Interview with HELEN FARKAS
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Q. 1990 HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. WITH ME IS LORI RICE.

GOOD AFTERNOON, HELEN.

A. Hello.

Q. LET US GO ON. LAST TIME WE WERE INTERRUPTED WHEN YOU FINISHED, WHEN YOU WENT INTO FINISHING THE TAPE, AND I REMEMBER WE WERE IN EARLY 1945.

A. Yes.

Q. AND YOU WERE ON THE MARCH FROM AUSCHWITZ TO --

A. No, I was on the death march from Pushkow. They brought us from Auschwitz to Pushkow in October, '44, to dig these sponselgrabers. I talked about them previously.

And then, when the Germans were pressed by the Russians and the Allies, then the Germans probably had orders to evacuate us because the Russians were coming. In that part of the world, the Russians were fighting. And I am sure that they were more scared of the the Russians than the Americans, so, for some reason, for their reasons, they didn't leave us behind and run. They took us. So we started this death march from Pushkow.

Q. PUSHKOW IS IN SILESIA, IS THAT RIGHT?

A. This Pushkow is located in Silesiansee.

Silesiansee is a large town. We walked through Silesiansee that first night, and I told you about the sick, the sick people, the sick women who had typhus, and they also did not leave them behind probably because they didn't want to leave the trace of their attrocities, so they wouldn't be found out what they were doing with us or to us. So they put the sick ones in the wheelbarrows, and we had to push them. Occasionally, I was called to do it, too.

And we were passing through Silesiansay, it was a terribly cold night. The snow was frozen. It was very slippery. It was very hard to walk, but since there were five of us in a row, we had to march like that always five in a row. We held on to each other, but you can imagine those of us who had to push the wheelbarrow.

Anyway, we walked through Silesiansee late that night. It was dark, but the moon they couldn't turn off, and we saw what a beautiful town that was. Apparently it wasn't bombed yet. I don't know whether it was bombed later, but we just looked what a beautiful, beautiful town this was.

So, whenever they could march us not in towns or not in villages, they did it that way. We marched mostly on highways, on freeways, just not so the population would see us.

So I told you about the few instances what happened on the way. I don't think I had a chance to mention this woman. This must have been around February. She must have just have gotten pregnant when she came to

Auschwitz because, you know, in Auschwitz, they selected and preselected the pregnant ones, the fat ones, and they gassed them. The fat ones they used the fat for soap.

And this woman was marching with us. I didn't know her. But one time we were stopped, you know, occasionally they stopped because they either had to sit down and rest, the Germans themselves, our guards, or they wanted to eat. We didn't have, of course, what to eat, but we had to all sit down. And we were marching, and it was very big snow, and one time they stopped us right after a rest. We were surprised they stop us, and we start looking. "What? What? We just rested, how come we stopped again?"

And we saw everybody is looking into a direction. And we looked there, I'm talking in plural because my five in a row and my sisters and my niece, we looked there and we saw a woman standing and blood on the snow. And by the time we notice what was going on, we saw the logeralster was running to the German, she was running back from the Germans to the woman. We later found out that she ran for a knife to cut the umbilical cord. She was having a baby standing on her feet.

And all we saw by the time we -- I saw it and my sisters, we saw the blood and we saw that she was doing like this, killing her own baby because she had no way of keeping it alive. She had no way of feeding it, bundling it. So, with her own shoes, with her own feet, she had to kill that baby.

And the woman cut her umbilical cord, and we sat there for maybe 20 minutes, and she came back into the rya it was called, the road, she came back into the road. We got up and we walked.

I don't know whatever happened to that woman, but some women were talking about it, that she did come with us, that she continued the march.

Then we were -- I don't remember whether I told you about the wagon. They had a wagon, sometimes with horses, sometimes with cows or whatever were pulling this wagon, and they had their equipment, their civilian clothes on it, and their tents because sometimes, see, they were unable to find silos somewhere on the way to lock us up, then we had to just lie down wherever it was, snow or wherever, we had to lie down. They got their tents, and between them, one or two stayed and watched and they changed each other or whatever. That's how we spent the nights.

And one time we heard shooting, bombing. And we were very happy because we said, "Oh, their enemies, our friends are coming. The Russians or the Allies are coming and they are going to liberate us." We were very happy. We heard some shooting. And we found out at this time, when we heard the bombing, that they hit the wagon.

During the day, if we were going in populated area and somebody was left behind who couldn't walk anymore, they just shot them in front of us. But when we were going through populated area, then they would tell

others to help them up on the wagon. And if they were staying through the night -- I mean through the day, then at night, they had a rest and the next day they were lucky enough to continue.

So we heard this time when we heard the shots that, in the front, sometimes the wagon was in the front, sometimes in the back, that the wagon was hit and the horses were killed. And later, on we found a girl amongst us who didn't have an arm and, poor girl, she was covering it and covering it, and we found out that she was on the wagon at that time. She lost an arm, and it was all raw there, and she covered it, poor thing. With what did she cover it? There was nothing clean, nothing sterile. And it was cold. And she suffered, and she came, and she tried to stay alive.

I also don't know what happened to that girl. We were all so busy with our own little group to keep ourselves alive, to help each other walk to not remain because my niece, I think I told you about her leg, my sister first of all, she came out of being in that little cubicle with typhus. She was weak. We had to help her walk. My niece, with her foot, we had to help her walk.

And often we remained in the back, you know, the marching was going and we remained in the back. Then we just prayed that we can go until there's rest time again so we can recuperate and go to the front of the line because that's what we had to do. The weak ones, they all had to go to the front of the line every time we started marching

further so that they have a little leeway until they fall back.

And this German who was in the back, often he said, "Du nechtsen de ester gescheissen." German, "You'll be the next one that I will shoot."

So we were so scared, we had to do this. And then I think I told you that we did it as long as we could, and then we had to help them escape. They escaped once, and my sister Ethel and I cried for Miriam and Irene. We cried that we had to do this, we have to help them escape. We have to throw them out of the line behind the fence, behind the gate. And we cried a little and in a way we were happy because, if we go any further, we all will be shot to death. So we figured we don't know what's here, we don't know what's there, at least we're not going to see them being shot.

Next morning, we started going. I don't know, did I tell you? There they are, they were caught and they brought them back. And we hugged and kissed. We were so happy to see them again.

So they walked with us another couple of weeks, I don't remember how long, but then the second time we have to do it again, and we did, so to speak, get rid of them because we would have had to see them being shot.

Q. WAS THIS IN A VILLAGE? YOU LEFT THEM IN A VILLAGE?

A. Villages, when we walked by, we always figured that, in a village, maybe there's more chance for them to

stay alive than in a town because the town people perhaps would be more afraid to keep somebody or to hide somebody.

So this was another episode that I wanted to tell you about what we have seen.

Now, this happened. Another time we heard shooting again, and again we heard that -- we didn't know what was happening, but in this line, girls were coming, and they were offering us meat, raw meat.

You know, I think I told you that, in the silos where we were put up, the first thing we were looking around, what we find, salt or grain or whatever to keep eating, you know. In the beginning, we ate it by the handful. But then we learned that it's not good because the wheat, it swells in your stomach, and then your stomach just bursts and dies because it happened. We knew that some girls remained there in the silo because their stomach bursted because at night they ate the wheat.

So we were in the row going, and some girls were coming around and selling us meat. "What do you have? Do you have a needle? You have a scissors? You have salt? Grain? Whatever."

And we bought. I don't remember what we gave her for it. She gave us a little piece of meat, maybe like five, six ounces of meat. The meat was from the horses. The horses were busted by the bombs, and those who were in the front, they cut pieces of it. And they were eating and selling.

So my sister and I, we bought this little piece

of meat, and we started chewing it because we figured it's food, you know. And this was near the Elbe River. And as we were going and we were eating, we ate up this little meat, I got sick. I got so sick the next day that I felt that I can't continue, and we were just approaching the Elbe bridge, the bridge over the Elbe, which was later bombed by the Germans before the war ended, they bombed it, and the Allies didn't find a bridge there anymore.

So, as we were coming on the bridge, I remember I was terribly, terribly sick. By then, that was already in the afternoon, late in the afternoon, and I begged my sister and our friends to leave me there. "I can't walk another inch. Just leave me. I'll be okay, I'll be all right. Whatever happens to me, just go, save yourself, go."

And she wouldn't let me. She wouldn't let me stay. I was so very sick, diarrhea and stomachache and headache and everything, and we had absolutely nothing to cure ourselves, not even a little water.

So she said, no, no, and she ran and she brought some girls, and they started dragging me, and they literally dragged me for a little while. But we were so lucky, I mean I was so lucky that, right after we crossed the Elbe bridge, they found us a silo, they put us up.

And during that night, I was terribly sick. I had diarrhea and I threw up. But after throwing up, I started feeling better. I slept a little, and that was my life. My life was saved right there and then. They

probably wouldn't have shot me right there because it was populated area, but God knows what would have been with me. I was terribly sick.

That was the only time. I always felt that I will survive. I felt such strength, such want for living. I wanted to live so badly that I always had that feeling, no matter how, I will survive. I will survive. This time, I said no, I will not survive, this is my end.

I survived that.

I would like to talk about emotions. In spite of the hunger, the cold, the suffering, the knowing that we have lost our family, we didn't know who was alive, who isn't.

I was engaged to be married with my present husband. We were 17 when we met, and we were very much in love. We went steady for four years. After four years, we got engaged, and we wanted to get married before the Holocaust, but my parents and his parents, they talked us out of it. They said, "You're too young. Wait a while. Let's see what will be the end. He has to go into the service."

He had to go to forced labor. The Jewish boys got the yellow ribbon, and they had to use their own clothes. They got no uniforms.

So my fiance was in the service in forced labor. And the separation, when we had to go into the Ghetto, he was a sportsman, he was the star in our home town. Our home town had the Bakoba Jewish soccer team. I think that

was the only Jewish team in Hungary or Romania, and he was the center forward. He was very handsome and a very talented player and everybody knew him, and I was very much in love.

And he somehow got away one time just before they put us into the Ghetto to see us one more time, the parents and the sisters and the brothers. And that was the last time that I knew about him. We were separated, and all through the concentration camp, we knew nothing about each other. They heard all kinds of rumors that they took us to kill us, and they just didn't know what happened to us, but we were completely cut off.

Our gentile neighbors, we lived in a town, I was born in our home, and all the neighbors in that part of the world, you don't sell your house, you buy a new one, you move here, you move there. There, you know, you were born there, you lived there, you knew everybody, everybody knew you.

So my neighbors, we were very good with our gentile neighbors like Julia, this next door neighbor who saved me these few pictures, and I had a childhood girl friend. I was always hoping they will come around by the Ghetto. We were only for three weeks in our home town in the Ghetto, but my only wish was, I didn't care about anything, my only wish was to give a letter out to somebody to mail it, maybe my fiance will receive it.

But even if they came by, they went far on the other side. They were afraid to come, to come near. But

these were just those few who were very good friends.

The population within those four years between 1940 and '44 were so brainwashed through radio, through the newspapers, they were so brainwashed that they actually believed that we are subversive elements, the Jews. We are the worst thing that there is on this world and we have to be annihilated. We are the Communists, we are cheating, we cheat the population, we are the bankers, we are the teachers -- I mean, we were the bankers, the teachers, the intellectuals, and we were the worst thing for them to have, so the solution is to get rid of us.

And lots of the population, they were promised that, when they take us away, nobody ever knew that they are actually taking us to be annihilated, to be killed. You could never hear it, you could never see it.

My father went down to our basement where my youngest brother, who never came back, had a radio hidden because, the radios, we had to bring them in to the authority and leave them there. They gave us a little receipt that we have your radio. But my brother had a small radio, and it was in the basement. My father used to go down and listen to the Voice of America. He knew a little English because he spent four years in New York in 19 -- before the first world war.

And he used to come up from the basement and tell us what was going on in the world, that, in Russia, where the Germans occupied, they found mass graves of women and children and men and that in -- where is that, this

girl, I told you the girl that marched with us, she was from that area, and she was also one of those that were taken sooner than us.

Q. FROM RUSSIA?

A. No, that was not Russia. That was Slovakia. Not Czechoslovakia, Slovakia.

She also told us the attrocities that she went through and she lost her parents, but she was able to somehow get back, and then she came to Auschwitz. So we know firsthand that all these things were happening.

When my father came up from listening to the Voice of America and told us what he heard, that they are killing the Jews and they are killing Christians and they are killing all those -- I mean Catholics especially and they're killing all those who are against, who dare speak up against Naziism and all these things, we thought that my father lost his mind. We could not believe. We just could not believe that, in a modern world in modern time, they would really kill women and children. Okay, they go to war, they kill each other, men. But to kill children.

So what I wanted to bring out, I have to go back to my emotions.

My only wish was that I could send a letter to my fiance, but there was no one in the three weeks who would touch, who would come over to touch a letter, although my friends are still my friends and I believe they are my friends, these gentile girl friends of mine that we went to school together and we loved each other and I still

love them, but when the orders came for us to be evacuated to be taken away to Auschwitz, we, of course, didn't know where they were taking us, they were just given the order, the Jewish community in the Ghetto, you know, who was the authority, they got the orders that they have to know how many people we are and to to form groups and to bring us to the train station.

So it was put out in front of the -- it was like a bulletin, you know, every day what has to be done. We all knew this street is going this way, this street is going that way, this street we should be ready and we can take so many kilograms of our belongings.

So then we feverishly started packing bedding and clothes, and my father was able to get in because the Ghetto fell into a part of town where my sister Ethel lived, we were able to bring in hams, you know, whole hams and hang it up in the attic so that we have, and we brought in live chickens and gooses and, you know, things. And yeast was the first thing we ran out, all of us. You know, we were giving to each other little pieces of dough to start yeast. I mean to start baking.

So we managed all that. But then, when the orders came that we can take so many kilograms per person, then we had to pack, you know. And what? What shall we pack? My father said, "Pack the hams."

My mother and father were kosher, they didn't touch them, but my father bought this for us for the children and for the only grandchild. My sister Ethel had

a beautiful little blond boy not quite two years of age, and my father kept saying, "Pack the hams."

My mother said, "Yes, food is most important."

Bedding, clothes. So we schlepped. Finely the day came we had to go schlep everything on our backs and on our arms to the train station. We were locked up in these cattle wagons, which I told you. But what hurts most when I go back when I talk about emotions of a girl who is in love with her fiance, as we were coming from the Ghetto to the train station, I had a letter in my hand, and I couldn't -- I was just looking and I was begging to drop it in the mail. Nobody.

But there were some of our own home town people who spat at us, and that hurts forever.

Like I told you about the bread, it hurts me that I left the bread on the table and the eggs. It hurts me today how stupid I was that I didn't bring that bread with me for all of us during the death march.

This hurts me up to today even, and I cannot forgive my home town people for being so cruel as they were with us. And they were shouting at us because they were told that all our belongings, everything we owned, house we owned, like I said, they took away everything from the house. After the liberation, we found nothing, just the shell of our home. They were promised that everything that they take away from the Jews will be distributed amongst them.

I mean, the propaganda that was going on for

four years, they were able to brainwash. I'm talking about my town people where I was born and raised. It's something that I cannot forgive and, therefore, I never want to go to my home town again or any country again, my former country. I don't want to go, I don't want to know anything about them.

Emotions. What was I dreaming about? Bread, potatoes. Always wishing to know that my fiance is alive, whether he knows that I'm alive. And the longing for being free, what it means to, for no reason at all, only who was a prisoner can feel that feeling that you don't know from one moment to the other the hunger, the cold, the suffering. Nothing matters as much, nothing hurts as much as being torn away from your surroundings, from your normal life, to live like an animal.

We became like animals. When we were on the death march, we were full of lice. How could I cleanse ourselves? We had one shower between May of 1944 that we arrived to Auschwitz, that little shower that we had when they cut all our hair from all over, and then we had one single shower during the summer, and then we didn't have a shower until we were liberated. So, within one year, we had two showers.

What did we do during the death march? We had no extra clothes at all. Everything we owned was right on us. Everything we slept in. The same thing that we wore during the day, we wore during the night. So when we became full of lice, some of us did and some of us didn't.

During the march, we would take off our clothes. Once the top, then the bottom, and we would just pick the lice and throw them.

Then, if we stopped somewhere where there was a little river, we were able to use the water of the river. We would go there, and they let us go there to wash our hands, to wash our face, but it was cold, you know, but during the day, too. Don't forget, it was January, February, March. It's cold, it's icy.

Sometimes we stopped and we couldn't wait for our little river because the river was frozen, too. We would take snow and wash, take off the upper part and wash ourselves with snow. We didn't have a towel or a napkin or a handkerchief, nothing. We would put on the clothes as it was on us after we rubbed our body with snow.

We came to a camp where we spent six weeks. Some of the girls who were not able to walk went on a wagon. They disappeared. We didn't know whether they're alive or dead because often we heard shooting, that they shot them. But we didn't know what happened to them.

One of my girl friends, whose brother was my husband's best friend from childhood, his wife, as a matter of fact, lives here, and she's my best friend, he died, this girl's name was Gruenfeld, Shari. She went on the wagon. I shouted to her, "Shari, don't go on the wagon, don't go on the wagon. It's afternoon already. Come, we'll help you, we'll help."

She said, "No, I'm tired, I'm tired of living."

She lost her sister. She had an older sister, Elsa. Elsa the last time I saw her, we were marching on a highway, and the bushes and trees, they were quite close. I saw her jump out because we, from the same city, everybody was like that, from the same city, we always tried to march together to be together because we had to help each other. One time I had to be helped, one time another needed to be held.

I saw Elsa. Her head was like this. It was swollen. Nothing else but her head was swollen like this. And I saw her that she jumped out and she jumped behind a bush. And then I asked Shari, "What's going?"

She said she couldn't come any longer.

I told her she's got to do it.

So we agreed. You know, it was better than seeing her being shot. She couldn't go.

Now came for Shari, this was maybe a month later, Shari goes on the wagon. I shout, "Shari, don't go on the wagon, don't go on the wagon."

She said, "I can't. I give up, I give up."

"Don't give up."

"No, I give up."

With another girl friend from Satu-Mare, the two of them went on this wagon.

We arrived maybe six weeks later to this camp. Before they let us into the barrack, there was a huge barrack, but, by now, we had lost probably about four or five hundred girls. Before they let us in, we had to take

all our clothes off, we had to dunk them into barrels, and further down some girls were waiting with these big pots with a handle, and they went in like this and poured this all over us naked. So we didn't have a shower. That's what I'm saying. And this was that stinky disinfectant stuff they put in the water. This is how they knew we're dirty, they knew we are full of lice, so they poured this stinky water over us. Our clothes, we had to dunk them into the barrels, take them out and get the water out and put them on again wet.

Q. DO YOU KNOW THE NAME OF THAT CAMP?

A. No, I don't even know the town. I don't even know where we were. But I remember it very well for this reason and two other reasons, but I have no idea. We didn't have any idea then where we are.

They had wooden floors, and that was something special for us because it was clean, beautiful clean.

Before we got in there, we had to stay out in the cold, it was March, and we had to stay out in the very cold with all this cold wet clothes on for (tzelapel.) The tzelapel is they counted us, five in a row, and they counted us. And my sister Ethel, the others were not with us anymore, she got into some hassle with a (stupdienst.)

Q. WHAT?

A. (Stupdienst) was among us they chose to help them, you know, with the stick. I think I told you, when I arrived at Auschwitz, my sister and I were chosen, and we were given sticks to be (stupdiensen,) but we ran away. That

was from Block 31 or Block 30, and we ran away to Block 10. We left the sticks there because we didn't, when to bleukaster told us that we have to beat up those who are out of line, you know, we knew that this is not for us, so we ran away from there.

But some of the stupdiensen, because they had more food and they were able to get more, maybe more clothes, and authority, you know, they had authority over the others.

So this girl and my sister Ethel got into some hassle. I don't know what, I don't know how, but the German woman saw it, and she said, "You get out of line because you're going to be punished."

So the punishment was that everybody could go into the block, into the barrack, except the punished one. There was only one punished, and that was my sister Ethel. But you know what I did? I exchanged her. I went and stood out there. When the German woman turn around, I threw her back, and I went there because I was stronger than her.

My heart was bleeding for her all through the concentration camp time because she lost that beautiful little boy of hers. She didn't know whether her husband is alive or dead. He was in a Russian prison from 1942. She heard nothing. For two years, she knew nothing about her husband, and it was a pain to raise the child alone and to be alone and then losing this child. And she was smaller than I, and I always protected her, you know, like my

little sister. She was my older sister, but I always protected her. I had very great compassion and love for my sister all the way until her death.

So I had to stay there from morning, maybe around 11:00 o'clock or so, from morning until it got dark, I had to stay out there in my wet clothes. And look at me, I didn't catch a cold even. I didn't get sick, I didn't catch a cold. I just suffered through the day, and I went in.

And that's where we found out that Shari was there and this other girl was there and tens of girls were there from our home town, but they were all, almost all dead. Maybe two or three were there to tell us who died in this camp because, I'll tell you why, because, wherever we went, the first thing was, of course, looking around what we can find for food, as food. No matter even if it was just grass, you know, we would pick grass.

Then there is dandelion. You probably never knew that the dandelion is a wonderful food. It's bitter like heck, it eats your stomach out, but the Russian women taught us in Auschwitz that this is good to eat. We didn't know. Not Russian, the Polish women. Some Polish women that were there already five years, they, we saw them at, you know, that there was a place where they have faucets, faucets, faucets. You know, the same way as--

Q. SHOWERS?

A. Not showers, just faucets where we were able to go when there was no (bluekspar) in Auschwitz.

Then we saw that they were washing something green and it has white, you know, that they pulled it out. So, in Auschwitz, the dandelions were growing all over; and these Polish, some of them were Russian, too, these Polish women were pulling them out and they were washing them and they ate all the green stuff, too. So we learned that this is very good.

They said, "It's very good vitamin and it keeps you alive."

So now we knew already from Auschwitz that this is good to eat. So wherever we came, we were looking if there was nothing, real food, it was whatever was green was good to eat, whether it was a blade of grass, anything. If we were able to wash it off or dry it off or get the sand or earth off it, we chewed the top and swallowed it. It was food.

This camp, there was nothing, absolutely nothing. It was bare, and this was in March.

Before they let us in, I want to mention, before they poured this water over us, I forgot to mention it, they shored our hair off outside, outdoors, again from all over. And that's why I have such short hair when we were liberated in 1945. Summer I came home with that short hair that you saw in the picture because my hair was -- our hair was shorn again in March. When we arrived to Auschwitz, we already had a little hair, and they let us go to Pushkow with our hair. In March, when we arrived to this darn camp, this is where they shored our hairs off again.

Q. HAD IT GROWN SINCE AUSCHWITZ?

A. Yes, since Auschwitz, we had already a little hair, at least like a man, like a man's hairdo.

Then we stayed in this camp. This was like death because there was nothing else to eat, only what we were given. We prayed to God that they take us away from there. Wherever, but take us away. There was nothing to do all day long, just sit and do nothing. We could exercise. Walk, you know, we already used to this walking.

So finally, after six weeks, one night, again just like from Pushkow, they marched us out, c'est la vie, and they let us go. We were glad to go. We were very weak by then, and from then on, we really lost a lot of them. You know, they couldn't walk because their legs gave out. They didn't have strength. There was not enough nourishment, and the fact that we were locked up for six weeks like that, we lost our muscles. You know, I was a perfectly developed 23-year-old, I was already 24 then, 24-year-old, and I had busts. But during the time of the marching and during this one year of suffering, everything went back. My sister had a little skin because she had nursed her little baby, but I was not even married yet. So my bust went completely back. I was like a boy. And I must have been, let's see, something like 40 kilos, 80 pounds or 90 pounds, something like this, when I was liberated in May.

So, anyway, this is how we spent our days,

marching, losing a lot of us. Sometimes we were sleeping on the snow, and in the morning, we always tried to get up before the Germans woke us because they slept in their --

Q. IN THEIR TENTS?

A. Tents, yes. So we were trying to wake up and start to exercise, make our legs go. Very often lots of them we left there. We just marched away. They didn't even bother to bury them anymore. They were dead.

I had to tell you about a girl who was in Pushkow. Her aunt was a Slovakian Jewish woman, and she was a very strong personality. She was sent with us as a blaulager altester. The lager altester was this Huga. I think I told you about her. She was the gentile woman who came to Auschwitz with her husband and two children who were Jewish, and she, in the hope that they'll stay together, and she was very bitter. She was terribly bitter that, on account of us, she has to suffer. But the marcher, she was the lager altester, the gentile lady, and the marcher, she was the bluger altester. She had a beautiful niece. And in Pushkow, she gave her niece to the commandant to conduct his household.

Now, we were in these two silos, and outside the silo, there was his home. It was one of these homes which you put together. How do they call them? They have them here in America today.

Q. PREFABRICATED?

A. Yes, prefabricated little home, and she was serving him, this girl. Occasionally, she would sleep in

the silos with us and occasionally she would spend the night with him.

As we were being marched, we saw that this poor little 17, 18-year-old girl is growing fat. She was pregnant. And he was so cruel, and he was Wehrmacht already, he was not SS. He was an older man. Older man, maybe 50. For us, he was old. And the girl was marching all through this time from Pushkow, she was always marching next to him. But she carried his civilian clothes, not he, or he didn't put it on the wagon either. She was carrying on her back all through the time right next to him. She was right next to him with his civilian clothes just in case, you know, we are caught or something by the Allies or the Russians, then all of them had their civilian clothes with them so that they can right away change clothes.

So this girl, we heard after the war that she bore a little boy. After the war, she bore a little boy. What happened to the commandant, I don't know.

Q. YOU LOST TRACK OF HER?

A. We lost track of her, but we heard from other and we also heard that Huga, she was being seen, she was spotted in a train in 1945, and that they pulled her off the train because she was very cruel, they pulled her off the train in Slovakia and they beat her up. That's how much I know about her.

Now, let me think what else can I think about?

I told you about my girl friend who I lost by sugar beets. Her fiance lives in New York. She didn't

return. I was trying to think of those who were close to me who I knew.

Now I will tell you, you have an idea how it was day in and day out, marching, having food, not having food, sleeping in silos, sleeping outdoors, losing a lot of our buddies.

The time came, my sister and I, end of April, that we decided that we can't go any further. We can't do it any longer. There's just the two of us to be responsible for. We're going to try and run away because we found out that now more and more were running away from amongst us. We were shrinking, you know, we were shrinking constantly. And we decided we'll try for it.

So one night, we were marching, and they put us up on a hill. And on the snow, we had to lie down on the snow. The Germans put up their tents and they said, like other times, nobody is allowed to get up or to sit up. Just lying down because, if somebody sits up or gets up, they'll be shot.

So we waited. My sister and I talked it over, just the two of us. We were afraid to tell the girl who was with us all along because, the more we are, the harder it is to hide. We didn't know what the future is for us. So just the two of us, we didn't tell anybody.

We decided we just laid down and waited until it was real quiet. You know, everybody was crushed and fell asleep right away. We kept ourselves awake, and we started slowly around midnight, we started -- how do you say? --

crawling. We started crawling down the hill slowly, slowly. And the hill was going too fast like this, we turned around not going like this, we turned around, and we fell into a little river. And as we fell in feet first, we felt big rocks, and they made such a noise. We thought this is it, we're going to be caught because, as we fell into the water, and the water must have been maybe this much, maybe less than a foot or a foot deep, so the rocks were making such a noise because we fell with such force, and we just stood there and we were hoping. We heard nothing, so slowly, slowly we started to feel our way quietly a little further down and away from the hill and then out, and we started to go fast. We saw that nobody noticed. It was a very -- it was a hailing day, night, it was hailing, it was snowing, it was very, very cold. So we went, and we started to go fast.

And from far away, we saw a little like a house. So as we were coming close, it started to be light, and we discovered that it was a tool shed. So we went around it, and the door had a lock. We went around, and there was one not glass window, just a wooden window, which we discovered that, when we pulled it up, it opened up. So we crawled inside, and we pulled the window, so-called window back.

And we looked around. There was nothing to eat, but there was saws and axes and stuff like that and there was a big table bench, a big bench. So we went outside again, and we brought in snow.

And the first thing we had to do was to eradicate the KL. You know, we had a foot-high KL on our backs, on our coats, Koncentration Lager, KL, and it was with white oil paint. Now, we had to get that somehow out, so we started scratching and scraping, and I don't remember how we got hold, we had a brush, we had a scissor, we had a brush, but we couldn't --

Yes, luckily, we did have a blanket, which we got in Pushkow. When we arrived to Pushkow, everybody had a blanket. We slept on it in Pushkow, so that blanket we all had on ourselves, you know, all through the time that we were walking.

So we started working on the coat because it was already April, and during the day, it was a little sunny. The snow was melting. And sometimes, I mean, in civilian place with population, you can't go around with a blanket on you, you know. So what we did was we tore off pieces, we cut it around with that little manicure scissor, and we made a shawl for ourselves just so that we cover the KL, you know, on the triangle, and we put it like a shawl like we can put it on our heads until we made it long enough so that it comes down to here because, with the blanket, you can't go around in the streets.

So we stayed there about two nights. The second night, we woke up that somebody is rattling the lock. And we couldn't see much, but there were little cracks, so through the cracks we saw a man in the striped clothes like in Auschwitz, you know.

And we didn't see a man prisoner before. We heard them, we heard them when we were in Pushkow. They had worked on a different section. We heard them sing. They were Italians. They sang beautiful. We heard them sing, and some women who knew Italian, French, my girl friend, one of them knew French, and she was hollering. We never saw them, but they were hollering back, and they were also prisoners.

We didn't see them, but now we saw this guy in the striped clothes, and we got so scared, we didn't, you know, we didn't even think that this poor man, he's in the same boat as we are. We just sat there and waited. And he went around the window, and he was fumbling there in the night, but he wasn't smart enough to do what we did to try from the bottom up. If he would have done this, it would have opened. He was just fumbling around. And then we looked out, he went away. We saw him walk away.

So we stayed there another night, three nights, and we had nothing but snow. We only ate snow, and we were terribly hungry. This is the end. We've got to get out of here. So we decided we would go out. That morning, we already -- that K and L, it still showed a little bit, but we were able to cover it with this shawl.

We went out and we started walking. And a short while, we reached a village. And the first house at the village, just that morning, they had put out potatoes, cooked potatoes with corn meal mush like this for the chickens. We stole the food from the chickens and we ate

it. It tasted good. There was no salt in it I remember. And so we ate that. It helped a little.

And we started going into the village, but we wanted to wait until it gets a little dark. We sat around, you know, and we were just biding our time to wait until evening time.

And around evening time, we came into this village, and we were looking. We had no idea where we are, what country we are, whether it's Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland. We had no idea because, you know, we didn't see any signs anywhere, and some signs we saw we didn't know. German we could understand this would be Germany. But the Slovakian languages we didn't know, which is what whether it's Czechoslovakia or whether is it Poland, we wouldn't know.

So we were looking to go into a house now that night was falling, somewhere where there is no male, no man. We were so afraid that, if we go into a house where there is man, then too many questions, and we would be afraid that they would serve us in, you know. They would take us into the burgermeister or something.

So we were very lucky. We saw through the window they were lighting the lamp. They didn't have electricity, they were lighting the lamp. I saw a tall young woman and behind her a little farther we saw an older woman. So we decided we would go there.

We knocked on the door, and --

Oh, I didn't tell you, before we reached the

village, we met -- we thought this was Messiah -- we met a woman and a man on the highway. Every time we saw military or something, we went off the highway, but we saw this peasant woman with a black scarf. You know, she was dressed in peasant clothes and the man was also. This peasant couple were coming towards us from the village. And when we saw them, we came kind of closer, and we overheard that they were speaking Hungarian.

We said, "God, Hungarian here in the middle of the world? Where? Who?"

So we went closer and we said, "Oh, you're Hungarians."

"Yeah, are you Hungarians?"

"Yes, we are Hungarian," and we started asking them all kinds of questions. "Well, where are you from?"

"Oh, well, we're coming, we stayed in Breslau. We went to Breslau with the Germans. When the Russians were coming, then we fled with the Germans, and we went with our whole family to Breslau. We worked at a factory. But when they bombed Breslau, we had to run with the Germans. The Germans were leaving, we left with the Germans."

And we asked, "And where are you now? What is it?"

She said, "Well, we're just going over the border to Czechoslovakia because they are good in that school. You know about that school?"

"No. Actually, we come from Breslau also. We

were in Breslau also working in this factory, but we didn't know about -- what is it? Where is it you live?"

And she said, "Oh, you don't know the Hungarian, the other Hungarian people in Chuzitz Ashway? It's only across the border there is in town in Czechoslovakia. That's where we were with the Germans."

So we said, "Oh, really? Well, we were just -- we also coming from Breslau."

"Well where are your parents?" We looked like children. We were like young girls. "Well, where are your parents? Where do you live?"

We said, "Well, during the bombing, we lost our whole family, our parents and everything," because they were telling us what terrible bombings and how many people died and everything. So we said, "Well, we just left after our family was thrown apart. We just left and were looking for some other Hungarians. So tell us where it's at."

And they told us where it's at. Okay, so then we were coming. And when we knocked on the door here at this house, they let us in, and we asked in broken German, "May we come in to warm up? We are very cold."

They said, "Of course, come in."

And then they were making, I don't know if you know there is a food -- they didn't have much food themselves, you know, there is a food which is called zatakar. It's corn meal mush. It's corn meal with regular flour, and it's not cooked like a mush, but in milk and water, half milk, half water, with a little salt. They

have there in Czechoslovakia, Germany, on the end of a stick, they have like a star made of wood, and they let the flour and the corn meal go into the boiling milk and water, and they go like this, and then it forms little nuggets, and they cook this, and that is a meal, that's a food.

So that's what they had for dinner, and they asked us would we like to have some of this.

And we said, "Yes, thank you very much."

And they served us. They saw that we ate it all up, that we didn't just lick the plates. Then they asked if we would like some more, and they asked us, we told them we're Hungarian. So we knew that being Hungarian in this part of the world doesn't seem to be very foreign because they were not surprised at all to know that we're Hungarian. So we told them that we're Hungarians, we came from Breslau, and we're on our way to Chuzitz Ashway, but since things were very bad and we were bombed, we don't have any papers, we don't know how to cross the border, and we'll see. We don't know yet what we're going to do.

And they said, "Would you like to spend the night here since you're on your way, this is about ten kilometers from here?"

And we said, "Yes, we would appreciate if we could spend the night."

And they made a bed. The daughter made the bed for us in the middle of the one room they lived in. They had another room, but they didn't put fire, you know, they didn't heat it, so that door was closed. They had two

rooms. The house was two rooms.

So they made us a bed here and we look at that bed. It's beautiful, clean, and we look at each other, and we said we tell them.

So we had such confidence, we saw so much compassion, they felt so sorry for us, we could tell they felt sorry for us, so we said, "We appreciate this beautiful bed, but we would feel very guilty if we would fill you up with lice. We are full of lice."

And then we spilled it all. We said we lied, we're not from Breslau, we're Jews. We told them. They stayed up with us until way after midnight.

Right away, when we told them about the lice, they went and brought in a huge pot, they put it up on the stove, and when the water was boiling, all our clothes went into the pot. They brought in from outside like a bathtub, you know, made of wood, and the young woman, she brought soap and she started scrubbing us. She herself washed us one by one, and she brought in petrol for our hair. We didn't have hair, we didn't have much hair because it was less than a month, but she put a little petrol on our hair.

Actually, we didn't have lice in our hair by then, only in our clothes, because we didn't have much hair yet since March. It was only like five, six weeks old, the hair, but she brought petrol, she put it on us, and then she shampooed us with soap. And they both cried when they saw our bodies, how we looked. With clothes oh, we looked

bad enough, but not as bad. They cried. They felt so sorry for us.

So they said, "Don't worry." We told them that we are now aiming for that school in Chuzitz Ashway. "Don't worry," the old woman said, "my daughter will take you across the border next night. She's going to take you across, and she'll come back. Don't worry, she knows where to take you where there is no sentries."

They put us up for the night. Our clothes was outside, and in the morning, it was stiff frozen, so they couldn't bring it in.

They said, "Don't worry, you cannot be seen."

We told them, "We cannot be seen because you'll get in trouble." We didn't want to get them in trouble.

She said, "That's okay."

They made a fire in the stove and the next door they locked it up as it was before, and we spent the day, my sister and I. They brought in the clothes, they hung them inside the house so that from the warmth they dry, and they fed us and they came in occasionally and talked to us, and they were very interested in the story we were able to tell them about Auschwitz, about how they killed the people. They couldn't believe it.

What we learned about them was that her husband, she was Czechoslovakian and her husband was German, and they lived in Germany, this was the other side of the border was Germany, and their daughter was an old maid. She was never married, but a heart of gold. So she said we

shouldn't worry, they would take care of us.

Next day, when the clothes was dry, we dressed up, they gave us some underwear, they gave us some clothes, and the next night, she walked us across the border. We said goodbye, and we said, "If we're alive, we'll come back because God knows how wonderful good-hearted people you are and we will not forget this."

I'm still sorry that I don't know about them because now I could really help them. I could have helped them, you know, send from America already help, but unfortunately, we were too absorbed in our own lives, you know, to remember. We did go back then later. I'll tell you all about it.

So what happened was she took us across the border, and across the border, not far away is already the town Chuzitz Ashway, and it was explained exactly how to get to the school.

Now, when we got to the school, my sister and I, still being afraid, you know, we decided that one of us will go into the office. I went into the office, she waited outside in the hall. I went inside and I told them that I'm from Breslau and we lost our parents, the story, you know, the same story as the peasant woman told us, and I have a sister with me.

"What's your name?"

And I gave my real name, my real name is Safar, my maiden name, so it's not a Jewish name because lots of Hungarians are also by the same name. So I gave her my

maiden name, Safar, Helen, and I have a sister who is outside, she had to go to the bathroom, and I'm going to get her.

First I have to see whether it's kosher, you know. At least, if I'm in trouble, then she can get away.

So she said, "Yes, bring her in."

We were registered, and we started going to the dining room. We had beautiful food. We were being fed. And they took us to the second floor, they gave us a corner.

We discovered that, in this school, in one corner there was a family with nine or ten children, I don't remember exactly, Hungarians who fled with the Germans. In this corner, there were two young men. In this corner, I don't remember what was because we got absorbed right away with this family.

That corner was ours, my sister and mine. We slept on the floor. They gave us some bedding, some blankets, some stuff, and we became absorbed with this family. We loved the children, we took the children for walks. I knitted booties for the children.

We didn't care that he, the man -- the woman was very much upset with this whole story, with their whole life what the husband did to her, to them, because she said they would have -- they should have stayed where they were, they shouldn't of fled with the Germans. They should have stayed in Hungary. But the man, he felt that he had some trouble on his head. He was afraid from the Russians that

they will -- he must have done something, either he was in government or something, but he was so afraid of the Russians that he didn't want to stay. So they struggled like this in the school, and they left their home and everything, and it was very hard life for the woman.

Here she had two servants right away. We were very glad because we played with the children. I knitted booties for them. We took them for walks. And the children didn't like the food in the cafeteria, in the dining room, what they served, so he always brought stuff, and my sister went outside and cooked it on, you know, an immediate stove like barbecue. So she would prepare different foods for the children. For us, the food was wonderful. We were able to go for seconds.

And slowly, we were there about 10, 12 days, and all of a sudden we hear, "Posar, posar." "Posar" means attention, attention, in Czechoslovakian. And since this school was in the downtown area, we saw this radio station or something, and from there came the voice, "Posar posar."

And everybody came, and we went to the window to look out, and we see that military is marching into Chuzitz Ashway, an MP with the hat.

And the man comes running. He said, "The Americans are here." He was very happy. He was afraid from the Russians. Somehow, the Americans he was not -- he didn't have such great fear from the Americans as he had from the Russians. I don't know his reason.

So we found out that Americans are marching in,

5th of May, the war is ending either today or tomorrow, the war has ended because the Americans are here.

So we look out the window, and we don't say anything yet. So we see MP on the hats, on the helmets. So the Hungarian man tells us, "That's the police. That's the police. That's the American police is here."

And we still look outside, and we're happy, we saw everybody is happy. These people, you know. But then we went down to eat, and we see that they are all white in the face and "What will be with us? What will be with us?" They're eating their heart out that they are now prisoners, they're going to be prisoners.

And the Czechs come right away. They close the school. Nobody can go out.

And my sister and I still look out. We come in, we go out. There's big excitement, and we saw the long faces, too.

And all of a sudden my sister said, "Look, a Mogen David."

We run down, and we start running to this officer with a Jeep. And he stopped the Jeep right in front of this school. He was going to come in for some reason or other, and my sister goes, "Mogen David, Mogen David."

And he looks. He said, "How do you know? Wie weist du of Mogen David."

She said, "We're Yidden. We're Jewish."

I'm goose pimple even now.

And we tell him, "We are Jewish. We were in a concentration camp. They killed our parents." And Yiddish, as much Yiddish as we we knew -- I knew fairly well Yiddish.

And he was stunned. He said, "Wait right here. You don't go away. Wait."

He went to his Jeep. He brought us chocolate, cigarettes, bread, like Langendorf bread, this soft bread. We never saw that kind of bread before.

And he said, "Wait a minute. Don't go away. Where are you?"

We told them that window is our window up there.

So he went inside. The Czechs have closed already the school, and he had to march on. He was the chaplain of this battalion and he could not stay. He had to march on with the battalion further, you know.

And he went into the office to the Czechs who occupied. Immediately they had guns, and they had occupied the school and locked it. He went in there, and he somehow got this certain man who was the burgermeister of Chuzitz Asway before. His wife was in Theresienstadt because she was Jewish, and his home was taken away by the authorities and some Germans lived in it, but they fled, so his home was there. Potatoes on the stove, food in -- they didn't have refrigerator, so everything was out there.

And this chaplain went and talked to him and told him, "You take these two girls out immediately. They

are Jewish. You don't let them stay for one minute."

So right away he said, "While I'm still here, I want to go grab what you have."

What did we have? Goodness, we didn't have anything. We got some underwear from the Hungarian woman. So we grabbed everything. We didn't say a word to them. We just went out, and he gave us over physically he gave us over to this man, and this man immediately took us himself to his home.

So he opened up the house, we come in, and we found food that was uneaten, food that was uncooked, like I say, potatoes and bread. So he told us, he didn't speak very good German, he told us to "understand you will stay here. My wife is Jewish. I will go bring her from Theresienstadt, and you stay here and don't go anywhere. We will take care of you."

So he brought us food. We didn't have money. We never. We spend there almost two months, and I'll tell you why we didn't handle money at all, because he brought us everything. He took us to a magazine where we they had shoes, clothing. He said, "Choose whatever you need." So we chose clothing, shoes, and suits.

And then we went back to visit the Hungarians. Yes, we met some people with who we were talking during these 10, 12 days that we spend. They begged us to bring them in stuff from the city. They'll give us this or that for the children.

We said, "We don't make deals. We don't want

anything." But we did go and bring them in -- we didn't have to handle money. I don't remember, from somewhere we had to bring it, so we brought them some food for the children, some milk for the children just once, and we never went back again.

And these Hungarians, when they found out that we are Jewish, their chin fell. They had no idea that we're Jewish. So we never went that way. We stayed in this man's house.

He went the following week, he went and brought his wife home, and she was a very lovely lady. She begged us to stay and they would adopt us and we would get married and we should remain there forever because they have no children, they never had any children, and they would love to have us.

And we had to tell them two things. First thing, my sister had gotten her period. You know, the food that we were getting in Auschwitz had bromo in it, and that that's a tranquilizer. So all through the time, we didn't have our period. We had one period on our drive to Auschwitz, and then even, during the march, we never got -- I don't think they put any stuff into our food anymore, but we were already -- our bodies were so broken down that we never had our period.

Now that we started eating normal food, my sister, in a month or so, she got her period, I didn't. But what did I get? I got a staph infection, which is fuddle grushes. Do you know what fuddle grushes are?

Boils. I still have one that sometimes come out here. I didn't want to have it operated because the doctor said it's okay. Sometimes it flares up, sometimes it doesn't. But I had them on my seat, all over. I couldn't sit. I had to lie on my stomach for weeks. And I had them on my ears, all over inside my ears.

So we told this lady, I was ashamed to tell the man, you know, and we told this lady that I have these fuddle grushes and they hurt terribly and they ooze pus coming. My poor sister was pushing the pus out and more pus came.

And we had already, of course, clean stuff to use. You know, we found shirts and white linen things that were clean and we could use it, but they didn't seem to go away.

So finally, when I told the lady, we told the lady we can't stay for two reasons. The main reason is that my sister was married, she's married, she lost a child in Auschwitz, and she doesn't know whether her husband is alive or dead, and we must go home to find her husband. And I have a fiance which I don't know whether he's alive or dead, and I want to go home, too.

"But first things first," she said. "We have to take you to a doctor."

So she and her husband, they took me to the military hospital. So a high ranking officer was a doctor, and he gave me an injection first, and then I had to go to treatments. And this took another month. We couldn't come

home. We couldn't go home to Romania.

It was Romania again, you know, because, after the war, it became Romania. So we had to have papers. You can't travel without papers. And that picture with my short hair, that was the picture that the lady took me to have the picture taken for the passport.

And I had to go for treatments, and this injection the doctor gave me brought my period. But that didn't help me any for my fuddle grushes. Finally, when the ears cleared up and my bottom cleared up, they gave my sister and me the passport that we can go home. So we had to travel home.

How the train tracks were broken, were torn here and there. So we went and sat there for days, for days by the stations. From Chuzitz Ashway we were all able to go. He put us up on the train. So we came to Prague, and then Prague it was torn up, so we stayed for days in the outside and inside, but lots of -- hundreds of people were waiting for trains to be able to get up and go.

So what happened was we had to walk until the next piece starts. But to be able to go further, you know, you always had to have somebody to go with. The two of us, two young girls, where do you go? So we teamed up with people. Whoever was going north, we went with them. So we were walking until the next place. There we had to stay for days again until we're able to get up on the train. Most of what you could see go was Russian tanks, you know, these flat trains.

Q. FLAT CARS?

A. Yeah. They had all kinds of things on them. Animals, I mean beef animals, you know, they had their tanks on it, they were in Russian it's called zabrah, that means stealing. I mean, they didn't call it. They were zabrahing everything that was in their way the same thing as the Germans did. You know, whatever they occupied, they were stealing and taking everything away.

So we were in a place were we were waiting somewhere to be able to get up on a train. This Russian, he looked like an officer, he didn't know a word of English, we didn't know a word of Russian, but we showed him Romania, Romania. He said, "Da voy? Da voy? Da voy?" Just the two of us.

So we come up, and he shows us, he opens up a Jeep that was on top of the train. You know, it was not rolling. It was on the train. He opens up the Jeep. He says, "You stay here."

So we were happy. "Look, we're inside. We're going, we're going. We're going north.

So he understood perhaps a little bit, so he asked who we are. He went and brought bacon, slabs of bacon with black bread, with pickle, and he gave us to eat. It was wonderful. So he fed us and he was talking to us a little what he understood. We told him all about Auschwitz, and he, "Mm-hmm hmm," he was so sorry. "My heart aches for you."

Comes the night, we're locked in there, comes

the night, we wake up my sister and I, that somebody jumped in from above, and he starts fumbling there feeling and "Ethel, Ethel, Ethel," he wants my sister, not me, he wants my sister.

And my sister started saying, "Syphlis, syphlis, Ich hab syphlis." The German's syphlis.

So what do you think? Right away he jumped out, and he let us go until the next place, wherever we -- there were no tracks again, you know. And we get out. Again we hang around, and then a train came with lots of young women and young men, Polish. They were going home also from concentration camps or wherever they were, and we befriended, while the train was standing there, we befriended some of these guys that came down. They were going around buying Coca-Cola was already there, it was American occupied, and they said, "Okay, okay, no room." You know, it was so packed. He said, "You want to stand?"

We don't care. Stand, sit, we don't care, just to go, go north.

So they let us up on the train, and we were sitting on the floor, we were standing, whichever way. Finally, finally we were able to come almost home, and then somehow, I don't remember why -- oh, yes, I remember, they had to go Polish way, you know, in another direction, and we had to go to this direction, so we had to part.

And then we found somebody from our home town, Ailey is his name, he still lives in Satu-Mare, and he and we found quite a few Hungarian friends from our home town,

and we set on one of these flat trains, and we came -- this was already we were already in Romania, and this is how we arrived home.

We arrived home, it's Sunday, and at the train station, Shari's brother is waiting. He was the goalie in the Barkoba Jewish team and, like I told you, he was the best friend of my husband. He was out to every train that arrived. He was waiting for his sisters. They already knew that his mother was not a wealthy-- not a healthy lady, not wealthy and not healthy, and he didn't expect to see his mother because already so many came back who were in Auschwitz and they knew already what our fate was, but he was still hoping for his two sisters, for Elsa and Shari.

And when he saw me and my sister Ethel, he came and he hugged us and "What do you know of Shari? What do you know of Elsa?"

So we had to tell him, "Don't wait for them. Don't wait for them because it's only a heartache for you to wait."

He, my husband, my fiance at the time, was playing that Sunday, and poor Shauni, he was coming out, he left the team, he left the game, he was injured that Sunday, he couldn't play so somebody else played, but still, you know, he's in the team, he would stay there and watch and root for his team.

No, he left. Every train that was arriving, he was there.

So right away, he took -- how do they call it? -- yes, horse and buggy. Right away he took a horse and buggy and he took us to the home where he and my fiance lived. The two of them got themselves an apartment and they had a maid who cooked for them. She held house for them.

Now, to go back how come they were home?

In September, '44, my home town was occupied by the Russians, and Shauni and my husband, Joe, you know, Joe Farkas is my husband, they were in forced labor, and then they were caught by the Russians. When the war ended, when the Russians marched into Satu-Mare, the Russians tried to catch young people and those who were loose and they took them to Russia. They took them to Russia.

So the two boys were caught, and they put them on a truck, and they took them straight to the border. But these two guys, they were smart enough, they jumped off and they hid.

They were in Kohlswahr or near Kohlswahr, which is about 300 kilometers away from Satu-Mare, and these boys started to walk home 300 kilometers. It took them I don't know how long, and they walked home and they were home in September already in Satu-Mare.

So what they did, they arrived with nothing. My husband found their home was completely nothing in it. They lived in an apartment, and the apartment was already occupied by strangers. He went to my home, which was our home, and that was almost destroyed, only the frame of the

house was there. And he found my second-from-the-youngest brother, Natan, he found him there. He was sleeping on straw because everything was taken out of the house, but my brother slept on the straw.

And my brother told him that he is getting ready to go and join up with the Zionists because I was in the New Ha Zioni and he was in the Betas before the war. So he found out that, in Italy, he can join up with the Betas and go to Palestine. That was his ambition. He found nobody alive in the family, nobody home, and before we even got home, he was already gone. And then he found out that we are home, and he did not come home, no, we just started corresponding. And then he went to Palestine, at that time Palestine. It was not Israel yet in '45.

So, to go back to my fiance, Shauni took us to this apartment where the maid was Marishka, and right away they moved up from the bedroom. They had two rooms, they had combination room. What did the kids do that came home? They had nothing. They occupied the place. So they went in the downtown areas, they occupied this nice two-room apartment with a bathroom and with a place for the maid to sleep, and they brought furniture from wherever. They brought furniture, they put it down.

I had a bedroom set, a beautiful bedroom set with Julia, my next door neighbor. So my husband went there. Julia gave him the bedroom set, and I also had a few suitcases of my stuffierngess it was called, you know. Before you get married you have bedding. So I left a lot

of things and clothes and some jewelry with Julia, and she gave him everything because they thought we are dead because it was already June, July in 1945, but she gave him already in 1944 everything back. She was a real true friend.

So we came, and Shauni brings us into his apartment. Marishka is there. She's cooking lunch. That was dinner. And I see my furniture in the bedroom. It's my furniture.

And so Shauni said, "You just wait here. Marishka, serve them, give them to eat. And go take a bath."

Right away she made a fire because there you have to make a fire under the water for the bath, and we felt at home and happy. And he right away took the horse and buggy and -- not horse and buggy. This is more elegant than I should call it horse and buggy.

Q. A CAR DO YOU MEAN?

A. A car, yeah. And he went back and he started shouting from outside. And my husband, he was sent for. But I told you he was the star of the team. And he started shouting, "Helen is home, Helen is home."

He just threw the ball down and ran. In his uniform as he was, he arrived home.

And it's a long story, the rest of it. We stayed there, and we were well cared for.

And then my sister started to look for her apartment, but her apartment was in the Ghetto at the time,

so that was occupied also, so she started to look in the downtown area for her mother-in-law's apartment and it was also occupied. But the landlord, he said he has authority to find them a place somewhere else and she will get her place back, her mother-in-law's place back.

Q. WHO WAS IT OCCUPIED BY?

A. Population. Whoever. I tell you, in 1944, when the Russians came in, the war ended there. Then it was like zabrah, you know.

Q. A FREE FOR ALL?

A. Free for all, whatever. They broke into stores, they took everything. It wasn't even stealing. It was just taking.

So then my sister, in a few weeks, about two weeks or so, she got her mother-in-law, father-in-law's apartment, and so she moved in. And her brother-in-law came back, he wasn't married yet, her husband's brother, but about her husband she knew nothing. We knew nothing. Nobody knew anything. Lots of them came back that they were taken to, when they were in forced labor with the Hungarian -- I would as soon call it army, but I call it army. Lots of them were used for stepping on the mine fields, you know, lots of them were killed that way. And when they took these Jewish boys when they caught them, they took them to Russia. You know, the Russians came in, so they took them prisoners.

My brother-in-law was taken prisoner in '42. Even though he kept saying and all these Jewish boys

saying, "We're not enemy, we're friends, we're Jews," the Russians didn't care. They didn't give a damn. They still were prisoners.

And my brother-in-law, we didn't know he's alive until 1948. From '45, my sister was there alone.

Her brother-in-law moved in, and she took in two other young men, so she cooked for the three young men, and that's how she made her living. I bought her a pair of stockings and clothes, she got a little money from these boys, so she made a living by cooking and caring for these. She took them in, her brother-in-law and two more guys. So that's how she made her living.

But she didn't know whether he's living or alive. She had suitors, she had suitors, a very good, one of the best friends, they were two couples. They were very good friends. His wife went with a baby to the left when we arrived at Auschwitz, so she was dead and he was alone. He came back, and he wanted very much to marry my sister, but still, in '46 and '47 and '48, he said, "I'm not waiting any longer, Ethel. Either you come with me, I want to go to Palestine, I want to go away from Satu-Mare, I don't want to live here forever," and he kept talking all along that he wants to take her to marry her and take her with him.

And she said, "No, not until I find out whether he lives or is dead. I can't."

So he got himself up and he went away. And in 1947 -- no, '48, in the summer of 1948, early summer, my

sister was helping me to put away cucumbers for the winter and green beans and paprika. You know, we put them in jars, and she was helping me to do that.

And I was living on the second floor. Shauni moved out when my husband and I got married, then Shauni found himself another apartment, and he moved out, and I lived there now with Marishka and my husband and myself.

And my sister was helping me. All of a sudden, a girl comes running in, a woman, and she has a post card in her hand, and she says, "Ethel, Ethel, your husband is alive. Look, here is a card from my husband. My husband sent this card," because from Russia very seldom did anyone receive a card, a post card to give at least to show that they're alive.

And this is when we found out that her husband was taken into a prison camp, where he found my brother-in-law being there already for I don't know how long. That's when she found out her husband is alive.

This was in June or so, and we left that year in December. He came home in October. So he was home two months already before we left. Then the escape from Satu-Mare, that's another story.

We were fleeing from Satu-Mare from the Russians across the border, my brother-in-law Morris, his wife Lensie. She is from Czechoslovakia. My oldest brother-in-law married a girl from Czechoslovakia, and we stayed together.

When we came home, my husband and his brothers

opened a shoe store in Satu-Mare. We had the best, most beautiful shoe store in Satu-Mare from 1944. He opened the store with Shauni first, with Shauni Gruenfeld, Alex Gruenfeld, and they were partners until the brothers, two brothers came home, Sol and Morris, and then they parted, they decided, when the family came home. His two sisters and his two brothers, they all four of them came home the same time.

After we were liberated, then my two brother-in-laws, they stuck together also through the concentration camp, and they found out where the two little sisters are because they are the youngest, the two girls are the youngest, and they went and picked them up, and the four of them arrived home one day.

We didn't even know they're alive. They arrived home, and we were married a few weeks only, my husband and I, and we gave them one of the rooms, and the two girls were sleeping on the floor and the two boys were sleeping on the floor.

Then they were with us for a year. They got married, the two girls on the same day. During that year they found themselves two husbands, and we married them off in 1946. The two girls in one day they married and the younger older brother because my husband is the youngest of the four boys. The second from the oldest, Alex, he was married, he married a Romanian girl, and he lived in Romania. And so the two boys, Sol got married in '47 and the same year Morris got married, and they had in -- no,

they got married in '46. In '47 they had a little boy Gaby.

And when we decided to flee Satu-Mare because it was getting to be my brother-in-law Morris, he was a high-style young man before the war, and he was on the blacklist. Somebody came and told him. We knew that what they were doing now, the Communists were taking over, they were bringing them in and putting nails -- pins under their nails, under their toenails and they tortured them to tell where the dollars are, where they have the dollars.

Now, dollars was such a traif thing. Nobody was to be caught with a dollar. That was the worst thing you could own. You could own anything from before the war, but dollars, if we were caught with dollars. So this was the pretense. This is how they brought them in, and they tortured them to tell about dollars. Then they sent them and they put them into prisons, where they never returned. Very few of them were able to return.

It was during Stalinism. It was such a terrible, terrible time that if somebody like somebody that we knew from our home town, he got drunk and he said -- he was by profession he was putting for the horses the --

Q. HORSESHOE?

A. Horseshoe, yes. And he got drunk. They went to a game, and after the game, they won the game, they had a few drinks and they were very happy, and he says, "What I would like to see is Stalin's horses, the funeral of Stalin's horses. I would like to put the horseshoes." So

he made that remark of something like this.

They arrested him, they took him away, and he died in prison because of what he said.

So this I'm telling you just as an example. Similar things were happening constantly. If somebody was on the blacklist, then he was almost as being dead.

A friend of ours who lives in Australia, he went through the torture for the dollars. He was lucky he had an uncle in a different town who was able to steal him out of Satu-Mare's prison because he was a oidvaren. He was able to steal him out, and they stole him through the border to Hungary to freedom, and this is how he is alive today.

Lots of them came out. Either they died when they were finally let out because they beat their lungs, their kidneys to pieces. So it was a terrible time to be on the blacklist.

And when somebody came and told my brother-in-law quietly, "Listen, you better get going because you're on the blacklist," then right away we talked it over, Joe and Morris, and we started whatever money we had. We had decided earlier that we want to leave. Lots of people left in the black market way, you know, crossing the border.

So we started selling the merchandise and putting back the empty boxes. So every day the boys went into the store, and the store, you came in, you thought that this is all merchandise. As they sold the

merchandise, they went and bought dollars.

And by the time in 1948, around the end of '48, the dollar was very expensive already, and we didn't get to buy too many dollars, but whatever we could, we converted our assets into dollars, and we prepared to leave.

And my brother-in-law Morris, he was a very efficient person, he still is, and he found a man whose name was Sosch, like Salty, and he owned property across the Romanian-Hungarian border, and he was taking people across during the night for dollars.

So we got together with another couple who also had a little boy just like Gaby, my little nephew, he was 15 months old by the time we were ready to go, and this couple owned a truck. So it was talked over that, this and this night, Sosch is going to meet us over there before the border somewhere, and we were able to go with this truck to close to there, close to there.

So I said goodbye to my sister Ethel, my brother-in-law. That night, my sister and my brother-in-law practically emptied out the apartment. All night long, they were carrying the stuff we left there, furniture, all the stuff we put away for the winter, you know, the cucumbers. So they were working, the radio, the carpets. You know, Persian carpets we had.

And in the morning, when they found out that the store is not open, they started to look around. What happened? Where are the Farkases? Why don't they open the store? That's when they discovered that we fled.

And they started questioning my brother-in-laws, that is the Farkas boys brothers, and they said they know nothing. Of course we said goodbye quietly to everybody before we left that evening. It was the 28th of December, 1944.

Q. WOULD THAT BE 1948?

A. No, no, '48. I'm all mixed up. I'm trying to collect my thoughts. You know, it's 45 years and I'm 70 don't forget. The mind isn't so sharp anymore.

So, in 1948, December 28, on my brother-in-law Morris' birthday, we went across the bridge of the Somesul, the Somesul is a river which runs through our town, and we met this couple with the little boy.

My sister-in-law Lensie took the little boy to a doctor, and they put a suppository in his little behind and so did this other couple so the boys are asleep, and they got a sled. They bought a sled, and my sister-in-law and that other couple, they bought a warm, warm, a little like the papoose, you know, they closed them in real good, warm, and we went with the truck.

And we left the truck on the highway, the closest to where this man had to meet us, and we came to this place, and he was waiting there.

He told us that every one of us should have a white sheet to cover ourselves. So he had a sack, a white sack, but stupidly, on his sack, he had his initials. So he had the sack put to a corner and he just put it on himself like that, and we were walking and walking across

the fields.

We didn't have much time to prepare ourselves in advance. I had bought myself a pair of high top shoes because people who left before, they telephoned us, "Make sure you have good shoes." And I went and bought myself a pair of shoes because, in our store, we didn't have that kind. We had fashion shoes.

And I didn't have time to break them in. And when it came to lace up the shoes and walk in them, they were so stiff.

And my husband said, "Don't start out with them. They're going to eat your feet up. You can't walk with these."

So what did I have? I had a pair of sandals and I had a pair of rubber boots where the sandals go inside them with zippers up to here.

Q. LIKE GALOSHES?

A. Yes. They were fashion shoes. They had a heel. That's why I had to wear a sandal for it. I wish I had plain rubber shoes or rubber boots, but it was much harder to walk in these because I had high heels inside them.

But we had no time to prepare any better, and we started to walk. And I had started to walk in these, and we fell down because it was corn field. And the corn husks were cut from here on, you know. So these corn husks, corn, whatever, we fell over them. I fell over them also because I had these high heel damn things on my feet. And

every time I got up, snow went inside. So my feet were going slush, slush, you know.

And what did we take along? We had previously prepared, this friend of ours made us -- you couldn't go into a store and buy bags like here you have a choice. He made us a zippered bag the same from some material for my sister-in-law Lencie and me, and I put in them a nightgown, Joe's pajamas, large and the small pillow case because I figure, wherever it will be, whatever we'll sleep on. It don't have feathers in it, but we'll be able to sleep on something white, something our own, something that smells good, we'll put in our underwear.

So I put in some underwear and nothing of value because I did have some nice silverware, but who's going to carry silverware? So what I put in this little bag was just underwear, a few clothes, and we put on about three, four layers of clothing. And I had a coat with fur inside because, during the Russians, during Stalin's time, you didn't show your fur outside, you showed the fur inside. You know, you couldn't show that you're rich. You couldn't show that you have things.

And we really didn't have jewelry, stuff like that, because everything was taken away before the concentration camp. All I had was my little wedding band. Julia had it, and she gave it back to my husband when he came back.

So we walked through this field. It was about 1:00 o'clock in the morning when we reached a village,

Chingar. This man had people arranged already that, when you knock on the door, they let you in. He paid for us because he brought us, he charged $500 per couple. So he had $1500 there from the three couples. I don't know, I don't remember if we paid for the children separate.

But let me tell you before I forget about the children. The children were laid, they were asleep so deep because they had the suppository, sleeping suppository. They slept, and they were being dragged now by Morris, now by Joe, now by the other father.

What happened was that these husks tore open one of these little papoose things, and one child started crying, was about midnight or so, and then the other one woke up also. So what they had to do quickly pick up the child, leave the sled behind, and they had to carry.

So my brother-in-law Morris was carrying Gaby, Joe was carrying Gaby, this man was carrying his little boy. But this man was emotionally or physically, I should say, so weak that he didn't have the strength to carry the child, so my husband took the child.

Then we find out that the woman is pregnant, and here she has a huge bundle on herself. So my husband goes and takes away the bundle, he takes away the child. So my husband carries their bundle, their child, and here I'm carrying my little bag, Lensie is carrying her bag and her purse and my purse, Morris is carrying his son.

So from time to time he gives his child back. "Now you take your child," to this man who had the truck.

And then Lensie says, "Oh, the hell with this purse. I don't need it. I can't carry it. It's too much for me." She throw away her purse.

I went and picked it up. "You're crazy. You're just as crazy as he." I pick up her purse and I put it next to mine, I carried her purse.

So this man, before we even reach that place, before we even reach the border, he lays down in the snow, and he says, "I'm not going anywhere. You take my wife and my child. I'm not going. I don't have the strength. I give up."

My husband and my brother-in-law gave him a couple of slaps. He says, "You come out of it."

And the man who was taking us across the border, he, too, he says, "I'll beat the hell out of you if you don't take your responsibility. You, look at that pregnant wife of yours. She's coming, poor thing, and here is your child. You want someone else should carry your child all the way? What about when we reach freedom? What about then?"

So they gave him a bad time. He got up, and he walked.

And not too much later, we arrive to this house. He knocked on the door, they opened up, they gave us right away a drink of -- some kind of drink. You know, a little shot of something. And they started making some warm food or warm drink, I don't remember.

But the man who took us across the border, he

said, "You have to give something, too. I'm paying to them every time."

Tape 2

So we were in this peasant's home, and this was on the Hungarian border. We were already in Hungary. We crossed the border.

And I didn't tell you that, when the children were being carried by their fathers and my husband Joe, from time to time, they were crying. And one time they were crying, and this man, finally they made him get up and go. The man who was taking us across the border, he said, "Be patient. We're almost at the border. Be patient."

And then we heard, it was terribly foggy, I don't even know to this day, we don't know to this day how this man knew his way, but it was his land, you know. He happened to have land across the border, part of it was Romania, part of it was Hungary. It was his land he was taking us through.

So we heard dogs barking and we heard shouting, "Sty, sty," which means "stop."

And we thought this is going to be the end of us because, just a few nights before, five young men were shot on the border, five Jewish young men were leaving from Satu-Mare across the border. You know, the border is so wide and most of them went through Changar, which is this route where we went. And there was a time when we heard these dogs bark.

And we were terribly tired. My brother-in-law Morris told us later, he says, "I was praying to be caught,

just to make sure we won't be shot when we heard the dogs bark and they shouted 'sty'."

But the fog was so thick that they couldn't see us. They just heard the children cry and the dogs probably made them aware. We were counting on them to having a good time. After all, it was near New Year, it was after Christmas. It was between Christmas and New Year's, and these guards, they drink, you know.

So we were hoping, as this man Sosch told us, that that's a good time to cross the border because they're busy, they're drinking and they won't care and the fog is usually very thick.

So, as we were going, he said, "Just keep the children quiet. Everything will be all right. We're almost at the border." Then, all of a sudden, he kept saying, "Be quiet. We're almost at the border. Let's go. Keep going, keep going."

Then, all of a sudden, he says, "Okay, guys, we stop, we sit down, we rest."

He took out the bottle and a little glass, and he gave us all a little drink. And we rejoiced, we are across the border, the sentries are far behind, we're safe and we have just a little more walk to come to this village, to this peasant home.

So now we're there, and they're giving us a drink and they're preparing something warm and we warm up. And then this man Sosch said, "Give them a little gift. They're nice people. They deserve it." Of course.

So we had money. My brother-in-law Morris, like I said, he's very efficient. He had bought for Romanian money or dollars, I don't know, he had bought Hungarian money to come across the border with. So we had Hungarian money. But I don't remember what we gave him because Morris took care of the giving there.

But this couple, this woman, this pregnant woman, poor woman, she opens up this big bundle that my husband was carrying almost all through the way, and she opens the top and she takes out some bedding, some pillow cases, things. And Lensie and I, we look what she has, she has table cloths with a big burned-out hole with spots, with dirty spots on it. And we just look at each other. My God, what we left home and what she is carrying.

So she gave them some stuff from that bundle, but we will never forget we sometimes make remarks remember.

So, anyway, this couple, they went to Israel.

You were asking me whether we left our home town. We had first of all to live in our home town, although, from the time that we came home and we got married, we started a very nice normal life, good business, and the boys were stars in this sport, everybody knew us and we lived the life of Riley. Not with very much money, I don't say we were rich people, but it was nice and would have been a very nice life. We wouldn't have even thought of going away from there if it wasn't this Stalin era with the terrible things that were happening to certain people

and we saw the future very bleak. So we just had to leave everything behind and go.

So what we had in mind was we'll go to freedom, we'll go to American zone or, naturally, not to Russian zone, and we'll go to Israel. Now we have a land, we have a country. Since last May, we have a country. And that was our thought. Lots of people that went away like this friend of ours who wanted to marry my sister, he, too, went to Israel, and he wrote back the land of milk and honey. And, of course, there was already war in '48, but that was our thought, to go to Israel. We're leaving Satu-Mare for Israel.

Okay, now, the peasant people took care of us. We go to the railroad station. It was quite far to go into Changar, the village, and he got his, not horse and buggy, but bulls and buggy, I guess, or cows and buggy. And Lensie with Gaby and I, we sat up on the buggy, the boys were walking. They were up, they were down. And we went to the railroad station.

And we arrived at the railroad station, we have to go buy tickets. We already said goodbye to Sosch, he was going back already home. So my brother-in-law, Morris, takes out it happened to be a very big bill. I don't know how he didn't think about having small bills, but it was a big bill, and they gave him back the bill when he went to buy the tickets for the train, not to Budapest, but Lensie had a sister who lived in Kecskemet. So Morris went to buy the tickets from Changar to Kecskemet. And, naturally, we

speak Hungarian and our language is perfect, they have no idea that we're not from Hungary. So they push it back through the window, "Give me smaller money. I don't have change. It's too early in the morning."

So my brother-in-law, he goes and says, "Well, I don't know. I have to go change somewhere."

So he went to a bar. I don't remember whether he had to go out of the railroad station or where. He went to a bar and bought himself a drink and he got change. I don't know if it was a thousand dollars bill -- not dollars, a thousand pengar, at that time it was pengar, now it's forint. So he had change, he came back, he bought the tickets, and off we were. We were on the train.

Before we fled Satu-Mare, that summer, I was sick. I was in bed for about two months with the yellow jaundice. I saw something that made me sick to my stomach. Since we didn't have refrigeration, I cooked goose hind, you know, and it was Saturday afternoon, and I brought it in, and I didn't turn the lights on yet. I started eating it in spice, you know, where we had this cooler. I picked it up and I started eating it. And when I came out and put on the light, I saw that fly eggs, the little fly eggs were all over it. And when I saw it, I got so sick to my stomach that I couldn't eat for weeks. I couldn't eat. And yellow jaundice, it caused me yellow jaundice. Here they call it hepatitis. And I was very sick with it.

And I also was pregnant and lost it. We wanted

children very much from the time we were married, but nothing happened. But that time, the doctor said yes, I was pregnant, but I lost it.

So I was sick, and the time came to go, and I was still pretty weak, fairly weak, but I was no longer yellow. My eyes cleared up and everything.

And in the morning, in the train, when the lights came on and they looked at me, they saw I was yellow again. Overnight, overnight, my eyes got yellow, my skin turned yellow again, and so we came to Kecskemet, we spent, this was the 28th, and we spent the New Year's Eve there hiding after Baubi's house. "Baubi" is her sister's name. Then the boys went New Year's day to Budapest. They took a train, they went to Budapest, they went to the Jewish temple. They started inquiring how can we go further from here, and they got information.

And, meanwhile, we had to settle down in Budapest for a little while until we were able to get to -- yes, they had to go to the HIAS, to the Jewish agency, and the Jewish agency was gathering groups, which they had hanky-panky with the Russians, some of the Russian border guards, and they turned the other way while you crossed from Hungary to Austria because that part was on the Russian, and Linz, for instance, Vienna was under Russia and Linz was under America.

Q. AGAIN IT WAS THE FOUR POWER, BUT SURROUNDING VIENNA WAS THE Russians?

A. Russians, yes. In Vienna, for instance, where

the Rochar Building was, they brought us over there. So let me tell you how it was.

So, in Hungary, first we had to rent a place to stay, the two wives and the child and the two husbands. The husbands went around smelling how things go, you know. So Lensie and I and Gaby, we found this place, I guess it must have been the Jewish people who directed us that these people rent furnished apartments. So we stayed there. We started buying some utensils and started cooking a little, and we conducted a little household.

Then we went and bought some materials, and we went to the tailors, we need a suit, we need this and that before we do anything else. We have to spend some time in Budapest, we might as well use it for getting some clothes because all we had was the three, four clothes that we had on ourselves. It was hard to walk with it too, I forgot to tell you.

So we were told that we can go that certain night, and they gathered us, we bought a suitcase, so we had already something to schlep. We went and with a bus, they had a whole bus full of people.

And there was a young -- a fairly young couple with a little boy who were in the bus. They were from Budapest. They said, "Oh, how lucky. You're going free."

Well, we said, "Yes. Well, we'll probably pay it back some day to the Jewish community."

She said, "We had to buy our way. 10,000 American dollars we had to pay for the HIAS to take us out

of here to Vienna." He said, "Of course, they used this money for like people like you. They didn't take the money for themselves, but," they said, "you have money, you pay for those, too, who don't have the money."

So we came to the border. We were sitting, we saw these Russian sentries there, we were kind of waiting what will happen.

So the conductor went into this little office and he said, "It's okay."

We sat in the bus, and we go for a little while. We have to go for a little while on foot. So we got our stuff. We crossed the border, and we have to go to another bus picked us up or this bus, I don't remember exactly, but I know that this was a tense moment until we were able to go from Hungary to Vienna.

So we came to Vienna, we arrived in the evening. They brought us to the Rochild's Sanitarium or something like that, it was a hospital or something, and a lot of people were there, Polish people who were sitting, living there since 1945. Three years they were sitting there and waiting to be able to go somewhere. They didn't want to go home to Poland and they were making children. Everybody had a little cot, not a bed, a cot, and food was given, there was a dining room or something, and it was very unsanitary. It was so terrible that place that we don't ever want to remember it. It was so unsanitary that, the first night we slept there, Lensie started hysterically to cry.

And we had some distant relatives in Vienna, and they said, "Come sleep here with Gaby."

But then somehow, somehow it was arranged that she can sleep, since it's only a matter of a few days because we don't want to stay in Vienna, it's a matter of a few days that she can sleep in the hospital with Gaby. So Lensie slept with Gaby in the hospital those two nights, I think two additional nights, and Joe and I slept next to each other and Morris, and we couldn't wait for those two or three days to be taken to Linz.

In Linz, they settled us in a DP camp. We registered there, they started giving us rations, and we started a life. Lensie and us, we got a classroom because this used to be their soldiers used to be or a school, I don't know. And they divided it with cardboard. So we lived in the same room divided with cardboard, but we conducted one household. We went and bought food and we cooked, one week Lensie cooked and one week I cooked and we got along wonderful. We had Gaby, and Lencie's nerves were not very easy, you know, because she was a mother with responsibility, with raising a little child. They are diaper washing here. You know, it was not very easy on her. But we were great help, Joe and I, and we enjoyed every moment of it. We loved Gaby, we still love him just the same as at that time.

And we lived there for eight months.

Now, we were waiting like others that we will go to Israel. My husband and Morris, too, the two guys

started to play soccer ball with a Jewish team, I think it was a Jewish team, and they met quite a few Polish guys who were playing, and they started talking, "Where are you going?"

"Going to Israel."

"Are you crazy?" To my husband.

He got a job also with the Joint Distribution. He was working. So this guy was working there and was playing ball.

He said, "Are you crazy? You want to go to Israel now? There's a war in Israel. You want to go the Israel? It's not a very easy life. Why don't you to go America?"

Joe said, "How can you go to America?"

"Don't you have relatives?"

"I have relatives, but I have no knowledge of them. My wife has relatives, but we don't know of them. We don't even know their names."

I happened to remember the name. I had an aunt in New York and a whole family, five children and so on.

So he said, "You just go to the HIAS, and you tell them that you have relatives and you want to go to America, and you will be eligible because you were in the concentration camp," and this and that.

So Morris said, "Okay, I'll go find out."

So he went and he inquired, and they needed some proof, and we were able to have people who vouched for us.

And then the boys were playing, you know. As a

matter of fact, at that time, my husband was offered $10,000 if he would play -- it was a lot of money -- if he would go to play for an Italian team. But we couldn't. We wouldn't even repeat it, not here about it. We never even discuss it.

So we waited until the papers got ready, everything went fine, and eight months later, we were -- yes, and Lensie had a sister-in-law who lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She started to write her about this.

She said, "Sure, come to America. I go to the HIAS here in Milwaukee, and I'll make arrangements that you all come to Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

So she went there, and she started the connection, you know, from Linz to Milwaukee. And within eight months, I think, we arrived. Then we left Linz in 1949, October the 1st, we came with a boat, General Mueher from Bremerhaven.

God, you don't wish to go by a boat. My husband, I couldn't talk him into taking a boat trip until a few years ago because he always remembered how sick he was until finally a very good friend of ours said, "Don't be silly, this isn't the kind of boat you came on to America."

Everybody was on the floor of that boat, all the ten days that it took from Bremerhaven to New York. It was terrible. The soldiers, they were coming and going, nothing was wrong with them, they were adjusted to it, but everybody was sick.

I knew a little English. Lensie and I took about 22 lessons in English. When we knew we were coming to America, then we hired an Englishman who taught us English, not American English, and we learned some English.

And I started talking to some -- yes, Yom Kippur came, and they made a room. There were religious people coming with us, too, and they made a room for a temple. And we saw a few soldiers came in, so we knew they must be Jewish, they start praying.

So I went to one with my limited English, and I started talking to him. And I saw a woman, she was smoking cigarettes, she was walking and she was wearing American clothes, you could tell, pants and American clothes.

So I talk to her, I said, "How come, I'm sick just looking at your cigarette, how come you can eat, you can walk, you can drink, you can smoke cigarettes, how come we're all dying here?"

She said, "Listen to me. Tomorrow morning, you go down to the dining room. You start eating hard boiled eggs with lots of salt, lots of pepper, and that will take care of your stomach, and you'll see."

And I don't remember whether the rest of them tried it, but I tried it, and next day I was okay.

Poor Gaby, he kept coming, "Mommy, I'm hungry, Gaby is hungry."

So I said "Don't worry, honey, let them die. I take you to eat."

So the two of us, Gaby and I, were fine, but the

rest of them, they just struggled through the ten days on that boat.

So we arrived to New York, and this cousin of hers who lived in Milwaukee, she had a daughter who lived in New York. She was waiting for us, although the Jewish community people had to pick us up from the boat and take us to the train station to take us to send us to Milwaukee. This cousin's daughter talked to them in English. She already was here a few years in America because she came from China. They went to China.

And she arranged with them that please telephone that they are not arriving this and this time, but 24 hours later. "On the same train, I will bring them to the train,, and they will arrive 24 hours later," and we spent one night in New York.

I had to look in the telephone book. I remembered my cousins and they remembered their cousins, their aunt, they had an aunt, and she found us one of each. And his aunt, Joe and Morris' aunt came. She was an old lady. She lived at her daughter's, and she came to see us that one night. So we got to be acquainted with some of the family, and then we kept it up.

So then the next day, we came to Milwaukee. And when we saw how they were waiting for us. They were waiting for us in, you know, Ilyush, the cousin was there, and they were waiting at the station.

They took us to an apartment. You know, Milwaukee is full of Germans. It was an old part on Knapp

Street in Milwaukee, and they took us into this very old house, but it was clean, it was nice, you know.

So we got in the middle there was a dining room and the kitchen, and Morris got the bedroom and we got the bedroom, and we settled in there in Milwaukee.

When we came in and we saw a plate full of fruit. We didn't see bananas, I don't know. Oranges we saw on the boat, which we couldn't eat, we couldn't smell even. And we were so touched, you know, we were so touched. Butter and a refrigerator with butter, with milk, and, you know, it was just such a wonderful beautiful experience for us, and so we settled in.

And Lensie had an aunt who just passed away a year ago, I think, she wanted us to come here to California, and her oldest sister lived here in California, so we talked on the phone now, and they said, "Don't buy anything. Don't settle down. Just live there until you have to, and, as soon as you are able to pick yourselves up, you come because Alex," her husband, "has talked already to ALCOA in San Francisco, and they want you very much. Morris the goal keeper and Joe the center forward, you're going to move here. No way, you're not staying in Milwaukee."

But we had to stay in Milwaukee for a while. We had to kind of -- yes, they committed themselves to play there in a team for one season, and they were playing in television 20 minutes every Sunday. They picked them up from Milwaukee, took them to Chicago, every Sunday they

went to Chicago, Oldsmobile was advertising, it was part of Oldsmobile's promotion, and they were playing soccer.

And so we spent the first winter, very, very hard winter in Milwaukee. We spent very, very hard summer in Milwaukee, very hot. Lensie and I were working at Frank's Sausage Factory. She had Gaby in a nursery. And Joe was working in a factory. What do they call this? You know, with the refrigerators and -- iron, ironwork, you know. He used to come home, he used to be oily all over. Every night he had to take a bath and rub the oil off.

So Joe was working in this factory and Morris was working for a Jewish man who was really wonderful. He had a factory of building blocks, and Morris was able to work until the cold weather turned to 10 degrees or 10 below, I don't remember.

So, anyway, he was working, and this man, he turned out to be our teacher, English teacher. No, not this man, a friend of his. He came to the house almost all through the time that we spent in Milwaukee, he came and taught us English, all of us. We learned English. Gaby, of course, a little two-year-old, he picked up in the nursery.

And we stayed there until the following September. We told all of our jobs that we're moving to California.

Joe and I bought a brand new Buick. I didn't know how to drive. He knew a little bit how to drive. And Morris and Lensie said they're not coming with Gaby for a

week in the car. They will come by train. Flying was too expensive. So they came by train. It took a lot less, and it took us a week.

Joe learned how to drive in America on his own experience. He was so tired of driving about five days later that he put me on the turnpike. You know, there was no traffic. He put me to the wheel, and I don't know, for some reason, that wheel didn't want to go straight. If I pulled it this way, it went this way. If I pulled it that way, it went. So I was going like this.

He said, "Okay, you don't know how to drive."

So he drove all the way our Buick. He bought it for $2800. At that time, it was not the cheapest Buick. We saved it up. We didn't spend the money. We earned and put it in the bank, every dollar. We just spent enough for food. We didn't even buy clothes because Helen, Lencie's sister, and her aunt kept saying, "Don't buy anything. You have time to buy here in California."

So we got by that whole year like that. So we then -- yes, Joe and I drove, and we arrived the 5th of September. We arrived across the bridge, the Golden Gate, I guess, and there was such a traffic in San Francisco. We got so scared. We never saw such traffic in our lives driving.

We had to go to a certain hotel in San Francisco. He was a big Hakoah fan, and it was all arranged that he will put us up until the Hakoah will find us jobs and the Hakoah will find us an apartment and the

Hakoah will take care of us, and that was the happy ending. They found us an apartment, and later on we moved to the Peninsula.

We liked the Peninsula from the very beginning. We lived less than a year in San Francisco, and the boys got a job on the Peninsula in a shoe store, both of them.

You know, we had a shoe store in Satu-Mare, and they are good business people, really, they know the merchandising. They touch a shoe, they know whether it's inside made of leather or cardboard, so they're good shoe people.

And a year later, they worked here on the Peninsula, and a year later, we opened our first shoe store in Milbrae on El Camino, and we had that store until last year. Now then we sold it to the family, and it's still in family hands, but they are giving it up also. And then we opened another store in Sunnyvale with another brother, and then we opened another store in San Carlos with another -- with Lencie's brother-in-law, with Baubi, the ones that lived in Kecskemet. They came to America, and he passed away, unfortunately, her husband. And we all made a good living, and we enjoyed life in America.

Children, Joe and I could not have for 14 years. Then we finally decided to adopt a child, and through the Jewish Agency, we almost got a little boy who was a year and a half old. His heart was on the right-hand side, and we wanted to take the child because the San Francisco Mt. Sinai Hospital told us that the child will

have to go through many operations, but it will never cost us a penny. "All this child needs is what you have, is love, care. That's all he needs." And we were already accepted.

We were to go meet the mother and the child. The mother was a divorced child with another child, and we worked to get this. Mr. Blackman was the head of the Jewish Adoption Agency at the time, and he really wanted us because he knew how much we really wanted a child and we couldn't have our own. At that time, there was nothing like now this, you know, creative parenthood.

And by the time we had to go and see the child and the mother, the mother changed her mind, and she didn't give up the child. She apparently had some prospects of getting married.

And we kept trying, and the time went, and we applied for adoption through the county, through San Francisco, through San Mateo County, and waited and waited, nothing happened.

Finally, a friend of ours, they live in Dublin, California, called us up. She was five, six -- she was six months pregnant. She also was not -- she could not conceive for eight years. Finally she was pregnant, and the baby died when she was six months pregnant, and the doctor, her doctor, said to them, "Here is a woman. She has a daughter in college. She's about your age, and she is pregnant to have a child at end of April. She would like to give up. She's not Jewish, but she would like to

give up the child because the father of the child is an old flame of hers, an old" -- they were very much in love, but they each married their own, he married a Jewish woman, she married and she had a family, she had a little 10-year-old and a 20-year-old in college, and here she was pregnant from this Jewish man, and he could not divorce because his wife was in an asylum.

Q. MENTAL HOSPITAL?

A. In a mental hospital. So she decided she'll give up the child. She told the doctor she would like to give up the child to a couple who are Jewish. She would like a couple who are this and this age, close to her age, and she's not looking for riches, but for parents who want to have a child, for people who cannot have, but who love to have a child.

And so Ann Schweitzer, that's her name, Ann and Ben Schweitzer, Ann and Ben told us about it, that they decided they'll wait because the doctor that said your next pregnancy will come sooner and you will have healthy children from then on, which is true, she has Karen and Debby, she has two daughters, I mean they have two daughters. And they said, "We talked about you, Helen, Joe. Are you interested because then we bring you together with this doctor?"

The doctor called, and we made arrangements with a lawyer in San Francisco. We have to put down $550 for her hospitalization, and her due date was the 23rd or so, about, April, 1957. '57 or '58. '58.

And we made the arrangements. We met the woman, she wanted to meet us. We took her out to Palo Alto for dinner with a fictitious name. Our name was fictitious, her name was fictitious. This was not a black market situation. The lawyer, you know, he was a good friend of the doctor, and there was a fee for us, but I guess they call it like gray market. No, there really was no market in this. It was just helping people to help themselves.

So we met this woman, and we liked each other very much. She was very happy with us and we were going to get the baby when she delivered. She was six months pregnant then. And then we were very happy. We were going to have a child, whatever, boy, girl, it doesn't matter.

In February, February 9, this was in December we met her, February, 1958, I had my last period, and then I didn't have it. I got very sick with Asiatic flu, and I was sick, sick. And that was if first time the Asiatic flu was in our area here the on Peninsula or in California. I was sick and didn't get well and I was sick and sick.

And then Dr. Lazar said, "Helen, I want you to take a pregnancy test because why are you throwing up? You're throwing up in the morning more than in the afternoon?"

"Yes."

He said, "I want you to go take a pregnancy test."

Okay, we belong to Kaiser. Take the pregnancy test. They call me up, they say, "The frog died, come in

and we do it over again."

Also, again some time passed, and then the Dr. Lazar said, "Okay, Helen, I'm making an appointment to a gynecologist and I want you to be examined."

He examined me, and he was the doctor that was Lencie's gynecologist when she had Susie, the second child. She is 16 months older than my daughter. So, naturally, I went to this doctor. The doctor made an appointment, I go to him.

And he said "Well, Helen, I examine you. Everything looks like you're pregnant, but with you I wouldn't commit myself. 13 years of marriage and I don't know." He said, "Let's hope it's that, let's hope." And meanwhile -- yes, he says, "I want you to see you four weeks from today."

I make my appointment, I go home, and I don't remember exactly, a couple of weeks later or days later, before my next appointment, I felt the baby move. It was a sensational feeling, and Dr. Lazar said see, "See, that's it, that's it."

So we have a daughter. No more, never did I get pregnant again. So we think it might have happened because we were relaxed, you know,.

So I had my daughter when I was 38, 14 years after our marriage. She lives here in Foster City. Unfortunately, she was married for six years and divorced with a two-year-old beautiful little daughter. She is a high school teacher, she lives in Foster City. She's

teaching in Woodside High School. She got her master's now last June, and we're living happily ever after.

I think this is the story that -- the rest of it, you know, there's a lot in between probably, but I don't know if there is anything else. If you would like to ask me, I probably left out a lot of things from in between, but I was kind of trying to give the whole story.

We lived within a very loving family. We brought out everybody from Satu-Mare, my husband's family, my family. Unfortunately, some of them are no longer alive.

Q. WHAT ABOUT YOUR OTHER SISTER AND HER DAUGHTER?

A. Oh, I didn't tell you about that. Okay.

When we --