

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW

of

GLORIA HOLLANDER LYON

February 13, 1989

by

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1 MS SILVER: I am talking to Gloria Lyon.

2 Gloria, why don't we start with tell me a little  
3 bit about your childhood and the town you were from and  
4 your background.

5 A. My name is Gloria Hollander Lyon.  
6 Hollander having been my maiden name, which I adopted as  
7 my middle name.

8 I was born in Czechoslovakia, in a small town  
9 called \* ~~Nagy Bereg~~ <sup>Nagy Bereg</sup> ~~Nodbera~~. In Czech it was \* ~~Velkebere~~ <sup>Velky Bereh</sup>. It's nine  
10 kilometers from the provincial capital of \* ~~Beranebo~~ <sup>Berehovo</sup> or  
11 ~~Beregas~~ <sup>Beregszasz</sup> in Hungarian. There is a reason I give you both  
12 Hungarian and Czech names for these areas and that is  
13 because when I was eight years old the Hungarians took  
14 over my area and the towns received Hungarian names.

15 My town was about 40, 45 kilometers from the  
16 Carpathian Mountains. On a clear day you could  
17 practically touch it. And it was mainly agricultural area  
18 and forestry. The soil was beautiful, black, and it lent  
19 itself to terrific fruit orchards and vineyards.

20 On the other side, we were about 40, 45 miles from  
21 the famous Tokay. We call it Tokai, the town of Tokai,  
22 where the famous wine comes from. Consequently, this  
23 whole region is wine country.

24 We owned a lot of land. By that, I mean we were  
25 comfortable, but the products that we raised were not for

1 sale; it was for family consumption, and vineyards. Some  
2 portions of these fields my mother inherited from her  
3 parents and my father inherited from his parents. It's  
4 something that we survivors don't know anything about  
5 today because we have nobody to inherit from.

6 We raised such items as potatoes, corn, wheat, of  
7 course grapes in the vineyards, and sunflower seeds, which  
8 was used to make oil out of.

9 I never forget the most -- Those were my favorite  
10 fields. Beautiful sunflowers as they turned with the sun.

11 We owned horses and cows and we also had a store, a  
12 small store, but it was the biggest in our little town.

13 Every Wednesday my mother and father would go nine  
14 kilometers into the city with the horse and buggy and in  
15 the winter with the sled and did the shopping for our  
16 store. And we children were being educated. I was a  
17 student.

18 We enjoyed living there. We had four strong  
19 seasons. And there was a stork's nest on top of our  
20 house, which I loved, and one further down on top of the  
21 hayloft. I remember the stork coming back with a ring  
22 that my father placed on its leg. It would come back year  
23 after year.

24 Q. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

25 What was everyone's names, your parents, your brothers

1 and sisters?

2 A. We were six brothers and sisters. Joseph,  
3 Michael, Shandor, I was next, Victor next and I was the  
4 fifth child and then my sister Anushka.

5 Q. What were your parents' names?

6 A. My parents' name were David Hollander my  
7 dad and my mother was Hellene Hollander.

8 My mother and my grandma ran the store and my  
9 father oversaw the fields to make sure that the migrant  
10 workers are taken care of who helped with our fields. We  
11 children were in school.

12 Then an accident happened and Joseph was involved  
13 in an electrical accident that killed him. He just  
14 graduated and we were very proud of him.

15 In 1938 all the Jews had to close their stores,  
16 including us. That really meant that we are heading into  
17 hard times, because once the liquid assets are gone, the  
18 cash, then we may have to sell some of the things that we  
19 can grow.

20 As it turned out it wasn't nearly as big a problem  
21 for us as it was for many Jews who did not own land, who  
22 simply owned shops in our town. They were really in  
23 destitute many times because their cash was gone after  
24 awhile, after a few years, and then they had no fields to  
25 eat from and so a family such as ours helped these Jews in

1 our town.

2 We had our horses and cows until the very end. In  
3 between 1938 and the very end, by that I mean when we were  
4 picked up in 1944, we experienced many, many difficulties.

5 In school, I was in second year high school and  
6 nearly finished it before we were picked up.

7 I took German as a foreign language, which helped  
8 me in subsequent years a great deal.

9 The problem that we experienced with anti-semitic  
10 people in our town suddenly we found ourselves singing  
11 anti-semitic songs. It sort of caught up with the Jewish  
12 kids. The words to an existing melody, melodic melody, I  
13 might add, would be very anti-semitic and very current,  
14 would pickup the current political situation against the  
15 Jews.

16 One that comes readily to mind was, the translation  
17 perhaps doesn't come through as well, but.

18 \* (The song is recited in Hungarian)

19 That means whoever has a Jewish girlfriend for a  
20 sweetheart should put a rope around her neck. This really  
21 tells you about the climate of the day. There were  
22 others.

23 Finally one day I remember mother saying What are  
24 you singing to that melody? I said Everybody is singing  
25 it in the school. We just want to be part of the crowd.

1 We realized, of course, later that we were working against  
2 ourselves. Also the Jewish children had, students, had to  
3 sit in the back seat of the row and soon we had to wear  
4 the yellow star and that immediately exposed us as Jews.  
5 For a while, my family were excused from wearing the  
6 yellow star because my dad was a hero in World War I and  
7 he was highly decorated. Unfortunately this turned out to  
8 be not such a help after all because we found ourselves  
9 neither Jews nor non-Jews. Eventually we had to wear the  
10 yellow star just shortly before we were taken away. We  
11 strongly wanted to belong to the Jewish group, even if we  
12 had to wear the yellow star.

13 Q. What happened, does the teacher say to you,  
14 Jewish students you have to sit in the back of the class?  
15 Do you remember what happened?

16 A. Well, it was very simply announced that all  
17 Jewish students had to sit in the back rows.

18 Q. Who announced that?

19 A. This was announced in each class in the  
20 high school where I was and in elementary schools also.

21 Q. How many students were in your high school  
22 and how many of those were Jewish?

23 A. Quite a few of them were Jewish. We  
24 actually -- I would say nearly about one-fourth. That's a  
25 very heavily Jewish populated town where I went to high

1 school in \* Berexas.

2 Q. Do you remember when the teacher came in  
3 and said Jewish kids have to sit in the back of the class,  
4 do you remember what you were thinking?

5 A. I don't remember, except that I remember  
6 only the effects, the psychological effects that wearing  
7 the Jewish star can have. Suddenly your friends are  
8 turning the other way. They are no longer including you  
9 in their game or their discussions or study groups.  
10 Consequently you felt left out.

11 So Jewish kids with whom you did not even associate  
12 with before, for whatever reason, suddenly found  
13 themselves a community there and they stuck together.

14 In our area this did not go on for a very long  
15 time. The Jewish star, as I recall, I could be a little  
16 bit off, but I would say that we wore it only about a  
17 month to five, six weeks at the most.

18 Q. What year was that?

19 A. That was in 1944.

20 Q. So no Jewish star before then?

21 A. Exactly.

22 Q. What about sitting in the back of the  
23 class? Did you have to do that before 44?

24 A. No. That also took place towards the end.  
25 The last semester, half year I would say. Actually toward

1 the end of the last semester. It was half a year.

2 Q. When did you hear the anti-semitic songs?

3 A. The anti-semitic songs became very popular  
4 in 39, 40. I was only about nine, ten years old. So that  
5 makes it about 49. I am sorry. 39, 40.

6 Q. You were ten years old in 39?

7 A. Exactly. I was born in 1930. This area  
8 was Czechoslovakia until 1938 when the Hungarians took  
9 over this area as part of the Munich Agreement. Soon  
10 after the Munich Agreement all sorts of racial laws  
11 filtered down from Germany into our area and one of them  
12 was the yellow star. There were other things much later,  
13 closer to 44 when men, Jewish men, disappeared from town  
14 and soon the family would receive a notice that so and so  
15 is missing in action. But we didn't really know what  
16 happened.

17 The notice would say on the Russian Front that he  
18 would be missing from the Russian Front. One of them was  
19 my uncle who lived across the street from us. His wife  
20 was my father's sister and they had seven daughters. I  
21 will get back to this family later because something did  
22 happen.

23 Families like this suffered tremendously. They had  
24 no food and their savings were completely used up and they  
25 depended on those members of the Jewish community who

1 could still afford to give something for their sustenance.

2 We could see we were in for hard times but never,  
3 ever did we ever think that we would be taken away from  
4 our home and we will never see it again. Never thought  
5 that. Otherwise, I am sure that many of us would have  
6 fled. There were some families who emigrated to the  
7 United States in the late thirties and we could have done  
8 the same thing, had we known what was ahead of us. But  
9 hindsight is always easier to analyze than looking forward  
10 and making predictions.

11 Suddenly in 1944 --

12 Q. Before we get to 1944 did you hear anything  
13 before 44 about what was happening to the Jews?

14 A. Never.

15 Q. Never?

16 A. Never. Until the year before we were taken  
17 away. There was a man who came through our town and that  
18 was in the summer of 43. I remember him as if it were  
19 yesterday because of the news that he brought us.

20 He came to us because my father was a leader of the  
21 Jewish community and he talked to us and my father was to  
22 spread the word to everybody. What he said was that he  
23 came from almost a slaughterhouse. That he escaped from a  
24 pool of blood in Poland where people were being shot into  
25 mass graves. And in the darkness of night he said he

1 crawled out of the mass graves and he crossed the  
2 Carpathian Mountains and he made it his business to go  
3 from town to town to tell Jewish communities about the  
4 faith of the Jews in Europe by the Nazis.

5 You see nobody would believe what happened.  
6 Everybody thought that he was a lunatic, he was crazy.

7 It somehow made a deep impression on me. I  
8 remember, I was only eight years old. No, I couldn't have  
9 been. In 1943 I was 13.

10 Q. In 19?

11 A. 43. I was thirteen years old. I remember  
12 that face so well. He just said Believe me, it's  
13 happening and that wherever the Nazis go they slaughter  
14 all the Jews.

15 Q. Do you remember his name?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Can you tell me what he looked like?

18 A. I can remember he had very big eyes and  
19 bushy eyebrows, full lips, and he was a little bit on the  
20 plumb side. But I remember his intensity. He said  
21 Believe me, I am completely sane. This is happening to  
22 Jews in Europe. But you see, there was a complete news  
23 blackout where we were. We were fed only propaganda. But  
24 at that time we weren't really aware of that.

25 Reading the newspapers -- You could not listen to

1 the radio. The Carpathian Mountains blocked the sound and  
2 they were jammed. The radios, even if you could hear it,  
3 in fact my brother had a secret radio in the basement and  
4 he took the life in his hands in doing that and static was  
5 terrible. He was listening to it all the time and it was  
6 jammed and he just could get words through here and there,  
7 but could not really get much news, except local news and  
8 that didn't help us very much.

9 So we were completely ignorant really outside of  
10 this one persons eyewitness account as to what went on in  
11 Europe.

12 Q. Were you in the family room when he came  
13 and talked to your family or were you eavesdropping? Were  
14 you in the room?

15 A. I was eavesdropping. My brothers, although  
16 my brother doesn't remember a word about this. I said How  
17 can you forget such a thing?

18 Well, probably I thought he is crazy and I didn't  
19 think anything of it.

20 I thought what if it is true? What if it is true.  
21 Somehow I dismissed it from my mind after awhile and later  
22 only to think about this man many, many times.

23 Q. Did you talk to your parents about what you  
24 had heard?

25 A. No. I wasn't suppose to be listening, but

1 I remember hearing him. When this man left our house he  
2 was surrounded by children, because he was a new face in  
3 town and they sort of walked with him for awhile and off  
4 he disappeared, went to the next town and so on.

5 Q. Did you tell any of your friends what you  
6 had heard?

7 A. No. We didn't discuss it. In an area like  
8 this you hear many rumors. It was a mistake not to, I  
9 realize that now. But, like I said earlier, it's  
10 hindsight. Had we all known and taken this man seriously  
11 we all would have known what to do.

12 Q. So as far as you knew, Jews had to wear the  
13 yellow star and this and that, but they weren't deported  
14 or they weren't certainly murdered?

15 A. Exactly.

16 Q. They were suffering like everyone else in  
17 the war?

18 A. Well, in a sense, yes. On the other hand,  
19 because a lot of non-Jews were gone also and fell in the  
20 war. So actually they were lumped together in our minds.

21 A soldier can die in the war and that's a war they  
22 would say and there is nothing we can do about it. Well,  
23 those are just things that I tend to recollect from my  
24 early years.

25 I remember this is a religious community. On

1 Sundays the peasants would dress up in black and the  
2 church bell would ring and they would look so neat going  
3 to the church and coming back I would watch them. A  
4 religious community.

5 Jews and non-Jews lived side-by-side. We were  
6 intermingled. What we did non-Jews did and vice versa.  
7 We spoke the local language, which was first Hungarian.  
8 For my parents that is because they were born in the  
9 Austria Hungarian Empire. They are from Hungary. We  
10 children were born in Czechoslovakia, which was carved out  
11 during World War I, after World War I to be exact. And  
12 then it lasted, our part of Czechoslovakia lasted only  
13 until 1938 as I said earlier.

14 Q. What was your mother's tongue or language?

15 A. My first language was Czech, which I very  
16 quickly forgot. I was only eight years old. I went to  
17 Czech school and I just remember nursery rhymes and the  
18 national anthem, the Czech national anthem, and very  
19 little else. Just good morning and thank you. Other than  
20 that, Hungarian became the language to know.

21 So I learned my basic 4-Rs in Hungarian. Even  
22 today I can count fastest in Hungarian. A strange  
23 phenomomon, because that's the language I learned to read  
24 in. So we communicated to our parents in Hungarian. But  
25 we children spoke fluently both languages Czech and

1 Hungarian.

2 Q. When your family lost the store --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- in 39?

5 A. 38.

6 Q. And then the next, until 44, until you were  
7 deported, the family lived off the land?

8 A. Yes. We lived off the land and we had  
9 plenty of milk. One cow, just before we left gave us  
10 about 50 liters of milk. She just had a little calf. The  
11 calf could only drink so much. So there was plenty of  
12 butter and cottage cheese and so on. We had plenty of  
13 wheat and corn. So we had to restrict certain areas of  
14 our lifestyle. But there was more than we could have.

15 Q. What did you have to restrict?

16 A. Well, things that we had to buy. Clothing,  
17 for example. That was the hardest part. Mother had to  
18 sell some extra butter and milk in order to raise the cash  
19 to buy us new clothes for the holidays. Such was the life  
20 after 1938.

21 The night before we were taken away a friend of my  
22 dad's came to our house to tell him that the following  
23 morning we would be rounded up by the Nazis.

24 You see, this was during Passover. We were picked  
25 up the day Passover ended, the very next day, and it was

1 that night before when this Christian friend came to our  
2 house to warn us.

3 So that night my father said Let's bury the family  
4 jewelry and so they picked -- The family was called  
5 together and dad said You children should know what we are  
6 going to do tonight, because we have to leave our home  
7 tomorrow, the home that belonged to our family for  
8 generations, and the house that my parents built, and that  
9 was our home.

10 So they decided that mother's jewelry, which by the  
11 way was an investment in those days, because banks use to  
12 go bankrupt all the time. There was no F.D.I.C. or  
13 Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation to insure any  
14 savings in banks. So people invested their money in  
15 jewelry because that can always be converted into money  
16 through a sale.

17 So they picked up the wooden floors in one of our  
18 bedrooms and they hid the family jewelry in a metal box in  
19 that floor. They replaced -- Apparently they put a metal  
20 sheet on top of it and replaced the wood.

21 The silver candelabras and silverware, they dug a  
22 big hole for that at the far end of our seven room house.  
23 It was a special room with a dirt floor. Unfortunately  
24 because of the nature of the floor that was found later.

25 Right away after the news came my father dispensed

1 my brothers to tell so and so and so and so and instructed  
2 them to tell others about the news about tomorrow morning,  
3 while certain members of the family were digging the hole.

4 We couldn't understand that we would be going away.  
5 It was all bewildering to my sister and I, who were the  
6 youngest. But the following morning at five the Nazis  
7 really came pounding on the floor.

8 I'd like to backtrack just one more thing. Since  
9 it was Passover we only had Matzos in the house. We had  
10 nothing like bread to take along. So my mother got the  
11 flour back from our neighbor. Because it was Passover, it  
12 was symbolically given to our neighbors as a sale and then  
13 you could purchase it back.

14 Mother started to bake bread during the night. At  
15 five o'clock in the morning when the Nazis came pounding  
16 on the door the bread was still in the oven and we had to  
17 leave it behind. I even forgot that part until my sister  
18 reminded me of it when we met.

19 Q. This was, you are not suppose to bake  
20 bread?

21 A. Exactly.

22 Q. You were an orthodox family, Gloria?

23 A. Yes, we were an orthodox family. We  
24 observed the kosher and all the laws and our tradition.

25 Q. But your mother broke that for gift night

1 to prepare?

2 A. It had to be. It meant taking all Passover  
3 dishes up to another level of the house under the roof and  
4 bring back down the other dishes.

5 My father kept telling my mother Don't do anything  
6 extra because we don't know where we are going. We can  
7 always bring it back when we return. Such little things.

8 What to take along? We decided we will take our  
9 best clothes, the strongest clothes and best shoes. For  
10 Passover we always had new shoes made for us. These were  
11 all custom made shoes. We couldn't just go into a store  
12 and buy a good quality pair of shoes anymore in 1944. So  
13 I wore my new shoes and they served me quite well for a  
14 long time after that.

15 So we were then ordered to leave our house in half  
16 an hour and turn the keys over to them.

17 Q. How many people came to your house?

18 A. There were two, what are they called? The  
19 local police. The gendarme. Gendarme, with the feathers  
20 in their caps and three Nazis. So there were five people,  
21 as I recall.

22 All I remember, I was so consumed by what am I  
23 going to do with my cat Utzi. So the neighbor who watched  
24 from a few feet away said I will take care of Utzi until  
25 you come back. So I remember handing over my kitty cat.

1 Q. Do you remember the name of the Christian  
2 man that came to your house to warn you?

3 A. My brother remembers him. I don't remember  
4 his name.

5 Q. Will you ask your brother what his name is?

6 A. Sure.

7 Q. Was he a friend of your family?

8 A. Yes. He was my father's friend and he was  
9 a local leader. He was an official. He was also an  
10 official. I think -- Well, I don't remember. I was too  
11 young to really know what he does, but he was a well  
12 respected community leader. I remember his size.

13 My father had two non-Jewish partners in a  
14 thrashing machine that my father owned, which went from  
15 farm to farm. This man was somehow involved with that  
16 ownership, I believe. I am not quite certain about that.

17 Q. What were you carrying at five o'clock in  
18 the morning when they said to be out of here in half an  
19 hour?

20 A. Well, the most moving thing that I  
21 experienced at this point was as they were sealing the  
22 lock -- They put a big lock on our door. They started  
23 powering wax over it. They were melting wax and pouring  
24 it over the lock so that would be the proof nobody went in  
25 the house. So we had the secure feeling it's well locked

1 and it will be taken care of while we are gone and until  
2 we come back.

3 One of the Nazis took out a stamp and put the  
4 Swastika into the hardening brown brownish wax and my  
5 father started to cry. That really -- just to see my  
6 father cry. I don't remember when I saw him cry before.

7 So then we were taken to the local city hall and  
8 there we saw many Jews arriving from our towns and we took  
9 along just what we were permitted to do just warm  
10 clothing.

11 It was April. I think April 15 of 1944 when this  
12 happened. It was still very nippy. You could -- Spring  
13 was about to come, but it was quite chilly yet. Then we  
14 were loaded on the trucks and taken into the neighboring  
15 Berexas where I went to high school. There we were placed  
16 in a brick factory.

17 Q. How many people were in the city hall and  
18 how many trucks did it take to get you to the next town?

19 A. There were at least 300 of us,  
20 approximately.

21 Q. Was that all the Jews in your town?

22 A. All the Jews in our town. We all knew each  
23 other intimately. We were all mostly all of us related.  
24 Practically all related. But we were all very close  
25 friends.

1 Q. Who were you sitting next to? What was the  
2 truck ride like?

3 A. It was very much like that those in Germany  
4 with canvas on top.

5 Q. And two seats on each side of it?

6 A. I don't think there were any seats. I  
7 think we just sat on the floor of the truck.

8 Q. Who were you sitting with?

9 A. My mother and father and my brothers and my  
10 sister. We were all there. My grandma passed away a few  
11 years before and my brother Joseph had the electrical  
12 accident. So there were my three brothers.

13 Q. Were people panicking? Was your father  
14 crying more? Were you crying?

15 A. My father kept saying Let's just wait and  
16 see. Let's just wait and see. Keep calm. He was a very  
17 calm and very thoughtful person. He kept many people from  
18 becoming hysterical, which we all tended to be.

19 But we really didn't think anything very, very bad  
20 could happen to us. Because they kept -- The Nazis kept  
21 telling us Well, we want to save you. We have a lot of  
22 anti-semitics in this town and we want to take you to a  
23 place where you won't be subjected to anti-semitism and  
24 you will be together. So in away it seemed reassuring.  
25 But on the other hand, we didn't feel we were in danger in

1 our particular situation, in our particular town because  
2 we were so intermingled with everybody.

3 At the same time nobody else thought so. Nobody  
4 else tried to save us or hide us. Nobody offered to save  
5 us or hide us that I know about.

6 Q. Did you want to be hidden? Did that come  
7 up as a possibility?

8 A. It didn't even come up as a possibility.  
9 But by the time we learned we were going to be taken away  
10 nobody could escape because the town was sealed. By that  
11 time we lived not very far from the railroad station.  
12 Anybody could just run down half a mile and just catch a  
13 train somewhere. But everything was sealed. There was no  
14 way one could even get on a train. So there was no way  
15 one could escape.

16 But it's not something we thought about because we  
17 didn't feel we were in grave danger at the time.

18 In any event, first we were taken into the  
19 beautiful synagogue in Berexas. While the Nazis were  
20 setting up this brick factory, the ghetto in the brick  
21 factory, and eventually they moved us from the beautiful  
22 synagogue into the brick factory where the walls were open  
23 or closed, depending on how many bricks were lined up.

24 These are sort of little cubicles. They placed  
25 entire families into these little cubicles on dirt floor,

1 with a running hallway, sort of a hallway, between boards.  
2 It was absolutely true, it was a huge brick factory. It  
3 had a long roof on top of it.

4         Soon they were bringing buckets of water for  
5 people. If you didn't bring a cup to drink out of we  
6 couldn't even get a drink.

7         Soon they were placing everybody to work. And work  
8 was taking the brick and giving it to the next person to  
9 the next person to the next person and so on. I don't  
10 know what they did with it at the end of the line.

11         But as the Jews kept coming into the ghetto - they  
12 called the brick factory a ghetto because they were  
13 assembling all these people from the communities around  
14 the area, but only Jewish people. Eventually all of us  
15 were there and I remember you could go to the entrance of  
16 the factory and see if you recognize anybody.

17         One time I went with dad and I remember somebody  
18 from our hometown came to tell my father that so and so in  
19 our town is using our horses during the day and so and so  
20 is using it at night. By the time you will come home you  
21 are going to have horses that are skin and bones.

22         My dad, who loved animals so much, especially his  
23 own, I just want to tell you how much he loved these  
24 animals. Before we left he went into the stall and he  
25 went from horse to horse and cow to cow and hugged them.

1 It was such a pitiful thing. He hugged them and he had  
2 the brush in his hand and he was brushing them as if to  
3 say goodbye. Maybe he knew more than he let us know.  
4 Maybe he did. But I don't know.

5 And so when he heard that our horses are being used  
6 day and night my dad really swore. You tell the son of a  
7 bitch that when I get out of here he better lookout for  
8 his life unless he takes care of my horses. He loved them  
9 so much. In fact, one of them was pregnant when we left.  
10 That's the horse that he was mainly concerned about.

11 Q. Do you remember the name of the person that  
12 was using the horses?

13 A. It's very strange that I have blocked out  
14 the names of the people in my town. I have tried so many  
15 times to remember these things. But my brother remembers.  
16 He remembers all these names. I knew the names of these  
17 people intimately. Somehow it doesn't come forward.

18 Four weeks later -- Oh, while we were in the ghetto  
19 they came around with empty buckets. They wanted people  
20 to give their wedding bands and the Hungarians were trying  
21 to collect as much as possible from the Jews. Most of us  
22 had very little jewelry along.

23 I had a pair of golden earrings. My sister did and  
24 so on. We couldn't take those out because they were  
25 soldered in so we would not take them out or lose them

1 because it was always solid gold. They didn't take it.

2 My mother gave up her wedding band. But they did  
3 not look elsewhere. If you had anything hidden you could  
4 have taken it with you wherever you went. Sometimes  
5 people sewed things into their clothes lining or whatever.  
6 But not in our case.

7 About four weeks later we were shipped out.

8 Q. Before you were shipped out, while you were  
9 there were you working? Were you a worker full time?

10 A. Not I. I was a student. My father had to  
11 work and my brothers.

12 Q. What did you do during the day?

13 A. A very interesting thing developed. We had  
14 some free time and the young people met each other.

15 Believe it or not I had my first marriage proposal  
16 at that time from a young man I never saw before until I  
17 went to the ghetto. That was still on the grounds of the  
18 synagogue, in the yard of the beautiful synagogue in  
19 Berexas.

20 I said I am too young to get married. I am only 14  
21 years old. But my cousin Leah is 17. She may be interest  
22 in your marriage proposal and I just left him. Thinking  
23 back now, a 14 year old then was quite unsophisticated,  
24 compared to a 14 year old today who knows so much about  
25 life. But I remember the young man wanted me to wait for

1 him and marry him when I come back.

2 There seemed to be an urgency. A lot of young  
3 women received marriage proposals during these  
4 circumstances. But life wasn't really as beautiful as I  
5 may have drawn this picture to be. All these young men  
6 and ablebodied people had to work doing things. They were  
7 taken out of the ghetto and did certain types of work. I  
8 don't really know all what.

9 Q. Was your father frightened during this  
10 time?

11 A. Everybody was frightened, actually  
12 everybody was. Times were so chaotic. Times were very  
13 insecure. Suddenly we were away from our homes and thrown  
14 into this dirty situation. Can't even have a change.  
15 Babies were screaming and crying. They didn't have their  
16 milk that they needed. Mother's were just too nervous to  
17 nurse. People began to die from pneumonia because it was  
18 very cold. The sharp wind just went through this ghetto.  
19 But it was really just a makeshift factory. If we brought  
20 a blanket, fine. If not, we were not given any blanket to  
21 cover ourselves with.

22 Some people brought along too much and sometimes  
23 that was taken away because there was not enough room.  
24 The situation was absolutely incredible.

25 My brother was of military age. He was 20 years

1 old. Because of that he was taken out for the labor  
2 force. He was told that because he is Jewish he is not  
3 going to be getting a uniform or he is not going to be  
4 using a gun, but he will be like a soldier. We said  
5 goodbye to my brother and I didn't see him for 17 years  
6 later. That was my brother Michael.

7 Now Shandor and Victor and Anushka and mother and I  
8 were ordered to load -- were loaded onto the cattle cars.  
9 You see the Nazis were very clever. They chose this brick  
10 factory because the railroad tracks led into the factory  
11 making it easy for the Nazis to ship us all out. Usually  
12 it was done at night so the civilian population would not  
13 know very much. Not very far from Berexas was a very  
14 large railroad center called \* Chop. So it was easy to  
15 ship us out in any direction they wanted to.

16 But they knew where they wanted to ship us  
17 apparently. Of course, this is from hindsight.

18 Q. Your father was not on that?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. He was. Everyone but your brother?

21 A. Exactly. So we traveled for about four  
22 days and we arrived at our destination on Friday night.  
23 All night long we were kept in these cattle cars.

24 By the way, when we were loaded onto these trucks  
25 they gave us a small barrel of water and a bed pan. We

1 were so crowded in those trains that most of us really  
2 could not even sit down. So we opted to stand up and lean  
3 on each other's shoulders and try to sleep that way and  
4 then take turns, those could who could sit down.

5 We had to do our basic human functions with just a  
6 single blanket as a screen. All these things came as a  
7 shock to us, we had to do suddenly that we never had done  
8 before.

9 When we arrived -- As morning broke dad looked  
10 through the cracks and he commented he didn't like what he  
11 saw. He noticed tall electric wire fences and rows and  
12 rows and rows of long barracks. The name of the place as  
13 we later learned was Auschwitz.

14 There were just many thousands of us it seemed when  
15 we arrived.

16 The first thing we heard was shouts in German.  
17 Rausch. Rausch. Out, out. Dogs barking and German words  
18 are hitting us with shouts to lineup and walk in an  
19 orderly direction and go a certain way. Some people in  
20 striped uniforms, blue and gray uniforms, were helping us  
21 down. And some of us were told, like my sister was told  
22 you are 18. You are 18. No, I am just 12 years old. I  
23 was 14. No, you are 18. This was said in Yiddish.

24 To my mother one said Say that you can do any kind  
25 of work, that you can do work out in the fields. Mother

1 just remembered this. But we had no idea what this meant.  
2 We were certainly not encouraged to ask questions, on the  
3 contrary.

4 So we followed the crowd and we walked. We could  
5 hardly straighten out after that. We were all sort of  
6 broken up from this long journey.

7 As we reached a crossroads there was a German  
8 officer with white gloves and a baton or a little stick in  
9 his hand. He was separating us into three groups.

10 The men and women had to go in two different  
11 directions and the women, the old people and children and  
12 disabled, the sick, had to go in one direction and those  
13 who were over approximately the ages of 17, 18 to about  
14 40, 45, give or take a few years, were sent in another  
15 direction.

16 I was sent with my mother in the direction of those  
17 in the middle group. My sister was sent along with the  
18 children and the disabled and the sick and the old. So we  
19 thought the old people would take care of the young. We  
20 didn't know what this selection meant.

21 Q. Who else was with you? Just you and your  
22 mother?

23 A. Yes. My aunt and my uncle and five of  
24 their eight children. Three of them hid out in Budapest.  
25 My other aunt. Lots of cousins from my hometown.

1 Q. Can you tell me some of their names,  
2 Gloria?

3 A. Sure. My aunt lived across the street.  
4 Her name was \* Shuttle Scharf. The girls name was Edith,  
5 \* Yanka and Chela, Burgie and so on and two little ones,  
6 whose names I don't even remember.

7 Q. How were they related to your family?

8 A. My first cousins. Their mother and my  
9 father were sister and brother. And then my uncle \*  
10 Fahrcash, who had seven sons. Three of them hid out in  
11 Budapest and the other five came with us. My other uncle  
12 Samuel.

13 Q. What was his last name?

14 A. Hollander.

15 Q. What were the other family last name?

16 A. Scharf. My sister married a Scharf. My  
17 father's sister married a Scharf. My uncle Fahrcash and  
18 my uncle Yennie, these were all Hollanders. These were my  
19 dad's brothers. They all came with their big families.  
20 And there were other cousins. The \* Gelb family.

21 My uncle Bela Gelb, who was the local town teacher.  
22 He was a very impressive looking man. He came with his  
23 two daughters.

24 Q. What line was your brother in? He was sent  
25 with the men? Your father?

1           A.           My father and brother were sent with the  
2 men. After that I didn't know the subdivisions. In other  
3 words, I don't know who was sent to one side and who was  
4 sent to the other side.

5           Now here mother and I are walking with all these  
6 people one way and Anushka was sent to the other side by  
7 this man with the white gloves and the stick, who we later  
8 learned was Dr. Joseph Mengele, the infamous camp doctor  
9 of Auschwitz. For many years he was one of the most  
10 wanted war criminals.

11           Anushka didn't want to go that way, and wanted to  
12 join us. So she stuck around for, seemed like probably  
13 was just seconds but it seemed like longer than that. And  
14 a German hit her in the back and said go, go and she  
15 continued to go the other way with the old people.

16           A wagon was coming from that direction toward our  
17 direction, pulled by two horses, with rubber tires was  
18 passing us by. It carried luggage and there was Anushka  
19 sitting at the edge, at the very end, and as she saw us in  
20 the row she jumped off and joined us.

21           We were at that time very angry that she did this  
22 because we felt that the old people would take care of the  
23 young people. Now she would have to work very hard. But  
24 at the same time, of course, we were very happy to have  
25 Anushka with us. So three of us were together.

1           We went to a place where they shaved our heads  
2 completely and we were given this tatoo on our arm. I was  
3 tatooed A-6374. Mother was tatooed first. A-6372. It  
4 shows up a little bit when it's moistened. Do you see  
5 this number. Mother was tatooed A-6372, my sister is 73  
6 and I am 74. You see, I am still carrying that tatoo on  
7 my arm today.

8           Many of my friends had this operated to get it out.  
9 Although my doctor said now it can be taken out through  
10 modern methods without an operation.

11           Q.       Did it hurt?

12           A.       It hurt very much. Because it was done  
13 with a needle that was stuck into ink, an ink well. Each  
14 time they had to penetrate the skin and leave the ink  
15 under the skin. So that was the procedure.

16           The following day our arms swelled terribly. There  
17 was some people who died from this. We didn't know what  
18 the reason was at the time. They developed high fever and  
19 they just died. You see, they used the same needle on all  
20 of us.

21           So looking back now I can really understand what  
22 the cause of some of these deaths could have been.

23           At that time we weren't sure what was the reason  
24 for it. We were tattooed.

25           We had to give up all our clothes except for our

1 shoes. I was very lucky that our transport was able to  
2 keep our shoes. I had good strong new shoes with me,  
3 which served me very well for a long time.

4 Q. I am sorry. Before we go on, can I ask you  
5 to take off these bracelets?

6 I think the noise might be --

7 A. On sure, I am sorry.

8 Q. I didn't realize that either. I just think  
9 it might be picked up by the equipment.

10 (At this time the deposition was recessed)

11 Q. You didn't know where your father was?

12 A. No. Or brothers.

13 And then we all received a gray cotton uniform.  
14 And that's it.

15 Q. All your clothes were taken away?

16 A. All our clothes was taken away from us.

17 Q. The gray uniform, was that like a little  
18 hospital gown?

19 A. Yes. Only longer. It came down to the  
20 middle of my legs.

21 Q. Long sleeve or short sleeves?

22 A. No, it had short sleeves. It didn't have  
23 long sleeves. That was it.

24 And then we were assigned to a barracks. There we  
25 learned how naive we were, from the old timers. The Jews

1 from Holland, Belgium, France and from all countries under  
2 Nazi occupation. You could hear all sorts of languages  
3 spoken.

4 At first when we were assigned to the barracks we  
5 were not working yet. We were not assigned to work for a  
6 little while. During this time those of us who were very  
7 young were still full of pep from home.

8 We decided to just make the others happy and stood  
9 on a stool and we sang songs in Hungarian to the inmates.  
10 There they had a chance to learn about what happens --  
11 what the latest is back in your area, in our area. They  
12 would give us hints like Well, your parents are not alive  
13 anymore. See that gas chamber? See that smoke stack?  
14 That's where everybody went up in smoke.

15 At first we thought how cruel of them to say such  
16 nasty things to us. Why should they make us feel so  
17 badly? And we really learned a few days later when we  
18 were assigned to work that indeed they were trying to tell  
19 us something.

20 One time this young girl, we took turns singing and  
21 this young girl was singing this happy song from home and  
22 the \* blockesta came and gave her such a big smack she  
23 flew off this little stool and said Where do you think you  
24 are? In a resort place or a hotel? This is a  
25 concentration camp.

1           And she said see that smoke? That's where all your  
2 family went up in smoke.

3           Where did I hear this before? Somebody made a  
4 comment like that to us, just not so long ago. What is  
5 she saying? It was really incredible to feel such shock.  
6 It's indescribable. People would be burned here. Well,  
7 if that's true how come you are alive? The whole idea,  
8 even when you are there seems just incredible,  
9 unbelievable at first.

10           Well, during those few days before we started work  
11 we did a few other things. I thought before I go on I  
12 have to tell you that there was a little population shift  
13 that took place. Ten of us from my bunk moved to include  
14 some of these young girls who came with us. We decided  
15 that we should remember this day somehow and we didn't  
16 have pencil or paper or anything. So we decided to  
17 compose a little poem. Now we set it to a tune. It has  
18 to be a tune that we all know, because none of us are  
19 musicians. So we chose the tune of \* Hauchiqua. We knew  
20 it in Hungarian. So that was settled. How do we do this  
21 without pencil or paper? Well, you remember a line. You  
22 and you and so on and don't you forget it.

23           So it was that we wrote, we composed rather a song  
24 in Hungarian about our situation there. Strangely enough  
25 many years later I would write this down when I was free

1 and only to look at it now as a masterpiece, something  
2 that really captures. It's full of hope. We still didn't  
3 know where we were and it tells about that.

4 Q. Do you have that on you or do you remember?

5 A. I remember every word of it.

6 Q. Tell me?

7 A. I will sing it to you. Except my voice  
8 isn't too good right now with a cold.

9 \* (The poem is now sung in Hungarian)

10 Q. You have a beautiful voice. What does that  
11 mean?

12 A. It means somewhere in the world there is a  
13 camp with rows and rows of barracks and people always have  
14 to stand in line for say appel or head count. They are  
15 drenched and they are cold and they are shivering, but for  
16 appel we have to lineup regardless of the weather. Be  
17 brave and strong, loyal Jewish worker. Before too long  
18 will come the big change. The day will come, the day of  
19 reckoning will come when we will return to our beautiful  
20 homes into the arms of our loved ones. This is our song  
21 until we die and that we are Jews we shall never deny.

22 I translated this from Hungarian into English.  
23 It's very strange. After I wrote it down in Sweden -- As  
24 soon as I arrived in Sweden I wrote it down. That little  
25 book that I wrote this into, I have many other songs in it

1 that I remember my family by. My brothers use to teach me  
2 the songs so I would write it down in the book before so I  
3 could remember my brothers before I knew what happened to  
4 them. It traveled with me. Until recently I dug it up  
5 and there is my childish handwriting in it. So I was  
6 asked to keep it in the safe.

7 We were in Auschwitz. We would have to stand in  
8 line for say appel or head count. Sometimes for hours.  
9 We would have to get up very early in the morning and a  
10 shrill whistle would wake us up. Sometimes the whips  
11 would go over our head as we tried to scramble out of our  
12 bunks and into the courtyard where we would have to lineup  
13 to be counted. Once in a while somebody would be missing.

14 If so, we would have to stand there as long as the  
15 totals would add up to what they are suppose to be.  
16 Sometimes they just didn't count right. But for whatever  
17 reason, which we were not told, we would be counted.

18 They dished us out some kind of tea or coffee. I  
19 never could figure it out. Nobody else could. It looked  
20 like it may have been made from some dark leaves that fell  
21 off of the trees in the fall. But it was very bitter.  
22 The only good thing about it was it was liquid and  
23 sometimes it was warm.

24 So my mother would tell my sister hold your nose  
25 and drink it because she didn't want to drink it. So it

1 will sustain you a little bit.

2 We would be getting a piece of bread that would be  
3 about the size of two or three slices. That was for the  
4 day, which disappeared mighty fast, unless it was consumed  
5 immediately. We really learned very fast. It seems so  
6 strange.

7 We all were shaven and I couldn't recognize my  
8 mother and my sister -- My mother particularly until I saw  
9 her face-to-face. We all looked alike from behind.

10 We really were reduced to -- Untermenschen that we  
11 were called I felt was never us. I always felt it was the  
12 Nazis who were the untermenschen.

13 Q. What is untermensch?

14 A. Untermensch means subhuman. We were  
15 reduced to a subhuman level. We worked very long hours.  
16 It was 12 hour long day.

17 We were assigned to work in \* Brzeszcze or  
18 biercanal or Canada. This was sorting the clothing after  
19 those who arrived in Auschwitz, who were stripped of their  
20 clothing. Those who went to the gas chamber and those who  
21 were allowed to live for awhile longer. Their clothes  
22 ended up in our sorting piles.

23 One advantage for this job was that we were able to  
24 find some food once in a while and try to eat it when we  
25 were not watched. But on this job we had -- There was a

1 Hungarian guard who befriended my mother and my sister and  
2 talked in Hungarian to all of us who could speak  
3 Hungarian. While I was a little too timid to listen to  
4 him, but I listened many times when he would talk about  
5 his grandchild in Hungary and he was not in Auschwitz by  
6 choice. He even showed pictures of his grandchild to us.

7 I went to look at that picture. I remember a  
8 little girl about four, five years old, maybe six and with  
9 pride he showed us his wallet with this picture in it.  
10 Well, the reason I am saying this is because this guard  
11 eventually saved my life.

12 While we were on this detail in Biercanal a number  
13 of things happened. I would like to share this one thing  
14 with you. The Nazis would surprise us by checking us  
15 thoroughly, whether we take anything back with us from  
16 Birkenau to Auschwitz. We were housed in Auschwitz. We  
17 had to walk every day the three or so kilometers to  
18 Birkenau.

19 Where we worked there were several rows of  
20 warehouses. This was in the midst of five strange looking  
21 buildings with chimneys. The people would go into these  
22 places and never come out. Only the smoke through a  
23 chimney and flames sometimes over the chimneys could be  
24 seen. There was a terrible stench permeating everything,  
25 the cause of which we soon learned.

1           People going into these places were gassed and then  
2 they were cremated in the crematorium. We would be  
3 smelling the burned human flesh and bones and this really  
4 had a perculiar psychological effect on me because in  
5 Auschwitz I lost my sense of smell to this day.

6           It was very difficult to believe even when we  
7 worked there that such things were happening. But we  
8 finally realized that our days are numbered. That unless  
9 we do as we are told we could also end up there across the  
10 street, a mere maybe 50 meters away from where I worked,  
11 just around the corner, across the street was one of the  
12 gas chimneys and crematorium. Every day we would pass by  
13 it.

14           Once in a while a train would come in at a certain  
15 time and we would still be seeing the people undressing on  
16 the lawn right in front, men and women together, and we  
17 were ordered to look the other way as we passed by. You  
18 look the other way but you somehow see things that  
19 happened there and somehow you managed to look over to the  
20 right where the gas chamber was. Soon we would hear none.

21           Toward the latter part of the job, I worked there  
22 for nearly eight months. Except for a brief period when  
23 we were transferred to the \* Waybury. That was another  
24 place where we had to braid fabric. Not everything that  
25 we sorted, you see, was usable. So the usable material we

1 had to crate big packages to be shipped to Germany. The  
2 unusable materials were used in the waybury. We had to  
3 braid them into tight braids a certain width. It had to  
4 be a certain width. I learned -- somebody said these  
5 things are being used for fuses.

6 To this date I really don't know for what use this  
7 was to the Germans. But fuses sounds reasonable. But I  
8 don't know for sure. I would like to give you testimony  
9 only on what I am sure of, what I witnessed and the rest  
10 anybody can read about.

11 We came home absolutely exhausted. In the summer  
12 once in a while the water was shut off. We were ordered  
13 to do a lot of work at this sorting place.

14 One day my mother decided that if we ever get out  
15 of here alive what are we going to do? So she decided to  
16 hide a piece of diamond that she found in the loot, rather  
17 than thrown it into the diamond pile.

18 Q. The diamond pile?

19 A. There was a diamond pile. There were piles  
20 of silver, gold, there were teeth, gold teeth, and false  
21 teeth, hair, luggage, eye glasses, rings. It simply  
22 seemed incredible, all these piles of things that  
23 everybody brought along.

24 Remember, people had to bring along small things,  
25 things that could be also turned into money.

1           So my mother told Anushka and me about it and we  
2       said Don't do it, Mother. Don't you risk your life for  
3       anything.

4           She said Well, if I can get it through maybe we  
5       will have something to start with if we ever survive this  
6       hell. So she put it into her shoes and into the toes. Lo  
7       and behold that very day we had to remove our shoes right  
8       after leaving work. We were being checked out for any  
9       items. My heart was just pounding. Anushka almost cried.  
10      Let's just try not to show anything, any emotions because  
11      this is very dangerous.

12          Now the road right there in this area was not  
13      cemented, but it had gravel, larger and smaller gravel.  
14      As mother took her shoe off she just opened her shoe and,  
15      one of us, I don't remember which, pushed a piece of  
16      gravel or a larger rock on it and that is how my mother  
17      passed through this inspection period, which could have  
18      caused her life.

19           Q.       She threw away the diamond?

20           A.       She just emptied her shoe onto the gravel  
21      and pushed a larger piece, a little piece of stone on top  
22      of it. There was a lot of gravel there. But if it had  
23      been a larger item it could not have been done.

24           Q.       Did she get to keep the diamond?

25           A.       No. She threw it away. She threw it away.

1           There was another time my mother in Auschwitz  
2 almost had to give her life. The \* twinlager, the twins  
3 who were experimented -- If I may backtrack for a second.  
4 We were shifted from this building to another building,  
5 which was close to the twinlager, right next door to the  
6 twinlager in fact. She was a daredevil. She would wrap  
7 up smoked meat or some food with a piece of rag or string  
8 or somebody's belt. She would throw it across the  
9 electric fence into the twins.

10           She's done this successfully a few times. One day  
11 she was caught. We were really very worried because she  
12 was taken to the commandant, who was ready to have her  
13 flogged publicly. The capo, our capo, pleaded with the  
14 commandant not to do it with this woman because her child  
15 is the youngest in the camp, meaning my sister, and she is  
16 one of our best workers.

17           So he said all right. That if the mother will get  
18 killed that her daughter will -- Not talking about me, but  
19 talking about my sister Anushka, would have a devastating  
20 effect on her and it would demoralize everybody. So the  
21 commandant ordered a Nazi to come and check on Anushka.

22           One day we were working in the waybury and the Nazi  
23 came in and said to my sister, you come here. Anushka  
24 really was scared and started shaking. Mother and I  
25 particularly worried. The Nazi ordered a chair and he put

1 his boot on the chair and said to Anushka, Okay, it's such  
2 and such time. Start braiding.

3 Anushka put the material around his boot and he  
4 told her to make it as tight as possible. Your life  
5 depends on it. She worked very hard in making, doing her  
6 very best. And then the Nazi said That's it and looked  
7 down and checked the braid and checked the inches and then  
8 he said Look at this. She is 12 year old and she did this  
9 much in such and such time. I want to see all of you do  
10 this very thing or better. And took my sister with him.

11 We didn't know what was going to happen to her. He  
12 took her to a little canteen. I never saw a canteen.  
13 Took her to a little canteen and gave her soda water and a  
14 potato and some fish, herring, and I don't remember what  
15 else. A half dozen different things.

16 She brought it back and she shared it with a few of  
17 us. That was her reward for doing this job. So my mother  
18 was saved and my sister was saved. My sister was a  
19 constant, constant worry because she was really in danger  
20 of being picked out at every single selection.

21 One day we were all ordered for a selection. Of  
22 course, we were not told that. We were told this was  
23 going to be a medical checkup. All clothes off. So our  
24 clothes were off.

25 We had to go through this barracks to go into a

1 room. You know as we went in people just dropped from  
2 anxiety. They knew that their lives are going to depend  
3 in that room whether they are going to live or die. There  
4 is somebody who is going to make that decision, that Godly  
5 decision. So all these people who didn't have enough  
6 stamina to begin with just never made it that far. They  
7 would be taken away and never to be seen again.

8 Well, my sister and mother and I made it in there.  
9 I was worried about my sister. But it was I who was taken  
10 out this time. I was told to go to this other side by  
11 Joseph Mengele, the same man whose inspections I passed  
12 several times since we arrived without any difficulties.

13 Q. Did he talk to you? Was there anything?  
14 What did he do?

15 A. No. He would say Turn around if he had any  
16 suspicion about anything. Turned around, all naked as we  
17 all were. He would say Go this way or go that way.

18 I was sent to join the small group, which kept  
19 growing. There were 30 or 31 of us. I'd say 30 just to  
20 make it even in the end.

21 My mother and my sister were sent to the other  
22 side. I was really -- I really cried. I was very worried  
23 particularly for my mother. She knows and I know, we all  
24 knew that this is going to be the end.

25 Well, I was picked out this time for not being fit

1 for work anymore. They apparently were sent back to their  
2 barracks. We were kept in this barracks long after  
3 everybody left. It was dark. We were all naked.

4 After awhile, in the middle of the night, a truck  
5 came and we were all ordered to get on this truck. While  
6 we were on this truck, there was one man who led us to the  
7 truck, and there was another man who came to close the  
8 canvas in the back. This man who closed the canvas in the  
9 back was the same Hungarian guard who took care of us in  
10 Canada, who showed us the pictures of his grandchild and  
11 use to talk to us in Hungarian. There he was in SS  
12 uniform.

13 Q. What was his name, do you know?

14 A. No. I could have known this at one time  
15 and maybe somewhere in my subconscious, but I just will  
16 never know. But I can visualize him today.

17 But just as he was closing it he sort of looked in  
18 like that. He saw me and he said you too? In Hungarian  
19 he said \* taish, meaning you too? I just nodded.

20 As if to think for a moment, he looked up and said  
21 You all know we are going to the gas chamber. Now whoever  
22 would want to could jump off on the way. But if you are  
23 found you are not to tell of me because if you tell of me  
24 you and I both will be killed. Otherwise, I may be able  
25 to save other lives yet.

1           He closed the canvas and he went up front and he  
2 slowly drove off.

3           Q.       What language did he say this in?

4           A.       Hungarian.

5           Q.       The women you were with were not all  
6 Hungarian?

7           A.       No.

8           Q.       So he was speaking to you. How many other  
9 Hungarian women were on there?

10          A.       I don't know. I know there was something  
11 from Berexas. I remember this woman from Berexas because  
12 my parents use to shop from them the wholesale for the  
13 retail store yet. Later mother would sell them butter or  
14 things from our farm when things became a hardship.

15          For years I knew her name. Once in a while it pops  
16 into my conscious memory. I tell my husband. Oh, yeah.  
17 It's Fuchs. Now I remember. Fuchs. Isn't that strange  
18 how this goes in and out? She was among us. I thought  
19 quickly and I thought who would come with me?

20          I thought if I stay on this truck I am going to be  
21 killed and incinerated within a hour. If I jumped, I may  
22 be found and killed but perhaps not. That here was my  
23 chance to see mother again and Anushka.

24          With that in mind, I just jumped off the truck  
25 without knowing where I am, what is going to happen, just

1 jump off the truck. You see nobody responded to my  
2 request. Who would come with me?

3 Because they were all -- We all knew eventually  
4 this was going happen to all of us. We were completely  
5 despondent. But you see I think it would help me is if I  
6 had my mother to live for.

7 As the truck approached the familiar wooded area  
8 where there was a deep ditch near the road I jumped off  
9 the slow moving truck and continued to go down and I found  
10 myself in something round. It was a culvert. I just  
11 crouched down in this culvert. Within about 15 minutes or  
12 so I heard sirens. The sirens go on. Then I heard the  
13 German voices, mens voices above. Probably the German  
14 soldiers. I just sat there naked in this culvert.

15 The night passed. I was there the next day. I  
16 thought my God, what have I accomplished? I will just  
17 vanish from the elements alone.

18 So in the middle of the night, the following night  
19 -- this was about 24 plus hours later. I decided that  
20 unless I get out of here I will have accomplished nothing.

21 You see, we already passed the gate from my part of  
22 Auschwitz into the other part of Auschwitz. We had to go  
23 through a forrested area and then the area of the gas  
24 chambers to work. So I was outside of familiar barracks  
25 area.

1 But I got myself up to the road side and I saw a  
2 tiny little star in the distance, a light like a tiny  
3 little star. I really followed that light, really not  
4 knowing if it would lead me to a safe place or straight  
5 into SS headquarters. Really frankly I lost my sense of  
6 direction. But I do believe that God must have been  
7 along side me and he led me into our barracks.

8 There I worried about somebody being at the door,  
9 which usually happens. Inside the lights were on. I  
10 entered and I picked the nearest safe \* corio.

11 A corio we use to call it. I climbed up to the  
12 third tier of a bunk. Corio means bunk bed. And somebody  
13 woke up and started to scream. I put my hand on my mouth.  
14 I said my God, after all this she is going to give me  
15 away. I said I will explain to you my predicament. She  
16 came from a few miles from my hometown. We found  
17 ourselves later together through several camps, until I  
18 lost her. But her name was \* Levowitz. It is a human  
19 being I will never never forget. She gave me her overcoat  
20 and I stayed there. The very next morning.

21 The very next morning, when appel time came with we  
22 were lined up and there came somebody and sliced off I  
23 don't know how many, and we were ordered to go to the  
24 railroad platform. At first I didn't know we were going  
25 to a railroad platform.

1 I said my God, only to go through another  
2 selection. It so happened that the Germans were emptying  
3 Auschwitz, because the Russian armies were nearby. This I  
4 learned later. This camp was being emptied.

5 I was ordered to go on to a cattle car with all the  
6 others. We traveled for days. We arrived in the  
7 concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen. Naturally, I was so  
8 elated to be alive after all this.

9 But now my mother, I missed my mother and my sister  
10 sorely. I had the need to prove to them that I am alive  
11 and somehow that little hope remained with me throughout  
12 my camp life. When somebody new came into any camp I was  
13 in did you by any chance see an elderly woman? She was  
14 only 48, 49. My dad was fifty-one, by the way when we  
15 entered the camp. But according to concentration camp  
16 standards that was already aged for those who were alive.

17 Of course, nobody -- It would have been too much of  
18 a coincidence. Nobody heard of them or saw them.

19 Bergen-Belsen was simply so overcrowded. The camp  
20 itself, the terrain was sort of hilly. I remember what we  
21 did there was we were given a shovel and we moved the dirt  
22 from here to there. Somebody moved it from there to some  
23 other place. As I found out later we were digging mass  
24 graves. But I didn't know it at the time.

25 They didn't even have barracks for us to go into.

1 They were already so full, far beyond their capacity, more  
2 than double its capacity. So they put up some huge tents.  
3 We were in these tents. The side, there is a young  
4 forrest right nearby, near our tent. It was on a hill. I  
5 remember the mud sliding right under the tents and into  
6 our tent. Some people were sleeping on the floor. It was  
7 absolutely incredible.

8 There was a lot of suffering in Bergen-Belsen.  
9 People with dying like flies from mistreatment and mal-  
10 nutrition and hunger and diseases.

11 So far as I knew, there was no gas chamber in  
12 Bergen-Belsen, but there was a crematoria which operated  
13 day and night it seemed. It was very close to my tent.  
14 It seemed that people were dying at a faster rate than  
15 they could burn them.

16 After that we were lined up quite suddenly again  
17 and I was taken to Bergen -- No, in Bergen-Belsen I was  
18 taken to Braunschweig, the City of Braunschweig. There I  
19 was housed in the stable of the horses of the SS. It was  
20 a camp that was opened temporarily for a certain purpose.  
21 The purpose of this particular camp was to clear the  
22 streets of Braunschweig from debris so the German  
23 artillery and vehicles could pass through.

24 There we were assigned to a very cruel commandant,  
25 who took at the slightest provocation she could would beat

up someone. If at night she was prevented from resting then that person would get a beating right on the spot.

I remember one night a young woman about 16 years of age suffering from acute dysentery rushed to the latrine.

On the way -- Well, most of us suffered from dysentery throughout our camp life. On the way she apparently woke up the commandant and she gave this poor girl such a savage beating that by the time this girl arrived at the latrine she could not hold herself up and she just fell in and drowned. I never will forget seeing her in the latrine the following morning.

Several things happened in Braunschweig. One of them I'd like to share with you. Here we encountered some kind civilians, Germans who really tried to help us. I remember one elderly woman. She had her hair up. She sort of stooped down. Was walking along, sort of looking this way and that way, waiting for the right time for her to throw us this bread under her arm. And when it flew over to us it was beaten up, eaten up in minutes, huge long French bread. It felt good there were good and kind people out there who were trying to help us.

We passed a sardine factory every morning on our job, on the way to work. There was always a sizable pile of sardine bones to be had by anyone who was willing to

1 brave the whip of the guards by stepping out of line.  
2 There were always brave souls among us. They would just  
3 pile them up in their pockets, however it smelled. It  
4 didn't matter. And would come back and dole us out a few  
5 herring bones. Even today -- sardine bones rather. I  
6 wonder how could we eat those things? Why they filet  
7 sardine bones?

8           There is an explanation I learned very recently for  
9 this. They were not really sardine bones I learned. It  
10 use to be a meatpacking, a meat cannery type of place.  
11 During the war they didn't have enough meat. So they  
12 converted the meat canning places into fish canning  
13 places. So they had to cook the fish and they would  
14 purify it and it was that cooked, the bones of the fish  
15 that we would be grabbing.

16           Then on our job one day -- Just imagine this vast  
17 work area. It's in the middle of the City of  
18 Braunschweig. There isn't a house or building intact.  
19 The Allies leveled the place. Our job was to clear the  
20 major streets as I mentioned.

21           Here one day one of the girls from the small groups  
22 that we were set up on this very, very long boulevard just  
23 disappeared from us. We were busy with our shovels and  
24 suddenly there is one less person. Everybody is looking  
25 for her. Suddenly a voice comes up from way below I am in

1 a dark place, looks like a basement. Apparently she fell  
2 through the floor of a burned out building into the  
3 basement of this house.

4 So we yelled down to her look around for some food.  
5 When the guard was at a safe distance we pulled her up and  
6 her large man's coats pockets were bulging with black  
7 round burned things. It was potatoes, baked and burned  
8 from the fire of the bomb. So we feasted on baked burned  
9 potatoes while on that detail.

10 Then I was shipped out to Bendorf. Bendorf is a  
11 very small town now in East Germany, but at that time it  
12 was not far from Braunschweig and Bergen-Belsen, about 60,  
13 80 kilometers, I would say.

14 Then I worked twelve hundred feet underground below  
15 in a salt mine. A civilian -- Civilians were assigned to  
16 us for training. I was learning how to thread a pipe. We  
17 were working on precision instruments for the V-1 and V-2  
18 rockets.

19 As you know, those were the fastest missiles  
20 available at that time and the Allies were very much  
21 afraid that Germany would develop these and mass produce  
22 them. They already were successful in penetrating  
23 England, London itself with them and other places. You  
24 see, Hitler, fearing that the Allies will bomb the major  
25 industrial places, moved the armaments industry

1 underground.

2 It happened that several industries were under this  
3 salt mine which I revisited nearly two years ago. And  
4 there three thousand men and fifteen hundred women worked  
5 slave labor as slave laborers in that salt mine.

6 I recently learned that if it makes me feel any  
7 better this German scientist said to me, the instruments  
8 that we produced down there were mainly unusable because  
9 it was very dry below but as soon as the instruments were  
10 brought up the rust would set in due to the salt content.  
11 So most of it was not usable. That was heartwarming to  
12 learn.

13 Then I was transferred to Hamburg, where also I  
14 helped to clear the streets of Hamburg of debris. From  
15 there to Hanover.

16 Now Hanover was a very significant place. I was  
17 put to work in a factory that manufactured gas masks. I  
18 picked this up nearly two years ago when I revisited the  
19 Continental Gummewerke in Hanover. Slave laborers worked  
20 to produce these things.

21 Hitler wanted everyone of his subjects to own a gas  
22 mask, fearing that the Allies are going to fight a war  
23 with chemicals in response to the V-2 rockets.

24 In revisiting this place in May of 1987 this  
25 factory did not <sup>26</sup> knowledge the fact that they had slave

1 laborers during the war. I was the first one to return  
2 to the Continental Gummewerke. I was given a tour around  
3 the factory.

4 When I saw a bunch of gas masks being taken off the  
5 machines, <sup>still</sup>hot, I said <sup>why</sup> are you still making these? What for?  
6 Well, for industrial purposes I was told. I learned that  
7 this factory was founded by Jews over a hundred years ago.  
8 But that's an area I would like to talk about later.

9 There we worked on an assembly line. The belt  
10 would be going faster or slower, depending on the whims of  
11 the Germans, the managers. We were handpicked for these  
12 jobs. I learned that only very recently. These  
13 industrialists and townships sent representatives into the  
14 concentration camp and handpicked the laborers they wanted  
15 for their factories.

16 For example, I learned that the reason I was picked  
17 for Bendorf to work on precision instruments is because I  
18 have small hands. Something that I never would have  
19 dreamt of. Who knows, I may have had to show my hands to  
20 somebody at the time.

21 But these are the jobs, this is the job of a  
22 historian to dig up information like that through records  
23 of the Nazis themselves.

24 Hanover was really a very frightening place to  
25 work. The concentration camp was set up on the grounds of

1 the factory. Around it there were electric wire fences.

2 Just outside the electric wire fences was another  
3 fence that just surrounded the entire factory grounds.

4 Just on the other side of that fence, the safe  
5 fence shall we call it, were very beautiful little summer  
6 homes and people lived in these summer homes and their  
7 children played in these summer homes.

8 In revisiting Hanover and the Continental  
9 Gummewerke in May of 87 I knocked on a few doors and I  
10 talked with the oldest resident on that street. We had  
11 interviewed this person. I told her that at one time we  
12 were neighbors.

13 In going back to that period when she was only a  
14 young 17 year old woman she was telling me how well she  
15 remembers the camp and that in her family album they took  
16 some pictures of family events of the children and she  
17 remembers seeing the camp in the background with the  
18 electric wire fences around it and the factory also as it  
19 looked then.

20 I asked her if she would be so kind and look  
21 through her family albums. It would mean so much to us  
22 today to have those pictures. She was true to her word  
23 and she mailed us enlarged copies of these.

24 Nearby was a canal, which I remember very well  
25 seeing from a few floors up that I worked on. When I

1 first arrived there in 87 I could not find the canal. I  
2 said I know there was a canal here. Where is the canal?  
3 It couldn't have disappeared.

4 Well, we found out that the canal was there all  
5 right, but the trees, the small trees have grown up to be  
6 big trees obliterating the canal. We found it. And now  
7 excursion boats were going down this canal and people were  
8 swimming in this canal in 1987, when in 1944 and 45 slave  
9 laborers worked there and brought the goods from the  
10 factory onto ships that carried the materials down the  
11 canal to the cities and towns or wherever because the  
12 canals served -- it was a tremendous fuel saver for the  
13 Nazis.

14 Q. You have some pictures?

15 A. I have some pictures the neighbors sent. I  
16 would like to introduce them now. This shows the rubber  
17 factory, the Continental Gummewerke at right, and the  
18 concentration camp barracks at left. You can see the  
19 foreground the children at play in the adjacent gardens.

20 It's taken from the garden of my former neighbor, a  
21 German civilian. She sent us -- Here is another picture  
22 of the civilian gardens with children at play adjacent to  
23 the barracks, which are at right of concentration camp  
24 Limmer on the factory ground of the Continental Gummewerke  
25 in Hanover during World War II. Precious pictures.

1           This one is a recently discovered World War II  
2 photograph of the barracks of concentration camp Limmer.  
3 That's what it was called. Limmer. That was the Limmer  
4 district of Hanover. On the factory ground of the  
5 Continental Gummewerke. Gummy means rubber. Rubber  
6 factory. In foreground you see the civilian gardens  
7 immediately adjacent to the camp showing children at play.  
8 Faintly in the background the civilian residences of  
9 Limmer.

10           And just one more. Again, the concentration camp  
11 Limmer. It's a barn like building, center left in the  
12 midst of civilian residences and gardens, with factory  
13 buildings of Continental Gummewerke at right.

14           In my interview with this lady she said we didn't  
15 know -- She didn't know whether we were civilian people  
16 from foreign countries coming in, and there were many  
17 people who did come and they lived outside the factory and  
18 came in and worked at the factory and they received some  
19 sort of remuneration for their work. But you see she  
20 realized and her family realized that we were  
21 concentration camp workers at one point or another.

22           At night she said she use to hear screams coming  
23 from the barracks just across the street from her summer  
24 home. She wanted to know what were those screams about?

25           I explained to her that during the day if we didn't

1 do our work properly that the Nazis would beat us up right  
2 on the spot in front of the civilian workers, who  
3 protested, who didn't like to watch human beings beaten up  
4 in front of them.

5 So the Nazis designed a new way of carrying out the  
6 punishment. They just jotted down the numbers, our  
7 numbers, which was very clearly outlined on our uniforms,  
8 and at night after 12 hours of work on this assembly line  
9 -- imagine looking at gas masks for 12 hours. They really  
10 became like monsters after a while. They didn't look like  
11 this. They had a great big steel frame and sheets of  
12 rubber would be placed on top of the steel frame and  
13 pressed into a machine which would melt the rubber against  
14 this form, this metal form, and they were very heavy on  
15 top of it.

16 We had a certain job to do on it and as they came  
17 up we had to do whatever it was. If we couldn't we had to  
18 put it aside.

19 If they made this belt go faster we had to do many  
20 more work. Sometimes it was designed to just thin us out.

21 Well, at night our numbers would be called out  
22 after we would go into the barracks after 12 hours of work  
23 and the punishment would be meted out in the barracks.

24 She, having lived across the street, would hear  
25 these screams come out. When I told her what they were

1 she just covered up her eyes. She said those screams were  
2 haunting her all her life, ever since she heard them.

3 From there I was sent to Ravensbruck.

4 Q. How long were you in Hanover?

5 A. I don't really know. I think approximately  
6 two months. We broke down very fast.

7 After awhile many of us just were in very bad shape  
8 from long hours of work and very little food. On Sundays  
9 sometimes we were off. I am really not sure just what our  
10 days off were. That just isn't clear in my mind. I think  
11 we were off on Sundays. I think we had one day off.

12 Q. Do you know the name of the woman  
13 commandant?

14 A. I think I do. She was there for a short  
15 time and then she is better known in other camps.

16 Q. The woman in Hanover.

17 A. In Hanover? No. No, I don't. There were  
18 a lot of French women working there who were political  
19 prisoners.

20 I remember one time the Nazis wanted them to work  
21 faster and they were going to give them, give all of us  
22 certain coupons which we can cash in in a little  
23 commissary. They decided, we all decided we are not going  
24 to fall for this. Some of us are going to be weeded out  
25 as a result.

1           So they started beating up some of us because we  
2           didn't go along with their game. Then the Germans -- Not  
3           the Germans. We decided we better accept the coupons. We  
4           don't have to cash them in and we didn't. Nobody did. So  
5           it was really a way of getting back at them. There were  
6           very few Jews among us at that particular camp.

7           Q.       Did you take a train to Ravensbruck?

8           A.       We were shipped off to Ravensbruck. This  
9           was a camp notorious for women, experiments on women. It  
10          was a woman's camp.

11          Q.       Right.

12          A.       There the situation was unbearable,  
13          unbearable. I was not there for a long time. Maybe two,  
14          three, four weeks.

15          A.       Then we arrived in Ravensbruck. I just  
16          want to point out --

17          Q.       The group.

18          A.       I and hundreds and hundreds of other women  
19          arrived in Ravensbruck. We traveled for days. It seemed  
20          as though we would never get there. I just want to  
21          mention these little short trips between camps. What  
22          today may take an hour and-a-half, an hour maybe to an  
23          hour and-a-half by car, I found out would take us as long  
24          as two to four days sealed in box cars. These journeys  
25          took quite a bit out of the human body. It was very

1 strenuous.

2 Well, there we found that we didn't know what is  
3 going to happen to us. I don't remember working there or  
4 doing anything, other than delousing myself forever. We  
5 were all full of lice. We hadn't bathed for God knows how  
6 long.

7 The situation everywhere was more and more  
8 desperate everywhere I went. So finally one day we were  
9 put into cattle cars and we were just traveling and the  
10 train stopped in the middle of a huge meadow. There was  
11 nothing there except this meadow. No station, nothing.

12 We were sealed in the box cars. We heard the  
13 Germans coming, going back and forth. They were deciding  
14 how to get us out of the cattle cars for the execution.  
15 We were all going to be murdered here out in the open  
16 space.

17 At that point all sorts of reaction set in. Some  
18 women sobbed, others became delirious and still others  
19 fell into deep apathy. I remember thinking to myself my  
20 God, I have lived this long and now it will end like this.

21 Well, suddenly the doors were shoved open and we  
22 were ordered to lineup. The line was as long as the eye  
23 could see practically. Instead of shooting us they doled  
24 out to us from burlap sacks, a handfull of raw macaroni  
25 and a handful of sugar. Just plain sugar. I wasn't

1 prepared for this. So I took my dress, I held it up to  
2 receive my ration. I wasn't aware there were holes in my  
3 dress. The macaroni and sugar spilled onto the tall  
4 grass.

5 So I stooped down to retrieve the macaroni that I  
6 could see at least and at that point a Nazi started  
7 beating me up. That's all I remember.

8 The next thing I remember was when I was hearing  
9 voices. I heard You are lucky, you are going to be free.  
10 I have to go back and face the consequences in German. I  
11 heard voices like You are going through the Danish country  
12 side. Pretty soon we will be in Copenhagen. I thought,  
13 Oh, God, I must be hallucinating. I am hearing all these  
14 beautiful things. What is happening?

15 When I opened my eyes I was not in the same cattle  
16 car that we were traveling in. I was in a real train, a  
17 passenger train and I was told we were traveling through  
18 the Danish country side and we were being freed and we are  
19 free, we will be in Copenhagen soon. I just couldn't  
20 believe it. Could it be really true after all this? Just  
21 so suddenly like that?

22 Here just not long ago they almost shot me and they  
23 almost murdered me by clubbing me and now I hear I am  
24 going to be free. Just things didn't add up. That's how  
25 things happened unexpectedly everywhere that we were.

1           So indeed the train pulled in and stopped in  
2 beautiful Copenhagen and church bells were ringing and  
3 people were barricaded and they were waving Danish flags  
4 all over. We arrived to these smiling faces. I hadn't  
5 seen smiling faces like this it seemed like since  
6 eternity.

7           I really was beginning to believe that maybe there  
8 is some truth in what I hear. Then we were transferred on  
9 to a ferry boat and I was carried on a stretcher and we  
10 were taken to Malmo, Sweden.

11           While we stood at the station in Copenhagen people  
12 broke through the barricade. They came up to the train  
13 and they handed us brown bags filled with all sorts of  
14 goodies, chocolates, boiled potatoes, even peeled and cut  
15 up for us and we ate and ate and we became ill from  
16 overeating. We became so ill when we arrived in Sweden.

17           People were dying all along. All this process was  
18 taking place people were dying everywhere. They just  
19 couldn't handle it. Not just from food. But also from  
20 their existing illnesses and exertions. Even the news  
21 became too much in some cases. There was a whole trail of  
22 death all along. That was the saddest thing.

23           To see that you are so close to freedom and the  
24 enjoyment of that freedom and yet it's not to be.

25           When I returned to Sweden I went to that cemetery

1 and a beautiful film of these graves, young girls 18, 19,  
2 20, 21 line up rows and rows of these cemeteries. These  
3 were the girls who died on the way to freedom or shortly  
4 after arrival. They just couldn't be saved anymore.

5 Well, Sweden.

6 Q. When you were on the train had you met any  
7 friends? Were you sitting with anybody on the train?

8 A. Everybody was a friend. But I didn't  
9 recognize anybody because in the process transferring -- I  
10 was out at this time. When I came to there were a couple  
11 people with me. One of them was the girl who saved me in  
12 Auschwitz, who gave me the overcoat. She came all the way  
13 to Sweden. I have her photograph in my album.

14 And then we were taken to Malmo, Sweden on May 3rd,  
15 1945. We were taken to a beautiful high school with an  
16 olympic size swimming pool. There we were showered and  
17 received new clothes and we were fumigated from head to  
18 toe with ddt. At the time we didn't know how dangerous it  
19 was.

20 We were distributed into the various communities of  
21 the area.

22 You see, what happened was that this was a rescue  
23 operation of Count Folk Bernadotte of Sweden. He was the  
24 head of the Swedish Red Cross and member of the Swedish  
25 Royal Family. He went to Germany to plead with Himmler,

1 to Berlin to plead with Himmler for the release of the  
2 Scandinavian prisoners only.

3 At first Himmler wouldn't see him. Send an  
4 emissary. No, let them rot in Ravensbruck. He gathered  
5 the Scandinavian prisoners together and placed them in  
6 Ravensbruck. Then one night he called, he sent word to  
7 Bernadotte, tell him to take them all out of Ravensbruck.

8 So it happened that he wired or telephoned Sweden  
9 and said have all the available vehicles ready to roll  
10 into northern Germany to Ravensbruck to get all of these  
11 inmates out. And he said Paint them all white with Red  
12 Crosses on them.

13 His government wasn't ready to receive all these  
14 thousands of emaciated sick people. They were ready for a  
15 few hundred. I don't remember. Three to five hundred  
16 Swedish inmates. Here Bernadotte has all these people  
17 coming into Sweden. As he writes in his book Curtain  
18 Falls, he says that as the ambulances and trucks and vans  
19 and so on were rolling into northern Germany to  
20 Ravensbruck they were still in the process of painting  
21 them and the paint was all wet when we arrived.

22 But that didn't matter. We placed as many as we  
23 could into all these vehicles and they rode into northern  
24 Germany and they passed our train and so it was that our  
25 train was included in the White Fleet Rescue Operation.

1           Many thousands came after us. I found my name  
2 among this rescue operation in several books at Yad Vashem  
3 when I was doing research there in 87. We arrived in  
4 Sweden. I was sent to Landskrona. Landskrona is a  
5 charming little town at the southern tip of Sweden.

6           Q.           This is after Malmo?

7           A.           Malmo was a place we were cleaned up and  
8 received new clothes and from there we were distributed to  
9 the various communities.

10           The people of Sweden have been simply the most  
11 humanitarian people. I will always love them for it. I  
12 have never seen so many people do so much good for human  
13 beings as they have during that time.

14           When we arrived in Landskrona they didn't have  
15 enough hotels to put us in so schools were used to place  
16 us in. I was in quarantine in the high school where I  
17 eventually went to high school. The high school was  
18 closed early and they placed mattresses on the floors of  
19 large rooms, classrooms, and there we were very happy on  
20 mattresses.

21           Later when I returned I was told You were placed on  
22 mattresses on the floor? That was quite an improvement  
23 over what we had before and we were delighted.

24           But we couldn't handle food. So people came in,  
25 Swedes were allowed in, certain ones, not to be with all

1 of us but those of us who were sick but not contagious,  
2 did not have contagious illnesses.

3 We had to be spoon fed. Many of us, not I, but  
4 many of us had to be spoon fed. For weeks and weeks we  
5 lived on oatmeal just to start opening the stomach and get  
6 us use to food and little by little to learn to eat food.

7 Q. How were you feeling?

8 A. I was suffering from malnutrition problems  
9 and 17 cavities in my teeth. But my main problem would  
10 surface many years later. My shoulders did not grow  
11 together properly, which did not show up upon my arrival  
12 in Sweden. It would show up some 30 some years later as a  
13 result of malnutrition.

14 You see, at a time when I should be still growing  
15 at the age of 14 my body was actually consuming itself.  
16 So there was not enough room for me to raise my arms  
17 anymore. So I have had two shoulders operations here with  
18 the deltoid muscle having been relocated and the acromium  
19 process had to be carved off to make room for the arm to  
20 come up. These things came about later.

21 But the psychological scars, I think they will  
22 always be there. The nightmares. Even though my  
23 nightmares have subsided considerably compared to what  
24 they use to be, when my husband would wake me up several  
25 times a night, even after 1949 when we got married, they

1 would still appear and reappear. Certain scenes and  
2 fears. Once in a while he still has to wake me up.

3 Certain psychological scars just seem impossible to  
4 eradicate. I think the best way to deal with it is to  
5 talk about it and to live it to some extent again in order  
6 to bring it to the surface and they help.

7 I have decided the best way to do it is to teach  
8 young people about the eyewitness account of the Holocaust  
9 and that is what I do a lot.

10 Q. To say the least. I suspect there is no  
11 one has given more presentations than you in the Bay Area  
12 certainly.

13 Back to the town in Sweden and then we will come up  
14 to the film you are making now. You, as an educator. How  
15 long were you in that town?

16 A. I lived there for -- First I was in  
17 quarantine until they sorted out the tubercular problems  
18 and contagious patients and then those of us who were not  
19 contagious but simply needed to buildup our energy and  
20 whatever, we were sent for a few months to a summer resort  
21 place. There we were under constant nursing care.

22 So that sometime in the middle of the summer I was  
23 released. But when I was in quarantine in Landskrona a  
24 Swedish family came to visit me all the time. They would  
25 bring me packages. Apparently I was full of life very

1 quickly. I would borrow the nurse's bike and ride it in  
2 the school yard. That's how the Sweden family said they  
3 spotted me.

4 I was the youngest member of that transfer to  
5 Sweden I was informed. I was 15 years old at the time.  
6 Fifteen and a quarter to be exact. That Swedish family  
7 had a beautiful daughter just one year younger than I.  
8 They wanted me to be adopted and become a daughter, a  
9 sister to their daughter \* Gulan.

10 After I was released from the summer camp the  
11 Swedish family signed for me and said they would take care  
12 of me and I went to live with this wonderful Swedish  
13 family who gave me so much love and care and under-  
14 standing. Really just what I needed to become a human  
15 being again.

16 Q. What was their name?

17 A. Gulan Berglund was my -- I call her my  
18 Swedish sister now. We correspond today and we are very  
19 close. It's the Berglund family. Eric and Lillie  
20 Berglund, the mother and father, and their daughter Gulan,  
21 who later married a Jewish man and turned Jewish.

22 When I returned to her home again in 1962 for the  
23 first time she was telling me about her \* Cashroot system  
24 in the kitchen and it was incredible for me to see this  
25 since I remember going to confirmation to her church with

1 her and she would come to the synagogue with me.

2 But I lived with them until I came to the United  
3 States. Initially I told them I cannot be adopted but I  
4 would love to come and live with them. I felt it would be  
5 better for me to live with a normal, so-called normal  
6 family rather than be together with the refugees. That  
7 was good and bad.

8 But understanding survivors was very difficult. I  
9 was plagued by many nightmares. In fact, to the extent I  
10 actually affected my Swedish sister. We shared the same  
11 room in twin beds. She would get up at night and started  
12 having nightmares of her own after hearing some of my  
13 stories. They seemed unbelievable.

14 They kept wanting me to forget it. Don't talk  
15 about it. Start living a normal life. While I felt this  
16 is what I would love to do but how? I can't seem to get  
17 it out of my system. It seems there is so much pressure  
18 in there. Now I am free and I suddenly have all this time  
19 to think about my family. Who survived? Who didn't  
20 survive? So far as I know I am the only survivor.

21 I was hoping that they will help me look for my  
22 family. They promised to do that and they did.

23 What happened was my name, along with all the  
24 survivors in Sweden appeared on European radio. At that  
25 time they were announcing everyone's names. At crucial

1 centers in Europe our names would also be printed on long  
2 lists and pinned on the walls.

3 So it happened that people came to tell my mother,  
4 who survived the camp with my sister Anushka, and on  
5 January 27, 1945 the Russian Army swept through Auschwitz  
6 and sent them back home. Home, Czechoslovakia became  
7 Hungary, became part of the USSR, part of the Ukraine.  
8 The Russians took this area.

9 So my sister and my mother went back home shortly  
10 after our separation, while I had to go through six other  
11 camps after that.

12 My brother Michael survived the slave labor camps,  
13 the death marches under the death orders of Alolph  
14 Eichmann and Buchenwald and he too went home.

15 Shortly before Roshashana, the Jewish new year, my  
16 father and my brother Shandor, went home together. They  
17 were together. Only 17 years later I found out that my  
18 brother Shandor and my father were about 40 miles from  
19 each other when I worked in Bendorf in the V-2, rockets  
20 parts factory and they were working in dura. Dura  
21 dynamiting silos and tunnels. Neither of us knew that the  
22 other was alive.

23 So Victor was the sole death in the family in the  
24 Holocaust from my immediate family. From my father's  
25 family nobody survived. My mother's family luckily her

1 sisters, and I have some pictures to show, and her brother  
2 were in the United States and that's the family that  
3 stayed intact.

4 Back in Sweden our names -- The people kept going  
5 to my mother to tell her that they heard my name on the  
6 radio and that I am alive and that I am in Sweden. She  
7 refused to believe it.

8 Anushka, my sister, told me later my mother fainted  
9 when she heard that. And then later she would send  
10 Michael to Budapest, which was the closest very large  
11 center to look at the comprehensive list of survivors  
12 issued by the Red Cross and he found my name on it. He  
13 had a copy of it, which he carried around with him for  
14 years. It's no longer to be found. Eventually my mother  
15 believed that I was alive. Only she wrote to me later  
16 when she received six letters from me all at the same  
17 time.

18 She didn't learn what happened to me because she  
19 died shortly after freedom from hardships suffered in the  
20 camps.

21 The family jewelry was still there and served them  
22 well because when they came home there was not even a  
23 pillow to their name. All the animals had been auctioned  
24 off, the fields taken away and nationalized by the  
25 Russians.

1           So my father and the whole family moved into  
2 Berexas, the city, where there was still a few Jews left  
3 who came back. But almost everybody in our town was  
4 annililated in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

5           I found a very interesting document at Yad Vashem,  
6 in which -- Well, which I filled out apparently. I don't  
7 remember doing this anymore but I found it and I must  
8 have. Filled out upon arrival in Sweden, in which the  
9 question was who am I looking for? I must have thought  
10 who could be alive? Probably my brother for not having  
11 been in the concentration camp, not having known he went  
12 through all that he did, and it was part of the deception  
13 of the Nazis to tell one thing when they are going to do  
14 something else with you. Where was I?

15           Q.       The document.

16           A.       Oh, yes. And I am looking for my uncle in  
17 St. Louis Missouri, my mother's brother. I remembered  
18 that my mother had a brother and sister alive in the  
19 United States, but I didn't remember my aunt's -- I didn't  
20 remember her address. Even though I use to write to her  
21 and my uncle. One night while I was in Sweden, in the  
22 middle of the night I woke up and I said to my Swedish  
23 sister Gulan, waking up. I just dreamt my uncle's  
24 address. It's 5236 Delmar, Saint Louis Missouri. She  
25 said write it down. By morning you will forget.

1 I thought I wrote it down dutifully not understand-  
2 ing what she meant and the following morning she ordered  
3 me to write to that address. Of course, I did. My uncle  
4 got that letter and I missed the address by two numbers  
5 within the same block.

6 And he contacted my aunt in Kansas City, Missouri.  
7 The two of them immediately started preparing papers and I  
8 remember the first letter from family. That I have  
9 somebody left in the world.

10 Immediately my aunt instructed me that my mother is  
11 alive, that she heard -- No, I am sorry. That was a  
12 little later. That I was the first one to have shown a  
13 sign of life and that I should write only to her, not back  
14 home.

15 I didn't know what this meant at the time but I  
16 later learned that my mother and my sister were home and  
17 that if I write to them the Red Cross will want to re-  
18 unite me with my family in Russia and my aunt and uncle  
19 wanted me to come to the United States.

20 You see, I wanted to go home. I really felt that I  
21 needed my mother. But a letter from her said that as much  
22 as we would love to have you come home, we think you would  
23 have a much better life in America. So I listened to my  
24 mother with pain in my heart knowing that I would never  
25 see her again.

1 But I felt it was quite a sacrifice on her part to  
2 want me to be safe.

3 Looking back now, it's a good thing because I did  
4 have a much better life in America since the Iron Curtain  
5 was put up and nobody could come in and out during the  
6 Stalin Era. They all were stuck back home and I didn't  
7 see, I never saw my mother again. She died within two  
8 years.

9 Q. When did she die?

10 A. She died within two years after the camp.

11 Q. The brother you didn't see for 17 years?

12 A. I haven't seen any of them for 17 years.

13 Q. You didn't see any --

14 A. Anybody. I came to the United States and  
15 they went back home. The Iron Curtain prevented me from  
16 going there or for them to come here.

17 So I had the first opportunity to visit them, that  
18 was in 1962 and that was very early to go to the Soviet  
19 Union. It was at a time when the State Department advised  
20 me not to go through Czechoslovakia, because they do not  
21 recognize dual citizenship. I had to go by way of  
22 Helsinki Finland, Leningrad, Minsk and Lvov. I had to  
23 meet them in Lvov.

24 That's the first time I saw my father, my two  
25 brothers and my sister. That's a hiatus of 17 years since

1 the Holocaust. So you can imagine what a tremendous  
2 reunion that was.

3 First cousins who survived the concentration camps  
4 came to Lvov to meet me there and I made some homemovies  
5 of our reunion, which I treasure today.

6 Many years later my husband and I were able to  
7 rescue the rest of the family from the Soviet Union and  
8 bring them to this wonderful country, the United States.

9 They were all married, they all had three children  
10 each and we started with my father and then Anushka, her  
11 husband and three children, then my brother Michael and  
12 his wife, mother-in-law and three children.

13 My husband and I singlehandedly brought them out at  
14 that time with no help from the community or anybody.

15 Then my brother Shondor and his children and then  
16 daughters-in-law and sons-in-law and grandchild. It's  
17 been a very rewarding life.

18 Q. And brought them to live here?

19 A. They are all in the United States.

20 Q. Your father?

21 A. My father died in 77. But he lived with us  
22 for eleven years. During his stay here we treated him to  
23 what we consider a blessing, a trip to Isreal. He didn't  
24 know he was going there. Where he met Golda Meier and the  
25 administration. She was just going out of office at the

1 time and new administration of Begin came in. We went to  
2 the Knessett. He met a nephew who survived by hiding out  
3 in Budapest.

4 On his way home he dropped dead in midair. So that  
5 is how he died. But he saw all his children come out of  
6 the Soviet Union and his grandchildren and I think he died  
7 a happy man.

8 Q. And he lived with your children?

9 A. That's right. My children always wondered  
10 how come I don't have a grandpa? How come I don't have an  
11 uncle? How come I don't have an aunt? All my friends  
12 have aunts and uncles. I don't have anybody. And it was  
13 my painful duty to tell them that your children will, but  
14 it's not possible for them to have any and the reasons  
15 why.

16 Just one more thing.

17 Q. Of course. And one more thing for me too.  
18 Where is Anushka?

19 A. Anushka lives in Brooklyn, New York.  
20 Shandor lives in Brooklyn, New York. Michael lives in San  
21 Francisco.

22 Q. Michael lives in San Francisco?

23 A. Yes. His Mother-in-law, who he brought out  
24 just died two weeks ago. All his children are married.  
25 He has grandchildren. It's really a blessing.

1 Q. What were you going to say?

2 A. Just I don't want to leave it out of my  
3 story. It's such an important part. I think it should  
4 give us food for thought. One of the consequence of the  
5 Holocaust is an experience that I want to talk about and  
6 that's my brother Shandor, who after coming home from the  
7 Holocaust, married this very nice lady and then they had a  
8 daughter called Judy. Judy became of marriageable age.

9 This is the very first children after the Holocaust  
10 in an area that was emptied of Jews. Judy did not have  
11 anybody to date or to marry. She could marry somebody her  
12 own age group, someone younger or someone much older or  
13 marry out of faith. This whole generation was wiped out.  
14 This was an experience in that part of Europe after the  
15 war. Judy married out of faith.

16 She and her husband also are in the United States  
17 now and we saw her recently. I wanted to thank you for  
18 this interview.

19 Q. I have a couple more questions. I want to go  
20 back to 1949. You came to St. Louis?

21 A. I went, yes, I arrived in the U.S. An  
22 uncle met me. Aunt Lina, my mother's sister's husband.  
23 My sister having died sometime ago.

24 By the way, I have those pictures I would like to  
25 show of my American family. He took me to St. Louis,

1 Missouri. But you see, I was suppose to go to Kansas  
2 City, Missouri. But a telegram waited for me that said do  
3 not come to Kansas City. It was from my aunt. Come to  
4 St. Louis. While you were on the ship coming over to the  
5 U.S. your uncle died. So I didn't have the pleasure of  
6 getting to know him. So I arrived to death. Really a sad  
7 situation. Here I left Europe thinking to myself goodbye,  
8 bloody Europe. I don't care if I ever see you again.

9 I simply want to open up a new chapter in my life  
10 and just start from scratch. I am a new person, I am no  
11 longer what I was before the war. My heart is not the  
12 same, my thinking about things aren't the same. I feel  
13 like I am a thousand years old.

14 I realize that death is part of life and that we  
15 just have to accept it as it comes out. I just wanted so  
16 much to meet him.

17 May I show a picture of him and my aunt? I want to  
18 show a happy picture first. I am going to show Anushka's  
19 visit here just recently and in the cemetery of our  
20 father. Is this all right?

21 This is Anushka and I at the cemetery where my  
22 father David Hollander is buried in San Francisco. We are  
23 paying our respects. It's called \* kaber avold, kaber  
24 meaning a visit to the grave, which takes in prayer. And  
25 another picture of us visiting on that same day.

1           A happier moment of Anushka and me in our kitchen.  
2       We are doing some household things and having a good time  
3       doing it.

4           The Swedish family who took me in and wanted me to  
5       be their daughter. The far right is my foster mother,  
6       Lillie. Next to her is Fabro Eric, her husband, my foster  
7       father, and this is me on my visit from 1962. From Russia  
8       I went to Sweden. That's my Swedish brother-in-law,  
9       Steeg, and my Swedish sister Gulan. Now Eronson.

10          An old picture of my dad. Here he is. He is a  
11       volunteer fireman in our town. This was before I was  
12       born, I am sure. That community involvement was always  
13       his forte.

14          And now? How can I do this? This is my uncle, my  
15       mother's brother and my mother's two sisters. My uncle,  
16       who died while I was on the ship coming over here, and the  
17       middle one is \* Uncle Louie Parnis' wife-- my mother's  
18       sister, Lani, and this is my aunt Bella Smith. None of  
19       them are alive today, but they brought me out to the  
20       United States.

21          These are my cousins. My Aunt Lanie's children.  
22       My first cousins, whose albums I went over. First thing I  
23       asked for when I came, may I see your albums, please?

24          Some of the pictures came from their album. That  
25       is how I was able to get some of these pictures. These

1 also are my mother's sister and my mother's brother.

2 There is only one more picture, or two. My  
3 grandpa. This is my mother's father. He died when I was  
4 six months old. I did not know him. But he did not die  
5 in the Holocaust.

6 And one last picture from the American family  
7 album, is my grandma, my uncle and his wife visiting us  
8 and paying our respects to their father, my grandpa.

9 My mother and dad, she was seven months pregnant  
10 with Anushka. I am right here. That's the only picture I  
11 have of myself as a little girl.

12 Q. Beautiful pictures, Gloria. We are almost  
13 out of time. Just two more questions. Another time we  
14 have to continue what happened after the war. We haven't  
15 covered that at all really.

16 A. Sorry.

17 Q. I am so glad. I am so glad we went into  
18 the details with this. We will do that another time.

19 Right now I would like to summarize two things  
20 quickly. One is the film and the other is your work as a  
21 Holocaust educator and then we will conclude and another  
22 time we will go into more detail. Carl is wonderful and I  
23 want you to tell about Carl and your kids and what you  
24 told your kids.

25 Tell me about the film.

1           A.           About eight years ago a professor of film  
2           approached me to have a documentary film made about my  
3           experiences. He heard about me because I have been making  
4           myself available to educate the young people about the  
5           Holocaust. At least to the extent that I was an  
6           eyewitness.

7           I always felt that I am an eyewitness and it is  
8           much better if I tell it than some day my children telling  
9           it. The film has been struggling along. We have some  
10          tremendous film footage, but we have been plagued with  
11          financial problems each time. It is a much slower project  
12          than we anticipated.

13          To date most of the film footage has been filmed,  
14          which takes in a visit, my first visit back to Germany and  
15          lecturing at the University of Hanover to German youth in  
16          German, in their native language, and getting the feel of  
17          what it's like today in Germany.

18          I also lectured at the \* Vicerosa Cultural Center  
19          and that was a very interesting experience. I helped  
20          dedicate two monuments, one of which is one concentration  
21          camp we were setting up a monument for was a camp that I  
22          was in and that was Hanover at the Continental Gummewerke.

23          I visited the continental Gummewerke, where I was  
24          the first one to return, visited Bergen-Belsen, where I  
25          was the first one to submit a film about my visit and now

1 it is in the education center. It became archival  
2 material. This is unedited film footage. They purchased  
3 a copy of it. At least the parts of the film which relate  
4 to the camps in and around Bergen-Belsen.

5 They also ordered a finished copy of the film once  
6 it's completed, as well as a video copy. So it will be  
7 definitely exposed.

8 If we could only get some funds we could finish the  
9 film in a year at the most, because we have the editing to  
10 do and just very little more filming. But I wanted to  
11 leave a legacy for future generations. This is very  
12 important to me.

13 I am in the schools a lot. I have spoken in over  
14 200 high schools, universities, junior high schools,  
15 synagogues, churches, civic groups, you name it.

16 I find that the oral history of the survivor, the  
17 physical appearance of a survivor makes all the difference  
18 in the world.

19 These students write to me thousands of letters. I  
20 cherish everyone of them. I answer back one letter to  
21 each school. It takes a lot of my time. I have been  
22 doing this for nine years at my own expense and an  
23 additional three or four years with some help from the  
24 schools now and then. But even now I carry the expense of  
25 this Holocaust education mainly myself.

1 I think there is a tremendous need to get some kind  
2 of support so that we could have more survivors out there  
3 in the schools because we survivors are here on borrowed  
4 time.

5 I am 59 years old and I am among the youngest of  
6 survivors. Pretty soon there will be no survivors to tell  
7 the stories.

8 I feel that the first thing on the agenda would be  
9 for each survivor to give his or her oral history so that  
10 future generations can see us or hear it from us.

11 Q. That's what keeps you going?

12 A. That's what keeps me going. When I get a  
13 letter from a Stanford student who says I have been  
14 blessed with a comfortable life and the privilege of going  
15 to the school, I never met Gloria Lyon until just a half  
16 hour ago, an hour ago, and I walked out of this class  
17 feeling that the world is mine, I don't take the things  
18 for granted that I have done before, the sky is blue, I  
19 walk into my room, I see the books and the furniture and  
20 everything that I have and I can do whatever I want, it's  
21 all mine to do with as I please. Yesterday I didn't feel  
22 this way.

23 So what, there are those books, there is the  
24 furniture. So everybody else has it. I can call up my  
25 mom and hear her cheerful voice. Gloria Lyon couldn't

1 call up her mom. She doesn't have a mom to call up. She  
2 doesn't have family to call up and yet she waits among  
3 those families with the high rate of survival within her  
4 own family and he thank's God for having had this  
5 opportunity to hear how human beings can treat human  
6 beings and how an entire society can bring down an entire  
7 society from a high level of living to that of murderers  
8 in a relatively short time and man's inhumanity to man  
9 seemed unreal to me before, but now I know it is there.

10 I get a letter from a black student who says I am a  
11 black American and I know what discrimination is, but I  
12 thought I knew what real discrimination is, but now I know  
13 what real discrimination is like after hearing Gloria  
14 Lyon. It just goes on and on.

15 Or I read about the Holocaust, I saw films about  
16 the Holocaust and I heard about the Holocaust but not  
17 until I met a real eyewitness, Gloria Lyon, do I know or  
18 have even an inkling what it was all about.

19 So these letters are simply book material,  
20 historical material for the future. I think we should  
21 make a great effort to finance our oral history project in  
22 order to make it possible for this project to go forward  
23 so that we can save the eyewitness histories for future  
24 generations.

25 This should be number one. Everything else can be

1 done later after we are gone.

2 One of my most rewarding experiences is to be able  
3 to tell the students to cherish their democracy and to  
4 steer away from discrimination and prejudice, to be kind  
5 to each other and treat each other equally.

6 I think, if nothing else, this to me is the most  
7 important thing that I have ever done before.

8 Q. Gloria, thank you. Thank you so much. We  
9 will continue soon.

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