

Interview with EVA BOROS

Holocaust Oral History Project

Date: December 11, 1991

Place: San Francisco, CA

Interviewers: Sylvia Prozan

Bill Froming

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1 [Begin Tape 1.]

2 MS. PROZAN: This is the continuation of
3 the interview with Eva Boros for the Holocaust Oral
4 History Project. The first and second interviews took
5 place in May and July of 1991. Today's date is
6 December 11th, 1991.

7 My name is Sylvia Prozan, and assisting in
8 the interview is Bill Froming.

9 MS. BOROS: On the left, that is my Uncle
10 Benjamin, and the last I saw of him was 1944, in May,
11 in the ghetto in (Solosh) -- not (Solosh) -- and he
12 was already ill.

13 BY MS. PROZAN:

14 Q And the picture on the right is?

15 A And the picture on the right is Uncle
16 Sigmund, and he was the youngest of the six children.

17 Q Eva, what can you tell us about your Uncle
18 Benjamin?

19 A Uncle Benjamin, it was a very, very close
20 family, and as I look at this picture that has been
21 given -- sent to me, we were lucky to get these
22 pictures, they were sent from Israel. His daughter is

1 there, but she didn't come until -- she stayed in
2 Russia after the war, she got married and stayed in
3 Russia, and she only got out in the later years, much
4 after the war.

5 Better say -- it's probably ten years or so
6 since people were able to get out of Russia. That
7 part where we were born, that wasn't open like Moscow
8 and real Russia, but we came from the Carpathian -- it
9 was called the Carpathian area.

10 So she must have brought it. Sarah is her
11 name, the daughter. She brought these pictures with
12 her, because she had a brother in New York, and she
13 came with her husband, and she's a widow now, the
14 daughter, and she lives there now.

15 So these pictures, we didn't have them, and
16 they didn't come from my aunt. She brought these
17 pictures and sent it to my sister.

18 Q What do you remember about your uncle?

19 A What do I remember about him? He was a
20 tall, slim man. He was very much like my father.
21 Very intelligent and very religious.

22 He had three children in the family. They

1 had the smallest family, three children. One son, who
2 was very artistic, in fact he was a diamond cutter, he
3 escaped in 1983, and the last trip -- this is going
4 into details -- the son, Ludwig was his name, he
5 wasn't able to enter the United States. He stayed in
6 Cuba and later he was able to come. That's how late
7 he got out of Europe.

8 I remember he made for -- at the time it
9 was still Czechoslovakia, and he made a cigar box and
10 carved out the president's photograph, the profile of
11 Masaryk, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the president of
12 Czechoslovakia, and he got a price for it, and he was
13 able -- they had him come to Prague, and that's how he
14 went to Prague and he was able to escape Europe and
15 the persecution.

16 Well, he stayed in Cuba, and from Cuba he
17 got to the United States, and he got into diamond
18 cutting. He was very, very clever, very good with his
19 hands. This was the second son of Uncle Benjamin.
20 And he had an older son who was married and had a
21 family, and Samuel -- he also survived, and he came to
22 the United States, and then he died in New York. He

1 went to see his brother.

2 But the uncle, coming back to the uncle, he
3 used to come and visit us, and I don't know how much
4 details, really. During my childhood I remember the
5 older -- my sister and two cousins got together, of
6 the brothers, the older girls, and I had to join them,
7 we went to visit them. They lived out of (Solosh) in
8 a small place. We took them and they were very happy.

9 I had to tag along with an older sister and
10 the cousins. And the last sad thing I remember about
11 him is the ghetto, that he was ill in the ghetto
12 already before they took us away, and he was ill. I
13 visited him. I went to see him there. And he was
14 taken. He was taken to Auschwitz.

15 Q How old was he then?

16 A In '44, he must have been -- he was maybe
17 60, approximately, or less. 59 or 60. He was older.
18 He was older than my father. My father would have
19 been only 56. So he must have been 59 or 60. That
20 young.

21 Q And Sigmund?

22 A Sigmund was the youngest one, and he was

1 the pet of my grandmother. Of the six children, they
2 were the four boys. They were all very tall and very
3 -- well, he only had one daughter. She is alive, she
4 lives in Israel, and she had one son, and he has three
5 daughters. So they would have been Uncle Sigmund's
6 great-grandchildren.

7 He was quite a worldly man already, in
8 those days. This is a picture taken in Karlsbad, in a
9 resort place. He was busy working. I think he was in
10 the lumber business. And he visited, he came home and
11 visited, because he had two brothers; the oldest one,
12 Eugene, who was Lanci's father, Lanci Farkas's father
13 -- I didn't bring a picture because I hope she brought
14 some pictures -- and he used to come.

15 He lived very close to the Polish border,
16 (Yasina), and during the Hungarian era, when the
17 Czechs left, when Hitler invaded the Sudeten and he
18 took part of Czechoslovakia, and where we lived, he
19 went back to Hungary, so he moved to Satu-Mare with
20 his daughter and his daughter married there.

21 Q When is the last time you saw him?

22 A I saw him in 1943. I visited in Satu-Mare,

1 and his daughter had the baby, and I was about 16, 17.
2 That's when I saw him last. And the age of my uncle
3 at the time he died, gosh, he must have been -- let's
4 see. The aunt who lived here would have been 99. She
5 died when she was 97, my Aunt Rose, and she was the
6 second youngest. I'm trying to guess, he couldn't
7 have been more than 54 years old.

8 Q And what was his fate?

9 A He was killed. I don't know, somebody met
10 him and I think towards the end of the war he just
11 died of starvation. He died in the camp. I don't
12 know which one. I don't know which one.

13 Q If you can take yourself back in time to
14 the day that you were liberated, where were you?

15 A Well, I was in (Sitau), Germany, and
16 (Sitau) was the town, but we were in an airplane
17 factory working there out of town. I don't know if it
18 had another name, the area, which was a distance --
19 probably about ten kilometers, because when my sister
20 was ill, they took the sick people into the city, into
21 the hospital, into the German hospital, and it was a
22 distance, at least ten kilometers.

1 Q Which sister is this?

2 A This is Edith, because Anna was with me,
3 she was the younger one. She was well.

4 Q And what do you remember of the liberation
5 that day?

6 A The liberation, we woke up, at night we
7 heard the cannon shooting, the noise, shooting, we
8 didn't know what it was -- actually, why am I calling
9 it a cannon? -- what was going on. The war was really
10 close, it was there, the noise. So we knew it's
11 probably a good sign for us that they're not going to
12 kill us.

13 And when we woke up very early in the
14 morning, there were no guards, no SS, nobody was
15 around us, and the Russians came, the Russians
16 liberated us. The soldiers were arriving, they came
17 to the camp, and what I remember is that they were
18 marching, they picked up German soldiers who were
19 escaping in the roads, around the town, they were on
20 bicycles, and they brought them in in the camp where
21 we were held.

22 And a Russian officer asked if anybody

1 knows the languages. I did a little interpretation
2 there from German and Russian. The officer, the
3 Russian officer needed something to be told, I can't
4 remember what, not very long, just -- I told him that
5 I need a bicycle to go into town to visit my sister in
6 the hospital, so he gave me a bicycle, because I
7 helped out a little bit. He said, take one. The
8 German was very upset when I picked one out. He was
9 still holding onto it. I remember that.

10 But it was very sad, going into town, and I
11 was hoping very much that my sister will get well. We
12 are free, they're going to do magic, they're going to
13 get her well. It didn't happen. She was very far
14 gone, and they couldn't save her.

15 When I came in to visit her, I went a
16 couple of days, and they did -- the Germans, there
17 were nuns there in the hospital, and they put her in a
18 clean bed, and the nun talked to me and she said --
19 there were two in a room, and she says, this other
20 girl, I think she was a Dutch girl, she didn't talk,
21 she was also pretty bad, but she said she might make
22 it, but your sister, Edith, isn't going to be able to

1 make it. She is not -- they can't save her, there is
2 nothing they can do for her.

3 I said, try. And I went back the following
4 day and they told me that she died. She didn't eat.
5 She was in very bad shape. I have previously told you
6 about details how she -- they hit her on the head. I
7 don't want to repeat the story.

8 Q All right. And then after Edith died, what
9 did you do?

10 A After she died -- by the way, it was an
11 interesting episode with my bicycle, I was riding back
12 and the Russians took the bicycle. The Russians were
13 on the road, and they were taking away things, they
14 were picking up, and they took it from me. I said,
15 another Russian gave it to me, but they were taking
16 away things. They used to take watches away, people
17 were telling us later.

18 Anyway, that was the story that happened,
19 the bicycle was taken and I had to walk home, back
20 home, back to the camp. This was just like two days
21 -- generally, the people -- I was so involved with my
22 problem there with my sister that we didn't leave

1 right away. The people, they were free, they picked
2 up and probably left the same day. We stayed there.
3 Lanci's sister was with me and Anna; Blanche and Anna,
4 my sister, and me, and we didn't start out. We were
5 waiting. I was waiting to see what's going to happen
6 to Edith.

7 So I think we spent at least two extra days
8 there. You know, I haven't been thinking about that.
9 And so we said, let's go home, let's get going. So I
10 tell you that as much as Auschwitz was so vivid and so
11 clear, I don't think -- I cannot recall if we went to
12 a railroad -- how did we get to the railroad station
13 in (Sitau). We must have because we had been
14 traveling by train. We had to go -- probably went to
15 the railroad station. I don't know if it was other
16 people that joined us. Very few were left. And I
17 don't recall how we got there.

18 Q Do you recall being on the train?

19 A I recall being on the train, and we were
20 traveling through Czechoslovakia. We didn't go into
21 Prague, but we went to Brno, that's Moravia's capital,
22 and we were also in Slovakia, we were in Bratislava,

1 and they already have set up Jewish -- I mean, there
2 were centers, what would you call it, a community. Or
3 they were hidden, I don't know how, but they were
4 already heads of the community, of the town.

5 They set up little offices and we had a
6 place where we arrived. I don't know how we knew
7 where to go. I can't remember.

8 Q How did you eat on the journey?

9 A What did we have? I don't think that was
10 any problem anymore, which was a tremendous problem
11 before. They did feed us. They had kitchens. They
12 set up kitchens and we had to register. We
13 registered. They wanted the names, they wanted to
14 know the people and the names who survived.

15 As a matter of fact, they already knew back
16 home in my town, where I came from, they knew that my
17 sister died already after the war, that we were
18 together, and they said, the two (Vesovich) girls, the
19 two sisters are together. The oldest one -- well, my
20 very oldest sister died in Auschwitz, but Edith was
21 there. They already knew little details, and I didn't
22 know how it came back.

1 So they did have names and they had the
2 people, they wanted to know how many survived, and
3 where they are. They wanted to keep a count on it.
4 So they had already kitchens set up. We got food when
5 we got there. And on the trip going, we picked up
6 something in (Sitau). Before we left we had some food
7 there that we got from the stores in (Sitau). We were
8 not hungry anymore. They were not hungry by that
9 time. So there was food and there was care.

10 And I think they gave us, like there were
11 crowns -- "crown" is Czech money -- they gave us a
12 certain amount. And this journey took two weeks to
13 get home. The bridges, there were lots of rivers in
14 Slovakia and Czechoslovakia, lots of mountains and
15 rivers, but all the bridges were bombed and damaged,
16 and so it was a very, very long trip, two weeks to
17 travel from Germany across Czechoslovakia into (Kiras)
18 or (Krau). Each place has two or three names with the
19 changes of the times, what countries they were.

20 Q And where did you stay after you got there?

21 A Well, we found my ex-brother-in-law. He
22 was the elder of our town. He set up households. He

1 was one of the first ones. And he was everybody's
2 father. So we had a place to come. He occupied a
3 Jewish home, and all the children and all the young
4 people, because they were now older people, just the
5 youngsters who came home had a home there. That was
6 our home. That's where we came to.

7 And he had -- everybody was doing
8 something. Girls were cooking and everybody was --
9 and that was home.

10 Q How long did you stay with this
11 arrangement?

12 A With this arrangement we stayed -- let's
13 see. We were liberated, and the war ended, May 8th,
14 and two weeks to travel, so close towards the end of
15 May we got home. We stayed -- we perhaps stayed, I
16 never gave it a thought what months did we leave, but
17 maybe we stayed there four to six weeks, not very
18 long.

19 And then we were advised by the Russian
20 officers to leave, go away from here, this is going to
21 be Russia, go where you can, get going. So one day
22 Lanci, Anna and me, my brother-in-law Morris, he put

1 us on a carriage driven by horses, and we traveled
2 through the whole night, and we went to Romania, to
3 Satu-Mare, and over there we had cousins again, we had
4 relatives, and we came there.

5 He just wanted to clear everything out,
6 close out the house, close up the kitchen; and until
7 everybody, all the people who came home, had places to
8 go, he took care of them. He took care of them.
9 Everybody left. Some went back to Czechoslovakia.

10 There were two sisters I think who
11 survived, who had a father in the United States, and I
12 am sure they were one of the first ones to be able to
13 get to the States. I'm sure they lived -- I never
14 heard about them, but they lived back east, I don't
15 know what town their father was.

16 So those two girls were the very first who
17 came home. They were home already and they were doing
18 the cooking in the beginning when we got there. We
19 didn't stay very long there, because there was no
20 future. It was just very, very smart to get away.
21 That was good, because nobody was able to get out of
22 there. It wasn't even allowed until recently to go

1 back there, it was so closed up by the Russians.

2 Q Had you been to your home?

3 A My own home, it was there at the time, but
4 it was just four walls. There was nothing in there,
5 and nobody and nothing, and the reason -- I think I
6 have described this -- the reason we decided to go is,
7 I was hoping that my brother, who was 21 when he was
8 taken in the forced labor camp, he was taken out from
9 the ghetto, and I was hoping that he survived, but he
10 didn't, because they were on the death march.

11 And it was still winter in the very early
12 months of '45, but that town was liberated at the end
13 of March or April because the war had ended in May and
14 the Russians were already in Germany. So they were
15 taking those young people and they were shooting them
16 on the way. They were marching all the way from
17 Romanian territory all the way across into
18 Czechoslovakia. Where they were taking them I don't
19 know, just they were marching, and he didn't make it.

20 I don't know, I'm not sorry I went home.
21 We wanted to go. And we did, and we left. There was
22 no sense of staying there.

1 Q What was it like in Romania, when you and
2 Anna stayed there?

3 A Well, in Romania we had some more cousins,
4 and then my brother-in-law came, when he was through
5 he came back to Romania, and this cousin sold his
6 little business. He had a grocery and paint business,
7 and he sold it to him, and they moved out of the house
8 into his in-laws' home, and he just -- I think my
9 brother-in-law was paying rent, but we had a home
10 there, he gave us the home to live there.

11 And from there I got papers. My sister and
12 me got papers from my aunt, and I -- again, I don't
13 recall how I got in touch and how did she have our
14 address. I knew she lived in Santa Cruz at the time,
15 and we must have written to her.

16 Q This is Rose?

17 A Aunt Rose, and she sent us affidavits, so I
18 was determined to go. I always wanted to come to
19 America. We were young people, and there were orphans
20 and people were marrying, and I said I wanted to go to
21 America. And they had a hard time letting me go, but
22 I did, and Anna stayed there.

1 Q When was this?

2 A And this was in '46. We stayed there. We
3 were there in town, in Satu-Mare, oh, we spent
4 probably a year.

5 Yes. In 1946, in -- yes, in 1946, in May,
6 Isabel left. By the time I came to Prague they left
7 for the United States, my cousins. So I was in
8 Czechoslovakia -- I must have left in May, just a year
9 after liberation. I went to Czechoslovakia. I
10 acquired papers and went to Prague with my affidavits,
11 to the American consulate, and registered.

12 I couldn't get my sister registered because
13 you had to be there in person. I did get a passport,
14 and I had to wait until the end of the year, because I
15 had to be 21. I wasn't quite -- so I got a passport,
16 I had the registration, I had a number for the United
17 States, for -- you know, they registered, they gave
18 you a number, and that's how you were able to -- and
19 to get a visa, but first you had to have an affidavit.

20 So I was in Czechoslovakia there for a few
21 months, maybe a half a year I spent there with
22 friends, and I found some acquaintances from back

1 home.

2 And I had to return, because the number was
3 already too high for me. They said I would have to
4 wait a year. And I wasn't going to go by myself. I
5 was writing to my aunt, and my aunt said to me, maybe
6 you can come for a visit. If you have to wait for so
7 long, maybe she would send me papers just for a visit,
8 until my number comes up.

9 Gee, I just remembered this. And I went to
10 the consulate in Prague and they told me, oh, no, you
11 can't go for a visit, you are registered already to go
12 for permanent. So I cannot stay there any longer. I
13 said, I'm returning. And maybe we can go -- I can't
14 leave Anna there. And so I went back, and I got
15 myself a Hungarian visa, and I went to Budapest.

16 I had a cousin, I still have her, I'm going
17 to visit her, I hope, this spring. She survived
18 there, and I stayed -- I came and visited with her for
19 a couple of weeks. She was working on her doctorate.
20 She put everything away and we had a good time
21 together.

22 And after that I had to have another visa.

1 Now I had a passport already, but before that I had to
2 have a visa to go to Romania. So I got a visa and I
3 went to Romania. I spent the winter. It was during
4 the wintertime, it was already winter and very early
5 spring of '47, and I returned to Satu-Mare. So --

6 Q And what was Anna doing all of this time?

7 A Anna was helping my brother-in-law, and I
8 think Lanci and another cousin, Lilly, they used to
9 come and visit, because they were in another town, and
10 they used to come to Satu-Mare and they stayed there.
11 Again, with my brother-in-law there was -- everybody
12 had a home there, the family. There were no more
13 strangers. And when they were in town they had a
14 place to come to, and they came to Satu-Mare.

15 So what did Anna -- well, she was very
16 young, she was three years younger than me. I guess
17 we were not young anymore after the war, after our
18 experience. Well, Lanci was married, and they
19 introduced me to my husband, and so we got married in
20 May, May 8th. That's too fast. I don't know if I
21 didn't go into these details for you before.

22 Q If you did, you have to do it again.

1 A That's what you are doing to me.

2 Q Where did you meet him?

3 A At Lanci's house.

4 Q When?

5 A In the beginning, when I came back from
6 Budapest, I was in Romania, and they gave me -- that's
7 right. They gave me a visa for a very short period,
8 and they didn't want to renew it, the Romanians.
9 Well, Lanci and her sister-in-law, one of the
10 Farkases, they introduced me to Steve, and we met at
11 Lanci's house.

12 Q When?

13 A That was the beginning of 1947, after I
14 came back.

15 Q And what did he look like?

16 A He looked handsome and tall, and he was
17 very quiet and very intelligent, and he was alone.
18 His parents were killed in Auschwitz. He had a
19 sister, an older sister who was married and had a
20 child, and they were killed. And he was alone.

21 He resumed -- he cleaned up the property,
22 the business. His father had a stationery and

1 printing and wholesale warehouses with stationery, and
2 books. A very big -- he used to work with some 35
3 people, much before the war.

4 His father was 78, almost 79 years old. He
5 was still working in the business, and he was taken,
6 he was deported. So Steve saw his parents in '44,
7 because he was in forced labor. He was in school in
8 (Grenobyl), he was in the university. He wanted to be
9 an electronic engineer. His brother-in-law was an
10 engineer, chief engineer there in one of the factories
11 in Romania and Transylvania, and he wanted -- he
12 studied, and after the war broke out, he came home.

13 He came back, and then he had to go, he was
14 a Romanian soldier for a little while, and when the
15 Hungarians came in, the Jews had to go into forced
16 labor camp, so he went into -- he was in the camp.

17 He was liberated. They marched them too,
18 and he was smart. He just hid. He didn't continue
19 after he got to a certain part in Czechoslovakia,
20 Cheb, it's called, the town, I passed it coming home
21 too, and he walked home. He walked home two days and
22 two nights nonstop from this part of Czechoslovakia

1 all the way home to Satu-Mare, day and night.

2 He says, I don't know how I did it. He was
3 25, that's how you did it. And the drive to get home.
4 And this was in 1944, in October. He lived on the
5 field, he didn't go on the main roads because the
6 Russians were picking up people, they didn't care if
7 you were a Jew and if you suffered, whoever you were,
8 they were picking up everybody for -- they needed
9 them. I don't know for what they used them. In fact,
10 they took them back home later, they took them back to
11 Russia, these people who they captured, gathered for
12 work, to rebuild.

13 And he was told about it. He knew it. And
14 he says he was trying to avoid them. He was walking
15 alongside the railroad track, and made it home in '44
16 in October. I said, do you know in '44 in October we
17 were taken from Auschwitz to Germany, and he was
18 liberated. They didn't have anything, it was bombed,
19 the town, they didn't have lights, candles, matches.
20 Somehow a few of them came home, a few Jewish young
21 boys, and they managed.

22 He came home, he goes to see the store, and

1 the Russians, with big trucks, whatever the Germans
2 didn't take, they grabbed, stationery and goods from
3 the store, and they were packing. He says, wait a
4 minute, this is mine. He told them. And, well, we
5 need it too, they said, they needed it. They left
6 something for him. But he started. He opened up the
7 store as soon as he could, and he made a living for
8 himself.

9 So the houses were emptied over there too,
10 in Satu-Mare. And that was Romania again by this
11 time. It was Hungary and then got back to Romania
12 again, because it was Hungary before the first war.
13 After '18 they gave it to Romania. And then the
14 Hungarians came back when the war started in '39.

15 We became -- we were Hungarians in '39, and
16 Satu-Mare, they went there in 1940, so after the war
17 it went back to Romania. This is what's happening now
18 in Yugoslavia and with all these things, European
19 countries. Okay. Getting into politics.

20 Q How long after you met did you get married?

21 A Not very long. About three months we knew
22 each other.

1 Q Who conducted the ceremony?

2 A Oh, we had a rabbi there. And it was held
3 at my cousin's house who lived in the town, the one
4 who gave us his home, and we lived there, and then we
5 moved into his in-laws's home, and it was a big home,
6 and the wedding was held there. And then the other
7 cousin, Uncle Sigmund's daughter, and his wife, they
8 survived. That's another story, because they were in
9 Budapest, his family. He sent his family to Budapest,
10 Uncle Sigmund. And she -- we had the dinner, wedding
11 dinner there, in their house.

12 Q Who was at the wedding?

13 A The uncle wasn't there. Well, my cousins,
14 Lanci was home, Lanci was pregnant with her first
15 child, with Gaby, and friends and family, whoever -- I
16 had some other cousins. We had a big family once upon
17 a time. And some, some survived.

18 So cousins were there, and friends, and it
19 was a proper wedding, I mean with a rabbi, huppa.
20 1947, May 8th.

21 Q You married May 8th?

22 A Yes, two years after he was liberated.

1 Q At the beginning of the first interview
2 there was a glorious picture of you and Steve. Where
3 was that taken?

4 A That was taken in Satu-Mare on the
5 promenade. You know, in these towns people were
6 walking, that was the big entertainment, you went out,
7 and we were walking there, and somebody just snapped
8 it. It wasn't a professional, it was just an amateur,
9 somebody just took it. It was a small picture. And
10 we had it enlarged. And that was taken in early
11 spring.

12 I remember I had a coat. Steve had a coat
13 made for me. I had some purses, bags made. I was all
14 dressed up by that time. So those were, we hoped,
15 happy times. And we couldn't stay there very long
16 either. I didn't want to stay in Europe. We had the
17 business. We had a home. There was Communism, the
18 Russians were taking -- the Communists were taking
19 over.

20 Steve's family had a building, an apartment
21 house, he had rentals in there. And the front, the
22 family home was taken away. They have the Communistic

1 headquarters. I don't know what's going to happen now
2 with all these things. My sister was visiting there,
3 and she was trying to take pictures, photographs, and
4 they ran out of the building.

5 She wanted to bring back for the children
6 to see, and they didn't allow her to take pictures.
7 And in the backyard, his father built a building, and
8 one nice day they came, they need that too for
9 offices, get the rentals out, and you too move out,
10 we'll give you another apartment.

11 And things were getting very tough there.
12 In the business they were trying -- they were -- oh,
13 it's so detailed. You had to -- every sale had to be
14 -- how to express -- you had to write it down and give
15 a receipt. There was no machine register, it didn't
16 come automatically, you had to write -- every sale had
17 to have receipts so they could check it officially.

18 And I said to Steve, let's leave. Let's
19 get away. And he -- it was very difficult to leave
20 your home again and pack up and go again. And when
21 his colleague was taken in, a Romanian colleague with
22 a big stationery business, they took him in to

1 interrogate him, and they just kept him in jail, he
2 got scared, whatever you are, you are a capitalist.

3 Isn't this ironic, what's going on today,
4 talking about this, what's going on in there. Ruined
5 our lives doubly. I mean, you had to leave, just when
6 you started out, you already had a place to live, a
7 furnished, comfortable home. Oh, those were terrible
8 things. It was difficult to persuade Steve to leave.
9 But I had the American registration, and I still
10 wanted to go to America.

11 So we did leave, and that goes, again, into
12 details, how we left. Somebody, I don't know how,
13 Steve found a guide, a man, a Hungarian, a peasant.
14 We couldn't go legally. I mean, I'm just talking as
15 matter of factly here, talking about leaving. We had
16 to escape. This was illegal, escaping at night.

17 Q Why was it illegal?

18 A Because they didn't let you go. They
19 didn't let you out. They didn't give you freedom to
20 go. How long did it take for them to open the gates?
21 This was dangerous. This man, he knew the way, so he
22 had to guide us, take us across the border from

1 Romania to Hungary. And one nice day we just left. I
2 mean, we moved over -- they took away the apartment
3 and they gave us an apartment.

4 I think I have talked about this. I am
5 quite sure, because it was, to repeat that, they told
6 us they're going to pay us the expense of moving, and
7 I came with a receipt and they laughed in my face,
8 that I was expecting them to pay me back.

9 Q How much?

10 A I can't recall the expense, how much it
11 was, but they gave us a big apartment. I knew,
12 they're not going to let the two of us stay in this
13 place. We didn't even want to live in there. We had
14 a dining room, the bedroom, the kitchen, the hall, and
15 there were a couple of empty rooms. I knew that it
16 was just temporary at that point already. I just
17 didn't want to stay there, I just wanted to leave.

18 Q What were the details of your leaving?

19 A Well, how we had to -- it was November of
20 1948, and snow fell, first snow, how do you walk
21 through a border that's plowed up so they can see your
22 track if anybody passed through there, between Romania

1 and Hungary, and we took our white sheets off the beds
2 and put it over us, dressed warm, it was winter, and
3 the first snow fell, and we covered ourselves.

4 They took us by a truck close to the
5 border, and there -- that was one guide, and the guide
6 who walked through across the border with us, he just
7 came, he walked with us. We walked the whole night to
8 walk around about the guide. He knew the way, a side
9 way, how to -- we got there early in the morning. The
10 following day. We walked the whole night. That's how
11 we escaped to Hungary.

12 Then it was organized over there. There we
13 were -- we were gathered there, and we had to stay
14 there at an Austrian -- on the border at an Austrian
15 farm. He kept us in the -- what do you call it, where
16 the cows -- the barn. He kept us there. By that time
17 it was more of a group, there were other people
18 coming. It wasn't just the two of us. There were
19 other people coming, that had been escaping, and
20 that's where everybody brought the people in there.

21 And this farmer had a big truck, he loaded
22 us up at night, we were covered there, and he drove

1 into Vienna, into the capital. This is how we got
2 there. And there already was the -- we were getting
3 papers and we were able to -- oh, in Vienna, my sister
4 -- yes, we had somebody in Vienna. My sister's
5 sister-in-law. We stayed there.

6 Their home was bombed, but they had -- I
7 remember what kind of ladder we had to climb up, it
8 wasn't repaired yet, nothing was fixed. We stayed
9 there for a couple of nights in Vienna, and from
10 there, that's where we got some papers and we were
11 able to -- the aim was -- what was the aim? The aim
12 was to get into an American zone away from these areas
13 where Russians and -- Vienna was occupied by four
14 different -- the allies. And we wanted to go to an
15 American zone.

16 So we had to go -- we traveled from Vienna,
17 we went into Linz, you heard about Linz, in Austria,
18 and from Linz there were displaced persons camps.

19 Q You left Romania and walked all night
20 across the border to Hungary. In Hungary, you didn't
21 stay very long?

22 A We stayed in -- in Budapest we stayed on

1 the borders. We didn't stay. There were houses that
2 they brought us in, and from those houses we were
3 taken into the capital. We were in Budapest -- you
4 are right, I skipped. You are too good. I skipped
5 the two-week time we stayed in Budapest. We did stay
6 in town.

7 Q How did you get to Budapest? You said they
8 took you.

9 A We went by train. See, the language we
10 spoke, we were not afraid. Came to Budapest, I had
11 this cousin, Magda, and I had another cousin, my
12 mother's cousin, he was a writer, he was a very famous
13 man at the time. The first World War he was in
14 America already. And we thought that he is going to
15 help us, but he was afraid that he's going to put us
16 up. I had his address, because I visited there during
17 the war when I was 16, 17. And his mother, I knew
18 them. So I was there twice, in Budapest, before, and
19 I came to visit.

20 And we were hoping when we get to Budapest
21 that he would help us. So he was afraid because it
22 was Communists there too, and they had a club, the

1 artists club, and I knew what that was, and we had a
2 cab, and we took a cab and we went to visit him. He
3 came out to meet us, but he said he was afraid to take
4 us in. We didn't have papers yet at that time. And
5 he suggested a place to sleep.

6 We slept over. And then we went to the
7 community, to the Jewish community, and they had
8 already arrangements made, and they took us from
9 there, from the Hungarian border, from Budapest, and
10 then they took us to the Hungarian border, and from
11 the Hungarian border we were taken to Austria, and
12 that's when we got into that barn, into that Austrian
13 peasant and farmer, and from the border area we went
14 to Vienna. That's it. That's it. Does that have so
15 much significance?

16 Q And then you were in a DP camp in Linz?

17 A In Linz, yes, and then we got from -- in
18 Austria, from Vienna, we traveled by train. We had
19 identifications, false identifications.

20 Q Where did you get them?

21 A We bought them. We were arranging them
22 already there. They made them. And they told us to

1 read it, and we got on the train, and the Russians
2 came to check, and wouldn't you know that he took the
3 identification and he checked Steve. He was testing
4 him. He was reading the names. And we thought that
5 he is keeping him.

6 He took those papers and he slammed it and
7 he looked at mine, and we thought -- by that time
8 Steve thought that he is going to take him off the
9 train. He let us pass.

10 Q You say "they." Who furnished, where did
11 you buy these?

12 A They were -- at the center there, there
13 were some people who were handling it. We were not
14 the only ones. There were lots of refugees.

15 Q At the Jewish center?

16 A I can't remember. It was our group of
17 people, it must have been. I think Steve took care of
18 that at the time. He found the people. We had to
19 have papers. We had money. I skipped that part, that
20 we were selling out, and we were buying dollars, and
21 we left with some dollars. We had a few thousand
22 dollars, which very few people were able to manage.

1 When we decided that we're going to leave, we were
2 selling out the store, and I was buying dollars, and
3 we were coming -- we had money.

4 Q Where did you carry the dollars?

5 A On us. We were hiding it. It was very
6 dangerous, really. That we're going to be caught,
7 that was -- as much as we could get in a short while.

8 We didn't sell any big items. He couldn't
9 -- from the printing shop, somebody wanted to buy a
10 molder and couldn't agree -- this was just selling
11 goods in the store, and then people were handling
12 dollars. As always, the almighty dollar. I had the
13 experience all over the world, what a dollar bill
14 meant. Everybody was looking at the dollars like God.
15 They always worshipped it. Anyplace in the world.

16 We were in the Suez, we were in -- I
17 remember, every place, the dollar had the power. It
18 was very valuable. Almighty.

19 Q And while you were in the DP camp, you were
20 waiting --

21 A Okay. We were in the DP camp. We spent a
22 little longer there. Most people were able to get

1 papers to go to America within a year. Some people
2 stayed. There were people there from all over, the
3 survivors.

4 They were married by that time, there were
5 children there, and there was some help, there was a
6 distribution. The joint distribution committee used
7 to come out and families, or by person, there was a
8 certain amount of money given.

9 We lived in those camps. They were like
10 barracks, like military barracks were set up. And
11 families were living in each room. And we spent -- it
12 was called (Abelsburg). Out of Linz, there was a camp
13 there, and it was called (Abelsburg). We spent there
14 two years. Steve couldn't -- we couldn't go to
15 America together at that time because he was under
16 Romanian quota. I couldn't even ask for papers for
17 him to go together.

18 I could have gone if I -- but I didn't go
19 to the American consulate there because the Romanian
20 quota was never good. And he couldn't go to America.
21 And -- well, what did we do? We studied during the
22 summer. We were swimming there, and that's where we

1 learned English. We started out, not in school, on
2 our own. We didn't speak English until then.

3 Q Spending two years there, that took you to
4 the end of 1950?

5 A At the end of 1950, we didn't come to
6 America. We went to Australia.

7 Q How did that come about?

8 A How did that come about? We were going to
9 go -- Steve wanted to go to Canada, and we couldn't
10 make it, and we had some friends in -- and he had
11 friends, somebody from Satu-Mare, in Australia,
12 Sidney, Australia, and you needed a permit to get to
13 Australia. You didn't need any number, but you needed
14 somebody to send you papers. We had to buy -- I
15 remember \$300, we paid. It didn't cost him any. But
16 he sent us papers.

17 And in a short while, as we were working on
18 that, we thought, that's where we can go together,
19 let's go to Australia, and -- yes, we went by ship,
20 they took us by boat. It was very, very long journey.

21 Q Where did you leave from?

22 A We left from Marseilles, from France, but

1 we were going from Austria. They took us to Zurich,
2 to Switzerland, by train, and from Switzerland we went
3 to France, to Marseilles, and that's where we got on
4 this -- there was an Egyptian crew on it. Do you know
5 that I don't know under what flag -- I didn't
6 understand it at that time. I know the crew was
7 Egyptian. It was some kind of a ship.

8 It was a military or -- I don't know, it
9 was not a luxury ship. It was a very difficult
10 journey. And we stayed on it -- I don't know how many
11 weeks. It escaped me.

12 Q Do you remember the route the ship took?

13 A Yes, I remember the route. We went through
14 the Mediterranean, which was very rough, and people
15 got very seasick. Women were separate. We were in
16 the bow, they put us there, and the men were in
17 another section, and it was very, very rough,
18 Mediterranean. We went through the Suez Canal, and
19 into Ceylon, it was at that time the Indian ocean, and
20 into Sidney, Australia.

21 And it must have been -- I don't know, two
22 or three weeks, how many weeks. I'm sure Steve will

1 know. This escapes me now, how many weeks. It was
2 very difficult. He was very sick. He had -- he was
3 seasick and he had to be hospitalized. He was running
4 a temperature on the ship.

5 Q How large was the ship, or how many people?

6 A How many people, how many hundred people,
7 about 500 people. It was a big load. It was a very
8 difficult journey. We didn't feel like going on any
9 boat trips. It was a very hard trip. And we got
10 there, we thought we came to paradise, now we're going
11 to be happy in Australia. Oh, what a journey.

12 Q What did Australia look like? What did you
13 think about it?

14 A I didn't like it. It wasn't to my
15 treatment. But we stayed for about a year. I worked.
16 We worked. Steve worked. I don't remember what he
17 was doing. We already spoke English. I was able to
18 get into a store selling lingerie, corsets. I was in
19 a department store. And, well, I wanted to go to
20 America.

21 I did go to the American consulate. I had
22 the number, I was able to get the visa, and I was

1 pregnant, and I left when I was six months pregnant.
2 I had the American visa, and finally, after all, I had
3 to go by myself.

4 Q You were able to get the visa?

5 A Yes, because I was registered in Prague. I
6 had the number, remember? And I requested it, I
7 requested my visa.

8 Q And how did you come to America?

9 A I came to America, and by that time it was
10 plane, no jets, but regular planes, and so we came. I
11 was in Fiji. This was -- okay, let me give you the
12 date. 1952, March 12th, I came. I got here. But it
13 was -- I think it was the same date, because somehow
14 at the time -- we stopped in Fiji Islands, and in
15 Hawaii, and people went sightseeing. They probably
16 took them at that time to -- we just had the 50th
17 anniversary, Pearl Harbor. I couldn't go sightseeing.
18 I was tired, and I needed to rest.

19 And I was lucky that they let me in,
20 because I was pregnant. And I came into San
21 Francisco.

22 Q Did someone meet you?

1 A My Aunt Rose and her daughter, Elizabeth,
2 they waited for me. And Lanci, the Farkases, were
3 here already. And Isabel and (Emrick). They took me
4 to the hospital.

5 I had twins three months after I came here
6 in June. June 12th, I had twins. And (Emrick) and
7 Isabel took me to the hospital. First I stayed with
8 Lanci. When I came here, my aunt, they took me to
9 their home. My aunt lived in Los Angeles at the time,
10 and Elizabeth lived in San Francisco. Her husband was
11 a furrier. They lived here. And I was in their home
12 for a couple of days, and then I stayed with Lanci.
13 Everybody was working in those days. They were young.
14 We were young.

15 But I stayed with Lanci for a while. They
16 were renting a big house on the Mission, 24th and
17 Mission at the time. It was with her sister. And
18 they already opened a business on the peninsula, so
19 they lived in this, and I stayed -- I had a room, or I
20 stayed with a little boy, she had a five year old boy,
21 he was already five at the time, because when they
22 came he was only two, so -- oh, they took me to the

1 doctor.

2 I was in Mount Zion Hospital, and I had
3 proper care, and I rented -- after that I rented a
4 room with a family, they were a German couple, they
5 were nice people. They had a daughter, you know, the
6 German and the Austrians were able to ship the young
7 people, the children, to England when the war broke
8 out. They were able to save those children, and they
9 had a daughter in England.

10 And it was just the two of them. And they
11 were renting. So I was renting there a room with
12 kitchen privileges. And I remember that when I got
13 into labor, (Emrick) and Isabel took me to the
14 hospital, and I had -- oh, when they told me, the
15 doctor did x-rays, I was getting very big, and so they
16 told me I was going to have twins. Here I am alone
17 and I'm going to have twins.

18 Q And the twins were --

19 A Julie and Linda. They were big babies. It
20 was no problem. I had some help for the night, but I
21 handled it by myself. Steve got papers to go to
22 Canada, and when he came, we met him at the airport,

1 and he saw the babies the first time, they were ten
2 weeks old when he saw the children. Can you believe
3 all this? Can you believe it? It's even unbelievable
4 to me. I'm not even getting into all the details.
5 Oh, I can't believe it. Oh, I had a hard time with
6 the two babies.

7 Q Steve came but had to go to Canada?

8 A They didn't let him stay. He had to go.
9 He had papers to go to Canada. So he went to
10 Vancouver, and he worked there, and we were here. And
11 when the children were -- babies were six months old,
12 I was able to go to Canada. He couldn't come. They
13 didn't let him enter. So I had to go, packed up. I
14 was already renting a little apartment at the time.
15 And I traveled with the babies to Canada.

16 It was winter, winter of '52. And I was
17 only allowed to stay six months in Canada -- I wasn't
18 a citizen yet -- not to lose my right to come back.
19 So we stayed there, we were renting there a place, we
20 had an apartment there, and I had to pack up again
21 after six months. I had to come back.

22 And I had an apartment here. Anyway,

1 papers were going on for Steve to come to the United
2 States. And then, I don't know if you remember the
3 (McAren) bill came out, and I was able -- they gave
4 the permission to -- for the husband to come even if I
5 was an alien, I wasn't yet a citizen. After a while
6 -- I don't know how long this took. I had a social
7 worker, Miss Prager. Did you know her, by any chance?

8 Q How old were your daughters when he came?

9 A Oh, not that old. It was still -- they
10 were infants, it was still the beginning -- it didn't
11 take very, very long. That date, I don't know the
12 date when he came, was able to come. And then we
13 moved to San Bruno. We were renting an apartment
14 there, and then we rented a house. And he went to
15 work, he worked for (Schwebeker) in San Francisco, and
16 then later he worked in (Zalerber). Stationery,
17 paper, he went into that. He wasn't in his own
18 business. He was working.

19 And when the children were two and a half
20 -- but I cannot tell you, I cannot tell you the age of
21 the children when he was able to come. It didn't take
22 so tremendously long. It didn't take a year. I think

1 he was here when they were a year old already, much
2 before.

3 Q Was he earning enough so that he could send
4 you money to live on? When did all those dollars give
5 out?

6 A The dollars didn't completely give out yet,
7 and he was working, and he was able to send money for
8 me. I had enough to live on. We didn't have -- well,
9 with the children, I went to the clinic with them for
10 a while until he came here. Then we had a doctor.
11 Yes, after he worked he got insurance, then we had
12 everything. We managed. I had enough to live on.

13 Q At the first interview we saw a beautiful
14 picture of your daughters. Would you like to tell us
15 about them?

16 A They were 21 when a friend of theirs did
17 all those portraits for them. He worked for Brooks
18 Camera, I think, and he is still around, this young
19 man. He made a lot of pictures, and the children
20 picked this out and framed -- put them in little
21 frames and gave it to me for mother's day or some
22 occasion that they gave it to me. And I have them on

1 the wall. See. I have these pictures, I have a family
2 wall in the den, and I have more than what I brought.
3 I have lots of pictures. And they are very valuable
4 to me.

5 You see, with all the moving around, all
6 the tragedies I have gone through, it wasn't finished,
7 because one of my daughters had diabetes when she was
8 13 and a half, Julie, and we lost her when she was 34.
9 For 19 years she had all kinds of illnesses that I
10 have gone through with her. Very, very, very sad. I
11 don't know how I'm here in one piece, how is this
12 possible, that after what we have gone through, that
13 was the biggest tragedy of our lives.

14 Q You say she was sick for --

15 A On this picture already she had -- Julie
16 was a very outgoing and a very, very bright girl, and
17 she wanted to be a doctor or a surgeon when she was
18 six, eight years old. She was almost finished -- she
19 was a nurse. With her condition, with her sickness,
20 she made her nursing. She just needed to pass the
21 test. And she got very ill by that time. She
22 couldn't finish. She couldn't be a doctor. She

1 wanted to be a nurse.

2 To the last minute she was hoping that
3 she's going to be all right, but her kidneys gave out,
4 her eyes. She was going -- she did have a transplant.
5 I was going to give her a kidney. Well, I jumped a
6 lot, because by the time when she graduated from high
7 school she was diabetic, and she wanted to go to
8 Israel. She just wanted to go to Israel.

9 And Linda didn't go, her sister, and Steve
10 was against her going by herself, with the condition,
11 and she -- I remember she always said, mommy, you see
12 how glad I am that I did go and I saw Israel, I
13 couldn't have gone now, when she got very much sick,
14 more sick. She came back from Israel and she had
15 Hodgkin's disease.

16 She was ill and she already had Hodgkin's
17 disease at the time. She had to have surgeries. They
18 took her spleen. Oh, I can't even go into this. I
19 think I cannot go on.

20 Q Who were the girls named after?

21 A Julie was named after Steve's niece. She
22 was Julia. Juliana. Her middle name is Frances,

1 after Steve's mother. And Linda was just Isabel's
2 idea. It was at the time, in '52, and it's a sort of
3 Spanish word, and she suggested the name, Linda, but
4 her middle name is Serena, after my mother. Linda
5 Serena. And these were their names. They started --
6 we were still moving, on the peninsula, when they
7 started -- you want to know about school?

8 Q Yes.

9 A Their schooling? Well, they started
10 kindergarten in (Milbury), and then we moved, we
11 bought our first home in (Bury Bury), south San
12 Francisco. It was a little two bedroom home. We
13 lived there for about three years. They started first
14 grade there. They went up to third grade. We made
15 some very nice friends there.

16 They were in the Brownies, and my friend,
17 who lives now in Arizona, we are still friends, she
18 was the Brownie leader, and we were friends until now.
19 I visit her in Arizona every year, and she comes here.
20 Her daughters are here. Dorothy's middle daughter,
21 she has three daughters, and the middle one, Pamela,
22 is a good friend of Linda's. They went to school for

1 three years together.

2 That was in south San Francisco. And then
3 we moved to (Milbury). We moved to (Milbury) when the
4 children were nine years old, so they continued
5 elementary school in (Milbury). And high school,
6 Capuchino High School, and then they went to San
7 Francisco State. They lived at home.

8 Q Together?

9 A Together, but, well, they got a car by that
10 time, and they were commuting, and sometimes I had to
11 help, because Linda, she was doing biology, she was
12 majoring in biology, and Julie, Julie did nursing. So
13 that's where they were for four years. And when Linda
14 finished, Julie was already ill, and Linda finished.
15 After that she went to Israel.

16 Q When was this?

17 A She went to Israel after she finished
18 college. She went to visit first, came home, and she
19 decided she wanted to go back. I think she had to
20 finish one more semester, she had to finish school in
21 order to be ready to go to -- she was planning to be a
22 hygienist, or at least Steve's idea, daddy's idea, he

1 suggested to her. She didn't like it, she said she's
2 going to Israel.

3 And when was that? They graduated high
4 school in '70 -- '74. '74, she must have gone first.
5 Linda went for the first time. And she came back
6 after the visit and she went back for a year, studying
7 the language, and then she went back. She finished
8 school in San Francisco State, and they were commuting
9 from home. We still lived there at that house, that
10 home is still our home.

11 So when Linda went back, that's when she
12 stayed in Israel for two years, and she met her
13 husband there, who was a Russian immigrant. He came
14 when he was 25, he came from Leningrad. He finished
15 his medical school in Leningrad. He was finished -- I
16 thought when he was 25, when he was 24 years old he
17 finished medical school, and being that they don't
18 have to pay for education, they didn't have to pay for
19 education, he had to pay back working for a year where
20 they send him out.

21 And then he started traveling. They were
22 able to go -- he said, I was in the place where you

1 were born, in that area of the country, he came from
2 deep into Russia, from Leningrad. He went for a visit
3 where I came from, and he liked very much when he saw.

4 And they decided, his family and him, they
5 were the very first people, when Russia opened their
6 gates, to -- people to leave. They went to Israel in
7 1973. The Yom Kippur War was in 1973. He was there
8 already, his family was there. He couldn't speak
9 Hebrew. He didn't know any Latin alphabet. He only
10 knew the Russian alphabet. And he had to study
11 Hebrew. He studied there.

12 And when the -- and he learned. He was
13 perfect in Hebrew. And when the war broke out, the
14 '73 war, he told them he was a doctor, and they took
15 him, he served in the military as a medical, he was on
16 the Sinai Peninsula when they were fighting there.

17 After that, after the war he -- they
18 accepted him as a doctor, and he worked in the
19 emergency room in a hospital, because up to that point
20 he couldn't work as a doctor. They didn't accept him.
21 He was helping -- his father was a cabinet maker and
22 he worked with him in the beginning, and then he went

1 to study. He also was -- he studied the language,
2 Hebrew, so he had to learn that.

3 And you want to know how they met. Linda
4 had a roommate, and her roommate's mother came from
5 New York, visited the girls, and Michael, my
6 son-in-law, he met this lady at the show, and they
7 started talking, and he was interested in America, and
8 she invited him home, and that's where Linda met him.

9 And he kept calling, and -- anyway, it was
10 meant to be, so Linda said that she met somebody, she
11 wrote, and I decided to go to Israel to see what's
12 what, and she said that she's ready to get married.
13 So I went to Israel and arranged for the wedding, and
14 it was a real Jewish wedding.

15 Q This was what day?

16 A This was in February 1977. February 27th,
17 the last day. 28th of February.

18 Q Did you have some family in Israel at that
19 time?

20 A Yes. I have cousins there, too.

21 Q Were they able to come?

22 A Of course. I mean, I had 60 people there,

1 just family.

2 Q Your family?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Can you recall who? Aunts, uncles,
5 cousins?

6 A I had cousins, and cousins' husbands, and
7 in fact I even had a friend in Haifa, I was
8 corresponding -- that's Isabel's cousin, and he lived
9 in our town, he comes from there too, and I was
10 corresponding with him, and asked him to come. He was
11 the religious man, but we had rabbis there, there were
12 two rabbis, and Michael's family, I forgot to mention
13 that he has parents, his parents are still alive, they
14 came from Russia, a brother and a sister, and their
15 children, they have family.

16 And this (Yasi) Farkas, who came from Haifa
17 to be there at the wedding. And I had some even
18 second cousins there who lived -- live in Israel.

19 Q Where did you have the wedding?

20 A We hired a hall in a regular place, and I
21 don't know if it was a restaurant or --

22 Q What city?

1 A In Tel Aviv. And we had a regular -- we
2 had a nice wedding, a nice dinner. It must have been
3 a restaurant there. They had a hall, a social hall,
4 where it was all set up.

5 Q And then you came back here?

6 A Came back to the United States, and they
7 stayed there, and besides were sending papers and
8 tickets, and they wanted to come here, and interesting
9 enough, history repeats itself, Linda came to the
10 United States pregnant. They let her travel, because
11 her husband was there with her. They came together.
12 They had the papers.

13 And they came together in '77, February
14 they were married, and in October -- it's harder to
15 remember the recent things than I've been going into,
16 deep into my background, childhood and everything
17 else, and this one here I am more hesitant, and I am
18 thinking more of the date, but I'm getting more
19 detailed dates. This is what was happening here.

20 Well, Michael had to learn a new alphabet,
21 and the language, but they did it all together,
22 everything together. He passed, he got his driver's

1 license, and for a year he was observing and he was
2 taking all kinds of tests, and they lived here, on the
3 peninsula, for a while, and he was applying to places
4 he wanted to do a residency to get into.

5 He passed all the tests, by the way, with
6 flying -- he has -- he says he doesn't have it
7 anymore, photographic mind. He was able to study very
8 easily. And he passed all the tests. He had a little
9 difficulty with English, that's where he didn't pass,
10 but Linda was helping him, and they worked together.

11 And they decided to travel. He sent his --
12 I don't know what you call the applications for to
13 hospitals, he sent back east, to New York and to
14 Chicago. And they traveled, they got a car from us,
15 and they traveled -- oh, with the baby already, the
16 baby was born, Danny was born in December, December
17 5th of '77. And in the spring, in the early -- early
18 in the spring they left back east. Michael wanted to
19 go to school.

20 And they called every day home from the
21 road, if any mail, any answers came, and there was an
22 answer. That was Steve's bright idea. And he was

1 accepted to Chicago. I don't know what hospital that
2 was over there. And he called, he went there, had an
3 interview and was accepted, and they went to Chicago.
4 First they went to New York and he was looking for
5 things in New York, and then they went back, they went
6 to Chicago and they spent -- two years ago.

7 Q And after that?

8 A After that, after the two years he did the
9 -- he went for his internship which he did in
10 Baltimore. He got into Baltimore. It was affiliated
11 to Johns Hopkins. They lived like in a campus where
12 all the residents were out of town. I don't know how
13 many miles out. There was a hospital and he worked
14 there, and he did his gynecology.

15 Q And after that?

16 A After that he got -- he was applying for
17 work, and -- to California too, and he was -- oh, he
18 came for an interview to Kaiser in Oakland -- in
19 Hayward, and that was his first position. He was
20 working there as a doctor.

21 Q As a --

22 A As a gynecologist.

1 Q And with all of this we don't know his last
2 name?

3 A Michael Golan.

4 Q And where is he now?

5 A He settled down, they lived in Fremont.
6 They bought a home there and he worked for four and a
7 half years there, and this was a guy who wanted to be
8 on his own, so he started inquiring, and he found a
9 place, a doctor was retiring in Yuba City, he gave up
10 his practice, and Michael bought it, and they are
11 there for four years in Yuba City, he has his own
12 practice.

13 Q And --

14 A Meantime they had a little girl, Rachel was
15 born when they lived in Fremont. She is going to be
16 nine in February. And now they go to school. Daniel
17 is 14, he just turned 14.

18 Q And you had a special event this June?

19 A In June it was his bar mitzvah. They
20 didn't do it on his 13th birthday. It was held in
21 June, this summer. They had it at their own home,
22 they had a rabbi, and it was a nice celebration.

1 Interesting, yes, I must mention this, when
2 Daniel was born I was 51, 52, and I said, gee, I'm
3 going to be 55 years old when Daniel is going to be
4 bar mitzvah'd. And the time came, it happened, and
5 the most interesting -- the reason that went through
6 my mind, because Michael was brought up during
7 Communism, he didn't want to hear about religion,
8 don't drive me crazy with God, don't hammer it into
9 the children's heads. He didn't want to know
10 anything.

11 But it is interesting, because he is
12 involved and we have all the holidays, and he's
13 participating, and he was really participating in the
14 bar mitzvah, he even had a -- the rabbi told him to
15 get a tallis, and I was looking at him, it was very
16 interesting. He is very successful, he is a very
17 clever guy, he has a very good practice, and they are
18 doing well, and this is -- I guess this is my joy,
19 this is what I have gotten after all these horrible
20 things.

21 Q What thoughts went through your mind at the
22 bar mitzvah?

1 A I said -- you see, I had lots of questions
2 with all the bitterness, with all the difficulties,
3 with all the heartache, with all -- there were all
4 these questions, so many people died, so many people
5 were killed, the family, I lost two brothers, two
6 sisters, the little nephew, my oldest sister's baby
7 was 18 months old. Why were we left to live? I mean,
8 how come, what, how?

9 I mean, questions -- there are no answers,
10 like Julie when she was so ill and she kept telling,
11 mommy, this isn't fair. With her suffering, she had
12 so many problems. What is fair? Where is there an
13 answer to all of these questions, to what's going on
14 in our lives?

15 And what was going on through my mind, as I
16 have even written to Daniel a little note, a little --
17 how I felt, I guess this is what we had to survive
18 for, this is what -- where we got, I guess, to see
19 this for the coming generation, and for the future,
20 seeing these children. They are very happy, they have
21 everything, and they are living a good life.

22 I am asking, what kind of a world is

1 expecting -- is awaiting them? What's coming, with
2 all these difficulties? I'm very much interested in
3 politics and I'm following, and I have to hear the
4 news constantly, and knowing what's going on in the
5 world, because I was 12 years old when the war broke
6 out in Europe, and I was following, we were by the
7 radio sitting during this whole time.

8 And I don't know what I see in the future,
9 in this world, or what good -- I was hoping that
10 people have learned war is a horrible thing, hatred is
11 a disgusting thing, it doesn't take people anyplace,
12 you just harm yourself with these feelings, negative
13 feelings inside of you.

14 I don't know, I was hoping that our
15 generation, like I write to Israel, to my cousins, I
16 said, this is what our third generation has to live
17 with, the terrible problems that are going on in
18 Israel, and the whole world, and how people feel about
19 each other. Is anti-Semitism buried? Is hatred gone?
20 We live it. Can this happen again? Yes. Can it
21 happen here? Anything can happen.

22 And my feelings, I wish I could say that I

1 didn't even feel that big hope and see it as clearly,
2 that right after the war, when I said, when it was
3 Communism and capitalism, in 1945, I said -- I was 19
4 years old, and I said, I don't see that the world is
5 at peace, that it's over.

6 And I just don't see, I don't see any clear
7 good world. I don't see it.

8 Q What do you remember, what kind of
9 childhood do you remember that you had?

10 A Me, myself? Was the most happy, and I :
11 imagine that people with poor or -- I mean, just
12 people who I know, or if they were orphans and having
13 such bitter life experiences like Isabel and people
14 who had -- I had the most happy childhood there ever
15 was. I didn't have 17-inch screen television and all
16 the things that my grandchildren are having. An
17 abundance. And I don't believe in that either,
18 overdoing, and children have to know that they can't
19 have everything.

20 But we had a very happy family life. We
21 were a big family. We were six children at home. I
22 had both parents until I was almost 15. My father

1 died, and I think that's where the decline was in my
2 inner world. But I was a very lively child. I liked
3 to do everything. I was interested in everything, and
4 sports, and outdoors, and the one thing that I should
5 have done, probably, after the war I should have gone
6 back to school, but I really should have done
7 something more useful.

8 Well, no, I didn't say it right. I really
9 didn't go to school to educate myself more. I had
10 life education. But the childhood, I do feel that:
11 that was my basis, and that's something that has
12 really carried me and given me strength, what we had
13 at home. My mother had six brothers -- two brothers
14 and four sisters. They were six.

15 My father was -- four brothers and two
16 sisters. And there were children, lots of cousins,
17 and I had lots of children around me. We had friends,
18 I always had friends. I was a leader, I had always
19 been, let's do this, let's do that, and my mother
20 says, we have a big family, you have here your sisters
21 who need more children, I have to have more children
22 there from the whole neighborhood, from the whole

1 area. We had a big garden, and I was interested in
2 everything, I had to do everything.

3 And holidays and the family together, and
4 we had our meals together. At 12:00 we had our main
5 meal in Europe. We sat around the table, all of eight
6 people, every day a party, eight people around the
7 table.

8 And I was very happy. I was right there by
9 my father when he was ordering, we had grocery store,
10 the store was by the house, and oh, my childhood
11 friend who lives in New York, they are Orthodox. I
12 visited with her, she asked me to come. I was there
13 two or three years ago. They went back to our birth
14 place, her and her husband, and she says that this is
15 after -- since '45 we left, and she says that our
16 homes are no more there, everything collapsed, she
17 couldn't recognize things.

18 It's so changed, dilapidated, neglected,
19 everything, she says, our home and your home doesn't
20 exist anymore. They collapsed. My grandfather built
21 the home. So it must have been over a hundred years
22 old. Nobody took care of it for 45, 46 years old, of

1 course it collapsed. But the property is there. But
2 who is interested anymore? They have no Jewish
3 cemeteries.

4 Q As you were speaking, I was just wondering,
5 before the war broke out, do you suppose that your
6 mother felt any differently about the future for her
7 children or grandchildren than you do?

8 A You know, I don't know if the Semites, they
9 say dark haired and curly, dark eyes -- we were all
10 blondes, both parents were blue eyed, and we were such
11 fair and light children, all of us, and when they
12 came, people, to the store and customers, they were
13 always, oh, Mrs. (Vesovich), you have such beautiful
14 children, oh, I want your luck to be good.

15 She worried about the children too, the
16 future, the war, and newspapers were coming, and they
17 were reading, my parents, my mother, and they were
18 following already world events. And they were already
19 worried, when things were going on. I was describing
20 about 1942 already, '39 in Poland, and '42 when
21 Slovakian women were taken into -- and the Slovaks
22 were taken into Poland, they were just -- that's how

1 much we have known, that they are going to Poland.

2 And yes, they were worried about what's
3 coming, sure. I am sure that she always wanted us to
4 have good luck.

5 Q If there was one period in your life that
6 was the happiest, what would that be?

7 A Well, it is the time when we were all
8 together. It's going back, all the way back, I guess.
9 I never gave it a thought, but you are asking, that
10 was a happy time, before -- up until 1940, 1939 and
11 '40, the real childhood, the age of 12, 13. Those
12 were the happiest. The rest was very difficult.

13 And the reason I didn't crack up, and I am
14 here in one piece, I have done a lot of -- I've been
15 doing yoga, I've been walking, and I've been swimming,
16 and that really, really helped me. I guess that's
17 what helped me to get through. It's very important
18 for me. I do it even now. I am taking classes and I
19 do my exercises every day, and I walk practically
20 every day, at least three miles. And I know that that
21 kept me going, sane.

22 [End Tape 1, Begin Tape 2.]

1 BY MR. FROMING:

2 Q You have been so forthcoming, have you
3 talked to your daughter about the events?

4 A Yes, she knows that I'm coming -- yes, she
5 knew that I was doing it in the past, and she knew
6 about today. We were together Thanksgiving. We were
7 there. We came, and Michael was making pie. That was
8 so funny. He is so -- they made pumpkin pie, and I
9 said I never made pie in my life. I am a good cook,
10 but Hungarian, no gourmet cook, but I still cook
11 Hungarian and Jewish food, but simplified.

12 I used to bake. Julie liked sweets, and
13 Steve did, but we don't do that anymore. We are
14 pretty close, but she is busy with her family. And do
15 you know what I have noticed now? We are very close,
16 the children like to come, and there are a couple of
17 things, Rachel -- Grandma, did you make some stuffed
18 cabbage? And Daniel likes baked beans, the Jewish
19 style, sholent, have you heard of it? And that was
20 always his favorite, and I try to keep it on hand.

21 It's getting a little more independent,
22 they are growing, they have their friends. And I just

1 saw somebody I met, I was walking, and I met some
2 friends that I used to work -- oh, I didn't even tell
3 you that I used to work here, I worked in one place
4 for 37 years. Part-time, never worked full time,
5 because I was with my children. I wanted to be home.

6 And -- is this rolling? -- I told her, she
7 has a little grandson, David is going to be three
8 years old, and I said, enjoy him while he is little.
9 When somebody else told me that, I couldn't believe
10 it, we were so very close. The children just loved to
11 come and stay over and for holidays or vacations, or
12 Linda and Michael traveled, though went to Disneyland
13 with Daniel, and they left Rachel when she was little
14 for a week or so.

15 I mean, they were doing that a lot. The
16 time comes when they don't need you anymore, they look
17 at me, and they see my old face, Grandma, you got too
18 many wrinkles. I said, you know what, I'm going to
19 have more, you're going to get older and I am going to
20 get older, as you are growing. And I said, this is
21 still okay.

22 But it's difficult for children, for young

1 people, to really accept, even though they know you
2 are their grandparents and you have to be old, but
3 it's nice while you were active. One time I was there
4 visiting, and Rachel wanted to play soccer, and I
5 played soccer with her, I kicked so hard that my back
6 went. Michael said, are you crazy, do you want to get
7 a broken hip? Me, a broken hip? Boy, did I have a
8 bad back.

9 But Rachel shows me her dances, she takes
10 dancing, and Grandma, look, I can do the splits. :
11 Rachel, you are taking this from yoga. Do you want to
12 see what I can do? She knows. She knows. She knows
13 I do head standing and so on. So --

14 Q Have you talked about the events of your
15 life with the daughter or the grandkids?

16 A Yes, the grandchildren, they know, they
17 know. Not into details, but of course Linda and
18 Julie, they knew when they were very young. They went
19 to attend Sunday school, and I have a newspaper
20 clipping that was done when the children were two and
21 a half years old.

22 I met a family in the park -- I took them

1 when they were little, I was always out, I was in the
2 park -- and I met a family, the lady, I think the
3 mother was there only with the two children, and I
4 started talking, I told her that I come from Europe,
5 and a little bit of my background. She said, gee, I
6 know some newspaper writer, he is working in San Bruno
7 on a -- we lived in San Bruno at that time, yes, we
8 were renting a house, and they lived in San Bruno.

9 And she says, do you want to talk to him?
10 Well, I said, okay. So I told him a little bit about
11 -- this was in 1955, before Thanksgiving, and he put
12 in the headline, the Boros family who is going to
13 celebrate Thanksgiving, it's going to be a very
14 important Thanksgiving, they can give thanks for very
15 big reason, and described, in just a nutshell --
16 really, actually, what it was, it was our escape in
17 more details from Romania, it's already after the war,
18 from Romania, how we finally got to the United States,
19 and mentioned there my -- so the children knew the
20 story, and I have talked to them. I have talked to
21 them about it.

22 Q How did they react?

1 A Well, what was their reaction? I guess
2 they had sympathy. They knew what I have gone
3 through, even just at the time when I knew I'm going
4 to have a baby, I wanted it to be born in the United
5 States. And that's why I left or I didn't wait for
6 it, I thought I'm not going to travel even this easy,
7 it was easier to leave alone with a pregnancy instead
8 of with a baby.

9 And so they knew it was what was done, what
10 our background, what we have gone through, and I
11 wanted them -- I wanted for them a better life in the
12 United States, where we are safe.

13 Q Do you think -- I guess that's one way in
14 which it's influenced your relationship with the
15 children. Do you think these experiences have
16 influenced them in other ways, or things that you
17 wanted for them?

18 A Well, we wanted for them freedom, and we
19 wanted them to have a good education, and to have a
20 better life, and safety, I guess, for -- this is -- it
21 just couldn't be repeated, that they should have a
22 better life, and achieve more than we did.

1 We had to leave everything. It was taken
2 from us once. The second time it was voluntary, but
3 it would have been hell. It was just a very, very
4 difficult life in Romania, during Communism, and no
5 freedom, and here you have everything. It just hurts
6 me to see how much the United States -- how much this
7 world has deteriorated, how bad the situation is right
8 now. Let's hope for a better world.

9 I was always hopeful, I was an optimist,
10 cockeyed optimist. That made me survive, it made me
11 live. I don't know. I don't know. But I imagine
12 this is for the future generation. I was meant to be
13 here.

14 Q Has Steve told his story?

15 A He didn't. He didn't even think about it.
16 He was not in a concentration camp. He was in a
17 forced labor camp. His father was helping him. He
18 was not hungry, he was never hungry. He had
19 everything. He always had money on him. Even when he
20 was walking through -- going home, he still had some
21 money on him. His father took care of him when he was
22 in the forced labor camp.

1 He was in another town there, and I guess
2 the biggest tragedy was losing the parents. They were
3 not young, and the manner that he lost them, with a
4 concentration camp. And his sister, who was younger,
5 a young mother. And he never even gave it a thought,
6 of doing this. I don't know, I could ask him if he
7 was interested, but -- do you need more people? Do
8 you need more stories?

9 Q Did he tell you about it?

10 A Yes. I knew where he was, I knew the town.
11 This cousin who is in Budapest, her parents, she comes
12 from the town where Steve was sent, and my brother,
13 when he was taken out from the ghetto in '44, he was
14 21, and he was sent to this town, to Baia-Mare. It's
15 -- I don't know how far from Satu-Mare, but that's
16 where he was.

17 So Steve is not really -- he got home in
18 '44, in October, when the war was really -- towards
19 the end, the last six, seven, eight months. So he was
20 home already. So he is not complaining. He didn't
21 really experience -- he is not talking so bitterly
22 about it. He was 28 when we got married. So that's

1 Steve.

2 BY MS. PROZAN:

3 Q Thank you very much for sharing this with
4 us. Who is in this picture?

5 A This is Daniel, his bar mitzvah picture
6 with the rabbi. Don't ask me the name, I don't know.
7 He's from Sacramento. They go to Sacramento, to
8 Sunday school.

9 Q How tall is Daniel?

10 A Daniel is as tall -- he is about six foot.

11 Q And he's only 14?

12 A He just turned 14. Yes, he is going to be
13 very tall.

14 Okay. This is Anna, Anna Schwartz, my
15 younger sister, who survived with me.

16 Q She is the one who wrote the poem?

17 A She is the one who wrote the poem. There
18 are two of them. One in the ghetto. And this is
19 Michael Golan. And Steve. I should have given you
20 Linda. Linda Golan, my daughter.

21 And Steve, and Daniel. We are sitting
22 right there in the garden. And Helen Farkas, she is a

1 very good friend. Linda used to babysit her daughter.

2 And this is Morris Farkas. Lanci is my
3 cousin, Lanci Farkas, and Morris is her husband. This
4 is me. And Isabel (Koon), and Isabel's husband, and
5 let's see, Helen's husband Joe, Isabel's husband
6 (Emrick), and Helen's husband Joe, and Anna's husband
7 Solly, they were inside. They didn't attend -- they
8 didn't go to look for them. There were so many
9 pictures taken.

10 This is Kiley here, I don't want to forget
11 her. She is Helen's granddaughter.

12 Q And I think we've got another granddaughter
13 of yours.

14 A Oh, my little granddaughter, excuse me.
15 Rachel. This is Rachel here. Sorry.

16 Q And when was this picture taken?

17 A The picture was taken June. June 15th.

18 Q Of this year?

19 A This year.

20 Q And the occasion was?

21 A The occasion was the bar mitzvah.

22 [End Tape 2.]