

BAY AREA HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with JENNY REYNARD

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Place: San Mateo, California

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Anne Grenn Saldinger

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1 A. All the way back, back, way back? Yeah.
2 That's what I was thinking. Yeah, that's what I was
3 thinking, about my parents' parents, I was thinking of
4 this morning. I woke up quite early.

5 Q. TODAY IS JUNE 7, THE YEAR 2000, WE'RE AT THE
6 TEMPLE BETH EL, AT 1700 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS, SAN MATEO,
7 CALIFORNIA. WE ARE INTERVIEWING JENNIE REYNARD. MY NAME
8 IS PETER RYAN, INTERVIEWER, AND ANN GRENN SALDINGER IS
9 DOING THE VIDEOTAPING.

10 COULD I ASK WHERE AND WHEN YOU WERE BORN?

11 A. I was born in Valki-Kapustyany,
12 Czechoslovakia, November 28, 1928.

13 Q. AND COULD YOU JUST KIND OF LOCATE THAT IN
14 TERMS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

15 A. Well, it used to be Slovakia, then it was
16 Hungary and again Slovakia. And it's a very wonderful
17 place. I liked it. I liked living there.

18 Q. SO, IS THAT IN THE EASTERN PART OF
19 CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

20 A. Right.

21 Q. ALL RIGHT. HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE IN THE
22 FAMILY?

23 A. We were, including my parents -- my father
24 died before that -- 12, 10 children.

1 Q. YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER AND 10 CHILDREN?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. AND WHERE WERE YOU AGE-WISE IN THE 10?

4 A. I was the 9th.

5 Q. THE 9TH. OKAY. WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

6 A. My father, it's hard to describe it because he
7 had lots of different kinds of businesses. First of all,
8 my father used to buy mountains and they used to cut down
9 trees for him and they used to deliver it to Valki. He
10 used to go to these mountains that he used to buy --

11 Q. TIMBER?

12 A. Right. And they used to deliver it by loads,
13 train, train loads.

14 Q. OKAY.

15 A. And it came already cut up in pieces because
16 we used to -- in Europe at that time, they used to heat
17 the homes with fuel and coal; not like today. So, we
18 used to sell those. They used to come in by load, as I
19 said, with loads of trains and we had a big weight where
20 we were able to weigh it, weigh the goods from the train.
21 And they delivered it. We had a big yard there. And
22 people came to work to put it up for us. And he used to
23 get calls also and we used to sell those by -- they used
24 to set it up and sell it. My father was always generous,

1 always gave them more than they paid for. Then beside it
2 we had a grocery store, right in our home.

3 Q. RIGHT IN YOUR HOME?

4 A. We had a four-bedroom home, right near -- I
5 forgot to mention it. All this took place, our home was
6 right near the station.

7 Q. RIGHT NEAR THE STATION.

8 A. And so, it wasn't too far for them to deliver
9 it. But we used to have, still at that time, horses, with
10 baggers, they used to deliver it; like six or eight pair
11 of horses, baggers. They used to deliver it. And then we
12 had a big place to put it. Beside it he had wood, lumber,
13 all these other stuff.

14 Q. SO, YOU HAD A FOUR-BEDROOM HOUSE?

15 A. Four-bedroom house.

16 Q. AND WHO WAS IN THE BEDROOM WITH YOU?

17 A. With me? My mother and my sister.

18 Q. THREE OF YOU?

19 A. Three of us.

20 Q. AND WERE YOU A RELIGIOUS FAMILY?

21 A. Very.

22 Q. VERY?

23 A. Very.

24 Q. BOTH PARENTS?

1 A. Both parents, especially my mother.

2 Q. AND HOW LONG HAD THEY BEEN IN THAT PART OF
3 CZECHOSLOVAKIA, DO YOU KNOW?

4 A. For a long time, way back. My mother's
5 parents came from Czechoslovakia, my father's parents came
6 from Czechoslovakia.

7 Q. DID IT GO BACK BEFORE THEN?

8 A. Well, I knew their names. We used to go
9 visiting each other, then my grandmother used to live
10 with us for a while. After my grandfather died, he was
11 pretty young, he was only 52, he got a stroke, and he
12 died all of a sudden. He was the mayor of Valki, my
13 grandfather. They kept telling us he was a very nice man.

14 Q. HOW BIG A TOWN OR CITY WAS THAT?

15 A. Not too big.

16 Q. NOT TOO BIG?

17 A. Not too big. Probably -- I really don't know,
18 but I imagine about 8,000 people.

19 Q. JEWS, NON-JEWS?

20 A. Jews, non-Jews. Jews were quite a bit many of
21 Jews. I would say about 3, 400 at least; 3, 400 people.
22 Because usually people had pretty big families. Everybody
23 had 8 or 10, 6, 8 or 10.

24 Q. A LOT OF WORKERS, RIGHT?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. AND RELIGIOUS?

3 A. Pretty religious.

4 Q. SO, YOU OBSERVED ALL THE HOLIDAYS?

5 A. We did. I was also religious, because this is
6 the way I was brought up. We were pretty religious,
7 pretty -- if it was Shabbat, we did not travel, we did not
8 see a paper. We had kosher; strictly kosher.

9 Q. YOU REALLY OBSERVED THE LAWS?

10 A. Very much so.

11 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR OWN SCHOOLING?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. WHEN DID YOU START SCHOOL?

14 A. I started pretty early because my father was
15 friends with the school --

16 Q. PRINCIPAL?

17 A. Principal. And I wanted to go to school. And
18 the principal said, okay, just let her come. We won't
19 register her, just let her come. So, this is the way I
20 started pretty early.

21 Q. AND HOW OLD?

22 A. About 5.

23 Q. AND WAS THIS --

24 A. 4 and a half, 5.

1 Q. WAS THIS A MIXED SCHOOL, JEWISH SCHOOL?

2 A. No, mixed school.

3 Q. PUBLIC SCHOOL?

4 A. Right.

5 Q. DID YOU HAVE FRIENDS BOTH CHRISTIAN AND

6 JEWISH?

7 A. Yeah. I had a lot of non-Jewish friends and a
8 lot of Jewish friends.

9 Q. DID YOU LIKE SCHOOL?

10 A. Very much. Yeah, I did.

11 Q. YOU WANTED TO GO BACK, YOU MUST HAVE LIKED IT?

12 A. Yeah. It was a nice school. I remember the
13 teachers, I remember the principal. It was pretty
14 comfortable.

15 Q. HOW BIG WERE THE CLASSES?

16 A. About 30 I would say in the classroom.

17 Q. HOW LONG DID YOU GO TO THAT SCHOOL?

18 A. 9th grade or 9th, 10th, I just started.

19 Q. 9TH OR 10TH.

20 A. Right.

21 Q. DID YOU HAVE TO STOP SCHOOL?

22 A. They made me stop school.

23 Q. BECAUSE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN YOUR COUNTRY?

24 A. Right.

1 Q. DID YOU HAVE YOUR BIG MEAL AT NOON?

2 A. At the school?

3 Q. NO, NO. I MEAN DID YOU --

4 A. Oh, yeah. Noontime.

5 Q. AND EVERYONE WOULD COME BACK --

6 A. Everyone would -- well, whoever was around.

7 We had big families. But our meal was noontime. But
8 then we would have soup or usually meat product, we had
9 only weekends, separately. Friday and Saturday; chicken
10 or meat. We don't have too much meat to eat.

11 Q. SO, LIKE SOUP, VEGETABLES?

12 A. For Saturday?

13 Q. NO.

14 A. We had a big --

15 Q. DURING THE WEEK.

16 A. During the week, soup, some vegetables. We
17 had lots of vegetables. I forgot to tell you, we had a
18 big yard, huge yard. And we had lots of potatoes,
19 vegetables, carrots, tomatoes, string beans, peas.

20 Q. WHO TOOK CARE OF THE GARDEN?

21 A. Us. The family, and a bunch of us.

22 Q. SO, YOU GREW YOUR OWN FOOD?

23 A. Our own food. And we had trees, we had about
24 35 fruit trees. I loved them. There are no more trees

1 like this. Fruit doesn't taste the same.

2 Q. OBVIOUSLY.

3 A. Oh, no.

4 Q. WHAT KIND OF FRUIT?

5 A. Plums, pears.

6 Q. APPLES?

7 A. Delicious. Apples, cherries we pick.

8 Raspberries, strawberries. And beside that we had cows
9 and horses and --

10 Q. SO IT WAS ALMOST LIKE A LITTLE FARM?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. AND THE GROCERY STORE?

13 A. We had a lamb, too.

14 Q. A LAMB?

15 A. Yeah, the grocery store. People used to come
16 in to buy stuff.

17 Q. DID THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS WORK AT THE
18 STORE?

19 A. Yeah, everybody helped out.

20 Q. WHAT DID YOU DO?

21 A. Me? I played a lot. Most of the time I
22 played. And yes, I had something, but I did not like it.
23 It was to take care of the geese. We had geese, about 20
24 of them. We had to keep an eye on them. They used to run

1 away, go to the neighbor's place and eat their stuff.

2 Q. SO, YOU HAD TO BRING THEM BACK?

3 A. I had to watch them. Sometimes I used to take
4 my -- later on, I remember, I used to take my homework
5 with me to study or books to read.

6 Q. TELL ME WHY YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT.

7 A. To watch the goose?

8 Q. YES.

9 A. Because they used to bite me. They snap. I
10 was afraid of them. Then cows, we used to have to get
11 cows sometimes, they run away.

12 Q. IF THEY WANDERED AWAY?

13 A. And my mother used to send us. And another
14 thing I did not like, we had a big family, and we kept
15 our potatoes in --

16 Q. THE CELLAR?

17 A. The cellar. In a whole bunch; you know,
18 potatoes. And I used to go down there. And I was always
19 afraid I'm going to -- they're going to be in a heap of
20 potatoes with worms or something. So, to pick them up, I
21 did not like that. And then to peel for 10, 12 people,
22 potatoes, I always thought it takes forever.

23 Q. A LOT OF WORK TO FEED THAT MANY PEOPLE?

24 A. Yeah, yeah.

1 Q. WERE THOSE MEALS THAT YOU HAD WITH THE FAMILY,
2 WERE THOSE GOOD TIMES?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. YEAH?

5 A. Yeah. We were 10 children and with my
6 parents, 12. And then if somebody was missing, we did not
7 like it. We were kind of -- we knew something isn't
8 right. A person wasn't there, my oldest brother had to
9 work or had to do something, we just did not like that.
10 That person was missing.

11 Q. SHOULD BE THERE?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. YEAH.

14 A. And we used to have beautiful Friday evening
15 meals. We had very nice meals. We started already
16 Thursday cooking for Saturday. Make breads and all kind
17 of chocolate, cakes, poppyseed cakes.

18 Q. I BET THE POPPYSEED CAKES DON'T TASTE AS GOOD
19 NOW, HUH?

20 A. No, that's right.

21 Q. NOT LIKE YOUR MOTHER MADE THEM?

22 A. Nobody makes it anymore.

23 Q. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR SISTERS AND
24 BROTHERS?

1 A. Okay. Let's see. My oldest one started to
2 learn how to print. He wanted to be a printer for a
3 newspaper. Well, we called him Yenna, but I think his
4 name was Eugene, but we called him Yenna. So, he started
5 to work, learn. But he was complaining somehow from the
6 chemical, his eyes was hurting him. And then there was
7 Willie, and he was working in -- he was selling materials.

8 Q. WHAT KIND OF MATERIALS?

9 A. Clothing.

10 Q. CLOTHES?

11 A. Cloth. Right. Herman, he had, mostly in the
12 yard, mostly he was going with the cows and all this.
13 And then Arnold, he was -- they call it a philosopher, he
14 was talking about going to the moon and he was dreaming
15 about things like that. And I was wondering, at that
16 time, he's going to build a ladder, you know.

17 Q. BUILD A LADDER FOR THE SKY?

18 A. Yeah. And he was -- he joined the Hagannah,
19 pretty early.

20 Q. WAS HE GOING TO GO TO PALESTINE?

21 A. He was very much considering that. But the
22 means, we did not have the means. We were so far away.

23 Q. YEAH.

24 A. And never thought of it, that we can really do

1 it.

2 Q. DID YOUR FATHER MIND THAT HE WAS IN THE
3 HAGANNAH?

4 A. Yes. And my mother, too. They did not like
5 that. I don't know why, but they just did not care for
6 it.

7 Q. THEY WANTED HIM TO STAY HERE?

8 A. I think they figured that once he's out, he's
9 going to be -- he won't be religious. I think mostly for
10 that religious reasons.

11 Q. OKAY.

12 A. Then there was Audie, my sister Audie. She
13 learned how to sew. My older sister Rosie, she was the
14 oldest, she took care of us.

15 Q. SHE WAS THE LITTLE MOTHER?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. A GOOD MOTHER? WAS SHE A GOOD MOTHER?

18 A. My older sister?

19 Q. YES.

20 A. The best.

21 Q. THE BEST?

22 A. You're going to hear that when I tell you what
23 happened in Auschwitz. Because I was together with her
24 all the time.

1 Q. OKAY.

2 A. Let's see, my sister Helen, she was pretty
3 young yet. She mostly was reading most of the time,
4 studying, reading. My brother Daschiell, he was also
5 just reading and studying. And my younger sister, Min,
6 we were fighting and playing. She had her friends, I had
7 my friends.

8 Q. WHO WERE YOU CLOSEST TO?

9 A. With my younger sister.

10 Q. WHAT WAS THE AGE DIFFERENCE?

11 A. Well, she was about 8 -- about 4 years
12 difference.

13 Q. COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR FATHER,
14 WHAT HE WAS LIKE?

15 A. He was a very good person, religious person.
16 He had a lot of friends, lots of Jewish and non-Jewish.

17 Q. FRIENDS?

18 A. Friends. He was very well liked. He was
19 always good to people, fair; always fair to people. He
20 treated them nice. He treated people nice.

21 Q. WAS IT HIS FATHER WHO WAS THE MAYOR OR YOUR --

22 A. No, my mother's father.

23 Q. OKAY.

24 A. He was very generous with us, too. He used to

1 go to restaurants, little coffee houses rather. And we
2 used to follow him, especially when we wanted something
3 special. We used to ask him for money, we knew he won't
4 say no. Meaning that we wanted to buy a special candy or
5 something, so we just had to ask for like crawlers.

6 Q. AND HE WOULD ALWAYS GIVE?

7 A. Always. And he used to smoke. That's one
8 thing that he did not do right. He used to smoke. And
9 my mother and father used to fight over it. He used to
10 cough, he got hurt in the army. He was in the army, the
11 First World War. And he got shot in his lungs, and he
12 should not have been smoking. Even the doctor said not
13 to smoke. But, he kept on smoking. He used to go outside
14 to smoke so nobody sees him smoking.

15 Q. AND YOUR MOTHER WAS UNHAPPY WITH IT?

16 A. She didn't care for it.

17 Q. WHAT WAS SHE LIKE, YOUR MOTHER?

18 A. My mother was very helpful in the community.
19 Every week or so, she and a couple more women got together
20 and went collecting money for certain, like --

21 Q. CHARITIES?

22 A. Organizations, charities, right.

23 Q. SO, SHE WAS ACTIVE?

24 A. Active and busy at home. She was very busy.

1 Q. WERE YOU CLOSE TO HER?

2 A. Yeah. And she was -- she did not have that
3 much time for us, but taking care of the house to feed
4 and ducks to feed. I don't know the proper way to say
5 it. They used to fill ducks' neck with corn to make them
6 fat. And the same with goose also. They used to do that
7 at that time.

8 Q. YEAH.

9 A. So, the ducks should be bigger and --

10 Q. PLUMP?

11 A. Right. So, every morning she had to get up at
12 4 o'clock in the morning to do all these, and feed the
13 cows and feed the chickens.

14 Q. SO, SHE WAS ALWAYS WORKING?

15 A. Always working. Always working. At night we
16 used to go to sleep early when the light was out. I
17 mean, when night was up, when it was getting dark, we had
18 to go to sleep and had to get up real early.

19 Q. SO, IT WAS A VERY BUSY, INDUSTRIOUS HOUSE,
20 YEAH?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. WHEN DID YOU BECOME AWARE THAT THERE MIGHT BE
23 DIFFICULTY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

24 A. Well, I heard some talking, some people

1 talking. And I heard my mother saying the leaves don't
2 move unless there is a wind. That was a saying, that the
3 leaves don't move unless there's a wind.

4 Q. TO PUSH IT?

5 A. Right.

6 Q. YEAH.

7 A. So, I was wondering what did she mean by
8 that. So, I do not ask her. Somehow we did not
9 communicate this way. But, I heard something that the
10 Germans were coming, something about Germans, and sure
11 enough, a few months later, Germany invaded us.

12 Q. NOW, YOU WERE NOT IN THAT PART, YOU WERE NOT
13 IN THE SUDENTENLAND PART, WERE YOU?

14 A. No.

15 Q. SO, YOU WERE TAKEN OVER BY GERMANY WHEN?

16 A. Let's see. I have to get that straight.

17 Q. EARLY 1939?

18 A. No, a little bit later. It was '43, I would
19 say. '43. In '43.

20 Q. SO, UP UNTIL 1943, NO GERMANS?

21 A. No Germans. But Hungary came in again about,
22 about just the same, a little bit before that. And they
23 were really very mean. They called them the Gendarme,
24 Hungarian policemen. And they were extremely rude and

1 mean. They called us names. And slowly, slowly also the
2 people started to change. They started calling people,
3 Jewish people names. And there was difficulties. They
4 could not work in their office. They did not let -- they
5 did not give us work, people wanted to work in offices.

6 Q. JEWISH COULDN'T GET WORK?

7 A. No.

8 Q. DID THEY INTERFERE WITH YOUR FATHER'S
9 BUSINESS?

10 A. They did. Especially the neighbors. At the
11 same business across the street. And used to stay in
12 front of his yard and calling people not to go to that
13 dirty Jews, to come to his place. So, this is the way.

14 Q. HE HAD THE SAME KIND OF BUSINESS?

15 A. He opened the same kind of business.

16 Q. SO, HE OPENED, WHEN DID HE OPEN?

17 A. Let's see. About '42, I think. '42 my father
18 died when he was 42. I mean, in the year '42 he was 52.

19 Q. WHAT YEAR?

20 A. 1942.

21 Q. IN 1942?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. DID HE DIE OF LUNG DISEASE?

24 A. Right. They did not have penicillin. He had

1 pneumonia. And there was nothing they could do for him.
2 It happened in the winter, in December, January, that he
3 had to go to this place where he had this -- where he
4 bought his forest, the whole forest. And he spent -- it
5 was a very cold winter. And he spent some time there and
6 he caught a cold. And then --

7 Q. DID HE EVER COME BACK HOME?

8 A. Yeah, he came back home. I think it took
9 about 3, 4 weeks that he died. As a matter of fact, it
10 was the same day as he died, that same minute the mailman
11 brought a letter to us from my brother Arnold, who was, I
12 told you he was kind of --

13 Q. THE DREAMER?

14 A. Dreamer.

15 Q. YEAH.

16 A. And he apologized to my father, that he caused
17 trouble.

18 Q. DID HE REALLY CAUSE TROUBLE?

19 A. No, not really. He was a good boy, not really
20 trouble. He was --

21 Q. WORRIED?

22 A. No, no, no. He was so involved in that, you
23 know, showing things and -- Hashomar things, he was so
24 involved in all this stuff.

1 Q. IN THE ZIONIST?

2 A. In the Zionist movement, right. He was so
3 involved. So, he apologized in that letter to my father.
4 And as it happened, at that time they took him in a camp.

5 Q. LABOR BATTALION?

6 A. Labor camp or something. And he never saw him
7 again.

8 Q. NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN?

9 A. No. He was the first one -- after my father,
10 he was the first one. They noticed us that he got
11 killed. But we never found out where he was killed, when
12 he was killed. We could not find anything.

13 Q. DID YOU GET A NOTICE THAT HE WAS KILLED?

14 A. Yeah, we got a notice.

15 Q. YOU DID?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. WHEN WAS THAT?

18 A. In '43.

19 Q. AND WAS HE ACTUALLY PART OF THE ARMY?

20 A. No. Kind of labor camp.

21 Q. WAS THE LABOR BATTALION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

22 A. Yes. Someplace, the Ukraine.

23 Q. IN THE UKRAINE?

24 A. Yeah. Well, actually I do not say exactly the

1 army, it started out as in the army. And then they
2 separated him and took him --

3 Q. THE JEWISH --

4 A. Where he was to work. To dig things.

5 Q. THEY MADE HIM BUILD ROADS AND TRENCHES?

6 A. Something like that, right.

7 Q. SO, THAT LETTER THAT HE WROTE NEVER REACHED
8 YOUR FATHER?

9 A. No. As he was dying, the letter came to --
10 the mailman gave us through the window. We had the
11 windows across the street, we had a lot of windows
12 there. And I remember, the mailman just handed,
13 delivered to us. Because the saying, you're supposed to
14 open the windows when somebody dies, for the --

15 Q. THE SPIRIT TO GET OUT?

16 A. Right. That's what happened. They opened the
17 window, and he handed, the mailman handed us the letter.

18 Q. SO, IT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE
19 FAMILY TO HAVE YOUR FATHER DIE?

20 A. Right.

21 Q. WERE YOU THERE?

22 A. Yeah, I was there.

23 Q. HAD THE HUNGARIANS COME YET?

24 A. Soon after. Soon after my father died, the

1 Hungarians came in and they were -- actually, it was
2 about the same time. Everything happened about the same
3 time. I don't know exactly. I was very unaware of this
4 thing that happened.

5 Q. WERE YOU STILL PLAYING?

6 A. I was always -- at that time I was about 12, I
7 liked playing. I still liked playing. I had lots of
8 friends. And they played hard. But my father, that
9 really hurt us. I mean, really, really. It was the first
10 time that was pain; real pain for days in, days out. You
11 felt that your heart ached for months and months.

12 Q. YES. HOW DID THE FAMILY MANAGE AT THAT TIME?

13 A. It was getting difficult. That's why my --
14 and soon after my oldest brother was taken also to this
15 labor work. And my sister and my brother decided they're
16 going to leave home. They went to Budapest; 2 sisters and
17 one brother, 3 from our family. My sister was sewing, so
18 she had something that she was able to rely on.

19 Q. YES.

20 A. That they would take her.

21 Q. DID THE THREE OF THEM GO TO BUDAPEST?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. TOGETHER?

24 A. Together.

1 Q. AND YOUR MOTHER, WITH YOUR MOTHER'S APPROVAL?

2 A. Not really, but there was no other way. They
3 really wanted to go, so they did. They did. And that
4 was in '43 also. In '43, right. '43, my father died in
5 '43, and it happened in '43. And even I wanted to go,
6 but they did not -- as a matter of fact, I was packed and
7 they put me on -- and I was on the train already, and my
8 mother thought I'm not serious, I was very young. And
9 they took me off the train, later on, after my sisters
10 and my brother left. So, they went to Budapest, and I
11 stayed after all.

12 Q. SO, THERE WERE FIVE SIBLINGS GONE THEN,
13 RIGHT? YOUR TWO OLDER BROTHERS --

14 A. Right. My two brothers, Herman and Dave.
15 Herman was helping a little bit, and then he was taken to
16 that work camp. And it was only me, my brother, Dave,
17 Daschiell, they called him Daschiell. Me and my brother
18 Daschiell and my little sister.

19 Q. SO, YOU COULDN'T RUN ALL THE FARM WITH JUST
20 THAT?

21 A. We started to sell the cows and horses. We
22 did not haul the wood anymore. Mostly from grocery store
23 what we had, and that didn't go very well either. But it
24 was difficult times.

1 Q. DID THEY LET YOU KEEP THE GROCERY STORE?

2 A. Yeah, the grocery store.

3 Q. THEY DIDN'T INTERFERE?

4 A. No, we kept it until the last minute.

5 Q. WHEN THE PERSON ACROSS THE STREET SAYS DON'T
6 GO TO THE JEWS TO BUY, DID PEOPLE STILL COME?

7 A. Some, but he was very mean. He started
8 belittling me. He called us -- called my mother the dog
9 Jew. And when we heard that, we were very upset, the
10 children, the children were very upset. And they started
11 calling us names. People were very not nice. The
12 Hungarian people and Slovakian people weren't very nice.
13 We found out.

14 Q. EVEN THE PEOPLE THAT YOU THOUGHT LIKED YOU?

15 A. Friends, some people who were our friends,
16 they just whispered between each other so we knew how
17 they feel.

18 Q. THEY WERE AFRAID TO SAY OUTRIGHT THAT I'M YOUR
19 FRIEND?

20 A. They just did not say anything; did not matter
21 to them how we feel about them.

22 Q. WERE YOU FRIGHTENED THEN?

23 A. Not really, but it wasn't very comfortable.
24 It wasn't comfortable. I wasn't frightened. I wasn't

1 afraid of anything or anybody. I always felt through
2 everything, I'm going to survive, whatever it is, I
3 always felt strong.

4 Q. WERE YOU STILL GOING TO SCHOOL?

5 A. Yes, I was still, I went to school until we
6 had to leave.

7 Q. HOW DID THE OTHER STUDENTS TREAT YOU?

8 A. Okay. It was okay.

9 Q. THEY DIDN'T CALL YOU NAMES?

10 A. No.

11 Q. NO?

12 A. No. But we felt -- I had a lot of friends,
13 Jewish friends, with whom we kept together. And I had
14 some non-Jewish people, my age, the children, that we
15 were pretty good friends. Did not make a difference.

16 Q. THEY DIDN'T STOP BEING YOUR FRIEND?

17 A. No, not really.

18 Q. SO, HOW LONG DID THAT PERIOD GO ON, WHERE YOU
19 STILL HAD THE GROCERY STORE, YOU WERE SELLING THINGS OFF?

20 A. Until the Germans came.

21 Q. AND THEY CAME WHEN?

22 A. The Germans came in '44; the end of '43 or the
23 beginning of '44; end of '43.

24 Q. THEY HADN'T COME BEFORE?

1 A. No.

2 Q. THE HUNGARIANS?

3 A. We knew that they were going to come. We
4 knew, we heard already, we heard Hitler talking on the
5 radio, really loud, at my neighbors, really loud, and we
6 did not have a radio. But we heard the neighbor's radio.
7 And we heard Hitler talking, and you know how he talks,
8 he's kind of aggressive and loud. And that scared me.

9 Q. TO HEAR THAT?

10 A. I always heard something like you -- I knew he
11 was talking about us. And the people enjoyed listening
12 to that, some people. They really made that real loud so
13 you could hear the whole thing.

14 Q. YOU THINK THEY WANTED YOU TO HEAR IT?

15 A. Absolutely.

16 Q. LIKE THEY WERE TALKING TO YOU?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. DID YOU SPEAK ANY GERMAN?

19 A. No, but a lot of Jewish -- Yiddish.

20 Q. YIDDISH?

21 A. Yeah. Lots of Yiddish.

22 Q. WHAT DID YOU SPEAK IN THE HOUSE?

23 A. Slovakian. I did not even know how to talk
24 Hungarian at that time. But when they came in, then

1 Slovakia, I still went to Slovakian school. They had
2 Hungarian classes also, who wanted to go. I didn't. I
3 just kept on going to Slovakian.

4 Q. NOW, IS SLOVAKIAN THE SAME AS CZECH?

5 A. Czech is -- Slovakian is -- I don't know how
6 to explain it.

7 Q. NOW, THERE'S SLOVAKIA, CROATIA --

8 A. No, Czech and Slovakia. Czech and Slovakia.

9 Q. TWO LANGUAGES?

10 A. Right. Czech is the same as Slovakian, just a
11 little bit different.

12 Q. OKAY.

13 A. You just make it certain words different. So,
14 you know when you are speaking -- like you speak English,
15 in England they speak the same language.

16 Q. THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. SO, YOU --

19 A. You couldn't understand. What is it,
20 Australian? Not Australian. Forget it.

21 Q. OKAY. YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GO ANYWHERE
22 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BE UNDERSTOOD?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. WITH THE LANGUAGE?

1 A. Absolutely.

2 Q. BUT YOU DIDN'T KNOW GERMAN?

3 A. No.

4 Q. BUT YOU KNEW YIDDISH?

5 A. Yiddish. I did not speak so much Yiddish as I
6 heard all the time Yiddish. My mother spoke Yiddish.

7 Q. TO WHOM?

8 A. All of us.

9 Q. HOW?

10 A. She spoke Yiddish and Slovakian. And she
11 spoke fluent Slovakian also.

12 Q. BUT SHE PREFERRED YIDDISH?

13 A. Yiddish, right.

14 Q. SO, YOU KNEW A LOT OF YIDDISH AND THAT HELPED
15 YOU WITH THE GERMANS?

16 A. Yeah. After a little bit. Because I did not
17 speak it as much as I listened. We always answered --

18 Q. IN CZECH?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER THE GERMANS COMING IN?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE IT?

23 A. Yeah. The people stood in the streets waving
24 flags.

1 Q. GERMAN FLAGS?

2 A. German flags, Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, all
3 kind of flags. And they were welcoming.

4 Q. WELCOMING?

5 A. Welcoming very much. And we weren't very
6 happy. We kind of had a bad feeling, not that I knew too
7 much about Germany. We knew a little bit but not that
8 much.

9 Q. YOU HEARD THE THREATENING WORDS ON THE RADIO?

10 A. Right. But I did not hear so much. Right.
11 Mostly about the radio. As I said, we did not know too
12 much about Germany.

13 Q. WELL, PROBABLY NOT TOO MANY PEOPLE KNEW WHAT
14 WAS GOING TO HAPPEN THEN?

15 A. No, not really. And there were lots of very
16 intelligent people, doctors, lawyers and all this. And
17 nobody talked about it. You know, we went to the temple,
18 and nobody talked about it. Nobody talked about what the
19 Germans are doing. We weren't afraid.

20 Q. HOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT NOW, LOOKING BACK,
21 THAT NOBODY TALKED ABOUT IT?

22 A. That nobody really knew what was going on.

23 Q. OKAY.

24 A. Really nobody knew what was going on,

1 including my mother and neighbors. I don't think anybody
2 really knew what was going on.

3 Q. OKAY.

4 A. We really did not imagine what was --

5 Q. IN STORE?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. NOW, YOU DIDN'T HAVE A RADIO. DID YOU NOT
8 HAVE A RADIO BECAUSE YOU WERE JEWS OR BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T
9 HAVE A RADIO?

10 A. We just did not have a radio.

11 Q. OKAY. COULD YOU HAVE A RADIO IF YOU WANTED?

12 A. Yeah, probably.

13 Q. YEAH?

14 A. Probably. We did not have a radio. I never
15 missed it. I never even thought of it.

16 Q. SURE.

17 A. We did not have time for that.

18 Q. IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE --

19 A. And people did not have radios. And they did
20 not have cameras.

21 Q. THEY HAD NEWSPAPERS?

22 A. They did not have newspaper.

23 Q. NO?

24 A. No.

1 Q. SO, EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAD TO LEARN FROM
2 OTHER PEOPLE WAS BY WORD OF MOUTH?

3 A. Exactly. We did not know too much.

4 Q. AND I GUESS THE GERMANS WERE HAPPY THAT YOU
5 DIDN'T KNOW TOO MUCH?

6 A. Right. They did not -- they were welcomed
7 very much. They were liked immediately by our neighbors.

8 Q. HOW DID LIFE CHANGE WHEN THEY CAME? DID YOU
9 HAVE TO --

10 A. We started to be afraid.

11 Q. WHY?

12 A. They started to talk about -- almost
13 immediately they started to talk about people would have
14 to leave.

15 Q. BE ROUNDED UP?

16 A. Right. They were talking about it.

17 Q. THE PEOPLE FOR THE GERMANS?

18 A. We did not have too much to do with the
19 Germans. Mostly with the Gendarmes, not with the
20 Germans. We had nothing to do with Germans at that time.

21 Q. OKAY.

22 A. They came and they left. They went further.
23 They did not --

24 Q. THEY DIDN'T STAY?

1 A. Right. In there. They just continued.

2 Q. BUT RUMORS STARTED?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. AND THE PEOPLE --

5 A. And maybe here and there they stayed, they
6 took some -- I don't even really know if they took
7 somebody's homes. They did not take any homes in the
8 beginning.

9 Q. SO, IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS ALL RIGHT? YOU
10 DIDN'T HAVE TO WEAR A STAR?

11 A. Oh, I forgot. Yeah, then that came out that
12 we had to wear a star.

13 Q. WHEN?

14 A. Soon after the Germans came in, right. The
15 yellow stars.

16 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

17 A. Yeah, I remember that. All of us.

18 Q. HOW WAS THAT?

19 A. Degrading. We did not want to go anywhere.
20 We did not want to be different.

21 Q. SO, THAT'S AGAIN TO ISOLATE YOU?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. WERE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON WHERE YOU COULD GO
24 OR WHEN YOU COULD GO? COULD YOU TRAVEL? COULD YOU GO TO

1 MOVIES? COULD YOU GO TO THE PARK?

2 A. We did not go. We just did not go.

3 Q. YOU STAYED HOME?

4 A. We stayed home. Most of the people just
5 stayed home. They did not go. We did not have a theater
6 that much. Movies we did not go anyway. My mother did
7 not like us going to movies. So, and to parks, we did not
8 have parks really as such.

9 Q. DID YOU STILL HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT?

10 A. No. We started to have less and less food.
11 But it did not bother us. We had our own chickens and
12 all this. So, it did not bother us that much. We did
13 not feel it that much; about food. Maybe we did not
14 afford to buy new shoes and new clothes, but it wasn't
15 that long. Everything else was more important. All of a
16 sudden, I mean, talking about clothes, it wasn't
17 important any more, clothes or anything. We were just
18 trying to --

19 Q. SURVIVE?

20 A. Getting nervous, kind of.

21 Q. NERVOUS?

22 A. Concerned.

23 Q. HOW LONG DID THAT PERIOD LAST, THE
24 NERVOUSNESS, THE WORRIES?

1 A. About 6 months.

2 Q. AND THEN WHAT?

3 A. And then we were told we have to get
4 together. Jews will be deported. Did not say where
5 we're going to go.

6 Q. YOU WERE TOLD THAT --

7 A. Just we have to pack our clothes. And they
8 did not tell us to leave jewelry or anything at home.
9 They did not tell us anything. Just one package. I
10 don't remember how big the package can be, but I think a
11 luggage for each.

12 Q. OKAY.

13 A. And to meet at the station, the train station.

14 Q. WHICH WAS 1943?

15 A. '44.

16 Q. THE BEGINNING OF '44?

17 A. '44.

18 Q. YOU HAD TO ALL GO TO THE STATION?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. YOU, YOUR MOTHER, YOUR YOUNGER SISTERS --

21 A. And that was right after Passover. We heard
22 already just before Passover, we knew we had to go, we
23 have to pack. And I remember we had this beautiful table
24 cloth which was one we used just for Passover. And they

1 called that Halamite. I don't know if you know what that
2 means. In between Passover, first there is -- and we
3 left this beautiful tablecloth on the table. We usually
4 put it away, everything that was Passover. We still put
5 away the dishes. Some of the dishes, not all the dishes.
6 But this beautiful tablecloth we left on the table.

7 Q. DID YOU STILL HAVE ANIMALS?

8 A. Yeah. We still had animals.

9 Q. SO, YOU HAD TO JUST LEAVE THE ANIMALS?

10 A. We had to leave everything. My mother asked a
11 neighbor to take care of it. And they promised they would
12 take care of it. They would feed them and take care of
13 them.

14 Q. THEY WERE GOOD NEIGHBORS?

15 A. Yeah. And we trusted. But deep down we knew
16 that nobody really cares, that maybe she's waiting for us
17 to leave. Deep down we did not --

18 Q. IT WASN'T A GOOD FEELING?

19 A. No. None of them. We really did not have
20 anyone that would stay. Oh, you have to go, I'm so
21 sorry. Nobody. And we were pretty good neighbors.

22 Q. YEAH.

23 A. With some of them. We helped out each other.

24 Q. SO, YOU DIDN'T HAVE FAR TO GO TO GO TO THE

1 TRAIN STATION?

2 A. No. I heard them, I saw them and heard them
3 pass by our window. Our window was right on the way to
4 the station. The station was a little bit further; maybe
5 a quarter of a mile. And we saw people come, all backed
6 up already and going to the station. And we did start
7 out, we went in the regular trains, with regular trains,
8 not in a wagon. We just left Czechoslovakia, we left on
9 regular trains. And I wasn't frightened because I was
10 thinking, all of this, lawyers and doctors, they all
11 packed and they're all coming. It cannot be that bad.
12 They would not --

13 Q. THEY WOULDN'T DO THAT TO THEM?

14 A. Right. All this intelligence, smart people,
15 and teachers, just because they're Jewish. I did not
16 give it a second thought, a second deep thought, you
17 know. I was just too stupid at that time. I did not
18 think anything else of it.

19 Q. WAS IT COLD THAT TIME OF YEAR?

20 A. Yeah. It was pretty cold.

21 Q. SNOW?

22 A. Snow. Because usually we had a lot of snow,
23 but at that time I don't think we had a lot of snow. We
24 need snow. We need coats and all this.

1 Q. AND WHERE DID THE TRAIN GO?

2 A. The train went near Hushkara, that's also in
3 Slovakia; about 20 miles from where we lived. And they
4 had -- there was a big -- it was a fabric --

5 Q. A BIG FACTORY.

6 A. Yeah. Let me see what they call it.

7 Q. BRICKS?

8 A. Bricks. It was brick fabric factory. And
9 they had a lot of room. It was miles and miles. It was
10 spread out. It was a big place. And we were all just
11 deposited. We just stayed there for about 4 weeks. My
12 grandmother came there from Dibuzay, not too far from
13 us. We met her over there. And we took along food from
14 home.

15 Q. THEY LET YOU TAKE FOOD?

16 A. Yeah, we took some food along. And we shared
17 that with her. And they gave us some food.

18 Q. ENOUGH?

19 A. No, not really. I gave my food to my mother
20 because I felt I don't need it. And my mother, I heard,
21 she gave her food to her mother. And I was kind of
22 angry, but I thought about it. Because I did not -- I
23 wanted her to have it. But after a couple, 3 weeks or
24 so, I don't even remember those times. It was just --

1 everybody was sleeping on the floor. I don't remember
2 that much of that time.

3 Q. DID THEY HAVE BATHROOMS?

4 A. Outside.

5 Q. OUTSIDE?

6 A. Very dirty, messy, outside. Then came the
7 deportation from that place.

8 Q. AFTER ABOUT 4 WEEKS?

9 A. Right.

10 Q. NOW, WHO WAS THERE, YOUR GRANDMOTHER, YOUR
11 MOTHER, YOU, YOUR YOUNGER SISTER AND ONE BROTHER?

12 A. And one brother. And my older sister.

13 Q. SIX OF YOU ALL TOGETHER?

14 A. Well, my grandmother, my mother, my little
15 sister and me, five of us, I think.

16 Q. ONE BROTHER?

17 A. One brother, yes. One brother.

18 Q. TWO SISTERS?

19 A. And one sister.

20 Q. ONE SISTER?

21 A. Yeah. One brother, one sister, me and my
22 grandmother. We went together on the train afterwards.

23 Q. YOUR OLDER SISTER WASN'T WITH YOU?

24 A. My older sister. So, 3 of us and my mother --

1 4 of us, and my grandmother, but she wasn't with us on
2 that. They weren't with us when we left.

3 Q. THEY SEPARATED?

4 A. She might have been with us. I don't even
5 really know.

6 Q. OKAY.

7 A. I don't really know.

8 Q. OKAY. AND HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE IN THAT PLACE,
9 IN THAT BIG FACTORY?

10 A. Thousands and thousands. I really don't know
11 how many, 10,000 or something, I imagine.

12 Q. FROM ALL THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. SO, WHERE DID YOU GO?

15 A. So, they put us in this train that was --

16 Q. CATTLE CAR?

17 A. Right. And we were about 90 of us.

18 Q. IN A CAR?

19 A. In a car. It was very hot.

20 Q. STANDING?

21 A. Right. Most of the people were standing. And
22 it was very hot. And one of my friends who did not feel
23 good, she had a stomach ache, and I remember she had to go
24 to the bathroom. And somebody somehow, we were able to

1 get some kind of bowl or something, and we put the blanket
2 between the people so she was able to use that. It was
3 terrible, terrible. And at that time we all got in, that
4 was already bad, really bad. We were really -- at that
5 time we started to get scared.

6 Q. AND YOU WERE SCARED THEN?

7 A. I was scared, but I knew that I would
8 survive.

9 Q. YOU ALWAYS HAD FAITH?

10 A. Faith. Right.

11 Q. AND EVERYONE IN YOUR FAMILY, DID YOU FEEL THAT
12 ABOUT THEM, TOO?

13 A. I don't know. I don't think so. I don't
14 think they -- my older sister did not. My little sister
15 probably had the same faith as I did. Because we were so
16 inexperienced, so silly, we did not think of anything;
17 just like it would be.

18 Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU AT THAT TIME?

19 A. I was 14. I should have known but I didn't.
20 And my little sister, she was about -- let's see. I was
21 14, she was about 9. So, that was right about this time
22 of the year when we left. I know it was just about
23 Shavuot. When is Shavuot?

24 Q. THIS WEEKEND.

1 A. This weekend. The reason I know it is because
2 my mother said that we all have to eat fruit. Before
3 Shavuot, you eat fruit. Because Shavuot you have to eat
4 that. She gave all of us a prune, the dried prunes. And
5 she did not feel good. So, somehow somebody gave some
6 alcohol and she put it on her chest. And she probably
7 felt something, she knew probably something is wrong. Me
8 and my sister, I don't think paid that much attention.
9 Just it was uncomfortable. But we figured everybody else
10 is there behind us, all these doctors and these lawyers
11 and school teachers; if it's good for them, it's good for
12 us.

13 Q. HOW LONG WERE YOU ON THE TRAIN?

14 A. About 24 to 30 hours. It was going fast. It
15 was really going fast.

16 Q. IT WAS GOING FAST?

17 A. Real fast.

18 Q. WHERE DID YOU GO?

19 A. I found out we went to Auschwitz. We found
20 out. We did not know that. We never heard of Auschwitz
21 before. And we arrived there, Auschwitz, with all these
22 people there. There was a nice looking SS man with a
23 dog. And we found out later that was Mengele. And he had
24 a stick and he was separating us with the stick. And he

1 selected my mother and my sister to go to the right and my
2 brother, I did not even see. He just disappeared. And me
3 and my sister, my older sister, we went to the left. I
4 saw lots of people. I looked back at my mother walking
5 away with my sister. She looked back. And I remember
6 what she wore. She looked back and she was kind of sad.

7 Q. YOUR MOTHER?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. HOW OLD WAS YOUR SISTER?

10 A. My sister was about 9.

11 Q. 9. THIS IS YOUR -- OKAY.

12 A. My younger sister. And my mother was at that
13 time 52. And she had already 10 children. That was
14 pretty -- the oldest was -- she got married pretty young,
15 my mother got married pretty young.

16 Q. YOU DON'T KNOW IF YOUR BROTHER WENT TO THE
17 RIGHT OR THE LEFT?

18 A. No. He did not go to the right. He went to
19 the left also. But I did not see him. I just know he,
20 when I talk to him now, he survived also.

21 Q. YOU SAID YOU REMEMBER SEEING YOUR MOTHER. DID
22 YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT WAS HAPPENING?

23 A. Absolutely not. Absolutely no idea. They
24 separated us and they -- we started walking. And we

1 walked. There was music, young children playing,
2 beautifully dressed. We did not even hear anything. I
3 did not imagine anything bad happening.

4 Q. WERE YOU AFRAID THEN, WHEN YOU WERE SEPARATED?

5 A. Not really.

6 Q. NOT REALLY.

7 A. Not really. I wasn't.

8 Q. THE ENORMITY OF IT HADN'T HIT YOU YET, HUH?

9 A. No. I saw lots of people, and I figured, oh,
10 they must be Jewish people, emptying clothes from their --

11 Q. YOU THOUGHT THERE WILL BE WORK HERE? THERE
12 WILL BE WORK HERE, THAT'S WHAT YOU THOUGHT?

13 A. Pardon?

14 Q. THERE WILL BE WORK HERE?

15 A. No, I didn't even think of work. I just
16 thought they're taking care of our clothes and
17 everything. They took it down and they were -- people
18 were hollering and yelling to each other. So, I thought I
19 arrived someplace -- we're going somewhere else. Like the
20 other place in Hushkara.

21 Q. HUSHKARA YOU THOUGHT WAS WHERE YOU WERE GOING
22 TO GO?

23 A. Right. Like we're going to go someplace.

24 Q. YEAH.

1 A. So, and then they took us to this big place.
2 There were smells from ammonia and things like that.

3 Q. DISINFECTANT?

4 A. Disinfectant, right. And all this. A strong
5 smell and all this. And all of a sudden, we just knew
6 something isn't right. That's how we start to get scared,
7 when they took us to this place.

8 Q. WHY?

9 A. They told us to get undressed, completely
10 undressed. At that time we started to be afraid.

11 Q. THIS IS DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHER PLACE,
12 RIGHT? IS THAT WHAT YOU THOUGHT?

13 A. That's what it is. It's some scary, it was
14 scary with these people that are sitting there, cutting
15 their hair. Some people were cutting it bald. And they
16 gave them some kind of -- they took everything away from
17 them. And they gave them clothes, just picked up from --
18 it was in a heap.

19 Q. LIKE A BIN?

20 A. And everybody just got a dress, did not matter
21 what. So, that's what we had to do also. We had to get
22 undressed completely. They cut our hair. And they took
23 all our jewelry, whatever we had. They took our watches,
24 we had to put everything on the side.

1 Q. DID YOU HAVE TO TAKE A SHOWER?

2 A. And they send us in the shower. And at that
3 time we started to talk about the -- the people started
4 to talk; let's hope it's only water, nothing else. So,
5 at that time it hit me, something is terribly wrong.

6 Q. DID THEY GIVE YOU A NUMBER?

7 A. No.

8 Q. NO?

9 A. No. They were too busy, I guess, too many
10 people came that day when we arrived.

11 Q. WERE YOU WITH YOUR SISTER?

12 A. I was with my sister. We stuck together from
13 then on. We stuck together. Let's see. They assigned us
14 a barracks, and me and my sister, we slept together. We
15 slept 6 on each side, 6 people on one side, 6 people on
16 the other side in this barracks. No shoes. Actually they
17 give us some kind of shoes -- whatever we were able to
18 get. They did not fit, just had to grab a shoe. And the
19 dress, she had a yellow ugly, ugly long dress. And I had
20 something, an ugly dress, just hanging on me. And we were
21 shivering, both of us were shivering. They led us all the
22 way to this place where they had fires, fireplace. And
23 they said when we touch the fire, it would kill us. And
24 as we walked there, we heard people screaming. It was a

1 terrible scream. And we saw fire high, high, going high,
2 really high fire. And still today, the screaming, when I
3 hear that scream, children playing, baseball, football,
4 and they scream and they're happy and all this, and you
5 don't see the children, you just hear the scream, all this
6 reminds me of that scream. You know, people screaming
7 because they --

8 Q. THEY'RE HAPPY?

9 A. They're happy.

10 Q. THEY'RE PLAYING?

11 A. They're playing. But this scream was also the
12 same sound screams, screams from whenever I hear that
13 scream, it just reminds me of the same scream. The people
14 might be happy, but it's the same sound.

15 Q. SO, YOU HAD THE FIRE AND THE SCREAMING
16 TOGETHER?

17 A. It wasn't too far, it wasn't too far from us.
18 We couldn't see it, but like a mile from us or something,
19 from where we stayed. And at that time we knew something,
20 I mean, really things are not right.

21 Q. DID YOU KNOW WHAT THE FIRE WAS?

22 A. No. Not at that time, I did not know, but it
23 scared me.

24 Q. OKAY.

1 A. I never even imagined, never would occur to
2 me. I remember my mother sitting crying about in history
3 what used to happen, but I remember sitting down in the
4 one place where my mother used to read the Bible and
5 telling us about the stories about what used to happen.
6 But this is the 20th century, I would never think of
7 something like this would happen. Never occur to me,
8 never crossed my mind.

9 Q. HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE BEFORE SOMEBODY TOLD
10 YOU WHAT THE CHIMNEY WAS ALL ABOUT?

11 A. A day or two.

12 Q. QUICK?

13 A. A day or two, right. They start to talk about
14 the crematoriums, and all this. But at first I did not
15 even accept it.

16 Q. JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE IT?

17 A. Right. I could not believe it. So, I thought
18 they want to scare us. People were already for years in
19 that camp, from other countries, Poland. Someone was
20 there for about 4 years when we got there. So, I figured
21 when she is there so many years --

22 Q. THEN MAYBE I CAN BE HERE?

23 A. No, but I was thinking that cannot be that
24 they would kill people.

1 Q. RIGHT.

2 A. Just that she wants to scare us.

3 Q. WAS SHE THE ONE THAT TOLD YOU?

4 A. No, just different people, friends, we start
5 talking, and everyone starts to worry about themselves,
6 and everybody was looking out for their own survival. All
7 of a sudden, everybody cared about themselves only.

8 Q. DID YOU KNOW ANYONE ELSE --

9 A. But for me it was very important for my
10 sister, my sister was very important to me.

11 Q. DID YOU KNOW ANYONE ELSE BESIDES YOUR SISTER
12 THERE?

13 A. Yeah. A few people I knew.

14 Q. FROM BACK HOME?

15 A. Right.

16 Q. DID YOU --

17 A. At least 15 or 20 of them.

18 Q. DID YOU TRY TO STAY CLOSE TO THEM, TOO?

19 A. Right, we did. We tried to stay together as
20 much as we could. And then one of, all of a sudden, when
21 we walk by -- in Auschwitz, you know, just a street. We
22 were allowed to go to the bathroom. So, when we were --
23 there was a bathroom built, a long, long -- a big room.
24 And there was just one wood, piece of wood on the top and

1 there was about 20 of them. And there were water,
2 running water if somebody wanted to wash themselves.

3 Q. COLD WATER?

4 A. Cold water.

5 Q. NO SOAP?

6 A. No soap. And one day I walked by and there
7 was one of my sister's friend on the sidewalk. She was
8 very, very sick. People tried to take her in, there was a
9 place where they put the sick people. So, they put her in
10 there. And she wanted to be covered. There was nothing
11 to cover her with. After a few days we heard that she
12 died. A very young, she must have been about 17, like
13 looking, very pretty girl.

14 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT SHE HAD?

15 A. No.

16 Q. DID SHE HAVE A FEVER?

17 A. She had a high fever. And then after a while,
18 we walked by, we saw death. You know, as a young person,
19 I was always afraid of death, dead people. I never
20 wanted to go close to people who died or people how are
21 sick. And after a while, we saw dead people, we just
22 stepped over like nothing. After a while, we saw them in
23 piles of people, a bunch of people. They tell me that
24 they put bromo in our food, whatever that is, probably a

1 Q. AND SHE WAS WEAK?

2 A. Very weak, and I really worried about her. I
3 just worried about her. I was just afraid that they're
4 going to take her away. That was my main reason to
5 survive, my sister.

6 Q. TAKING CARE OF HER?

7 A. Nothing else mattered, nothing else. Just
8 her.

9 Q. DID YOU STILL FEEL OPTIMISTIC THAT YOU'RE
10 GOING TO SURVIVE?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. YEAH?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. EVEN THOUGH YOU SAW ALL THESE DEAD PEOPLE?

15 A. Yeah. I don't know. I wished they would bomb
16 that place. I would not have minded if they bombed that
17 place.

18 Q. AND KILLED PEOPLE?

19 A. And killed people.

20 Q. INCLUDING YOU?

21 A. Including me, I wouldn't have minded it.

22 Q. JUST TO STOP IT?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. NOW YOU WERE WHAT, 17?

1 tranquilizer or something, we could not feel anything.
2 Nobody had menstruation. The girls did not have
3 menstruation. It stopped. They gave us something in the
4 food, they said. They tell me after.

5 Q. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE BEFORE YOU GOT IMMUNE TO
6 DEAD PEOPLE AND BODIES?

7 A. Slowly, slowly we got used to it. I don't
8 know how long it took, but I was surprised at myself. I
9 was always afraid of dead bodies. We just walked by and
10 did not give it a second thought.

11 Q. NOW, HOW WOULD YOU OCCUPY YOUR DAYS? DID THEY
12 WANT YOU TO WORK?

13 A. Most of the time we stayed uphill, and that
14 means we have to stay in line. They woke us up some 4
15 o'clock, 3 o'clock in the morning. And they made us
16 uphill, standing.

17 Q. ROLL CALL?

18 A. Roll call. And we stayed until about 9
19 o'clock in the morning, until Mengele came to count us.
20 A few times they counted us over and over again. Mengele
21 and the brekdas, first the brekdas and then Mengele.
22 Over and over. And I was always worried about my sister,
23 she wasn't that strong. And one time they were standing,
24 she collapsed. And we knew that Mengele is already

1 counting, because he was up front. So I tried to pick
2 her up to make her stand up, and I couldn't. So, he
3 came, he heard something going on. So, he came by and he
4 put the stick out and hit her to get up. I mean, really
5 a couple times with a stick. So, she got up and I tried
6 to hold her up. And somehow that time we get away with
7 it.

8 Q. COULD YOU HOLD HER UP?

9 A. Because usually they used to take them out
10 then, out of the line. I tried to hold her up, in her
11 yellow dress.

12 Q. HOW OLD WAS YOUR SISTER?

13 A. She is -- she was about 24.

14 Q. SO, SHE WAS QUITE A BIT OLDER?

15 A. Yes, but I was the strong one, she was the
16 helpless one. I was the one when they give us food, what
17 it consist of is a bowl of soup. They used to call it
18 pepper soup. They did not wash, it was suppose to be
19 vegetables. And one piece of bread every day, about this
20 big. And a cup of soup, every day. And she could not
21 eat that soup.

22 Q. COULDN'T?

23 A. She couldn't. So, I give her my bread and I
24 ate her soup. I always thought I'm better off with soup,

1 I can eat it. And she had my bread every day.

2 Q. WERE YOU HUNGRY ALL THE TIME?

3 A. All the time.

4 Q. DID YOU THINK ABOUT FOOD?

5 A. All the time.

6 Q. DID YOU TALK ABOUT FOOD?

7 A. All the time. That's all we were talking
8 about, food.

9 Q. WHO ELSE WOULD YOU TALK WITH BESIDES YOUR
10 SISTER?

11 A. I had a very good friend, her name is Uda
12 Polska, she was my age, and her mother.

13 Q. WAS HER MOTHER THERE, TOO?

14 A. Her mother. Her mother must have been 38.

15 Q. WHAT'S YOUR SISTER'S NAME?

16 A. Rosie, Rose. But we called her Rosie.

17 Q. WAS SHE FRAIL BEFORE YOU GOT THERE OR JUST
18 AFTER YOU GOT THERE?

19 A. No, she was always pretty frail, but she got
20 really very slim, very skinny.

21 Q. VERY SKINNY?

22 A. Very skinny.

23 Q. LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT?

24 A. Right.

1 A. Not quite. Yeah, 16.

2 Q. 16?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. YOU WOULD BE 17 IN NOVEMBER OF 1944?

5 A. Right.

6 Q. DID ANY OF YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS DIE?

7 A. Lots of them.

8 Q. THAT WERE IN THE CAMP WITH YOU?

9 A. No. You mean before? Lots of people I did
10 not see anymore. My good friends, there was a neighbor
11 who we had, that were 5 girls; 4 girl and the older ones
12 were long gone. And only one girl came home. I did not
13 see them. They were my friends.

14 Q. BUT, I MEAN, IN THE CAMP, THERE WAS YOUR
15 SISTER AND THERE WAS A FRIEND OF YOURS AND HER MOTHER,
16 RIGHT?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. DID ANY OF THOSE PEOPLE DIE?

19 A. Well, lots of people did. I never saw them
20 again. I don't know what happened to them, if they went
21 to some other places or they died over there. That's the
22 only girl I know who died right there, her name was
23 Spiegel also. She was a daughter of a very well-to-do
24 man also.

1 Q. FROM HOME?

2 A. From home.

3 Q. YEAH.

4 A. They had a mill; a mill, with flowers.

5 Q. A MILL WITH FLOWERS?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. DID YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING RELUCTANT TO GET
8 CLOSE TO PEOPLE OR DID YOU WANT TO GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE?

9 A. Not at all. That's all we wanted, to be close
10 to people. Everybody wanted to know everybody. That's
11 all we wanted, to be close to people.

12 Q. EVEN IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO THEM, YOU
13 WEREN'T, IT WOULDN'T HOLD YOU BACK?

14 A. If something would happen to them?

15 Q. LIKE, YOU KNOW, PEOPLE GET SICK AND DIE AND
16 EVERYTHING, AND THEN YOU'D LOSE A FRIEND?

17 A. If it would not bother me?

18 Q. WELL --

19 A. Yeah, just like today, it would bother me.

20 Q. IT BOTHERED YOU BUT YOU STILL WANTED TO GET
21 CLOSE?

22 A. Right. We wanted everybody to be cared for.
23 We cared very much for each other, all of us.

24 Q. DID PEOPLE HELP EACH OTHER?

1 A. Yeah. I would say yes. There was nothing to
2 do really for each other. Like when my sister collapsed,
3 everybody was trying to hide it also. So, otherwise
4 there was not much you could do for each other.

5 Q. DID YOU SHARE FOOD?

6 A. No.

7 Q. NO?

8 A. No.

9 Q. DID PEOPLE STEAL FOOD FROM EACH OTHER?

10 A. No.

11 Q. NO?

12 A. There was no way. That's all you got. They
13 cannot steal it from you.

14 Q. DID PEOPLE STEAL SHOES?

15 A. No.

16 Q. NO?

17 A. No.

18 Q. DID PEOPLE TRY TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER?

19 A. Yeah. We had them on all the time; shoes and
20 whatever we had, we had them on all the time.

21 Q. PEOPLE WERE NOT AFRAID THAT WHEN THEY WENT TO
22 SLEEP, SOMEONE COULD COME AND TAKE THEIR THINGS?

23 A. No. There was nothing to take.

24 Q. OKAY.

1 A. There was just a dress on us and the shoes. I
2 don't even remember exactly.

3 Q. NO UNDERWEAR?

4 A. No, nothing. That's all we wear. There was
5 nothing to worry about.

6 Q. HOW DID YOU KEEP YOURSELF CLEAN?

7 A. When we went to the bathroom, once in a while
8 we washed a little bit. There were no towels or anything,
9 we just washed ourselves. I just remember this one night
10 when we were out there, I was shivering, it was cold, very
11 freezing. We tried to be close, hold on to each other.
12 Then we were watching these big fires and noise, what I
13 told you about. That was the worst night of my life. We
14 were just shivering and we went to the barracks and we
15 slept 6 in a row and we all held on to each other tightly,
16 to keep warm.

17 Q. WHERE THERE LICE?

18 A. Pardon?

19 Q. LICE?

20 A. No.

21 Q. NO LICE?

22 A. No. They told us when we got there, they're
23 going to delouse us, that's why they're cutting your
24 hair.

1 Q. SO, YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY TYPHUS THERE?

2 A. No. Not at that time.

3 Q. DID YOU EVER HAVE TO GO TO THE INFIRMARY WHERE
4 THEY TREATED SICK PEOPLE?

5 A. Only to see this one person, this one.

6 Q. COME TO VISIT?

7 A. Right. We could not go in. We were watching
8 her. She was kind of separated. And we were just
9 watching her from outside. And I saw her and nobody did
10 anything for her. But they did not let us in. Just a
11 small place. And there were about 3, 4 people; laying on
12 the cold floor, on the cement floor.

13 Q. DID YOU LOSE ANY OF YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS
14 DURING THAT?

15 A. Almost immediately. When I came on the --
16 when we came on this train and by accident I read a paper
17 and nothing happened, paper, you're not supposed to read
18 papers, and that was a Friday. And nothing happened. I
19 figured, you know -- and then slowly, slowly I really
20 began not only -- I became an unbeliever. I figured if
21 God did not help us that time, there is no God. This is
22 the way I felt about it at that time.

23 Q. HOW ABOUT YOUR SISTER?

24 A. Well, she felt kind of the same, but she came

1 -- she's back. She's kind of religious. She has kosher
2 today also. Not real kosher, like we used to have.

3 Q. CLOSE?

4 A. Not even close, but --

5 Q. IN SPIRIT?

6 A. Right. I really started to, not to believe in
7 anything.

8 Q. DID THAT LAST?

9 A. Forever.

10 Q. FOREVER. SITTING HERE TODAY?

11 A. Sitting here today --

12 Q. YOU STILL FEEL THAT WAY?

13 A. Absolutely.

14 Q. THAT THERE IS NO GOD?

15 A. There is -- I must be afraid or something,
16 because I'm afraid to say that. But that probably isn't
17 because what happened and there was, you know, you read
18 the Bible and you read there was all kind of miracles
19 happening, but I figured we needed a miracle at that time
20 and we were in Auschwitz. And I still look for -- I'm
21 still looking for some kind of answer from anybody. I
22 talk to my rabbi. We still belong to temple. We belong
23 to a temple and we pay our dues, but we don't go. Just
24 Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipper, even though I don't

1 believe. Right? But I'm still looking for answers and I
2 asked my rabbi and he cannot give me answers and I ask
3 other rabbis.

4 Q. WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

5 A. That how come it was happening and nothing was
6 -- nothing, what was happening, how come there was no,
7 some kind of interference.

8 Q. FROM GOD OR MAN?

9 A. And how come it always just happens to Jewish
10 people.

11 Q. THAT'S THE REAL QUESTION.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. WHY US?

14 A. Yes. I still don't have any answer.

15 Q. NO ONE HAD AN ANSWER FOR THAT?

16 A. Do you? So, let me go on with my story about
17 Auschwitz. So, there were selections often. I guess they
18 stand -- can I take a break?

19 Q. SURE.

20 A. Yeah.

21 (Break in videotape)

22 A. Yeah, there were selections, quite a few of
23 them, quite often.

24 Q. AND BY THIS TIME YOU KNEW WHAT THAT MEANT, TO

1 HAVE A SELECTION?

2 A. Right. I knew but nobody knew exactly.
3 People did not talk that openly about that.

4 Q. OKAY. BUT YOU KNEW IF SOMEONE COLLAPSED, THEY
5 WOULD BE TAKEN AWAY AND YOU WOULDN'T SEE THEM AGAIN?

6 A. Right. But we weren't sure about what they do
7 with these people who they select. I did not really know.

8 Q. YOU KNEW THEY WEREN'T THE STRONG ONES?

9 A. I did not know exactly. Because they just
10 took. Did not really -- Mengele was just, you know --

11 Q. RIGHT.

12 A. Selecting. When all the people were there,
13 then we knew. When all the people that they selected, we
14 knew something is going to happen to them.

15 Q. AND YOU ALSO KNEW THAT IF PEOPLE GOT SICK,
16 THEY WEREN'T AT THE HOSPITAL, BUT THEY DIDN'T --

17 A. No hospital. There was no hospital.

18 Q. SO, THE MESSAGE WAS CLEAR, IF YOU GOT WEAKER
19 OR SICKER, YOU WERE IN TROUBLE? YOU KIND OF KNEW THAT?

20 A. Yeah. And we heard rumors also that Mengele
21 is collecting -- they're talking about hospitals, that
22 Mengele is, there was some kind of experiment with young
23 people; want to find out things about that. We did not
24 know what was going on really. We just thought they want

1 to find out how come they are twins, how come there are
2 two or three.

3 Q. YEAH.

4 A. So, just figured it's an experiment, just
5 experimenting with something. But we had no idea what
6 was going on.

7 Q. NOW, WHEN THERE WAS SELECTIONS, WERE YOU
8 AFRAID THAT SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU?

9 A. No.

10 Q. NO?

11 A. No.

12 Q. YOU STILL FELT STRONG?

13 A. Very strong. I did not worry about that.

14 Q. AND YOUR SISTER?

15 A. She did. She worried about this. She always
16 worried about everything, anything.

17 Q. OKAY.

18 A. My older sister.

19 Q. SO, YOU HAD TO KIND OF KEEP HER FROM WORRYING?

20 A. Right. I was the strong one.

21 Q. AND YOU BECAME LIKE THE MOTHER?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. DID THAT HELP YOU, DO YOU THINK, TO HAVE
24 SOMEONE TO WORRY ABOUT?

1 A. I think so. Looking back, definitely. I
2 think so. Because nothing else mattered. I wasn't
3 interested in anything, nothing mattered anymore. It
4 just did not matter. Nothing mattered. For me, it just
5 mattered -- she mattered, that's all. Nothing and nobody
6 mattered really.

7 Q. HOW ABOUT YOURSELF?

8 A. No.

9 Q. NO?

10 A. No. I did not worry about me. Not at all.
11 Not for a minute.

12 Q. DO YOU THINK SHE KEPT YOU FROM WORRYING ABOUT
13 YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU WERE SO WORRIED ABOUT HER?

14 A. I did not think of myself. Just I was hoping
15 -- as I said, I wouldn't have minded if they bombed that
16 place. And food, I was worrying about food, and not so
17 much for myself, but for my sister.

18 Q. WHY COULDN'T SHE EAT THE FOOD?

19 A. Because of the -- the rocks, she called them
20 rocks. And it was green, it was awful. It was just
21 awful. It just did not matter to me. Today it would.

22 Q. SURE.

23 A. But at that time it just did not matter to me.

24 Q. YOU WERE VERY, VERY PRACTICAL?

1 A. Always.

2 Q. YOU DID WHAT YOU NEEDED TO DO?

3 A. Still today, I am practical.

4 Q. OKAY.

5 A. But we were hungry anyway all the time. They
6 would have eaten -- anybody would have eaten that soup,
7 even though it was terrible. And they put some kind of
8 medication in it. We kind of heard that before. Because
9 people were saying, I don't have my period, so we figured
10 there must be something in the soup.

11 Q. WHEN PEOPLE WERE TAKEN OUT IN A SELECTION, DID
12 THEY PLEAD, DID THEY ASK TO STAY, DID THEY WAIL?

13 A. I did.

14 Q. YOU DID?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. TELL ME ABOUT THAT.

17 A. Well, not that way, I begged, be the strong
18 one. So, one day there was a selection, and every time a
19 selection came, that first thing was, I heard that the
20 selection was coming -- just block out the selection; the
21 days that there were selections. Sometimes it wasn't,
22 but she called us. I don't know, maybe she was told it
23 was going to be and it wasn't. And there was all kind of
24 German soldiers all around. And there was one that you

1 can see on television, Auschwitz, the buildings on the
2 top, that was full with SS men; filled with soldiers.
3 But every time there was a selection, the one thing is I
4 had to run to the bathroom. Immediately I had a stomach
5 ache and I had to run to the bathroom.

6 Q. SO, YOU HAD FEAR, BUT IT EXPRESSED ITSELF
7 PHYSICALLY, RATHER THAN --

8 A. Right. I know that now, but at that time it
9 was just a stomach ache.

10 Q. OKAY.

11 A. A few times. Because every time I had to do
12 that, go down to the bathroom. And the SS men was always
13 watching us. And I was only afraid he was going to shoot
14 me. Because they were free to shoot. But every time I
15 had to go down. So, that day was a selection, and I came
16 back and we all had to get undressed, pick up our gowns.
17 And my sister went to the right. And Eduka,
18 (phonetically spelled) went to the right. But Eduka's
19 mother, my friend's mother, went to the left. Because
20 she was an older person. And I was sent to the left.
21 And I thought, I'm so strong, I was just worried about my
22 sister, and they send me to the left. I wasn't afraid,
23 but I wanted to be with my sister. I did not care where
24 we were going to go, what we're going to do, if they sent

1 me wherever --

2 Q. YOU JUST WANTED TO BE WITH HER?

3 A. I wanted to be with her. And when they sent
4 me to the left, I started to holler, I'm a twinning,
5 twinning. I did not know what they call it in German,
6 twin.

7 Q. WHAT IS THAT?

8 A. A twin.

9 Q. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

10 A. A twin.

11 Q. OH, TWINNING?

12 A. I'm a twin.

13 Q. I'M A TWIN, YOU SAID?

14 A. Right. So, I kept hollering I'm a twinning --
15 no. Villing. It did not come -- in German they calling
16 it twilling, but I called it twinning or something,
17 because I did not know. And I want my sister, I'm a
18 twin, kind of in German. And Mengele stopped the
19 selection and said, what are you saying? I said, my
20 sister is over there. My twin sister, my twinning -- I
21 called that twinning. I said my twinning is over there.
22 So, he says, oh, come on, and he shoved me, he says go
23 over there, to there, and that was that room, where they
24 kept bread, the daily doses of bread. And he shoved me

1 over there, that I should get in there, and I should
2 wait.

3 Q. STILL ON THE LEFT?

4 A. No, separate in a room.

5 Q. OKAY.

6 A. In another room.

7 Q. HE TOOK YOU OUT --

8 A. He took me out in this other room. And I saw
9 the lipstick from the people; which I did not even use at
10 that time. But I put on the lipstick, I was smart enough
11 to do that, put on the lipstick. And I was wondering if
12 I should take a bread. That was more important to me, it
13 was a loaf, loaves of bread.

14 Q. RIGHT.

15 A. And I got dressed and I come out and he called
16 me later on, an hour later. He called me out. And he
17 says, I know you are lying, but get in there. And he
18 shoved me to the outside. And he told me, I know you're
19 lying. But the guard, she gave me a smack on my face, a
20 real smack. She was Jewish, I don't know why she did
21 that. To show something, I don't know why. And I went
22 to the other place. And they were all surprised to see
23 me. And this Eduka started to cry, where's my mother,
24 where's my mother. And I said, I don't know. She's on

1 the other side. And she knew that she won't see her
2 mother again. And I was with my sister. I just did not
3 -- I had no idea where I'm going to end up.

4 Q. DID YOU LOOK ALIKE?

5 A. Not at all. He never saw her. He never knew
6 who I'm talking about.

7 Q. OKAY.

8 A. Because she was down already in the other
9 place.

10 Q. AND THAT WAS AFTER MENGELE --

11 A. Mengele, right. And he said, I know you're
12 lying.

13 Q. BUT HE LET YOU LIE. AND HE SAW YOU HAD
14 SPUNK.

15 A. And I must have been pretty skinny.

16 Q. BUT YOU HAD SPUNK?

17 A. Yes. So, was my -- this is the way I
18 escaped. Because all these people, we never saw them
19 again.

20 Q. THEY WERE GONE?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. AND WHAT TIME DID YOU REALIZE WHAT HAD
23 HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER AND SISTERS?

24 A. Well, the first day we already were scared.

1 We knew something isn't right. The first day. When I
2 was shivering, that I do not -- I just remember, I could
3 not get ahold of myself. Just knew something is wrong,
4 that was the first time I knew something was really
5 wrong.

6 Q. AND THAT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO THEM?

7 A. So, from then on, we went -- we lived our
8 lives day to day. I think we stayed there another month
9 or so. Then we were sent to --

10 Q. THEY DIDN'T PUT YOU TO WORK THEN, YOU WERE --

11 A. No.

12 Q. AND YOU WERE THERE ABOUT SIX MONTHS?

13 A. In Auschwitz?

14 Q. YES.

15 A. Yes. And then they sent us to Hertine. It
16 was cars or --

17 Q. CATTLE CARS?

18 A. Trucks and things. They sent us to Hertine,
19 up in Germany, Czechoslovakia.

20 Q. WHAT IS THE NAME?

21 A. Hertine. H-e-r-t-i-n-e. And then we start
22 working in a bomb factory.

23 Q. WHAT DID YOU HAVE TO DO?

24 A. Well, I had -- what I had to do is, me and the

1 same age children as I was at that time, each of us had a
2 box, a big box like this.

3 Q. YES.

4 A. Wooden box. And we were loading them, loading
5 them.

6 Q. LOADING THE BOMBS INTO THE BOX?

7 A. Loading the box on the train. You know, on
8 the train, it was going on, one by one.

9 Q. THE BOXES WERE ALL FULL?

10 A. Full, right.

11 Q. HEAVY?

12 A. There were two of us, we were able to handle
13 it.

14 Q. OKAY. WHAT WAS YOUR SISTER DOING?

15 A. My sister worked with the bombs, how to put
16 them together. Some kind of parts they were working on.
17 And once there was an accident, and a bomb exploded in
18 front of the friend -- we made friends over there. The
19 mother got killed, her mother. We just knew them from
20 over there. And that was a sad day.

21 Q. WHAT KIND OF HOURS DID YOU HAVE TO --

22 A. To work?

23 Q. IN YOUR WORK, YES.

24 A. From morning until night.

1 Q. FROM FIRST LIGHT TO DARK?

2 A. To dark, yeah.

3 Q. AND WHAT KIND OF LIVING SITUATION WAS THERE?

4 A. There were the -- how do you say it --
5 prisoners, there were other kind of prisoners in that
6 place, from Italy.

7 Q. ITALY?

8 A. Men. And from other countries. It was a
9 different kind of life. It was already more human. We
10 saw people -- and they were also in a uniform, prison
11 uniforms. But they got better food already, more food.
12 Especially if they -- we had 20 children who did this,
13 that loaded the bombs. And they felt sorry for us, for
14 the younger children to always have to do that. And they
15 would give us a slice of bread, a slice of salami.

16 Q. THE PRISONERS?

17 A. The men. And they used to hand it to us.
18 They felt sorry for us. Of course, it was a different
19 kind of a feeling.

20 Q. WAS THERE ANY ROMANCE?

21 A. No. But we were talking back and forth.

22 Q. YOU COULDN'T --

23 A. Learn how to say je tem --

24 Q. IN FRENCH?

1 A. I love you very much. They just taught us.

2 Q. THEY TAUGHT YOU HOW --

3 A. We never went close to each other. We never
4 were close.

5 Q. DID THE ITALIANS TEACH YOU HOW TO TALK?

6 A. The Italians were really, really nice people.
7 Whenever they could, they really handed us food;
8 especially to us, the children. And I used to save it and
9 give it to my sister, whatever I could.

10 Q. SHE DIDN'T GIVE IT AWAY?

11 A. No. There was nobody to give it to.

12 Q. RIGHT. DID THEY TREAT YOU BADLY THERE OR
13 WELL?

14 A. No, better.

15 Q. BETTER THAN WHERE YOU CAME FROM?

16 A. Oh, absolutely. We slept only two or three in
17 a bed, not bed really, a bungalow.

18 Q. BUNKS?

19 A. Bunks. Yes.

20 Q. AND HOW ABOUT SHOWERS, DID THEY HAVE ANY
21 SHOWERS?

22 A. Showers? I don't think so. Just washing, to
23 wash up in the bathroom.

24 Q. STILL COLD WATER?

1 A. Cold water. No hot water.

2 Q. DID THEY HAVE A HOSPITAL?

3 A. They had, but not right there. We did not
4 have anybody sick. If somebody was sick, they were out.
5 They transferred them out.

6 Q. OKAY. SO, NOBODY WANTED TO GET SICK?

7 A. Nobody wanted to get sick. As a matter of
8 fact, I got hurt while loading the train, it was moving,
9 the train was moving, and I fell right underneath the
10 train. I just got scraped, nothing serious. I did not
11 even tell, just my sister. I didn't tell anybody.

12 Q. WERE THERE RUSSIANS BOMBING?

13 A. Well, I don't know who was bombing. But it
14 was a welcome sign. I remember watching them, and we
15 just loved it.

16 Q. COULD YOU SEE THE PLANES?

17 A. Yes. We saw the planes. And we saw the
18 bombs, we saw -- it was very close. And soon after we
19 were gathered together and get -- they send us, they got
20 rid of us.

21 Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

22 A. They took us to Theresienstadt.

23 Q. SAY AGAIN?

24 A. They took us to Theresienstadt.

1 Q. TO THERESIENSTADT. IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

2 A. Right. And they --

3 Q. DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY --

4 A. Because they did not want them to get hold of
5 us. And somehow they let us loose there.

6 Q. IN THERESIENSTADT?

7 A. In Theresienstadt.

8 Q. WHAT TIME OF YEAR ARE WE TALKING ABOUT NOW?

9 A. In '45, March; February or March. I think it
10 was February.

11 Q. SO, IT WAS WINTER?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. COLD?

14 A. Cold. We did not feel the cold. We just --
15 we were so happy to see the bombs and all this. And the
16 Russians there. They let us loose. And we saw the
17 Russian people, the Russians feed us, the Russian people
18 feed us.

19 Q. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT IN THERESIENSTADT?

20 A. In Theresienstadt.

21 Q. YOU MEAN WHEN YOU WERE LIBERATED?

22 A. When we were liberated by the Russians.

23 Q. THE RUSSIANS LIBERATED YOU?

24 A. They liberated us.

1 Q. THEY CAME INTO THE CAMP?

2 A. Not into the camp that was -- they just let us
3 loose.

4 Q. IN THE TOWN?

5 A. In the town, just loose.

6 Q. THE GERMANS LET YOU LOOSE IN THE TOWN?

7 A. Yeah. They just let us loose. They just left
8 us and they just left. We saw lots of German people
9 afterwards on the streets, dead. That did not bother
10 me. Just walked by them.

11 Q. THE GERMAN PEOPLE?

12 A. Aw just one leg. And the Russians who
13 liberated us, was women and men. And one of them gave me
14 a big bread like this, a really big bread, and I could get
15 to my sister. And in the meantime, we started walking. I
16 don't know. We were just loose. And everybody was
17 hollering names. Because you see other people walking by,
18 going by, other prisoners with their prison uniform, you
19 know, their blue and white uniform, and their blanket over
20 their shoulders. And people were hollering, do you know,
21 did you ever hear of this and this.

22 Q. THEY WERE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE?

23 A. Like I was looking for my brother. And I was
24 hollering, do you know Spiegel Dave. And after a while,

1 somebody hollered back, I know Spiegel Dave. And that
2 was Spiegel Dave.

3 Q. YOUR BROTHER?

4 A. My brother. And I thought, I saw him with the
5 blanket, I did not even recognize him. That's why I did
6 not even -- if I had not called his name, I could have
7 just walked by.

8 Q. DID HE RECOGNIZE YOU?

9 A. He says he did. And the first thing what I
10 gave him was from the Russian people I got some margarine
11 also, and I gave it to him. And bread. And he had the
12 margarine. And the bread -- then he got very sick. And
13 he ended up having typhus; I figured from my margarine
14 that I gave him. And they put him in the hospital.

15 Q. WHERE?

16 A. In Theresienstadt. And it was separated, but
17 I still went in there and I worked and help nurse. I was
18 there every day. I got whatever I could find of food,
19 potatoes. I was able to find some potatoes, I guess from
20 the Russians. And small potatoes, cooked. And he put it
21 under his pillow. He wanted to eat it but he couldn't.

22 Q. DID YOUR SISTER COME, TOO?

23 A. My sister came to visit, but she did not come
24 to help. I stayed there with him. They did not let me,

1 they said it's very dangerous, I could catch it. And I
2 stayed there. As a matter of fact, I sneaked in through
3 the window to get in there.

4 Q. YOU WERE GOING TO HELP HIM NO MATTER WHAT?

5 A. No matter what. I made up my mind. So,
6 that's about it.

7 Q. WHEN YOU WERE IN THE FACTORY, DID THEY
8 TRANSPORT YOU TO THERESIENSTADT OR WAS IT VERY CLOSE TO
9 THE END OF THE WAR?

10 A. I was very close. Plus it was two weeks
11 before --

12 Q. DID YOU GO BY TRAIN TO THERESIENSTADT?

13 A. No. Theresienstadt, how did we get there?
14 No, trucks.

15 Q. TRUCKS?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. AND THEN BY THE TIME YOU GOT THERE --

18 A. No, I understand what they wanted. They tried
19 to get us back to, to send us to the crematoriums. And
20 they just couldn't go through. So, they just -- it was
21 already the last -- they were afraid, so they just forgot
22 about us. We ran.

23 Q. HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN THERESIENSTADT AFTER
24 THE WAR WAS OVER?

1 A. Let's see. We left there -- May 5th, I know,
2 I was back in Budapest. I don't know how I got to
3 Budapest. We were probably just going from place to
4 place.

5 Q. WAS YOUR BROTHER WITH YOU?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. AND YOUR SISTER?

8 A. Yes. We went together.

9 Q. AND WHY DID YOU GO TO BUDAPEST, BECAUSE YOU
10 KNEW YOU HAD --

11 A. Everybody else, we just went with a group.
12 Everybody was -- we had troops going. And then slowly,
13 slowly, there was soup kitchens. They served us soup
14 here and there.

15 Q. SOUP?

16 A. Right. Regular food, as much as we wanted.

17 Q. WERE YOU LOOKING FOR YOUR BROTHERS AND
18 SISTERS?

19 A. Yes, I was looking for them. I mean, I wanted
20 to look for them, but I just had no idea where they were.
21 What happened was my brother and my sister, they were
22 hiding in Budapest. And they had a woman, an older woman,
23 non-Jew, who was hiding them. And the whole story about
24 my brother escaped, my brother and my sister. But one of

1 the sisters, they taught her to hide behind the
2 furniture. And she did, and they could never find her
3 afterwards. The SS men came in and some Hungarian came in
4 and they got her and they think they drowned her in the
5 river. I don't know. The river in Budapest. So, we
6 never find her.

7 Q. BUT DID YOU FIND YOUR BROTHERS?

8 A. My brother, my brother and my sister, they
9 were -- when we came home to Valki-Kapustyany, the same
10 house where we came from, they were there already. My
11 oldest brother, we never know what happened to him. We
12 don't know what happened to him. And we never know what
13 happened to Arnold either.

14 Q. SO, YOU WERE FIVE LEFT?

15 A. Six left.

16 Q. AND YOU WENT BACK TO THE HOUSE YOU HAD LIVED
17 IN?

18 A. We went back to the house.

19 Q. WAS IT UNOCCUPIED?

20 A. They had -- the Germans had horses in the
21 house. They kept horses in the house.

22

23 (END OF TAPE I. TAPE II BEGINS WITH THE LAST
24 ANSWER ON TAPE I.)

1

2 Q. IN THE HOUSE?

3 A. In the house. That's what they told us.

4 Everything was gone, everything was gone; no furniture,
5 no clothes, no pictures.

6 Q. AND DID YOU STAY THERE?

7 A. We stayed there and --

8

9 (RESUME INTERVIEW ON TAPE II)

10 Q. YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE HOUSE.

11 A. Yeah. The only thing I wanted to do was eat,
12 eat and eat. And nothing in the -- nothing interested
13 me, nothing really. I figured life is, it's not worth --
14 nothing is worth anything.

15 Q. YOU WERE VERY DEPRESSED, HUH?

16 A. Yeah. I just wasn't interested in anything,
17 nothing.

18 Q. JUST FOOD?

19 A. Just food. And I gained lots of pounds. And
20 since that time, I still cannot throw away food. I can't
21 throw away food.

22 Q. EVEN NOW?

23 A. Even now. And my brothers were very good to
24 me. They took care of me after I came back. My two

1 older brothers, the third one was young himself.

2 Q. HOW LONG DID YOU CONTINUE TO FEEL LIKE THERE
3 WAS NOTHING THAT YOU WERE INTERESTED IN?

4 A. For a long time.

5 Q. ARE YOU TAKING ABOUT MONTHS, YEARS?

6 A. Years.

7 Q. BECAUSE YOU HAD LOST SO MUCH?

8 A. No, because I figured that the whole -- I was
9 really disappointed with the whole human race; that it can
10 do something what they did, what they can do to people, to
11 other people. Now I'm getting used to it. I see in other
12 countries, what they do. It's just terrible.

13 Q. YOU WERE TERRIBLY DISILLUSIONED?

14 A. I was.

15 Q. DID YOU WORK THERE?

16 A. Afterwards?

17 Q. YES.

18 A. If I work? Well, I did a little photography,
19 I learned. But nothing special.

20 Q. DID YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS TRY TO HAVE THE
21 FARM AGAIN?

22 A. We did not find anything. No, the cows and
23 the horses, everything was gone; everything.

24 Q. DID THEY TRY TO PLANT VEGETABLES AGAIN?

1 A. Not for a long time. No, I don't think so. I
2 don't think so. After a while we stayed there in
3 Valki-Kapustyany until '49. And then we immigrated to
4 Israel, all of us.

5 Q. ALL OF YOU TOGETHER?

6 A. Not together. First my sister left; my older
7 sister. She got married.

8 Q. THE ONE THAT YOU WORRIED ABOUT?

9 A. Right. She got married first. And then my
10 other sister got married. And I kind of stuck with the
11 family. And when they left, I left also.

12 Q. HOW MANY WERE LEFT THEN?

13 A. Sisters and brothers?

14 Q. YES. YOU HAD TWO SISTERS WHO GOT MARRIED.

15 A. Two sisters who got married, right. Right.
16 And I was there. And then my brother -- let's see -- my
17 oldest brother, he got married, too. Yeah. And also in
18 Valki-Kapustyany, he got married.

19 Q. SO, EVERYONE WAS GETTING MARRIED?

20 A. He actually came a few years later. He's the
21 only one that stayed behind, my third from the oldest
22 brother. He left about 10 years after us. He stayed
23 there for a long time. He got married and then was -- he
24 had a business and a big store, with some partners.

1 Q. WAS IT HARD FOR HIM TO GET OUT?

2 A. It wasn't easy. They put him a couple times
3 in the prison because the Russians came in then. And me,
4 I just --

5 Q. DID YOU HAVE TROUBLE GETTING OUT?

6 A. No, not at all. It's amazing what all of them
7 did for the people, all of us -- the Jewish organization.
8 What's that word? Paid for all this. I know I did not
9 pay for the ship to take me to Israel. I know I came
10 through Transylvania.

11 Q. SO, YOU WERE HELPED BY JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS?

12 A. Right. I think they called that (inaudible)
13 but I'm not sure.

14 Q. WAS IT A --

15 A. A Jewish organization.

16 Q. FROM ISRAEL?

17 A. Yes. It was from Israel.

18 Q. OR FROM AMERICA?

19 A. No, not from America.

20 Q. NOW, ALL YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WERE
21 GETTING MARRIED. WERE YOU INTERESTED IN MEN?

22 A. Not at all.

23 Q. NO?

24 A. No.

1 Q. SO, YOU REALLY WEREN'T INTERESTED IN ANYTHING?

2 A. Until I came to Israel, I met my husband; my
3 present husband. And we're married 50 years.

4 Q. HOW DID YOU MEET HIM?

5 A. Just met him.

6 Q. AND HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN HIM?

7 A. Well, just for the security and he was very
8 nice and pleasant.

9 Q. SOMEHOW THE CHEMICALS STARTED WORKING AGAIN,
10 HUH?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. SO, YOU DIDN'T SPEAK HEBREW?

13 A. No, but he spoke a little bit of Jewish. He
14 speaks -- he's from Germany, my husband is from Germany.

15 Q. OKAY.

16 A. So, he spoke a little bit of Jewish, he
17 understood Jewish, he speaks it. And I spoke Jewish.

18 Q. YIDDISH, YOU MEAN?

19 A. Yiddish.

20 Q. WHERE DID YOU GO TO WHEN YOU GOT TO ISRAEL?
21 WERE YOU WITH A GROUP?

22 A. For a very short time; maybe two weeks. And
23 then we -- me and my sister -- not the oldest one, who
24 had already at that time a child. She took her child

1 with her from Valki-Kapustyany. We looked for a home
2 near Haifa. And I stayed with them for a long time.

3 Q. HOW LONG?

4 A. A year.

5 Q. DID YOU WORK?

6 A. Yeah, I worked.

7 Q. WHERE DID YOU WORK?

8 A. Wherever I found work.

9 Q. I'M SORRY?

10 A. Sales.

11 Q. SALES?

12 A. In the restaurant.

13 Q. AND WHAT DID YOUR HUSBAND DO?

14 A. My husband was a mechanic, auto mechanic.

15 Q. SO, YOU WEREN'T MARRIED YET?

16 A. No.

17 Q. HOW LONG BEFORE YOU GOT MARRIED?

18 A. Not very long. I came in, let's see, in
19 March, and we were married in December. We met at the
20 bus stop. I didn't want to say it.

21 Q. THAT'S GREAT.

22 A. He's proud of it.

23 Q. SURE. SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

24 A. And he wouldn't let me go. And we came to the

1 states afterwards. He was there a long time, 30 years,
2 and he could not stand the heat, my husband could not
3 stand the heat. It was too hot for him. It's very hot,
4 humid, in Israel.

5 Q. AND HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?

6 A. Four years.

7 Q. FOUR YEARS?

8 A. So, in '54 we came to the United States.

9 Q. DID YOU WANT TO COME?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. YEAH?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. OKAY.

14 A. I did.

15 Q. WHAT DID YOU THINK AMERICA WAS GOING TO BE
16 LIKE?

17 A. To get away from -- I don't know. No, just --
18 I don't want to say it.

19 Q. YOU CAN SAY IT.

20 A. To get away from my mother-in-law.

21 Q. OKAY.

22 A. She was a very possessive, she liked to
23 possess my husband. You know, Israel, Jewish mother.

24 Q. YEAH.

1 A. So, that was one reason for getting out.
2 Otherwise I wouldn't want to leave my sisters and
3 brothers. And he came here. He was working a little bit
4 as a mechanic. Then he became an insurance broker, and
5 he did very good as an insurance broker. He is a very
6 pushy kind of guy himself, he's pushing, he was pushing
7 himself. Because his language wasn't very good, but he
8 pushed himself to study. And he became number one
9 salesperson. He was on the Time magazine, that is, the
10 number one salesperson in insurance. And then he became,
11 after a while, after it was 10 years, he became a real
12 estate broker.

13 Q. REAL ESTATE BROKER?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. SOLD HOUSES?

16 A. Sold houses and he bought his own buildings.
17 And it was okay.

18 Q. IS HE STILL WORKING?

19 A. He's still working. Yeah. And in the
20 meanwhile, we had three kids. My oldest one became a
21 doctor, ophthalmologist, married to a gynecologist. My
22 middle one became a lawyer. And my youngest daughter --
23 two boys and a girl -- she became -- now, I don't
24 remember -- lawyer's helper. What do you call it?

1 Q. PARALEGAL?

2 A. Paralegal. Right.

3 Q. HAS AMERICA TURNED OUT TO BE WHAT YOU HOPED?

4 A. Yeah. And more.

5 Q. AND MORE?

6 A. And more.

7 Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

8 A. What everybody says. Everybody from Europe
9 says it's wonderful to live here, to be able to be free.
10 You can be Jewish. In the beginning, I wasn't so sure
11 about being Jewish.

12 Q. YOU WEREN'T SURE?

13 A. Because even yesterday, I have to say, when I
14 think, don't even think of it, I kind of want to hide it.
15 But there are lots of freedom. You can do whatever you
16 want to. You can be whatever you want to. And nobody
17 appreciates it as Europeans do. The American people don't
18 appreciate it. They don't know how lucky they are.

19 Q. YOU HAVE TO HAVE EXPERIENCED IT, THE BAD PARTS
20 TO KNOW HOW GOOD IT IS?

21 A. To appreciate anything, everything. Even the
22 food. What we have here, it's amazing. I don't think
23 anybody anywhere else in the world has food like here.

24 Q. BUT WE DON'T HAVE CHOCOLATE POPPYSEED CAKE,

1 HUH?

2 A. If we want to, we could.

3 Q. THAT'S TRUE.

4 A. As a matter of fact, I have a can of poppyseed
5 in my -- someplace, and it's already getting old. If I
6 would want to, I could make it.

7 Q. YOU KNOW HOW?

8 A. Oh, absolutely. My sisters, they still do it
9 in Israel. My sister is in Israel. She's getting sick
10 lately.

11 Q. NOW, THIS IS THE ONE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. OKAY.

14 A. And she was married the second time. Her
15 first husband died. She had the second one, she was
16 very, very happy with her second one. And she was
17 married five years and he just had a heart attack.

18 Q. JUST RECENT?

19 A. No, it's already many years ago. She never
20 remarried.

21 Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SISTERS AROUND?

22 A. I have another sister in Israel. She lost her
23 husband. And then I have a brother in Israel, he lost
24 his wife. He was just -- he was 84 and he just -- his

1 son is in Canada, so she just came to visit Canada. He's
2 84.

3 Q. HAVE YOU GONE BACK TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

4 A. No. And I don't want to.

5 Q. YOU DON'T?

6 A. I went to Europe. My husband would like to go
7 and visit Czechoslovakia, including Valki-Kapustyany, but
8 I don't want to.

9 Q. NOW, HE'S FROM GERMANY?

10 A. Germany.

11 Q. WHAT PART?

12 A. Berlin.

13 Q. DOES HE WANT GO TO BACK TO BERLIN?

14 A. We went back to Berlin.

15 Q. YOU DID?

16 A. I was with him.

17 Q. WHEN?

18 A. About in the '80s.

19 Q. IS THAT THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE BEEN BACK?

20 A. To Europe? Yes.

21 Q. YOU DON'T WANT TO GO?

22 A. Not to Czechoslovakia.

23 Q. YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO AUSCHWITZ?

24 A. Auschwitz was right -- I could see it, where

1 is Auschwitz. I did not want to go to Auschwitz.

2 Q. YOU WANT TO FORGET?

3 A. Forget it.

4 Q. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO TALK ABOUT IT?

5 A. I really did not want to talk about it for a
6 long time. My daughter, when she was about 12, she
7 started questioning me. And she was asking me questions
8 and all these things. I reluctantly answered. My boys
9 don't know so much as my daughter. She keeps questioning
10 me, she keeps writing down questions.

11 Q. WHY DOES SHE WANT TO KNOW?

12 A. She wants to know the family. She wants to
13 know the way back.

14 Q. SHE WANTS TO HAVE A SENSE OF WHERE SHE CAME
15 FROM?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. AND YOUR SONS?

18 A. Not as much.

19 Q. DOES YOUR DAUGHTER KNOW YOU WERE DOING THIS
20 TODAY?

21 A. I told her, but I don't think she knows the
22 date. My oldest son knows because he is the one that
23 keeps asking me, did you do it, did you do it.

24 Q. HE WANTS YOU TO DO IT?

1 A. He wanted me to do it.

2 Q. WHY?

3 A. As a matter of fact, he came with a camera to
4 my house with his daughter. They have two daughters.
5 And they kind of did the same thing. And at that time I
6 cried. And I said I'm not going to cry anymore. Once I
7 cried, that's it.

8 Q. WHAT WAS IT THAT MADE YOU SAD IN THAT
9 INSTANCE?

10 A. Because I just -- what I remembered. Now,
11 it's already -- people, I see so much. In one way,
12 people including me, getting used to Auschwitz, to the
13 constant talking about it, about Auschwitz and all this.
14 My husband watches everything, he tapes everything.

15 Q. HE DOES?

16 A. From Auschwitz.

17 Q. FOR YOU?

18 A. No. He's obsessed. No, for himself. And he
19 wants the children to know about it.

20 Q. AND DOES HE ASK YOU ABOUT IT?

21 A. No. I just tell him here and there,
22 something.

23 Q. DID THEY GET OUT OF GERMANY IN TIME?

24 A. I think it was '38, I think, he left.

1 Q. WHERE DID HE GO?

2 A. To Israel.

3 Q. WHEN YOU FIRST MET YOUR HUSBAND, DID HE ASK
4 YOU ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES?

5 A. No, he did not.

6 Q. IT WASN'T TALKED ABOUT?

7 A. No.

8 Q. YOU DIDN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

9 A. No. No. I did not want to talk about it.
10 And even today, I just -- you know, I have friends who
11 came also from Germany and they came from Austria. And
12 when they talked about -- I said one time that I was in
13 Auschwitz, they were surprised. And they said, oh, I
14 wasn't there, I wasn't there. Like it was embarrassing.
15 So, they gave me that feeling that I should be embarrassed
16 about it.

17 Q. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT. WHY ARE YOU
18 EMBARRASSED?

19 A. Just that I was there.

20 Q. AND THEY SAID WHAT?

21 A. You know, but when you come to think about it,
22 what they, when you think about it, it's silly. But this
23 is the way I feel about it; kind of look down at you,
24 when you were in Auschwitz.

1 Q. REALLY?

2 A. That's the feeling I got. When you reason it
3 out, you feel why, but it's there.

4 Q. ARE THEY LOOKING DOWN OR ARE THEY SCARED AS TO
5 WHAT YOU WENT THROUGH?

6 A. Looking down.

7 Q. YEAH?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER THAT.

10 A. I know.

11 Q. AND THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER WHAT
12 HAPPENED.

13 A. I know. But when you talk about it, that's
14 the feeling I get. Oh, I wasn't there.

15 Q. OH, I WASN'T THERE?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. MAYBE THAT MEANS --

18 A. Oh, we did not go there, you know.

19 Q. MAYBE THAT MEANS, I DIDN'T HAVE SUCH A BAD
20 EXPERIENCE AS YOU DID.

21 A. Well, it could be. But that's what I get.

22 Q. OKAY. SO, YOU DIDN'T REALLY TALK ABOUT IT
23 WITH YOUR HUSBAND FOR YEARS. AND ONLY YOUR DAUGHTER ASKS
24 YOU ABOUT IT. HOW DID IT HAPPEN THAT YOU CAME NOW?

1 A. Because of my son.

2 Q. YOUR SON?

3 A. I love my son, and I want to please him.

4 Q. THE OLDEST ONE?

5 A. I love all of them, but my oldest one is the
6 one.

7 Q. HE IS THE ONE THAT CAME WITH THE CAMERA?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. HE WANTS YOU TO DO THIS?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. FOR YOU, FOR HIM, FOR THE WORLD?

12 A. For the children, for himself, for everybody,
13 for the world maybe, I don't know. And also he has two
14 daughters, and the youngest daughter is very, very taken
15 by this. She really, she's like this friend of mine
16 looking down, like I told you, she's the other way
17 around. She is supporting. That she said, oh -- she's
18 only 13, but she would bring it out for me also, you know,
19 she would question me.

20 Q. SHE WANTS TO KNOW?

21 A. She wants to know.

22 Q. ISN'T IT LONELY TO HAVE HAD SUCH AN IMPORTANT
23 EXPERIENCE IN YOUR LIFE, THAT YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT?

24 A. The only time we talk about it is when I'm

1 with my sister. We talk about it.

2 Q. BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE TOGETHER?

3 A. And she would always tell me how terrible it
4 was. And if it's not for me, she would not have come
5 back.

6 Q. SHE'S GRATEFUL TO YOU?

7 A. Absolutely.

8 Q. AND ARE YOU PROUD THAT YOU COULD HELP HER THAT
9 WAY?

10 A. Very. But I'm not boasting about it.

11 Q. I KNOW.

12 A. I'm not boasting, but I'm very glad.

13 Q. THAT WAS QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT.

14 A. She thinks it is. She always tells everybody
15 and anything, if not for me, she would not have survived.

16 Q. WELL, YOU KNOW, I THINK IN SOME WAYS IT KEPT
17 YOU ALIVE, TOO, HUH?

18 A. Absolutely. Because I wasn't interested.
19 Either way, it did not matter, it really did not matter.
20 It wasn't that important. After all this, you did not
21 want to be there. But with my sister, I wanted to be
22 there with her, but you didn't want to be there.

23 Q. TO HELP HER?

24 A. Right.

1 Q. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU BEFORE YOU COULD BE
2 INTERESTED IN THE WORLD AGAIN?

3 A. After my oldest son was born.

4 Q. THAT MAKES IT IMPORTANT?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. THAT REALLY GAVE YOU A REASON TO BE ALIVE?

7 A. That's right. That's right. Even today, I'm
8 proud of him.

9 Q. I HOPE YOU ARE PROUD OF YOU, TOO. YOU'RE A
10 BRAVE PERSON. SO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO NOT WANT
11 TO GO BACK TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

12 A. There is nothing I want. I don't want to see
13 the people anymore. I liked that place, I really did.
14 It was fun to grow up, country like.

15 Q. BUT YOU FEEL ABANDONED BY THAT, HUH?

16 A. I think they were the worst people, worse in
17 my mind -- I mean, I know the Germans were terrible, but
18 they were --

19 Q. IN SOME WAYS THEY WERE WORSE FOR YOU?

20 A. Abusing us.

21 Q. BECAUSE YOU TRUSTED THEM?

22 A. They abused my mother, and I cannot forgive
23 them.

24 Q. SO, THEY'RE NOTHING BUT BAD MEMORIES, EVEN

1 THOUGH YOU HAD THIS WONDERFUL CHILDHOOD THERE?

2 A. Absolutely. Bad memories.

3 Q. AND YOU DON'T WANT TO SET FOOT THERE, HUH?

4 A. I had a nice childhood because of my parents,
5 and my family; but not because of them.

6 Q. DO YOU THINK THAT SOMETHING LIKE THIS COULD
7 HAPPEN AGAIN?

8 A. The way it goes sometimes, I cannot believe
9 it. It's unbelievable. And I thought that it would
10 never happen again. But since we came back from there,
11 the concentration camp, it doesn't seem that they are
12 sorry or they feel sorry for us, the non-Jewish friends
13 of ours. As a matter of fact, I think they are glad what
14 happened. And as a matter of fact, they are sorry that
15 they -- that it did not happen -- that they did not
16 accomplish what they wanted.

17 Q. TO WIPE YOU ALL OUT?

18 A. Right. That's the feeling I have, since I
19 came back. So, why should I go there to Czechoslovakia.
20 There's nothing there.

21 Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU GO TO BERLIN WITH
22 YOUR HUSBAND?

23 A. I didn't want to go. And he did not want to
24 go, but it was a free trip and all this, and I just went

1 for him.

2 Q. HOW WAS IT FOR HIM?

3 A. He went to see where his mother was when she
4 was young, and where he was born. Could not find anyone
5 that he left there.

6 Q. COULD NOT FIND --

7 A. Yeah, just did not find. Not the same. He
8 went to a Jewish school, so he went to look at that
9 school. And in a way, he was glad to see his childhood
10 schools.

11 Q. DO YOU FEEL OKAY ABOUT HAVING DONE THIS
12 INTERVIEW?

13 A. Yeah, I'm glad. I'm glad it's over.

14 Q. YOU'RE GLAD IT'S OVER?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. WAS IT HARD?

17 A. Not as hard as when I was with my
18 granddaughter when she would question me.

19 Q. WHY WAS THAT HARD?

20 A. I don't know. I have no idea. I can't answer
21 that.

22 Q. SHE'S OBVIOUSLY VERY INTERESTED IN THIS AND IN
23 YOU?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. DOES THAT FEEL GOOD TO YOU?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. ABOUT HER WANTING TO KNOW WHO YOU WERE AND
4 WHAT YOU WENT THROUGH?

5 A. Yes. I feel good about it that she was
6 interested and she was sympathetic to it.

7 Q. IT'S GOOD THAT PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW, HUH?

8 A. Definitely.

9 Q. I MEAN, THE YOUNG PEOPLE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO US
10 THAT THEY BE INTERESTED IN WHAT HAPPENED, AND THAT THEY
11 KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, OTHERWISE WE WILL ALL REMAIN IN THE
12 DARK LIKE WE DON'T HAVE RADIOS OR NEWSPAPERS, YOU KNOW?

13 A. Better they know what was going on. They have
14 to know.

15 Q. AND THEY NEED TO KNOW FROM YOU, BECAUSE YOU
16 WERE THERE.

17 A. Yeah. That was another -- that was a reason I
18 wanted to have this done. Because who would tell about
19 it? We have to tell about it, who was there.

20 Q. AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE DOING THIS.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. DID YOU BRING UP YOUR FAMILY HERE?

23 A. Yes. My family -- let's see. I have one
24 son-in-law who is not Jewish. He did not convert, but he

1 keeps all the -- like Passover, he doesn't eat bread,
2 only matzo. He doesn't eat on Yom Kipper, all day. He
3 tells my daughter, today is going to be a holiday. And
4 the children are brought up Jewish, yeah. Their children
5 are brought up, two little girls, they are brought up
6 Jewish. And they go to Sunday school.

7 On the other hand, my brother who is pretty
8 religious, and he went -- he goes to synagogue, and he
9 brought up the children Jewish, and they are pretty
10 religious. Wore the yalmaka and all this. And the son
11 married a non-Jew and she brings up the children as
12 non-Jewish. And we don't know what happened, but that's
13 it. He's not happy about it.

14 Q. SO, EVEN THOUGH YOU LOST YOUR FAITH, WE TALKED
15 ABOUT THAT, YOU STILL HAVE TRADITIONAL --

16 A. Right. Because I believe in tradition. It's
17 good for the family.

18 Q. DO YOU STILL FEEL LIKE YOU NEED TO HIDE YOUR
19 JEWISHNESS?

20 A. No, not really.

21 Q. DO YOU FEEL SAFE --

22 A. Yeah, but I would not go really on hollering
23 I'm Jewish, I'm Jewish. Also anybody that says, I'm
24 Christian, I'm Christian, also I don't believe in it.

1 Q. SURE.

2 A. But I'm free here. But I would not want to go
3 see friends or anybody in Czechoslovakia. Somehow I just
4 -- I don't even, I don't like them. I think they were
5 letting -- not only they let us be deported, also when we
6 came back, they weren't very nice to us. They moved into
7 people's homes. They took the nice homes. Nice Jewish
8 people lived there, and they would not even -- they want
9 to live there. It's coming to them, like they inherited
10 it.

11 Q. SO, THAT LEFT A BAD TASTE FOR YOU?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. AND IT REALLY WASN'T SAFE, EVEN AFTER THE WAR?

14 A. Well, it wasn't -- not that they especially
15 went after Jewish people, just it was felt we are not
16 welcomed.

17 Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO
18 SAY TO YOUR FAMILY, FUTURE GENERATIONS?

19 A. Just to be strong and to -- whoever could
20 afford, even not afford it, should go to school. They
21 should educate themselves in every aspect of life. And
22 find out things, read and study up on things, what's
23 important, to them.

24 Q. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF OUR

1 PROJECT, FOR COMING AND DOING THIS, TELLING US THIS STORY
2 AND BEING SO GENEROUS. IT'S PAINFUL, I KNOW. WE REALLY
3 APPRECIATE IT.

4 A. You're welcome.

5 Q. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

6 A. You're welcome.

7 (END OF INTERVIEW - FOLLOWED BY PHOTOGRAPHS)

8 Q. DO YOU WANT TO TELL US WHAT THESE ARE?

9 A. Yes, definitely. This is my father, Bernard
10 Spiegel.

11 And next to that is my mother with my sister
12 and her friend Kato. And then on the top is my husband's
13 brother, his wife, my daughter-in-law and (inaudible.)

14 This is my brother Arnold, who was talking
15 about going to the moon, way before anybody was talking
16 about it. And he was a big zionist, very interested in
17 Jewish causes.

18 This is my little sister Erica, she was just
19 adorable. She left with my mother together to the gas
20 chambers.

21 This is my sister Helen, who was very
22 studious, always studied. And she was hiding up in
23 Budapest, and some, from Hungary, they call it melasho,
24 they took her there. And we assumed that they take her.

1 This is my brother Herman, handsome boy, he
2 was always very handsome, and my older sister Rosie, and
3 me and my sister Alya and her son Milan.

4 Q. WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

5 A. (Pointing to young girl on the left.) This is
6 me and my husband in 1949, we just got married.

7 Q. CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANY OF THESE PEOPLE?

8 A. Go down the line?

9 Q. WHATEVER YOU WANT.

10 A. My aunt Rose, any daughter-in-law Melinda,
11 with my son Ron. My daughter Laurie, Allison, Melanie,
12 my son Michael, my daughter Amelia, her husband Vince, my
13 cousin Adrian and their son, my granddaughter Julia, me
14 and Monica, and her husband with her, and Jeremy and
15 Zach. This was taken at Allison's bat mitzvah, three
16 years ago.

17 And this one was Benny and my older son
18 Michael and the middle son Ron and (inaudible.) My older
19 son became an ophthalmologist, and my son became a lawyer
20 and my daughter is a parallel. So, we accomplished
21 something.

22 Q. THIS IS ALL YOUR GRANDCHILDREN?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. DO YOU WANT TO NAME THEM?

1 A. Right. There is Allison the oldest, and then
2 comes Maria, my husband smiling there and there is Melanie
3 and there's Monica and Melanie and there's (inaudible.)
4 and those are my grandchildren.

5 Q. THANK YOU.

6 A. Thank you.

7
8 (END OF VIDEO TAPE II)
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