HELEN FARKAS

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Q. MY NAME IS EVELYN FIELDEN, AND I'M INTERVIEWING HELEN FARKAS TODAY FOR THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT AT THE HOLOCAUST CENTER OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO. WITH ME INTERVIEWING IS LORI RICE.

GOOD MORNING, OR, RATHER, AFTERNOON, HELEN. WOULD YOU START OFF BY TELLING US WHEN AND WHEN YOU WERE BORN?

A. I was born in Rumania. The name of the city is Satu Mare. It's a city of, at that time, approximately 100,000 people. Approximately one-third of the population was Jewish. And we were very well-integrated in Rumania with our neighbors, and the children of friends with each other.

We did not inter-marry, but we had friendship that lasted from childhood until the Holocaust started. Then, the fear of what was going on changed them, because they were afraid.

I should start with the fact that, during the Rumanian Era, we had a good life. We didn't have particular problems. Of course, it was always when the parent had to discipline the child, he or she would say, "Watch out, because I'll call the Jew." But, we were used to it. It didn't bother us. But, we were not persecuted, as such.

So, we just knew that it exists, and we were good neighbors, and we had no problems with that.

In 1940, when the Hungarians marched in, the 5th of September, evidently Hitler gave them back Transylvania -- this part of the country is called Transylvania. It's on the border of Hungary. Very, very shortly, once we became

Hungarians, the persecution of the Jews started. First it started that we daily saw in the newspaper, the orders what the Jews have to do, or they may not do: Slowly, the doctors could not practice, lawyers could not practice, people in government were released of their profession or jobs. And certain orders came out daily in the newspaper.

One time, we had to give in the radios. Every Jew had to submit their radios; of course, they were not paid for it. And, you know, at that time a radio was like a month earning of a family.

So, what they didn't want us is to hear what's happening in the world; however, I had a young brother, who was at that time, 19. And he had a small radio, which was even more expensive than the big one. And he just took the chance and did not give in the radio.

And my Father used to go down in our basement. We had our own home and orchard, and we were able to live a little bit secluded from the happenings.

My brother and some of us even tried to make a bunker in our backyard, but then the neighbors discovered it that we were doing it; and we abandoned it when we heard what is going to happen.

My Father used to go down with the little radio in the basement. He put down a needle -- a pin of some sort -- and he was able to catch in American. He knew some English, because he was here before the War for four years. He lived in New York. And he knew some English, and he was able to listen to Voice of America.

And he used to come up from the basement with

terrible news that thousands of Jews were found dead in ditches. And in Poland they were doing this to the Jews. We thought my father went out of his mind.

We just could not conceive that it's possible, in the 19th Century, something like this -- or the 20th Century -- something like this could happen.

We did not believe all the stories my father brought up from the basement. We could not believe that they are true. We figure, it's probably propaganda from the Voice of America to say these things.

Q. WHAT YEAR DID YOU SAY THAT WAS?

A. This was in 1944. Actually, it started in 1940, but, slowly, they were progressing.

So, actually, my father started listening from, like '42, '43, you know, when we found out what's happening in the world.

Then, some people came back, some from Slovakia. They picked them up in 1943 and took them away; nobody knew where. Here and there, one or two escaped, and they were tellins us about the atrocities and the murders that -- not just the Germans, but their local governments were doing.

And I can say, as for myself, that the Hungarians were not sympathetic at all. Even our own neighbors were not sympathetic when it was just starting to happen. Very few of them did expose themselves to help the Jews. They were all so afraid.

I happen to know one person who saved a Jewish child. She's here, she's a very good friend of ours. But very

few of them were willing to risk their lives.

So, they bagan to -- the laws began to be more strict and more restrictive to the Jews. And then in 1944, before Passover, the law came out that they will put us into ghettos. And it so happened that my sister lived in the area in those few blocks that they designated for the ghetto.

And we started bringing in food and hiding food, because we didn't know what's going to happen. And in 1944, right after Passover, we were interned into the ghetto.

The Elders of our town, the Temples, they were the ones that carried out the laws. I presume that they didn't know what they were doing, because they did it. They probably had no choice. But they were the ones that organized the -- with their help was organized the ghetto. With their help were we shipped to Auschwitz.

They didn't give us any food. It was mostly the food that was brought in, so we shared the food. I remember after three weeks, we ran out of yeast, for instance. And the people in the ghetto, we shared.

We were lucky. We had food in the whole apartment of my sister. We lived, three, four families in it: my sister, her mother-in-law, father-in-law, their son -- and he was to be shipped out for forced labor, like every other young man. But, occasionally, he was there, and he was living there. My parents, I was living there, my brothers. So, we were terribly crowded in a one-bedroom apartment. Thousands of people in a square, three, four blocks.

So, when the time came and they started shipping us out of town, presumably for work, they said that we will work in factories, and so we all feverishly started packing whatever we were able to bring in from our homes.

We locked our home and we brought bedding with us. So, we feverishly started packing.

We were allowed so many kilograms to take for each person. And I wish they didn't allow us anything, because when they packed us into those cattle cars, there was no room. We had to sit on our own belongings.

So -- I made it real short with the ghetto, because all we spent there was from three to five weeks. The last ones that were to be deported were there only five weeks.

So, they packed us. As we were carrying all our stuff on us, we were walking to the railroad station. And the biggest hurt and disappointment from our townspeople, from our own neighbors, was that they were spitting at us. They said, "Good, we'll be rid of the Jews," some of them.

Some of them just didn't show their faces. I think those were the decent ones, who didn't come and didn't show their faces.

So, they brought us to the railroad station. They put us into the cattle cars, about 80 of us. And we had no room to move, at all. We had to sit on top of our belongings.

We had no way of relieving ourselves. Buckets were, somehow, brought out, and we had to do it right there.

My sister had -- her husband had been taken to forced labor, and she didn't know about him since 1942, two years previous to when we were deported. And she had a little boy, who was two years old. She just had the baby when he was taken away.

And she had this two-year old, beautiful, little blond baby. We sat him to a window. I was rushing -- I was the strong one -- I was rushing to get to that little, tiny window. And we were sitting on top of our belongings. And I put the baby to that little window so that he can get some air. He had beautiful, little blond, curly hair.

And diapers -- she had diapers. My sister brought along diapers, but where were they? We had a very hard time. The child was crying. She was all -- he got rashes. There was no water to wash him.

Finally, after about two days, we were allowed to get some water. They brought in some -- these big cans, and we had gotten some water. Tried to save it. How can you save water?

And Germans, of course, took over when we left Hungary. And the border -- they took us over from the Hungarian -- from the jandar (phonetic) -- is the gendarme.

As they parked us away from the route, because they had to take ammunition, and so whenever they needed the track, they just parked us for hours and half days at a time.

And it was awfully hot. It was May 21st, because

it took three days. And we arrived the 24th to Auschwitz. It was the 21st of May 1944.

It was very hot in those cattle cars.

So, before they gave us over to the Germans, the Hungarians -- jandars came up, and they said, "I know you dirty Jews, you didn't give up all your gold, all your money. Give us whatever you have left! We know that you are stealing it with you, and you are taking it with you!"

But, actually, we have given up already all the jewelry and money and whatever we had. They have taken away already before we left the ghetto.

My brother had hidden here (gesturing off camera) in his cuff, in his shirt cuff, a couple of thousand of bangers. And my Mother said, when these jandars said, "We are going to get you out of the cattle wagon, and each one of you will be searched, and whoever will have money or jewelry on him or her, they will be shot right here in front of the rest of them!"

So, my poor Mother, she kept saying to my brother, "Give it up! Give it up!"

"How can I get it out?"

He was a tailor and he had it sewn in. So, somehow, he got a razor -- a blade -- and he cut it out here. And, somehow, he cut it out and took out the money.

In the big excitement, he didn't notice that he threw into the hat 1,000 -- was a half, only. A half was left here (gesturing off camera).

And after they collected the last of the money and jewelry, whatever people still had with them, everybody was scared, you know, so they gave it up. This jandar came up, dangling the half-thousand bill. And he said, "Where is the other half of this? Who dropped this in the hat?"

And my brother already felt that it's there.

And they said, "You give it up, or else all of you will be shot! We have no remorse! We have no sorrow for you! You're thieves! You're this, and you're that!

So, my brother was about to stand up and give the other half, and I pushed him back and I took the half. And I said, "It's here!"

Because I figured to myself, "He's a 19-year-old boy." I was a 23-year-old girl, not bad-looking. I thought, "Maybe they will be softer with me. They are not going to shoot me for that half a thousand bill."

So, I stepped -- I got up. And he said, "You! Step down here!"

So, I had to go through the baggages, and I had to jump down. And just as I was down there, he said, "You know what you did? You disfigured the money of our Republic, and that is a crime of death! And we warned you!"

So I said, "I'm sorry!"

I was too scared and too upset. And they started beating me as I was standing by the cattle wagon. As they were giving me slaps, the cattle wagon gave me the other, you know? They really gave me a very bad beating. And then they

called me names. And they said, "Okay, go back!"

So, my Mother was relieved because she figured, you know, it was still better than they shot my brother.

They gave us over to the Germans, and then, a few hours, we continued. We had no idea where they are taking us, because nothing leaked out, not at home, not in the papers, nothing; except what my father kept saying that he heard on the Voice of America. We started to believe!

And we started to be very fearful; but still, we just could not believe, even then, that they are taking us to annihilation. They are taking us to kill us!.

It was terrible. Those three days and three nights in the cattle car was -- was hell! Lots of old people were crying. And you could hear sick people. Some of them were shouting, "Oh, he's dead! He's dead!" So, apparently, there were some dead ones, too. But we were much too busy when we arrived to check who's dead or who isn't.

We just kept together, our little family, and we shared whatever we had. We had irekeelho with us. My Mother said, "We are going on a train. We don't know where they are taking us. We have to have some irekeelho, something to eat." That's made out of flour and eggs.

Q. AND YOU CALLED IT -- ?

A. Irekeelho.

So, that was -- it was nourishing; yes, it was nourishing. So, my parents were Kosher, but before we went into the ghetto, my Father bought some ham for the children so that -- they don't have to be Kosher -- they need some

good food. And he was able on the black market, to buy, for lots of money. So, we brought along a ham and irekeelho. Water was something that we needed, terribly. And we had it, only occasionally.

And so, we shared what we had. We got from others what they had. Some had some fruit. We had irekeelho and the ham.

And, like I said, many times they diverted us off the tracks. Those were the worst times, because when you go, you get a little air, and it's a little more exciting, knowing that you're going somewhere. You know, you can't (?) just die of thirst, of heat, of exhaustion. Not being able to stretch out, not being able to lie down.

So, the fourth day, the 24th of May, we arrived to Auschwitz. We didn't know where we are. They opened up the cattle cars and we saw these men, young men in striped clothes and striped hats, with no hair. They were shorn.

And they shouted, the Germans with their guns, they were all shouting, "Aus! Aus! Mach schnel! Mach schnel!"

So, we had to jump out, but, as we were trying, each of us to save something to bring along. My sister was running for the diapers. I was running for my Mother's medicines. She had a little box with medicine, and I was running for the medicine.

The young men with the striped clothes -- in Yiddish -- they kept saying to the young women, who had children -- they kept saying, "Give your child to an older person! Give your child to an older person!"

My sister said, "They are crazy! What do you mean, give my child to an older person?"

My Mother was there. Her mother-in-law was there. She is not going to do that. So, as we came off, we jumped off the cattle wagon. We still wanted to retrieve some things. They started beating us, beating us back!

So, the baby was crying because of all the excitement. My sister's mother-in-law grabbed the baby. And I had a pink -- pretty handkerchief, and I was going, "Uriha, look! Look! Look!" Trying to quiet him.

And it took just two, three minutes, and my sister and I turned around to retrieve some things from the cattle wagon, and they were already beaten off to the left. And we saw them. My sister started to run -- to run for her baby. And a German soldier hit her with the butt of his gun and said to her, "Go back! Go back! Fiefrei!" Five in a row.

Right away, immediately, we had to line up, five in a row. And here, my Mother is going that way, my Father, my brother. And my sister's mother-in-law, father-in-law, the baby. And she is trying to run again after the baby, and, again, she is beaten back!

Meanwhile, we find ourselves in front of a gorgeous looking, elegant, high-ranking officer, which is, we found out, was Mengele. We went through -- we went through, and he was looking at the faces, the bodies. And he was asking certain people how old they are. And he was just making a wave, like this (gesturing) -- right, left, right, left. We had

no idea what was happening. But my sister was thrown back here, and I was thrown back over there, and some people -- young women, friends from our hometown -- were also thrown this way. And they were hysterical for their baby!

My sister's very good friend, Clara -- she lives in New York -- she was just shouting, and she wanted to fight the soldier -- that she wants to retrieve her baby!

And, meanwhile, they are making us go, go fast! Fim in a rei! And they are beating us with the guns. And they are making us go, and just go! And we looked back, and so, the soldiers, when they saw some of us being hysterical -- mostly the young mothers -- he said, "Why are you hysterical? You are going to meet them in the bath, in the bath house. You are going to meet them. They are going to the bath house, and you are going to go to the bath house, and you are going to meet them there."

So, they just -- like this friend of my sister, Clara, and her sister -- her name was Ethel -- they just hugged each other and cried! And we were just going, going, going! (gesturing.)

I can't remember the time, but quite a long time -- we were going ahead. We didn't see any more our relatives, our group. And we arrived to a big, red brick building. Thousands were standing around the building, from other trains, probably. They were standing there for hours. They were tired. They sat down. Then, they shouted at them to get up! So, we were there.

We must have arrived around 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. And it was Saturday. Sunday was the first day of Shuwas. We arrived the day before Shuwas.

And as we were standing around and just lurking (?) around and figuring what will happen, we saw that they are slowly moving us. Slowly, groups are going into the building. And we didn't see anybody come out, because they came out those -- that -- they came out a different -- to a different door.

So, finally -- finally, after hours -- it must have been about six, seven hours later -- we got into the building. And there we were ordered to take off all our clothes, just take our shoes with us.

They looked us over. They looked over the shoes. They looked into our mouth. They looked into the body, whether they are bringing diamonds or things like that, jewelry.

And they then, finally, they let us into another room where girls, like us, were standing around with some old scissors and old -- those hair clippers, you know. And they started clipping our hair. They de-haired us all over our bodies.

When we, you know, as we were coming -- you couldn't stay close to your -- to, like, sister or Mother, or whoever you came with. You couldn't, because they just grabbed you -- the first girl that was free to do it.

And so we got lost from each other -- from my sister. And we go around and look for each other when we were through. We looked for each other. We don't recognize each other. We

looked like boys, naked boys. And then, we finally recognize each other, and we fell on each other! We hug each other! And we start laughing hysterically, until the laugh goes into cry. And we hugged each other. We laughed and cried until our turn came, and out we went into another -- into the third room, and there, they had the showers, yeah.

First -- first, they dunked us into disinfectant. It was terribly stinky, very bad, cold, stinky. And then, they let us have our showers. The showers were long lines, and we were so happy to see. We didn't have soap, but we had warm water coming in, we thought, and it was kind of warm water, and we were so happy.

We just pushed each other away from the shower heads. We just wanted to enjoy it longer. And then, they shut it all off at the same time. We had no towels.

Out into another room, huge rooms. So there, they had long tables. This table with clothes. This table with socks. This table with coats. This table -- they didn't give us anything else. They didn't give us hardly underwear. The shoes, we had our own. See, we were to bring our shoes with us into the shower.

So, as we had to go, and they handed us out. Nobody looked for size, color, or anything. Each person, as you went by the tables, you were handed. The socks were mismatched, purposely, that they gave us. The dresses were whatever you got, either too big or too small. And some of us got some coats, but they ran out of coats very fast, and some of us didn't get any coats. I didn't get any coat.

And so we went out, and outside, we started

dressing ourself. I got a black jersey dress, which, luckily, was very long. And I was very thin at the time. I was a young, 23-year old. I had very good figure, very thin, tall.

And the jersey dress was this long; so, right away, we figured out that we can tear off a piece and tie on our heads, because it was very cold. In Auschwitz, the days were terribly hot. The sun was beating us. It was just hard to believe how very hot it could be in the daytime. At night, it was very cold.

So, it must have been around 3:00 o'clock in the morning when we finally got out. And we changed clothes. We helped each other and ourself, you know. So, finally, around 3:00 o'clock or so, we were all ready. They marched us. They marched us to Lager C. It was called Barracks C.

There, they had 31 barracks. They were made of wood. They were the first barracks that the Polish prisoners were building -- the Polish Jews -- five years previous. They brought them there, and they were the ones that they made them build these barracks, and then they lived in them. So, they emptied them.

And when we arrived in these 31 barracks, there was a thousand, minimum, people in each one. There was nothing in Barrack 31. We, my sister and I, we wanted to get into Barrack 31. But there were from No. 1, all the way -- it went like this (gesturing) and around. Lager C was a very big, you know, it was -- I don't know how many acres of land, but the middle of it was for the Germans.

And each one of the barracks had a little, tiny

room, and that was for the blockeltesta. They called blockeltesta, the Polish women who were given to us as overseers of us. And they had to be very tough. They were very tough, and they had to be, or else.

So, they marched us in. There was nothing. It was dark. There was nothing. We went around, feeling. There was nothing but mud, because it was raining the day before, probably, and the earth was all muddy.

In the middle, there was an oven, but I heard and I found out, there was never fire in those ovens. They were red brick, brick ovens. Those who came in first, into the barrack, they ran and occupied places, you know, on the oven. It was long. It was supposed to be heated, and then it would heat the whole barrack, but it never saw fire. It was never heated, or heating, at all.

So, my sister and I got in, and we felt that we are going in mud. And we were terribly tired. My sister, she just lost her baby. And she couldn't stop -- she saw that we didn't find our parents and the baby. She just kept crying and crying. And I couldn't let her -- she got her period, too, from the big excitement -- and I couldn't let her sit in the mud, so I said, "You know what? It makes no sense that both of us should sit in the mud. I'll sit in the mud, you sit in my lap." She was smaller than I, so she sat in my lap.

We were over a thousand people. We had to sit very close to heat -- to warm each other, also. And because we didn't see -- it was so dark -- we didn't know how much room we have. We just tried to warm each other. We didn't

know each other, a lot of us, but with just the body, you know, needed a body to warm you.

So, around 5:00 o'clock, it started to be light, and we started to recover and look around and see what's happening here.

About 5:30, this woman who was our blockeltesta came out, and she very sternly warned us. She was a Slovakian, Jewish girl, and she started to warn us that we should better behave, because if we don't then she has to give us out. And she told us, "I have been here for five years. I have seen a lot of misery. I am one of those who built these barracks. We were in the rain. We were in the sun. We were in the terrible weather of this area, but you, at least, have a roof over your head. And I will see to it, if you are good, if you behave yourselves, I will see to it that you get food and that you have it decent; but if you are going to give me trouble, I will have to give you trouble. I have to control over a thousand people. I am in charge and I have to account to the Germans.

Graisa, you will see her. She will come." She is a beautiful, blonde lady, we discovered. "I am responsible, and she is very mean. She is very cruel. And if you are going to rock the boat, in any way, you will be under the boat."

So, we found out later that she wasn't a bad person. As a matter of fact, she was a good person. She tried to do the best for us, but her duty was to keep us in control. And here, we were very hungry. How can you keep people in control when they are so terribly hungry?

After one or two days, we started feeling hunger. Before that, we were upset and hurt and surprised, and -- you name it.

So, the very first morning, she ordered some of the girls to go into her room and bring out 16 sticks. She had 16 sticks, about this high (gesturing). And she had them laid down. And she started choosing among us -- those that were like myself. I was tall. I seemed to be strong and young.

The age, by the way, that Mengele let through, was supposedly from 17 to 35. We were chosen not to be gassed. We were chosen to work. So, that was the age group that was with us in Auschwitz in all of the 31 blocks.

Q. THESE WERE JUST WOMEN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, JUST WOMEN, NOW?

A. Only women.

Q. OKAY, THANK YOU.

A. The men were somewhere else.

So, she chose 16 girls and she handed out the sticks. Very sternly, "This is your duty. You are going to be -- you girls are going to be my helpers. You are going to be the stoop deest." Deest in German means servant. "So, you are going to be my servants. You are going to help me control the group, and you are going to have to use these sticks whenever it's necessary."

So, when she finished and she went back into her room, my sister and I looked at each other, and we said, "We can't do it." So, what was there to do?

They let us out, you know, they let us out "free block." That means you can go and mix yourself with all the 31,000. So, we decided, since nobody knows us yet, now is the time to put down the stick and disappear from this block.

We discovered friends that used to live in a town where my uncle lived, and they told us that they are in Block 10. Then, I discovered my future sister-in-laws. My husband became my husband after the war. His two sisters were in Block 10, and we discovered that they have bunks. We no longer have to be in the mud.

So, we went and -- we went in, and, of course, it was full, too, to the brim. But, as others were beating each other for the bunks, so were we. We had to beat our way to a bunk.

And slowly, everybody found, you know, someone; if not in this block, they found in the other block, then. They found relatives and exchanged. We were in business, I tell you!

Some of the clothes were exchanged. Some people had a needle. You'd sell your piece of bread for a needle. We were haggling, constantly.

So, we had our place, already. And once you settled down, it was pretty much your place. Very seldom would somebody beat you out of your place.

So, the first or second day, we discovered my sister, my older sister who lived about 300 kilometers away. She lived -- is Kolasvag -- with her daughter.

Now, her daughter was 17 years old --16 years old. She was well-developed. And she, somehow, slipped through Mengele. He did not notice that she had a limp. If he would have noticed her -- . She had surgery, several surgeries on her knee and her foot. One of her foot (sic) was a little shorter and thinner; but, somehow, she was very tense, and, somehow, she slipped through.

And when we saw my sister, my oldest -- this was my oldest sister. She was 36 -- 37, very nice, good looking, tall woman. And, like I say, her daughter, she had a beautiful, little face. And, even with no hair, she looked like a cute, little boy. So, we were terribly happy.

And they happened to be in the Block 12, so we brought them over to Block 2. We exchanged the place on the bunk, and we were able to -- all four of us -- be on the same bunk.

Life in Auschwitz was -- yes -- I failed to mention that that first day, this blockeltesta, when she was explaining to us where we are and what we are to be doing -- doing nothing until you are chosen to be taken somewhere for work -- she said, "If you don't behave," you know, "do you see those chimneys? Do you see those firey smokes that come out? Do you smell the smell of flesh?"

Yes, we did, but we were not aware yet, the first morning. We weren't even out yet. She put us up for sailapel. The sailapel was something that happened every single morning and every single late afternoon. We had to line up in five rows, and, usually, it was the same people. We chose each other. So, we chose a Slovakian girl to us when we were in

Block 10, from the second day on. And she was our line -- our fifth to the line for as long as we were in Auschwitz. We had to have someone that you knew and you got used to, because we had to share a bread. Every morning after the sailapel, we got bread, about this (gesturing) about this size. And they said that half of the bread is sawdust, but who cared? It tasted wonderful because we were terribly hungry.

And we had to divide it in five equal pieces. Now, with what? We got a spoon. When we came to Auschwitz, they gave us a cup and a little shisala. We called it a shisala, a little bowl like a cereal bowl, but larger, and they had holes. And we even got -- made ourself from our clothes -- a string. And we wore it, because, otherwise, you don't have it with you when you need it. So, we were wearing the cup, the bowl, and the spoon. We just tied it around.

But, what we discovered that we need a knife, terribly badly. We have to divide the bread. So, the first day, all of us, we started making the end of the spoon. We made it on stone.

Q. SHARPEN?

A. Yes, to make it into a knife.

So, all of us had our spoon with our knives, and with that, we had to divide the bread so equal, you know, each little crumb had to be so.

So, we were responsible for each other, all five of us.

Now that we were all together, all four of us and this Slovakian girl -- this Slovakian girl told us a lot about what happened to her when they took the Slovakians. She got away. And she told us a lot of atrocities, what Slovakians were doing to them when they took them out of -- like a no man's land. There were no houses. They killed them. They tortured them. They raped them. And all these things she was telling us, so we know first-hand those things really happened. But we didn't know about them before we were already incarcerated, ourselves. Everything, they were able to keep.

There was no television, and not too many people had radios, and then they took away the radios. And in the newspapers, they never mentioned anything. Today, I wonder how they were able to bottle all these atrocities that they started in the late 1930's till '44, because that's when we were convinced that all of that was true, what my father heard in the basement.

So, in Auschwitz, the daily happenings were: They got us up. It was still dark, around 5:00 o'clock. We had to stay for hours, five in a row. If somebody didn't feel good and sat down, then our blockeltesta tried to ignore it, but she often would say, "Girls, you've got to stand on your feet, because if you'll be discovered, you'll get 25 lashes!"

So, we had to wait for either a German officer to come and count us after she counted us, or Mengele -- no, Graisa would come in. This beautiful, blonde woman on a horse, elegant, in officer's clothes. And she had a whip

with nails on the end. And I tasted it once, but I got away.

One time -- I'm jumping from one thing into the other. One time, blockspaira -- they called it blockspaira when they called all the Blocks, all the barracks. Then, nobody was to be found outside of the barracks. We all had to be in our own places. And that's when we knew that they are coming to select, but we never knew which barrack they will select. They were selecting women for whatever they needed them for; so, for hours we would have to be inside.

I was caught when a blockspaira came. I was caught near the kitchen. I always went around the kitchen, see if I can steal some food, or get some food, or work for some food so I could bring to my family. And I always shared it.

So, somethimes, the breads would arrive, and I wanted to be there by the so-called magazine where they emptied the trucks, to help. Because, if I was there to help, then I was able to get broken pieces of bread. I put it here (gesturing off camera). I had tied my dress here, and then everything went in here, you know, in the back so I'd be able to bring. They let us collect pieces from the ground; pieces that broke, they would let us have, because we were working for it.

So, I was there sometimes at 4:00 o'clock in the morning to -- before the count -- so that I can organize -- it was called "organize" some food.

So, during the day after they came and counted us, then they released us, except for when blockspaira came,

then she just hollered, "Blockspaira! Blockspaira!" Everybody had to run for it, to get inside.

This one time, I was a little too far and I couldn't make it to my Block, and here she was, coming on the horse with her whip! She saw me and she got off the horse, and she was coming after me! And she just hit me a little bit. She didn't get me really hard. And I ran into a barrack, which was not my barrack. In here, out there! In, out! In and out! And she lost me! I was so lucky! That's the only time that I tasted her whip.

She was very cruel, we found out later, really, but she was really gorgeous. She always wore her hair like this (gesturing) to the back. Blonde hair, long hair, and in a long bun, like this.

So, our daily work was doing nothing. Just hanging around when there was no blockspaira. And all day long, we had nothing -- we got nothing to eat. In the morning, they gave us that little coffee, which, apparently, that's what they said it was made of burned bread crumbs. That's the coffee; not real coffee, but we didn't care. It was something warm. We were able to drink.

As to toiletry: There was a long, long building, and they had -- they had these holes. Then, they had another building in the middle of the 35 -- around the 31 Blocks; not 35, 31. They had -- we called it bath, but it wasn't bath -- where we were able to wash ourselves. They had faucents about this distance (gesturing) faucents, faucents, faucets, faucets. So, when we were released, we were able to go and do whatever we want: wash ourselves,

wash our clothes, carry it on our back so the sun would dry it.

Then, in the afternoon, we would be tired. We would lie down somewhere, trying to find shade, which was almost impossible because the sun was terribly strong.

And there was nothing to find to eat, you know. Like, here and there, we were looking for grass, you know. If we find a little grass and chew on it, it would be great. So, this was life.

One time, a band came, and the girls were wearing their beautiful clothes. They had nice hair. And we thought that they are Germans, but we found out these were the talented people that they chose.

They used to come in at times and ask for professions. "What is your profession?" "No, we are looking for --" this and that. Most of us didn't have that profession. But sometimes, like they came and they looked -- when they selected among us -- they looked for beautiful eyes. Now, what the heck did they want beautiful eyes for? We were afraid that they may use us -- because the word went around from the blockeltestas that they were using girls from amongst us to take them to the front for the soldiers. But we were not designated for that. They cut our hair. We looked -- we didn't look so that they would take us to the front for the soldiers. But later, we found out that the Belgian girls were taken. They brought in the Belgians and the French girls -- that they were taking those to the -- to the front line for the German soldiers, to be used.

So, these girls had their hair. They built a

podium for them, and beautiful music came into our -- into Block C. We thought this is some good omen. They are trying to please us, to give us entertainment. We couldn't imagine.

But we couldn't go close to these girls to ask them anything. And we just felt so inferior to them, you know. Look at each other! We looked like some animals! We looked something awful when we were losing weight rapidly.

In the first few days, the food was terrible, because they used bromo, they called it. A tranquilizer to keep us calm; and not only that, but it stopped us from menstruating. I never did menstruate. My sister had it the day we arrived, and we didn't have it until -- I'll tell you when.

So, this kept us -- they sedated us. They put it in the food, but it had a bad odor. However, after two, three, four days -- after a week, you don't care what it smells like. You are so hungry, you can eat a stone! So, this was the sole food that -- the coffee in the morning with nothing. At lunchtime, they brought in big cans, we called them, but they were big dishes. They rolled them in or carried them in. And there was food. It was grass and cabbage, and here and there, a sliver of meat from canned food. And we were very happy if we found a potato now and then in our food. And they, perhaps, threw in some maragarine in it.

Theymust have kept us on a very low calorie diet. We just -- we lived. We just didn't die, you know, but we were hungry all the time.

At night, they gave us that one loaf of bread for

the five of us. A little square piece of margarine, and, sometimes, we would get a little square piece of cheese. Sometimes, a little marmalade. And that was the sole food that we would get there, daily.

The cheese -- my sisters and I, we couldn't eat it most of the time, because it was crawling. It has those white worms in it. And the French women, they loved it! They bought it from us. They gave us bread for it, or thread, or whatever they could salvage. So, whenever we got the kind of cheese that was going away from us, we sold it to the French women. They said, "It's protein, and it's wonderful!" And it keeps them alive. And they didn't feel the way we felt about it. Even though we were hungry, we just couldn't eat that kind of cheese. So, that was the daily food and the daily doing nothing.

And then, there were some people -- young people who were weak, mentally or physically. They got to the point where they got to be psychotic or something. We had to deal with them. We had to talk to them and hold them down, not to run to the wires, because the wires had the electricity. If you just touched it with one finger, it would kill you right away.

And then, after a few weeks, we heard, yeah, they found here a girl that hung on to the wires, and they found her dead. And here and there, some of them would commit suicide.

We were selected -- we had to be very careful that my niece wouldn't fall into selection. So, when the blockspairas came, and we somehow found out which barrack is going to be selected from -- we try to escape into

another one. We would shelter each other, you know, because we were afraid that my niece will be eliminated.

What we had to do was undress completely naked, and have our clothes on an arm and walk through in front of these doctors, who selected us.

So, we were able to get away a few times, and a few times, we couldn't. So, we made a plan that my sister, my oldest sister and her daughter will go first, and we will manage it so that, before my sister's daughter -- before my niece comes -- one of us will make some kind of racket, you know.

So, we decided the best thing is if my sister goes -- no, no, no. Best thing is if Ethel goes, the one that lost the baby. Then -- then Irene goes, ny niece. Then I go, and I'll do some kind of a racket. I was the strong one. I was the one that was able to fight, you know, for them, because my oldest sister was always scared for losing her child, her daughter.

My other sister, who was two years older than I, Ethel, I felt very, very sorry for her that she lost her husband. We didn't know whether her husband is alive or dead. He was already two years in prison. We didn't know, but he just never wrote. He disappeared from forced labor. And there, she lost her beautiful baby. So, I felt that I am the one that is sort of unattached; whatever comes, let it come to me, and they will be able, through me, to somehow benefit.

So, we made the plan like this: My older sister goes first. I follow her daughter and I give her a push.

So, my niece put the clothes on her arm and she covered her leg. But, in order not to be exposed for too long, I gave her a shove every time. I pretended like I caught myself, you know, my one foot caught the other. "Oh! I'm sorry!" You know, and I gave her a shove, and there I was standing. I was in good shape. So, came then -- Ethel was the last one and we went through.

This happened 12 times. Out of the 12 times, we hid, maybe, four times. And the 13th time, my older sister and her daughter were shoved to one side. And then, as I shoved her and we continued, we just didn't even care what they were showing which way, and nobody cared that much. We just automatically went and followed them. And they took us. We had to stay again in a row of five. We lost the girl, because she remained back, the girl that was our fifth, so we got somebody else.

And they took us to the -- to the bath house and we had a bath. We got some clothes when we came out. And they took us to the railroad station that same day. And they put us -- not into cattle wagons, but a regular train. And we thought to ourself -- this was already in October -- we thought to ourself -- they are taking us to freedom, Look, we are treated like human beings! We got coats. We got -- the shoes, we didn't get. The shoes were always the same. Those who had no shoes, was too bad for them. They had to live without shoes.

So, they put us into these beautiful trains, and we were very happy and we started to sing. And, of course, all through the day, what did we do? We reminisced of the

past. We had no future, but we had a past.

And they didn't let us out, of course. The Germans were with us. And we arrived in Silesia. I don't remember exactly whether it was two days that it took, or a day and a night. I can't remember 45 years back. But, we arrived to Silesia. It's called Shilayzeenzay. And there they got us off the trains and they took us with some new Wermacht.

Now, we thought that is also a good omen. Our life will be better now. We're out of Auschwitz. We don't semll the flesh. We don't see the fire and the smoke coming from the crematorium chimneys. We, definitely, will have it better, so we were very happy about that.

So, they marched us to Pushkow. It's a close-by village. And there, in two silos, they ahd straw, nice, deep straw, and in the middle, they had a huge, round heater.

And winter was coming. It was cold already in October. And we -- they put us down. They gave us food. And the next morning at 5:00 o'clock or so, up, sailapel, out we go.

Q. HOW MANY?

A. Two thousand, five hundred of us. They brought 2,500 of us, and they divided us into two silos.

And next morning, they marked us out into the field, into a field. It must have been about 4 kilometers away, which is about 3 miles or so. And on the way, we were able to pick what the peasants left there -- Brussels sprouts, you know? The sticks? We just were running out of the line of five. We jumped out and we grabbed some of here, and the

others grabbed there, and we were able to chose something, eat something. And it was good food. Even though, a little bit, it was frozen, but it was still food, you know.

So, how long was that? Until we ate it all up.

So, we arrived to this -- outside of Pushkow, and there were group of men in civilian clothes. And they were the engineers who took over -- took us over to teach us what we are to do. So, we started. They gave us shovels and instruments to work with. We had to start digging. They called it puncio Graben. Four meters on top, and it went down like this (gesturing), and the half a meter in the bottom. We found out that these we have to build so that when the Allies or the Russians might come, then their tanks will fall in and they can't come out. So, it was a trap that they had us build.

So, we work there and every -- in the morning, we got our little coffee. And at noon, they brought us -- with a cattle wagon -- they brought us the food, but half of it was out already, because, as it was coming, it was always spilling, spilling; so that wasn't very much food. But they gave us a cupful of food, and then we worked.

And during our work, we always tried to get together with those we love and with those that we feel good. We made friends with women. One woman, for instance, was a very rich man's daughter from the same town that my sister was, and my sister knew their store. Her parents owned a big magazine with clothes, material for men's suits and men's clothing and women's suits. They were very wealthy people and she had a very beautiful childhood. Every year,

she was sent to Europe with the school, and -- I mean "in Europe," not to Europe -- in Europe to different countries to study. And she had all these beautiful experiences that we only read in books. And we became very good friends.

So, we were -- she was reminiscing and telling us about things she saw in Paris and things she saw in London, and things she saw -- to us, it was like she was in the moon, because we grew up in this little town. And how far did we go? Once in my lifetime, I went to Budapest and to my sister, 300 miles away.

So, it was pleasant to spend a day with someone you loved, with someone that could teach you and tell you things so that the times goes better; being hungry all the time and being cold and being hot, and whatever.

And then we also were exchanging recipes. That was the worst thing, because we felt even hungrier then, when we were exchanging recipes.

And then we talked about music and we talked about theatre, and we talked about whatever. We were trying to bide our times.

But winter came, the earth froze. We could not work with our shovels and picks any longer. They had to bombard the ground. They put powder and the ground was blown up. And then we had to shovel it out and throw it out.

Some of the kids became -- especially the young ones -- we had to start watching the young ones, because they were already so tired and so exhausted and so hungry. And they slowly lost their belief in the future, you know. They thought -- we kept always talking, "Yes, we have a

future!"

We kind of lectured each other. But, meanwhile, we kept -- the stronger ones kept an eye on the young and the old. Well, what was the old? My sister was one of the oldest, I mean, that age group, my older sister. Her name was Miriam.

Some of these young people or old people who lost the will to live, they would sit down and they would freeze! In no time, they would freeze! So, we had to watch them. Sometimes, if they sat down in sort of like where the thing turns and we didn't see them -- by the time we reached them, if you touched their finger, it broke off.

We lost, in that Pushkow place, from October -- I don't remember the date; we were not always up to dates -- but from October till the 21st of January 1945, we worked there.

I was very lucky that one of the -- an older man, to me -- I mean, to us, he was old. He must have been around 50, 55 years old. One of these engineers. He saw that I'm a good worker, you know. He saw that I have a good feeling for making it nice and straight, you know. And he noticed me that I'm a good worker, and my sister, Ethel.

So everyday, he saved a little of his food that he brought with him, and left a little in the bottom of his dish and gave us, once for my sister, once for me, once for someone else. So once -- let's say like two, three times a week, we had a little extra, real food, you know, not with the bromo in it.

And we did this, and -- yeah, my niece -- we were

slapping her out to work the first week. Then she couldn't walk, because we had to walk always a little farther. We finished this section, we had to start the next section. And she couldn't walk with this leg, so she kept saying that she is going to do something about it. She is going to talk to the German. The Wermacht was a man of about 50, 52, 53 years old, a big man.

He had a little house outside of our -- outside of the premises where we were locked in -- the two silos. And he chose one of the Lagerelsters. We had two Lagerelsters. One was Jewish; one was not Jewish, and she was about the only non-Jew we knew of. She was very cruel, because she was very bitter. Her husband and her two sons, she had. She came with them because she thought if she will come with them, being an Aryan, she will spare her family, but it didn't happen that way. They tore her away from her family. She never knew whether they are living or dead. And she was caught among the Jews, and she started hating us.

And when she gave us the lesson, like the first one in Lager C, she said -- she was a Slovakian. The Slovakians were not so very good. She spoke Hungarian with an accent, and she said with this -- with her accent, "You will all die! I will be the only one who will remain alive because I am not Jewish! And if you are going to be out of line, I am going to send you back to Auschwitz! You are going to burn like your mothers and your fathers and your children!"

And she threatened us and was cruel. She was terribly bitter, and she took it out on us.

Now, she was the main Lagereldersti.

In Auschwitz, they were blockeltesta. She was Lagerelster, and under her was a Czech woman and she had a niece with her. The niece was about 17 years old, a very beautiful girl. And she had it well, because she didn't send her out to the field to work. She had her as her stoopdeest, so she was in the Lager. It was called "Lager" where we were, where the silos were.

And we discovered later that she was keeping house for the old Wermacht, so she had all the good food. She spends nights there, she spends days there. And my niece said, "If she can do it, I can do it. I don't want to take her job away and I can't, because she has Eucha behind her, but I would like to arrange with him that he lets me stay on campus. That he let me stay, I will show him my leg."

And her Mother said, "No! No! Elaine, don't do it! They will send you to Auschwitz! God! Please, don't!"

And all three of us were after her, "Don't do it! Don't do it! Don't do it! They are going to send you to Auschwitz! We will slap you there and we will slap you back! And all the food I get from this guy, you are going to get it!" So she didn't say anything.

One morning, sailapel, and the German is there, the Wermacht. He was the head. She jumps in front of him from the road and she lifts up her pants and shows her knee and shows this foot, which is much thinner. And the broken German that she could speak, she told him that she would like a job in here. She could -- she could work in the kitchen. She could keep the place clean. She would clean.

she would sweep the premises, anything! "Just don't let me walk out, because I can't walk with this leg, but I will be the best worker!"

And so, when he saw that leg, he was stunned! He was stunned! "How did you get here?" You know, going through the selection of Mengele, going through the selection of Graisa (phonetic), going through all those selections. "How did you get here? You were supposed to be dead when you arrived!"

So, he was stunned, but, like I say, he was not a Nazi. He was a Wermacht, and he said to Eucha -- her name was Eucha, the non-Jewish Lagereltesta -- "You find a job for this girl, let her work on the premises." So she said, "Ja Vohl." He left.

She said, "Come out here!" She started beating her, slapping her right and left, and beat her up! And she said, "If one of you will ever attempt to do this to disgrace me by going straight to the Commandant, you are going to go back to Auschwitz, or I'll kill you right here! Don't ever, anyone of you, dare go in front of the German! I am the boss here! You come to me if you want something, but don't you dare, from now on, nobody! Come to me! You're here to do a job, and what you have to do, you do it! And don't you ever -- " And nobody dared, nobody.

So, my niece remained on campus. She was hanging around, hanging around the hitchen. Every night when we came home, under the straw, covered, there was a little food she stole from the kitchen, or she got -- she's a very sweet girl. She is living in a kibbutz in Israel. She has a

beautiful disposition. She's a very, very friendly, nice, sweet person. And she was only 17.

So, she was able to steal food and hide for us. and, beside that, she was the one that gave -- she was one of those -- there were 2,500 of us -- so, she was one of those who were dishing out the food.

Every night when we came home, we had to have the sailpel. After sailapel, we got the food. And she was always looking for mothers, to give a little more, not only her own mother -- she didn't give us more -- but for her mother, a little more potatoes. For someone else, who was a mother, gave her a little more potatoes. And she was collecting for us, the shell of the potato, the peel, the peel. She was collecting peel and she was hiding it, and she was giving it out after the dinner was over, when we were free to lie down or go warm ourselves, or we washed out something. We would dry it there by this drum heater. Then, she would give them a little potato peel. And she was trying to help wherever she could. She's a very good person, even now.

So, this was going like this till 21st of January, I think. At that moment, we didn't know the date, but we found out later. We lay down to sleep, yeah. And I might mention that we -- when we came to Pushkow, each one of us got a blanket. And that blanket, we covered ourselves at work, if we were cold or if it was raining or snowing. That was our shield.

And at home, I mean "at home?" -- in the silo, we covered ourselves with it. When we lay down to sleep that evening, all of a sudden, they come in and they say --

they turn on the lights -- "Everybody dress up! Pick up your belongings, and we're going to leave!"

But, meanwhile, I left out something. About six weeks previous to that, what happened was, after we arrived from work, they lined us up. They took blood samples from us. They took blood from us. We were trying to figure out what do they need it for? Then, some said, "Sure, they need it for their soldiers. They need our blood for the soldiers, for the wounded."

Then, they came back, and certain people were chosen, whose blood they had, and they put the name on it; although, we were nameless all through the time that we were captive, we were nameless. But when they took the blood, they took the names. My older sister fell into the group that they have typhus. All of these, their blood came back that they have typhus. So, my older sister was drawn away from us. And they brought some prefabricated -- two little houses, and they put them in there. My sister was put in there with four other girls. They had bunk beds there and they got straw. And my niece, being on campus, she stole some more straw and gave it in through the window, because they locked them up and only the window was being open to give them the food and to look in on them.

Q. DID ANY OF THESE PEOPLE APPEAR TO BE SICK, TO YOU? WERE THEY SICK AT THAT TIME?

A. No. No, we didn't see, but then, they became very weak because they didn't have a chance to walk. They didn't do any exercise. They were lying there, and with that little food -- but my sister was lucky, and some of those that were with her, because they shared. My niece was -- all day long --

she was going around finding food and giving it into through the window, when nobody saw, you know. So, my sister was sharing it with those kids.

However, lots of people were brought in, frozen. Then they had to make, like, a hospital. So, some of the girls that were getting to be weak, they took them from there to the hospital.

So, the 21st of January when they started the evacuation, they said, "Everybody out!"

Now, here we were worried about my sister. She's locked in! How are we going to get her out? So, what they did was -- there were about two left, my sister and two other girls. We kept an eye what they are doing, where they are taking them. So, they took them to the so-called hospital, where the frozen ones was.

They had nothing to treat them with. There were a few doctor women amongst us. What they did, they went to the kitchen and they got margarine paper -- paper from margarine, yeah, and they rolled it around their wounds, on their feet, on their fingers, on their hands, to try to keep it covered. And margarine, perhaps, helped somewhat. But they had absolutely nothing to treat them with.

So, when we saw all this that the Germans were running around, and the blockeltesta and the stoopkeest, everybody, they don't know what's going to happen.

"Everybody out of the barracks!" I mean, "out of the silos! Take everything that belongs to you and set yourself in line of five!"

We went and we stole my sister out of there, and

she was out in our row. And late in the night, it must have been close to midnight, they handed us out regular loaves of bread, what the Germans were eating, the same bread, they gave us. A loaf of bread, every one of us.

Apparently, they were not prepared for this, because it had to happen very suddenly. They lined us up. They gave us a bread, and they started marching us.

Q. ONE LOAF FOR EACH OF YOU?

A. No, a loaf for the five of us.

See, we always had to set ourself up fife in a rei, five in a row.

So, they started marching us.

Now, what happened was, they had to get rid of the ones in the hospital. So they couldn't -- they probably didn't have any orders to shoot them or kill them there, but they couldn't leave them behind.

We later found out that the Russians were coming. That's why they started -- they evacuated us, because they were running with us. They couldn't leave us behind. So, they had no orders, apparently, to kill these that were about 40, I would say, about 40 of them.

Q. IN THE HOSPITAL?

A. In this hospital.

They came with wheelbarrows, and they set these poor, sick women in their wheelbarrows. Some of them had blankets, some of them didn't have blankets. They were delirious. Most of them were delirious, you know, they didn't know what was happening to them.

So, here the marching! And the snow was so shiny!

It didn't snow, I don't know for how long, and it was frozen. It was so slippery! It was so terribly slippery! We had to hold on at all times so we don't fall.

Then, the German comes and pulls me out. He was looking for strong ones, for big ones. He pulled me out and he took me back. I didn't even know what was happening on the end of the line. He took me back to the end of the line, and there, I had to push a wheelbarrow with a person in it. So, I did it. I pushed! I pushed, but I couldn't! It was so slippery!

I still have my own shoes from Satu Mare, from home. I happen to have a pair of very strong support shoes, and they lasted me because I was very careful. It Auschwitz, I went barefooted. During the day, it was always hot. I went barefoot. I had the shoes on my shoulders.

We went to bed on the bunks, the shoes were under -- were the pillows. Everybody was watching over their shoes, those that had them, because those that didn't have them stole them! So, the shoes were prime concern -- of prime concern.

So, here I was slipping! I pushed that wheelbarrow! If it was a sled, it would be easy, but on that frozen snow to push it, it was terribly hard! I couldn't do it! I felt that I am going to die with her.

So, what did I do? I save my life! I leave her behind! She is not going to live! She was delirious. She didn't know.

I tried to talk to her. She didn't answer. She was just -- so, I figured, I still have something in me, some life left. She's not going to live, anyway. I left

her behind.

So, what did the German do? He pulled out another one and set her to push the wheelbarrow. All of us did the same thing. We abandoned those wheelbarrows as fast as we could and run back and find my line.

Then, daylight came. We were still pushing. I wasn't caught, just that one time. Then they stopped us when there was no town hearby. It was like in the wilderness, you know, on a highway. They stopped us. They, too, needed rest, so they say down and they ordered some of the women to go and push the wheelbarrows. And they pushed them away out of sight. We were resting till then, it was wonderful! We were working ourself. We were exercising to keep ourself going, because it was very cold. In January in Silesia, it's very cold.

They, they were out of sight. We heard the guns. They shot them all! They shot them all dead, and they brought back the girls that were pushing the wheelbarrows. They had no shame! They shot them, they brought back the girls! Fine, now we have no problem! Problem is all solved!

So, we were walking, night came. The first night came on the road. There were Wermacht, as I say. They were trying to find us silos to put us up for the night.

To speak in general now, sometimes they found silos, sometimes they didn't find silos. When they didn't find silos for us to go to sleep -- they wanted to rest and go to sleep. They had wagon coming where they had their civilian clothes, their little tent. They just put down a tent and they took care of themselves. They went to sleep.

Then only one or two remained to watch us.

So, we would spend the night like that, you know. They said, "Lie down, nobody lift their heads!" And spend the night like that. But, I must say, that did not happen very often. They always tried to get us into a village or by a village or -- not town. They avoided towns.

We were walking away, no matter -- it didn't matter how far they had to go out, but they tried not to take us through towns. Villages, yes.

The people were stunned when they saw us. Some of us had no shoes. They tore pieces of their blanket and wrapped it around their feet. And we must have been some sight, I tell you! They were stunned, looking at us.

And we didn't know whether we were walking in Germany or are we in Poland? We didn't know. Only by the signs, writings. We tried to figure out what language the signs are. So, we went through Slovakia, we thought, but that was not important, anyway, where we are being taken.

If we were brought into a silo, the first thing was that we started running around, looking what we can find. Sometimes, we found salt. We broke pieces of salt and put in our pockets, because that was important staple, too. Sometimes, we found wheat. Sometimes, we found other minerals or cereals. And whatever we found, we started eating. We were hungry. We started eating and putting in our pocket, in our shirts, wherever we could have some to take with us for next day.

Wheat was the best commodity. We would sell it to each other, because some of them didn't get into this;

some got into different silos. They had to divide us, you know, 2,500. No, by then, maybe about three, four hundred were missing. The ones that died, that ones that froze, the ones they shot; maybe about two, three hundred were missing already. So, we were selling it to each other,

"I have salt -- "

Q. YOU HAD NO MONEY?

A. No.

Q. SO, YOU BARTERED, RIGHT? YOU EXCHANGED?

A. Yeah, we exchanged. We called it, we were "buying."

I was buying, like I said, sometimes thread or a needle or bread. Bread, nobody wanted to give up. The bread, that was very necessary. But this was giving life, also, you know, eating these cereals -- the wheat and barley, or whatever we could lay our hands on.

Then, this is how we lived. Sometimes, they were able to bring us cooked potatoes from the peasants. At night, they would come with a wagon and they would give out one or two potatoes. They tried to keep us alive, but the problem was that they had orders to shoot those that cannot come.

When, after a few weeks, everybody got so tired, and some of us were worn out. And my niece -- my niece, we were slapping. She couldn't walk with that leg. So, Ethel, my older sister, her mother, myself, this girl -- this rich girl from Kolasava -- another girl from Kolasava -- we organized ourself a group of six, seven, eight of us that were helping those who can't walk. Not just my niece, but others, too; those that remained behind. We always

watched that, if we can help some of those, because after a few weeks, they were no longer ashamed to shoot them in front of us.

So, after a few weeks, let's say this was around February -- end of February, March -- my niece couldn't walk. We were exhausted, carrying her. We tried to carry her like this, you know, two of us making a seat (indicating). We tried to carry her like this, which ever way. It was very hard, we couldn't. The few times, we remained back; and when we were in the back, we were always praying for a rest period because if they are tired, they sit down, and then we all sit down. We all have a chance to rest.

So, if we sat down, then we had a chance to go to the front of the line again because, on the back, they would say, "Du bist dien if she disen." (phonetic) "You'll be the next one who I will shoot if you don't keep going."

So, we heard it a few times and we were terribly scared! We were very scared we were going to lose my niece.

It went like this for weeks, then, finally, we decided -- the four of us -- we must do something when we are somewhere where there are a lot of trees or something, to make them escape; rather than seeing them being shot here, they will take a chance.

So, we tried. One time, we were being brought to a village. And the street where we were marching was narrow and we were very close to open gates. So, we had made a plan that one of us watches the German over here, one of us watches the German over there. And they had a hard time

keeping track of us, because we all were running out of line. We knew that in a populated area, they are not going to shoot, so we were always running out of line.

What did I do? One time -- now that I remember -- before I forget to mention -- we came in a village like this, and I said -- we talked it over with my sister, that "If you don't find me, I'll be coming. I'm going to run out and see if I can steal something."

So, I ran out at the very close gate. I ran right into the house. The house was very close. The door was open. I ran in, and there was nobody! It was like a kitchen -- the living room was like a kitchen. There was a big, round bread on the table! A big knife next to it! Some eggs, I saw. And I came in, and nobody is there! And I said, "Bitte brot! Bitte! Bitte!" Nobody answers. And I am so stupid! I was afraid to spend time taking the knife and cut a piece of the bread or half of it, or, better yet, I had this blanket. Why don't I take the whole bread? I ran out with nothing! I didn't even grab the eggs! I ran out with nothing!

I was so afraid! Such fear took hold of me that I ran out! And when I told my sisters that there was the bread, there were the eggs, and I didn't touch anything, I ran out with nothing! They said, "You're stupid! Why didn't you take the whole bread? Just take and put it under the blanket?" I'm sorry, even now, that I was so dumb.

So, talking -- I didn't do it again, But what we did, when we were able to run out of line like this, was

where the villages began, or even in the villages, they had mounds of snow, soil. It depended how the weather was by March, April. The sun was melting away and we saw these mounds. We didn't know what they are, but we figured out it must be the potatoes or sugar beets, so we started running for these mounds and started scratching, and they started rolling down. And we started putting them in here (indicating). So, we were able to, sometimes grab the -- the potatoes were deeper -- the sugar beets were not very deep -- so we were able, often, to run for these mounds and come back with sugar beets, which were food, wonderful food!

One time, we ran into -- to where these mounds were, and then I saw that some girls are down in a basement. So I ran down, and it was full of cabbage! I don't know how the door was open, or they opened. I don't know, because when I came down there were at least 20 girls down there, alraedy.

So, I ran down about ten steps, and I started grabbing food and putting it in here (indicating). I brought a cabbage, I brought about four beets, and I started running up the stairs; and there the German stands, like this, with his gun! (Stands up.) He was beating -- everybody was coming out -- he was beating right and left, turned away.

When I was coming up, it so happened that he had his legs parted. I ran through his legs, back into the line with the cabbage and with all the food. That was some -- that was some lucky day!

So, we had -- for a few days -- we had something to eat, other than if they gave us. Very often, we didn't get

anything. They put us into silos and we spent the night with whatever.

One time -- I will tell you about how we made my sister and her daughter escape. But first, I have to tell you -- yeah -- they escaped. First, because when this happened, this episode -- I must tell you episodes as they come to my mind, without dates, without timing.

One time, this next episode that I will tell you -- I have to tell you, after we made my sister and her daughter escape because, at that time, only my sister Ethel was with me. Miriam and Irene, we made them escape like this: We talked it over that whenever there is a gate open near the line, one watches here the German, the other there, and the two of them -- "Now, go! No kissing, no goodby, jump!" So they did.

We left them. They put us up very close in a silo. Ethel and I, we start crying. "God knows what will happen to them! But then, isn't it still better than seeing Irene being shot!"

We saw some shot from our home town. One girl, for instance, we knew her very well. She shouted when they were taking her to be shot. She shouted, "Remember my art sight! (phonetic). Remember my art sight when you go home!"

She was a very, very strong girl, but she kind of collapsed with her sister, together. She had a little sister, and they both, never came back. I mean, I saw this one being shot.

So, next morning, we get out. We are very sad. And we hzve to organize somebody in the line instead of my sister -- my sister and her daughter.

What was happening, whenever we lost people, we had to re-organize the line of five, you know. That, we have to do for ourself.

So, we re-organized ourself. We take two other women -- three other women. We had one -- two other women. And we cry a little. We walk. We cry a little more, and, then, all of a sudden, who do we see in the line? My sister and her daughter are looking for us! When we saw them, we started hugging them, kissing them! "Oh! Thank God, you are here! Thank God, you're here! We were so worried! God knows what will happen with you now that you are away from us!"

So, we were so happy that they are back with us!

What happened -- well, they went into a -- what do they call the place where the cows live?

Q. BARN?

A. Yeah.

So, they went in there and they wanted to hide. And they were found right there. And then they were found by the owner of the house and the place where they were. And he brought them into the house, and he gave them -- he and his wife -- they gave them food and they let them wash up. And they talked to them as -- little German; more or less, Yiddish, they spoke.

And he said that he's very sorry, but he cannot let them stay. He cannot hide them because it's death for

those that hide the prisoners or Jews, you know.

So he said, "I have to take you to the Burgermeister." He took them to the Burgermeister --

Q. THE MAYOR?

A. The Mayor, yes, the Mayor of that village.

They sat there in a nice, warm office. They brought them food and they told them that they are very sorry, but they will have to give them to the next group that comes. There is nothing else they can do with them.

So, they stayed there that same -- that day, and that next night -- that same night, they spent the night in this office. They were locked in. At least, they enjoyed the hospitality, sort of a thing. And next morning when another group came by, they were given to this group. It was a small group. And the Wermacht, who was the head of the group, called them "mein kinder."

Q. MY CHILDREN?

A. My children.

He made them walk -- like, we were walking, approximately 15, 20 kilometers -- 18 kilometers a day. He made his "kinder" walk 5, 6 to 8 kolometers a day; slowly resting them, and he just took it easy. His orders were -- they found out later -- to bring them to Bergen-Belsen, to the camp.

And there was not a night that he wouldn't wrack his brain or do whatever he could to bring potatoes, to bring food.

He would go into the villages and make the population cook potatoes for them, give them food. And every night, they had food and until he brought them in; I don't know

how many weeks later.

They arrived to Bergen-Belsen. He gave them over, but he was very gentle with them. He never beat up anybody. And they were willingly spending the time with -- there was no sense escaping, because they can only get to a worse place, like ours, for instance, where they were shooting.

So, we didn't know. The second time, we never knew about my sister and her daughter till after the war. But that, I will tell you later.

Now, I will tell you the episode when we were just the two of us, Ethel and I. We were still being evacuated, and the same thing -- the same daily life was going on. If we came -- we were walking by a brook, then we would -- they let us stop, because, like I said, they stopped for eating, or they stopped -- we didn't eat, they were eating. They were eating. We sometimes saw they were eating bacon. They were cutting bacon and eating with -- with sour pickles and bread. But they never shared. Yes, because they didn't open their tent when they just sat down to eat.

And they were watching us; meanwhile, the gun was there. So, if there was a little brook, what we did, we took advantage of it and we took off our clothes and washed it. We were full by then -- we were full of lice. Our clothes was full of lice and the eggs of the lice, you know. So, that was our doing, we tried to get the lice away from our clothes. And to dry it, sometimes we were able to dry our clothes on our back or our head, if the sun was shining. Sometimes, we put it back on, wet as it was, or half wet.

Some of us were really fighting the lice. Some

of them didn't, you know. Some of them, you could see the lice going on the dark clothes. They were just spatseering (spattering ?).

Q. WHEN YOU WALKED LIKE THAT, AND YOU HAD TO RELIEVE YOURSELF AND STOP --

A. Yeah. That, we had to run ahead. If we had to relieve ourselves, we had to run ahead, run out, do it, and then be back before you get to the end. They saw what we were doing. It was a necessity.

Q. DID YOU KNOW WHICH DIRECTION YOU WALKED IN, BY THE SUN?

A. No. No, we had no idea where we were. We had no idea which way we are going. We didn't even think of looking at the sun. Are we going south, north or west or east? No, we had no idea. It wasn't anything of importance to us. The importance was to stay alive, to have somebody -- something in your body, to put some food into it, and to try to get rid of the lice. And, I mean, the daily necessity was important, not which way they are taking us.

We were not free to go where we want to go, anyway.

I wanted to tell you about this incident, but, first, I'll tell you another one.

(End of Tape 1.)

HELEN FARKAS

December 20, 1990

Interviewers: J. Weltech, E. Fielden, W. Stern, L. Monarch

Producer/Director: John Grant

1990 HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

San Francisco, California

Tape 2 of 2

Transcriber: Mary Ann Rout

Certified Shorthand Reporter 6125

My name is Evelyn Fielden. I'm an interviewer with the Oral Hisotory Project for the Northern California Holocaust Center. Today is December 20, 1990, and I'm here in San Francisco with Helen Farkas. With me are Otto Monarch and Judy Welch, as well as Warren Stern as co-interviewers.

Q. GOOD MORNING, HELEN.

A. Good morning.

Q. WE WILL CONTINUE YOUR STORY WHERE YOU LEFT OFF THE LAST TIME. AND I REMEMBER YOU WERE ON THE DEATH MARCH FROM AUSCHWITZ, AND I WOULD LIKE YOU TO TELL ME A LITTLE BIT MORE.

A. I will try to collect my memories as close as I can. I remember that I mentioned the death march from Auschwitz and many episodes. I will start today with the episode of when we were put up for the night on our death march in a silo. And, during the night, my sister and I -- by then, we were just the two of us, Ethel and myself. Miriam and Irene escaped. We didn't know whether they are going to live or die, but it was better than seeing them shot, because they could not walk.

My sister, Miriam, was in typhus in Pushcow. She was in that tyhpus -- little house, and she was very worn out. And my -- and her daughter, as I had told you before -- had problems with her leg, and we carried her as long as we could, with the help of friends. But we have to make the decision and make them escape. The second time, they succeeded in escaping.

We were just the two of us, Ethel and I. During the night, we woke in up the silo. I can't tell you the dates. It was happening -- the death march was happening from January 21st till -- I'll tell you when.

Q. WHAT YEAR?

A. Pardon me?

Q. IN WHAT YEAR?

A. 1945. Because the war ended in 1945 May.

So, we smelt good smell of regular bread, not the kind they give us. And we heard shush, shushing, and action around. And my sister said, "There is something going on here!"

And as she felt with her hands in the dark, she got hold of bread -- of a loaf of bread. It was a half a loaf, the bread, but regular, big loaves. So, we wat down and started eating the bread. The bread came in through a window.

The girls smelled the bread. They got on top of each others' shoulder and broke the window, and, somehow, got hold of the bread that was actually the Nazis' bread for next day.

My sister and I started to eat. And we could have saved a portion of it.

I said to my sister, "Let's not eat it all up, let's save some for tomorrow morning."

She said, "No, let's just eat it up. There might be trouble. We don't know what's going to happen. Let's just eat it up."

She was right. Next morning when they oepened up the silo to let us out, they said, "Everybody put your belongings" -- which wasn't much -- "in front of your feet."

Everybody had to shake out everything. And those that were found with bread were set aside, and they marched them off with a group of women who were not -- who had no

bread. They marched them off. And we heard the shots. They shot them! We knew it then, that all of those were punished for it, because they told us so, later; a day or two later, one woman came and started telling the others -- the word came to us through the gravevines, you know, the grapevine was from one end to the other. She told us that they shot all of them into the grave. They had to dig the graves. They shot them all, but this woman jumped, and after the Nazis left -- she had some soil on her -- and she escaped. But, somehow, she must have been caught, because she was brought back to us. So, this was one -- one lucky day that we escaped by my sister not listening to me, saving.

I'm thinking of, you know, I told you about the mounds where they were shooting at us and I lost one of my girlfriends, Yoki. Her fiance lives in New York, now. He got married. She was a very beautiful, young girl. She got shot while we were running through the mounds for potatoes or beets, whatever we could get our hands on.

I'm thinking of episodes during the -- yeah -- I didn't tell you about Dresden. You know, whenever we were marching -- whenever in Auschwitz or on the way, we were always searching for written words. I speak four languages. I read and write three: Rumanian, Hungarian, some English -- I get away with it -- Yiddish, I cannot read or write, but I can speak. And so, whenever we found something written, we passed it on, if we knew how to read it or someone else knew how to read it.

We didn't know what's happening in the world. We were -- the hunger and the cold and the terrible physical

strain that we were under was not enough . It was very important to know what's happening.

So, in Auschwitz, for instance, whenever we found a little piece of wood or something, we always searched whether there was written something on it. And, often, we got word, somebody was looking for somebody.

Then, we came to Dresden. As I told you before, they tried not to take us through towns. They were trying to take us through highways and forests and just not through towns, but whenever they couldn't do it that way, they had to.

So, one day, we marched in. It was spring already. And the sidewalks were laid out in this downtown area where we must have had to march through -- was laid out with potatoes -- cooked potatoes, raw potatoes, apples, whatever you can think of. And when we saw the food, we ran for it.

The windows were all drawn. You couldn't see anybody in the streets. You couldn't see anybody peeking through the windows.

We ran for the food, and we trampled half of it because everybody wanted to have some. And the Nazis were so confused. They started shooting up in the air! They didn't dare shoot at us! See, if it happened, if something like this happened, like when we ran to the mounds to get some food, they would shoot amoung us, above us. So, they started shooting above us and started making us run out of the city.

This is my recollection of the only place -- the first time and the only place where people were kind to us. They must have known -- the people of Dresden must have know that we are coming, because they had to have that time, and

they had to be organized for it that nobody showed their faces. They were probably in danger. So, this is one of the good memories.

Talking about feelings: At all times being hungry and suffering. Our thoughts were always to our loved ones. We were always thinking, "Who's alive? How do they live?"

It was inconceivable that people lived in normal houses and they are covered with blankets, and they are warm in their homes and they have food.

You get -- unless you were in this situation -- you just cannot imagine the feelings in the nights. But it's interesting how human nature and how the body is; although, you're losing weight and you're losting flesh, and the bones remain, only.

But you go to sleep and -- if you're able, and when you're able to fall asleep, you don't feel the hunger. When you wake up in the morning, you're not even hungry! It's an amazing thing. I never even discussed it with anybody before. I just thought about it now that i'm going to talk to you about it. I thought about it. How was it I never even mentioned it to my doctor? How is the human body functioning that you're so very hungry, you wake up in the morning, you're not hungry?

You have the terrible dreams, you know, the nightmares which still persist. I very, very often have the nightmares, and I'm always hiding a child. I'm always hiding a child. I don't know whether it's because I have a daughter and I have a little granddaughter, whether that has something to do with my feelings. But I always wake up just when I'm being

killed! Just when I'm being shot, I wake up. And I think that someday I might even die that way. It might just be something inside a human being that you dream these things, perhaps when you're not very well or something, or old. Because I always wake up when I'm being shot or when I'm dying. And always, it's the same, the same dream. Always, seeing the happenings.

I'm trying to remember things. Yeah, you know, somebody asked me how can you remember after 45 years? How can I forget? Sometimes, I try to forget these things, but there is no day -- there is no day that I wouldn't remember something about the holocaust. For so many years, I bottled it. My husband wouldn't let me talk about it. He always felt if I talk about it, I got emotional and it's not good for me, but the thoughts were always there.

Now, I remember something I want to tell you about. I told you about the liberation. I think I told you when we were in the school and the MP -- American military -- marched into Shushitza, and my sister looked out the window and she saw -- she saw a beautifully dressed American officer. She saw the Star of David on his hat. And she started -- she said, "Come here! Come here!" Because we were hiding then with the Hungarian Nazis. We pretended that we are Nazis -- Nazi Hungarians, too. We came from Breslau.

I told you about the Hungarian peasant couple that we met on the way when we went out of that little tool shed. They were the first people that we actually met, and we were amazed to hear them speak Hungarian. We knew that we were in Germany, we thought. We weren't sure where we were. And

they told us about the school where the Hungarians are. And then, this old woman and young daughter, who bathed us and who held us for two days until our clothes were de-liced, and she took us over to the school -- I mean, across the border, Because we had no papers, we had to go through the night. She took us over the border. I mentioned, I think, this whole episode, but I forgot to tell you that, after we were liberated, my sister and I came back. We don't know their names. We were just so dumb, we didn't even think of asking their names. They didn't know our names. We brought whatever we could get from the Bourgermeister, who put us up in his home. We asked him to give us gifts. He gave us china. He gave us crystals that the Germans have left in his home, because the Germans took over his home when they came into Shushitza, and we brought for this -- these two women --

Q. YOU ARE NOW IN SHUSITZA?

A. Now I was in Shushitza. We were in Shushitza.

And she saw this officer with the Star of David on his hat, and she said, "Come here!" So the Hungarians who stayed in the same room in the school wouldn't hear, because we were supposed to be Nazi Hungarians, not Jewish girls. And we saw the hat on his head.

We ran down and we went there, and we said -- we started singing in Yiddish that we are Jews, we are Jews! and he was amazed and asked us what we are doing here? We told him all about the schools, the Nazis here. But, meanwhile, the Czechs already locked the school while we were running out, the Czechs locked the school. They had already on their shoulders, guns. And this officer came in, yeah.

Then he said, "I'm the Chaplain, but I cannot stay here, but I'll take care of you, quick."

So, we went back to the school, and he took us into the office and told them right away to put us up -- to take us out of the school because we're Jewish and we're not Nazis, and we cannot stay with them.

I think I told you all about how the German women came to us that we should bring them in butter and milk and this and that?

Q. NO, I'D LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THAT.

A. Did I tell you about that?

Q. NO, YOU DID NOT.

A. Okay. So, you know, it took a day or two before they were able to -- this Czech who became the Bourgermeister again. He was the Bourgermeister in Shushitzinashuma before the Nazis came and occupied. And they took his home and everything. His wife was Jewish and she was in Theresienstadt. I told you about that.

And he took a few days till he took us to his home, and then, again, he took us to his home. And these women were all begging us -- they will give us this, they will give us that -- to go to town. They will give us money to buy. And we said no. One single time, we went and brought some milk for some children, and that's all. We didn't want to do it anymore.

So, when he took us out of there, then we stayed in his place until he brought his wife, and his wife wanted to adopt us. I mean, she said, "Stay with us, you'll stay here, you'll get married. There's no use for you to go home. There's probably nobody alive," and so on. We said no, my

My sister was married. And we told her that was the first time we told anybody that she was married and she had a little boy who perished in Auschwitz. And we have to go home to find out who's alive. And we have a home. That's how we said goodbye to them.

And I also told you, I think, about the staph infection that I had, yeah? So, we had to stay with them for about six weeks. They wouldn't let us go until I was completely healed.

In Shushitza one day, this bourgermeister came and he said, "Come with me." He took us to a prison, and there in a room was a young man, about 25 years old, very good looking, and SS military. And he was so beaten up. He was black and blue. And he was just sitting there in the corner, and scared.

He told us that we can do anything we want. We can beat him up. We can spit at him. We can abuse him, whatever we want.

And we just looked at him and looked at each other. We turned around, and we said, "No." We just went out.

They tried -- the Czechs were very bitter -- they tried to punish and catch the Nazis and put them in prison. But that was the only time we saw, after the war.

I think I told you about the girl that marched with the Commandant when we're on the death march, that she had the baby from him after the war.

Q. (UNINTELLIGIBLE.)

A. Well, let's see.

Q. CAN I COME BACK A LITTLE BIT TO DRESDEN, BEFORE YOU GO ON?

CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO US HOW THE FOOD WAS LAID OUT? YOU FIGURE THAT THE POPULATION WERE AWARE THAT YOU WERE COMING?

A. In Dresden?

Q. DRESDEN, YES.

A. They must have seen other groups coming before us, too. But that is for certain, this was planned, because when we marched that downtown area, on the sidewalk -- the food, the closed windows, and not a person to be seen there in that area where the food was laid out. That was a planned thing. It had to be.

Q. WHERE DID YOU ULTIMATELY GO IN DRESDEN, WHERE DID THEY TAKE YOU TO?

A. We just marched through there, Dresden.

Q. YOU DIDN'T HAVE -- THE NIGHT WASN'T COMING ON, OR ANYTHING, SO YOU HAD TO BE DOWN SOMEWHERE?

A. Not there. We just had to pass through it. They always tried to take us out of town. Out of town, so not into towns.

I told you about the Russian girl who was running out of line and she ran uphill, and then the Nazi caught her and brought her back and shot her in front of us, because she wanted to escape.

See, in Bruno, they attached to us, 500 Russian and Polish women. They had their long hair and they had their own clothes. And they were attqached to us, but they didn't mix with us, because we didn't even look half as good as they did. And we didn't know their language. Most of us were Hungarians and Rumanians and some Belgians, some French, but the Slavic language, there weren't too many.

So, this woman, we saw, all of a sudden, she ran our

and like she's gone crazy, so they brought her back.

I think I told you about the six beautiful, young women with -- also from -- that were brought from Bruno, who wanted to escape in a forest? They pretended they are just going to eliminate their needs.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT THAT.

A. They went -- you know, whenever we stop, when the Germans had to eat or rest, then they stopped us and we all had to sit down. Some of us had to go out, you know, to the side. The Germans were watching us. And this happened just on a highway where there was very thick forest. And these girls -- they had long hair, they had coats, they were dressed in their own clothes, shoes. They marched -- I mean, they went slowly, slowly, farther and farther and farther away. And the Germans noticed, because they were sitting with their guns and they were watching us.

And the girls started to run, and they ran after them. They brought them back. They made them take off their shoes, take off their coats. And standing up, as they were, they shot them. And when they collapsed, they shot them again. And then the Nazis said that this is what happens to those who escape. So, that was a very sad episode.

Q. YOU DID NOT KNOW WHERE THEY CAME FROM?

A. Well, you know, the Germans marched into Russia. The Germans were in Poland. So, they did the same thing all over. They might have been Jews. They might have been not Jews. They were Communists, so they were against Nazism. They took prisoners as civilians, too, you know, and took them, too.

As a matter of fact, those girls didn't have it too bad, because they were working in a factory and they lived in a compound like the school that -- in Shushitza. And, like, after we came from Satu Mare to come to America, we stayed in Austria, also in a school. See, they occupied schools or -- what do they call it, where military lives?

Q. BARRACKS?

A. Yes.

Q. (UNINTELLIGIBLE.)

A. So, when they brought us in, we actually spent only one night in this place. But I don't even know or don't remember what kind of a factory they worked in, but they had it not too bad. They had their daily rations.

I understood they way they were talking, some of them. There were some Slovakian girls that could talk to them and approach them at times when we were sitting, you know, on the death march. They would say that they were working, some in this kind of factories, some in that kind of factory. And they marched them every night over there. And they had bunks, and they had their own belongings. And, poor girls, when we march, then we stole everything, you know, scissors, knives. We didn't have those kinds of things.

My sister and I didn't get to get anything, only a girdle.

Q. A BELT OR GIRDLE?

A. A whole girdle.

Q. A CORSET?

A. A corset, yeah. It warmed her body. It was a small person. My sister, Ethel, was smaller than I was. So, that's all we found as they were rummaging and stealing everything from them.

But it didn't much matter, because the next morning they were marching with us, and they probably couldn't have taken everything with them.

You know, you become like an animal; although, I can't say that we would harm each other. We were always -- the good will to help each other was always there. But you, somehow, you get to be different than you are in real life, you know, because everybody's fending for themselves. Everybody wants to survive. But I cannot remember one incidence that somebody would have harmed the other, or would have stolen the bread from those who saved it.

Yeah. Sometimes it happened that we were sleeping outside, and there are all kinds of people. No matter how small that little piece of bread. Some of us would say, "Oh, I must have a bite of bread in the morning. I've got to save this two bites of bread for tomorrow morning, because if I am able to put two bites of bread into my stomach, then I can start the say." And they would save it, and then they would sleep. They would fall asleep forever.

Often, when we were not able -- when they were not able to put us into silos and we slept outside under the sky, it was either raining or -- the Nazis had their tent, but we didn't have. And, very often, we got up in the morning and we found dead ones next to us; of course, then, whoever was closer, took the little bundle, whatever she had.

But to take or steal from each other, that, very seldom did I hear about it. It was a camaraderie.

And we always tried to help each other when somebody couldn't march and they were on the end of the lines,

somebody would run forward to the stronger ones, who were in the front. "Come one, we need your help back there!" You know, because in the back, they were shot if they couldn't follow.

So, but still, you know, you're not the same. You're not the same, because the malnourishment, too. And, another thing I recall. We could tell ahead, a day or two, who's going to die. We saw in their eyes. There was a glassy look to the eyes of those who were already so exhausted that they were not going to make it any longer. We could tell just looking into their eyes. Then, we always tried to help. We couldn't help them, giving them food, but we always talked to them, "Just hold up, pretty soon -- hold on, pretty soon we're going to stop somewhere. We'll have a good rest. Maybe we'll find something in the silos."

I told you that, in the silos, first thing was looking around for wheat or some kind of cereals that we can find to eat. And we tried to encourage the weak ones, always. "Hold on, hold on. We'll help you. You'll make the day."

Then, once you arrive somewhere, you're able to sit down, to lie down. Then, you feel like you're living again. You're going to make it. Tomorrow morning, you get up with new strength.

What did you want to ask me. Evelyn?

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE PEOPLE WHO DIED?

A. Nothing.

Q. JUST NOTHING?

A. We just marched off. They left them there, around the end.

They did bury those that died of frost in Shu --

no, Pushkow, where we stayed, where we were working with pensograbben. If somebody died, then they took them and buried them in the forest, very near the place.

Q. WHO IS "THEY," PEOPLE OF YOUR GROUP, OR SOMEBODY ELSE BURIED THEM?

A. The people from our group. Yeah, the Wermacht. There, we were already with Wermacht. Then they gave us back for the death march, they gave us back to the Nazis. But in Pushkow, we were with Wermacht.

This Commandant -- I told you about where my niece jumped out and -- yeah, she stayed. From then on, she didn't have to march out, but she got a good beating from Uja, from the Lagereldester.

I think I told you that, in the beginning, when we started marching out every morning to the working site, how wonderful it was to see on the -- although there was already cold, frost -- snow started a little later. But we ran for the Brussels sprouts. They grew Brussels sprouts in that area. And they had these sticks, and here and there, not only did we eat those sticks that they collected Brussels sprouts from. That was the only time that I saw how a Brussels sprout grows, because, in my country, we never had Brussels sprouts. I never saw them before. So, we saw something green over there. So, we ran and grabbed it from the ground, and we ate the stick, chewed on it, because, you know, it was food. It was something. And here and there, we found a little Brussels sprout on it, too. But that ended very soon. We ate it up very soon.

There was nothing to supplement the food they gave

us, and it was very little.

Q. DID YOU GET WATER? DID YOU HAVE WATER?

A. Water, yes, and snow. We lived -- there were days when we were marching, if they couldn't get hold of food for us -- the Nazis -- then, just snow. We just ate snow as we were marching, grab some snow. And that's what kept us alive from day to day. We marched 18, 15 kilometers, approximately, each day.

So, I told you about the girls from Bruno.

(Looking at paper.)

When I was speaking to youngsters, high school kids in Burlingame and Sunnyvale, and my area where I live. My daughter went to Mills High School. And it's funny how very often the young people would ask me, "Do you hate the Germans?" And I had to think about it for a while, but still I said, "No, I don't hate the Germans. I don't hate the nation. I don't hate."

Even though I went through all this terrible ordeal, I don't hate anybody. I would hate the persons who did this to us, but I still couldn't beat them up. I couldn't do anything.

I would just say, "The authorities are for punishing. It's not for us to do. If God has given us this punishment, we don't have the right to do it."

So, they were taken that you don't hate the Germans. No, I don't hate anybody. Was interesting question from the young people in the high schools.

Q. COULD YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT LIBERATION, ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AFTER LIBERATION? CAN YOU HEAR ME? CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LIBERATION AND TELL US WHAT

HAPPENED TO YOU AFTER YOU WERE LIBERATED AND HOW YOU LIVED AT HOME? AND THEN, HOW YOU CAME TO AMERICA?

A. Yes, I would love to tell you that. That's happy; happier things to talk about.

Okay. I'll pick up from Shushitza where the bourgermeister and his wife wanted us to stay, and we said, "We can't stay, we want to go home. We have to go home. We want to see who's alive from our family. Now, we know that -- the atrocities, and we know the killings, and we must know." So, we started going.

I think I told you about the trains. When we started out from Shushitza, you know, you couldn't go wherever you wanted, because the tracks were bombed. And from the war, some place the tracks were torn, so you had to go a long way until you found trains going again with track, because there were tracks.

So, sometimes, we had to sit for days in train stations till we were able to get on something that took us north, you know, to Rumania, because this was now Rumanian again. My home town became Rumanian.

I think I told you that, in 1918, that was before I was born. I was born in 1920. In '18, the Rumanians got Transylvania after the First World War; 1940, Hitler gave it back to Hungary, so we became Hungarians, and that's where we are deported. By the time we were liberated, Stalin gave it back to the Rumanians. So, we had to come back to Rumania. It's Rumania, now.

We finally got our passports to go back, so we went -- I don't remember the places, but we always attached ourselves

to groups with children where there were families, you know, where were was a mother and children. We attached ourselves to them, and this is how we were able to live, because we had no money, no food, no clothes, no jewelry, you know, to buy food; so, we would help always with the children, then we were able to eat with them. Because it took two, three days, sometimes, to continue. And we walked a lot with others.

You know, they found out now we have to go so far and there will be a station with a train. So, we came to a place and you couldn't get into -- the trains were going and when they stopped, even you couldn't get in. One time, there was a train which had Polish/Slovakian. They spoke the Slovak language, which we didn't understand. And we asked them to please, let us come in and go that way. We told them we want to go that way. "No! No! No!" But one of them said, "Okay, come!" But then, no sooner -- they were so crowded, they did put us out. They said, "Out! Out! Because we go someplace else. We are not going the same direction." So, we had to get out.

Then we stayed again, and this, uh -- how do they call these, the flat train wagons?

Q. FLAT CARS?

A. They were flat. The Russians were taking back cars and jeeps and things that they were -- they called it Zobra. Zobra is stealing. They were stealing it from the occupied areas.

And there was a soldier, a Russian solder, and we approached him to please let us just sit there, to come on and sit there. And we tried to explain to them. There were two of them -- to explain to them that we are Jewish and we are coming back. We figure he'll be sympathetic to us. And

the train was standing there for a while, and they said, "Okay, come on up."

So, we sat down. And he knew a little German. We knew a little German, a little Yiddish. And we tried to explain when we have seen -- Auschwitz and everything what we have seen, and what we have gone through. And all day long, he was, "Oh, oh," he was so sorry. He went and brought beautiful, black bread and bacom and pickles, and we were eating with him. And this was the officer.

And then, night came and he said, "You go into this jeep. I locked the door, nobody can go in." And, "You go to sleep." We understood, you know, hand and feet.

And during the might -- so, my sister, we were very happy. It was warm there and the train is going, wonderful! So, in the middle of the night, we didn't even realize that the jeep, it was covered. From the top, somebody falls in. And the guy was going for my sister. It was the officer, who, all day, he felt so sorry for us. He probably thought that he's doing a good -- good service, because my sister said that she was married and she lost her child. She doesn't know if her husband is alive or not. And my sister -- we became desparate, and, in Hungarian, we said, "This guy is here for you-know-what!" And my sister said, "Ich haf syphilis! Ich haf syphilis! Ich bin krown!" And then, the guy went out the way he crawled in, same way, he crawled up. In the morning, nothing was mentioned. He didn't -- he pretended that it wasn't him.

Q. LET ME JUST TRANSLATE WHAT YOUR SISTER SAID, "I AM SICK! I AM SICK! I HAVE SYPHILIS!"

A. Yeah, she said she has syphilis. Well, it scared him off.

And this was another episode, yeah, how we were coming home.

Then, this officer told us -- I think we spent two nights in that jeep. And this officer told us that we'll have to get off here, because they are taking a different route, and it's not on the map. I mean, it's a different route on the map where we have to go.

So, again, we waited a few days, and then we met some people from our home town. We got together with them. There was a man who is still living in Satu Mare. We brought him out to America about five, six years ago, and he spent two months here with us. We took him all over, to Los Angeles and everything. So, he kind of took care of us. We're the girls, and he's the man. And he brought us home to Satu Mare. From train to train, he was running around, and he always found out. He knew some Russian. And his name is Aily. And he brought us home to Satu Mare.

We arrived on a Sunday to Satu Mare. And my fiance, at the time -- before the war, I was engaged to my husband. And he was center forward in the Jewish team, Barkoba, and he was playing a game. He had a game that Sunday. And his best friend, Alex Gruenfeldt, he came out everyday to the train to see if his sister -- he knew his mother is, probably, dead. He didn't have a father, but his sisters, his two sisters, Elsa and Shari, they went with their mother to Auschwitz, so he knew mother is probably not alive. But he was waiting, every train that came through Satu Mare, he was waiting for his sisters.

And it so happened that my sister and I, we knew

about his sisters. Elsa, I think I explained to you, the oldest sister whose head grew. She had some ailment. And when we were on the death march, her head was so big. I saw her hide behind a bush, and then Shari told me there was "nothing I can do. I have to let her, because the way she looks, they are going to shoot her." She couldn't go any more.

And then Shari was the one -- I think I told you about that, too -- that we told her, "Don't go on the wagon." Because, whenever we were in a city or something, they wouldn't shoot them on the end of the line. But Shari said, "I can't go. Now I have a chance to go on the wagon, because they weren't shooting." We were near a town or around a town. And we said, "Shari, don't go on the wagon, don't go!" She said, "I give up, I can't! Elsa is no longer with me. I give up!"

So, what happened was they did not shoot them. They took them to that place -- I think I told you about that episode, too, where we were brought into a Lager -- into a camp where there was nothing to eat. And they had boards on the floor, and we slept on the boards. With the bones, it was terrible. We had to turn; if one turned, all had to turn.

And there, I found some girls from Satu Mare, and they told me that Shari died, too.

So, when we came home, Alex didn't know about his sisters. When we came home, he was at the station, and he saw us. He was very happy, because he and my future husband, at the time, were best friends from childhood, and he was so happy.

Right away, he took a horse and carriage, and we ran to straight -- not home, but to the field. No, no; he took us home, to his home. And my husband, my future husband, at the

time -- they had an apartment together. And they had a maid who kept house for them. They were liberated in 1944 September. I'll tell you about that.

So, anyway, Alex brought us to their apartment. And Marisha was the maid. She, right away, gave us food, and we took a bath. And Alex ran to the field and started shouting, "Ernie! Ernie!" That time, my husband's name was Ernie. He changed it here in American to Joe. "Ernie! Ernie! Your fiancee is home, and Ethel, her sister! I just took them to our place!"

And he just dropped the ball and everything, and he went and he ran home. He took a carriage, also, and he ran home and he found us there.

And we stayed there for a few -- maybe a few weeks, maybe two weeks or so, I found my furniture there.

See, my parents bought me the furniture. I had everything to be married. But then they said, "Don't get married." My husband had to -- I mean, my fiance had to go to forced labor. And they said, "Don't get married. You're better off if you wait it out until the end of war," and so on.

So, one of my room -- furnitures -- very beautiful furniture I had. I give it to my girlfriend, a Gentile. And when my husband and his friend, in September 1944, the Russians came in, they were able to get away. The Russians wanted them, actually to take them to Russia. What they did was, they rounded up the young men and took them to

Russia.

And the two guys were on this truck to be taken to Russia, and they escaped from the truck, and they hid for a while. And they walked home for almost 100 kilometers, slowly, slowly. So, they got home in September, and there was chaos at the time. The Russians just occupied. Some Jewish people started coming home, like them who were in forced labor. And they were able to stay in our home town. They occupied this apartment, and they hired this woman. And they started to normalize their life -- lifestyle. It was, supposedly, freedom.

The Russians started to -- Communists started taking over, you know, and they started a life. And they were waiting to see who's going to come home.

So, early in the spring, let's say May; actually, it's not so early -- people started to come home, those who survived. My sister and I got home and -- around middle of July, because -- I told you because of my staph infection, they didn't let me go. We were liberated, actually, in Shushitza. The MP's, American MP's, marched in the 5th of May. So, the war ended in Shusitza the 5th of May. I understand, not everywhere was the war ending the same day.

So, we were liberated the 5th of May, but we couldn't go home until the middle of July. And then my fiance and I, we got married. My sister moved. She got back her mother-in-law and father-in-law's apartment. The home was on my name, because my parents built me that home. I sold it because it was nothing; through the war, everything was stolen, nothing was left. Even the windowws and the floors were picked

up. So, I sold the house, and we remained living in this apartment.

My husband and Alex Gruenfeldt, they were also partners in the first shoe store they opened in Satu Mare. So, because they owned the shoe store together, and the apartment -- and the furniture were my furniture -- they agreed on -- one chooses the store, one chooses the apartment.

So, my husband is a very mild -- not so mild-tempered, but easy to get along with, especially when it comes to business, so, he said, "Alex, you choose." He chose the store, and this way, we got the apartment. Because, don't forget, only in America can you take a newspaper in your hand and find thousands of apartments to rent! Only in America, not in Israel, not anywhere in the world!

People, even now, live in Satu Mare, for instance, after so many years after the war, still they live in cramped apartments, several families in one apartment. We went back and we were maazed that, still, they don't have enough housing.

So, an apartment was like your own home here, you know, to own a home. So, we had a very beautiful downtown apartment. And we started a very beautiful, good life. The business was good.

Yeah, my husband's brothers came home -- Morris, Sol; the two sisters, Rose and Lily. And, naturally, we were the only ones married, my husband and I. They all came in and lived with us. We had a big livingroom, and we provided sleeping quarters. They slept on the floor. And they stayed with us until they got married, for two years. The two girls got married the next year, and the two boys

got married the following year. So, they stayed with us. Like I said, it was very big thing to own an apartment, especially one like this.

So, we had a very beautiful life. My husband and his brother Morris opened a shoe store. That was my husband's trade. He learned that in Europe. You don't -- you're not able -- I mean, at that time -- I presume it's the same, now. You had to -- you couldn't just go and be a salesman. You had to learn the trade. So, he learned the trade, and he was a shoeman. So, they oepened, in the downtown area, a very beautiful shoe store, the two brothers, from what? You probably would ask me from what? What did you bring home? Nothing!

My brother-in-law, before the war, was a very good traveling salesman. He made a lot of money, and he was traveling with several things, but mostly with hat -- they call it in Hungarian "toms," unformed hats, you know? Just the shell, yeah. And then he was selling these to the hat makers. And he had velour and all kinds of very good material.

After the war, people were wearing wooden-soled shoes because there was nothing!

The Germans took away -- when the Germans occupied us, they were taking away everything from the occupied areas what they occupied. Then the Russians came and they emptied everything. There was almost nothing. It was always just what was produced that time or that year. They took away the cattle. They took away whatever they could.

So, my brother-in-law, before we were taken into the ghetto, he had some very good Gentile friends, and he

left some -- I don't know how much of this -- and my husband found out -- I mean his brother, my husband's -- found out that Morris left some of these toms with somebody. And he went there and it was a lady. And she willingly gave them to him, and he started selling these. And he made enough monty to start a shoe store -- to rent a place, to start a shoe store.

The shoe store started to go like crazy, because everybody needed shoes. And he was traveling all over, and he was ordering material -- I mean he was ordering. He was traveling all over the country to have shoes made, and bring them, and ship them. And they couldn't get enough shoes. So, the business was very good after the war.

And we all lived very well, like I say. We had everything we needed. And it would have been very nice to live there. The memories, though, were haunting us, you know. You were going this way, you were going that way. You remembered. You remembered the good times, because they didn't seem like good times to us. Now I say, you know, human nature is such that the bad, you forget easier than the good, so good things remain in your memory. You know, being married to the one you love. We went steady for seven years, plus the year that we were incarcerated. After eight years, we were finally able to be married.

We wanted children right away. We couldn't have children. We didn't have any children. We tried to find out the reason. In those days, they didn't know much about, you know, about conceiving, and we tried. I went to a salty bath for a month. You know, that will help. There was a

saying, "There's a red-haired waiter there," they said. And some women came back pregnant and had red-haired children. But this was just a saying.

So, some of us girls went, women who couldn't conceive. We tried. We went to doctors, nothing helped, so we were childless.

We lived there for five years. 1946, '47, '48, people started to disappear from our hometown, because Communism started to be stronger, and people that had no attachments, they started to go to Palestine. You know, this was in Palestine's time. "let's go to Palestine!" You know, the word was going around. "You can escape! This and this man knows the route how to go across the border." Because it started to be very strong, the Communism.

And they were rounding up people, and people were disappearing. They were arrested and disappeared. One man from -- for instance, I heard -- he happened to say that, "I would like to be the man who puts the horseshoes on the horse that would carry the funeral casket of Stalin." Somebody heard it, was told to the authorities. They came, they took him away. He never returned. They beat him till he was dead. You could not trust anybody.

The children in school were taught to tell what they hear at home. You know Show and Tell? So, it started to be a very jittery situation from year to year. So, lots of people, especially Jews who were not too much attached yet to home again, they went, they went, they went.

So, there came 1948. That was alerady three

years after the war ended. And my brother-in-law, Morris, was, you know, so-called "somebody" in town, "somebody." He was a very debonair, handsome, always very elegant. He also made a lot of money, and he was a big sport man. He was a goalie in Barkoba, and my husband was the center forward and his brother, Sol, was back -- one of the backs. There was a very big camaraderie. You know, it was such a good -- to be having such a good time.

Every Sunday, these boys were practicing, and these boys were having games after games. There was jubiliation and it was just a very nice life; therefore, we didn't even think of going away. But then, in 1948, some word came out through the grapevines to my brother-in-law, Morris, that he's on the black list. That black list was the most dangerous thing by then, and by 1948, so we started to plan our escape.

My sister, Ethel, was at the time pregnant. I think I told you that her husband was a Russian prisoner until 1948 August. They didn't let even the Jewish people, they didn't let go, the Russians. They kept them in prison after the war was over. My sister didn't know till 1948, till that summer, that her husband is alive. She was asked to marry and she just kept saying, "No, I have the feeling he's alive, and I'll wait."

So, my sister, by 1948, December, when we finally made our final plans to escape -- she was already pregnant with Annie. She knows my sister, my niece.(sotto voce). And she couldn't take the trip, because it was very hard. It was -- the escape was planned -- Morris, Lancie -- you met her --

maybe Evelyn didn't, but John did.

And they had Gabie, the little boy, who is now with Kaiser, a doctor. And he lives in Bay Area with his wife and three children. He was 15 months old, and he had to be carried.

This couple, who -- the man had a truck -- they also were connected with the guide. So, the guide said he'll take the three couples, but here were two children! They had a little boy, also, who was the same age. And I think I told you about how we escaped that night. Did I tell you about it?

Q. NO.

A. That we heard the dogs bark and we heard -- when we were escaping -- we heard, "Sti! Sti!" That means in Rumanian "Stop!" And we would have been glad to be caught, because the night before, they shot five young boys and we were afraid we'll be shot, also.

So, I already told you how we escaped and how we came home. And then when we heard that Morris is on the black list, we had to plan our escape. And we came from -- I told you, I think, that on the train, they discovered when they looked at me, that I had jaundice. Again, I had jaundice before we left Satu Mare. I was at that time -- they held a jaundice sick person in bed for two months. I stayed in two months and then I started walking all night, and I was really exhausted. But Lancie was even more exhausted. She threw her purse away. I think I told you that, too.

So, okay, we escaped. We came to Budapest. I told you about that. And we stayed in Budapest for a short.

time. And my brother-in-law, Morris, went around and found out how we can escape. He got hold -- he went to the Jewish temple and he got hold of the Hyas, I think. And they brought us over the border to Austria. We were brought to the Rothschild Center, which was a terrible place. People -- Polish people were living there, actually living there, like out of a suitcase for years. They were waiting to be taken to Palestine or to America, or to Australia, wherever they could get to.

So, we spent about two or three nights there, and we just had to get away from there. It was very, very terrible place. People were not sanitary enough, and it was just awful.

So, we went, I think privately, we went to Linz. Now Linz -- part of Linz was occupied by the Americans and part of Linz was occupied by the Russians, and the train would go through. So, whenever we went from -- from -- what did they call the place we were in? That was a military place, which was the DP Camp. They kept the displaced persons. That's where we lived.

Q. MILITARY, WHAT MILITARY?

A. It was Austrian. Austrian military have given up -- this was Austria. They have given up this certain building where they kept the DP -- it was called DP Camp, which meant --

Q. DISPLACED PERSON?

A. Yeah, displaced persons.

So, that's where we got a room. Lancie and Morris and us, and it was divided by cardboard so that it would be like two rooms. And we lived there from -- we got there

early in 1949, because we escaped on Morris' birthday, the 28th of December from Satu Mare and we came to Linz. This was outside of Linz, so whenever we wanted to go to Linz by train, we went. We always had to be very careful not to go one station farther, because if we would have gone into the Russian Zone, we would -- they would never see us. It happened. We heard often that it happened. Somebody fell asleep in the train or something, and they crossed the line to the Russian side, and they never saw them again.

It was the animosity was so great in 1949, '48, '49. In those days that you really had to stay awake. And our objective was to be under the Americans and not the Russians.

We stayed in this DP Camp till October 1st in 1949. October 1st, they sent us to -- they took us to Bremenhaven, and there we board the General Muir, a military ship. It was a small ship. I think, altogether, there was the crew and about 100 -- I can't remember -- about 300 people, or so.

And the ocean was terribly, terribly rough. Everybody was sick next day after we left England. We went by England from Bremenhaven, and after we left England, it was terribly rough. Everybody was sick, and everybody was on the floor.

And my little newphew was hungry. He would always say, "I'm hungry! I'm hungry!" And there was nobody to take him downstairs to the dining hall to feed him. Children were not sick, only the adults.

So, Lancie and I learnt a little English when we knew we were coming to America. We took some private lessons

from an Englishman. And I saw this woman, this American woman. She was dressed like a military woman, and she was eating and smoking and going around. And I asked her one day, with my broken English, whatever I could speak English -- I asked her, "How come you are not sick? Everybody is sick here, only the soldiers are not sick. How come you are not sick?"

She said -- I understood her the way she explained -- she said, "Tomorrow morning, you get up, crawl dwon to the diningroom, eat hardboiled eggs with lots and lots of salt and pepper on it. That will upset your stomach so you will not be able to move around." And she was right!

Next morning, I did that, and from then on, Gabie, everytime he said, "I'm hungry!" -- was in Hungarian "I'm hungry!" I took him down and we ate. And I was the only one in the family who was able to move around.

So, we got to New York. In New York, Lancie's cousin's daughter, who lived there, a young woman -- she lives now here in California -- she was waiting for us.

She was expecting her baby. And she went to the Hyas and told them that she will be responsible.

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She wants to have us over night in New York, and she will send us next day -- she will bring us to the train station. They were waiting for us in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That's where the papers to come to America came from -- Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

So, we started -- I took the telephone book. I knew that I have cousins in New York. I knew their names, but I had no addresses, so I took the telephone book from Ingrid and I started to look, and asked her to call, in English. And she called. We found a cousin of theirs, the Farkases, and an aunt lived here. Their mother's sister lived in New York, and she came to see us that evening while we were in New York.

Next day, we went to -- she was an old lady. She lived with her daughter. I found one of my cousins -- I mean, Ingrid found them in the telephone book. She called a lot of Friedlanders. She found one Friedlander, that was my cousin, so we were able to pick up relatives. And we told them we will be in Milwaukee, and so on.

So, we came next day to Milwaukee. And we came into this big, red building, they brought us, on Knapp Street. It was a very old house, and it was a two-bedroom apartment. And when we came into the livingroom, or whatever it was -- kitchen, I don't remember -- there was a big bowl of fruit, fresh fruit -- bananas, oranges. God, that was something! That sight, I will never forget; because, you know, the kindness of strangers that they wait for you.

We didn't know much of these, because, you know, in Satu Mare, although there were Jewish organizations that had

to do, like -- what was the name -- Jewish organizations? I can't remember the letters that they went by. But we didn't have much to do, because we never needed help. You know, people that needed help, financial or otherwise, they knew these organizations. We didn't know much about the organizations through our life, you know?

Now, we learn to see a new way of life, a new perspective, how people help. It was different when we were together, you know, and the suffering, but not in a new world. They bring you to a new world. They wait for you with an apartment, with towels and bedding, and butter and milk in the refrigerator. And it was just such a phenomenon, such a good feeling to see this, so we were very grateful.

They found us jobs. Lancie was working, first with her cousin in a meatpacking factory, and she had Gabie go to a nursery. He was exactly two years old when we came to America. And I got a job in a -- some kind of a wooden factory. Then I got a job in a tannery, stinking job. It was very bad-smelling place. But we all worked. Joe got a job in a machine factory. Every night he came home, he was oil all over his body, through the pants, through everything. Every night he had to scrape, take a bath, scrape the oil, but we made good money.

We saved the money, because we didn't intend to stay in Milwaukee. Lancie had an aunt who lived here in San Francisco, and she kept saying -- she had a sister who lived in San Francisco. And we talked on the phone, and they said, "Don't buy anything, because you're not going to remain there. You're going to move to California as soon as you have

enough money so you can let go of the security of the Hyas."

You know, because Hyas meant security. If you are out of a job, which -- because we weren't -- from the first day, they never had to pay our rent or do anything, because we all four of us went to work. So we saved money, we opened an account in a bank. And we, somehow, just used money for what we needed necessarily. We didn't buy even a chair, nothing.

So, what we were doing was, we worked, we saved. We went for 50 cents to the movies to learn language, you know, we didn't have a television.

Security meant to belong to a hospital. That was the first thing when we arrived to Milwaukee. They put us into the hospital -- our names and everything, in case we need medical assistance there. We didn't have to go beg anybody, or spend money, we could go there. Of course, we were healthy, we didn't need to.

So, we stayed four seasons -- practically four seasons in Milwaukee. We didn't like it very much. Winters are terribly strong, the summers are terribly strong. And the summer -- by the time that summer came -- see, we got there around the 11th, 12th of October. The fall was beautiful.

And I worked in these two different places, and then Lancie and I worked in this Frank's Sausage Factory. And it was pleasant. It was very nice work, but it was very cold. So came the summer. Outside, it was terribly hot, and inside, we worked in a refrigerator. I mean, the room was the refrigerator. That's where we were weighing the cold cuts and things. This was our job. We were weighing four ounces of this, eight ounces of that, and then it went on to the

packing. We worked there until next fall, next September. The factory moved to Chicago, and that was a good reason for us to finally make our move.

We gave back everything, and some things that, you know, dishes -- we had to buy some. And so we gave back everything to the Hyas that they gave us -- the apartment -- so they can have it for the next family.

And we came to California. We arrived the 5th of September 1949? '50, 1950. And we, again, got an apartment, on Geary Boulevard. It was arranged by the Hakoba team here in San Francisco. At that time, it was in the C League, I think, and they were very much interested in bringing us there -- the two guys, the goal keeper and the center forward, my husband and Morris, so they paid our trip to come to California. This was arranged by Lancie's sister, her brother-in-law, and so on. So, we came to San Francisco. They waited for us.

Lancie and Morris and Gabie moved in with their sister on Mission Street, or next to Mission Street in a very beautiful furnished apartment, large. Joe and I got a studio apartment on Minna Street in San Francisco. And I started to work in Bennati's (sp) Drug Store before Christmas. I got a gift-wrapping job. And they were to let me go right after Christmas, they didn't need me any longer, but they liked me, and I got to know their daughter. And I was telling her -- in the broken English, the little English I knew -- I was telling her about where we come from, what we did. So, she tried to arrange for me to be kept there, but around March or so, they had to let me go. They didn't have

the job for me. So, what did I do? I kept looking around for a job.

And from the Geary Street, we moved into Minna Street. And my husband and Morris got a job on the Peninsula; that was Standard Shoe Mart. And being a shoe business, they became salesmen at Standard Shoe Mart in Millbrae. And I changed my job to Moore's Cafeteria.

I didn't know much English, so, what did I do? My very first job -- I mean, I was hired. I was desperate. I couldn't stay at home. I didn't want to stay at home. I wanted to work. At that time, they needed only busgirl to pick the dishes from the table. It's okay, I'll pick the dishes from the table. What's the difference? So, in a very short time, within a few weeks, I discovered that my boss was a Hungarian who was already, I think, born here, but his parents were Hungarian. And he discovered that I'm Hungarian. We started to talk with his broken -- Mr. Tote (sp) was his name, he was the general manager.

So, I told him, I said I would like to get out of picking dishes.

I said, "Can you put me -- ?"

"Can you count? Can you figure? Can you work with figures?"

I said, "Sure!"

So he tried me out as a cashier and checker. First, I was the checker. In those days they had, you know, the people went by the line and you had to give them a ticket for whatever they were buying and add the tax to it -- 3 percent tax at the time. And he found that I can do it very well, so I was

able to sit on a chair, because standing, you know it was not very easy. So then my job was really good. I worked there.

We moved out when we earned enough money, and the boys were making good money. We bought the first house in Millbrae, and a nice, little two-bedroom house. We needed only a small amount of down payment, so we bought -- Joe and I bought our first home in Millbrae on Bay View Avenue, 535 Bay View Avenue. We didn't have money for furniture, so I had my --

One of my brothers who lived in Belgium, came to Canada. I think I told you about my brother and sister-in-law who were underground during the War. They fled from Belgium to France, and they became partisans. And after the War, they moved to Canada. My brother sent to me -- I'm jumping from one thing into the other -- sent me $500.00, and the bank gave me another -- whatever -- Bank of America on Powell Street -- on our -- on my job, I got another 500, so with a thousand dollars, we bought mattresses and the bedroom set and the table and four chairs and a nice little radio. And life started good, again. And we started paying back the Hyas. Every month, we sent back the money they spent on us in Austria and bringing us to the United States. So, from the very, vry beginning, we are contributors, not only paying back what we owed them. We are so grateful, and we are grateful for what they are doing for others.

The boys worked at Standard Shoe Mart for approximately a year or so, and then the brother-in-law -- Lancie's brother, who had been here already several years, he was also working in a shoe store. And they decided that they will rent a place somewhere, and the three of them will get together, and whatever little money we have -- 6,000, 8,000 -- we put

it together, and they open a shoe store.

So, they found this location in Millbrae on El Camino, and they put together their money and they bought a little, inexpensive Chevrolet. And Alex, Lancie's brother-in-law, Alex Schmuck, and Joe, my husband, the two of them went with the car -- neither knew very well how to drive yet -- but they went all the way back East to bring merchandise --to buy merchandise for the store. They quit --all three of them quit their jobs and they oepened the shoe store in Millbrae.

It was good from the beginning, but we all three women worked. Lancie got a job. By then, we knew a little more English. She got a job at Bank of America. She was a teller. Helen Schmuck was working at City of Paris. They were making drapes in those days, and Helen, although she never really worked -- because they were very well-to-do in Seagat -- they lived in Seagat -- but she knew a lot about drapes since they owned a drape factory of some sort. So, she was working at City of Paris and I was working as a cashier reliever and checker in Moore's Cafeteria for quite a long time after our own store opened, because we didn't want to draw money from the store. So, we, the three women, kept our home going. We supported our husbands. They couldn't take out money from the store because they needed money to put merchandise.

I don't know if that was during the Korean War, but the business really started, took off very well.

Then in 1956 -- no, sooner that that. No, much sooner that that. They had a brother who escaped before us with his wife. They lived in New York. They came over here and we found a location. This was in 1957 -- '58, 1958.

I was pregnant then with my daughter in 1958. By the way, I did not conceive until 1958. We were married in 1945, and I did not conceive until 1958, and that's the only time I did. I only have one child, one daughter.

My brother-in-law, Alex, and Hannah, his wife, came. And we opened a shoe store in Sunnyvale, and my husband taught them. They were never in shoe business. My husband was going from Millbrae all the way, all the time, to Sunnyvale and taught them for a year. He was going everyday. And they made a very good business. We were partners there with Alex Schmuck, also, and Morris, Joe, and Alex and Hannah. They were conducting the business there.

Then in 1956 when the Hungarian Revolution was, Lancie's sister, Barbie, and her husband escaped with a daughter, Judy, and they worked -- I mean, he worked in our store in the stockroom. He didn't know a word of English. Barbie went to work, also, for Moore's Cafeteria, but they had opened somewhere else, and she worked somewhere here on the Peninsula. And then, finally, they rented a place in San Carlos, Family Shoe Mart. They named it Family Shoe Mart.

That one is Sunnyvale Shoe Mart, Peninsula Shoe Mart, and we opened a third shoe store. And Immanuel Iscowitz and Barbie, lancie's sister and brother-in-law, -- unfortunately, he passed away more than ten years ago. And so, we had interest in three shoe stores.

The shoe stores now belong to the Millbrae Shoe Store. A year ago now, Morris and Joe retired, sold that to a brother and to Sol and Lily's husband. They just now this month sold it, so it's no longer in the family. The

Millbrae -- the Peninsula Shoe Mart is no longer in the Farkas Family.

They retired from Sunnyvale. Hannah and Alex sold out. Alex Schmuck had died, also, about ten years, and Helen died, also, so the store belonged to Morris, Joe, Alex, the three brothers. And we took in Annie, my niece, and her husband, Peter, the Silbersteins.

Then, a few years ago, I don't remember exactly when, we also sold out the shoe store to Annie, my niece, and her husband. Now, it belongs to them.

The San Carlos Shoe Mart, we took in -- when Immanuel died -- we took in a nephew of mine -- my younger brother. We brought her with his family from Israel, when Avie was 14, and they went here to school and to college.

And then we took the boy and the 14 (sic) to work in the stock in Millbrae, so he kind of got himself into the shoe business all along until he was already -- when Immanuel died -- he was already something like -- somewhere in the 20's. So, we took him in as a partner there.

And my husband brought a friend from -- who, also is from Satu Mare. So, now, the Family Shoe Mart belongs -- we sold out to my brother, my younger brother. And Morris sold out to -- no, Morris sold out to my younger brother. We sold out to my nephew. He didn't have any money, but, slowly, he will pay it back, if we live long enough.

So, now, the store belongs to my younger brother and two of his sons and this friend of ours from Satu Mare, who we brought from Los Angeles. He is with us every Friday night. He's a bachelor. We adopted him. He calls me

Mommy. And he's a year older than I am.

And it's a laugh in the family that -- Earl Zolden is his name -- we call him Zollie -- that Zollie calls us Mommy and Daddy, and we refer to him as our son. And when I introduce him as my son, people look at me, and they don't say anything; so, apparently, I do look like his mother. He's a year older than I am. Especially, the way John set that camera with all the wrinkles show so beautiful here, right?

Q. YOU LOOK GREAT. YOU LOOK GREAT.

A. Thank you.

I think, in a nutshell, I bet there's a lot more I could say about the experiences, but I think I covered quite a bit.

It's good to be alive. Life runs so fast.

"My God," Zollie is saying -- we adopted Zollie -- every Friday night, I make Shabat and he's there. He's religious, we are not. And when I see him, I say, "Zollie, day before yesterday was Friday, after tomorrow is Friday, again!"

Today, he calls, he said, "How are you, Mama?"

I'm fine.

After tomorrow, it's Shabat again!"

Life goes so fast. Life is great! Unfortunate that the world isn't so beautiful as it could be. With the technology that we have today, we could enjoy life. I mean, the world would be beautiful to have a United Europe, a United States. If people would only learn to protect this planet and to be good to each other. If people would just love each other for what they are.

I don't care what color, what religion. I don't have to marry someone. I mean, this is very sad about today, especially today. It's very sad that the world, when it could be so beautiful, the world has turned sour, that we don't know what tomorrow will bring. We don't know the future of our children or our grandchildren.

Q. OUR CHILDREN, HELEN -- I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT, HOW DID YOU APPROACH YOUR DAUGHTER? HOW DID YOU TELL YOUR STORY TO YOUR DAUGHTER AND WHEN DID YOU START?

A. When I approached my daughter about what?

Q. ABOUT YOUR STORY, ABOUT YOUR LIFE, TELLING HER ABOUT YOUR LIFE?

A. Yes, okay. I have to tell you, when she was a teenager and she went to Mills High School in Millbrae, I was asked at the -- what did they call this program every spring? I was asked to speak to them about my experience. Social Science, yes. I happened to meet her Social Science teacher and I was talking to her. This was in the early '70's.

She graduated in '76. So, she asked me to speak to her Social Science class. And she got together juniors and seniors and two, three classes, and I spoke to them.

And only one time, my daughter was in the class to listen, and she said, first after the speech -- speech? no, after talk. After my talk was over, she came and she hugged me and she kissed me, and she said, "Mom, why didn't you talk about this? Why didn't you tell me all of this?"

I said, "Well, Dad never let me talk. It was not the right time. It was always not the right time, sort of." So, she hugged me, she kissed me. She said, "I'm so glad

you're alive! I wouldn't be here if you wouldn't have survived!"

So, she knew the story, but somehow or other, I don't know -- She graduated in '76. She went to USC, to Los Angeles. She was a terribly busy, busy child, always with studying. She had the potentials of studying well, she just didn't apply herself, but she always brought home good grades in high school. Her teachers always spoke well about her. But she was always terribly busy, artistic.

She is an artist. She is teaching art. She is working, and this is her -- she is going into her fourth year in teaching. She's now teaching in Woodside High School. It's a very hard profession.

She fell in love with a young man in USC. In those days, in '76-'77, we were rather naive. First of all, we were never around young people, you know, such young people, and having our child at the age of 38, we didn't have much experience. We were terribly occupied with living, you know, living, making a living in a new country -- new language, new customs, new everything.

So, I think I did not understand enough about how to raise children, to give them a sense of religion enough, because, I must tell you, I am at quarrel with God for what happened. I still cannot -- I don't say that I don't believe in God, I believe in something higher than ourselves. I believe in God, whatever we call it -- be good.

I don't believe -- although, I think our religion teaches that there is such a thing as reincarnation. I don't care what's over there. I care about what's here. And this

is what I taught her all the time: Be a good person. She always was a good person.

She fell in love with this young man from a excellent family, very, very highly educated family. They are Catholics. They are some very fine, very wonderful people. They accepted us for what we were and gave us lots of respect, and to this day, the young people, they -- the marriage wasn't the right thing for either one of them.

They got married. They lived -- they were married for six years. They knew each other for eight years, because when they fell in love, they wanted to get married at the age of 19 -- same age.

And his parents were such fine people. They invited us to their home in Los Angeles, in a very good section, very -- in a palace. And they said, "Let's talk about our children. They want to get married. What is your opinion?"

We told them that, although we would like our daughter to marry in our religion, we brought her up till the age of 16, it was mandatory for her to go to the Temple and to study and to learn Judaism and all that. But we see the sincerity of the boy, that he loved -- that they love each other. The only thing is they are both in college, how will he support her? We brought her up, we would like her to marry and he should be able to support her in the manner we brought her up. He can't even support himself; so let's not talk about religion, we cannot dictate that. It's up to them, if they really know what they are doing.

And they said, "We agree with you. We told Brandon" -- their name is Richardson -- Dr. Richardson, and his wife

is, also. She has degrees of doctorates, and he has more than one. He is Dean of USC and now, but he was diplomat in England for -- during the Ford and Reagan Administration. They are Republicans and very good friends of the Bushes, and he's Advisor to Bush, so they live in Washington and they live in Los Angeles.

So, he said -- Charles Richardson said, "I told Brandon, 'You're too young. Wait two more years, by then you're almost -- or have finished university.'" And I want him to go for his doctorate. I want him to have his education, like all of us. All of his family, they are all highly educated people.

So, he said, "I told Brandon if their love will endure for two years, then we'll let them get married, then we'll support their marriage."

And we said, "We agree to that."

And their love did endure two years, and they did come back that they want to get married. We made a very beautiful wedding. Again, we went to the Richardsons. They had us for a very fancy, beautiful dinner, and we talked over how to do the wedding.

Now, my husband sdaid, "I have one child, only, Charles, you have six sons. Brandon is the oldest. I have one daughter, I want to marry her -- I want to give her away with a Jewish wedding."

Brandon said, "Well, why can't we have a priest and a rabbi?"

My husband said -- I was embarassed -- he went like this on the table, "No!" Slap! I was so embarassed!

"No! I have one daughter and I want to marry her Jewish!"

Charles said -- his father -- "Brandon, Joe has one child, he has the right to give her away in his religion, the manner he feels right, and we should abide by that."

So he said, "Can i invite our priest?" Priest, I guess -- "Because, you know, he's like family all these years."

And Joe said, "No! I am not going to make a mockery of it. It will be a Jewish wedding, or you can go to Vegas!"

So we agreed that evening. We had the date set eight months prior to the date, June 15, after they come out of school, and in 1980.

So they went to school, my daughter graduated. Brandon kept saying, "I don't need to graduate. I can never -- "

You know, he started to be rebellious --

He said, "I can never achieve what my family wants me to, if I live a hundred years! He wants me to be like him, successful, successful! Success is all he wants! I can't, and I'm not going to do it! I'm not going to take classes for graduation! I don't need that piece of paper! I don't need to graduate!"

So, frictions, frictions, frictions, frictions! And my daughter was torn between us, even before the wedding, even before she asked us to give her the permission to marry Brandon. She knew how strongly we felt of our religion, not so much religious-wise, because I have to say, even today, I'm not that religious. We belong to a Temple. We are Number One supporters of the Temple, but I do, more or less,

the traditions, what I saw in my family home. I keep all the traditions, and I feel I'm a good person. I want to be a good person. That's how far it goes.

However, my husband and I had our hearts set very, very much that she should follow with us in our footsteps. But lots of friction came upon -- between us, because of Brandson; she was terribly in love. He's very handsome. I don't have the picture to show you. He's very tall, handsome, very nice-looking, but a rebellious young man. He now starts settling down. They are divorced four years now.

They were married for three years, and then they came -- they decided that they want to start a family. We were so happy, because Brandon said, "We won't have any children," at one time. We didn't say anything. So when they said they decided to start a family, we were very happy we will be grandparents. So when they were married four years, they had their little girl. Her name is Kylie.

But by then, they lived in, probably, about the fifth or sixth place. We gave them a condominium in Los Angeles, because they were in school in Los Angeles. Brandon went and sold it. We had nothing to say. They came and they bought the home here. What did they do? Nothing! They didn't go to school, they didn't do anything! They didn't even have a child yet! They were bumming around. Then he doesn't like the neighbors, he sells the house. He moves to Santa Cruz. What are they doing there? Nothing! They live off the money that they had, the difference between the condominium in LA -- that was on the Wilshire Corridor, very expensive. Here, they bought one for a lot less, so they live off that money.

And, constantly, we help them. We tried to make this marriage stay. Once she is already married, at least the marriage should stay, should last, but all kinds of frictions. And Brandon doesn't want to go to school anymore; and then, finally, he does go to school. And it was one thing after another. Then my daughter is pregnant, she is three months pregnant. They are moving to Hawaii, to Maui. They sell the house. They have all the money, they invest it, and they live off the interest. Doing nothing, beach bum! He's a beach bum and she's a mommy.

Q. THEY HAVE ONE CHILD, NOW?

A. One, yes; she's going to be seven years old in January.

So they lived in Maui. Then they decided they are going to Boulder, Colorado. In Boulder, Colorado, he needs $3,000.00 from us for tuition. Okay, tuition, we'll pay, anytime. Even his father would pay for tuition, but his father kept saying all along, "Don't give them the house, don't give them anything. Let them make their own living, their own life."

And the father and the mother, they were very supportive of us, always. And they always said, "Don't! Don't! You're ruining them" And we did, because we always gave, we never said "No!" Whatever, whenever; but for tuition, of course!

So Brandon starts going to school in Boulder, Colorado, in University of Boulder, Colorado. My daughter is a mommy, she goes to an art school -- place -- somewhere, where she is doing art. She was not quite two years old -- Kylie -- and she put her in, you know, day care for two, three

hours so she can go and do something for herself, finally; to do something, her art work, you know. Then she had a very nice -- I went to Boulder to see -- she had a one-woman show, an art show. And then my daughter calls in January. My daughter calls up one day. She said, "Mom, are you sitting or standing?"

I said, "Why?"

She said, "Sit down, I have something to tell you."

I said, "Wait, Dad is home, let him pick up the phone. If Dad is home, let him pick up the other phone."

"I kicked out brandon, and it wasn't the first time."

"But just two weeks ago, you said you wouldn't like to be married to anyone in the world, not even you wouldn't change with the Queen of England, or the Queen of -- " I don't know what. "Just two weeks ago, you said how happy you were when Daddy asked."

My husband is very sharp. He said, "I don't like something about something. I smell something foul."

So I said, "But just two weeks ago when we were there, you said how happy you were and how this and that."

She said, "Well, what can I tell you? I tell you now I want to divorce him, but don't ask me why."

So she didn't tell us on the phone.

And my husband and I said, "Look, Amber, give it a little time, think about it."

"I kicked him out. He's now staying with a friend who also goes to the same school."

"Think about it, give it some thought."

So she gave it some thought. She must have been -- poor thing -- very miserable for two weeks or so.

And my husband said, "Look, after you thought about it, maybe you can forgive him. Men do things sometimes, you know, that women will forgive. You have a child, after all. Think about it, maybe you forgive him."

You know, he was trying to give her the leeway of having right away, you know, turn a marriage over like that.

And he said, "If you feel for sure you're ready to divorce, then I will come -- Mommy and I will come. Mommy will stay with Kylie and we will go to a lawyer." And so on. And that's what happened.

She called a few weeks later. She divorced him, and she decided to continue her education. She had a bachelor of fine arts from USC. And we said, "The best thing, if you want to support yourself, is if you get your credentials for teaching."

So she was very torn between staying in Boulder; she liked Boulder, she had friends there. She made friends at the art center, and she was torn between to come here and be under our thumb, you know, or maybe we will influence her, one way or the other.

And I told her -- I went especially alone, without my husband, one time when she had a show, the one-woman show.

I told her, "Honey, I don't want to talk you into coming to Burlingame or live with us, or whatever. You must make that decision, but we would welcome you with open arms, and we will help you in every way that you should go and get your education further so that you can start making a living." They never made a living in six years of marriage, not she, she didn't work, he didn't work. He never earned a dollar.

So she came. He was not a bad person, Brandon. I don't want to tear him down to the ground. He was confused. Now that he doesn't have Joe Farkas behind him, he's making a nice living. He re-married a year and a half ago. He married a lovely girl. I think, in a big way, we were at fault, by not knowing and not wanting, we contributed to his delinquency.

So, finally, she decided, and she came here. And she applied at San Francisco State and she got her credentials. And as soon as -- she didn't even have her credentials in her hand -- she went for an interview in San Mateo High School. They hired her, but they needed her only to replace someone who was on a sabbatical for one semester. And then we thought, "This is the end of it all." Because in art, each school needs only one artist, art teacher.

And she was so lucky. She interviewed at this school where she is teaching now. She is finishing her third year. And she lives in Foster City. We bought a condominium, no, a townhouse, there, and it's not hers. This time, we're not giving houses; although, it wasn't her doing, she would never. And she is paying the mortgage.

And she is very responsible, raising the child alone. And she -- it's very hard profession, to teach high school, and to teach -- to deal with teenagers. Apparently, she is doing a good job, because, after two years of teaching, she got tenureship. She made her master's degree last June.

So we have worked out a wonderful relationship to go back to -- how to relate to each other. Having this great difference in age -- having a first and only child at the

age of 38, and, like I told you before, it's not easy to know how to raise children. We were very lucky, because she always was a good girl and she has my nature; although, she is more Farkas than Sofar. But still, I think she has the nature of always wanting to be good, and this is how I was. My parents had nine children, and my husband is the only one who can tell that he heard it so much from my father that I was the best child of -- from all the nine. I was one of those children who always tried and wanted to be the good child. And Annie can tell you that I was known as the good child.

So she's a good person. She now has a boyfriend, a year, and he's also not Jewish, but it no longer bothers us, he's a fine person. And if this is to last -- although, she keeps saying, "I don't want to get married. I don't have to re-marry." But we think maybe, when the right one will come along, she will. Kylie has a good relationship with this young man.

And now she seems happy. They have a very good relationship with Brandon; not only her, but us, too, and with the grandparents. Kylie spends every Christmas and sometimes Easter with Brandon's family, with Brandon. Brandon is going to pick her up now, Saturday, for the Christmas vacation. She was lighting Hannukah candles every night, Kylie. I brought a beautiful Menorah. So now she is going to be seven; she knows that how lucky she is.

"Grandma, I'm so lucky; other kids celbrate only either Christmas or Hannukah. I'm so lucky I celebrate both, because I'm Jewish and I'm Christian."

So, so far and so good. She is a very sweet and very

giving child, very happy child, and we enjoy her very much.

Like I say, our relationship with my daughter is completely restored. There is a lot of love between us, and I must say, lots -- lot of understanding, because we learned to trust her. You know, she said it when she was a teenager:

"Mom, why don't you trust me? You never seem to trust me."

Because I thought you always have to knock it into their heads, "You're not to do this, you're to do that!" You know? And sometimes, parents overdo it.

My girlfriend said, you know, "You're responsible for a lot of things, because you kept saying no."

Joe said, one time, he happened to drop a word, "I would kill her if she wouldn't find herself a Jewish boy," when she was going with Brandon. That was no crime to fall in love with a Gentile boy. If they would have made it, we would have loved to see them be happy, especially with a family like the Richardsons. They are such wonderful people.

We call each other, we talk to each other. They went on a cruise; Alice, his mother, sent a card. And we talk on the phone, women's talk, about our grandchild.

And things have worked out very well. They have a nice, friendly relationship, my daughter and her former husband and his little, young wife. He married a 19-year old when he was -- yeah, she is about ten, eleven years younger, I guess. And they were even in my house, and we like them. Kylie calls them from my home, and we always talk to each other. We went to Hawaii, we talked on the phone. So things have worked out fairly nice. It's unfortunate that the child

is sort of like without a father. It's the children who suffer with broken marriages.

Q. LET ME JUST ASK YOU, DID SHE FINALLY GET HER JEWISH WEDDING?

A. Oh, yes. Yes, we made a very beautiful Jewish wedding in the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco. The Richardsons had a wing for themselves, the whole family came. The boys, Brandon's brothers, were ushers. Brandon's father escorted me under the chupa -- to the chupa, I should say. And we got hold of a rabbi from Stanford, I forgot what his name was.

(BREAK IN FILM)

(CONTINUING)

(TAPE 2 OF 2)

Q. YOU CAN FINISH UP YOUR STORY.

A. So, the Richardsons came from all over the United States, the grandmothers came, both from Brandon's mother and father's side, to the wedding. And one of his uncle's, Brandon's uncle, who is a dean, also, in a university, somewhere, he was the partner of Annie; she was a bridesmaid. Annie was a bridesmaid and Brandon's uncle was her partner. And it was a very beautiful wedding.

Q. (UNINTELLIGIBLE).

A. So, like I say -- yeah, I wanted to just say this shortly. Somebody told us that Rabbi Morris from Brotherhood Way marries intermarriages. I made an appointment and we took them there. We were there for the services Friday night, and after the services, Brandon and Amber go into the office. It takes two minutes, my husband and I stay outside, and out they are.

"What happened? How come you are already out?"

Brandon said, "He's not going to marry us."

"Why, what do you mean, why not? He does perform intermarriages."

"Well, his first question was, 'Are you going to raise your children Jewish?' And I told him we're not going to have any children. Besides, it's an unfair question, what if we do? I'm not going to start my marriage with a lie."

He said, "Although we decided not to have any children, but maybe we will have. I'm not going to lie, and I'm not going to answer that question."

He was very straightforward. Again, I have to say, he's a nice person. He's a smart, very intelligent, smart

person. So, out they were.

I had to look for another rabbi. But the people who told me about Rabbi Morris -- their daughter got married -- two daughters got married through that Rabbi Morris, and they were asked the same question. One of them is expecting her second child. The other is expecting her third child. I don't want to name them. They live on Peninsula.

Brandon was too honest about it, and that's how Rabbi Morris -- he's that kind of a person.

Q. WELL, I GUESS HONESTY DOESN'T HURT, SOMETIMES.

A. Did you want to question me?

Q. I HAD ONE QUESTION. WHEN YOU FIRST CAME TO THE UNITED STATES, WHEN DID YOU TAKE OUT YOUR FIRST PAPERS FOR YOUR CITIZENSHIP?

A. As soon as we were five years in the country. As a matter of fact, for that year, we were in such a hurry to get it -- for that year that we spent in Milwaukee, we had the landlady and the landlord sign for us that we lived there. And they know about us and so on. And we became citizens in 1954, I think. Yeah, '54. That's five years after we got to the United States. And that was one of the happiest days of our lives.

And when we first went out of the country, my brother lived in Canada and we visited him there. I don't think we needed a passport. But in 1961, we went for the first time to Israel, because I had my sister, Miriam. I think I didn't tell you about my sister Miriam and Irene and how, after they were taken to Bergen-Belsen by -- when they were caught. I told you about that, didn't I? Well, anyway,

I'll make it short.

When we made them escape the second time -- the first time I told you that they were caught and sent back, and we hugged and kissed, we were so happy that we saw each other again. The second time when we made them escape, they were found and they were taken to the Bourgermeister, I guess that's what you call -- and they fed them. And they attached them to another group.

Now, this other group was taken care of by an old Wermacht man. He was a very good-hearted person and he called them "mein kinder." He brought them to Bergen-Belsen. Bergen-Belsen, they were liberated. Right after they were liberated, my sister was found with typhus. She was put into hospital. In the hospital, people were coming and going, you know, they broughtin sick people and they found out -- they heard from someone that my sister, Ethel, is alive, but I died.

So, a letter came home to town -- to my home, Sabras, I mean that home. I still owned it at the time, but it was abandoned, and address was that one which she knew. And we got this letter and we were able to answer them right away.

When she got better, they sent them home to Kolasvar where they live. From Kolasvar -- since she knew nothing about her husband -- she got married to a man who was married and had a wife and two children, they perished in the Holocaust. And he was a big Zionist, and very shortly, in 1947 or so, they went to Israel and they lived in Haifa. And in '61 was the first time that my husband and I were able to go and

visit Israel, and we went to Europe. We didn't go to our home town, yet, we went to Budapest. And during this Stalin time, it was very stern, you know, and very frightful, too. But with this American passport, the world was ours!

Now, what I talked about a few minutes ago, it's sad, it's no longer that wonderful feeling; probably, people can go to parts of the world where they are afraid to be Americans, and that is very sad.

Q. I HAVE ONE QUESTION. NOW, AFTER THE WAR, DID ALL OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS GO BACK TO SATU MARE, OR HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO FIND EACH OTHER?

A. My brother, Nathan, did not come back. He was a baker before the war, fighter of Zionist. And he got together with some boys from Satu Mare and they went to Italy to be able to go to Palestine, so I did not see my brother until '61 in Israel.

My niece, Irene, got married in Kolasvar, but she went to live in Nordshara, Timmashara, and that's where the trouble broke out. My niece got married to Mischara, and then she went to Israel when her first child, her son, was born. He was six months old, she and her husband went to Israel.

And, let's see, who else? Now, let me tell you, my very oldest, my first-born brother, he was 30-some odd years -- 34, I think. He, his wife, his two children, perished.

My sister, Ingemar (?) who was 27 with three beautiful children, her husband, her entire family from her husband's side, none came back, all perished.

I had a very handsome, tall, slim, young brother, Ondor. He was 19. We know how he perished. They were taking some 2,000 young boys, teenagers, those over 17, because Mengele didn't let anyone -- didn't leave anyone alive below 17. These young boys, they were in a group. They thought they were being taken to work. They got them out of the cattle car on a field of snow. They shot them with machine guns. One boy came back in 1948 from Russia. He was brought back with no toes on his two feet; his feet were frozen. He was one of those boys who were machine-gunned. He fainted when the machine gun was working and he pretended he's dead.

When he came to, he saw that they were going around with guns and shooting those who were moving. This whole field was red with blood, the ice -- I mean, the snow. And he pretended; and he was in and out of delerium or fainting. He was found by Russians, but he doesn't remember. He only remembers that he woke up in a train with Russian soldiers, and his two feet -- the ten toes of his both feet were already amputated. They already had performed it, and he didn't know anything about it.

They took him to Russia, and he was released in 1948. And he happened to live right next door to where my husband and I in the apartment lived, and he told us that my brother, Ondor, was amongst them.

So, who came back? Ethel and I came back to Satu Mare. My sister, Miriam, I told you about. Lenca lives in Kiriatata, Israel; she lived in Bucharest. She was married in Bucharest. She lived there all through her married life. When her husband died in the '70's, she was able to emigrate to Israel,

and she lives there, she re-married. And that's all. In Satu Mare, only Ethel and I lived; and then, of coruse, they came later to the United States, legally.

Unfortunately, my brother-in-law passed away before his time at the age of 64, Annie's father, yeah. And my sister died three years ago, in August.

Q. HELEN, THANK YOU FOR SHARING.

Q. (FROM ANOTHER UNIDENTIFIED INTERCIEWER): I WAS CURIOUS, HOW DID YOU CONVINCE THE HUNGARIAN NAZIS TO ALLOW YOU TO BE WITH THEM? HOW DID YOU DO THAT BEFORE THE END OF THE WAR WHERE YOU WERE WITH THE HUNGARIAN NAZIS?

A. I don't understand, speak a little louder.

Q. YOU WERE ALLOWED TO BE WITH THE HUNGARIAN NAZIS BEFORE THE END OF THE WAR, AND WHEN THE CZECHS FOUND YOU, YOU WERE WITH THEM. HOW DID YOU CONVICE THEM --

A. Well, I tell you, they knew better than we. We had great fear that we might be caught, Ethel and I, when we came to Shushitza to the school where the Hungarian Nazis stayed. You know, they fled with the Nazis. But they knew better already how the world stands, that it's only a matter of days. Ten days or so was the whole time that we spent in this school, because the war ended already.

They didn't give a damn, anymore. They were just doing their job in the office. They never took us, even, to the Head of the office.

We came in. If we were boys, maybe they would have looked in our pants, you know, because in Europe the Jewish boys were circumcised, but, being girls and speaking the language perfectly -- Hungarian is our Mother tongue.

Rumanian, I speak very well, for two reasons: First of all, I was -- we were forced to go to Rumanian school. Secondly, I have a sister-in-law, Hannah, Alex's wife, she's Rumanian, and we speak, and I have Rumanian friends.

So, our Mother tongue was Hungarian and there was no reason for them to doubt, what? They are going to go to Breslau and found out that we said we spent all this time with our parents? You know, we were just little, helpless girls.

So, we said to them -- I came into the office, my sister stayed outside. I came into the office and I said, "I just got here" -- with people in and out, you know -- "mostly walking from Breslau. We were working in this factory, and we would like to stay here for a while."

"Okay, what's your name?

Helen Shofar.

Sign then, Helen Shofar.

I have a sister outisde.

Oh, where is she?

She had to go to the toilet."

And I saw that it's so easy. They didn't care anymore. They were just functionaries, you know.

So, they put our names and they said, "Okay, you go up on the second floor, there is this classroom, empty," you know, "there's a corner free, so you occupy that corner."

This corner was with this big family with a lot of children. Here, there was a couple. Here, one or two boys. And we occupied this corner. Four corners in the room. And we were in.

And right away, we got the tickets to go down and

eat in the diningroom. And most of them hardly ate that food. They went out to the restaurants, and they were eating better food. To them, this was no good food; to us, it was wonderful! We were so hungry. They were looking at us, you know. We tried to hide it -- to go for seconds and even thirds, sometimes.

Q. WERE THEY STILL UNIFORMED AT THAT TIME?

A. Oh, sure, sure.

Q. THAT WAS THE ARROW CROSS (sp), I believe?

A. No, no, Arrow Cross was at home, but here, here they were -- I thought you're asking uniforms; the men, you mean? No, these were civilians. If they wore uniforms, then they would be in the army.

Q. THE HUNGARIAN NAZIS, I MEANT.

A. Yeah. No, these were mostly women and children. The men were in uniforms, probably, but I didn't see much. No Hungarians in uniforms; I mean, Hungarian uniforms. Uniforms were German, because Czechkoslovakia was occupied by the Germans, then they caught them right away.

Q. AFTER YOU WERE LIBERATED, YOU SAID YOU NEEDED PAPERS TO TRAVEL. WHO GAVE YOU THESE PAPERS? WHERE WERE THEY GIVEN TO YOU?

A. In Shushitza, the Bourgermeister, they stayed with us, he and his wife. They took us to the office and they spoke for us in Czech. We didn't know a word of Czech, so they took us and we had to get these permits to travel and to say that we are not subversive elements.

You know, here, you don't think under terms of

politics, but in Europe, and especially behind the Iron Curtain, you know, papers! God, that's before bread, comes papers! Who you are. You know, at times, you couldn't go three blocks without being asked who you are, or what you are doing. So, you couldn't travel without papers.

Q. WERE YOU ABLE --

A. I wish I had them today. I would give them to the Holocaust Library.

Q. (UNINTELLIGIBLE).

A. I did have them for a while, and then, I didn't know what happened. Once I became American citizen, I figured I guess we don't need them, so I threw them away. They were so worn, you know. It wasn't a booklet, actually, it was a blue paper, and it was written on it. It was just that much (gesturing). So, I held on to it till I needed it; I no longer needed, I wasn't smart enough to keep it. It would have been a memento.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU, HELEN, AGAIN.

A. Thank you, Evelyn; and thank you, John.

Q. THANK YOU FOR TELLING YOUR STORY.

A. Thank you, all of you. And I'm grateful it's possible to leave this behind. And, especially, like Kylie's grandfather said, Dr. Charles Richardson -- he said, "Helen, you must leave this behind for your grandchildren, for our grandchildren. They should know, not only that you were Jewish, that they are part -- partially Jewish, but they should know who you were or what you were, and what has happened through your lifetime." And he said, "You owe this

to our grandchildren."

Like I said, they are just wonderful, very intelligent people.

And I'm happy that I can achieve this. After all these years, I feel like I opened up. Maybe I talk too much, but --

Q. YOU DID VERY WELL.

A. -- that is given to us women.

Thank you very much, all of you.

(END OF TAPE)