apartment. My parents had furniture built which we were able to take, which we were going to take with us. They used to take things from an apartment and put it all into one great big trailer, and we were allowed to do all this if we would have gotten out. We bought passage; we were supposed to leave, I think it was about the middle of '40, even though the war was on already. But we were supposed to leave, and the immigration allowed at the time yet, for sisters and brothers and mothers and fathers. And when we were called to pick up our, which would be the equivalent to an affidavit, it was called a *llamada* to South America, when they called my parents they told them, "Here's your *llamada*, but you're not getting it because as of now there's only children to parents, no more sisters to brothers."

MS: In other words, you could only leave the country if you were going to a parent.

LC: At that particular moment, we had our papers already in our hands. All our belongings, everything we ever had, went to South America already, because we had to ship it ahead of time. We were there with our tickets to go to South America with just enough to make us stay. I think we had maybe three or four weeks till we were supposed to leave, and there we were, everything was gone and we were left with just what we had on, and our suitcases, you know, to go on the ship. So that was 1940 and by then they started to take people into concentration camps, and things were starting to get quite rough. But yet we really didn't suffer too, too terribly bad, and we were trying to go somewheres else, but we had affidavits to the United States but missed the quota system that took a long time, and we just had to sit and wait. My parents tried for all over, but my father, like I said, was a hundred percent disabled, also had a very, very tragic accident a couple of years prior to that.

MS: To this episode in Germany.

LC: Oh, yes, with Hitler. In 1934 he was in a law office, and they were supposed to sign some papers, and he was called in as a consultant or whatever; I don't remember this because I was too little. My father sat on a chair and he was wearing one of those fur-lined coats, like the men used to wear, and he was in a great hurry, and he didn't bother to take his coat off, and he sat on the chair, and something must have been wrong with the

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chair. The front legs of the chair broke off, and my father fell, and he broke his back. The doctors didn't think he would ever, ever walk or even live. And determination and being a very, very good Jew, I didn't mention that before, I'm coming from a, not Orthodox, but a very, very religious family. We were not Orthodox, even though we didn't turn the lights on, but we were not. They might consider us here in the United States Orthodox, but for the type of synagogue we belonged to and all that we were not really Orthodox. We had a kosher home and everything. So my father had a tremendous faith and so did my mother; and they figured, well, it will get better. My father did get better. He walked, but he was walking on two canes, and he was totally handicapped. He couldn't do anything by himself. Going anywheres or whatever. So, we were having a hard time trying to leave because the way my father was, my mother could not see us going on some kind of a donkey boat or wherever they would take us, not knowing what would happen to us. So they decided to just wait it out until we could get out one way or the other. So, where did we go? We didn't get out and we went into the concentration camp. Somehow...

MS: I just wanted to ask you a question. I'm going back a little bit. You said your father served in the German Army in World War I. Now, he was an officer, is that correct?

LC: A captain in the German Army.

MS: A captain. Was he awarded any medals?

LC: Oh, yes. But, I know he wore the Iron Cross and all that, but I couldn't tell you what the other medals were because I was just a little girl. None of these things meant anything to me. My father still had a very good, even though he was not practicing anything anymore at the time before we left, but my father still had very good connections in all kinds of circles.

MS: With non-Jews?

LC: Oh, yeah. Government. He had a very, very good friend who was very close to the Gestapo, and he came and told us, within, almost I would say three days before they came for us, that we were going to be one of the next ones on the list to be interned. So we knew, that's it; that's as far as we could go. So, prior to that, my father decided since they were taking children once they were 14 years old by themselves, not to go with the parents, because as far as Hitler was concerned, once you were 14, you were an adult. And when this was all happening and a lot of our friends and the children and whatever had left already, my father decided that he is going to go the main headquarters in Berlin and trying to ask them, since he was a soldier in the Army, would they do him the great favor of letting his one and only child go with them. And he was warned, very strongly warned by everybody, non-Jews and whatever, not to do that because they would not like that, but he was determined and he came back with permission that I was allowed to go with them. There was a... Our first camp we went to was Theresienstadt, I don't know whether that means anything to you. The German Jews did, as a rule, not go to Theresienstadt. The only ones who were sent to Theresienstadt were old ones or people with means and also being "somebody". Means alone was not very important when it came to that. But when they

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came for us, they told us, if my father can come up with X amount of, I could not tell you what it was, not dollars, marks, an unbelievable amount of money within 24 hours, that since he was in the service and all that, that we would have the privilege of going to Theresienstadt. They made it believe like you're buying yourself into a condominium.

MS: Into a secure haven.

LC: Yes. Well, my father did have still money around and apparently connections, or whatever. I would be lying if I know where or what, but in any case we did come up with the money, and they came, and we did go to Theresienstadt. They took my father out on a litter because, I don't know whether it was the excitement or what, but he started to run a very, very high fever and they took him to the hospital.

MS: Was this prior to leaving?

LC: About a day before leaving, they took him to the hospital, but we pretended like we did not know that we were going. We knew we were going to be picked up the next day because this was told to my father in the greatest of confidence, so we could not say anything about it. But when they did come for my mother and I, my father wasn't there. They went to the hospital and got my father, too. But when they came for us, which was roughly about 4 o'clock in the morning, with a big bang on the door, "Open up. This is it." We, of course, did not know when they would come and they told us what to take so we could not prepare anything. We were allowed to wear two layers of clothing and each one was allowed to take ten German marks. But we knew whenever they did come for anybody, that you did not leave from your house directly to wherever they were taking you. But they did pick us up and they took us into some kind of a little truck, or whatever. I think that is what it was. It was like a little truck. They took us of all strange places into one of our synagogues and this is where we were meeting and we were there for almost 4 days 'til they rounded enough people up to go. As of then, of course, nobody told us where we were going, but since they had contacted my father prior to that, we kind of thought that's where we were going. We did not know about the other people, and whoever we met there, a lot of people we knew, we did not talk about this because they all kept saying, "We wonder where we're going to go?" And everybody knew of Auschwitz and a lot of people knew of Theresienstadt and a lot of people knew of all the other places. This already started in 1938, when they bombed the stores and when they, you know, what they call that, Crystal Night, and so everybody was familiar with all this, you know, with these different camps.

MS: You say people knew of the other camps at this time. No one knew of any deaths? No one was aware of people dying?

LC: Oh, yes, because 1938, when they, I never did mention that, they did come for my father in 1938. They went into each house and took all the men of everybody's family. The provider was being picked up. They did take my father, too, even though he protested to anything and everything; and he said, "They can't do that. I fought in the German Army" and all that, of course that didn't mean anything. But, surprisingly enough, they only kept him in the SS or Gestapo headquarters overnight and he was released the

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next day. And a lot of my parents' friends never did come back from that first escapade, which was six weeks, eight weeks, or how long they did stay, but a lot of them did not come back. On the other hand, one of my aunts committed suicide when they went to take their two sons, and we were notified of that. They did not live in Breslau where we lived, and both of her sons were taken to Buchenwald. My father managed to get both of them out for the burial. They had to go back, but they were allowed to come back for the burial, which was something unheard of. But they did release my father after one overnight, 1938. So, anyhow, there we were in the synagogue and, like I said, I think it was about three or four days that we were all together, and I don't know how many hundreds of people were there, and then they did say that they know my father was in the hospital, and they kept him in a certain room already, and when we were leaving that we would all go together. But we did not all go together, because they took women with children into one area and the men into the other, and then definitely old and sick were altogether separated. So, when we were already, when they took us and they loaded us into a cattle car, which holds about roughly six to eight horses or whatever, and we were about 40 in a cattle car, and there was a bucket in the middle, and that was to be used for each and everyone for whatever you needed it for. There was no water, no food, no nothing. And nobody knew where we were going. We never questioned it and my mother and I said, "Well, forget it, this is all for the birds. We paid that money and we don't know where we're going." There were not too many children with us, but there were quite a few elderly people, women, in that particular cattle car. I did not know how many there were. Once they closed the door. We never seen my father from the minute they took him out of the house into the hospital. We never seen him once we were in the synagogue waiting to be shipped out. They kept him somewhere separated. We never got to see him. We have no idea whether he was still alive or whether they actually would take him but, they did tell us he would go, too. We traveled roughly about four days and four nights. I guess you want to know approximately when that was. I did not mention. We left, I really don't have the exact date, but as far as I remember it was either the end of February or beginning of March, 1941.[3] That is when our journey to hell started. Again, my mother and I was in one of those cattle cars and as far as I remember I was not terribly upset because I was a young girl and things didn't bother me that terribly. I was only frightened for my mother, who was absolutely beside herself and if she would have been able to hide somewheres or whatever, I don't know what she would have done. But, the only thing, we were terribly, terribly concerned because we had no idea where my father was. We traveled, like I said, roughly about four days and nights and every once in a while we could look out; they had like these little slats and it was very, very, very, very cold. We did not get anything to eat. We were allowed to take something with us, whatever we had. You know from left-over after the last meal we got at the synagogue, but that was all we had. We had really no provision, and they did not give us any provisions. And outside

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[3]Beginning in the summer of 1942 until June 1943 thousands of Jews from Germany and Austria were transported to Theresienstadt, according to the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, edited by Israel Gutman.

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of each cattle car was always one Gestapo or SS man riding next to us. And they did open it occasionally and emptied out our waste, but no questions asked and they didn't mistreat us anything while we were inside because everyone behaved very nicely. So, we had absolutely no idea where they were taking us. We would be sitting for hours somewheres on the roadside, just sitting there. Anyhow, after four days roughly and four nights, it stopped, having no idea still where we were, and they opened up the wagons and we had no way of telling - all we seen was trees and some houses, but we were not able to tell where we were. They told us to line up outside, and my mother kept saying, "Where is Dad, where is Dad?" And there must have been about ten or fifteen cattle cars, at least. I don't know whether they were, by the looks of it, I could not tell whether they were all from when we started, because we stopped so many times and heard them working. So we had no idea. But we found out later on, there was only one or two cattle cars from where I came from, the rest were put on wherever. I couldn't tell you which route we took because from where I lived to Theresienstadt it should not have been more that maybe a ten or twelve hour ride by train, and we were four days coming and going. So, anyhow they told us to line up and to stand there, and all of a sudden we see quite far in the back somebody coming with two canes and that was my father coming to say hello to us, and that was something. Every time I think about it, I haven't been thinking about it, I can't believe it because when they took him, I didn't think he would ever make it, but that's how my father was. My father was always down and somehow there he was back up again. So they took us into where we did finally find out as we got into the camp. Theresienstadt was an army camp at one time. Consisted of private lodgings where the officers lived at one time, and huge–I don't know how many barracks. It was a complete town, a small town, a village, a very, very small little village. It had private lodgings and also barracks, and the barracks is where the enlisted men were. I even remember the names of the streets. One was I think "L" was for if you lived in the private lodgings and the other were "Q", if I'm not mistaken. So, we were yet again separated; the men went one way, and the women went another way. They took our name and whatever we had on us, if we had anything on us, I don't remember, they took away from us. All I do remember is I had a tiny little *Magen David* ring which an uncle of mine from Israel brought me when I was about three years old and I had that on my little finger and I did not get rid of it until I got to Auschwitz; they cut it off my finger, but it was always with me. So we were separated. My father went somewheres where we didn't know where. My mother went...

MS: In the camp?

LC: Within the camp. My mother and I wounded up in one of the barracks, the *Magdalenen* barrack at first and then we move to the *Hanover* barracks. And my father, we found after, I don't know, quite a long time, that he was with the sick people, where they kept them. As a matter of fact, he lived there all the time.

MS: How long did you stay in Theresienstadt?

LC: I would roughly say almost a year and a half to two. And I worked.

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MS: What type of work did you do in the camp?

LC: I worked in a place called, a very, very huge workshop where anything what had to be repaired inside the camp would go there: pots, pans, anything concerning beds, where wood had to be cut, or anything of that sort. I met somebody once in line when we were standing for food and he said would I be interested to do anything of that sort, and I said I don't care what I do. So they took me and I was kind of like a receptionist. And I would take care of people bringing things. You were allowed to have your own little pots and pans. Some people did. Not to cook with, but to eat with, and that broke and they would fix it. And electrical things which were not ours, but from the camp itself. The camp was manned inside by Jews. The outer periphery were Czech soldiers, and after that, the Gestapo. So, actually, we did not have any access to the German soldiers, or hardly ever to, well yes to the Czech soldiers. Yes, because whenever we had to go anywheres or to move, or we went out, I used to go out on a work force digging ditches or something of that sort when they needed people and they would guard you out, but inside the camp the Czech soldiers came, and once you were out of camp, the Germans took over, and you marched.

MS: Well, within the camp itself, you say the control of the camp was in Jewish hands?

LC: To a certain degree. Of course, they could not make any major decisions, but there were a lot of decisions being made. We had a *Judenältester*, that's the only way I can explain it, who was Dr. Normenstein. [Jacob Edelstein] I forget already even his name, who was the oldest one of the Jews, and they had councils and they had everything. I mean, it was really run more or less like a community, like a government. We had shoe repair places and it was all being done by us inmates.

MS: The treatment, was it...

LC: Well, as far as I'm concerned, it was not too terribly bad, but if you talk to anybody who was past being a young child, they would not agree with that. Because I have met many people and they thought, how could I say that. Well, I was a young girl. We were hungry, but I knew kids who worked in the kitchen and I always could get something for my mother or for my father, which we could see my father any time we wanted to. Even so, we didn't live together. You moved more or less freely inside Theresienstadt. My mother, I got my mother a job working for the main doctor of the whole camp who was in charge of - if you had to go to the hospital you had to go to apply, or if you had any kind of a medical problem, and you wanted to go and see a doctor you would have to go into the office of the doctors, and they would advise you where to go and how to do it. I happened to know this doctor and my mother cleaned for him and his wife. They had a kind of...

MS: Was he a Jewish doctor?

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LC: Oh, yes. Only Jewish. This is strictly. We had nothing to do, I mean we had no real contact unless with our own people. And they had an orchestra there, and they had cleaning brigades, and they had anything, I mean it was like a little town run by Jews.

MS: There were schools for the children?

LC: No, there was no school. There were children who were in kind of youth hostels, or whatever you would call them, where they lived, but they probably tried to teach them something or other, but not of any schools that I know of.

MS: Did you know of any religious services that might have taken place at the time?

LC: No. We lived with no time whatsoever. We would never know whether it was Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday and what year, or what month, or anything. We had nothing to go by. Probably the government, the Jewish government, was all in one particular complex in one big barrack and that was all divided into all kinds of offices. They probably did, but as far as I'm concerned...

MS: There was no camp periodical, newspaper, or anything of that nature that was circulated?

LC: I think I really can't

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Tape one, side two:

LC: Like I said it is very, very possible that there was one, but not that I remember it. But like I said, I mean, I was a young girl and I really wasn't too concerned about any of these things. My main concern is that my belly was full. And my father was very sickly, and that I could go, and know this boy or this girl and this kitchen, if I could possibly manage to get over there that I could make arrangements to get an extra for my father or for my mother. Food was not too plentiful.

MS: Was your father able to receive any medical treatment?

LC: Oh, yes. He did have medical treatment, to a certain degree. And about, I said I was there about a year and a half or two, I don't remember exactly when it was, it was roughly about eight months prior to before I left Theresienstadt, there were always diseases going around and you always heard of dreadful things happening where young women were having babies, and they weren't allowed to have babies and they were killed - the mother and the baby. All kinds of things.

MS: Do you know if there's any truth to this?

LC: Of course, there is truth to it, of course. Every once in a while you would hear stories of guests out of Block so-and-so, this one ran away and they were shot and then they had a big meeting with all of us and they talked to us - this is the Germans, the Gestapo or the SS, or whoever.

MS: What was the meeting about?

LC: Well, telling us that we better don't do any monkey business, and to behave. They used to come in for inspection and into our barracks. We were in one barrack, I don't know how many hundreds of people. We had no beds. They were these bunk beds, but only slats, no mattresses. My mother and I and three others, we were five of us on one slat on the third floor. No mattresses whatsoever. Nothing. And we had whatever was ours. I don't know about washing . I guess we washed out where, in the barracks, there must have been a place where you got washed. I know that we got washed, but as far as washing clothing or so, I have no recollection of that. To tell you the truth, all of this time I have never thought about it. But I don't remember. I know my mother had a pair of shoes which were fixed. I distinctly remember where the shoemaker was, and people who were professional people tried to do for their own people. They didn't get paid for it, but at least they kept busy, that was very important. At one time we were so many people in the camp that we had for roughly four months day and night sleeping. That we slept at night and we had to get out of the barracks for other people to sleep during the day. I don't know if everybody was working, from the people I was with, I don't think so because I remember coming into the barracks and you were not allowed to be on your bunk, you always had to be on the floor sitting real close crunched together and you were allowed to go out when it was mealtime or when there was free time you were allowed to walk. But what I was trying to

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get at, about eight months prior to when I left, there were an awful lot of sick people around and they were saying - we did hear that they came and picked up more people. As more people came in, they had to make room for them unless they were dying off in Theresienstadt, they took them out of Theresienstadt and shipped them somewheres else. We never seen that because wherever the railroad was nobody could get there, but you knew all of a sudden you talked to so-and-so, and they would say, "Oh, they're not here anymore, they were shipped out already." But this was always kind of a hush-hush thing, you know, unless you were right on top of it, or you knew somebody, you never knew when they came and took you or took the others. But eight months before I left, I came down and I became very, very ill. For days I had violent headaches, and my mother finally got me into the hospital, and they said that I had jaundice and they treated me for jaundice. I did have it, I could see it. There was one doctor who seemed to be Jewish. Doctors all our own people. Most of the people in Theresienstadt were from Czechoslovakia. I had wanted to bring that out before, because like I said, only extraordinary privileged people went into Theresienstadt, people who bought themselves into, which apparently my parents done for us. And also not because we had the money for it, but mainly because my father was a soldier in the Army. But most of the people in Theresienstadt really came from Czechoslovakia. I would say within three months I stopped speaking German because all my friends were all kids who were from Czechoslovakia. You know, I was in that kind of crowd so you know how fast you can pick this up. I spoke their language. I spoke mine, too, but I mean I was very fluent in Czech and the job I was having required me to speak Czech, where I was putting in my time.

MS: Did you say you found a position for your mother in the camp?

LC: Yes, my mother was cleaning for this Doctor Radenwolser [phonetic], I still remember his name, and he had what they called an apartment. He had a room with a little kitchenette and his wife was a doctor, too.

MS: So they were permitted to live together then?

LC: Yes. They lived in these private quarters I was talking about. Rows and rows of houses and that's where the - not the soldiers, not the people who ran the camp - the officers lived, used to live. Professional people, probably the doctors. My father was in a house like that which was kind of like a nursing home. My father was in a room with about eight men. Probably as big as my living room. They had individual bunk beds. No extra anything, but they were kind of looked after.

MS: Were you able to spend any time with your father?

LC: With my father? In the evening we would be... I don't know, I guess there were certain times when we were allowed to go to see him and he would be able to go out and walk with us a little bit.

MS: Was there any encouragement from other sources, other Jewish sources, that you were going to live through this experience and that you would return...

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LC: Well, we always prayed and hoped for that. That was about all. You know, I don't think me, as a child, talked about that. I'm sure my mother did and my father did, but I think I was much too preoccupied just living a life for what it is at that particular moment. I have to come back to this, this illness of mine, because they were ready to send me home [to her barrack] but there was this one doctor who seemed to be really concerned about it because I constantly complained of extremely violent headaches, and I was always running a temperature. And they were ready to release me the next day, and he said, "There's very little we can do for you, you might as well just recuperate at home." The next morning when they came to wake me, trying to wake me up and I was totally paralyzed from my head to the tip of my toes. My left side was totally paralyzed and I remained in the hospital for almost four months with spinal meningitis. This is going to sound funny, but if it wasn't for my age, I would have died. I was the only young person who had that at the time. There was an awful lot of cases around, but apparently I was the only one with that particular case and at my age that they actually, this I was told, I never seen it, but they actually said that they got medicine for me from the Red Cross and it was flown in or brought in because the doctors who treated me they said they had absolutely nothing to go by to save you because there's nothing there, that's why everybody died, but they said that due to my age, they would talk to the German authority and I did get medication and they pulled me through. My doctors. I had a neurologist with the name of Professor Krol. He was from the Prague University Hospital or whatever and he was a very, very big name. Czechoslovakia. You know, as I was in the hospital and my mother talked to this one and that one and as we met some doctors, and there were countless of doctors working on my case, my mother said that he was supposed to have some reputation, this Dr. Krol, and he saved my life. And he got from the Germans medication for me and they saved me.

MS: It's amazing.

LC: It is, but one thing, whatever they gave me, I forget already, but I got so addicted to it that as they were weaning me off the drug I kept saying, "I have to have this injection." I don't know what they were giving me, and they said well if I don't stop this, they would give me placebos, something which is not a drug, water, or whatever, because I was actually addicted to it. I was almost four months or something on that order, in the hospital. I had to learn how to walk again, and when everything did come back to kind of normal, I was told once I left I will forever be more than miserable with headaches and I live with headaches. I have very, very bad headaches, but there's something I have done every so often for it, which I know can help me. But, it was a very, very rough time and I remember that very well. I thank this doctor now - today yet, you know.

MS: You never knew whether he survived the camp?

LC: No, there were so many people who said to me, well, who were you together with in the concentration camp in my circles? Being as I was a child only, we didn't know anybody's last name. You only knew was Ruth, or Billy and that was it. As time went on, they were talking about that they were going to really start housecleaning, and they have

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to get rid of the young ones out of Theresienstadt and they got to make room for older people to come in, so many people coming in, so I heard constantly that people were leaving, constantly, and you seen not this person anymore, you seen different people on the street.

MS: You were not aware of any selections that were taking place?

LC: Well, this was always done in a kind of a way. Like I said, I was working. This was at the edge of the camp, and I went out of the camp before eight, and by the time I came back, my mother would tell me, or somebody would tell me, "Guess what? They came and selected so-and-so and so-and-so", or in the middle of the night they came, and I was a child, a kid, I probably slept through it, but I know my time came and I was tapped on the shoulder and told to report the next day, and I was absolutely devastated because I thought all this time I was so lucky to be together with my mother. My mother had become ill already at the time - I don't know of what - of everything apparently, and I really felt terrible. And my father, I didn't even know how to tell my father that I would have to go tomorrow. Well, to make a long story short, I had to report the next day somewheres out of the camp, and we were lined up - all mostly young people, my age, younger, older, no, I think more older than younger, there weren't too many real young ones - not at the time when they selected me. And there were some at the time, I would say, elderly people; they were probably in their thirties. So, when they were calling us by name - this did not take long, it was a very short process of getting us together. We lined up and after there were I don't know how many of them lined up they started to call you by name and there would be trains, again with the cattle cars, and we knew already what the procedure was. We all kind of knew wherever we were going, this is going to be the end of it because that we knew, once you leave here - we weren't strong enough anymore - we felt we weren't strong enough to fight or to survive. There we knew we were pretty well taken care of. But, from all what we heard, you know rumors always circulate whether you're behind whatever, but somehow there's always some kind of a rumor, and we all felt kind of gloomy about it, not knowing where we were going and what was going to be the future.

MS: What was the reaction of your parents?

LC: They were absolutely besides themselves. But the worst of it is that when they called me the first time and I was supposed to go and see *Oberkommandant*, whatever his name is, from the Gestapo, you know and he would give you a piece of paper and, "Here you go in this car", and when I got there and my name was called and I reported in front of him and he looked at his list and he said, "Oh, you're not going, you're staying here." And I looked and I said, "That's a miracle". Well, so with that I was took back into camp, and that happened four times.

MS: That you were to leave?

LC: That I was to leave and when my name came up, that they did not take me.

MS: Do you have any idea why this happened?

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LC: Yes, due to my father. He had nothing to do with that anymore, but apparently on the list it must have had his status as what he was in the German Army. Apparently on there, because that's the only reason. We have talked to... It was at least a period of I would say four weeks when this happened when they called me, you know, a couple of times. My mother talked to people, my father, and they all said this is the only possible way. And I did not know of anybody else who was experiencing this, and I was absolutely shattered and as far as I remember saying it now, I mean I was only a young girl then. I think I was ready to hang myself or do anything because I could not bear the stress. It was the most horrible experience. This is like going in the gas chamber at the last minute and knowing you're going there, and the last minute saying, "No, not today, maybe tomorrow." So, when the next time came around, I stated very frank that I am of age and that I'm going on my own responsibility and with that I left. I could not bear going through this again, not only for me but for my parents. It was absolutely breaking them completely. And I left and that's the last time I seen my mother. I did see my father after the war again.

MS: We're going to jump ahead here. Your mother remained in Theresienstadt? Did she die there or was she transported out of there?

LC: She was put into the gas chamber, in the last three months, in Auschwitz.

MS: But your father did survive?

LC: My father did survive.

MS: When you left Theresienstadt, where did they send you?

LC: Well, that was a good question. I think we traveled. I don't know, I would say almost two weeks to no-man's land. I would say two weeks. We were here and there and everywhere and we never got anywheres. They would take us out and load us on a truck and halfway down the road they would say, if some other vehicle would come towards them, they would say, "No, no we can't use them; there's no room." So this went on for roughly about two weeks. Well, they probably did give us something to eat, not that I remember, but I'm sure we must have gotten something at one time or other. You know, I'm talking to you now - whether you believe this or not - these are things which I had never, never thought of until we started to talk. Oh, there are certain incidents, it comes up that I think about and talk about, but these little in-between, it never, never, this is '45... Well by the time everything was over in 1945 it never, never entered my mind, so I'm sure we must have gotten something to eat in between. We would not have been able to survive. My next stop, I wrote this down, because I'm always getting this mixed up. My next stop was Auschwitz. We finally did end up in Auschwitz. After going here and there and everywhere.

MS: Can you make a guess as to about when this was that you entered the camp? Was it summer, fall?

LC: It was cold. It must have been in the fall. This would be - I was interned in '41, so this is roughly kind of two years later - '43, and I would say it was in the fall of '43 because it was already cold, and whatever I had on, on the trip was still, if I'm not mistaken,

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like I said, I never thought about this anymore, it must have been still my own clothing. Yeah. I'm sure it must have been, or bought in camp or whatever. But we still had everything which at the time we could say it was ours. Once we passed that bridge or came to Auschwitz or whatever, that was not the case any longer. You never had anything on your own anymore. I don't know where they were trying to take us because we went like I said, I would almost say two weeks, and no matter where we went we were told, "No, we don't have room." They did take us half-way down the road or we sat for days and they opened up the thing I guess to let us go out and do our duty or whatever, and they would say, "We'll soon get you somewheres," but we always just went from here to there. We thought for sure already this was one way of killing us. Like I said, we never knew how many of us there were because there were always cattle cars but not necessarily were there any people in there. So, we really did not know and you never had any contact with anybody except in your car. So, when we arrived in Auschwitz... I don't know why, but we just knew this was Auschwitz. I don't know whether we ever seen any signs of it or whatever, but when we got out of the car, I know that I had a pair of glasses which I had in my hand, in the case or whatever, but when they told us to get out, I had the glasses and I guess I must have lost the case at the moment and I grabbed the glasses like this and I was going to put them on, because I couldn't carry them like this, and I can see myself doing this. I had the glasses near my face and something said, "No, don't put those glasses on," and I threw them away and when I stepped out of the cattle car, and I'm sure you have heard the name, Dr. Mengele was there to inspect as you arrived and looked at each and every one of us and there was a "left" and there was a "right". If I would have had those glasses on, I would have went left and left meant the gas chamber. But I did not have glasses on. Glasses meant handicapped or whatever, and I did not have glasses on and I was tall, blonde, nothing Jewish-looking about me, and I went right. Quite a few of us who were with me in the same wagon went left for one reason or other, either they were sickly-looking or whatever, but thank God I was not sickly-looking, and I went right.

MS: At that moment, though, you didn't know what it meant, did you?

LC: No. They had always said that in Auschwitz they gassed people, and you know you heard that rumor, but we really didn't know what the extent of it was, or where. I'm trying to think why I knew we were in Auschwitz. Whether I remember seeing the sign as you come in, there's a big sign, there's a big gate, but I don't remember that, I really don't. But as they took us inside, or wherever they took us, we asked, apparently we must have asked once we got inside the gate. They hauled us into this huge, it wasn't even a barrack, I don't know what it was, it was some kind of an open hut. It had no roof, and they herded us in there. We must have been thousands in there, and we were just like sardines standing, being scared to death, not knowing what was going to happen to us. And out of somewheres, there was a voice hollering, "Is there anybody from Breslau?" There was two or three other girls I was still together with from Breslau and we kind of said, "Yes, yes," and they said, "Well, later on if there is any possibility once you get processed here you

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got to go out to the gate. There's somebody at the gate." It wasn't that kind of a gate, it was like a fence, you know, outside the fence there are some people who want to find out if there was anybody from Breslau. Well, I don't know how long this process took, but I finally did get to that outside fence, and lo and behold there were two girls I grew up with - dressed absolutely to kill. I knew something had happened to them. They were supposed to die in Germany already, in Breslau. They were sentenced to death. They were two of my girlfriends. They ran away three times from Breslau trying to cross the border, and they were always caught. The last time they were brought back - they were always brought back - and they tried it again, and again, they ran away from their parents and whatever... had very good connections to get out but never made it. The last time when they were brought back, they said they were going to shoot them or hang them or whatever in Breslau, it was big written in the newspapers up. That's the last I ever knew of them and we all thought they were long dead and here these two girls are standing in front of me on the other side of the fence.

MS: But they were in?

LC: Yeah, yeah. This camp was a huge, huge complex. I could not believe when I seen them and they were both dressed, and I mean dressed, beautifully dressed, hair, boots. Well to make a long story short, one of them played in the orchestra, and the other one was being used as one of the girlfriends of one of the commanders.

MS: They were prostitutes?

LC: Well, only one. I would not have called her a prostitute, but that's what she was. I mean, not on her own doing so, but she was kept by him, by one of the commanders in the camp. The other one was playing in the orchestra. She played the cello. In Auschwitz, in the camp. I am sure you have heard about the camp orchestra. Which is not what it looked to be in the movie. Did you see it? Well, I thought it was rather good, but I mean it's not exactly the way it was. But she played in that, and she played when they used to take them to the gas chamber, and when people ran away, and they were electrocuted on the fences, when they were throwing them against it, and they had to play. But she was selected for that. Both extremely good-looking girls. Almost Spanish-looking. Very, very good-looking girls. And they wanted to help me. Meaning, they were going to try and get me some kind of a job and they wanted me to... They were going to try to get my name and bring it to this one or that one that I would somehow be better off. I said, "Forget it."

MS: You immediately surmised the situation?

LC: Not to that extent, no, no, no. But they said they were going to help me and they could get me out and I can live better. I said, "Whatever it is, this is one place I don't think I want any part of it," and I seen them many times, I was there roughly about three and a half months in Auschwitz, and they always came and brought me something to eat, but I always said, "I don't want no part of it." Then, later on, when I found out what this camp was all about.

MS: You really didn't know it was a death camp?

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LC: I don't think immediately, no. I think about an hour and a half or two hours later we started to smell all this delicious-smelling meat, you know, and we were saying, "What are they making here?" Then, after it was delicious, it started to get very, very potent and nauseating. It starts out like smoking, you know like you're smoking - well, that's what it is. And then we seen the chimneys and you know. I traveled from this place to this place within the camp. I never did get a number. Auschwitz was, at the time, at the overflow and they were exterminating them faster then they could process them.

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Tape two, side one:

LC: I think I just mentioned to you that I never did get a number, because Auschwitz was almost an overflow. There were so many thousands of people coming in, and they were getting rid of them faster than they could possible process them, and most of them who did come in were already–you know this was already 1943 and this was going on already for quite a few years, this concentration camp thing–and people were getting older and weaker and sicker. What I was trying to say is, three times a day in every camp you were ever in, except in Theresienstadt, they counted us or twice a day, I don't remember. You had to stand in front of your barracks and then they counted the whole entire camp, which could sometimes take three hours and sometimes twenty-four hours. If the count wasn't right, then they just counted again and everybody had to stand in front of their barrack, the barrack you were assigned to. But since I did not have a number yet, they moved us constantly from one place - I was in Auschwitz and I was in Birkenau which was the other side of Theresienstadt [Auschwitz] but it was altogether same kind of... You didn't travel to Birkenwald [Birkenau]. You know, if you were coming in, you could have come into Birkenau and then go to Auschwitz. It was like Camden and Philadelphia. When I said I was in eight camps, I meant Birkenau and Auschwitz as being two separate camps, but it was really on one complex kind of thing.

MS: How is that spelled?

LC: B-I-R-K-E-N-W-A-L-D. [she means Birkenau] That was the working side of it. This is where people were sent out from there to work. Anywheres in the area they took them, and this was mainly, as far as I know... And the area I was in was strictly working camp, and they took us to do this and to help peel potatoes here, or to clean out the latrines over there, but whatever the kind of work I was doing while I was there was strictly in Birkenau. Like I said I did not have one barrack where I stayed the whole time I was there. We kind of kept moving around. I don't know what the purpose of it was. The main purpose of it was, after they got done counting us every time, there were all these new people where I was included with and we were supposed to get the number, and they made us stay, sometimes instead of going to work, they made us stay for hours at a time to get the number and then when they got to, I don't know where, they would say, "Not for today anymore." This went on the whole time I was there - I never did get a number. I would say about three and a half months.

MS: What happened after your experience in Auschwitz and Birkenwald? [Birkenau]

LC: Well, after about three and a half months, since I never did get the number, they were trying to bring a whole group together again to move them out, and I said, "Well, even if I have to volunteer for something like that." I heard they were getting to the area where we were staying, apparently they were kind of the newcomers they were getting rid of. I said, well even if we have to volunteer, but this is one place I do not want to stay

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because all you did was see and hear nothing but gas chamber, gas chambers and ovens, brutal this and brutal that, when they counted us and we had to stand there to be counted. You were always... the camp was like in a, not in a circle, in a square, so whenever you stood, they could almost oversee the whole camp. It went this way, this way and this way. There were always openings. So when they were counting us they marched, the Germans who were counting us, Dr. Mengele and all these commanders and whatever - they would go from one barrack to the other and count everybody, so you could always see all over. Why am I saying this now? Why am I talking about this, overseeing things? Oh, but, then I had been in so many areas in the camp and I knew where the ovens were, even though I wasn't there that long. But the way we were moved around, that we were on this side, and on the left side, in the back and in the front. I don't know what the purpose of it was, but I think the most important thing is there were so many places where they would do this, the tattooing and I think they were always trying to bring us to a place closest to that we would finally get our number. Like I said, I never did get it, but believe me I got it in here - I didn't have to have it on my arm. But anyhow, somehow I was selected to leave and that was the biggest relief I could possibly have. By then already I was very worn. I don't think I felt like a young girl anymore.

MS: During this time you had no information as to what happened to your parents? You had no idea?

LC: Nothing, nothing, no, nothing. Every once in a while when you would meet people who were just coming in -

MS: Would you ask?

LC: You would ask, and I met a lot of people I kind of knew by looking at, I don't know whether I knew them from Theresienstadt or whether they were people I seen in Breslau on the street, but you were not free to talk just like you wanted to. If you did, you always asked. Not only that, I met somebody from so-and-so town and I said, "Oh, my cousin was there, do you know her?" "Oh, yeah, I went to school with her. But they didn't go with our transfer, they went with a different one." It would have been something very unusual if you would have... Like I said, I did meet these two girls and I left them, and believe it or not, I'm not getting to this, but we were liberated together.

MS: That's interesting. Where did you go? Where were you "selected" to go?

LC: We were picked up again and we said, "Thank God," when we left there. I did see an awful lot of horrible things, where they took little children and threw them in the air and shot right after them - terrible, terrible. Especially when we were standing for - they called this counting - it's called the *Appell*. It means counting. So many people could not stand up and they would fall and they would either get trampled from them, or you want to see something nice, they would take knives and start cutting people up. Anyhow, that's what they done. Sometimes we thought could they possibly have a heart. I don't think they did. But it was done in such a way that you couldn't believe that they were humans, but they were. They had absolutely no respect for anything or whatever. To

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mention this, of course, which I think is very important - when you arrived in Auschwitz, my little episode with my ring. I did wear a solid gold little *Magen David* which I got when I was three years old from an uncle of mine in Israel, and I had that on. When they selected us, when I was told to go to the right, somehow somebody seen this and we had to stand and hold our hands out. They looked here and they looked there and they looked us all over and they seen that and they said, "Take it off." I said, "I can't take it off, it doesn't come off my finger anymore." And they came and they cut that off. While they were doing it, they hurt me very badly. I have on this hand or the other hand, I forget already, I have a very bad knife mark. After that, of course, the most important thing, we were shaved. Shaved on the top and shaved on the bottom and when they shaved you on the bottom they had a lot of times a lot of fun with you, you know. And then we were stripped of everything we had on - all our clothing - and we were handed a dress and some shoes. I had a black dress which must have fit a 300 pound woman and it went down to my ankles. Nothing underneath. Just a black dress, nothing underneath. I had a pair of boots which I never forget. They were two left shoes, and they were like high boots. That's what I wore. My dress, I used little by little as toilet paper - the bottom of it - and by the time I reached the next camp, which, by the way, was Buchenwald, that's where we went, I had only about three fourths of a dress left. We were sitting, we were waiting to go, we were told already we were going, I don't know when or whatever, we were told we were going to Buchenwald, which didn't mean anything, because they can tell you anything and it doesn't mean that was the truth. When we got outside of Buchenwald, we were already sitting there waiting to be unloaded and all of a sudden we had a - this last trip from Auschwitz on up we were in open wagons, open cars - we were not in a closed car. I don't know how long we traveled, I don't remember that. But I know that it was horrible because when you're riding, I don't know whether it was cold or it was warm, or whatever. But it was awful, awful. We were already told that we were in Buchenwald and we were sitting outside the railroad station. Or outside something. There were a lot of rails there, and there was a bomb attack. An air raid. And here we were. We couldn't have been any more exposed than we were. This is one episode I have mentioned many times, so this is very vividly in my mind. We were roughly about twenty of us in this open wagon, and it happened to be, I don't know why, but the group we were selected from in Theresienstadt [Auschwitz] we were all youngsters my age, 17, 18 years old. I was together with a girl I had already left Breslau with. She was in Auschwitz. She also went with her parents. She was also wanting to become a nurse, and we were quite close together. We were on this trip again, and when you heard the sirens going on and we seen all these planes coming, we said, "Well I guess this is going to be it for sure." We were laying one on top of the other because that's how we were laying, or next to each other, or we were sitting but we did lay down because we were so scared when we seen those airplanes. This was our first experience actually to do anything with war. We knew there was a war, but I don't know anything about a war, because that was a different part of the world. We lived in a very different kind of a world.

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We were laying on top of one another and I was like unfortunately the top layer. I know there were like two girls under me, and by the time this was over, there were only about 13 of us left. One girl underneath me, I don't know how that ever happened, she was dead and I was alive. But one thing I must say, in my whole life, I'm still a religious person, even though I have lost quite a bit of faith, but that doesn't change anything on not being religious. I always thought that I was a good Jew. But in all my life, I have never prayed the *Shema* as I done that half an hour when that attack was going on. After the war I happened to run into this girl's brother, and he was looking for anybody from his family, and also looking for her. I had to tell him. I told him I was there when she died. He said, "How extraordinary that you happened to be there." So I said that we were together, this whole time, from here and there. I said, "Believe it or not I was laying on top of her."

MS: Was it asphyxiation, you think?

LC: No, no. I don't know. We had quite a few of them who were hit from the bombs. But what she died of, I don't know. Probably fear, or whatever. We had to haul them all out of the wagon and bury them right there and then. Horrible things were happening there. An awful lot of people got killed by the bombs. I don't know whether she was hit by it, not that I remember visually seeing anything. I know when we started to move around, and I think there were 13 of us which were left something on that order. It was absolutely horrible, just horrible. After we got rid of everybody who was dead and they cleaned up outside where we were, then they came for us and took us into Buchenwald. I'm going real fast over Buchenwald and Mauthausen which was my next stop, because we got there and in Buchenwald was the first time that we had heard anything about the war, or how things were going. I mean war was something, if you would have said that in Japanese to me that would have meant the same as the world war meant to me, because we did not know anything about it. We knew there was a war going on, but we never had any contact of ever hearing anything about it, or maybe if we did hear anything about it, we were probably not at all interested because that was not our concern. We were only concerned with our own lives and what happened to everybody else. Our own people. But once we got into Buchenwald, they put us in what they call a... This was kind of a barracks, only for people who were not going to stay there, or at least as it looked in the beginning. We were only there strictly to wait out where they were going to put us, whether they were going to put us inside the regular camp or whether we were going to go on to another camp and I remained there approximately maybe a week or ten days, that's all.

MS: You did not work there?

LC: No, I did not do anything, and I got very little contact with anybody else because this part of the camp was a huge part, and there were so many of us waiting to go I don't know where. A lot of them had thought that they were going to Auschwitz, the people we were together with. And I said, "I don't think. We just came from there. I don't think they would ever send us back." But apparently from all indications, they cleaned that area up quite fast and apparently a lot of them did go to Auschwitz, who came probably

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from other camps or were just there, I don't know where they came from. You know, you always talked to everybody. This one came from here, and this one came from there. The only ones you had contact with was your own kind - Jewish people. I did want to mention, coming back to this. In Auschwitz, there were so many, also like in the other camps - I shouldn't say that - just Auschwitz, there were so many sections who were not only for Jews, that is known, but I just wanted to bring this up.

MS: But you had no contact with other inmates that were not Jewish?

LC: No, but we seen them. Hitler had a certain way of classifying them. I think purple were the homos, we wore yellow, which were the Jews. Purple - I think they were homos. Nuns had another color. Political prisoners I think were red. So when you seen them on the march or standing when we were being counted, as far as you could see, you could always see the colors. So, it wasn't all Jewish . I mean we were in an area where it happened to be there were a lot of Jewish, but they were not just Jews in that particular in camp or wherever. Some of them were completely kind of segregated. Where I was in Auschwitz or Buchenwald, there were only women. I never seen any men. In Theresienstadt, we were together, but all the other camps I was never with any men. Never. We did see them, but we had no contact. They would be on the other side of the fence.

MS: So then you stayed only a short time?

LC: A very short time in Buchenwald. I know there was talk about that the ones they were going to keep here they were going to go and have them working somewheres, but nothing ever materialized. I know that I was only there a very short time, and before I knew it we were loaded up again and we went to, this is so ridiculous, they took us from - if you know the map of Germany - they took us from here to there, and from there to here and from here to there. It didn't make any sense, that you would think they would to try to get you closer to where they know they have room for you, or whatever. Whatever they done, it just didn't make any sense at all. From Buchenwald I went to Mauthausen and there it was the same story. There was no... apparently they were not prepared for us. We were also... this is always like in the beginning of a camp, there's one big section where the newcomers are coming in. One thing I did not mention before, like you said, this jumping back and forth, but it just comes to you. You were always kind of interrogated. Who you were, what you were, where had you been and what can you do, and that kind of thing. I imagine by then everybody had their own pattern already. Not to give anything away or not to say anything, what could possibly... because you didn't know whether they had contact with your parents or whatever you say - intimidating, anything. You always had to be... by then already you were so trained not to say anything, only what they actually have to know; how old you are and that's about the extent of it. Like the prisoners of war, you know, because you never knew what they were going to use it for against or whatever, whatever reason. So, like I said, this was about the same story in Mauthausen, this camp, the last one I got to. I don't know, I was there a very, very short time, very short time. They had absolutely no use for us either. But I know that Mauthausen and Buchenwald at the

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time were mostly men. I think that's one of the reasons probably at that particular time. I know I have met many, many people in my years after the camp where I met people who were there, women. But at that particular time, I would say this was from '43 to '44 this was all taking place. After that we were taken away again from Mauthausen and then we said, "We didn't know where they could possibly take us." By then already, I think I brought that up before, we had heard of war. That they're getting close to this side of Germany and the Americans are supposed to... I don't know where, and the British are over here and the Russians are entering the picture. So we were aware of it, and later on we realized why we were so much moved, because wherever they were bringing us they were trying to empty this out because the Allies were coming closer. That was... at the time we didn't know it, but that's what it amounted to.

MS: They were emptying the camps?

LC: Pushing it further into, wherever they were not coming in yet.

MS: If there is anything that has come to mind, give yourself a couple of key words and when you see it, it will remind you of what you want to say.

LC: We're leaving Mauthausen. God only knows where they're taking us now, because at that point I think we were all getting extremely weary of always the fear. Where could they possibly take us again? What could they possibly do to us? It couldn't be already the end. So what's going to happen to us. Well, we're going back to the railroad. They take us in great big trucks. We're going back outside the railroad station, and they're loading us in these open wagons, these cattle cars again, and I don't know, twenty or thirty people all together. In the meantime, there were a lot of people who we picked up, not only the ones I came together with from Buchenwald to Mauthausen, there were more people like us. So we were all thrown together again with new people and different people and there were quite a few elderly people with us on this trip, and the fear was just getting to us. I think not because our fear alone, but the fear of the older people. What can happen to us? What can they do with us? Didn't we have enough of it? And that was a constant conversation piece. Well, by the time they finally got us all loaded up, here we were off and I know that it was cold when we moved, and we were in these open wagons. Now, we traveled. If you have a map, which we don't have, if you traveled from Mauthausen all the way down to where we're heading, which we didn't know where we're heading, it is almost the most ridiculous thing because we're going in a totally different direction. We're traveling all through Germany and after about, I don't know how many days, we hardly got anything to eat and the guards, whenever we stopped, were extremely, extremely bad. Any little thing when they looked inside our cattle cars and it wasn't just so, they start to beat us up and they were really bad. For one reason or another we had a feeling that they're only going to take us so much and no more and then they're just going to get rid of us, because they were really extremely bad guys. I don't know what happened. After three or four days of traveling, we weren't always traveling. We'd go like I don't know a couple of hours and they'd stop, and they'd bring us what is supposed to be food and the food consisted of some

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kind of water-soup mixture. It was more water than soup and had a couple of potato skins inside, maybe a smell or a sight of what was once a carrot, or something like that. And always just one slice of bread, like the size of our white bread. So that always held off... it took quite a long time. This was brought to us on our route.

MS: Was this once a day or don't you recall?

LC: I don't know. I think maybe they gave us some water in between. We always had water in our car [open wagon]. The most important thing we had is the bucket which was used for all our needs. But, I would say we were fed once a day. But we stopped an awful lot, and wherever we stopped we could never see where, what, or anything, because these wagons are very high, and when we stopped, we were not allowed to look over. You know these cattle cars, when you stand up you probably... It probably goes just about to here, so when you're trying to stand on your toes you would be able to look over but we had no way of doing that because they just wouldn't let us, because there was always a guy outside with a machine gun, or whatever. A lot of times it did happen that you heard shots and you didn't know what happened, so probably somebody was either trying to jump out or whatever, or looking over. But anyhow, after a few days of being on the road... I'm not saying that we were always traveling, but moving from here to there and then stopping again, and then maybe for a couple of hours we just sat there. I don't know what happened. Maybe because it was getting very cold, but they brought a few closed wagons in and - I don't know how many, but I know that it was alongside of us. I can see this like it was yesterday: when we stopped, whenever we were stopping there were maybe six, seven or eight cars, closed cars, and we didn't know they had anything to do with us, but all of a sudden they opened our wagon, rather the cattle car, and they said for us to get out and we thought that was the end of us. Because they lined us up outside and I thought they were going to come now and this was it. They were all standing with their guns and we just thought, "Let's get it over with, they're going to shoot us now." But they didn't. I don't know how many of us they took out but they did take us out and they transferred so many of us into the closed cars. Of course, there was a big sigh of relief going through all of us, maybe saying well, "God was good to us; they spared us from this," but others said, "Why didn't they do it already and get it over with?"

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Tape two, side two:

LC: I think I'm probably repeating myself. We were saying, "I wonder where they're going to take us now that we're in closed cars, whether they're taking us where it's extremely cold or whatever the meaning of it is", but it had some kind of a significance, because we said, "Why did they do it?" All of a sudden they didn't have a change of heart, because these guys who were patrolling us were some of the most miserable ones I've ever come across, and they were so brutal and every time they came near you they started to go with their gun towards you, not to shoot you but to hit you or to kick you or whatever. So, there we were off again, but the only way we ever had any vision of any kind was better now than before because there were slots. There was always one tiny little crack in the wood where you could try to see. We were always hoping that we would come to some kind of a sign. Where are we? I don't know how many days we were gone, but I know that trip was one of the longest I've ever experienced. I would say we were at least a week or whatever on the way. And lo and behold, we stopped, and everybody is trying to... Maybe we had two little peepholes in our wagon, but everybody was trying to look out of it and I finally got to look out and what I seen was the most unbelievable experience. I was in the middle of the big railroad station in Breslau where I came from, and I seen the sign hanging above "Breslau" and I could almost identify the bench, as much as I had vision out of that one tiny little bit of a hole.

MS: Were you the only one who recognized the area?

LC: No, well, I don't know. Maybe others did, but it probably didn't mean anything to them because there wasn't anybody with me who happened to be from there. But can you imagine being back in your own home ground?

MS: What did you think of at the moment?

LC: All I could... Well there was another girl with me who was also from there, but she got so panicky and I didn't. I just became the other way. I was very elated and she was afraid that I was going to try to do something, such as trying to get out, which would have been so totally ridiculous, because we were surrounded by hundreds of SS and the wagons were locked. There were I don't know how many locks on the outside and there was no way, unless when they opened the door, and they certainly weren't going to open it in the middle of the railroad station. I don't know whatever made them stop. Maybe on the track we were... There was probably something in front of us where we couldn't move, and they probably didn't realize it until we got very close that they didn't move us on another track. But it was just... I could not grasp it. This girl said to me, "Please." I said, "Look what am I going to try? We can't do anything. We don't have any hair. We look like God knows what. What could we possibly try?" That's what she was afraid of. I was just so elated I said, "Maybe this is a good omen. Maybe this means..." I don't know what I thought it was. Well, anyhow, we weren't on there too long and we were off. But now I knew the area where we were.

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MS: Did you have a sense of direction?

LC: Yes. Breslau is Silesia, which is very, very close. From Breslau to the Polish border it's about three hours by train. So I knew what area we were and then I said again, "It's very odd that they did put us in these closed wagons and I'm wondering where they're taking us," and I said, "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they took us to Russia," because we were in these closed wagons so we shouldn't freeze, so when we get there maybe they wanted to have the fun there. But I didn't know. I mean, why Russia? Russia had nothing to do with the Germans but this was my thought. Well anyhow, we were off again and I don't think we were riding more than a couple of hours and that was it. We stopped. We didn't know where we were, but I said, "Whatever it is, we were very, very close to my home." They unloaded us and we stood and we stood and we stood and by the time they unloaded all the dead...

MS: People had died in the wagons?

LC: Oh, sure, sure. Sometimes they did unload them on the way, sometimes they didn't. It all depends how they felt. All I know is it was very cold. It was cold and it was very cold. When we were standing there, we just couldn't figure out. I kept saying, "I know this area, we can't be more than maybe two or three hours away from home. Where are we?" Well, anyhow, they came with these great big trucks, and they hauled us off. Out of, I would say, I don't know how many hundreds of people we were in that whole train, but they only took maybe four, five or six wagons out of the people who stood there and hauled us away. The others were left standing there.

MS: Did they take any particular - young as opposed to old?

LC: I don't know. They went through the lines and they looked at you and some of them were picked, some of them weren't picked, sometimes you just stood there. You had no way of reasoning or trying to see what are they thinking of, what is the reason. But as it turned out, when we were leaving in the trucks, that, just by me looking around, they were most young people that were being taken. We went for about another half an hour or so and we landed in a very small area, and it was a, what do they call them where they keep the hay, it was like a barn but kind of like a barrack. But it was a combination of barrack and barn, and there was only really one great big building and by the looks of how many we were there, I would say we were maybe 250, maybe 300, maybe 400, but that's about the most we were, and we all said, "What is this place?" And there were no other building right near close by, and all it was, it was all fenced in, but the whole area was not particularly very big. It turned out to be... It was a work camp.

MS: Did you know whether you were in Germany or Poland?

LC: Oh, yes. We were in Germany and the name of the camp was Kurzbach. It had a big name, "Welcome" - not welcome, but it said something in German. And the name of the camp was on there, "Kurzbach". Later on I tried to figure out. We were not more than maybe forty or fifty miles away from my hometown. By just looking around I had a feeling that, I think I'll be able to get out of here.

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MS: At that point you felt that there was a possibility of escape?

LC: For me, yeah, and because I was so close to home. Of course, I never said anything to anybody and this other girl was always trying to stay close to me because she was so afraid that, she wasn't the type, but I guess I must have been more of adventurous, that she thought I would try anything. But it turned out it wouldn't have done us any good because we were so weak and so worn, and so tired, and we looked... We had no hair and with this long black dress of mine and the two left shoes, where would I have gotten? But once we were settled we were all in this one building. It was like a, originally a barn, and they kind of ripped everything inside out and they put beds in. Beds. [sarcasm] The slats. Like four on one and four here. So we were all in this one building. But in back of the building we found out that there were a few small buildings where our guards were and as we were moved around on this ground we seen that we were very, very close to houses, little farms.

MS: You say everybody was in one building? Did they separate men from women?

LC: No, no, never, never any men. I was never together, nowheres, nowheres. I must say that no matter where I was, I never, never never seen any men until I got into the next camp. There I met a man on the fence, but no, I never seen any men. The only men we ever seen were our guards. Oh, no, none at all. No, they were all women. Little, big, small, and they were all Jews. Nobody else. I have never traveled with any other but Jews. So as we moved around we did see which was to us very important - why are we so close to civilization? It wasn't, like I said, if we were maybe 250, maybe we were 400, but I don't think we were more than that. And we could see like half a mile down the road. I seen a little farm house and on the other side. So, anyhow, they settled us in and the next morning after we were all interrogated, name, and the whole thing again, and over and over, we were divided into work groups. And we were woken up very, very early and they gave us what they called we're going to get "three square meals a day", we were told. We were told we're here to work. This is a work camp, and anybody who is weak cannot stay, and anybody who feels that they're sick, they might just as well raise their hand because they're not staying here. So we were all, of course, terrified and we were all very weak and frightened and whatever, but it didn't matter. But when they said we were going to get three square meals because we're working, we figured well maybe this is our way of surviving this all. In the morning, they woke us up and brought us what was supposed to be a tea or a coffee and like a half a slice of bread and off we went. We were divided into work groups. We left the area and we marched and we marched and we marched and we marched. One day, or rather a couple of weeks, we worked in an area where we carried trees, from one side, let's say we were on City Hall, we carried trees from City Hall to roughly about how far north? I don't know, like 35 minutes a march. And the trees were all there. Great big trees and way, way in the background we heard them cutting the trees. And they were political prisoners; they were men. But we never got close to them but we

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could see them and they were sawing down this whole area. It was a wooded area and they were cutting them down and they made us, now listen to this, they made us... we were... we seen those men bringing them to a point where we were not there but we seen them, and there were about six or seven guys carrying a tree, but we were the stinking, rotten Jews and we were three women assigned to one tree. You should see my shoulders.

MS: Oh, my God.

LC: I always have sore shoulders. We were told that when we picked them up, if anything happens to us, just to keep on going because if we don't, we get shot, too. If somebody collapsed under it, in the middle or whatever, or the... just not to stop, because this is a work camp and they need us and they need strong women and if anybody drops, that's it. So I done this, and when we were finished the next day, you're not gonna believe this, we went back to the area where we took the trees and carried them back to where we started from.

MS: What was the point?

LC: To wear us down, to kill us one way or the other. It would have been much easier just to shoot us, and after about a couple of weeks of that they decided, well, this isn't going to work because they really have to put us to work, this doesn't make any sense, and then they moved us to another area. For a while we done exactly the same thing - carrying from one side to the other. In the meantime, of course, we have lost I would say a third, because people just totally collapsed. And I mean, they were trees. They weren't little trees, they were big, strong, heavy trees. And there were three girls who helped you put it on and when you got to the other side, you helped the others put it on and they carried it back. So this is how they made us work. And lunchtime, wherever the middle was, we stopped and they came with food, where the first time we thought, well, we're really going to get some food. It was the same soup with water and maybe a potato peel and maybe the side of a carrot, or whatever, and that was our meal, and the same piece of bread. The same piece of bread we didn't get until at night, till we got home. At night we got, every other day we got at night a half slice of bread, because we got a half in the morning. And every other day we got something on top of the bread, either a spoonful of cottage cheese... We had to go and pick that up. The bread was handed to us, but that extra whatever we got, we had to go to a window and we got like a, we had to hold our bread out to give it to us, and it was either a spoonful of cottage cheese or a slice of some kind of bologna or whatever, and one day it was cottage cheese, every other day, and one day it was a bologna and one day it was some kind of a jelly. So that was three times a week that was our nourishment. And the work we done. So, by the time we got back, we just totally collapsed. They never gave us any other clothes, nothing, nothing. There were quite a few women who took care of us, SS women, in the immediate camp, but the ones who took us out, they were always men. But inside the camp they were, [women], and they would give us lectures at night that they picked up so many dead. And every once in a while they said that they were sorry that they had to shoot the next one because that one tried to pick this one up. It was horrible,

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it was just horrible. And my thought of ever leaving there was just so totally nonsense of me even thinking about it, but I just couldn't get it out of my mind. I was so close to home, and I knew people who could help me once I would get there. But how was I going to carry myself? I was just a nothing. It was a very, very, very, very, very tough camp, very tough camp.

MS: Let me just straighten out my own thinking. In other words, you would carry trees to a certain point and you would drop them, and the next day you would go to where you left the trees, and bring them back to the starting point.

LC: And the next day we would do the same thing.

MS: How many trees could you physically carry in one day?

LC: Well, we walked, like I said, a distance of roughly about thirty minutes, but we only walked like from here to 6 houses down and had to put it down. Then they made us pick it up. They didn't know what to do with us. That's what it was. We could see these men in the distance, we always seen them and heard them, you know, these sawers, that they were actually looking for work for us. The ones who were in charge of us, I must bring that in, not only the SS but also it was called an organization T-O-D-D[4] - I think that is how it was spelled. It was called the organization TODT, which was known all through Germany as a work force. I think they had something to do with the SS, you know, with Hitler's elite and they wore special uniforms, and they had this special insignia on their clothes. It was something, I can't exactly remember what it was but it was typified of the organization TODT, which anybody who lived in Germany knew about it. After doing this for awhile, then they took us to dig ditches, and that was the real McCoy. That was...

MS: In that area?

LC: From the camp. Sometimes we walked five hours and maybe worked there only an hour and then we had to walk back again, but it was always within that area. Many, many days they took us by truck, and we rode for two or three hours but it was always in this kind of particular area. I could never tell you... We used to go through little towns, but I could never tell you exactly how far we were. Whether we were into Germany further or whether we were going towards the Polish border, I could not tell. Because these little names didn't mean anything at the time. They were like - not towns, they were villages. Listen, I was born and raised there and I lived there many, many years and I never heard of a place Kurzbach before. Kurzbach actually was a working camp.

MS: Was it also the name of the area that you were in, do you think? Do you think they took the name from the area, or you don't know?

LC: I have a letter here stating that I am one of the few survivors of that particular camp.

MS: How long did you stay at Kurzbach?

LC: I'm trying to think. We were liberated after '45. I was roughly about four months in Bergen-Belsen, so that brings it to the end of the year, '44, and we're going from

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[4]Organization TODT specialized in construction and used prisoners for forced labor.

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there on our death march to Gross-Rosen, so this must have been... I don't know why it was so cold, I'm just trying to think. But in Germany by the end of August/September it can get very cold. This must have been, kind of around September '44. Not '43. It must have been September '44 because from there we're going to... I was only about four or five months in Bergen-Belsen. I was liberated in '45. Anyhow, I don't know how long we were there, but I know that it must have been about four months, so that would bring you, like I said, to September. I don't know why it was so cold on the traveling, come to think of it. Well, I guess if you are riding, day in and day out in an open car and no clothing, and no nourishment, you know. But I distinctly remember because we had a feeling the reason they moved us from these open wagons because it was so cold, so I guess mainly at night it was so cold, but I do remember. It's funny now that I'm thinking of it. It couldn't have been that cold because it would have been kind of in the summer, but probably at night it must have been very cold. Or whatever the reason, I know that we were cold.

MS: Do you remember any details about leaving Kurzbach?

LC: Well, I stayed there and we worked very, very hard. The time probably, now that I'm thinking of it, it wasn't that terribly long, but it was a very, very hard time, a very hard time because there we really had to work. And there were many, many, many days where we didn't come home until late in the evening, and they would wake us up about 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning and sometimes we didn't almost collapse into our so-called barracks by ten o'clock at night. It was really very, very hard, and so many of them didn't make it, so many of them. We were digging ditches up to here, up to our, way above our knee in water. And there we seen, I said that before, this organization TODT who was in charge of it, and they were also in charge of us when we were carrying the trees. So, whether they had at the time a different purpose, that we were supposed to take them somewheres and they were stopped, whether it had something to do with the war getting close, or whatever, we don't know. But since they said, "This is a working camp," I could not imagine that they would have had us just doing this back and forth just for the sake of keeping us busy. They could have had something else for us to do. I don't know. I'm just logically trying to think about it now. Anyhow, we left Kurzbach very, very, very suddenly and, it seemed almost like something happened in Germany, because it was like one, two, three, come on, we're going, we're going, one-two-three. We came back from work and where we were supposed to get our so-called evening meal, and they rushed us and they said we can't go into the barracks because we're leaving. There were so many people who just laid down, and they never got up because they said, "Where could we possibly go now. We worked so hard." We left them there, there were a lot of them were still alive, but nothing was done about it.

MS: They were emptying out the entire camp?

LC: The entire camp, but from then to when we left, we dwindled down to I would say less than half. There were a very small portion who had died right there and then, carrying trees or dysentery or sickness or whatever. We did have a place where we

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could report to a doctor, and the doctor was very, very close from where our camp was and there were quite a few of them who went. And the funny thing is they didn't keep them - not like in Auschwitz. It you reported, or anywheres else, if you reported sick, you knew that beforehand, forget it, don't report sick, because this is the end of you. They give you something and that's it. But the people felt...

MS: Excuse me, you said they give you something and that's it?

LC: A needle.

MS: In other words, they killed you?

LC: Oh yeah, or they said they are going to do some kind of testing on you and maybe they worked on you for a couple of days, but eventually that was the end of it, or they just let you die there. You never heard of anybody who ever got out of there, so you can't say exactly what they done with you. But from people who have worked in infirmaries - between my whole travel you got a little bit of here and a little bit of there - we always knew. I don't know if anybody ever told us, "Don't ever report sick, because this is the end of it." Because no matter who reported sick, we never seen them again, whether it was in one camp or the other. But there they did report sick, and whatever they done to them they always came back to the barracks and they would stay a couple of days inside the barracks until they were so-called better.

MS: They would take them off the work force for a few days?

LC: Yes, I don't know what they gave them or what was the matter with them, because I'll tell you the truth, by the time we got back in from working, we were so drained that we couldn't talk or couldn't do anything. We just collapsed. But, when they took us, we knew there was something happening, because it was too, too fast of a thing to pick us just up and just out we go. We were to line up outside, and they told us we don't have to stand the way we were standing when we went to work. You know, any which way we wanted to line up, in five or in four. So, we said, "Then we're not going to work." We didn't know, they don't tell you anything, you know. The commander of that camp, unfortunately... They had asked me to come to Germany to testify in this particular case but I never knew any names, or if I did know them, I don't know any name, none whatsoever. The only one I remember is Ilsa Koch and Dr. Mengele because they were so well known, but others... My immediate guy who took care when we were marching - we mostly had the same SS - I'm sure he said, "I'm *Herr* so-and-so". If you wanted to say, something you were allowed to talk to them.

MS: I was going to ask you if you ever had any conversations with the guards?

LC: I know I never did because I always said, "What am I going to be looking for?" The less I tried to do, the better it is. I just stayed within what I am supposed to do and I don't do any less and I don't... instinct, you know. Sometimes they spoke to one and all they got was a beating for it, or a kick in the whatever, you know, so I always said, unless there was really something... I know many a time you felt like reporting sick, but I never did because I just felt that I made it that long so I'm going to try. Somehow, there

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must be and, what do they say,- a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, so I figured, how long can this go on? Something must happen. Either the Allies are coming or the Germans are getting sick and tired of doing this, or maybe Hitler isn't alive anymore, or whatever. So, anyhow, we were standing there and they said, "March. Off we go." And we just looked at one another. No matter where we went we were always taken when we were moved, we were always taken by truck, you know. But this time we knew this is our death march.

MS: Was your friend with you, the girl from Breslau?

LC: From Breslau? Yes, she was with me. She was with me until Bergen-Belsen. She didn't make it but she was with me. She was older than I am but she was with me. Anyhow, we marched and we started off at night...

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Tape three, side one:

LC: And it was in the evening when we started. Of course, we had no idea where they were taking us, and we were absolutely all terrified because we were all so weak and so scared and also so terribly, terribly dead tired and we left a lot of our good friends behind, just laying there because we were not allowed to help them to get up.

MS: Do you think they were murdered, or rather killed?

LC: No, I don't think so, they just ... Oh, maybe eventually, maybe they had mercy with them and shot them, because that's always the best thing for anybody who is like that because they wouldn't have lasted very long. But whoever was with us in the camp went with us on the march, so I don't know. I'm sure there were some back-up troops who could have come in and done that, but the ones who were in the camp guarding us went on the march with us and we always stopped in farm houses, not houses, farm areas. And at one time for two nights in a row, I remember this, I slept in the pig sty, and that was the best thing I ever had in the whole time I was anywheres because it was warm, it stank like hell, but it was warm and the animals didn't bother us and they kind of snuggled up to us and we were kind of... We were not too many of us in there, but we were, how many we were, we felt very, very safe and secure.

MS: May I ask you, can you guess about how many people were on the death march, roughly?

LC: Well, I said we were between 250 - 400 when we started and I would say we weren't maybe half when we went on it. But this was I have to bring this in, as we were on this for about a day or two, we picked up a whole other group who came from down the street.

MS: You have no idea where they were before they joined you?

LC: Oh, they were in another working camp. I couldn't tell you the name, but the ones we spoke to when they were grouped in... We weren't just walking in three's and four's, we were told in formation and two together or three together. We were always on the street. This is... we were kind of in a farm country area and not very, very populated area, nothing but mostly farms, and we were walking on the streets so there was always traffic coming by. Traffic wasn't what it is today, with cars, but horses and tractors, not the big tractors, hand tractors, what they used and a lot a lot of troops, German. So we were, you know, our march, I don't know, I think we were ten days on the way, but I don't think we traveled more than... I don't know, I really can't say. All I know is where I wound up. We must have went instead of going this way we went this way, because where I wound up was only twelve miles away from my hometown, and if we were fifty kilometers or fifty I think I said that fifty miles before away from my home town, but of course it could have been in a different direction. I don't know how many miles we walked, but I know that we were ten days on the move, and we did stop during the night. We either slept in the field, but it was always near a farmhouse. We had nothing. We never seen anybody, but that must

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have been all pre-arranged because whenever we got there, there was a place for us where we could sleep, be on the ground, or whatever, and I don't know. Out of nowheres we picked up this group and I think, if we were, by the time we reached our destination we were I don't think we were more than 100 to 150, but while we were walking we must have picked up at least 200 to 300 people, so I don't even think we were 100 people when we got there.

MS: Of the original group?

LC: Oh, from our original group, I don't think more than maybe twenty or thirty people, who were actually survivors from that particular march because it was terrible. They didn't give us anything to eat. They came with water and then they said they couldn't get the rations because the troops were moving and they needed the food so we knew we were [near the end of the war] You could sense it.

MS: You could sense defeat, you could sense...

LC: That it was very close to the end, very, very close. I thought by the time we are finished marching, this is going to be, like we're walking into something which, where they're going to say, "Well, it's all over," you know. But, anyhow, at one point while we were walking, while we had picked up already the new group, we came across another group, marching.

MS: This would have been the second group?

LC: Yeah, but they didn't join us, you see. We were just crossing paths and there were not more than about thirty or forty people.

MS: And they were all women, both groups?

LC: No, this was our marching group, the one who joined us, was only women, but this group we met they were dressed, they were dressed in their own. You could see that they had decent clothes on and they didn't look anything like us. And lo and behold, they were men and women and not only were they men and women, they were all from my hometown and I knew a whole lot of them, and I could not communicate with them. They were somehow forcing us, that all I could go was with the eyes and they kind of looked, but they could talk. They had somebody marching with them, also SS, but they were not patrolled as we were patrolled and I'll tell you why because as I looked at them I knew who they were. They were all half and halves. They were all people who had non-Jewish wives or kids like me who had a mother who wasn't Jewish or a father who wasn't Jewish, and most of them were people who were, the partners were by themselves. It was only the Jewish part. But I met, for instance, this is why I want to bring this out, there was somebody in there who I didn't know, but she recognized me and along our marching line came the word that there is somebody in the back who has something for Hanna Lore Grünberger. And what did I get? I got a coat. This woman seen me, she was the mother of one of my girlfriends who I'm now in contact with in California. She had a non-Jewish husband, her daughter was already out of the country and they took them–they were in Breslau till then–but then they separated them from their non-Jewish partners and they took them in some

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kind of a camp, and they were on a march to that particular camp. I don't know where that camp was, not too far from where I was marching, but that woman recognized me. I didn't know her. I knew the girl but I did not know her mother and she handed... Somehow, how she ever done that, because we were watched so careful. We weren't allowed to talk with anybody and Germans [native population] would come on the side of the road and would say, "Where were you from or what are you doing here or maybe if you wait a little bit we'll run home and bring you something to eat." But we were so very much guarded, we could never communicate with these people. Naturally they looked, look what we looked like. I had a dress on which by then already was almost to my...

MS: Are you saying then, Hanna, that the native population came to look at you?

LC: Oh sure, they were on the streets, on the roads, outside their farms or whatever. Oh sure, they looked at us.

MS: They knew you were concentration camp victims?

LC: Oh sure, all they had to do was look at our hair, we didn't have any hair, and the rags...

MS: And they offered ... and you feel they would have offered help?

LC: Oh sure, anybody, if we would have fallen back. There were mostly women, there were no men around, because the men were all fighting in the war and we seen a few children, but most of it was all women, old women, farm women. It was strictly a farm area. I don't know which way we walked, whether we walked around in circles, the same as they made us carrying these trees with us. I don't know, but I know that we were always in nothing but farm areas and as far as I remember, where I lived there was farm area, but not that terribly much, but maybe just in that particular section. Anyhow, I got this black coat and they reached it up to me and here I had to be very careful to put that on. That my guard shouldn't notice that I have something else on. And everybody was very envious and they told me the name of the woman. And I seen people I met. A friend of my parents who was marching by and he recognized me and I recognized him and we only had eye contact. He could have talked to me, but I guess they felt they didn't want to do anything to hurt us, otherwise we would have gotten hurt, you know. But quite a few people I had eye contact with which I knew and I kept saying, "It's unbelievable", but then I realized this was all the Jewish part of a marriage which was half and half. Isn't that something?

MS: That is amazing, it really is.

LC: And I contacted the girl, the daughter of this woman and I met the woman yet in California. We went out to visit them

MS: The one who gave you the coat you later met?

LC: Yes, yes, this girl wrote to the Exponent [Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia] many, many years ago that she is looking for somebody with the name of so-and-so if they have anywheres a way of finding out. And the Exponent, you know, when they have sometimes the HIAS and I did not read it. A cousin of mine from Chicago sent me the clipping to get in touch with the HIAS and I got in touch with the HIAS and they told me

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that I would have to sign a paper whether it's alright to give my name to whoever was asking and that's how we got in touch and I seen the woman. She died about a couple of years later, but we went to visit and I'm still in contact with the daughter.

MS: So did this group, of half Jews just... crossed your paths?

LC: Just crossed our paths and they were interned, which I call interned because interned didn't mean very much. I mean, they were kept away. Of course, for them it was terrible because they were separated from their family. Some of them still survived, you know, and some of them didn't, but at least it wasn't anything what we went through, but I don't want to be too long on this. The march was terrible. It was just absolutely terrible, like I said, by the time we got to Gross-Rosen. This was where we were going. Gross-Rosen was a very, very bad concentration camp, which was not for Jews. We only found that out later.

MS: Was it an extermination camp in a sense than the ovens or don't you know?

LC: I don't know whether they had ovens, but it was known to be a very severe camp, very severe and they were only bringing Jews in for a reloading, or for - what do you call that again, a holding place, because we found out later that there were never any Jews before. And here, once we got there, I found out that it was twelve miles outside from where I lived. And of course, I was a child at home, I didn't know of these things but that I never, never even heard the name, you know, my parents used to be talking about Buchenwald and about Auschwitz and about this and I heard these names and I kind of had an idea, where, what and what it was all about, but I never heard that name before and here it was a huge, huge camp.

MS: But it was primarily for what, political prisoners?

LC: I think it was mostly political and there is the first time that we were in a holding camp where on the other side of the fence were men. And I talked to a man who was from Breslau and he looked at my feet and said, "I'm going to get you a pair of brown boots." I said, "You better not". Even we weren't allowed to talk to them but somehow we managed. We had a little free time. We would be allowed to walk and for the short time I was there, they kind of treated us, compared to what we went through on that march, I wouldn't say humane, but almost humane. Because whoever was left of us, they could see that we were just nothing. And I don't know what they fed us, but I know we did get something to eat there. It's not standing out in my mind that it was just bread and water or something like that so I don't know, whatever they gave us, they did give us.

MS: It was a little more substantial.

LC: It was a little bit more substantial, and the man who I happened to talk to was a very, very tall man. Now as far as I know, he was a political prisoner, not a Jew, and everybody had somebody on the other side of the fence. We must have had some kind of a freedom... I guess we had like free time for walking or exercising and while we were doing it and the men were probably on the other side of the fence. Somehow we had a chance to, not officially, talk but somehow to... and he said that he has connections and if I'm going

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to be there a couple of days he is going to get me a pair of shoes and he asked me what shoe size I wear. I told him 37 1/2, this was in German, you know, and I said, "But please I don't want... no, new shoes I don't want new shoes, because everybody is going to see that." You know, this is automatically bringing me in jeopardy. This is terrible, where did I get them from, so he said not to worry about it and I don't know to this day. I did get a pair of shoes and they were brought to me officially from one of those women who took care of us inside the camp.

MS: A German woman?

LC: Yes, from one of the guards, through him.

MS: And you did not know who this man was?

LC: No, no.

MS: And you never asked his name?

LC: Maybe I did but...

MS: You don't remember.

LC: No, you know, you were so afraid of conversing. All I know is that he said he is from Breslau and I said I was from Breslau too and he said, "Isn't it so terrible, you're so close." I told him, as much as I talked to him, about how long I been already away, you know, and he said he has connections and I got a pair. They were not brand new, but they were brown shoes, boots, like a boot and they were brought to me.

MS: Which is an amazing thing it itself.

LC: And I wasn't questioned, where, how come, so he must have had a lot of pull, *shmeared* plenty, that I was never reprimanded for it or whatever, you know. So out of everything very, very bad there is always a little bit of good.

MS: Did you ever see him after the shoes? To thank him?

LC: No, I don't know, maybe I did, I don't remember. I know that this stood out to me very much and we were there very short, just... All I know is that I was in Bergen-Belsen which we are going to now. But we were loaded up again and we were told the reason we're leaving Gross-Rosen–this is the first time we were ever actually, not explained, but somehow they said to us that we are leaving there because we are too close to the border. We were not that close to the border, we were kind of close to the border, but I think what they more or less said we were too close to the border line of the Allies coming there. Because later on when we were going to Bergen-Belsen and we arrived in Bergen-Belsen, everybody had just gotten there and they were all coming from areas where they had to leave.

MS: So this told you there was a problem?

LC: Yeah, we were, now this is from one side of Germany again, we were in Silesia and we were going way, way up on the other side of Germany and I don't know how many days we were traveling, but I know it was winter, and we were in open wagons, because we had snow inside, and a lot of people who were with me froze, because you know, if you have nothing, you had nothing on you anymore, you're just skin and bones.

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MS: This was from Gross-Rosen to Bergen-Belsen?

LC: Yes.

MS: Did you have your coat?

LC: Oh, I had my coat and I had my new shoes. I had my coat, it was a black coat. It's funny, I never thought of it anymore, the woman died many years ago and never thought of it anymore, but when we were on the last day of our travel, oh, they emptied out so many of the wagons, people dying, freezing to death. I guess most of them just froze to death and you know, when you are at that point, it doesn't need much. All you have to say is, "One day, I'm just going to sit and that's it." It's like a machine, your body just gives out. And I was determined, the weaker I got and the sicker I was, I was determined. I don't care what it's going to take, but I'm going to make this to the bitter end. I really didn't know what the end would be, you know, whether it would be good or bad, but I said, "Something has to happen." You know, every time they moved us, we thought something would happen, but nothing ever did, but I know the last day, while we were traveling, we heard shooting and we stopped a couple of times always, we always stopped. It's the same story always, they were always bringing us food to the train or to our wagon and they took us out and we had to march a little bit to get I guess exercise. And they cleaned out and some people were asked to go and clean the wagons out and empty our waste and whatever, and somehow not only that we did hear shooting, but somehow, I don't know how, but it leaked out that they are very close. They... whatever that meant, but we knew it, I guess we didn't know what it meant, whether they were close to finish the war or I don't know whether we ever thought of the Allies. I think we did because they kept saying that as far as everybody knew or whatever information was leaking out, that we were very close to the English, but this was... Now I was liberated the 15th of April at 9 o'clock in the morning and this was in the end of November, yeah, must have been about the end of November because in Germany winter starts in September already, so that's why I'm saying when I was talking about that one trip. I don't know whether I got my timing in telling you this, whether I got my timing wrong or whatever, but all I know is that it was always very cold, but now that I think of it when you don't have any clothes on and when you're undernourished and went through all these years, I guess anything seems different.

MS: Of course, so then...

LC: We arrived outside from a railroad station, we seen the railroad station in the distance. I don't know whether it was a railroad station but it was one of those where they had all those cars standing on the side, so I guess it was a railroad station. We were way, way out and the same procedure, I mean this all became already like an old routine. We got out of the cars and stood there and we lined up and then a guy comes with a couple of jeeps or whatever and all the big shots come out from this new camp again and they look you over and some of them stop and talk to you and they pull you out and why do you stand this way or why do you do this and how come you're not dead or whatever, you know, the usual harassment. And a lot of women going around with the whip and hitting

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back and forth from the left and from the right. I never mentioned any of this because I think everybody kind of knows more or less the humiliation and harassment we all had, some places more, some places less, but this was just part of the routine.

MS: When you were unloaded in this railroad yard and you say the officials from the camp would come, was this in a sense another kind of selection, again where they were picking and choosing?

LC: No, no, we all went there, at this point it wasn't. When we were going to Kurzbach it was, because later on we found out that we went into a work camp, but this was...

MS: They were taking all the people off the train.

LC: Now when we went into Gross-Rosen this was an altogether different story, there was nobody there kind of like a greetings committee like there in Bergen-Belsen. In Gross-Rosen we were just led through the front entrance and there was a great big sign "Gross-Rosen" and we were led in through and they said we were going to Camp #C and Barrack 55. I don't know, I'm just giving a for-instance, and here you are and there was no explanation why, where or what or how long or what, but you know, when you do this, it becomes kind of a routine and you kind of know your own pattern already, what's going to happen. But this in Bergen-Belsen we were kind of officially, if you want to call it, greeted, and the strangest thing is we always heard very, very faint shooting, so we thought this has to mean something; either the Germans are coming and going to kill us or something, it's got to mean something and we heard that from the time I got there, till it was all over, and it never seemed like it got closer. They were always around us, but it seemed like it was never any noisier or more frequent...

MS: Or closer...?

LC: Or closer, it always was like it was, I don't know, how far can you hear shooting? But the longer we were there, there were men there, but we were totally separated. It was a camp for women and a camp for men, it was a great big camp, and thank God that was the end there because once we were together this... they were all nothings. Everybody, young, old, there weren't anymore old, but whoever we were there, we were all absolutely, I wouldn't call it anymore humans, because we didn't do a whole lot of working. We had to clean the latrines...

MS: It wasn't a work camp?

LC: But it was not a work camp, and they constantly counted us. I remember that for one thing for sure, and I came down with a very, very bad case of typhoid in Bergen-Belsen and everybody said that I was silly, I can't go on that way. I said, "I can't go on this way and if I report sick that was the end of it." We knew that, and they were most of them young girls and it's terrible, we all were almost nothing anymore, but there were so many of them, they said in the morning, "I'm not going to stand up for the *Appell*" [counting]. "I'm just going to raise my hand" and they did, and they reported sick and that's the last we ever seen of them and they were all my age, but they just had nothing left in them. No

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strength, faith, I don't know what kept me having such faith, like I said, I think I did say that in the beginning, I come from a very religious family, and faith was always, religion was always part of me, you know. I don't know whether that was it, or some kind of inner drive or what, but when I came down with typhoid, I know one thing, that I always dreamt of grapes and water. And one night–this was told to me, I don't remember that–not too far from our barracks was some kind of a little creek. I don't know what the water was used for, but we were not allowed to go there, and they caught me, they, I mean the people from my barracks, they caught me sneaking out and crawling on my hands and knees and nobody ever stopped me, nobody seen it and they pulled me out and I was leaning over there trying to drink, because [with] typhoid, all you want is liquid and liquid.

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Tape three, side two:

LC: In Bergen-Belsen we did not go on any so-called boards for beds. We were in a size of... The barrack was big and there were individual cubicles and the cubicle was probably 5 x 7, what would this be, I don't know, that's about right, would you say?

MS: No, this is larger.

LC: All right, so let's say it was maybe 10 x 12, no it wasn't 10 x 12, but let's say whatever, and we were roughly 30 women in there, and there was no way that anybody could ever stretch out. So I remember my four or five months in Bergen-Belsen sitting with my knees up against my chest and if you gonna believe this or not, but the last four months or five months, as long as I was there–when we weren't being counted and we weren't being beaten up or harassed or had to carry the dead or whatever–it sounds ridiculous: all we talked about was cooking.

MS: Well, its understandable.

LC: All the time we never talked about this and I was a young girl, I didn't know a thing about cooking, and I think that's where I learned how to cook. [Laughter] Some conversation, huh? Maybe we done this to keep our minds - to keep half way, because we weren't human anymore. And the worst of it is, while we were there, we never got a whole lot to eat, but the last... I shouldn't forget that from the bread. If I forget it I want you to remind me to tell you about the bread the last four weeks, but why what went on is that everybody was so, I would say three quarters of the people were going crazy and when they seen somebody–this is the only place I really actually remember, probably remember from other places, but there in particular it's very vividly in my mind–when two or three people noticed somebody not moving very much anymore and just sitting there.

MS: The throes of death.

LC: Right. They would fall over them. Oh, its terrible and they would start chewing on them.

MS: It's reduced to cannibalism.

LC: Yes, yes, that's why I'm saying. We were not human beings anymore, and any time we were called to pick up the dead from the outside when they collapsed, while they were counting us or while they were cleaning there or doing this or whatever, we were always praying that when they were doing it, while we were standing there being counted, and they said, "You, you, you pick up all the dead," but they wouldn't do that while they were being carried, while they were supposed to carry the dead on that pile. Because when they did then they really started to shoot into everybody, not only into the ones that were trying to carry away the dead, but into anybody, so at the end they were really trying to get rid of us in the worst way, and the last four weeks, in the last six or seven weeks, an awful lot of people died like flies, but different than any other time. And we discovered that they were baking bread with glass. This was well known in Bergen-Belsen at the end, that they were baking bread with glass and that's what happened. You ate a slice of bread and it just

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ripped your inside apart. There wasn't so much to be ripped anymore, you know. So for the last four weeks, nobody ate anything anymore, and then they really just died like flies, but the last four weeks we were not... This is when it started, that's when we realized this is it, some kind of an end, because the SS, they were the ones who always patrolled us. I'm sorry, you never heard that before from Bergen-Belsen? That they started to kind of disappear.

MS: The Germans?

LC: The SS. They were little... Every time we looked around, we didn't see this guy anymore and then we didn't see this guy anymore and that spread through the whole camp.

MS: Did you have any idea what was happening to them?

LC: Oh sure, they knew it was coming to the end so they fleed.

MS: They deserted.

LC: They deserted and in Bergen-Belsen were an awful lot of Hungarian prisoners, political prisoners, men, and they were put in charge of us, and they were, they were sometimes–they must have learned from the Germans–they were bastards, too. And I don't know whether I ever mentioned this, but one thing leads to the other. There was a certain kind of a group of inmates, you probably have heard that, the *Kapos*, they called them.

MS: Oh yes, they were Jews.

LC: Oh yeah, they were our people, but they reached to the rank of great bigness and they became a *Kapo* and they were sometimes worse than the SS. And I've seen lots of girls, I was together with, you know, through the time, even if I didn't know them. I don't know anybody. All we knew... so many times I meet people, "Didn't you know so-and-so?" No, I never knew anybody with their last name, all I knew is was their first name, and after a while, that name didn't mean anything either anymore, but like I said, they had asked me to come testify and I probably could testify when I see the guy, but I could not go and say you have to get SS so-and-so or *Oberführer* so-and-so, because I never knew any names. But the last four weeks, the last six weeks, all of a sudden they were just dying like flies, and we knew that this wasn't kosher. There was more to it than just dying. I know I was used to seeing people just getting very passive and just at the edge of it, just sitting there and kind of gave in, but this was sudden, you know. They were here now and all of a sudden, boom, gone, down they were, you know. So we figured there's something not right, and somehow we got word that they were trying to get rid of us before the Allies ever reached us. And the last four weeks, I don't think hardly anybody ever ate anything; we had water some when we got, I don't know whether they ever gave us any soup or what, I don't remember. But that's what happened at the end that they really tried to get rid of all of us and that was one way of trying to get rid of us. They could have shot us, but I guess...

MS: It's a terrible thing to say, but you wonder why they didn't. Of course they obviously didn't want to leave evidence of the concentration camp.

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LC: That's right and I would almost say by the very end, when April 15th came around that, oh there were Germans left, but nothing compared to what it was before that, you know, and maybe in the last couple of days, I would say that we heard the shots bigger than before.

MS: Closer?

LC: Yeah, and one morning, we heard that already for hours. I don't know what it was, but we heard so much commotion and I thought well, maybe they're going to come now and kill us after all. We didn't know what it was. It was all very noisy. Well, we weren't allowed out of our barracks that morning. I don't know whether they counted us at one time first thing in the morning or not, but we were not allowed to go out, and all we heard is this noise. And you know, not knowing what goes, you try to form your own opinion, what is happening, what is going on, and it got bigger and bigger and you couldn't make anything out, you couldn't understand, not ever thinking that it was in another language or what, but it was so much commotion. And we thought maybe they're burning the place down, that people are screaming, because we heard screaming and hollering, and you couldn't figure out what it was. And all of a sudden, they opened the gate to our barrack, and everybody ran. And I was so sick, I had this typhoid, I still had it. I didn't know that's what I had, but I was told afterwards that's what I had. I did not have the strength to go and walk anymore or do anything. I kind of just laid there and after everybody crawled on top of me, and I think my back was already broken and maybe my arm. I don't know, that's what I felt like. I went on my hands and knees, and I crawled and I see myself crawling and when I got to the outside of our little gate there from the barracks, I couldn't believe it. I said, "No, this cannot be true." I seen soldiers, not German uniforms, and they were the English Army. It was 9:00 or 9:15 in the morning, and they came in, and there was so much confusion and people were just dying from getting trampled. That's what I said, "I thought I was dead already from just getting trampled on." Because everybody went berserk, everybody, and the poor English meant to do us a lot of good and what did they feed us for the first meal? Chicken soup. And that's when they really started to die. Chicken soup! Fat, you know. Oh, it was terrible.

MS: Where did they take you?

LC: Nowheres, we just stayed.

MS: You just stayed where you were.

LC: And then they started, what we heard and what I seen and I couldn't move. Then everybody went crazy and they jumped over the fences and they were looting and they were burning and they were going into... The first place they went to look for food, you know the commissary and there was lots and lots of food, lots and lots and lots of bread. I guess somebody must have told them not to eat it, not our people, but the English or whoever were the ones, but didn't take us anywhere. Oh God, no they couldn't have moved us. We would have killed everything around us. We were so diseased and so sick.

MS: Well, then how did they set up relief for you, you don't remember?

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LC: All I know is that wherever we were we just stayed, and they did bring us something to eat, but my first experience with anything outside of a German uniform was me crawling on my hands and knees and all of a sudden I looked up and this big lug, maybe he wasn't that big, but somebody standing there, and I guess I must have heard him speaking English, and I was so proud because I spoke English, too, and I wanted to say something. Isn't that funny how that sticks with you? I wanted to say something, so that's why I knew what time it was. I wanted to say something so I asked him what time it was, and all he kept saying to me is, "I don't know what you're saying, I can't answer you, I don't understand you," and I kept saying, "What time is it?" And all of a sudden I realized that I wasn't speaking English. I was in Czechoslovakia, in Theresienstadt and I think I did mention that and that was my last language I spoke, so this came to my mind and I kept saying in Czech, "What time is it?" you know. I realized that and then I said, "Oh, gee, I'm not even speaking English." I seen that guy for about a half-second, and he told me it was 9:15 in the morning, that's why I know what day it was. They left us there, and it took days till there was some kind of a routine. They did not move us. They brought in medics, and I know we were interrogated, but right there and then and they cleaned up and they took the dead out. There were a lot of them coming around. They kind of cleaned up the barracks where we were in and I think our numbers were greatly reduced because they did take out some people, not that they moved them to another place, but maybe they put them to another barrack, probably setting up, at the time I didn't know exactly.

MS: Infirmary.

LC: Infirmary and brought in some kind of beds or, I don't know what. I know that it took me days for me to get out of there and finally they did move me to another barrack in some kind of infirmary, but what I wanted to say is, the terrible thing they done, that they came and they fed us chicken soup and that's all we had to have is the dysentery, and the dying was just unbelievable. And they didn't realize that at the time. Later on, they realized. But it took a long time. I'm saying long, maybe it seems to me, till they had some kind of an order, but I know that the first day or the second day, they came and they asked us for our name and where we were from and your parents' name. And they explained to us why they're doing that because they want the whole world to know that not you, but anybody who survived and they sent these lists of names. They made lists up and they sent these lists to all over the world, that when people come looking for one another that they have some kind of contact of trying to get in touch with you or knowing what happened to you. So you gave them all the information you have and I did, like I said, "I did go into some kind of an infirmary." But coming back to those two girls, when we got to Bergen-Belsen, as we were put into our barracks where my home was gonna be for the next couple of months, we were never moved, there was no disorganization, this was very much organized. We were put into one place and this is where we stayed. But like I said, I lived in this barrack sitting on the floor with my legs crammed up day and night, and if we were outside whatever duties we had, but it was nothing very important and it was definitely not

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a work camp, not the part I was in. But as we were brought into Bergen-Belsen, and no matter what camp it was, there were always people from inside the camp. Even so, we were behind the wire on this side and they were maybe on the other side, but somehow there was always a voice reaching out trying to find out. Do you know this one or are you this one or where are you from? Even so there was not really communication, but there was always some kind of a contact with some of the others, not that you knew them. And lo and behold, when we were getting there, aren't they hollering for my name again and here I see these two sisters, my two friends from Breslau, who were originally supposed to die. I think we did talk about this, remember I told you they were trying to run away from home, I think we talked about that?

MS: Maybe.

LC: They were trying to run away from home because they didn't look like they were Jewish. They looked very Spanish, or Italian or French and they spoke all kinds of languages, and they were finally sent to death. That's all we knew in Breslau and then when we got to Auschwitz...

MS: You found them there, yes.

LC: And here we were together. I was never together with them inside the camp, but we did see them. I did see them every once in a while and we did have some kind of contact and they were then also just ordinary inmates. I think I told you one of them was one of the Commander's girlfriend and the other one played with the orchestra, but we were all, we were liberated together.

MS: Well, let me ask you this, once the English came, and they started to rehabilitate you and build you up physically, how long was it until they moved you out of Bergen-Belsen?

LC: Well, we were moved inside of Bergen-Belsen, or let's say to another part of Bergen-Belsen. They cleaned up some other part of the camp and as you were either getting better or getting worse, I don't know, but they moved you to another part and I lived with one of my girlfriends in some kind of a barrack, but they weren't like where we were in before. We were maybe five or six people in a room, but these were the Officers' Quarters, the enlistment people, the soldiers who were guarding us, so I guess that's where they moved us, but I think I did not leave Bergen-Belsen permanently, you are asking me, to finally go to somewhere else, till the end of August.

MS: From April until August?

LC: Yes. There was a town near Bergen-Belsen, which is Hannover, where people came, I guess, I don't know. Jewish organizations or somebody came and talked to us and they said that if we were ever able to one day they would take us to Hannover and that there is a Jewish Agency and we can go and register there. As far as I knew, I left my parents in Theresienstadt and I was very, very anxious to find out if I could ever find out where they are or whatever happened to them. I'll be very truthful, I did mention at the time that my father was a very sick man and I did not expect him to be around anymore,

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but I was desperately trying to look for my mother, so one day they said that we could go into a bus into Hannover and there were several buses and other people went earlier. I don't know, but it was my turn and that maybe in June or July and they took us into Hannover and they stopped in a certain place in town and they said, this one wanted to go there and this one wanted to go there, so they said they'll leave us off here and this is where they're going to meet us again after a couple of hours. So when I got out of that bus, something awful happened to me all of a sudden. I got out of that bus and I could not move. I was all of a sudden totally scared, devastated, I was like struck with lightning. I could not move from the spot because here, this was my first time realizing that I was out in the world.

MS: You were a free person again.

LC: The same thing, we were liberated April 15th, I thought that the war was over. May 8th came, I never knew that there was such a thing as May 8th. It took me I don't know how many months later that I, that somebody said well the war was over. I said, "No, the war wasn't over, the war was over April 15th." "No, it wasn't." "That's when my war was over." So you know, I didn't know anything and there I stood in that little ... I see that it was some kind of a *Platz* [a square], an area where they left us off and there I stood. I couldn't move; I was like struck with lightning, and I thought, "What am I doing here? I don't know what to do, I don't know where to go, but what am I doing here? They're going to come for me," or I don't know what I was thinking. I could not move. I just stood there. And there were quite a few others with us, you know, and I said, "No, I can't leave, I have to stay here," and I guess they talked to me and we all started to walk to where this agency was, but it was... it took...

MS: Do you remember the name of the agency?

LC: It was a Jewish agency, I don't know who, the Joint or HIAS, I don't even know, not necessarily. I think this was set up from Germany. No, I didn't hear any... As far as I remember it was only German spoken.

MS: Did you get to the agency?

LC: Oh, yeah.

MS: And were there Germans in there or Americans?

LC: Jews.

MS: But where did they come from?

LC: Probably from other parts of the world, I never questioned it, but it was in a great big building and there were so many people walking around and here I see a man and I went like this and I thought for a moment that was my father and I talked to the man and I said, "Don't you know me?" And he says, "Yes, you're Louie's daughter," but in German, this is all in German. And I could have sworn it was my father, and then all of a sudden I realized, no, it wasn't my father, it was somebody my father lived with in Theresienstadt, and when I seen my father last, I guess that man must have been there, too, you know. They also lived in a room, twenty of them, and he was one of the men there. And I said to him, "Whatever happened to my mother?" And he says, "Your father is still

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in Theresienstadt." I said, "My father?" I says, "My father couldn't be alive", and he says, "Oh, your father is still in Theresienstadt. It's your mother who got killed." And I didn't cry, nothing. It was like if you would have told me oh, you just dropped a banana on the floor, and I said, "My mother got killed?" "Oh, yeah, didn't you know that?" I says, "I didn't see anybody, I didn't talk to anybody." Well, I finally did meet people later on who were actually there when my mother was put into the gas chamber in Auschwitz. You know, you go here and you go there and you meet somebody who was in this camp and you meet... This was all in the very beginning, you know, but I did register my name and this man gave me all the information I was really interested in. I wanted to know what happened to my mother and I wanted to know what happened to my father and here he's telling me my father... He just came from Theresienstadt, this man.

MS: Your father had not been liberated at that same place?

LC: Oh, yeah, probably, not April 15th, but he told me my father still lives in Theresienstadt, like I was still living in Bergen-Belsen, so I said, "How will I be able to get." There was no mail. This was after the war, Germany was total nothing. "Oh," he said, "That's no problem," he says. "There goes twice a week a bus, leaves from Hannover, goes to Theresienstadt, and picks up people and brings them here, anybody who wants to leave," and they have that from all other cities throughout Germany, you know, for them to get out of that particular area. So when I registered my name, I talked to somebody there and they said, "Oh yeah," they can do that. I should come back this-and-this day and then the bus is going to be there and I can talk to the driver and I should give him a little piece of paper and they wait 24 hours. They go from Hannover to Theresienstadt. Theresienstadt is Czechoslovakia.

MS: You, you were sending a message in effect to your father?

LC: Well, I was going to and he said that if I wanted to, I can just not give him a message, but write my father's name down and if this driver is willing to take that and he can hand it in to the office. Theresienstadt was a huge, it was like a city and if they have any way of getting in touch with my father, they would tell him that he could go on this particular bus, if not, on the next bus, but there would be a message for you. So I came back, I guess the week later, and I posted my name somewheres. You know, in this house was nothing but names all over the place, people looking and seeing, maybe this one was here or there was a name I heard, who is this, as they were traveling through, people coming from other camps, coming through and everybody stopped in big cities, because they figured if anything, it would be happening only in the big cities that they have a place to register yourself.

MS: Right, right.

LC: So I came back and I took somebody with me, because I was terribly, terribly excited, and I finally talked to the bus driver, and he said that he was going to be back. I don't know how long it took him to get there, but he would be back this-and-this day and he's going to try to see that the message gets to my father and since I talked to

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him, he had a personal interest. Usually he only went and they said there is a bus–this is what he told me–they go to the office and they announce over the loud speaker, "There is a bus coming from Hannover. Anybody who would like to go to Hannover, report in a couple of hours," and they take you there.

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Tape four, side one:

LC: Some people who didn't know where to go, you know. I knew I could go back to Breslau but where was I going to go in Breslau? I knew that the Russians were there, I knew that already. I didn't want to go back.

MS: You say you didn't want to go back because the Russians were there. Did you know instinctively there was something bad about going back to where the Russians were?

LC: Well, I knew, from what I heard, whoever was liberated from the Russians that they weren't exactly what you were looking for. If you got away from the Germans, you didn't want to have anything to do with them. They liked young girls, and stuff like that. And I also had heard that Breslau was almost 97% to the ground, so I figured I knew my mother and father wasn't going to be there, so who was I going to be looking for. So, I finally did talk to the bus driver and he told me to come back. I forget what day. So I came back the day before and I reported to this organization. Again I knew already some of the people there. You asked me who was working there.

MS: You don't remember who was working there, I'm sure?

LC: No, it really doesn't ring a bell who they were, no idea. But I know that there were people who spoke Polish, and there were people Hungarian and Czechs - all kinds of Jews from all over they came. I know I spoke German there, that's all I remember. Probably, were people from the HIAS and they took German people, German-speaking, and Russian-speaking, and Jewish-speaking people and put them there so you could communicate, I imagine. So, I reported the day before and they said to me, "There is no use coming back today because he's not coming back until tomorrow." So I said, "I'm not going back to Bergen-Belsen, I'm going to stay here," and I camped outside that door for 24 hours, outside. I guess I never told them. Probably if I would have said something, somebody would have taken me home and would have let me stay with them, but I was afraid of everything, you know. I sat on the curb 24 hours and the bus came and I couldn't even get up because I could see my father getting off that bus and everybody got out of the bus except my father, and the man, the driver, told me that by the time he had reached, my father had left. [Tape blank at this point.] Whoever was in charge of Bergen-Belsen at the time, not in Bergen-Belsen, in Theresienstadt. In the office they had told him that as far as they knew, they weren't too sure, that my father went to Berlin, but Berlin was totally out for me because Berlin where the Russians were. That was like going three times around the world from where I was because you couldn't travel. I was just still a bundle of... I never did tell you what I weighed when I was liberated. They weighed me when they took me to the infirmary, or before or whatever. I was going to be 20 the 17th of May and I was liberated the 15th of April and I weighed - this is German pounds, this is heavier than here - 57 pounds. Now my son weighed that when he was about 6 or 7 years old. I was what you would call a bundle of nothing, or worse than that. That was just terrible. Not only that

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I was a frightened little girl and lost and didn't know where to go and didn't know what to do, I went back to Bergen-Belsen and I was there for quite a while because I did not know where to go and I did not know what to do. While I was there I met three fellows and two of them I recognized walking in Bergen-Belsen on the street, and this happened now in all camps. Everybody came from one camp to the other looking for family. I met the brother of this girl who died while we were in the air raid, and he recognized me right away. He couldn't believe that I would stop him on the way. Anyhow, I told him that, he was looking for others, family. I says, "I don't know about the others but I know I was together with her and she is not alive anymore." There was another man with him who I had kind of heard or met once - much older than what we were, he was between me and my parent's age, he was then in his forties, maybe. And another man who was a fellow from Poland, and these three guys were liberated together, and I had become friendly with the girl when we were being put into rehabilitation or whatever you want to call it - a girl named Rushka. She was from Poland and we became very close and we were kind of mother to one another. She was also a couple of years older and we were trying to stick real close together, and we said well, wherever we are going to go... We didn't have to leave, but we wanted to get away from Bergen-Belsen, but we did not know where to go. And I met these three guys and they were saying that they are planning to go somewheres into Bavaria, trying to find a place to settle down, and if I was interested. So, I said, "Well, I know my father is somewheres. I don't know where, supposedly in Berlin and if I didn't get in touch with him by then maybe I would go there." I asked my friend and she said, "Yes." She didn't care, she can't go back to Poland. She hadn't found any trace of anybody. So, they were there for a couple of days and they got themselves something to eat together or whatever, got themselves a little strength together. The only way you traveled was by trucks if trucks would take you, from here to there, Army trucks, most of them Army trucks, or whatever. German, civilians or whatever. They left and they said if they find a place they would come back for us. While they were gone, there was a German, a real German guy, you could see by the boots. He had German boots on, and he had like a German uniform but he didn't have any insignias, that was all off. He was coming through the camp and I bumped into him and he asked me, I don't know if I knew of this one or that one or whatever and through the conversation I found out that he was going to Berlin trying to find his bride. They had just gotten married, not officially because they weren't allowed to get married anymore, but he was in the service and he married a Jewish girl, and he was trying to go back to Berlin trying to find her. He went to so many camps, but he hadn't found anybody who knew about her, so he thought maybe she went back to Berlin.

MS: Was he a German citizen?

LC: A German citizen who was in the Army, but he loved this girl, and they knew each other.

MS: How could he just circulate freely about?

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LC: Well, this was after the war. He didn't do any crime. He was a soldier but he wasn't in prison. Everybody moved around then by then. It was just kind of a normal world again, but you couldn't get anything. There wasn't anything there, but sure. I said to him, "If you're going to Berlin I'm going to give you a piece of paper with my father's name on it." He said, "Oh yeah, because I have to be going looking into places where Jews would be, so I could leave it there for the next guy to come along and maybe put it on the wall or something." Well, I don't want to get into that too much anymore. To make a long story short, he found my father and my father didn't believe him that he knew me, and he remembered only after my father... he was telling my father all about me, and repeating it and he said, "Oh, my God, come to think of it she did write your name on a piece of paper." My father seen the handwriting. Do you believe? I only heard that from my father later. I did not have any contact with my father as of yet, and these three guys came back for us and they said they had found a little town in Bavaria where there are quite a few Jewish boys. This is American Army territory, quite a few Jewish boys, and they would love if we bring a few people in there. So, we got our things together, whatever we had, what we had acquired. I know that I had a blanket and I put everything into a blanket like the farmers used to.

MS: Did you get new clothing?

LC: Yeah, I think we got some in Hannover, I think they gave us... I know I wasn't in my rags anymore, that I know. We finally... I think they stayed a couple of days, and we had to try to get some food. They had already done some black-market business, selling this and selling this so they would have some money. Nobody gave us anything. The Germans did later on. Once I settled they did give us food rationing and they gave us some kind of a money, or whatever. But anyhow, we got our things together and we went with them and we hitchhiked from one truck to the other and it took us quite a few days until we got to where we were going. I started to get quite sick on the way and my legs were very swollen. I thought I was already good as new again but I wasn't. When we arrived, where we were going to go? There was a curfew in Germany. You were not allowed to be out later than so-and-so and by the time we arrived we were already past the curfew and I guess if we would have told whoever had caught us that who we were, it probably didn't mean anything because they did not necessarily have to believe us. We were just so afraid. We didn't want to do anything that we were getting into trouble with the Americans. So, anyhow, we arrived at our new destination and we get off the truck and the truck was in a big hurry because they had to be in a certain time and it was much later already than that and they went off with all my belongings, and here I was again with nothing. I see all these little nothings I had to begin with, but they had housing and we were in a very, very nice house and there were the three fellows and the two of us. It was a private house. It was taken away from somebody, from a Nazi. Whoever looked after them gave them the house. The next morning they said that the Jewish boys are going to come visit next morning. Next morning came and we slept in a bed - my girlfriend and I we had

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a bed together and the fellows had two or three rooms. I don't know. And next morning came - and I don't know whether we had breakfast, I don't remember–but in came about four or five American soldiers and two or three spoke German, and one of them, first thing you ask, "Where are you from?", you know, the normal thing when you meet somebody. And one of them told me that he was from a town where some of my family lived, and he looked about the age that he would know my cousins, and I asked him and he said, "Oh sure I know them real well." Then there was another fellow with the same last name. I said, "Are you from there, too?" and he said, "No, no."

MS: What city was this from that were you inquiring about?

LC: Wiesbaden. This other guy, the fellow I was talking to from Wiesbaden, he looked awfully young and kind of frightened to even talk to us, but the other guy was a very nice looking fellow, blondish, and I said to him, "You're not from Wiesbaden?" He says "No, I'm from Düsseldorf." And he wanted to know all about us and this and this and that. Well, anyhow, it was September 3rd and the next day was September 4th or maybe that day was September 4th and it was the eve of Rosh Hashanah and the fellows - there were two or three others, there were American boys that didn't speak any German– but I had no problem conversing with them. We talked and he said that what we thought of if they would bring in some food for tonight or maybe it was the next day, I don't remember, and we would have a meal together and maybe some kind of a service since it was Rosh Hashanah. That's when it was, September 4, 1945 and I got married to the guy September 4, 1947, two years later. We married the same day. It was not on a Sunday; we got married on a Thursday, and if it wouldn't have been for him I would have never, never have made it, because I was just a bundle of nothing. I didn't know who I was or what I was or what I wanted. I felt like a two year old.

MS: What happened at that point? Did you stay?

LC: There was no lovemaking.

MS: That's not what I meant.

LC: Well, we stayed with the fellows for about two or three weeks and Walter was working for the Military Intelligence and when these three guys came to the town we were living in, they had to go and get permission. You just couldn't go and move anywhere. You had to go to Military Intelligence and get permission to move or relocate, whether you were Jew or whatever. So, the guy they had to go and see was Walter. In talking with them and knowing what they went through, he called the other guys in who were working with him - they were all with Military Intelligence - and they said oh, yes, that would be great if you would get a couple of Jews in here and have some kind of a little bit of a community, and they really looked after us.

MS: So you stayed in this community until you married your husband?

LC: Oh, no. That was in September. In February he was sent home. He was just a guy who cared for us, not only for me but for the others, too. We got food from them and they seen that we got food stamps. Whatever we needed. My girlfriend and I moved out.

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We got our own little place. We had a rented room in somebody else's house. We thought we would be better off being by ourselves. He finally, through writing to God knows where, finally made contact with my father. We could not write, there was no mail or anything. But through his channels, through Military Intelligence, but I never got to see him till after Walter went home. He came to live with me finally after. Walter went home in February, I think, in April. I tried to go into Berlin a couple of times but I wasn't successful. I just couldn't cut it. It meant walking, and crawling and begging and cheating. I tried. I met quite a few people who were going there and trying to find people. You had to cross over into Russian territory, and that was not easy.

MS: Your father then found you eventually and came to live with you. How did you get to the United States at that point? Did you have to go into a displaced person's camp?

LC: Oh, yeah. I applied to come here and I got my whatever you want to call it, a visa, through the HIAS and the HIAS brought me here and they lost my papers, I broke my leg. I have very, very bad luck 'til I finally made it. I finally arrived here the 17th of April, 1947.

MS: Was your father with you?

LC: No, my father could not make it. He was a sick man. He came to live with me. Walter left in February. He came finally to live with me in April, 1946. I left in... I had to go through a displaced person's camp, inside Germany. I left like the end of February, the beginning of March. My father couldn't make it. He was not well enough to even try to attempt it. But in the meantime there were quite a few other Jews who came back. Not came back, but came through and settled and we met. Walter found quite a few people who were hiding nearby who were originally from there, also mixed marriage. We had, I would say, a community of probably about... some of the boys had gone home, of maybe ten people or something like that. But most of them were people who were looking for other people or meeting somebody and saying, "Why don't you go with me?" In the meantime, my friend who I had lived with had left, and Walter also tried to find her family and she went into France. She found somebody in France, and she emigrated into France.

MS: Did your Dad remain in Germany?

LC: My father remained in Germany. He was never well enough to leave. We wanted him to come. I went to visit him for the first time in... He remarried again. The first time I went to visit him, I wanted to go. When was this Berlin Wall? That was like the end of '50s. I was working at the time. I had a little boy. I couldn't go to work but I was helping a friend trying to make a couple of dollars to pay for my passage to go, my ticket. But then this came up with the Berlin Wall. Finally, I went to visit him for the first time in '62. But he remarried almost the same time we got married, in '47. He met somebody who had also lost all of her family, originally from France but living in Austria. Her father was a diplomat with the foreign service. She lost all her family but she was never married. She was a comparatively young woman. She met my father and she seen that my father was a very,

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very sick man and she said, well, she survived all that and she made it her life's task to care of him and she really did for all the years they were married. They were almost married 25 years. We wanted my father to come and visit us, to come here for my son's Bar Mitzvah, but it would have been too much for him. At the time, we were told it is a tremendous risk to bring him here because he was not a well man and with insurances, for health insurance, he was forever being treated for one thing or other, so he never came. He died, '71. Thank God, my husband went to meet him and we went twice to visit him. With my husband, I went the first time. I took my son in '62. My father lived at the end in Switzerland on the Italian border.

MS: Just very briefly, whatever became of your brother who left for England as a child?

LC: My brother went to England and was first living with relatives. He always wanted to be on his own and he went to university in England. He always wanted to be very much independent. Then the war broke out and he went into the service. He was in Egypt. I don't want to go into this, but when I was liberated in Bergen-Belsen I don't think it was more than maybe six or eight weeks later I was called to the so-called front office that they had a telegram for me. I said, "This can't be. Who knows that I'm here?" From the Red Cross. But there was a telegram saying, "Glad you're alive - W.G. Townley". I said, "Well if you can trace the telegram, maybe I can find out, but that telegram is not for me." With a name like I have is not like Ilse Meyer - it's not a very common name - my first name or my last name. They were very nice and they said, "Well, if you want to send that telegram back asking who they are or how they know me it would be very nice to find out." A couple days later they called me and I got a reply, "Oh, sorry, I'm your brother." My brother went into the British Army and they had to change their names because they were fighting against the Germans. So this is the name he picked. This was a friend of his, something to do with graham crackers and whatever. But his name was W.G. Townley and is to this day. I had no idea. He seen the list at one point. My brother is doing very well in England. He always remained in England. He became a very successful engineer. At one point after the war when he wasn't married I had asked him, I said, "Look you make your living there, you certainly can make it here. At least we would be together." He said, "No." England is his home and we went to see him many times, and he's been here.

MS: I thank you very, very much. Very interesting, very informative interview. I appreciate the time and effort that you put into this. Recalling is always very traumatic and I appreciate your wanting to do this for us.

LC: If I know it will do anything to remind people of what happened, I know that others do it, too. But I think it's very important that nobody, nobody should ever forget what happened to us. Unfortunately, we can never, never, never forget it.

MS: Thank you again.

LC: You're welcome.

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