

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

INTERVIEW WITH EVA BOROS 7/11/91

Interviewers: Sylvia Prozan and Alan Peters

Transcriber: Tessa Botha

Q THIS IS JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> 1991 A CONTINUATION OF THE INTERVIEW OF EVA BOROS FOR THE HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IN SAN FRANCISCO. NOW, THE FIRST PART OF THE INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE ON MAY 16<sup>TH</sup> 1991. THE INTERVIEWER IS SYLVIA PROZAN AND SECOND TODAY IS ALAN PETERS.

EVA, AT THE GHETTO IN [SOLOSZ?] YOU RECALL BEING THERE WITH YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR SISTER, ANNA, ALSO WAS WITH YOU AND HAS WRITTEN A POEM ABOUT IT. CAN YOU SHARE THAT WITH US?

A Yes, I will. It's difficult - but I'll do my best. Okay. Anna Ziesovic Schwartz - April 1944. Ghetto. So this is the Hungarian, the original. [Reads poem in Hungarian]

Q AND THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION?

A Oh, you want me to translate it. Okay. The Ghetto. - I already gave the name, so...

Out of a few streets with the garden in the center  
Sits our hometown at the edge of the city corner,  
In it, masses of people laden with worry,  
Face an unknown future filled with danger a-plenty,  
On all four sides, ringed by ferocious guards,  
It's a meager living with much pain in our hearts -  
Not knowing what the future holds,  
A pitiful existence - does the free world know?

Dear Mighty God, free us from our bondage,  
Those do we pray to him, tirelessly, silently,  
We are such sure - He will not forsake His chosen  
people,  
He has been our Savior since time eternity.  
And when the handcuffs fall away,  
Painfully we tell our tale, day by day,  
Let our descendents remember it -  
What suffering their predecessors endured here.

Q BEAUTIFUL. BEAUTIFUL.  
WHAT MEMORIES DOES THIS EVOKE FOR YOU?

A Very, very, very, deep, very sad memories. We were still all together at the time, and, I don't know, I haven't seen her - she was the youngest girl, but we had also a younger brother. They were very close, the two of them. I wasn't so close - three years difference was big; I was a bigger girl than she was. And I just, I was always busy looking around, what, maybe we can get some food or, something. I was always outside and I was wandering through the gardens. And there was just a very plain empty room, and the whole family was in that room. And I just couldn't stay in - I never could. I can't stay in, even now - indoors. But I was always out, wandering outside, walking around in the garden. And I just, I wasn't aware of it. It - after she told me that she has written these, the poem, that, very faintly came back. I didn't pay that much attention to it because of the very, very sad and bitter times over there. It was just, no food and we just didn't know what's facing us. What were we - where we are going from there.

Q WHO WERE THE FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE ROOM?

A The family members were, mother - our mother, who was very young still, 46 years old - my married sister, with her baby, Blanche. Her father-in-law, she had her father; her husband was in the forced labor camp. And then, my second older sister, Edith was there. Our brother was there for a while, the older, David was there for a while, but then he was taken into forced labor camp. They had to go in - the ones who were born in '23, he was 21 years old and - it was like the induction. Like, getting into the army normally, this, but they were taken into forced labor camp, and they were allowed to go out - the young men. But for a while, until that call came, he was still there with us. And then, myself, my sister, Anna, and a little brother, Alex. That's in one room that was given to us from the landlady - was also Jewish. I mean, this was in the ghetto. Her house was taken; she emptied a room to let people come in because they had to make room for the people. We were coming in from the surrounding areas, from the surrounding towns, villages and that was the center. That was where the ghetto was created. In [Solosz?].

Q YOUR SISTER WRITES OF THE PITIFUL EXISTENCE...

A Yes, it was a very pitiful existence. There was nothing to do. And there was no, again, no food, nothing. Nothing to look forward, nothing to prepare, nothing, we were just waiting there.

Q DID YOU EVER FIND ANYTHING IN THE GARDEN?

A There was nothing in the gardens, no. And I think we talked about this in my first session, it's quite clear, but I remember that my mother brought me in a little dish - little mashed potatoes and I ate it. And then I looked at her. She was standing by me and watching me eating it and then I said: "My God, I didn't ask her if she had anything to eat." That was very, very painful - the thought, after-thought.

Q YOUR SISTER ALSO WRITES ABOUT THE FEROCIOUS GUARDS...

A Yes, the guards were watching us. You couldn't take, you couldn't - who was talking about escaping or getting out. We were locked in. We couldn't move. We couldn't get out. We couldn't do anything. We were like in a box there. I remember that, just boxed in. I don't know how big the area was, I couldn't tell you how many streets were surrounded, or... I just don't remember that so clearly. But I remember sitting out there in the garden and our rabbi came and asked me: "What are you doing? How are you feeling?" And I said: "I'm terrible, I'm hungry." But, and he was all dressed up and an orthodox rabbi, they had their garb, you know, their strict wear, their black overcoat, like the caftan. But the caftan wasn't worn like, weekdays. That was more, like they put on a caftan and a belt - it's a strict black outfit. And here he was dressed in boots and he had ride, like riding boot on and all prepared and walking around. Looking around. I don't think he could do very much himself. There just was - I don't know if anybody brought in any food. Maybe once, somebody brought us something - but very, very bad, very sad memories about that. But it was the last, the last few weeks that we were all together with our mother. As I said, my father died at home in 1940, so he was buried at home, with a big funeral. But at least he didn't go through this horrible experience of being taken. When we were, I don't know if I mentioned that, when we were taken away out of the ghetto that my uncle was walking up... the makeshift, as we were putting we were taken into those cattle cars

There was like a board put up to the door, from the ground to the door, to climb up.

And my uncle was in front me and one of the guards kicked him so hard: "Move, you Jew!" that his hat flew off his head and it was right ahead of me. I was behind him. And I remember that so well. His children didn't see it. I was talking to my cousin about it and she wasn't aware of it, because I was right behind him.

Q HOW OLD WAS HE?

A He was about 64. We were trying to calculate the time. He was about 64 years old.

Q WHERE DID THE GUARD KICK HIM?

A In the back.

Q HAD HE BEEN IN THE SAME ROOM, WITH THE REST OF THE FAMILY?

A No. They were - that was another family, my uncle with his wife and the children and... I won't go into this detail because you have from my cousin. She has - except that she didn't see it. I talked to her about it. She has done this project. She was in it. But our, I, she didn't see - I just told her what happened at the time that I was behind her father, my uncle. And what happened, what a serious, what a traumatic experience that was. But they lived in another house - they had another room also. Everybody just had a room, already there.

Q WAS THERE ANYONE WHO WAS GETTING FOOD WHEN YOU ??

A We had a bakery, as I described it before. And there was the baker with his family. And I was thinking about that, if they were able to get some flour, some food must have come in. Because when they gathered us to go for the transport, they said to come to the bakery and everybody got some... it was like Passover time, it was a bread but it was baked very fast. It wasn't as flat as a matzo but it was some kind - a flat, fast baked bread. And they gave us a few, but this was at the end, when we were going.

And nobody ever touched it because we couldn't eat at that time anymore, and as I remember, we had it in a bag. And that was my seat, I don't know, I was sitting, I was put under the window in the cattle car and the family, everybody sat round.

We were sitting around those - leaning against the walls, and I was under the window and I was sitting on that bag and the food. Nobody paid any attention to that. That was my seat. I remember, I just don't know it. So strange to me how this all came about. Here we hungry and - well, for later. We were always holding onto something for later. Nobody ever ate anymore - for later, in fact, later we also had some with the three sisters together in Auschwitz. We were always from the little bread that we got - we got one piece, because we were three together and we divided it ourselves, because one little loaf of bread was given for five people. We were in lines. We were five, you know, when they were counting us - ??? - in Auschwitz. We were five in a row. And the three of us, the three sisters, we tried to hold together. And then, we had a piece of bread. And we ate just so much - a slice and we always tried to save a little slice for later. I don't, we didn't eat it right away. Awful thing happened. I have to - this is not the ghetto, I am already in Auschwitz. But this is an awful thing, because my older sister, Edith, was taking care of it - of the bread, of the little thing that we saved up. And when we were standing [sennappel?] it had to be hidden. And one day she says: "Eva, you take care of it for once." And I wasn't used to it; I put it down on the ground as we were standing there, by my feet. I forgot about it when we were let go, finished with the counting. I left it there when we... I was - that was terrible. I was somehow, the one who always provided. I was out and I was always getting something and I managed to bring - I was always getting something from here and there. Even in Germany when we were - they were always giving me and I got into trouble. Once very serious trouble - I got a piece of cake. I'm getting ahead of myself.

Q BUT YOU HAD DIFFICULTY GETTING SOMETHING IN THE GHETTO?

A In the ghetto was awful. Was, I don't know, I felt, I myself, the kind of feeling that I had, was like it's not happening to me. I always try to block myself out. It's a funny thing because again, I'm doing yoga and I didn't know how you really can command your mind and how you can calm yourself. But it was just something, like it's in a haze.

I do remember pretty vividly pretty much, almost everything. And as I talk, it may come back to me, in details and things. But when it was very, very, very bad, it was like I - I don't know if I tried - it was just my, probably my nature, just to clam in and just be quiet. Some people may be noisy - crying, shouting. I was just always very quiet and always sitting there and just keeping for myself, in a very quiet way. Pulled back; pull in. And so what's gonna happen, what can I do about it? Now we just really couldn't do a thing. We couldn't do anything at that point. We were there, with the tide, whatever they...

Now that I hear how the war was progressing and how things were going, I just feel that the Germans knew that they are losing the war at that point in 1944, in April they took us to the ghetto. And then, a month later, in May, we were taken to Auschwitz. They kept all the cards and all the military, their... - to do the job with the Jews. It was such an important matter for them, to get rid and to kill that they didn't concentrate, that much, on their war duties, or activities, or winning the war. I guess Hitler knew he was losing the war. He knew it in Mein Kampf - he wrote it that he's gonna lose the war. And they still were ready to do the job, just to kill as many as they could of the Jews.

Q WERE THERE DAYS WHEN THERE WAS NO FOOD?

A In the ghetto?

Q IN THE GHETTO.

A Yes. Yes, I don't know how did we manage, how did it go through there, with a baby, an eighteen month old baby - and my sister breastfeeding the baby. And what did she have to eat? How did we not go mad under the circumstances?

It's beyond me. I don't where the food came, but how does a person - how long can a person survive without food? I don't know.

Q TELL US ABOUT THE DAY YOU LEFT THE GHETTO?

A I should even remember. I should know the day, but I don't know what day it was. It was a week before [Shavours?] and I don't that year what day was it. I don't know - somehow, Thursday clicks.

We were, yeah, as I mentioned before and I don't know about what time period this was, whether it was two weeks after we were in the ghetto when my brother was taken and several of his friends - the ones who were born in 1923. The 21 year olds. And, I can see I cannot recall the exact date of the timing when they were taken out. But then, an announcement came - the guards came and said this section so and so many people, come, line up and gather and whatever. Take whatever you have, your little personal belongings, whatever was left there, after leaving home and getting into the ghetto. I - we had very little personal things left. "Gather your things, families by families." They were very cautious, shall I say. I mean, they put emphasis on that, to get families together, to line up and go. And they marched us to the railroad station. I'm sure we went by foot - yes? Yes, we went by foot. I just remember being there and loading up. They put 80 - 100 people, 80, 90, a hundred people in one of those carts. Everybody, just, wherever they were - they sat down. And our family was in one corner, and my uncle and the cousins were next to us. And rest of the people. There was crying - there was no bathroom - there was no water...

I remember, it was raining and we put a little cup out through the little window - there were wires on the little window. And got a little water in - some rain water, to have a little drink. That much I remember and then I remember, it was several days. Now, [Solosz?] from up north to go. We didn't know where we are going. We knew we are going to Poland. But, nowadays there is - distances are not as big as they were at that time, going by railroad from our town, which, we were in the Carpathan to go into Poland. It's probably, what would you think, nowadays?

Q NOTHING, FIFTY MILES.

A Fifteen miles. Up north, maybe we had to go.

Q NO, IT'S NOT FAR.

A Not that far, but it took about two and a half to three days to get there. When they opened the doors and they had everything, then the guards came.

And what I have experienced, what I have heard now, that they were some guards in Auschwitz. So, we arrived to Auschwitz. There were some, I do remember young men in stripe suits with, they even had a hat on. We thought they were some kind of prisoners, but we were not aware. And I heard that some of them gave - very, very quietly instructions to some people.

"Give the baby to this older person there," - to give, to hand the babies over. If a younger - like a mother was holding a child, sometimes they - I didn't hear it and it didn't happen there where we were. Because my sister, Blanche was 24 years old and my mother was 46 and she had the 12 year-old, the youngest brother with her. And my sister had the eighteen month old son, the baby. And nobody said anything. It's just occurred to me now to talk about that now, about those young men who were in - sometimes it was a very strict thing for them, if they would have been caught. They would have been executed. They didn't... so I didn't - it didn't happen to us. It didn't happen there.

Q WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE BABIES WERE GIVEN TO THE MEN?

A Well, they went with the older people and they were... That Mengele, I don't believe that he is dead. I don't know - it doesn't matter. But I still cannot - it was in the paper last week, a few weeks, they were still talking. Last week, I think, in the Jewish Bulletin.

Q YOU'D GIVE THE BABY TO AN OLDER PERSON TO ALLOW THE MOTHER TO LIVE.

A Allow the - yes.

Q ?? IS THAT CORRECT?



They were working, either sanitation or whatever work they were given. And the women were listening to them talking and they said: "What do you imagine - where are your - where are the older people, where are the little children."

"Well, they are on the other side, on the other side of the wires."

There was no other side. They were, they were all cremated - gassed and cremated. And as our block eldest - that was our leader who was called because, as I mentioned before, from Slovakia and from Poland, some from Poland - but mainly the Slovakian women, the young ladies were taken - '42, '43 already. I don't know where they were taken before, but they wound up, whoever survived, they were taken to Auschwitz. And then, they were our eldest - block eldest. They were like, they were, if we were 500 women in one of those blocks, in one of those buildings - she was above us. And we had Marika, I remember, I was in number 3. We were in number 3. We, because the three of us, and I had my cousins, we were a group. We were ten of us together, close together, which was very important.

Q WHO WERE THE TEN?

A Ten with my cousins. We were like that, the three of us, the three sisters and then, I had a friend from our town, from [Krauwe?] or [Kirihazel?] - that town, Hungarian, Zelda Junger, she was a friend. And she had a cousin. So the five of us were in one row. And then we had another - next row - we always stood together, the next five row consists, or consisted of my cousins. And they were, you gonna talk to Isabel, and Nancy was here already. So they were four - and I don't know who was their fifth, because they were the sisters. Let's see - Isabel, Nancy, oh, Blanche - the other Blanche, Elsa and Lily. They were five - they were five together, sisters, and one was a niece. This was family, from my father's side. We were blood relations. We were all family. So they were together, four sisters and a niece. So we stood next to each other - we tried to be together, the ten of us.

Q YOU SAY THAT MENGELE WAS THERE TELLING YOU WHERE TO GO - WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?

A Yes, yes.

Q THAT WAS THE REASON FOR THE ADVICE.

A For the advice, given in a very secret way, in a very quiet way - because it was a danger to those... they were [helptlings?] - they were also prisoners. Those young men who warned us. They had a very sad, good job, because they were able to salvage something for themselves. They had clothes or - but, mainly food.

I mean ?? everybody brought something that they had in a little bag or they were able to have a little extra food.

Q WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE CATTLE CAR STOPPED AND THE DOORS WERE OPENED?

A Well, we got out. Everybody was pushed out. I don't remember if they found any dead or.... We didn't look around what was happening. We were taken and trying to be together. What was happening in the surrounding cart - in the area there. But we were by the families out, and my sister holding the baby, my mother is holding the hand of the little brother. And somehow, the three girls, we were somehow together. And Mengele's standing there and he is just right and left, right and left. I don't even know if right is for good and the left was for the old. I can't even recall exactly which meant which. But he was just waving one side and next side. And, so this is how the three of us got together - and, "you gonna see them later, when we got into Auschwitz, you gonna see the rest of them. You get together later." And then, we found out that... there is no later.

Again, I didn't want to believe it when workers, men were coming in and they were sitting down there by our buildings - by the blocks - we used to call, they used to call the area where we lived. They were like, horse barns, whatever. This was Birkenau actually. Wasn't that Birkenau where they took the women's... the 'C' laager.

Q THE WOMEN'S CAMP

A It was Birkenau, it was out of Auschwitz. I don't know how far, but we - they were coming into the  
camps

They said "Dudi," - my brother, David, we called him "Dudi" - everyone, the family, we looked at each other and they called me "Dudi." I looked like my brother. I remember that, and I remember the guards walking around there, and making fun and laughing - the SS guards.

Q WHAT DID THEY SAY?

A I don't know - just laughing. And I guess, they gave us some clothes, without any underwear, just some kind of... Oh yes, we did get - we got a dress, I know, it was a long sleeve dress, the stripe dresses that the men wore - they had some dresses for women. That was taken away from us after. But they gave us a dress to wear.

And then they sent us out and put us into those blocks. And we were on bunk beds, like three layers bunk beds. After a while - oh, and then we were counted - morning, before the sun came up, they lined us up, out of the blocks. Everybody, the whole building, lined up and we had to wait for the SS - the women and men, they came and they counted us. That was morning and night. Twice a day they were counting us.

I'm gonna have a little break - it's very shaky.

[Small pause]

Q EVA, DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST NIGHT AFTER YOU AND YOUR SISTERS WERE IN AUSCHWITZ, THAT YOU WENT TO SLEEP IN THE BUNK TOGETHER AND THEN, WOKE UP THE NEXT DAY?

A Yes, as I said that we were the ten of us together and we tried to be, and I don't know many we were on a - how many was compulsory to get on a bunk - I think it was about ten, so this is how we were staying also together. We were on one bunk and I remember we always called - we said we were like herrings - we were packed on those bunks. The way we were, with one turned, we all had to turn. I think, what we did, we - one row was on one side, and the other row, the five - feet to feet. That's how we were lying on those bunk beds. And I think there were some - maybe a blanket, you know that I cannot recall if we had a blanket to cover ourselves towels or what we had

A Oh, officer, dressed in his officer uniform - very efficient, very neat. And just he had - he had a little stick always in his hand. A little, like a baton, kind of a thing. What I recall - I don't know if anybody ever mentioned this. Somehow, I recall that. And he was pointing with that - right and left, right and left.

And there was the oldest cousin, who had a daughter who was a bit older than me, about a year and a half older. She was Ava also - that's how they were calling me, Ava. She was sent with us, and then she said: "Meine mutter," - this is my mother, and he said: "Okay, you go." And, Isabel's mother was sent to the left, to die - and then Isabel was sent with us, on our side. And she said: "This is my mother," and he didn't let her go. He had her come back. I mean, we all remember that very well, because Ava was let go with her mother, and there she was - I was 18, she was 20. And she went with her mother, to death. And Isabel was sent with us - he didn't, Mengele was - he didn't let her. She was not a pretty girl and I just don't know, he just let her go, he saw her - he saw she was a young girl and he let her go, and Isabel came on our side.

Q AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?

A Oh, my mother had a little - she didn't look so youthful at that point. She was holding the hand of my brother - he was 12 - little Alex. And, she went with my sister, with Blanche and the baby - the four of them were sent to the left. I imagine it was left.

Q AND AFTER YOU AND YOUR SISTERS WERE SENT TO THE RIGHT, WHAT HAPPENED?

A Oh, gosh, this was the hardest times, I imagine, right there in Auschwitz. We were sent to some kind of a bath. I don't know, we were also... they said they took the people who were gassed - they told them they were going to bath. Is somebody knocking - no?

They - we were taken to a bath, we were taken - we were shaved, [indicates head] all the hair - head. And then we all looked at each other - and we started laughing.

What we did if we had two blankets - we put one under ourselves and then we covered with one and we slept. We were young, and we slept and we woke up - where were we? They woke us up, that's right - for counting, [sellappel?] before, or I don't know how early it was. Who knew, who had time limit? Who had a watch, or whatever we were trying to mark the days or hours, I don't know.

It was very, very, cold there early in the morning and then the sun came out. The sun was hot, very damp. They took us out for counting and this continued, I don't know for how long - but then they got us a few days later, or was it a week later... They got us off and they said, for work. We gonna go to work.

And they took us for breaking rocks - I don't know where it was, how far they took us. But it was a pile of rocks and they gave us some hammers and we had to hit some rocks and make small, like, small pieces out of it. It didn't last too long. I don't know how long this lasted, how many days we were doing it. That isn't clear, either. But I know that it was raining and we were out there, and then, on our bare heads, the rain came. And then, as wet as we were, we went in and that's the way we stayed. And that went on for a while, I don't know how long.

And the one thing was very important to me, and to my older sister too - Edith. We didn't take our little sister out if we didn't have to. This was later on, I had another kind - a better job and we somehow, protected her. We kept her, Anna, stayed in. And the same thing my cousins did, they kept, they were, one sister and a niece - they were just less than a year younger than me. They were 17-ish and they stayed on and then we were the providers. We were trying to go out and work, or get something, which, I will describe in a few minutes.

I don't know how soon this came about - but this was a very difficult time, because when I got wet I remember, I had a sore - I still had my tonsils - and I remember, I had a sore throat. And there was somebody in our block, in our barrack that was able, I don't know, she knew a nurse or something - she brought me some medicine. Because I got sort of sick. And she helped me.

And then, later - and the food, again. They gave us - they gave us, I think we had, like a coffee, a plain water coffee, very watery something in the morning. And then at lunchtime - like in Europe, there is noontime is the main meal. At lunchtime they were [stuedienste?] - they were the, who were cleaning, sweeping there and bringing the food in, which was very important. They went to the kitchen, there was a few of them set up - I don't know how many - six or ten women. And they went to get the food to the kitchen. There was a kitchen someplace there. And they brought in - they were in those big containers, like, what would you call - 50 gallons or those huge containers. And then, they dipped in with a pot and I think, if I recall it, the first one in the line always five by the line - the first one got a part and then the next line had to come. And everybody drank from that pot. It was a very thin, a very poor quality, poor name for a soup, for a meal - that was our meal. I don't know what was in the evening, but there was something. Oh yes, we did get a piece of bread and we had to divide it into five. And what they were giving - some margarine, also. There was a little cube of margarine. For a while we were getting that. And that lasted for a while - in between, all those selections and I don't know if this is a repeat, or you heard from other stories, if I should go into...

Q IT'S YOUR STORY.

A But, the selections that have occurred, that Mengele came, and people said: "Selection, Mengele is here." And people had to - we had to line up, undress, and I remember when people that were pale and thin, they tried to get something red to put some color on and Mengele was checking for... I guess for illness, if anybody - they said it's - they are looking for rashes, he was looking for somebody had a rash. I know it had to be with raised arms - naked, undressed and in the line and passing him. And that's how he was. I - three or four, this kind of selections, we must have gone.

We was terribly worried. My sisters are smaller than me and my older sister was... my mother was small, my father was tall and there was six of us.

Three were tall and three were small and the two sisters - the older sister, Blanche was the tall one and my second, brother was, and the rest of the children, the three, were shorter. And the two girls were small - Edith - I mean, much smaller than me. And we were always worried of how to manage to be together, because there was a time when they were selecting for one [laager?] - I don't know, you must have heard about the sigeuner - the gypsy [laager?], the gypsy camp, that that was empty during the time we were there.

One night we heard terribly screaming and crying and I don't how the other people, because I didn't know - maybe, they were little bit older and... twenties, a year or two counted already there, that they were more aware, and more... I wasn't - as I said I was very quiet and very, very sheltered and very, very... and I wasn't so interested in what was going on maybe. But I did know that what's happening - one night was a terrible noise and they knew it, that the gypsies were taken. And they were taken without selection - the whole gypsy, the whole camp was emptied. They took them into the crematorium.

And after that was emptied, they started selecting in our camp - in the 'C' laager camp. And they were trying to take a certain kind of woman, the tall ones they were saying they are selecting. But our block [eltester?], Marike, she said: "Don't go any place, don't go on any selection." She says: "You see, you came in here through that gate, but nobody walked out here, only through the chimney."

They just didn't believe that they let any go into another camp, or taking them out to work. Whoever is selected and taken out of the camp, goes into the crematorium - is gassed, and crematorium. So I saw the chimneys there and again, I, it didn't sink in. Don't ask me how and why. I wasn't such a child, but it was there - I saw it, but I was far away from it.

Q AND THE FIRST TIME MENGELE CAME FOR THIS SELECTION, WAS IT IN THE MORNING?

A I don't think so. It wasn't during the counting, the [appeld?] - the regular, counting time.

This was a separate session, that was a separate program for him - coming to select and take people for selection, always clearing out the skinny ones, the [musselmans?] they would call them, somebody got skin and bones, and sick - so everybody was very careful to look good for him, for his selections.

Q HOW MUCH WARNING WOULD YOU HAVE?

A Pardon?

Q HOW MUCH WARNING WOULD YOU HAVE?

A Warning, very little warning. No, there was no - it's coming, it's here - now. Line up, undress and go, arms up and go for the selection. And so, as I said, I was always worried for us not to be separated. We were always worried about that, to stay together. We tried to stay together. So after this situation in there, we took a while, because altogether we were there from May to October - about six months, is that? And in meantime, after all this hardship and no food and all the things that were going on, one day, across the block - we were in block three. That was our first block from the fences. And across there was like a road, between, and then there was another row of blocks across from our buildings. There was across, another row of buildings. And there were no people in there and it was some kind of a warehouse.

And one day, there are a crowd of people there, and, in the door, and there is an SS man standing. And he was selecting people. He said there is work. And there was a crowd and I stood there in the back. And he reached out, he pointed out and asked me in there to the front - and picked out people, he says: "You gonna be foreman, you don't have to work, and get fifty more people, and then I'll tell you what you have to do." So people were pushing, the crowd started gathering and he gave me a whip and he says... [waves with her hand and hits the microphone] Oh, I hit this. "You make 'em go away." And that was one of those famous rubber whips, which my sister, Edith, was hit by an SS woman - later. And I remember, I waved it a couple of times and I said: "No, I cannot do that." I gave it back to him. He didn't want to take it from me. People were pushing and asking for it.



"I can do it, I show." But then he, I don't know, he just saw that I'm not gonna do it, and he took it from me. And he says: "Okay, you pick the people." Of course, I picked my family and that was our salvation. That was our, I think and they all say, that saved us from Auschwitz - I mean, that we were able to survive.

What happened there - it was a warehouse - they had bedding, they had the, not the sheets, but it was the pillow cases that were European feathers, you know, the European, that the Dutch people came, and the ones that came first. That was all folded nicely. I don't know who set them up there. Quilts, dishes, pots and pans, so we were able - the girls, I didn't have to do it. He says: "You take - everybody takes a big dish, a big pan, and wash the rest of the dishes, the pots and pans out and set them up." And, I don't know, you still have to fold there, some of the pillows, not the cases, but the slips, in what the original feather beds were. They were all taken out, because people were hiding maybe things they were taking with them. They used to put valuables, gold with them. So there was no more - no feathers were there, it was just the material.

So the girls were washing dishes. They took a slip, made an apron out of it. And they used to go out and go to the bathroom, and they said they had to go. And they were selling that, that was a business. They put a couple - selling to the other people for a little food. And they were able to have extra food - our crowd, our bunch of people. Yes, we got bands and Edith, my sister, embroidered it. I wish I would have those things - who thought of saving anything like that? It was called [unterkumft?] - UK. And I had foreman - imagine me, and my sister embroidered mine, and the rest of the people there - so they were allowed to walk around. They were able to get out - not out of the camp, but into that, into the street, into that area where we lived.

And on top of it, we had our own food. I mean, they brought us in a big container, and I was serving the food. We each had our own pot. We already had something of our own, that we didn't exactly share - everybody had a [tepolat?]. And they lined up and I was serving the food.

Now, the reason I am going into this detail is very important, because I don't know how Edith found out some other cousins were in another block. Two sisters, they were brought in from Transylvania a week, or two weeks later than we did. She met them in the bathroom, or I don't know where, we had at the end of the camp, or the [laager?]. There was - also was a barrack like this, but they were bathrooms. And I cannot recall where she met Anna, and her younger sister. But she - Anna told her that - told Edith that the little sister, Ilana, she just doesn't eat - absolutely, she cannot swallow the soup what they are giving and she's gonna die - she's gonna just... she can't. So, I served Edith first - she ran into the other block to bring a pot of food and we - they are alive, both, and they were in Bergen Belsen, or where they had typhus before the war ended. But they are in Israel now and Anna told me - her sister survived because of Edith brought her this food. Edith didn't survive. My sister didn't. But she got this extra food. And this, in Auschwitz - a lot of people were helped this way. So by the time, she brought her the food - by the time she came back, the fifty people, the forty-nine people were served. And she stood at the end and she had her pot of lunch. And that was a better food. It was a little bit thicker, there were some grains in it - barley. I remember that we were able to eat it. She was able to eat it too. And I helped some other cousins and who ever I could - I mean, this was a lifesaver.

It didn't last too, too long, but long enough for us to manage, because somebody discovered it. And there was a mother and a daughter - the daughter was half Jewish, the father wasn't Jewish. And she went to another SS man, who was right there, next block to us. She said she wants my job. And she got it. But it was towards the end. There wasn't very much stuff left there. Because, somehow, this was a little young man - he spoke Hungarian, this SS man who picked me. He was put there because we were Hungarian, so he must have come from Transylvania, not from our area, I don't think - but some place where they were speaking Hungarian. He was trained. And he listened, there were some people there who spoke German and they were older women than I was.

And he listened what everybody was talking and then, he talked to me - Hungarian, one day and... but he saved, he really saved our lives there and this is how we got some extra food.

And, another thing that I'm gonna add to this is we had quilts. We were able to fix up our bunk bed. We had quilts on the bottom and we had a quilt to cover ourselves. The nights were very cold.

And one day, I don't know, I have racked my brain - I thought about this episode, how this came about, how did I find out. There was another camp, another section, which was an unfinished camp - we got into that one later. But there was a mother and daughter who were separated - one was in our camp, the other one was over by... I don't know which was which. And also, my cousins had - there was another Blanche - this is a cousin Blanche who was in that unfinished camp. And they came - they brought them to our warehouse to get quilts, to bring over into their camp. I don't know for who they needed it, who was eligible to get the quilts. But they came - a line of people, I don't know how many came. And I was giving them the quilts. And somehow, I found out that there is a mother and daughter separated. So, I exchanged the two people - the cousin stayed with us - this is Nancy's sister, you know, her older sister. She came from Hungary, from Budapest and so she came with another transport, with another trip. And she was in another camp. And she was there - when I saw her, and we, I don't know how it... - I would have liked to clear this in my mind - how I found out about this mother and daughter separation. But I exchanged these two people, the mother and daughter went together, to that unfinished, to that other camp that was called [Beapschniedraaiz?] - it was an unfinished. There were no wires there. And Blanche stayed with us. So we had her on our bunk and we took her in. I mean, that was a - nobody knew about that. We couldn't say anything like this. But this was a very big event, a big thing to occur at that time over there - that we found her and I was able to get her. Because from then on she stuck to me. And big things were happening - the sisters were separated. But she ran away and she came, climbed into the window, Blanche, and wanted to stay with me, where I was. And Blanche was almost six years older than me, but I was the captain. That was just amazing.

I mean, I was - I was just really amazed with myself, how this whole thing came about and how it was done. The whole workmanship over there - working.

And it lasted for a while, it may have lasted a couple of months, that we were able to pick up and not being completely down like those poor people were. They were - I don't know - forty or fifty thousand Hungarian women in that one camp, in that one - the 'C' laager. So, this was a big break for us. So we had extra food, extra help and one day, after that, I mean, I remember her name was Lily - this girl, oh, must have been about my age who took over. But it fell apart. After that the whole thing fell apart. It was, I don't know, it was going towards the end, in the fall.

So that didn't exist anymore and then there were selections - some more Mengele's coming. More selections and then, once they picked us out - 300 people from our block. From block 3 - 300 people for work. Germans came from Germany and they said, they need people with good eyes, with good hands - some kind of work - what it is. But where I go they wanted to go, they wanted - my cousins and everybody they would have liked - so we were together still, at that time. We were selected and were still small group.

They took us to change for bath and into another laager, into another camp. I think that's when they took us over to the main building, to Auschwitz, because that was a brick building. And I think that's what it was. I have not, never gone back. I just saw it on pictures now, of the brick, that was just, I remember, on the other side of the wire.

Oh, something very, very traumatic happened one day, that my sister came in, running - that she saw somebody touched the wire, the high-powered wires. And that went up into a flame, like a charcoal - burned up. And it was, she was even more sensitive than me, and it was just a very, very terrible experience for her, I remember her.

And during this whole time when we were working there, the three younger kids were on the bunk beds. They were sitting there and maybe that's when my sister wrote the poem

And she wasn't working - we tried, the two older ones, we tried to protect her and keep her there. And she may have written that poem at that time. But I started saying about this selection, about this, this was a different kind of selection - this was for work, they said - to go to Germany. And we believed it, although Marika said: "No." And so they took us, and what happened I don't know. We don't know what was the reason, which we thought about it after we came home and talking about it, we said that perhaps it was occupied, or it was the end there or whatever they wanted us to do. Those factories were probably - already not existing. And so they brought us back.

And I think that's when we have gotten taken into this unfinished camp when they brought us back. We couldn't go back to the 'C' camp - we were taken into that 'B3' - [Beappschniedrei?] - that's I remember what they called it. There were no barbed wire, but there was selection there and that was a cruel time. That was very, very bad there. Again, there was no food and no work and nothing doing - and selections. So, it was bad.

And then we were selected once more. We were selected, er, taken, for work and then it was 500 people. Is this clear? Do you know that's it's not clear when we got into that 'B' camp, whether - because after we were selected for the 500 people - yes, they brought us back. That's right. They brought us back, because we were still together. Up till when they selected the 500 - then, they selected us 500 again, that they need us for work, to take us - we going to Germany. I don't know if they told us - to Germany, but we gonna be taken out of Auschwitz. And that's when the cousins - they had a couple of them who were sick, in fact, one of them had scarlet fever. And we were all together - only one caught it from her. And they were not in such good shape. They were not picked, we were not picked together, but my sisters, the three of us were taken into the five hundred. And that's when Blanche escaped from another building and climbed into the window and came and wanted to be with us. And we were watched, I mean, there were watchmen around, watching the front, where the door was. And our block, it was they couldn't imagine how did we become five hundred and five. They counted us - 501. How did that one person get here

It was a very puzzling thing to her, and they probably had to take somebody out, this was 500 people.

Then, we were taken - we were taken, at night, to the railroad station, put into those cattle carts, but only 50 by 50 people, and not to the gas. Not to the crematorium, but we are taken some place. And then, in the evening, the door opened and I jumped up and I went in to the door, see what they gonna give us - food for a couple a days and we gonna travel. This is a good sign, I guess, we were saying. And so, we got food, counted it and everybody sat on the floor there, and we traveled - they took us to Germany. So, I'm out of Auschwitz. We are out.

Q THIS IS OCTOBER?

A And this is October of '44. We arrived - we didn't know where, but this is Germany and this is Saxongebied. Sittau was the name.

Q YES, I KNOW IT. I KNOW OF IT.

A You know of it and we belonged to Breslau. We were not, we didn't get tattooed in Auschwitz. We didn't - our group of people didn't. But we belonged to Breslau, and in Sittau, and we were out of town. Sittau was out of town and we were taken out. That's where they had a [vlogs?] factory - the airplane.

Q BACK IN AUSCHWITZ, WITH THE SELECTIONS, AND MENGELE, CAN YOU RECALL ABOUT HOW MANY TIMES MENGELE CAME THROUGH?

A During our, my time? I would say, between 4 and 6. Not too - too, we didn't go through too many times. I didn't. I don't know how many other people. It may have been between four and six selections.

Q DID HIS APPEARANCE, OR ATTITUDE, EVER CHANGE?

A No. There was a snotty face, a very arrogant, very self-assured and a good-looking man in a uniform, trim boots, I mean, you know, the German SS uniform that they wore.

Do you know, looking back at the picture - the face, I don't know if I would have recognized, because I didn't look at him, that much. In order, I'm bad with names, but with faces, I'm good and I really don't know if I would have - without his uniform and his appearance, if I would have really recognized him. Not just the change with age, but if I etched it in, in my mind - his face, that clearly. I don't know if I would have recognized him. It was just somebody to fear and to dread.

And there was one girl, I remember, we were talking, she said that she has twin sisters. And I knew about it - she told me that they are some place, separated - that they are young children, and that they were some place, and she knew about it. I don't know how - if she was in touch, or she got messages from them. But that they were somehow, about some experiment, which I didn't understand at all, at the time - what it meant - that they were kept alive. Twins. She, I remember, I can see this woman before me - her face. And that's what she was telling me. And that he's a doctor, we knew that he was a doctor.

Q WHAT WORDS WOULD HE SPEAK?

A Not very much. There was no, as I say, I just remember the hands, or baton, or just movements. There was no - he wasn't yelling at us, he wasn't, no - it was not, nothing in particular, that I just knew that we have to dread him. That we have, we don't want him to come and see us.

Q WHEN HE POINTED AT SOMEBODY - WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

A When he pointed at somebody, he wanted out of the line. They were taking out - separate, because there was something, we knew that this is the end. That's death. We knew that.

Q DID IT HAPPEN TO PEOPLE YOU KNEW?

A No. No.

Q AND WHEN YOU WERE TAKEN TO THIS 'B' CAMP - WERE THERE SELECTIONS THERE AS WELL?

A There were - not too often. There were. At that time, I remember, Edith was already very worried. She was already very much afraid. It didn't take long - see, no matter if you can go without food, or less food. But we had, and it was a good base, a little bit, we picked up, during the time we had a little extra food there - during the time I was working. And the rest of the girls, with me. That - but it still didn't last that long, and even so, that as the Hungarians were taken last - and fourteen months, and you say, "What is that comparing to the ones that suffered - the Germans from '39. '33, maybe." '39 when the war broke out - in Poland, what was going on. And all through the time, I mean, the people were taken and they build - the prisoners, the [heftlings?] they built Birkenau. That was built by the prisoners. That they were there all those years - that we came the last year. But still, just go hungry for a week and you gonna see what happens to human beings and what happens to the system and how you endure life without food. So, even so, we had a little bit, we picked up a little bit during that period - maybe for a couple of months. When we got into that 'B' laager, where there was nothing again, you go down the drain very quick.

Q WAS IT MENGELE WHO CAME IN THERE?

A He came. He came once. We didn't stay there too long, but he came about during the time that we were there. I remember that Edith was hiding under the blankets and we were afraid to go together and we were worried about her. He came once, I don't recall any more selections in there, than just that one time. But it was cruel.

Q WHEN MARIKA SAID TO YOU - YOU MENTIONED, SHE TOLD YOU, DON'T GO TO THE SELECTIONS, WHERE COULD YOU HIDE? HOW COULD YOU NOT GO?

A Well, this was... No, we had to go, there was no place to hide when it was, when Mengele came for the, this kind of a selection. There was no way out.

But, when we were talking about, that they are picking us, selecting us, for work, that there is somebody coming to take us to work, she just did not believe it. She said that is impossible.



Nobody, nobody was taken out from here before and there is just no truth to it.

Q OF THE WORK THAT YOU DID WHEN YOU WERE IN AUSCHWITZ - FIRST YOU SAID YOU WERE BREAKING UP ROCKS...

A The rocks, yes.

Q WITH WHAT?

A With some hammers. We got hammers - we used hammers. Young girls there - I don't know, we have never done anything, any work. And they gave us hammers and we sat down there with a pile of rocks, just, what is gonna happen with them. We didn't know if there was any use for 'em. What - how much was there done - I don't know if we achieved anything. I don't remember. I just remember the horrible weather and the situation and the degrading happening, the situation that we were put into. It was, we knew that there is no use. It's not for anything that they want to use. It was just a - just for us, OK, so we did it. Work had to be done, I mean, you couldn't say, no, I'm not going.

Q YOU BECAME A FOREMAN, OR FORE-PERSON, WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THE JOB THAT YOU WERE OVERSEEING?

A I was overseeing the people, that they do the washing the dishes. It was really mainly, that we were able to get our hands on some extra food. But I didn't have any hard, any big responsibility - it was just seeing that the people washed the dishes. That was mainly what they had to do - washing the dishes, the pots and pans. There were no china wear. They were pots and pans.

Q WITH THE BED LINEN THAT YOU SOLD, WHAT WOULD THEY BE USED FOR?

A There were some people, they got hold of... I don't know how they got hold of needles and thread. They were able, they were colorful, pink and blue and I remember, that some friends from our town, made me a blouse. They were sewing, making things out of it, they were sewing it, some clothes. Put together in a miraculous way. Really, they - I don't know what else - but I remember a blouse very clearly. I wore that blouse that they made and I gave them a sheet for it not a sheet but a slip for it

- Q AND YOU SAID YOU FIXED UP THE BUNK WHERE ALL OF YOU SLEPT.
- A The bunk, where we were able to have - no, we didn't have pillows, because those were no feather pillows you know, they were just the slips. But we had quilts, we had silk quilts on our bunk, for the rest of Auschwitz that we stayed in that block, in number three, with Marika.
- Q AND WHEN THESE LINENS WERE SOLD FOR EXTRA, YOU SAID FOR EXTRA FOOD, TO WHOM WOULD THEY BE BARTERED?
- A To the [stube?] in the other... there were nurses, there were mostly people who were working, helping out in every block. You know, I wish I would know, exactly, if we were in number three, how many blocks, you, aren't you aware of it, how many buildings there were? If there were twenty five. People who went back, they already knew... I know there was a very, very first video-tape or film about an English woman - Kitty, was her name. I don't know if any one of you ever saw it. I remember it years ago.  
She was one of the very first who was - I think she was Polish and she was saved with her mother. And she was swimming and really, she was at least three years in Auschwitz.
- Q I SAW IT.
- A Did you see it? At least three years. And she went back with her sons. She has two sons and he's a doctor and they went back to Auschwitz together. This just came back to me, you know. Because I remember her mentioning that she was in number 25, or somehow numbers - me having numbers in my head. So there must have been a lot of those blocks. If there were fifteen on each row - there must have been... And, I don't know...
- Q YOUR SISTER ANNA ALSO WROTE A POEM ABOUT AUSCHWITZ - COULD YOU SHARE THIS WITH US AS WELL?
- A Okay, is this the - Okay. Anna Ziesovic Schwartz Meyers - [reads Hungarian poem].... and this is the translation...  
Auschwitz.  
In my hand, I am twirling the pen silently.

The paper in front of me, wordlessly, patiently.  
My mind in turmoil - thoughts reeling, forcing to  
put down on paper my personal feeling,  
My imagination is wandering far, far away,  
Beyond the barbed wire, somewhere...  
Watching in front of me tortured people marching to  
the field,  
Tired, starving women - lining up for a poor meal.

Searching, observing, listening and questioning -  
Where are my relatives? Where are my siblings?  
But everywhere I look, there is an unknown face -  
what of my sweet mother?  
No sign, no trace.

Oh, if only I could catch a glimpse of her kindly  
face,  
If only I could plant a kiss on her bloodless lips,  
But these are my hopeless daydreams - broken and  
dispirited do I stand here.  
And yet, with suffering, Jews do not despair.  
Clinging to hope that freedom is near - this inhuman  
bondage will come to an end,  
And no German will ever rule us with whip in hand.

Q THAT'S BEAUTIFUL.

A Thank you, that was a fifteen year old girl.

Q THAT WAS WRITTEN IN AUSCHWITZ?

A In Auschwitz. And she wrote me this little note -  
she added and right now when she send me - we saw  
each other but she wanted to mail it. I don't know  
why. She says - shall I read this?

Q YES, YES PLEASE DO.

A [Reads] It's amazing even to me now, to see the kind  
of hope and convincing trust we had in Auschwitz.  
He will help us and will not let us perish. It's  
quite revealing. [Interrupts reading to comment]  
But, interesting that she says that she had hope -  
but I had a feeling and I was talking about it,  
that, why exactly, everybody, if people are killing,  
dying and being killed - how come us, exactly, we  
are gonna be left living - why? Why us? Why would  
we be left to live? And I mentioned that later to a  
German, in Germany, when we were - soldiers that we  
were working with

He says: "Oh yes, you will stay alive." That was already towards the end. That was already in '45 in the winter.

[Continues reading] At this early stage, in Auschwitz, I still had hope that the rest of the family is housed somewhere, beyond the barbed wire, in different parts. We didn't know yet, the full truth. The pen and paper was a stub of pencil and scrap of discarded paper that she was writing on. She just send this little note, with the poems to me.

Q HAS SHE WRITTEN OTHER POEMS?

A No. No, she didn't - but she's a very, very, very highly intellectual - I was the outdoor, I was the sportsman and she was the - her and Edith, they were the scholars. She's very well read and very smart. Very smart.

Q DID YOUR SISTERS TALK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER OR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY IN AUSCHWITZ?

A Oh, I remember very well in the beginning, we discussed and where are they and where could they be. And when are we gonna be together again, as they said when they separated us, that's what they said, that you gonna see each other later. Yes, we did - we talked, we talked. Whatever happened, what happened to them. And then, it was like a very, very big struggle and it was a big...ok... of people - you know, everybody was for himself, very much.

There were cases - there were mothers taking the bite of bread away from their daughters, from... Another town where I got married, in Romania, there were very sad things in there - it was a fight, it was a struggle. People were also, very cruel. And these [stubbendienstens?] in Auschwitz, in those blocks, they were very cruel. They were really, with sticks and if somebody needed to go to the bathroom at night, they were not allowed to get out. They didn't let anybody out. And it was - we lost our humanity, our - they were inhuman, people were inhuman. Selfish - everybody struggled for, to survive, to live. To get a... stealing and my brother, they were marching on the death march - his shoes were stolen, and he couldn't go on.

It was in the winter of - it was in the early spring, or still the end, the end of the winter in '45. Because, before the war ended in Europe, they stole his shoes, his comrades, somebody of the boys. And he couldn't go on without shoes.

Q DID THAT HAPPEN BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SISTERS?

A No. No.

Q WHY WERE YOU DIFFERENT?

A Why was I different? I don't know, but I was always very giving and we had sort of always - why was I different? Okay, I'll jump ahead.

When we were in Germany and we were in airplane factory and I was around the kitchen there. And I got a bowl of soup - I didn't eat it by myself. I don't want to say, I mean, I don't want to make it look like everybody was so cruel and selfish and I wasn't. I wasn't. I carried the bowl of soup upstairs, because we lived - they were, the buildings that we were in, housed in Germany, they were [kaserne?] - how would you call it?

Q BARRACKS.

A Barracks, but they were not barracks because they were more, they were built for soldiers. They had prisoners there - the English prisoners of war, in the next one. We had an upstairs, we had a lower level and an upper level. Well, maybe barracks, but they were not flat barracks, because they were buildings.

Q MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS.

A Multistorey.. barracks.

Q THE DIRECT TRANSLATION FOR [KASERNE?] IS BARRACKS.

A Barracks. So we, I had to go upstairs, that's why I'm putting an emphasis on it. I'm running up with a bowl of soup - to share with my sisters, and I tripped and I fell. And I hurt myself, and a piece of that bowl, it was earthenware, you know, a piece of that thing dug into my finger - all the way to the bone. And I have a little, a little stain, a little mark still there

So we had, it was called an ambulance - we had a doctor, a lady, she worked with her two sisters. They were Slovakian girls. So she, the doctor was a mature lady and her sisters were younger. And as I'm standing there she's putting some clips, didn't stitch it but put something into my - and I fainted from the pain. I know I woke up lying on the bench and she was very angry. "Don't you do that!" I scared her. "Don't you do that to me." But what do I know, what I did. It happened. So this has happened. But this - and after that, I came up, I don't know what time period lapsed, or how long this lasted. But I'm coming up and I said this and this happened to me - they were giving, they had extra soup left in the kitchen, and I was bringing up a bowl of soup and this is what happened to me. So my sister ran down and there was a crowd, a commotion already and as this woman came - started hitting them with those rubber whips, that was given once to me in my hand. And she was hit right on the head - across the ear and she got ill from that time on.

They were still counting us, evening and night. We were standing up in rows there and we were counted. And one day, we had a lengthy [zelapil?] - they were counting and we had to stand there, because they captured a letter, in the gate, it was a big rock. And they captured a letter, one of the girls was corresponding with a English prisoner of war. And I guess, he was giving her, she already spoke English - a, this young lady must have been from Slovakia. These girls, maybe they were in their twenties. And maybe he was writing about situation, politics. I don't know what was going on, but they wanted to know who the person is, who is the one. Who is the guilty one. And who is the one who is getting the letters. And we were standing for a long time there, and my sister collapsed during, and she got ill from then on. She didn't want to eat whatever food we had and I kept going to the kitchen. I was trying, I was baking a potato in the ashes for her, they let me go to the kitchen somehow, I was able to push myself in there. But she didn't want to. I was trying to bring her some, and she couldn't. I mean, by that time, something must have gotten injured in the head, for sure.

Q THIS WAS EDITH?

A This was Edith

But she didn't want to. I was trying to bring her some and she couldn't - I mean, something must have gotten injured in the head, for sure.

Q THIS WAS EDITH?

A This was Edith.

Q WHEN YOU LEFT AUSCHWITZ, WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS OF YOUR FAMILY?

A Who was left?

Q AS YOU LEFT AUSCHWITZ TO GO TO GERMANY.

A About the family who was left? Who we came with, or...?

Q AS YOU LEFT AUSCHWITZ, IN THE CATTLE CARS, DID YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR FAMILY OR TALK ABOUT IT?

A Generally - the family at home, or the family that we have left in Auschwitz, or that we came with? The family that we came together?

Q YES.

A I don't think we already gave too much thoughts. I don't think that we were, we, somehow, it had to be clear that there isn't any. Where would they be - all the people that were coming? Somehow it was a space, it was out - out of the picture. It wasn't there with us.

Q DID YOU ACTUALLY - DID YOU VISUALISE WHAT HAD ACTUALLY HAPPENED? DID YOU THINK ABOUT... DID YOU REALIZE IN YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR SISTER, BLANCHE?

A No, no I couldn't. No, no, no.

Q SO YOU JUST BLOCKED IT OUT.

A Just blocked it out. And maybe it was now or later, when I saw [showar?] and I saw the people that were working inside there, in the gas chambers and who were explaining. I realized that maybe it was even better.

I mean, how could you even have imagined of what's going on in there, or how they did it or what they did, or how they were killing the multitude of people that was arriving and that is no place. After six months we didn't get to see each other.

Q EVEN IN AUSCHWITZ, YOU DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS ACTUALLY HAPPENING WITH THE PEOPLE WHO WENT TO THE LEFT?

A Not in the details. I mean, they said that they died, or like Marike was telling us, you came in, in the big gate. And when we came in - now that we are about it, it came a little detail about the music, about the orchestra that they had there set up. That when we were coming in, and the sign: 'Arbeid magt frei.' And I remember seeing that. But she says: "You came in, in through that big gate, but nobody has gone out alive - out the chimney." But I never heard about a crematorium before, I didn't know, I couldn't absolutely could not imagine or we couldn't, even in my dreams, to visualise it. To see it, what was happening, what was going on... How? How that was conducted?

Q DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?  
I HAVE A SMALL QUESTION - IT'S TRIVIAL - WHEN YOU GOT YOUR PRISON UNIFORM, DID YOU GET ANY SHOES? DID YOU GET ANY FOOTWEAR?

A What did we have on our feet?

Q WHAT DID YOU HAVE ON YOUR FEET?

A What did we have? I don't know if we were able to keep our shoes. No, we were not. Oh no, because people were hiding in heels - things. What did they give us? Do you - blank again. I don't know.

Q WOODEN CLOGS?

A No. For sure, not. An open shoe - a sandal... what did I have? What did I have on my feet, because I know that I jumped a puddle there, from the rain. It was like, clay - it was wet. I jumped a puddle and I sprained my ankle. I didn't have my Nike's on - that I walk in everyday. I don't know what kind of shoes we had. They give us when they gave us the... That is a trifle question. It's a very, very important.



Q WELL, IT'S SMALL BUT IT'S - SOME PEOPLE HAD WOODEN CLOGS...

A No, they didn't give us wooden... I'd never had... ja. Ja, maybe the wooden clogs were even, also given to the Dutch or that style of - not at the beginning. Maybe beginning, but not for us. God, I - if anybody remembers, but I don't. I don't know what I had on my feet. Must be something open, kind of a sandal.

I sprained my ankle and there was a distant relative - she was a nurse from [Muchachevo?] - you heard, you know where [Muchachevo?]...

Q NO.

A You know [Ushkarod?], uh, [Ungoire Ushkarod?] - that was the capital of Carpathian.

Q [USHKAROD?] I KNOW, THAT'S ALL.

A [Ushkarod?] yeah, she was working there and she sat me down and she was massaging my ankle, the one that was sprained. Rose, Rose, was her name - she didn't come back. Schreiber, Rosie Schreiber. I don't know, I - it's not coming back. It's not even the thought. I mean, but it is important to me now that you have said it. That you asked me - that you mentioned it.

I know that I got a pair of shoes from somebody when we were in the 'B' camp. Somebody brought me some clothes and gave me - I had a pair of shoes. I remember those - they were a high top, lace up shoe. But I don't remember, at this point, what they gave us. And if it was taken away again - because when we were selected for the 300, the people to go to work. What did they call them? Transport, with the transport. 300 - and then we returned, and then we went with the 500. What kind of shoes did I have, if I saved my high top shoes to go to Germany? That was the winter. We were going into the winter.

But that prison garb that was taken away at that time, and I have gotten a very light dress and that's where I was through the winter in [Sitau?], in that work camp in Germany. And I did get the prison garb, which was a dress.

I did have a jacket over it, over that thin, thin dress, a little summer - very, very frail dress. I had a jacket over it. One of those - it must have been a man's jacket because they had the suits. So I had - the dress was taken, but I had that striped jacket. Oh, so my sister got very sick there. That was very sad time.

Q BEFORE WE GO ONTO [SITAU?] - BACK IN AUSCHWITZ, YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU HAD ARRANGED FOR AN EXCHANGE WITH A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER - HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO DO THAT?

A That's exactly what doesn't come. What doesn't - what is not clear to me and I cannot, for the life of me, I cannot recall how I found out about the situation. About the mother and daughter being separated. And how they knew about each other. How did I know that they are there and then Blanche, when Bobby came, we, I just simply - if the daughter was there with us, Blanche came into her place. And she went into Blanche - because we were counted - there were no names, just head counts. So the same amount of people went back with the quilts. But I been trying to figure out. And I said, Bobby, how am I ever gonna, not very long ago, I said: "How did I - how did we find out, how did I know about this?" I don't know. I don't know, she doesn't know anything, but - she doesn't remember a thing. This cousin.

Q WHEN YOU GOT OFF THE CATTLE CARS IN GERMANY, WHAT HAPPENED?

A Okay, we were lined up and we were walking. They took us, I think, some people came from the factory there and we were with... Oh, they were in each cattle car, with the fifty women, there were two soldiers in, watching us. And they ate almost the same thing as we did for the two days. Had little salami and bread and that's what they were eating. I don't know if they were SS or Wehrmagt.

Q SS

A All SS. They didn't say anything to us, they didn't do anything. But I was, I stood up there on my two feet and I was counting the bread in - and what do you think? I had an extra bread left. And I shared that of course with my cousin

And when they let me go, the SS came and he says... I don't know, I was bitter. I don't know what they doing to me. I go in and there is no dinner for me. It was after dinner, so I didn't get any dinner. But twenty people in the room and nobody gave two spoons of food - leave it to Eva. I didn't have any dinner. Nobody gave me any. So that was that. It just seems like it - I didn't forget that.

Q HOW DID THAT CAKE TASTE?

A I don't know, I don't know. But I know that, there were women, German women, who used to come and check our work. And she complimented on my teeth. And I said: "I don't know, I haven't had a toothbrush for a year." And she says: "Listen, I bring you a brush and I give it to you in the bathroom." And she told me when we gonna meet. She brought me next day a toothbrush with a toothpaste. And I shared my toothbrush with my sisters. Oh, Edith broke the handle on it and she was so upset. She was so sorry, but this was really, really something.

Q AFTER YOU GOT TO THE BARRACKS, WHEN DID THEY ASSIGN YOU WORK?

A Very soon after - very soon. They brought us in and they were called halls. They arranged I think - I think I was in Hall 18, I remember. And they separated us, the sisters. We were not having, we each had two girls, one soldier. They were showing us, we had to work for them. And that was the only time where we were not assigned to one table, to one certain area. But we were of course, in the same factory and in the same - but the halls and the sections were divided. So we worked there - well, we worked there from October till May.

Q WHAT DID YOU DO?

A What did we do? As I said, that I worked in an airplane factory and that's why the Germans were on the war. We were - we had tools, small tools. That's right, that's why they were checking. They said the hands, the fingers and the eyes of being able to put... they were airplane parts, you know. They were taken apart and I don't know, screwdrivers, whatever they were called. I don't the little tools what they were. And I remember like a barrel type of a thing and an opening on the top

I mean, not talking about my sisters. But I had a bread for my work. I knew I have to be on my two feet.

But we got into Germany and we were walking. They took us, we were lined up. And tell me that the people - the German people didn't know a thing. What did they think we were, when we walked through from a railroad station, through the town and going into - out of town. Because we were not in town. These barracks, this factory, the airplane factory was out of town. That's where they took us.

They brought us in, we were twenty to a room, or I don't know if there was a big room. Maybe there were more people to a room. We each had - they were double bunk beds there, we each had a bunk for ourselves. We had some steam heat, we had some pipes there. We were able to wash whatever we had and hang it up for the night. We had a blanket to cover ourselves. That was, comparing to what I hear, what people have done, we were not on a death march from there. We were liberated there.

And I was always getting a little bit, a little bite here and there. They were giving me, and I got into trouble there too. A German gave me a piece of cake and I didn't eat it. I put it in my pocket. And somebody in another part of the factory, they were missing a towel. Somebody stole a towel. I have to tell this story, because it was how I got punished for nothing. And they couldn't find it. Who took the towel; what did they do with it? So we went back into our barracks and I was beat up by our own block [eltester?]. We had a block [eltester?] there too. And I was punished; I had to kneel. But they thought that they found the towel, but they found a piece of cake in my pocket that I had. [German...] she said you got it from the soldier, from them. I said: "Yes." And so they forgot about the towel, because I had the punishment. I had to bear the punishment. So I didn't get dinner that time and for hours I was on the cement - kneeling. Beat up and that piece of cake still in my pocket. I ate it there. After I been there for hours and I ate it. And they already got their dinner.

We were working twelve hour shift. Twelve hours, one week - daytime and twelve hours night shift.

Some part of the airplane, that we had to do things. They were telling us what to do. But I think at that...

Q ALRIGHT, ANYTIME.

A Okay, do you want to know?

Q SURE.

A Go ahead, what was your question?

Q DID YOUR SISTER ALSO DO THE SAME KIND OF WORK?

A Well, yes. We never talked about the work, and I didn't ask them what they are doing or what, because we didn't know. We had no idea what it is. What part - we knew it's a airplane factory. And if you went in to another hall we saw, sort of like, planes lying down, being on like stands, I remember. Different parts, but these were also taken apart - such a little...

Q WERE YOU ASSEMBLING PARTS - WERE YOU CLEANING THEM?

A No, I can't even, the nature of the work, to describe it. I don't know what it was. I just knew that we needed little tools, fine tools. And there was like a place where you had to go, to another hall and ask if you needed a different kind of a tool. The soldiers send us to go and get some kind of a tool - he asked. He describe, or give some kind of a number or something and we had to go down and pick it up for him.

Q DO YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF A PLANE THIS WAS?

A No. No, no, absolutely not. No name, or a number or what kind of a plane, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know.

Q YOU MENTIONED OTHER PEOPLE, IN THE SAME BARRACKS. AN ENGLISH PRISONER OF WAR DID YOU SEE?

A Oh, not in the same - in the next barrack. And after this incident, after this correspondence - they took the Germans. Oh, one day, they took, I don't know where we were that they took a few of us, a bunch of the girls, to work - into the other halls where the English prisoners were

And I don't know - there were bricks, they needed something. And we were - I didn't speak English at that time. And they took us to work with them together, for one short time. I don't know, we were handing, you know, like in a chain reaction, handing bricks, with the [heftlings?] with the Jewish prisoners and the English prisoners. But that only happened once, and after that, when they discovered the correspondence, the English were taken away. And they were Jewish prisoners - men - we only found out about that later, that they were in another barrack, that they were having men around there too.

Q OTHER THAN THE ENGLISH PRISONERS?

A The English prisoners were - it was emptied. They were taken away after they discovered this correspondence. They were taken away.

Q WHAT WERE YOUR MEALS LIKE HERE?

A Soup, again. It was always just a bowl of soup. But it was edible, and bread. And I guess, we were always hungry, but we were not that hungry. Nobody - there was I think on death and there were some sick people. We had, they called it the ambulance. The hospital. And it was a bearable situation. We had water. We had warm running water. We were able to keep clean. Our hair grew out for that time - for 6 / 8 months. We had a little hair.

And the winters - I mean, and we didn't have such a tremendous long walk to go to the factory. We were close by. We walked, everything was walking - they took us in line with the SS women, we had, they were our guards. And they were right there in every hall. They were watching over us. We were not allowed to talk to them - to the German soldiers. They were not allowed to talk to us.

And one day, one of them - so that German who gave me the cake was taken away - wasn't there anymore. And then another one came, and he went up to the SS woman and he said he's gonna take me out to the kitchen to bring coffee. She says: "You be careful, if you..." I don't know what she - he took his gun from his drawer. He says: "Do you have sisters here." He knew I'm not gonna run away. And we didn't go out - there were no wire fences there was no - and we were guarded - SS men

And the women were there with us when we lined up and they walked with us and each hall had. And I think that this man, that this German soldier must have talked about me in the kitchen to the people. That we are human. I mean, that we don't have horns. How did they describe how the Jews looked. They were showing the caricatures. They was showing the Polish dressed up in the caftans and with the earlocks and I don't know. He said: " I'm gonna - you gonna see that they look like us." He brought me over there. The SS woman gave him the permission and he was talking to me, this soldier. And...

Q IN HUNGARIAN?

A No, German, no. That Hungarian was in Auschwitz. This one, he let me stand there by myself. He said: "You stay here." And he left me there, and he went in, in another part of the kitchen. And I am standing there and the people have food around and the women - they are coming to look at me, like a something you come to see in the zoo, I imagine. I didn't realize - do you know that that just, as I was thinking about that - how I was standing there. I didn't even ask for a potato or a piece of cabbage. I remember they had cabbage there. And I'm standing there and I'm not opening my mouth, and women there, from the kitchen they were coming, looking me, measuring me up and down and not saying a word. And I just, it just came back to me, and I just realized that he must have showed me off there.

I wasn't that skinny - I must have been about - gosh, what was I - eighteen and a half, by December I was nineteen and in kilos, I was about 57. I mean, I wasn't, I was always thin as a child and - but we looked like humans, like humans over there. Everybody else, not just me, and we had enough, we had enough food somehow. It was the kitchen - they brought us food. We had bread, once a day was given, food. But it was bearable. I mean, comparing to all this horrible things and this was...

But, of course the tragedy of what happened with me and my family - with Anna and... that we lost our sister. So, our sister got very sick there and she wasn't able to function. Then she was in the hospital there.

Q THIS WAS AFTER SHE HAD BEEN HIT?

A After she had been hit and after she collapsed. And for a while, I had her in bed there and I tried to take care of her, and then it just didn't go. She was just bad - bad, in respect that SS doctor came, I didn't know he was a doctor. He ordered for her to stay - to soak her in warm water and I sat there with her. I don't know what it was that they gave. It wasn't a tub. It was something that she was able to sit in. They were trying to do something, he was recommending. But she wound up in the hospital and was going down the drain. She died there - she died, she died. It was a very, very sad, very sad memory and very sad situation because she was taken to German hospital after that. And after the Russians, we were freed - the Russians came to that part. And that's Eastern...

Q SHE DIED AFTER THE RUSSIANS CAME - AFTER THE LIBERATION?

A After the liberation, but she was sick through the whole time and she was taken in. I was in that ambulance that went to the hospital, to [Sitau?], to a hospital. We went to a hospital. And I came next day, to visit her. I got a bicycle. I was doing some translations there - German and Russian - when they brought in, into that camp where we were, they brought in the Germans. They captured them, the German soldiers and people. They were riding the bike - they were running away. I don't know, they captured them, the Russians. And they brought them in.

And I got a bicycle from the Russians. The other one took it away on the road, as I was going to the hospital. I rode into the hospital, but the sister, they were sisters there - nuns. She told me that there was no hope for her, that she died during the... I was trying, I brought her some compote to try, maybe if she is gonna eat, if she is gonna have some food. They couldn't save her. She said they couldn't save her.

Q DID YOU SPEAK WITH HER?

A She didn't speak. She didn't - she was in very bad shape. She was sick for a couple of months and it just went down completely - not eating.

Q HOW LONG WAS SHE SICK?



And she died in April, in May, May. Because we were liberated May 8<sup>th</sup>, when the war ended. That's when we were liberated.

Q YOU ARRIVED IN OCTOBER?

A To Germany. And worked there till May.

Q WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LIBERATION?

A We remember. Okay, I remember one thing before we were liberated. They were saying they are going to evacuate the factory. And they gonna take us and we gonna go with them, and this and this people gonna go with them. The rest go with them... it didn't come about because, I guess, they didn't have time. And there wasn't there to go - I imagine.

One day, I noticed, huddled the soldiers together. Across from the hall where our table was, was a - he told me he was a blacksmith, blacksmith. He was about 52 years old and he said: "I have some sugar there. Some cube sugar." And I was able - and I got a little apple and they, I don't know if they had enough to eat, or was it problems there too already in Germany. But he said: "You can help yourself." He didn't dare to give it to me, but he says: "You can have some."

And that - he was somehow the brain or what, the soldiers huddled together, a bunch of them came from that hall. And they did some drawing and I imagine, what I figured out, that they were doing the planning of how the front, of how the war was going. Because they had, I don't know if it was a paper, or just on the desk there, that they had some marking and doing... And when they left I told this to the girls. "Let's go and check this out. There is something that they were showing." I wanted what they were writing, what they were drawing in there.

And this also came to me, because not very long after that, we were liberated, so this is - they were discussing the front and how the war is progressing or what is happening, or how they are surrounded.

A She must have been sick for about a couple of months, without food and just in very bad shape. There was nothing that - the nuns said that there is nothing they could do. There were two people in a room - there was a Dutch woman who was also very sick. And she was with us and she was still alive. She said that they can save her but they couldn't do anything for Edith.

Q DID ANYONE EVER TELL YOU WHAT WAS WRONG WITH HER?

A No, I did not see a doctor. And I didn't have any advice - nobody is there with me. My cousin, they were older and my little sister, Anna, I let her be with my cousin, with Blanche. I was there alone and there were lots of sick people. I mean, they had a whole hall before they placed them in rooms, the people who were in the hospital, in the camp. We never saw any doctor, or anybody to speak to. I hope that some of the people were able to recuperate, because the ones that were in bad shape... This I remember, this woman who was placed with her in one room and she was very bad shape, in my opinion, at that time. But, I don't know what was happening. Maybe she started eating - maybe they were able to save her. But not Edith - no, no.

Q DID EDITH SAY ANYTHING TO YOU?

A Never. Never, she never spoke. The one thing she was saying - the one thing, before they took her. Before - this was in, this was a good question, because she says "You know, I can see our mother, with her violet... I can see her violet blue eyes." That was probably the only thing that during her illness that she told me. That she saw mother's eyes - that she's looking at us. [looking upward and shaking head] Ah, like she shook like when you wake up. Because she really wasn't, she wasn't there, she wasn't speaking and I don't know, her mind wasn't there. Because she stopped eating. Just didn't want to eat. Whatever little there was, she didn't want to and she got very weak, very sick - even more sick.

Q AND HOW OLD WAS SHE WHEN SHE DIED?

A She was 23. She was born in December '21. And she was 23 and a half, she was in '44, she was 23, in December

But towards the end, and that was like the beginning of May and before, two days or so, before the end of the war, we heard the shooting and the canons and I don't know, but we heard shooting and we said - we didn't know who is coming or what's happening. And when we woke up next day, May 8<sup>th</sup>, there was nobody there.

And then the Russians came, and that was our liberation. But I was very sad, happy, sad, I don't know - went to town - brought some meat and there... they said they gonna cook and we said we are never going to have enough potatoes. We gonna be happy to have potatoes, just to fill up on potatoes.

Q AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A What happened? Well my sister died and we started out. We said, well, everything fell apart there. Everybody was going wherever they wanted to go - to town, and we were going into German houses to bath and had some compotes. They had the jars with fruits. And we already saw we have to go - we gonna leave and I don't know how we found our way, to start out to go home. We going home. Where is home? We are going where we came from. And we started going; we went towards Czechoslovakia. That's where I was - you heard about Bratislava.

Q YES, OF COURSE.

A I - did we go to Prague? We didn't go into Prague. No I wasn't that time in Prague. I don't know what route, how did we...

Q YOU WENT SOUTH.

A We went south, but who was the leader, who told us, how did we start out?

Q WHO WAS WITH YOU?

A Well, my sisters and cousin. This Blanche was - the four of us were together. No six. Four - and Zeldie Junger and her cousin. We were five of us together.

Q DID YOU WALK?

- A We started walking. I think we went to the railroad. No, we - how did we get out of [Sitau?]? I never gave it a thought.
- Q DID YOU HAVE ANY MONEY?
- A I know - no. No, there was no money. We got somehow, I don't know how we got to Czechoslovakia, because there was already Jewish community. And they were already, they wanted names and they gave us, they gave us a few crowns, money. But we were traveling for nothing. We had no tickets, no money. I know that it took us two weeks, at least, two weeks to get home, to my hometown. I don't know how we started out. I cannot - I can't recall.
- Q DO YOU REMEMBER WALKING?
- A I remember walking. How did we find the station? I mean, somebody showed us the railroad station. And we were walking, of course. The bicycle that I got to go to the hospital - I got it from a Russian officer. He took it from a German. He said: "You don't need it anyway." And he said: "You pick one out." And I rode down to the hospital to see my sister. And I was going back - the Russians, the soldiers were picking up things. They were taking everything away. I said: "I got it." I said: "I am Jewish." He says: "You give me the bicycle." And that's it. They were taking it away. And so I walked back, I think it was about a 10,12 kilometer distance.
- Q WELL, WHEN THE GROUP OF YOU WAS GOING BACK, YOU SAID THAT YOU GOT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND YOU SAID YOU WERE GIVEN SOME MONEY THERE?
- A We somehow, bypassed Bohemia. We wound in Moravia, and Slovakia. I don't know how we got - looking at the map...
- Q WELL YOU GOT INTO MORAVIA DIRECTLY AND THEN INTO SLOVAKIA.
- A Then to Slovakia, because we were in Bratislava, and in [Korshitsa?] and I tell you one thing... that, I don't know how it happened, that I got inside in the train and I arrived home on the top of the train. On the roof. And there were bridges and there were things

Q TUNNELS?

A I don't know where I got on that there was no more room to get, and I arrived and I remember there was one of our tenants, why she came to the railroad station to see who is coming home. Who survived, because she grabbed things, whatever she could. And she was watching - she asked me where is mother. I said that - I couldn't talk to her. I just said: "She isn't." this was after when we arrived home, but I cannot give you any details in there how... how...

Q HOW LONG DID...?

A Two weeks.

Q It was June so...

Q WAS IT MAY OR JUNE?

A It was still May. It was still May and I know that summer was coming. And I can't even tell you how long we stayed there, because when we came home, my brother-in-law was there - my sister who was married, he survived in the forced labor camp. And he was the elder; he occupied a Jewish house. And there were already some girls home; they opened a kitchen. He went to the peasants, into the village and got food and there was pots of food cooking. There was food. He managed that, he was fantastic about that. How he was able to, I think he even found my cousin's cow for her. He found some fur coats. I mean, he was just fantastic, what he took over and how he managed the situation.

Q WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A Morris Zelmanovitch?. that was my brother-in-law, Blanche's husband.

Q WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WENT TO YOUR HOME?

A Our home was empty - four walls. Nothing was broken, but things were emptied. Furniture - nothing, in the whole house. And we had several houses there, and a bakery, and it was a whole yard that we had there. And Jews lived there and there was nothing - any place.

And I mentioned to you when I left last time, after the interview, that what stood out of my mind, so much is that, we had a very special candelabra. Friday night my mother lit the candles, and this was a candlestick that my father had made specially, a silver candelabra - a five branch candelabra. It was my favorite. I loved it so much, because I was able, as a child, take it apart. They were put together in pieces - it was a stand, and then, the upper part sits in, and then the branches. And I used to clean that. That was my favorite.

My aunt, who gave me the pictures, who survived because she was here in America - they came to Chicago and to California. She came home in 1922 and she didn't stay in Europe. Luckily, they didn't stay. They came back to the United States. And my father gave her a pair. He had made a candelabra, the identical. And she had that - that was 1922. And she gave that to me - hers. She said: "This is for you."

Q BEAUTIFUL.

A And I have that.

Q DID YOU STAY IN YOUR HOUSE, IN YOUR HOME?

A Not in my home. We didn't stay there, because of the - there was some little bit of danger with the Russian soldiers. They were very wild. Some of the girls, some little friends were insulted, by, not the Germans, but the Russians.

Q JUST INSULTED?

A Well, raped. And we were in our house, and there was a soldier with a... My brother-in-law was with me. I don't remember how he approached me, or what it was. But, my brother-in-law stood between us, and he grabbed for his revolver. I was saved, I mean, nothing happened. We didn't go back to our house. I was just looking through what was going there, what was happening. But the house was empty and this was a bigger house where he settled down and where he - it was a big, big yard there. And where the people, whoever arrived home, there was not, there weren't too many. Not everybody came back. Yes, why did I wanna go back, because I knew, by this time - mother isn't Blanche isn't

Something happened in Auschwitz and it must be true. And Edith died there with me, being with me together.

And my brother - maybe he survived. I mean, he, that's the place to go - home, if he made it. But he didn't - I waited, I waited. And nobody was telling me anything. They didn't want to tell me. His friends came and they told my brother-in-law. They still didn't tell me. They were not going to tell me that he didn't survive.

But there we were, in that house, and I remember, the Russian officer talking with... our rabbi survived. A rabbi that I had talked to and he came and talked to me in the ghetto - [Teitelbaum?]. He came back. And the two of them were talking, Jewish officer, a Russian officer, who was Jewish, with the rabbi - they were discussing. They were talking politics and discussing religion and communism. But my view was - I said: "The war isn't over," I said. I said: "Communism and capitalism is gonna be some problem in here." It's not at that point. I remember that so well, that I was talking about... But, this Russian officer told us: "Leave, away. Go away from here." Because already at that time they already knew this ghost remains, this Russia. It never was Russian before. It used to Hungary, Austro-Hungarian monarchy. But they gave it to Russia - Ukraine. I mean, Ukrainia is Russian too. He advised us, and he told the rabbi: "Have your folks leave." And within a short time, whatever, we were still waiting, who comes home - and then our brother-in-law packed us and send us across the border to Romania.

Q WHERE?

A We went to Romania, to the Transylvanian town, [Sato Mare?].

Q [SATO MARE?]?

A [Sato Mare?]. We were...

Q DID YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW COME WITH YOU?

A Not yet. He wasn't through, but he send us. My cousin, Lenzie, came back by that time, too.

And Blanche left to go to Hungary, because her husband -because she was married already. And she had her husband from Hungary - Budapest, [Katchkameed?], you know, different parts. That was deeper into Hungary. So she went there and I don't know when Lenzie came back. We didn't talk exactly, but she came back. And Lenzie was Blanche's sister, the younger sister. We were separated in Auschwitz. And she and my sister, the three of us, my brother-in-law, sent us over to Romania.

Q WHEN WAS THAT EVA? DO YOU REMEMBER THE DATE?

A Okay, this must have been during the summer inn '45.

Q ALREADY IN '45.

A Already in '45.

Q SO YOU WERE ONLY HOME A COUPLE OF MONTHS.

A Yes, we were just, there was nothing there for us. But we stayed home, we stayed home the summertime. I know that we went to the river to swim. We had a river there, the [Tissar?]. You know the [Tissar?].

Q I HAVE NO IDEA.

A And we loved that. We used to go there every summer. That's where we were swimming. And I know that the Russians were out there and they did their own wash. How primitive! Do you know, that you, they occupied Jewish homes there and the whole family lived in one room, if there were six rooms. They didn't know what to do with it. They all lived in one - they were so behind, so behind. I don't think they there still. You read what they left in Czechoslovakia - Prague, I mean, Czechoslovakia. It's - but they told us this, I mean, in a quiet way, because he was Jewish. He said: "Get your folk out." And that's how everybody....

Q AND WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WENT TO ROMANIA?

A Oh, I had family. I had some cousins there. I had cousins there. And they were also in concentration camps. This cousin's wife came back. She had children, and they gave the children to the older folks. Her older sister or the mother-in-law, they took the - she had two young girls



And they came back and they had a store, a little business there. And then, they sold it to my brother-in-law. And we stayed - oh, there is still a long story from there. I can't go on. Do you want me to finish today?

Q EVA, IN [SITAU?] YOU WERE PROWLING FOR FOOD FOR YOUR SISTER, EDITH, FOR ALL OF YOU ACTUALLY - HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO GET TO THE KITCHEN?

A Do you know that this is a very good question, because it brought back something very drastic, shall I say - because one girl in our room made a false key. We were able to go and get some food in the warehouse and do you know, that that's when we found out that there were men working and they did the same. They caught some of them. But they didn't suspect the girls. It was only our room and at night - you go to the bathroom, or whatever. You put a sheet on or they were prowling, as you said it. And it was a very dangerous thing and it was night. And I don't know how she found out, but [Sitsau?] - she came from Satomar?? this town that I went to later. I have never seen her again after that. But she was clever. She made a key, and we went - we were able to get vegetables, beets, some potatoes. I don't remember, there wasn't such a variety. But there was food there. And we didn't do it too many times. It was a very dangerous - and, as I said, the men were caught. They were punished badly. But besides that I was just always out. As I didn't know in Auschwitz, in the beginning - I got smarter. I got half a year older, I got smart of being out and being on my feet. And looking out of where you can get something. Because I remember this also, I was out there and they were bringing bread in and I was able to bring bread and we were able - got a little extra. And in the kitchen - I just went in the kitchen and said: "I have a sick sister. Could I get something extra?" They gave me the potato and they told me how you can bake it. They put it there into the ash. That happened, maybe, once or twice. I mean, the second time, maybe I didn't get anymore. But at the time when I was hurt, when I got the soup, there was left over food. And I happened to be in the right place at the right time. And I went, because then I was prowling. Yes, I was always trying to get a little extra, a little food. And...

Q WERE THERE GERMANS IN THE KITCHEN?

A No, they were all [heftlings?]. They were all our people. I mean, they were older than me and they were more capable, or they were used to work. I never was used to do anything of that sort. We had help at home, when I was younger. And what did I know about cooking? But they were our people.

Q WHEN YOU WENT TO THE, WHAT YOU CALL, THE STORE HOUSE FOR FOOD -

A At night. Stealing.

Q AT NIGHT, YES, STEALING - WHAT TIME OF NIGHT THOUGH WOULD YOU...???

A Oh, who knows? Middle of the night, or sometimes we had check-ups. They would come and turn the light on. They were checking on us during the night. And going for the food, into the warehouse, that was during the night - during the night.

Q ?? CHECK-UP?

A After the checkup, that wasn't a regular check-up. That was a surprise kind of - they were checking on, on us. But, was a very dangerous thing to do, that's for sure. I don't know how long that lasted. But I went once and Edith went, but oh, she came with such a pounding heart. I said: "Let's not do that." She was so scared. So was I, but...

Q AND WHEN ?? - NO LIGHTS.

A No lights. No lights, no lights. She said, just: "It's down there on the floor." And they were in piles you know, when they were delivering. I don't know how she knew where the ?? was. I didn't - how she knew where the things were. We were able to get hold of - and Bobby, Blanche, she went. She was by herself and took such good care of herself. I was angry at her - never got any advice, never helped me with Edith and I told her she was for herself. In Auschwitz, she met - her husband was there too. And somehow he was able to throw over the barbed wire some - he was able to help them in a little way too. They didn't tell at the time. Well, we - I don't know.

I said, another thing that was very important, my saying with my mind that occurred to me. I said that we were condemned to live. The rest of the family, the people who died, they died. We were condemned to life - that was my saying. Because it was very tough. It was a tough thing - why exactly us, why me. Life has been tough. Anyway... there is no big peace in our soul. Well, the reason I am able to go on and the things that have happened to me is probably what I have clung to - what I did, my physical workout. That must have helped me out. Okay.

[END]