Interview with: Gloria Lyon

Holocaust Oral History Project

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Place: San Francisco, California

Interviewer: Lani Silver and Marc Blumberg

Transcriber: Marjorie Forman

Q. I'M SITTING HERE WITH GLORIA LYON. WE ARE DOING THE SECOND PART OF HER INTERVIEW. THIS IS FOR THE HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

I'M LANI SILVER WITH MARC BLUMBERG, AND I'M SO HAPPY TO BE INTERVIEWING GLORIA, WHO I HAVE KNOWN FOR A LONG TIME.

DURING THE FIRST INTERVIEW, YOU TALKED ABOUT YOUR TRAIN RIDE WHERE YOU SORT OF WOKE UP IN SWEDEN, OR WOKE UP, AND I THOUGHT MAYBE THAT WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO START TODAY.

A. Sure.

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT LED UP TO THAT AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A. Of course. I was knocked out when I was beaten up by an SS for having tried to pick up the food from the tall grass.

Perhaps I ought to go back a step or two.

We were taken out of Ravensbruck, my last camp, and for three days, that the train just kept moving and stopping, moving and stopping, quite aimlessly. And we heard the Nazis outside. After we finally stopped

in a large open meadow, discuss our fate. And we were all to be executed in this open field.

By that time, we were very weak and many people were dead among us. In fact, more than half of us were dead, and the rest of us were ill and simply beyond ourselves. We were all very sick and weak and dazed. And some of us just went berzerk.

And hearing this news, there were all sorts of reactions. Some of us still cared and were elated, but there are many who -- who simply were in apathy, apathetic about anything that was going on.

Q. HEARING WHICH NEWS?

A. Hearing the news of the Nazis, that we were going to be shot in these open fields.

And I remember just feeling, how could it end like this, after all I went through. It seemed as though we are at the end of our journey of life and there was no way that one could believe that one would stay alive. The situation was so terribly drastic for us. I really don't think words can describe this journey between Ravensbruck and wherever we were in Northern Germany.

Finally, they opened the cattle car doors and roust, roust, and we should throw out the dead and the sick. And we did that.

Well, we threw -- we pushed out the dead, but the sick, in our particular cattle car, we just, by silence, decided not to touch them, aside from the fact that

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we were awfully weak to exert ourselves any further. But we did still care.

So we got off. And there was this very long column of human shadows, if I may call us that. And we didn't know what was at the other end, but when I got there, they were doling out to us a handful of raw macaroni and a handful of sugar out of burlap sacks. And so how to receive this?

I sort of imitated somebody. And I held up my dress to receive this ration. And I wasn't even aware that my dress was torn and the macaroni and sugar just spilled right through my dress and onto the tall grass. We were -- you know, it was very confusing.

In one breath, we hear that we are going to be executed. And why do they give us macaroni and sugar?

But, of course, this was somewhat later. By the time we reached the end of the column, I don't know how much time went by.

In any event, I wanted to retrieve at least the macaroni from the tall grass, and I was beaten by this Nazi with a club and I was knocked unconscious.

And I have no idea -- at least, I have no memory. And so I have to tell you what my fellow inmates told me, that they half dragged and half carried me back to the boxcar.

And when I came to, I just remember hearing voices like, "You are crossing the Danish countryside," that we would be in Copenhagen soon, that we are free.

I really thought I was having hallucinations, or something is wrong with me, for here I am dreaming about freedom, and the most beautiful thoughts; and could it be really true?

We heard too many rumors throughout our incarceration period. But when I opened my eyes, I saw an SS, and he said, "You are lucky..." in German, "You are lucky. You are free. I have to go back to face the music."

And it all sort of added up. And I didn't dare admit it to myself. Could it really be true? Is this really different from all the other rumors, this sort of thing that goes through one's head?

Well, I don't remember many things that go through my head. This was a very important form of hope, obviously, and so it's clear in my mind.

And the girls obviously carried me back, dragged and carried me back to the car, they told me, to the cattle car. And by the time I opened my eyes, I was on an entirely different train, and there were just a handful of girls around me.

And there still were -- there were a few men who were -- but the SS no longer played the role that they did. This was the very man who said that we are lucky, we were going to be -- we are free, but he has to go back.

So the girls told me, yes, we are traveling through the Danish countryside, and we'll be in Copenhagen

soon. And the train, indeed, arrived in Copenhagen.

And at the train station, there were all these people with Danish flags in their hands, and the church bells were ringing, and it was absolutely the most wonderful thing I ever saw.

The first time human beings were smiling at us and were happy to greet us and all -- all around me were -- well, we were in a regular train by now, a real civilized train, and they were behind barricades, and there were all sorts of police.

And the SS were still at the train stations, and they were telling them to hold them back, hold them back. And they were not permitted to come up to us.

But they broke through these barriers and they handed us, through the windows, brown bags. And mine had peeled potatoes cut up neatly, ready to be eaten, and chocolates, and all sorts of other things. But these are the two things I remember clearly.

And we all were just eating. We couldn't put enough into our mouth. And I was so sore at this point that I could hardly open my mouth.

In any event, I ate very little. But I held onto this brown bag, I remember. And all around me people -- after awhile, people were just dreadfully ill, and they were in agony for they have overeaten and their stomachs just couldn't handle it.

But the train moved on. And as we were moving, people were dying. Survivors, we didn't think of

ourselves yet as survivors. We still felt like we were still incarcerated for some reason. At least I remember I did.

And we were -- we arrived and we were transferred to a ferry boat and taken across -- and I was carried on a stretcher. I told them I can walk, but I -- I suppose I still felt that I had to prove that I can -- I am fit because my life would have depended on it in the camp. And it just wasn't an automated transition.

But they insisted that I lie down on that stretcher, and they carried me onto the boat, a ferry boat. And it took us across the body of water separating Sweden from Denmark called Oresund. And we crossed Oresund and arrived in Malmo, Sweden, on May 3rd, 1945.

Now, this was still five days before the war ended. And there we were taken to a beautiful high school with an olympic size swimming pool. And there we showered and we were disinfected with DDT, which is what they used at that time, and we received new clothes.

I remember we had a choice as to what we want and -- and there were shoes that had -- that looked like boots, and shoes that had just -- how do you call them -- oh, anyway, low shoes, okay?

And I remember picking a pair of boots so that they will last, for I left my shoes in Auschwitz during the selection by (Mag 11,) by (Magalenan) and, I was separated from my mother, and I guess the feeling was still with me. I have to have something that will last.

I couldn't adjust yet to -- to freedom.

I didn't even think about that for a long time, but it dawned on me that, why did I pick those boots? Because I saw myself -- a picture of myself in an old album in which I was in quarantine, and there I'm wearing these boots. Why did I pick boots? And then I realized why I picked boots.

So then, since we were so many, we were distributed into the various areas, and I was sent to Landskrona, which is a charming little town in Southern Sweden.

From Landskrona you could actually see across the Oresund and see Copenhagen there, the lights of Copenhagen at night. And many times a Saturday night we would later go back and forth to Copenhagen. They danced on the -- on these ferry boats on Saturday nights, so I had a nice time.

But those -- during those initial days, we were kept in quarantine in a public school building. In fact, in several public school buildings. I was in (Irca Squella), and that was -- in fact, a letter came from there much later addressed to that address from -- from my American relatives, addressed to
that place, but I wasn't there anymore by that time that letter came.

In any event, there they separated the very, very ill, those with contagious diseases, because many of us suffered from typhus and other serious ailments.

My condition was very, very fragile. Luckily, I did not suffer from any of these serious ailments. I had other problems. I had chronic vitamin deficiency, and seventeen cavities in my teeth needed immediate help.

And my right foot has, even now, all these volcanoes on them because the deprivation of vitamins had this effect on me, that little pimples would form. And then the next day there would be ten and then fifty. I mean, quite a few is all I'm -- I didn't count them, but quite a few.

And then eventually it would become one and become deeper and larger and would become infected and simply refused to heal. And they were just all over my right leg.

And so this needed immediate care.

At first we couldn't even eat because we just weren't used to it. And so they -- they fed us oatmeal -- excuse me -- some of the survivors had to be spoon food, and some of them just couldn't even take it from a -- from -- from a spoon. Some of them were so weak they were dying right there in quarantine. So many died. They were burying them all the time.

Almost all of those young girls, fifteen -- there were very few fifteen. I was fifteen, sixteen. Most of them were seventeen, eighteen through twenty-one. They were just dying.

In fact, I went to visit that cemetery on my return to Sweden much later and took pictures of their

graves. And I realized that there were even more than I thought buried both in Landskrona and in Malmo in the Jewish cemeteries.

While I was in quarantine, the local people came to visit us. Obviously we were much publicized in the local newspapers, and some of them feared that they will be catching some sort of dreadful disease from us, and they actually hesitated having us come.

Later through research, I went through the newspapers, what did the locals -- local people think about us coming. And I found that it -- it -- they had very good reason to feel the way they did because in those days before antibiotic, a disease spread, and it was difficult to control without antibiotic, which I think came later, I don't know exactly when. At least, so far as I know it wasn't available yet in 1945, or readily available, possibly.

But the local population was really wonderful to us. They brought us packages and with the doctors' okay, we could receive it from so-and-so, and we would write letters to them and -- and they would answer us back.

And so it happened that I -- I would be riding the nurse's bike or bikes around this big school yard. And it was just nobody else who knew how to ride a bike. And that was a surprise to me, but I used to have a bike in Czechoslovakia.

I mustn't get so emotional.

And a Swedish family came with a young girl just one year younger than I. And they were -- and they sent me a note one day that they -- that their daughter, Ulan, a beautiful blue-eyed blonde Swedish girl, an only child, wanted a sister. And they would like -- they would like to have a sister for her.

And after we corresponded for a while, they wanted to adopt me. This was a nonJewish, it was a Christian family.

And I really was so moved that they cared and they cared so much and wrote such affectionate letters.

I still have those letters today. And when they -- they knew that I didn't speak Swedish, so through a translator, they wrote me letters.

I answered them with the -- with the little German that I learned in high school, just two years of it. But how much German can one learn in two years of high school, not even enough for -- to hold an intelligent conversation.

But the girls helped me and together we wrote the answer.

In fact, whenever I needed, what would I write, I would ask them, and they said you should -- you should go and live with them, at least live with them, if you don't want to be adopted. And you -- why should you be with us. We are -- we are all so sad and you have a family.

I was sort of everybody's little sister since I was -- I was the youngest. In fact, it turned out to be -- it turned out that I was the youngest, which I didn't know until later.

There were some girls who were really just a few months older than I, but just two.

I was in Landskrona for a short time, for a few weeks. And then I was sent to a rehabilitation camp called -- in Varnamo. It was called in Swedish (Eckabor) pensionat for Varnamo. And that means a resort place in Varnamo in the providence of Smaland.

And their nurses kept track of our health and we were on special diets still. And I did not -- I did not really decide to be with this family, I mean, to be adopted, until much later, because I wrote to them that as much as I would like to be adopted, I have hopes to find my family.

And I set upon to search for them immediately. I started writing home to the Czech address and Hungarian address because, you know, I was born in Czechoslovakia, and we became Hungary in 1938 as a part of the Munich agreement. And then the Germans occupied our area, and then in World War II, Russia took over. And it has become part of the Ukrain, which it still is today in 1990, it is part of the Ukrain.

But I didn't really know who is going to end up in this land. And there were a lot of land trading at that time and the borders were unsettled, but the Russians

were in there already. Eventually, they sealed the -- sealed the border and nobody could come in, nobody could go out.

But I kept writing letters. And also our names were announced over European radio, and people throughout Europe would be sitting by the radio and listen to names of loved ones whose -- who is missing, whose name they would recognize. And if they would recognize a name, they would take the news back home.

And so it happened that my mother, who was from -- whom I was separated by Josef Mengele in Auschwitz -- Mengele in Russia, with me -- she was with my sister and I. The Russians liberated them in -- if I can say liberated, I guess I can -- liberated them in January -- on January 27th, 1945, and were sent home.

So they were in the camp from -- away from home from April 15th, 1944 to -- until January 27th, '45 in Auschwitz, and -- and went home. They practically walked halfway. They had to do a lot of walking, but they kept hopping rides and eventually made it, but I didn't know this. I didn't know anybody survived.

At this point, I felt that I was -- well, I didn't dare, but I kept -- this thought kept popping up in my mind, "Am I the only survivor?"

You know, after a few months, I really thought that I'm the only survivor in my whole family because nobody seems to come through. And "What happened to my relatives in America?" My mother's entire family came to

the United States before World War II.

And I also wrote to -- to my uncle, whose -- who lived in St. Louis, Missouri. And I knew his name, I knew the city, but I couldn't for the life of me remember his address, although I used to mail my mother's letters many times and add to her letters.

But one night -- one night I had a dream that my uncle's address was 56 -- whatever it was -- 3654 Del Mar, I believe that's correct. And I was by this time with the Swedish family in Landskrona.

I told them, by the way, that I am -- I'll be glad to come and live with you, but I -- at this point I do not wish to be adopted.

And so I stayed in Varnamo as long as I needed to with the Czechoslovakian inmates. We are no longer inmates, you see? Survivors. They kept us by nationalities. I was told that the bill for our expenses will be paid by the Czechoslovakian government. Whether or not it's true, I have still not been able to confirm. But we were all Czech -- born in Czechoslovakia.

This, by the way, caused some confusion, because later I didn't know whether to put down I am Hungarian, because we went with the Hungarian contingent, and the Czechoslovakian contingent to Auschwitz when we were Hungary to Auschwitz.

And we were Hungary since '38.

So these things, the documents, you see Hungarian, Czech, birth place Czech, but Hungarian.

So someone who doesn't know what took place and what is expected of us, really -- we didn't know what's expected of us, put down all sorts of correct -- what seemed like correct answers.

But as I analyze it today, I realize that it should have always been Czech -- Czechoslovakian.

But then again, "Why do you speak Hungarian?"

So I always need to explain these things.

Q. BEFORE WE GO AHEAD, I'M INTERESTED WHEN YOU GOT TO MALMO. YOU TOOK THE FERRY BOAT OVER TO IT, WENT STRAIGHT TO THIS TOWN?

A. Exactly.

Q. AND THE FIRST THING YOU SAW WAS THE HIGH SCHOOL?

A. No. We were at the harbor, and then we were bussed to this high school, a beautiful high school, a huge high school. I revisited that high school.

Q. HOW LONG WERE YOU IN MALMO IN THE HIGH SCHOOL? WHAT WAS YOUR STATE OF MIND?

A. I only remember segments. I remember this deep fear of the showers. We had to take a shower, of course, right after we -- we were sprayed with this -- fumigated with this DDT, and then we were told that we -- we need to come to the showers.

And everybody was hesitant, and we were -- we were talking. I don't remember exactly what we said, but we were fearful of the showers. And I -- for very good reason, of course, because in Auschwitz many of the inmates were -- many of the people who arrived were lured

into these showers thinking they are going to a shower, and gas came out.

And they tried to reassure us that this is no longer a concentration camp, this is freedom, and that these are really showers. And they demonstrated to us that, indeed, water comes out of there.

I remember that. And that is -- that even then we finally took our shower, obviously.

But you know, my hair was only about an inch long because we were shaven in Auschwitz. And somehow they didn't grow very much, but they were full of white eggs. And I haven't seen a mirror for so long, but when I got to Sweden I realized how -- you know, how, what those are.

And we were definitely infested with lice. We know that. And we were helping each other, delousing each other, so that we could get a good night's sleep in the camps, very often.

But these white eggs, long after the lice was gone and the -- the eggs were dead, we -- they still hung onto the hair. And they gave us some little combs with -- that had very fine teeth. And we would be combing with that, and these eggs would just -- some would come out. It would take the longest time for them to go away, when I think of it.

I went to live with the Swedish family. I was really, so far as how we felt at the time, I -- I think the showers and picking those boots stands out most in my

mind. "This must last." The kind of clothes I pick is -- I don't know what's ahead, but it has to last, whatever it is. I don't know when I'll get clothes again.

And I think those are the two things that stand out mostly in my mind. And we cried a lot.

Q. MY NEXT QUESTION --

A. We cried so much, we were happy, and suddenly we were free and we -- and we were very happy to be free, but suddenly we realized how alone we were in this world. No matter how -- how lovely the Swedes were to us, I -- I just can't tell you how wonderful they were. It was difficult for them to understand why we were unhappy.

We were simply -- we had all this time on our hands, and we were completely turned inward. We were wondering what -- what is causing all this turmoil in us. We should be happy; we made it. But there were so many who died, and there were so many who were murdered and hung and beaten and cruelly ended their lives. We just relatively a handful; why we, you know.

But we kept telling each other, reassuring each other that we really don't know. There was a war and, after all, men weren't with us. It could be that they survived in their camps. And we must not -- we must not jump to conclusions. The little -- the little ray of hope kept -- we tried to kindle it, but many survivors have really had no hope at all, right from the beginning.

I thought perhaps I was very young, that's why I felt that way. But I realize today that I am just that

6 way, I just always felt that somehow, some of them must have survived. I always felt that. I never expected all of them to survive, and all of them did not survive.

As you know, I lost one brother from my immediate family, Victor. I had four older brothers, and he was the fourth brother. And my first brother died before the Holocaust in a tragic accident, shocked by electricity. He actually
was an electrical engineer --

Excuse me, would you excuse me while I get a handkerchief?

(Brief pause in taping.)

A. I think I'd like to go back to the Swedish family. I stayed with them from August 17th, 1945, till I came to the United States. I left on April 11th, 1987.

During the time --

Q. 1980 --

A. I'm sorry. 1947. It wasn't that long.

7 So nearly two years. Nearly two years.

And during that time, once I returned from Varnamo and after I was rehabilitated, I went to school and I went to this very high school that -- where I was quarantined because we belonged to that district where I lived with the Swedish family. And that's where my Swedish sister went to high school, as well, and in the skola.

So I took typing and Swedish and history and also some different subjects.

7 At the same time, I was looking -- you know, made an effort to look for my family and kept writing, per chance I'll find them.

Also, my family in America, after I dreamt my uncle's address, 5236 Del Mar, I received one day a letter and that was addressed to my quarantine high school, where I went to high school there later.

But when I was in quarantine because I wrote that -- I wrote to him at that time, and of course it was forwarded to several different places, and I still have that envelope. And eventually it found me at the Swedish family's address.

So you can see how much time passed by. A sign of my very first family was my uncle, mother's brother in St. Louis, Missouri. And he contacted my aunt, my mother's sister in Kansas City, Missouri. And the two of them immediately made our papers to -- and sent for me to come to the United States, and instructed me not to communicate with my family if they are alive; that they haven't heard from anybody. I'm the first one who showed a sign of life.

And in a way when I read that I felt, "Oh, my God." You know, that my worst fears are coming -- you know, that my worst fears are coming -- coming true.

But I decided if -- to make some plans. That if I -- If I have no family, that the only place I want to live is Palestine with my people. Nobody will understand me after this experience. Only -- only those who survived

what I have survived.

But beyond that, I couldn't think. The idea of staying in Sweden was -- I thought about it, but I felt that I really needed family. I was fifteen, I needed my mother. I felt -- I longed so much for my family. I can't stress this strongly enough.

So that letter already added a sign of hope, at the same time a sign of despair. To me the idea of coming to America, which my uncle suggested at first, "No, no, I got to go home to my mother."

And I shouldn't write to my mother, as my aunt and uncle suggested, was the whole idea I couldn't accept. I kept writing to my mother.

And eventually, months later, I had a letter from my mother in which she wrote that she and Anushka came home from Auschwitz, and that is came back to (Nuberik) that is, came home to Nuberik, and couldn't enter our house. Our house was locked up. That some people have purchased it in an auction.

And fearing the Russians coming, they left. But before they purchased it, soon after we moved out of this house, the Nazis moved their horses into a certain part of our room because it was very huge, they could just -- and they went right through the hardwood floor.

But mother said in a letter, and said that Michael is home and -- and enabled us to move into our house. Until then, they lived with a Christian neighbor whom we were very close. And that the family jewelry was

still there, and it served them well to start life anew.

You see, in my previous tape I talked about burying our jewelry the night before we learned that we are going to be picked up. My dad buried the family jewelry under the hardwood floors, in one of the rooms where the SS had their horses.

And so the new owner who bought it in an auction -- bought our house in an auction, had the floor repaired, but he did not -- he only repaired where it -- in the center area. The corners were all intact as before. And so there was no need for him to -- to repair it there because the wood fitted in a parquet floor, so it wasn't necessary to do it all.

And what happened was that mother found the jewelry just where it was. But at first, she wrote, "When we entered the house and we saw that there's a new floor, since they cannot duplicate the finish," her heart sank, and said "Now, what are we going to live on?"

Because the house was completely empty. There was not a stitch of clothing or furniture, not even a blanket for them to cover themselves with.

And so what to do. All the animals, we had cows and horses, they were all auctioned off. We had chickens and ducks and turkeys. We had a sizable farm and vineyard in Czechoslovakia.

In fact, we lived off of the land quite a bit during those last few crucial years when the racial laws of the Nuremberg laws filtered down into the occupied area

which were -- which we had become. And so we were restricted from doing this and from doing that.

For example, my brother couldn't go to the university after he graduated from high school. He could go only to a trade school.

And all these things affected us. We could not earn money anymore. We had to close the store -- our store, which my mother and grandma ran. And so once the savings was gone, we just were in dire need for help.

And so we could live off of the farm because we had our own meat, corn, potatoes, buttermilk from the cows, and so much more than we could use.

And so this is how we helped our relatives and the -- just in our town, and neighbors. Those who were farmers really saved the rest of the community with our help. And of course, they couldn't pay. They didn't have money. Once their savings was gone, that was it.

And, of course, the accounts were frozen too. They would allow only a certain amount to live off of. And if they didn't have land, then they would have to buy everything that they needed.

Q. WAS THIS LETTER THE FIRST TIME YOU FOUND OUT YOUR MOTHER WAS STILL ALIVE?

A. The first time?

Q. WHEN YOU GOT IT, YOUR MOTHER'S LETTER OR YOUR UNCLE'S LETTER?

A. Oh, my uncle's letter came first, but at -- my uncle didn't know that anybody else was alive at that

point. And my mother told me who was home at that time, that Mic, that is my nickname for my brother Michael, came home, and he left because nobody was home, but then came home again.

And by that time, Mother and my sister, Anushka, came home from Auschwitz. She was twelve years old and survived Auschwitz. She jumped off -- well, actually, she jumped on a truck and jumped off to join us in the very, very beginning after she was selected to go to the other side.

Let me repeat this. When we arrived, this Mengele did the selection, Mother and I were sent in one direction, Anushka sent with the old and the young, and the disabled, and the sick, and so on.

And we know today for what reason, but we didn't know at that time.

And Anushka didn't want to leave Mother and me. And she stood around there for a little bit. In fact, the Nazis sort of hit her, hit her with the -- with the -- what is it called -- the wooden part of the gun.

But she -- and at that point, she actually saw a wagon with a flattop carrying luggage, and bundles, and so on, from the trains, and it was catching up behind us.

And she jumped on this flattopped wagon, and she was looking for us in the rows. And as she saw us, she just jumped off and joined us. And that's how she saved her life in the very, very beginning.

And so it happened that Anushka stayed alive

because -- you know, I saved my life later, but in Auschwitz. And Mother didn't know that I was alive.

In this letter, she wrote that the way she heard about my life was that people kept coming to tell her. First she heard from somebody that there was an announcement that I was alive and well in Sweden. And she wrote that, she told the person, it couldn't be me because nobody ever came back from the gas chamber.

But as they kept repeating these names and other people came to report to her that I'm alive and I'm in Sweden, and you know, birth place and birth dates, it all jibed.

And then she received six letters from me all at the same time, and only then was she willing to accept the fact that I was alive, indeed.

And apparently, she didn't know anything about my uncle and aunt yet in the U.S., her sister and brother, because she wrote nothing about them. But eventually, my mother wrote that, "As much as we would love to have you come home, we think you would have a much better life in America. "

And by this time, my papers were in the making and there was a two-year waiting period for the Czechoslovakian quota into the United States, but I just got on it in case they were not alive, that possibly I'll go to Palestine and maybe I'll go to the United States.

At the time I filed this request, I didn't know really that they were -- they were alive, even.

So by the time my mother wrote again, I already knew that I was -- I was on two lists, and I could -- and she wrote that, "As much as we would love to have you come home, we think you will have a much better life in America. "

And this just devastated me, because throughout my six additional camps after I was separated from my mom, I really -- I think it helped to sustain me just to know that I'm the one who was picked out for death, she was alive, and her chances of survival is much better than mine. She thinks I am dead, and so I've got to be strong and somehow make it back to her.

And so here suddenly now that I'm free to learn that I -- she advises me to go to America because I'll have a better life, that -- I needed a different type of satisfaction and emotional satisfaction. I really cried a lot after that.

But really looking back, as an adult, I mean, I -- apparently my emotional self never accepted it, but my intelligent self knows that this was the best thing that she could advise me to do under the circumstances.

And I would -- had I gone back, I would not have been with her very long because she died within three years after she was liberated, from hardship suffered in the camps.

So I could not say "Mother" for many, many years after that. I -- I haven't cried this much in years. I am sorry.

On April 11th, 1947, I took the Swedish steamship (Druchnik) home to New York Harbor.

Q. BY YOURSELF?

A. By myself. And a telegram waited for me in New York that -- it was from my aunt, Bella Smith, from Kansas City, Missouri, informing me not to come to Kansas City, but to come to St. Louis, Missouri, because while I was on the ship coming over, my uncle died.

At the time this really devastated me. I looked very much forward to having a family. So one of the reasons I didn't pick Palestine in the final -- in the final analysis, that at least I'll have a family in the United States.

I actually had two aunts and an uncle, but my other aunt died four years before, but she had children. So I had cousins from Aunt Lena, and those cousins appear in a book called "The Jews In America," which came out last October. They became my immediate family after.

But here I was, you know. After I left Europe, I said, "Goodbye, bloody Europe. I really don't care if I ever see you again, ever." I want a new life, a new chapter in my life. I want to start fresh and forget everything that happened, if that's possible. I never knew it was possible, but I wanted to so much.

And here I arrived at New York Harbor only to find that my uncle died. And I realized, really, that death is part of life and I must accept it and move on from there. What happens in life, I simply must accept

and adjust to it.

It somehow seemed to -- the very thought was healing that I could rationalize it like that.

I went to St. Louis. My aunt waited for me, and she just said -- she just got up from mourning. And she told me that I bring the breath of fresh air to her because this is the saddest part of her life, that she lost her only brother.

And so we stayed in St. Louis for six months, during which time I -- I immediately enrolled in -- to study English.

They had classes for foreign-born. And at the Jewish Community Center they were actual classes. You could get high school credit for it. And so I took history and language, to start with, and immediately started that.

But I was very, very restless, as I was in Sweden. Somehow it -- it was -- things took a very long time to heal. I had a tremendous amount of nightmares. Even coming to America, I kept waking up at night.

And I was -- oh, I was plagued by nightmares. It was dogs and shouts and whistles, electric wire fences and limitations. It was all just closing in on me, all the time in my dreams.

And I was constantly holding my head up to avoid the whip, which put a number of gashes on my lips over the years over my incarceration period.

But as time went on, I -- this was healing.

Time has a way of healing. And my nightmares have thinned out. And although I still have them occasionally, they are not violent as they used to be.

I just want to go back to Sweden. For example, I apparently affected my Swedish sister with my nightmares. I had so many nightmares, my foster father, my Swedish foster father, would get up in the middle of the night and just put his arm around me, and my mother, and just calm me down.

And he was just a -- he was absolutely an angel. You know, I had these open wounds still long after I was liberated on my right leg, and he would bandage my foot and put new dressing on it. He would go over the eggs in my hair and try to get rid of those eggs. I'll never forget it.

Eventually he even helped me roll up my hair to make curls, to make me feel better. I have such things, a real father couldn't have been more kind and more warm and more affectionate than my foster father.

And my foster mother was in Sweden. They wanted me to call them Mother and Father. And I told them that as long as I have my father living, my mother living, I cannot do that, but may I call them aunt and uncle.

And so I ended up calling them -- sure, they said, (Tantlaylie) and Fabror. That's what I call them. And, of course, my Swedish sister Goodag, and we still call each other sister. And we're still corresponding.

Well, she used to write to me in Swedish for the

long -- she still writes to me in Swedish, although she speaks English now quite well. I write to her now in English and she writes to me in Swedish.

And I revisited the (Barrygloons) in 1962 and have a beautiful homemade movie of our reunion, our first reunion. And this was on the way back from Russia.

When I finally was able to visit the remnant of my family for the first time, for when Stalin closed the borders, nobody could come -- go in or come out. And so all these years I tried to go in, they would not permit me to go in or for them to come out.

Finally, I was permitted first three days -- can you imagine, three days. We just came home from -- from the World's Fair in Seattle with our two sons, my husband and my two sons, and there was this telegram that I am now permitted to go to Soviet Union because I constantly applied and reapplied.

So I didn't give up, not once. And it was difficult because I spent most of my funds on the World's Fair in Seattle that I would have spent on this trip, because I didn't expect that they are going to allow me to come.

So I thought three days, that is simply too little. I mean, I would not even overcome the jetlag and I'd have to return home.

So I wrote back, telegramed back, "Please allow me seven days so that I can enjoy them." And they granted my wish and I went.

By that time, and Department of State, I asked their advice, you know, what's right, what's wrong, because we really had only one Embassy, which was in Moscow. And where I was going, I'd have no protection at all.

So they advised me not to go through Czechoslovakia because Czechoslovakia was -- did not recognize dual citzenship. So I had to go by way of Scandanavian, Helsinki, Leningrad, Minsk, and they permitted me to meet in L'Vov. What used to be Lemberg became L'Vov. Also what was Poland has become part of the Ukrain, as well.

And that is where I met for the first time, my surviving family. Twenty-one people came to meet me in L'Vov. They traveled over 200 miles to visit me on that trip back to the Soviet Union. I cannot tell you how meaningful that was.

And that, in itself, could take quite a bit of time, which I don't think you want me to go into, but I must say that it was a great reunion.

Since I was a member of our choir in our synagogue, I was a soprano, they -- I've learned a lot of beautiful melodies. And I spent my time with my family talking and singing from morning till night, and from night till morning until I lost my voice.

And the guide who was attached to me made herself quite evident, because the following morning she rushed to my door and says, "What happened to you? What

happened to you?"

And she gave it away. I mean, she was obviously recording everything we were doing, which they did at that time. And I said, "Nothing, no problem. I just lost my voice. I have laryngitis, you know." And I whispered like that.

Q. WHAT DID SHE SAY?

A. Whisperingly, like that.

And but there's one thing I'd like to share with you. Each member of the family who came to visit me, my -- my brother Michael, and when (Shandor) heard them coming, he was -- he's an artist and he paints some designs in large buildings, border designs, by hand. And his know-how was very much in demand.

And so they sent him to (Ootsbakistan) on a job, and he left his job and came to meet me in L'Vov, too. My sister came, and all their children. They each had three three children by that time.

And they came to visit me and my dad, whom I -- who survived also Auschwitz. And he was in -- he was in Dora/Nordhausen when the Americans liberated him, together with my brother, Shandor. He came to visit me. Imagine.

Q. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A. My father and I slept in one big bed and we talked all night, because that's the only kind of room we could get.

Anyway, it was absolutely marvelous. And I tell you, we discovered each other. I wanted to do something

for my father. I said, Dad -- you know -- I took his sock off at night, you know, before he put his pajamas on. I said, "Dad, let me rinse out your socks."

So when I took his sock off I noticed that he is web-footed. This might not mean anything to anybody else, but let me tell you, I discovered that I -- that I am web-footed, which I knew, and that's where I got it from.

But I said to him earlier that, "Dad, you would recognize your two American grandchildren, grandsons, because they are web-footed just like I am."

And at that point my father didn't know at the age of 70, he didn't know that he had web feet. He found out when I took his sock off to rinse it out for him. And I said, "Here is the family connection." I said, "Your two grandsons and I and you are web-footed."

Now, at first, he didn't know. He said, "It must be from your mother's side because I don't know anybody who has webbed feet."

And when I took his sock off, I said, "Dad, look at your feet." Well, actually, foot. And he saw he was web-footed.

Imagine. He was fondling his toes and he said, "I'm 70 years old and I never knew I was web-footed."

Imagine finding things like that out.

And all night long we talked about the past and every time we talked about the past, he would cry. He said, "Honey, it's no longer like it was, you should see. The forests were all cut down. There isn't any forest."

When I mentioned the beautiful forest, I remember the orchards, the vineyards. He said, "It's not like that anymore. All the forests were cut down and they planted potatoes and corn there, and that the Soviets have taken those -- the lumber and taken it inland and the area was raped! The whole area was raped!" I couldn't believe it.

He said, "Just keep your memories because it's not like that anymore."

Q. AND YOU WERE IN L'VOV BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T GO TO YOUR TOWN?

A. Exactly. They would not permit me to go into my hometown. To date, in 1990, I have not yet been back to my (Toniteabareg,) which is nine kilometers from (Barakas), which is the provincial capital.

And I hope that now with Glasnovst, that next April I should be able to be there. That's just a few months from now. And I hope to be there on April 15th, the day when we were picked up.

I want to know what -- what everything is like on that day, in that area. I mean --

Q. WHAT YEAR WAS THAT THAT YOU WENT TO RUSSIA?

A. In 1962. I made a vow to myself that I would not rest until I bring them to this country.

And so we brought them all out single-handedly, my husband and I. My dad was the first one. I called him (Opu) and my mother (Union).

So (Opu) came to America in February 1966 for my son's barmitzvah, and he missed it by two days. He would have made it, except that in Moscow, he was held up and they had to go through another police check to make sure he is clean, which he of course was.

And so he missed the barmitzvah. The whole town was waiting for him.

And Anushka, we brought Anushka to America in June of 1971. Anushka, her husband and three children, so that's five people.

And we brought Mishka to America, that's Michael, in 1974. Six people. That was Michael, his wife, his mother-in-law, Pepe (Crisman) whose picture hung at the Holocaust center, and three children.

And then my brother Shandor. There were six people ready to come, and they changed their minds because one of their daughters fell in love with a boy, which meant all this work having gone down the drain. We sent them new papers to include her future husband and -- so we went through that, which took quite a while. And then he changed his mind, that they'd all like to go to Israel.

Wonderful. That's okay.

So we contacted a friend who is a member of the Kineset, Mr. Abramof, and a first cousin in Be'er Sheva, Israel, who is no longer alive.

But at that time, I sent him all of the information that we have, take it to Abramof and have him help, and they sent him papers.

12 By that time, their son fell in love with a girl and married.

So I gave up. And my husband definitely gave up. And so he said, "We are no longer responsible for this family. They are -- they seem to take all this very lightly. And after all the work that we, and expense that we go through. And so tell them that they have to come out some other way."

And that's what I had to tell them.

But nevertheless, we did all the work and they did come out, all of them, eventually. They were brought out by (Hias) and they went by way of Italy and came into the U.S. And they are doing very well in New York.

Q. DID THE NEW GIRLFRIEND COME, TOO?

A. Oh, yes. They married and they even had a little child by then. So this huge family came out.

Q. WHERE DOES EVERYONE LIVE NOW?

13 A. Shandor and his family live in Brooklyn. My sister Anushka, who was widowed two years ago, she also lives in Brooklyn with her family. They are all married. All the children are married and have children.

And Michael lives in San Francisco, and he is now -- he is just on his way back from a trip to Israel. His first trip to Israel.

Mrs. Crisman, his mother-in-law, passed away a couple of years ago. So life goes on.

But we feel great satisfaction, so we were really responsible for eighteen people single-handedly.

Q. THAT'S GREAT. WELL, LET'S GO BACK TO ST. LOUIS.

A. St. Louis.

Q. OKAY.

A. 1945 -- 1947, 1947, it was -- St. Louis was an interesting place for me. I had to learn a great deal about the United States. I was studying, but I became very restless. I needed to work.

And so -- and "my mother," my mother -- my mother's sister, Aunt Bell, didn't think that I should work, that I should just rest up from my long ordeal.

But I told her, "I really need to work, Aunt Bell, because I'm constantly thinking about what I went through and I don't want to think about it. I want to keep busy, and it interferes with my thoughts when I study. So please let me work."

But she wouldn't let me work.

One day when she went shopping, after I observed some people coming in and out of this building almost across the street from where I lived, I just decided to go there and ask them for a job. I didn't speak English at all, but I put the best German I know how together and I said, "I'm looking for work," "Ich suche nach Arbeit."

And so the man -- the man, it happened to be the manager, and so he talked to me in German. And so he want to know a little bit about my background.

And he said, "Well, are you going to be living here?"

And I lied to him. I said yes.

Anything to get a job, you see?

So he said, "But the kind of work we do here, you know what we do here?"

I said, "No, I have no idea, but it doesn't matter. I'll do anything. I want to work."

So he took me up to the factory. I didn't know it was a factory. It was a mattress factory, of all things. And so I saw people hooking together wires, and they were making mattresses that way.

And so he said, "You see, this is hard work."

I thought to myself, he doesn't know what hard work is, you know, after what I did. "And eight hours a day."

I said, "No problem."

Twelve hour minimum was the days that I was used to from the age of fourteen on. So don't worry, I'll learn it fast.

And I really was anxious. And he said, "Do you have a Social Security number?" I didn't know what that was. And so he wrote a note to my aunt that my aunt should get a Social Security card for me.

Now, this was going to be the biggest selling job that I ever had to do after that point. I was just seventeen and I could not do it on my own when I came here.

And so Aunt Bell came home and I just blurted out, "Aunt Bell, I got a job."

And I never forget, she just dropped the

13 groceries on the floor, she was so surprised. She says, "But you don't even speak English." She said "You're a greenhorn."

I thought what's that, you know, a greenhorn -- I finally learned what that is. I'm supposed to be stupid.

But, "No, Aunt Bell, I got a job, but I need your help. And so, please, help me get what this says."

So I handed her the note and she came and hugged and kissed me. And so she went to the Social Security office with me and I got my Social Security number.

495-32-0297. I'll never forget it.

14 And I started work there. And there were many black people and Spanish people and Portuguese. And you know, it's the first time I ever been together with black people and they are so friendly. And I started learning their kind of English.

And I took it to school with me, and they kept correcting me, but it -- but that was okay. My vocabulary started increasing, and I kept -- continued my education and here, wherever I went.

And then six months later, I moved to Kansas City where, you see, my aunt had to settle my uncle's estate. That's why we had to stay for six months in St. Louis.

And then we moved to her home in Kansas City. She had a very lovely home.

Q. YOU TOLD ME A SAD STORY ABOUT YOUR FIRST NAME.

WOULD YOU TELL US AGAIN?

A. Thank you for reminding me.

I don't have a cold. I just don't know. I guess it's my emotional self that seems to affect me.

In St. Louis my -- and in Kansas city my aunt tried to change me completely. She wanted me to become a blonde. She wanted me to have a different name.

One day -- and she was very strong woman. She said to me one day, "Now, you are in the United States and now you have to become an American."

I said, "Well, I'm working on it. I'm in school and I -- you don't know how hard I've been working on it, but it takes time."

And so she says, "Well, I mean your name. Let's start with your name. I want you to be called Gloria."

I said, "Gloria? What a terrible name." I said, "It sounds like a drug store, a druggaria." Everytime she called me Gloria, it sounded like a drug store, druggaria.

I said, "No, you can't do that." I said, "That's the only thing I have left that my parents gave me is my name. They took everything away from us. I don't even have a picture." I said, "You want me to change my name, the only thing I have."

So she said, "Honey, you'll get used to it. Don't worry about it."

I said, "No. I don't want to be called Gloria."

And I was really -- she was really adamant about

it. And so she called me Gloria and she introduced me to everybody as Gloria. And I kept seeing this drug store all over everytime they called me Gloria. I thought of druggaria, which means drug store in Hungarian.

Q. AND YOUR NAME WAS HANJA?

A. No. Hansi.

Q. HANSI?

A. My nickname was always Hansi. Everybody called me Hansi. My formal name was H-a-j-n-a-l, which means dawn, or the morning glory flower.

And so she -- this is how she translated it, morning glory flower. Gloria.

So now I can see her trend of thought. At that time, nothing made sense. But I was really born with the name of (Zoira,) Z-o-i-r-a, (Holendaria). That was my Czech name. But nobody ever called me (Zoira).

In fact, later when we brought my dad over here, I asked him to bring my birth certificate over, which always seems to be needed for things, and eventually when I become a citizen, I'll need it.

And he brought me this document. And he said to me, "Honey, I could not find your real birth certificate. The only thing I found that fitted your birth date and your last name and everything was a birth certificate that said (Zoira Holendaria)."

And I said, "But Dad, don't you remember? That's my name. Legally that was my name. You are the one who registered me by that name."

He forgot that totally because I was always called Hajnal, Hajnalka in diminutive, or Hansi or Hansika.

So later when I had grandchildren my daughter-in-laws asked me, "What would you like your grandchildren to call you?"

And I said, "I would like to be called Grandma Hansi." So I got my Hansi back. And that's what they call me today.

But we're still in St. Louis this -- one day in Kansas City my -- or was it St. Louis? My aunt took me into a beauty salon and she sat me down and she said to the girl there to die my hair blonde.

And I said, "No way." I had chestnut brown hair all the time, auburn hair. And, in fact, sometimes somebody jokingly called me Chestnut.

And I said, "No way, I don't want to be a blonde. That's very artificial. And I'm just -- it doesn't fit me. I like the color of my hair."

And she was so adamant that the lady said, "Look, she doesn't want to be a blonde, so why do you insist on it?"

I mean, I really didn't understand everything, but I could tell. Anyway, she wouldn't do it. And I -- I cried. I couldn't fight her, she was too strong for me. And so she let it alone and let me be my auburn self.

Q. WHY WAS SHE SO INSISTENT THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR LAST NAME OR CHANGE YOUR HAIR?

A. Why? She she wanted me to become an American overnight. And she had her own image as to what I should look like and what I should be.

And I liked myself the way I was. I didn't want anybody to change me. My parents liked me the way I was. My brothers, my sister liked me the way I was. So what else matters? My aunt will just have to get used to the way I was. I didn't think there was anything wrong.

I weighed 117 pounds, quite a bit less than I weigh now, and I was pretty pleased with myself and I didn't want anybody to change me. But basically, I really felt this is the way my parents knew me. I want to stay the same. This is the name they gave me. That's what I want to keep.

When I got married, I retained my maiden name as my middle name, I felt so strongly about it. And four years later when I had my first child, a son, I named him Hollander. His middle name is Hollander, David Hollander Lyon, because I wanted the family continuating.

My second son was born, David was born in '50 -- 1953, January 29th. And Jonathan was born on December 25th, on Christmas Day, 1955. We gave him a middle name after my brother Victor, whom I lost to -- he was beaten to death in Auschwitz by an SS guard, and died instantly.

And so Victor is his middle name. Jonathan Victor Lyon. But I believe in family continuating. I think there's meaning to it and I love it.

Q. IT MUST HAVE BEEN SO HARD TO GIVE UP YOUR NAME

15 AND TAKE THE NAME GLORIA. AND IT HAS STAYED SINCE THEN?

A. Eventually as I became Americanized, I really -- I learned to actually like my name. And the fact that I was able to keep my maiden name as my middle name compensated, I guess, for that. And to pass that continuating down with my sons.

Q. SO YOUR --

A. So what's in a name? It can be -- it can be very painful. Some people have no need to do this and some people actually do change their names deliberately.

But in certain situations, a name is very important if it connects you to -- if it's a link to that past which you had cherished.

And I cherished my past. It was a beautiful life until the Holocaust came. I come from a very beautiful area. It is only about 40 miles from the famous (Tokay) wine. It's a lot of vineyards there.

That's why I love to go to the Napa Valley. Except that in the Napa Valley, everything, the grapes grow in flat areas. I was amazed when I first went there. And in our area the grapes are always on the mountainside, on the hillsides. And I have fond memories of this period in my life.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU MOVED BACK TO KANSAS CITY?

16 A. In Kansas City, my relatives owned a factory and they manufactured nurses' uniforms and children's clothes. Actually, children's clothes came later. Dresses and

uniforms at that time.

And so they hired me, and I was taking a perpetual inventory in Kansas City.

I lived there only for one year, but it was very nice because there my mother had a cousin, as well, and every week I would go to -- over there for dinner, and with her daughter and son, the Gordon family, and had -- and the (Parnass) family, and had dinner with them. And it compensated for the lack of a family, which I missed it so much for the longest time, I guess I still do, even though now I have my own family.

I enrolled in school there, too, and went -- continued my high school. And my aunt then moved to Los Angeles. And I -- I later moved there with her son. She had an adopted son and daughter-in-law. So the three of us moved to Los Angeles.

But that summer before I moved to Los Angeles, I met Karl, Karl who is now my husband for 41 years. Karl was home in Kansas City visiting his parents from Hastings Law School in San Francisco. He just finished his first year law school when he came to Kansas City.

And there I met him at the home of another survivor, my girlfriend Lucy from Paris, France. She had a birthday party and she asked us, us, her girlfriends, to leave our boyfriends home on a Saturday night to come to her birthday party.

And so we didn't like the idea of leaving our boyfriends home after all week, study and work.

So finally, Saturday night you want to have a good time, and we're going to go to an all girls' birthday party. Could it really be fun? You know.

And when we got there, we found that she invited -- true-to-France style, she invited her own set of boyfriends, but Karl wasn't among them. Karl came home to Kansas City with two -- and met with two of his buddies who came home for the summer from Texas University. One was in engineering and one from Harvard, a medical student. And Karl -- Karl, a law student.

So the three of them -- one of them heard about the party and they crashed the party where I was. And that's how I met Karl.

And every day that summer, we dated. Every day we met for lunch while I worked.

And oh, wow, it was such a complicated summer, because I fell in love with Karl, and I didn't know how he felt about me.

And he didn't dare make any commitments because he was still in law school. And his parents, who came here at a very late age, would have possibly needed his help. If one of them would have become disabled or would have died, he would have had to drop out of law school to help support them. And so he made this commitment to his parents.

By this time, he had an accounting degree from UC Berkeley, but he decided to go to law school per chance he could finish law, which he really wanted to be a lawyer

16 for a long time. And of course, he did become a lawyer, but this is why he didn't -- couldn't make a commitment until then, that it would be a burden to also support a wife.

So which was all right, because -- but I didn't know how he felt about me, see?

And so we corresponded all summer. It took me about three or four hours to write a letter. I looked up every word in the dictionary.

And we still have the letters, and you should see -- I mean, the words were correctly spelled, but they didn't necessarily fit the sentence, and the sentence structure was totally chaotic. But it was the process of learning English and expanding my vocabulary as time went on.

When my aunt moved to Los Angeles, we moved also a little later and, of course, I was closer to San
17 Francisco where Karl was going to law school.

And so he visited me several times, and we got engaged, and so it was a seven-month engagement. And on August 17th, 1949, we married.

And, really, I could never have found a better husband. I can say that 41 years later, two children, and we now have eight grandchildren, ranging from thirteen-and-a-half to one years old.

Q. AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR MARRIAGE, WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DID YOU BRING TO THE MARRIAGE FROM THE HOLOCAUST? WHAT DID KARL SORT OF GO THROUGH? WHAT DID THE TWO OF YOU

GO THROUGH?

A. Karl had to wake me up many times still at night from -- as I suffered from nightmares, and they really went on for some time, even after we married. And slowly, they petered out.

But I still remember him having to wake up and reassure me that everything is all right.

One thing about Karl, I felt -- at first I thought I could never marry an American boy, because I -- I felt how could -- how could anybody understand me. How could I be so complicated that nobody could understand me. In a way I felt, why am I so complicated.

I didn't put together the two, that the little that I would talk about the Holocaust to my American girlfriends or my American relatives were always brushed aside or, "Don't think about that, Honey. That was a long time ago. You're now here. You're safe."

I know they meant well, but there was a need, there was a need to spill it. There was just a time bomb inside me, and nobody seemed to want to hear it.

And it made me feel as though I had -- something is wrong with me. I was really popular with the boys, and I was asked -- before Karl came along, I had six proposals, and I turned them all down. I couldn't -- these boys were all in love with me and I could not possibly reciprocate.

And finally, I kept wondering, what is the matter with me. You know, is something wrong with me.

17 Really, not until Karl came along could I feel the way I did. And that I think was partly because Karl told me that his dad, how -- what his dad went through. He went to Dachau. He was picked up by the SS in 1939 on Kristallnacht and incarcerated in Dachau and what hardship this was on his mother.

Here was somebody who really could identify with my feelings, I felt.

And up to that point, I didn't talk about the Holocaust, because I was -- nobody really was interested, and I wasn't -- I really wasn't anxious to tell at all, but just little bits and pieces. Sometimes I would want to tell somebody, this reminds me of... you know.

Q. AND YOUR AUNT DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT?

A. Oh, no. My aunt said, "Forget it. Forget it." It's not that she was unsympathetic. I think she thought this was best for me.

I really think most of these people felt that way. And I was just dying to share with somebody, something.

Not that I wanted to unleash this on anybody because I wasn't ready, myself, to talk about the Holocaust, but I was ready to just talk about bits and pieces. Just little bits, what it was like, and to be able to feel free to even cry, if I had to.

But I always felt that, "Hold it in," and "Mustn't show your emotions."

And, I don't know, the way I'm going on right

now in this interview, I am really amazed at myself. I haven't felt so emotional about any of this for so long. I'm sorry.

And --

Q. YOU'RE DOING A GREAT JOB, AND YOU REMEMBER ALL THE DETAILS, AND YOU'RE DOING IT.

A. Finally, when I felt very serious about Karl, I decided that before he goes back to at the end of the summer to Hastings Law School, he has to know a little bit about me, because if he should decide that he likes me, that he loves me, preferably, that I want him to decide based on some information about me.

So on a picnic at (Squarrel) Park in Kansas City, just the two of us, I told him a little bit about me.

And he was so moved, and wanted to know much more than I was even willing to talk about. But he accepted. He wasn't pushy; yet, he wanted to know.

And that night, he told me later that he went home and told his family all about me, and he decided that night that, "This is the girl I want to marry."

But he wouldn't tell me all summer. And so eventually, of course, he did, but it came slowly.

I later realized, also, that there was World War II, almost everybody had somebody in the war, almost everybody lost members or family in the war. People just wanted to put the war behind them, and didn't want to talk about the war for those reasons. They were hurt, too. No

different reasons.

And we survivors. I think we really suffered a period of psychic numbness. We wanted to be heard and, yet, we weren't ready to talk, either, but there was a need to talk.

Perhaps therapy would have been excellent. Nobody asked us anything about therapy. Nobody asked us if we want to be helped that way, really.

Not until I started taking child psychology in college, you know, at San Francisco State, that I realized what is really the matter with me.

I realized the need to get this out of my system. And slowly, as I -- and I started having children, and slowly as the children asked me questions, I decided, I am going to be the one they are going to learn it from.

This school books -- school, the textbooks in schools had nothing about the Holocaust. I mean, nothing. These kids would grow up without knowing anything about what happened?

So, you know, it started with my tattoo on my arm, A-6374. And, "What's that tattoo on your arm, Mommy?"

Well, I had to tell them what that tattoo on my arm was, where I got it. A-6374. It somehow shows up better when it's wetted.

And my Auschwitz number, my sister's was A-63 -- no. Mother's was A-6372, my sister's A-6373, and I 74, so

that we had consecutive tattoo numbers. So my children kept asking me about that.

Although I must say, inadvertently, or somehow subconsciously, perhaps, I wore long-sleeved dresses. I don't know why.

I realized later in my child psychology classes, that we do things subconsciously, and so on. And that there are many things that I found that I am doing subconsciously, including wearing long-sleeved clothes.

And it took awhile before I wore short-sleeve clothes, really, and because I was exposed to this number.

And somehow, that number presented a stigma. There was some stigma attached to us.

At that time, nobody seemed to have known the significance of what it is like to carry around this burden, to be a survivor.

I realize that there is a tremendous burden to be a survivor. I mean, in normal life, one doesn't, I know, because I had a normal life. It wasn't always like this. One doesn't just simply go around and just start thinking about the worst things in one's life.

As a matter of fact, I don't. I am -- I would be anywhere, at a social event, something would always remind me of something in my past of my incarceration period, some cruelty or somebody's -- well, just a number of things from the Holocaust. And I would immediately slip back to that period. And somehow it would put a damper on that event, and I would realize what's happening

and try to put myself together again and go on.

This can create a problem when you want to get close to somebody and, you know, you suddenly withdraw and nobody understands why.

I can only speak for myself, of course, but I wouldn't be surprised if this is not a unique problem for me as a survivor of the Holocaust. I am sure all survivors must have something like this, or similar experiences.

Excuse me. If I had known that.

Q. SO KARL WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE YOU OPENED UP WITH AND TALKED ABOUT IT?

A. Karl is the first person that really wanted to know and that I opened up to. And it didn't make any difference to him. And he was very gentle and kind and understanding.

And he suffered a great deal, too, because he fled a year before Nazi Germany. He came over at the age of 15, and then he learned that his father was incarcerated in Dachau, and what hardships his mother is going through.

And here he was going to school in Kansas City, Missouri. He lived with his uncle there, and so he truly knew what -- what this pain is like. Yeah.

Q. BUT YOU WEREN'T TALKING TO VERY MANY OTHER PEOPLE DURING THE BEGINNING OF YOUR MARRIAGE? YOUR KIDS WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU --

A. Yeah, because most of our friends were mainly

American.

In fact, in Kansas City, my aunt discouraged me from being with survivors. And I just wanted to be with survivors. I felt most comfortable with survivors. We didn't talk about the Holocaust, no, but we just knew each other. There was something between us. There was a certain understanding between us that we know, we know.

And if something didn't go just the way you want it to go, there was always a forgiving type of feeling. We know. That's a tremendous burden. It's okay.

And it's very strange. My friends here who are survivors, we are close friends. For years, we didn't talk about the Holocaust. It's really interesting. We just knew where we were from, and very basic things about each other, but we always talked about the current things.

Isn't that interesting? That we, too, avoided that kind of confrontation. Because I couldn't tell anybody else -- another survivor, anything new. That survivor knew that which I knew, and maybe more, and vice versa, about a different area.

And we could have been in the same camps and we still, each of us, experienced a different experience. And each of us were affected differently, because we come from different backgrounds. We had different capacities to accept things, as everybody does.

And I think the Holocaust affected each of us deeply, and how we adjust to it. I think it depends so much on our pasts, on our earlier years, and as well as

what our experiences were.

Q. WHEN YOU MOVED TO SAN FRANCISCO TO GET MARRIED, YOU WERE IN L.A. FOR A YEAR?

A. I got married in Los Angeles with Karl. That's where I lived with my aunt.

Q. AND HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN L.A.?

A. One year, during which time I went to Los Angeles City College. You know, I took a college entrance examination and decided to start college after five years of high school.

Part of the time I went to, I think one semester to high school, and then I was so bored by that time -- my English was getting quite good, and I was getting very good grades.

And I realized even though I don't have many of the studies that these high schoolers had over a period of years, such as history and so on, I'll catch up in college.

So I enrolled at Los Angeles City College after I passed my entrance examination.

And I just went on to college; and imagine, much later, I graduated from -- I was invited to speak at a very prestigious high school in Oakland, the Headroyce School. Headroyce School, (holding up plaque).

And one day they asked me --

Q. THIS WAS RECENTLY?

A. Well, this was in 19 -- I think I spoke there in '85. I'll tell you in a moment. '85. That's correct.

And I'd like to show you. The students asked me (showing certificate) how -- where did I learn how to speak English so well.

And I told them what my educational background was; that they are so fortunate to attend such a wonderful school, the Headroyce School in Oakland, and that I was not so lucky.

After five years of high school in three different countries and three different languages, I still did not graduate from high school, and I really missed that.

So I took a college entrance exam and I moved to college. And so they decided that they are going to honor me with a high school diploma, and that's what this is. I'm very, very proud of it. I didn't know a thing about it. This was a total surprise. Engraved "Gloria H. Lyon."

They invited me to their graduation, and suddenly in this huge auditorium, I heard my name called from the podium.

And I thought, "Gee, I'm not a part of this program. Maybe I misunderstood."

And they started looking at me. And Karl says, "Go on, go on."

I said, "What's happening here?"

And to make a long story short, everybody knew except for me that I am going to graduate from high school, together with these wonderful students. And I

really broke down in tears, I was so -- so deeply moved.

And back in the audience, it turned out was one of my grandchildren, or two -- two of my grandchildren. How fun. I mean, how meaningful. My husband even gave me a high school graduation party. I didn't get that from college, but --

Q. HOW GREAT.

A. -- I was very, very pleased.

Q. WELL, AFTER L.A. CITY COLLEGE, THEN YOU MARRIED KARL AND CAME TO SAN FRANCISCO?

A. Yes.

Q. WHERE DID YOU LIVE?

A. We had a little apartment at 115 Gough for one year. And then we moved to Castro at Liberty, and we had an apartment. And we had our first child at Castro at Liberty. And then a year later, we moved into our own home in the Sunset District of San Francisco.

My husband graduated from law school, when we got married, and he still had to take his bar exams, which he did, and passed the first time, of course.

He was second in law school all the way through, and a member of the honor society.

And he received -- he got a wonderful job on the staff of Chief Justice Phil S. Gibson, the California State Supreme Court, as his research attorney, where he stayed for some time.

And he decided that he didn't want to stay in appellate law, and went to join a law firm. And he was

with that law firm for, I believe about eight years. They were trial lawyers named Lowenthal and Lowenthal.

Mr. Lowenthal is -- it's a husband and wife team. And he would have stayed with them forever, I guess, except that at that time, they didn't want to have a partner, and Karl wanted to move on.

And so he decided to go on his own. But we're still friends with Mrs. Lowenthal and confidente and....

It was a very good experience for Karl.

And he's been in private practice at his own office in general civil law ever since. He's in the Central Tower Building in San Francisco. Yeah. In San Francisco. He shares offices with two other attorneys and they share a suite of offices.

Q. AND WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SECRET IS FOR THE GOOD MARRIAGE THAT YOU HAVE?

A. Well, just give and let give, I guess. Be in love before you marry. Understanding each other.

There were times when, you know, we just, like anybody else, we would be angry at each other and have a little fight. It was never serious. We would never go to sleep until we kissed and made up.

I really think that we have a wonderful marriage, and I know that Karl shares that with me.

In San Francisco, after I moved up, I attended -- I started going to, I think I first attended UC, the UC Extension. There was one on Powell Street. I think it's some sort of museum now, and I went to that

school.

I took different courses. And eventually when we moved out to the Sunset Distrct, I went to San Francisco State, which is located -- which was located at the time, I think where the UC Extension is now, if I'm not correct -- anyway, that's where I went.

And eventually, I went to San Francisco State where I studied child psychology. I wanted to major in child psychology, but I also worked at the same time.

I worked for the actuarial department of the West Coast Life Insurance Company, and I learned to operate -- at that time, this was before the computer age -- a little manual calculator.

And I was computing life expectancy tables. Eventually that became too boring, and I asked them, asked management, if there was anything that they could give me that would give me a little challenge.

And so jokingly I was told, well, that I could become an agent. And I took it seriously, and I started studying for my life and disability insurance exam, state exams. But you had to be 21 years old to take it, so I was ready to take it and waited until I became 21.

And I took the exams and I passed it successfully. And with the law end, Karl helped me with the law end, which was really very, very helpful.

And then I had a child. And then I decided to study for my fire and casualty agent's license.

So for four years, I sort of -- I did this. I

sold life and disability insurance. And fire and casualty, I passed that test.

And for about a year, I also worked for the bond department of Fireman's Insurance Company of North New Jersey, and I was ready to deliver, that -- that was the end.

And eventually, I got a job with the Home Savings and Loan, which later became American Savings. And there I was the supervisor of the insurance department.

Since I had a license, I was very knowledgeable in insurance. And eventually, a blanket policy to go over all the loans on their real estate loans, and so that closed the insurance department. But they didn't want me to leave.

And they told me that they'd train me to become an escrow officer, and that was terrific. I learned a new skill and I became an escrow officer, and I did that for two years.

Except that hard times reached the company in '66. This was American Savings, the second largest in the world at the time. And they wanted me to stay on and just ride with the waves.

And the research department moved there and they asked me to come to the research department. So I started working, doing little secretarial work, and then I did a lot of surveys. I helped and I learned. I had a great deal to learn.

And the director liked me and taught me a lot of things about research and new way of doing anything I've never done before. And I became his assistant. And eventually when he left, I actually had to run the department.

The economic situation was very bad in the middle '60s, and I was the sole survivor of that department.

And eventually, the First Charter Financial Corporation, their holding company, wanted to relocate the entire research files to Beverly Hills, where the holding company was. And they asked me to stay on doing something else.

But the only thing that was left was the savings, and I didn't -- I felt that that would be going the other direction, and I wanted to move on.

And the news went around that I was available. What I was doing was a highly specialized field. Eureka Federal Savings asked me -- at the time they sent their vice-president over to see what I have done. And I was told, "This is exactly what we're looking for. Will you come and work for us?"

So I left on a Friday, American on a Friday. On a Monday, I started with Eureka Federal, and I was with them for nearly ten years as research analyst. Worked for senior management and did all sorts of in-house reports for management and budgetary control.

I was sent to computer school with the

horse-and-buggy days of the computer industry, and I've learned a great deal. At that time, we didn't have any software. Everything had to be written from scratch.

And I worked with -- and we were growing with the industry at a very, very rapid pace.

And in 1980, I was let go. And within a year, the entire department was closed down.

At that time, the association was in good shape, but within a year or two,
their financial situation went down due to deregulation. And we know today what mess the savings and loan got into after deregulation.

I did a lot of feasibility studies for future branch locations, and the financial indicators for management and charts analysis and that sort of work.

Q. WOW.

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED IN 1980?

A. In 1980 when I was let go, I finished cleaning all my closets and I was bored to tears. I was not used to not working. My children already finished college and moved on to graduate work.

Jonathan got his Master's degree in speech pathology, which he is doing today. And he's also a musician, by the way, with the Hot Borsch Band.

And David went on to medical school, and he's in internal medicine in Modesto, California.

And I ran into a situation whereby San Francisco suffered a hotel strike soon after I was laid off. And I

went to the Convention and Visitors Bureau to tell them that I would like to volunteer one day a week of my time to help them with anything. I told them I can do a lot of different things, and what I can't do, I can learn fast.

So they said they don't take volunteers, but they will hire me.

And at the same time I heard on the radio that San Franciscans, if you have so much as a closet place, please take in guests, because the guests in the city are leaving the hotels and the city needs the revenue.

And I thought, oh, this is the the first time I can help my city. I love San Francisco.

And so I decided to tell the Convention and Visitors Bureau to send us guests. We have two lower floors, lots of space. We could take in guests, you know, meaning gratis, for the duration of the hotel strike.

And so they sent two people out to the house.

And Karl and I were just following them from room to room, we have a three-level house, and one was telling the other that this room should go for this much, that room for that much.

And Karl and I looked at each other, you know, "What does this mean?" This is not what we had in mind.

And so Karl said, "We're very sorry, but we meant gratis. We didn't mean to charge anybody, but just for a short time for the duration of the hotel strike."

So we were told, "Well, but you have to send us a commission for sending you guests, because we have to

advertise to send you guests. You know, we are in the bed and breakfast business."

I didn't even know what that meant.

So for a long time, I called it "bread and breakfast," instead of "bed and breakfast."

But to make a long story short, I said, "Look, Honey, we'll still be helping the city, whatever it takes, let's do it for the duration of the hotel strike."

So I really had to twist his arm to do it under these conditions.

And Karl said, "Well, we'll try it for a month."

And today, over ten years later, Karl still says we'll still trying it. And we've had guests from 33 different countries and from all 50 states of the union, and it's been a very rewarding experience.

And one thing I learned from this is that what we read in the papers about human beings, the bad things about human beings, I think those are the exceptions. Because we met people we never saw before, and we never had one bad experience during this whole period.

I've enjoyed talking to them so much. We have breakfast together, which I pride in making, and it's like having an enlarged family. We are open all year round.

And so the two lower floors of our house is still open to guests. We are still with one of the services, the American Family Inn.

(END TAPE 1)

(BEGIN TAPE 2)

So if you have reservations, you know, that sometimes we need a little time in between them and we want to go away on vacation, we just don't take any reservation for that period. Like we will do next November and December, we'll take our vacation. And we try to do it in the wintertime when it's slow.

Q. GLORIA, GIVEN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH WITH THE HOLOCAUST, THE WAY YOU JUST SAID HOW YOU FELT ABOUT HUMAN NATURE, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HUMAN NATURE?

A. Oh, I think people really are okay, basically, I think. And I found this out through bed and breakfast guests. Many times we talk about the Holocaust openly. They ask me about the tattoo, or they now look at it and they see and they know. So they say sometimes, "Do you mind talking about it?"

In fact, we have a lot of professional people. And while we were filming for the documentary film that we are now editing, we've included a number of our bed and breakfast guests. Some of them were teachers, history teachers.

And so they were really just randomly picked. We just happened to be ready to shoot. And if it was all right with them, it was all right with us.

And so the filmmaker would come over on the spur of the moment, and would really shoot candid discussions at the bed and breakfast table. And they are just very revealing about human beings, how interested they are.

We've passed that period of deep, deep pain.

After all these years, we can now talk about it much more openly.

Some raw areas that we hit -- I am really talking about myself when I say "we," and so sometimes I dare to come out with that which is still painful. And I have to sort of use my judgment, but there still are those times.

But I felt really gratified when I was asked to come to speak before German University students in the city where I was incarcerated, one of the seven camps in Hanover, at the University of Hanover. And when I learned that I'm going to speak there, I made a tremendous effort to have that which I wanted to say translated to German.

And I practiced and practiced and practiced more, and I delivered it in German.

And I didn't know until really the last half an hour, whether I am going to give it in German or in English. And I wanted to check and see if I would feel comfortable. And because I've had reservations, of course.

And I delivered it in German, and wanted them to know what an effort I am willing to make for them to know my eye witness account as an example of many.

And this is the first time they have ever heard a Holocaust survivor, or ever met a Holocaust survivor in Germany.

I also spoke at other places, but this is sufficient for the record.

Q. WELL, TELL US ABOUT THE FILM AND THAT TRIP.

A. Everybody told me how difficult it will be for me.

And I kept telling myself, "Don't let anyone talk you out of it. Just decide on your own and do what you think has to be done."

And all along, I felt that I must do this, that I must talk before them. I have to meet them, see what the new generation is like after they hear me speak.

And I found, really, a group of people who were absolutely stunned afterwards. Unlike in all these many audiences that I have spoken thus far, about 304, something like that, here usually the arm goes up and they were ready to put questions. And there is never enough time to answer all the questions that the students have.

In Germany, it was just the opposite. Total silence. Stunned.

Well, I decided to get away from the podium and come down and get closer to the students. Perhaps this would help.

And so I felt that I needed to open it up a little bit after I talked for so long. And I said, "Look, I came from far away and we need to have a dialogue with each other. Surely you have lots of questions."

So one of them volunteered to speak for the whole group, that this is the first time that they heard a survivor speak. Indeed, "Most of us have never met a survivor. And so please understand that we are totally

shocked, and that's why we are not talking."

And it's all being filmed, by the way, but I had a good discussion with them.

And it turned out that many of them have grandparents who are Nazis.

And eventually, I also met with the -- well, I had lunch with the history department heads and teachers.

And I opened up the question of Holocaust education in the schools. Let's start right here in Hanover.

And I was told that, "Our students have grandparents who are still alive." And she rattled off at least a half a dozen names. I'm supposed to know them, apparently, but I don't know them.

But she said they were top SS, and that these kids would not be comfortable in our school.

I said that is why, while they are still alive, we must learn from them the truth about history. They need to interview these grandparents on videotape, if possible. Let's see what their faces look like. Let's see if they can look the camera in the eye with their past. Let them pass it on to their grandchildren. Let it be on the record. We survivors are doing it here, but that's not enough. It should take place in Germany where it happened. It is their generation that brought it about.

And we corresponded for a long time, but obviously, they are not about to do it.

And soon, these SS are going to be dead and their history, their experiences with the Jews in these camps will be lost. We're lucky that we were able to find Eichman, who could at least bear witness, if we can call it, in his own way.

Q. ANOTHER HIGHLIGHT OF THAT TRIP WAS GOING TO THE FACTORY.

A. I was just thinking about that. I was thinking, how am I going to go to this factory where I worked making gas masks at the age of fifteen. By that time, I turned fifteen.

I was with a film crew. So I suggested that I just go down there and knock on the door and say, "I'm a former employee here and I wanted to see what the place looks like now."

And they laughed. I said, "You may laugh, but I'm serious. I really want to go down there. The question is just how."

But I didn't have to do that, because I was also dedicating a monument along with the mayor of the town, and I was asked to say a few words. I had somebody help me with the German.

And I just learned a little while before this that this factory where I worked before, which is called the (Continental Gume America,)to date had not acknowledged the fact that they had slave laborers during World War II.

So I picked up on that and I said, "Please add

to this in German, that I want to say that I am one of those who was a slave laborer in that factory at the age of fifteen, and that I would like to visit that factory before I leave, whether I'm invited or not." And I said that. I said that.

And right after this dedication, we were invited into a little church nearby, which is significant, in itself. This little church, we were invited to have a reception there.

But the tower of this little church with this beautiful -- these beautiful four clocks on the sides, it's one of the oldest churches in Hanover.

By the way, we could see this tower from the -- the word escapes me -- from the camp which was located inside the territory of the (Continental Gume America), inside the factory grounds. That's what I was looking for.

Within the outer perimeter fence was the electric wire fence. And within those electric wire fences were three barracks where we were the slaves in that factory making gas masks.

Hitler fearing -- at the time, fearing that the Allies will retaliate through chemical warfare, wanted every one of his subjects in Germany to have a gas mask.

And not having enough labor force, all the men were in the military service, or most of the men, I guess, decided to save us Jews, and by putting us into their factories and different places to perform what man

possibly would have done, only not under the circumstances that we had to do them. Twelve hours were the hours, for every day.

And eventually, there was this -- for example, the (Continental Gume America), there was this, what is it called, this moving -- what is it called. It's like a white canvas that was moving, carrying with it gas masks at intervals, and so at many feet intervals.

And each of us had to do a certain detail on that gas mask. If we couldn't finish it, it had to be put on this side. If we could finish it, we could put it on that side.

Eventually, if the side that wasn't finished was tall enough, then they would write down our numbers, and so on.

It was a very, very boring type of work, and very demanding. Had to stand on your feet. Your stomach was growling all the time. You were constantly hungry.

And eventually, these gas masks became like monsters. You look at those gas masks for twelve hours. You dream about it at night. God, they are horrible.

I mean, aside from -- put all the horrors together and add gas masks to it. But still, we were protected from the elements. It was winter and so -- okay.

At this reception in the church, two men came up -- three men, actually, came up to me and said that, "We represent the board of directors of the (Continental

Gume America) and we heard you speak, and we would like to invite you on a tour to the factory."

I thought, that's just what I was hoping for. "Thank you very much, but I'm here with the film crew and where I go, they go."

"Fine."

Then additionally, our friend, Dr. Stallenberg, who is a professor at the University of Hanover, who was responsible for my coming over there, who interviewed me a couple of years before that in San Francisco as an eyewitness, wanted to make sure that I get over there. So he succeeded in doing that, and I was willing to come.

And I wanted him to come with us, because I felt that I will be leaving here before long, but Dr. Stallenberg will be staying on and recording history, and so I wanted him to be a part of it.

So I said to these three gentlemen, "But I would like Dr. Stallenberg also to be with us."

No, at first they didn't like that. I said, but he could translate, since they worked through a translator. I used that as a good reason. But that wasn't really my reason.

And so finally, they said, "Well, okay."

And I asked him, "Are you willing, Dr. Stallenberg?"

He said, "Of course."

And it so happened that a few years earlier when the neo-Nazies did a lot of propaganda in Hanover, the

professors at Hanover University wanted to come up with some antidote to this pro-Nazi propaganda, so what to do? They decided that they are going to look into their own backyard, see what happened in Hanover during World War II.

And lo and behold, they opened up Pandora's Box. They found six concentration camps that were active in their backyard during World War II.

And eventually, Dr. Stallenberg, who played a large role in this, along with other professors, created an exhibit in Hanover that was like none other before. The first proof of the activity of the Holocaust in their own backyard.

And so naturally, the -- and the factory was exposed during that time, and they weren't very anxious to have him come back with a survivor. I was elated.

Now, I just can't tell you how moving it was to be in that factory. I remembered when all the buildings were painted black. These buildings were made of bricks, and so that obviously -- so that they wouldn't be readily seen and be bombarded.

But when I visited the factory, the black paint was still on and some began to peel off. But it was still on. The old buildings were still visible, and many new buildings were built since.

And this, by the way, is still today among the largest, if not the largest, factory in Europe, in all of Europe.

They still have a 24-shift employee program going. I think I was told that about 3200 people work there today.

When I worked there, I don't remember how many of us were there, but there were three barracks on the grounds, only Jews, but there were others that were French and Danish, and others from other countries, Polish, but -- not many, not many Poles working with us at this factory.

And some very interesting things took place there that was -- there was a supervisor, who was called "The Red" because she had this terrible red hair. I mean, a color that was probably artificial.

And she came around with coupons. And she wanted you to work harder, and earn something extra if you worked harder.

And we decided among us, that no matter how much extra food we would get, we are not going to fall for this, because some of us are going to suffer as a result.

So they started beating us. And the civilian Germans who worked with us didn't like it. They didn't like the fact that we were being beaten. And we looked too vulnerable already and emaciated, dirty and hungry.

Anyway, it was very obvious that they are taking advantage of these raggedy-looking human beings.

And so they stopped beating us on their request, but what did they do? They wrote our number down, as I mentioned earlier.

And when we went into our barracks at night after working twelve hours on this assembly line, there were belts going back and forth, canvas belts, and which could be moving at a rate set by the SS. And sometimes they increased it so that they could thin us out.

If they increased it, there would be more gas masks that we could not complete, and the pile would be larger and they take the number down.

And we'd go into our barracks, and number so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so would be called out. And the punishment would be meted out in our barracks after we returned.

Q. WHAT WAS THE PUNISHMENT?

A. Oh, they beat us up. 25 lashes, usually. That was the most common, but I mean --

Q. WERE YOU BEATEN UP?

A. Not that way, but -- I didn't get 25, but I was beaten up many times, but not on a formal basis like that.

And some people were shot and some people were harmed. It was -- they had all kinds of cruel ways of treating us.

Q. DID YOU EVER SEE ANYONE SHOT THAT WAY, GLORIA?

A. Yeah. Oh, yeah, not just one.

Q. WHAT DID YOU SEE?

A. Just shot like a dog. I mean, dogs don't get shot like that. Just put a bullet right through, no questions asked, no reason. And he'd walk away with a

smile on his face. Oh. This -- no question about it.

But we often thought -- oh, I want to tell you that before I went to the factory, I scouted out the place, because we set a date a few days later, because we had a schedule to follow.

And I scouted out the place. I told the film crew to look for two canals, and where slave laborers carried these gas masks, and put it on -- oh, if I knew the word -- on flat --

Q. CONVEYOR BELT? NO.

A. No. On the river.

Q. RIGHT.

A. On the canals. And they would --

Q. BARGES?

A. Barges. Thank you.

And they would be floating down the river to save energy. These canals were all over. And they used them in lieu of automobiles, you see, because it was less energy.

They would float -- there was lots of rain, lots of water there. And that's where the slave laborers worked. And very often these laborers would be kicked in and they'd drown. And cruelty was everywhere all the time, wherever you went.

But we couldn't find the canal at first. And finally found them. And why couldn't we find them, because there were these big trees, a whole row of big trees that grew up since 1945, early 1945.

And so Dr. Stallenberg looked up on aerial maps that those trees weren't there when I worked for the (Continental Gume America), or they were very small. Anyway, they don't show up that's there.

So we could see those canals, and we did see them. Indeed, when we went up to the floor where I worked, into the building where I worked, and there's the canal. There were those two canals that I refer to.

And by golly, they were still making gas masks on modern machines. And this man just pulled one off the this modern machine, handed it to General Manager Robish, Dr. Robish, who gave it to me. It was still hot to the touch.

I thought "My, how times have changed." I said, "The war has been over for over 40 years. What are you making these for?"

And he said, "Well, for chemical industrial purposes," he said, "For industrial purposes, of course. And the firemen and the police use it," he said. And so forth and so on.

So we found the canal.

And coming back, there was some people working outside of a little cottage. And I thought those cottages, they were there. When we were just a few feet away from them, I thought, Those cottages were the homes of the SS. No. They were the homes of civilians. That was their summer homes. But they lived in it in winter, too, very often.

8 So I said, "Dr. Stallenberg, do you mind if we talk to these people working in the backyard?"

He says, "Well, I already interviewed everybody in this block. Almost everybody. And nobody lived there that long."

I said, "Please, just try these people."

And so he said, "How long have you lived here?"

So she said, "Oh, since going back to early..." what was it, early '40s or late '30s, something like that.

And so, "You lived here during the war?"

She says, "Oh, yes. You are in luck. We are the only ones who lived here during the war."

So I said, "Well, wonderful. Nice to meet you, neighbor," I said.

And you know, she was amused. She wondered, "Neighbor?" You know.

So Dr. Stallenberg explained that I was incarcerated just on the other side of this fence, which is just about twenty yards away from where we stood at that time, up from her little summer home, which was just darling, flowers, and just the perfect little garden.

And so I said, would she mind being interviewed on camera? But it was already dusk, so could we come back some other time.

And we came back, and she treated us to schnapps and cookies, really charming, in the yard. And she tells on film what she remembers. She remembers those barracks very much.

8 And she says, "I was just a young girl, seventeen years old. And I remember the screams coming out of those barracks. What were they?"

"Oh," I said, "those were the screams when the punishments were meted out on us survivors -- on us inmates at the time. Some didn't survive it."

And she said she remembers very well that sometimes on Sunday afternoons they had parties in her yard and they took pictures. And she still remembers in her old album she has some pictures taken from her yard whereby you could actually see the factory.

"Would you please look for it? We would love to see it."

Indeed, she was good for her word. Mrs. Lana sent us five pictures, enlarged five-by-sevens pictures taken from her backyard. You can see the outer perimeter fence of the (Continental Gume America.) You can see the electric wire fence inside it, our barracks. You can see the factory and the factory logo, "Continental."

They are precious to me. You see, children playing in her yard, dogs playing, and having a party.

And while looking at the canals, there was an excursion boat carrying passengers on a summer trip. I thought, how strange. How can I not think back to the time when I was here, when people were kicked in there; and if they didn't work hard enough under the whip, and they drowned.

So these -- this is what I mean. It could be a

8 beautiful thing for somebody. To me, I wouldn't dare put my toe in that water today with what I remember about that water. Seeing it from up there, it was simply incredible. Really, when cruelty reigned supreme.

Q. DID YOU SEE PEOPLE THAT WERE PUSHED INTO THE WATER? DID YOU SEE --

A. Oh, sure. Everybody did. Everybody did.

Q. WHAT DID YOU SEE?

A. What I saw was if somebody didn't carry enough because they had to transfer -- see, there was railroad tracks going to the canal. They had to be transferred by labor, you know, by picking up these tremendously big packages and put them onto the barges that would float down the river.

9 And once in awhile, we could see people being just pushed in, just like that. Well, if the man knew how to swim, he made it; otherwise he just drowned or he would just get shot.

This is how they weeded out the weak. These were men in striped clothes. And there are many pictures of these men at the next camp where I was near Hamburg. I was in Hamburg, also. It's just too many of these. These are not unusual. This is not an unusual scenario. It's a very mild one.

I didn't remember the factory being this big, this large, but somehow, it was -- it's much bigger. And apparently the Allies did bomb one of the buildings. It happened to be the Administration Building. And Dr.

Robish told us that it did not interfere with the operation of the factory.

But after our review of the yards and factory, and, of course, they completely erased the electric wire fence and the barracks. That was only the space for it, and he pointed. He pointed to the space where it used to be.

I thought that was definitely an acknowlegment of the fact that there were some. And whether they admit it or not, they -- it was time to have a talk.

And so we talked in an executive room. And I said, "Now, I came quite far and I would like to have some sort of tangible evidence about my having worked as a slave laborer in your factory."

And so Dr. Robish said, "I don't know anything about that. I don't have any records. It probably was all ruined in the bomb." All this is on film, this conference.

In fact, somebody invited -- and not us, a newsman, and he was there writing all this down. And eventually there was a big article in the local big paper, the Hanover (Ishoceitan).

And Dr. Stallenberg who was with us said, "Not even in your secret archives?"

And he said, "I don't know of any secret archives. I really don't know if there are any records. You have to talk to Dr. (Fonharts)."

"Will you make his card available?"

And so I want you to know, to make a long story short, at that conference, I asked for some company records.

I told them that the first thing I looked up in the papers, whether they are public or privately held company.

As a research analyst, I certainly know how to do that, even if I didn't speak a word of German.

"And I found out in the paper, which is just what your assets were, what dividends you paid, how much your stocks are being sold for. And so you're obviously a public company. You must have records and you must be able to give records for your stockholders. Could you please make some of these records available to me going back to before 1945."

And so, "No, I don't think our records go back that far."

Dr. Stallenberg said, "But the university received your hundred-year history on its anniversary. And so the university has one copy of it in its archives."

So he calls his secretary in. Dr. Robish said, "Would you please look" -- in German, "Would you please look and see if we have a hundred-year history available?"

And in less than five minutes, she brought a copy to me. And I quickly flipping over, looking at the numbers, I just wanted to compare certain figures from before '45 to -- and after, to that period.

And I couldn't for the life of me find anything

that I could put my finger on at a glance about slave laborers.

And so -- except something in the footnotes that said that some of the civilians who worked here still correspond with the foreign laborers in our factory, and that there was a very good relationship between them.

So all I commented was that it must be in the footnotes where I couldn't see the obvious figures that should be quickly available, readily available.

Anyway, I went to look at the founders, the beginning, the names, lo and behold, the factory was founded about just 80 years before. And you could see the names change of the board of directors from 1933 on, fewer and fewer Jews are on the board.

And the last token Jew was kicked out of the board, but he was -- they held onto him because I think, if I remember correctly, he was a Swedish diplomat, and Sweden was neutral and he was on the board. But he was kicked out, also I think in 1938 or '39. And after that, the Nazis took control of the factory.

That was founded by Jews, and the majority of its board of directors were Jews until the Nazi period. That was a very interesting revelation right there in their directors' room.

Q. FANTASTIC.

A. Yeah.

Q. GOD, GLORIA, IT'S AN INCREDIBLE STORY.

A. There's more, but it's hardly -- there's so many

things.

Q. THERE'S SO MANY THINGS, I'D LIKE TO SET ANOTHER TIME. I THINK WE NEED -- OUR TIME IS COMING TO A CLOSE. I'D LIKE TO ASK MARK IF HE HAS ANY FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, BUT --

A. Sure.

Q. WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO, IF IT'S OKAY WITH YOU, IS PLAN ANOTHER TIME, MAYBE IN A MONTH OR TWO MONTHS FROM NOW. I MEAN, NO ONE DOES MORE PUBLIC SPEAKING IN THE BAY AREA THAN GLORIA.

I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT STARTED YOU ON THAT PATH AND WHAT IT'S BEEN LIKE TO SPEAK, AND THE DEVELOPMENT YOU'RE MAKING. AND WHAT YOU TOLD YOUR CHILDREN AND WHAT YOU DIDN'T TELL YOUR CHILDREN. AND HOW YOU'RE FEELING NOW, HOW YOU FELT FIVE YEARS AGO. THERE'S SO MUCH MORE.

SO WOULD YOU DO THAT?

A. Of course.

Q. OKAY. GREAT.

A. I wish every survivor would do this. I think it's important to leave these impressions for future generations.

One of the reasons that I speak in schools is to give them a little idea of what there was, what happened. And I'd be very glad to do it.

And I thank you for making this possible for me to do, for bearing witness.

Q. WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHAT THIS IS. SO WHAT'S THIS BOOK, GLORIA?

A. This book, "The Jews in America" was published in October 1989, and was introduced by Chaim Potak, C-h-a-i-m P-o-t-a-k.

MR. BLUMBERG: SO THIS IS THE SAME BOOK?

A. Yes. It's published by Collins Publishers in San Francisco. And it really is a remarkable book. And I'm amazed that it made it, for they took over 70,000 pictures throughout the United States about the Jews in America, what Jews are all about, what they think, what they do, what they look like, and to show that they don't have horns.

Jews just are like everybody else. They represent every profession there is, even a cowboy in this book living in Petaluma, nearby Petaluma, California.

But originally, a photographer came out to Hieda Day School in Berkeley to take some shots of the children for a book. I didn't know what book -- what this book was all about. And I was asked to come to speak to the children about my experiences.

I almost didn't accept it, except that I have -- at that time I had two grandchildren from this school. And they are very young and I like to shy away from such young children on the subject.

But I went and they took 225 shots of me, and not one of those shots got into this book. They asked me if they could come home with me when they learned about my story during my presentation. They would like to take some pictures of me at home with some photos, do I have

any photos.

I said just very, very few that I obtained through -- from relatives' albums here in America, after I came here, And I'd be very glad to share it with them, but by all means, it's not complete.

And so here is my dad sitting down. They came over and they took pictures of my dad sitting down in the Austrian-Hungarian Army, World War I. And standing next to him is his youngest brother, (Farkash) Hollander. My father is David Hollander.

What's interesting about this is that they were fighting on the side of the Germans in World War I. And my Uncle (Farkash) had seven sons. Three of them were in Budapest in hiding during World War II. And he and his wife and the other four siblings went to Auschwitz straight into the gas chambers.

So while they were fighting in Germany in one war, in the other war they were murdered by the Germans.

The other pictures are of my aunt and uncle and cousins, my mother and father in a cemetery putting up a stone, and my step -- not step, my foster parents in Sweden, and really, my immediate family.

MR. BLUMBERG: CAN YOU BRING THESE PHOTOS WHEN YOU COME BACK THE NEXT TIME? CAN YOU BRING THE ORIGINALS OF THOSE PHOTOS? AND WE'LL GET SOME NICE SHOTS OF IT.

A. Sure. Sure, be glad to.

MS. SILVER: THAT WOULD BE GREAT.

A. Sure.

MS. SILVER: I need to ask us to end tape two.

(End of Tape 2.)