

OK, any time. OK. OK, we're at the end of Auschwitz. And you were at the end in Auschwitz. And I wanted to know-- we were talking about the trains and some of the incidences that stand out. So anything else that you recall?

No, not really. Not really. One of my girlfriends I saw coming in on transferred one day. I mean, she just walked into Auschwitz and walked through. And she was telling me that she was going to be put on a train again. She was going to go into Germany. And indeed, she did.

They took her into an-- She lives in Los Angeles now. And she went to a factory. I believe it was the Philips factory, if I'm not mistaken, in Germany, where she worked. And then she was liberated. I don't know what camp she was in.

And then she went up to Sweden. Yeah, they took her up to Sweden. The Swedes were very good to the Jewish people.

How long was she in Auschwitz?

Just in and out. That was the end, you see. I have something on my glasses. That was the end and end. That was the end, from the end of Auschwitz. She had been all that time in Westerbork. I don't know what she did.

And then she was put on transport I think her transport was the last transport. And then she came into Auschwitz. And they put her right back on the train into Germany. That was the end.

Auschwitz was already getting very close to being liberated, too.

Auschwitz?

Yeah.

Did you hear any approaching bombs or planes?

Planes.

Do you recall at what point? Was it almost the last month and the second to last month?

Yeah, I would say about two months before. Two months before, we saw-- we could hear planes come over. But that didn't mean a thing. But we had in Trawniki, too, that the planes came over. But now we really could hear, I mean, in Sobibor, too, in Auschwitz, too. And there was the same sound.

So we had a feeling. But you never know what the Germans were going to do. They did the same with us in Trawniki. We heard those planes, and they put us somewhere else. We had no idea that the war was coming to an end.

Another thing is we had no idea that France was already liberated at that time, in January '45, which they were, in '44. You see, we have no idea. We thought the war was still going on.

But going back to when I lost hope, really, in Auschwitz, is when-- especially when I was in the hospital. I let myself go. And Beppy, we both ready to die. And when we came out of the camp, we didn't want anything to do with Jewish religion no more. We didn't want even to be known that we were Jewish.

I don't think even Beppy for a long time didn't say anything to her husband, anything about the camp or maybe that she was Jewish. Or I don't even know if he knew.

He wasn't?

No, he wasn't. So we had a lovely apartment in St. Petersburg Place, in London. And we were right next to a synagogue. That was our apartment. We never stepped foot into it.

We didn't want nothing to do with it anymore, nothing to do with the Jewish religion. And then when I married my husband, and the boys became of bar mitzvah age, that's when I started slowly going to go back to it again. They went to Sunday school when they were six or seven years old. And I was thinking, my God, those kids have to become bar mitzvah.

So then it came all back again. But to go as religious as what I was when I was a child, never again, never anything into the extreme, never. I don't like organizations either.

Right. Did you feel anytime angry, I mean, wondering, where is the rest of the world?

Oh, sure.

What was that?

Sure.

You know who I was angry with? With the Dutch, with the government. I'm still angry at them. Why do you think I went out of Holland? The first thing we want to do as soon as Beppy was better, was get out of Holland. We didn't want nothing to do with them anymore.

They were the ones who got us into a camp, who gave all the names and addresses. And they co-operated with the Germans. And here was a neutral country. So we are very bitter, very bitter at Dutch people, very bitter. Nobody helped us after the war. The only ones who helped us were the ones who we remembered from before the war, who were sponsors at the orphanage.

We called them up, and we found their addresses and the telephone numbers. And they helped us out a little bit. Dutch government didn't help us. To this day, I'm fighting with the Dutch government. Because everybody gets pensions.

Now, you should see how I have to fight with them to get something. So we are very bitter at the Dutch people, very, very-- not at the Dutch people, in general, at the Dutch government.

Back in Auschwitz in the hospital, you were there the last month, basically. And I'd like to talk about that end and as much as you can recall that liberation. I know you mentioned these people came running in and saying, the Germans are gone and no more Germans. How did you and your sister get yourselves out of there? You sounded like you were so sick.

Oh yeah, well, we could walk. We could walk. But I mean, we got out of bed, and we were just sitting outside the barracks. And I--

That's what you're saying.

--mean, very weak, very, very weak. We hadn't eaten. I could not eat anymore because of my sores in my mouth. And Beppy was quite ill. But you could shuffle outside and planted yourself outside. So in case there were time bombs about, around the barracks, I mean, we didn't want that to happen.

So we saw, when we sat outside there in the snow-- and I think two days later, the Russians walked in. So it was just unbelievable. It was just unbelievable to see those guys come walking in.

And well, we saw soldiers again, but I mean, they were not Nazis. We knew there was something coming in there, and they just marched in. And oh, the people are just so elated and happy and kissed them and I mean, just unbelievable. It was just unbelievable.

It was quite an occasion. And mostly all the sick people were left behind, you see. So they were all very ill people who

were sitting out there and waiting for something to happen. And that's what happened. The Russians came in. And we're ever so thankful to them.

What was the first feeling or thought you had when you saw these Russians?

Well, we saw the soldiers come in, and we were endowed again. We saw now what's going on. You saw all those uniformed people coming in and also, with guns. Let's face it, this was army what marched in.

But then when we looked at them, we saw those heads they have on. And they started talking. Then you knew it was Russian and especially, the Polish people who were left behind. You see, there were a lot of Polish people there.

So they spoke with them in-- they understand each other a little bit. And they told them then that this was a camp left behind by the Germans. And they got food from wherever their army were stationed, and stuff like that. Yeah.

Did you personally have any interaction with the soldiers?

Couldn't speak to them, no. We just gave a big laughs and hellos. And we thanked them in the best way you could, but not really talking to them. Because I didn't understand a word they were saying. Or they wouldn't understand what I was saying.

They could probably see on our faces how happy we were. I'm sure they saw a lot of misery there, too. We didn't see it, but I'm sure they did, when they went up into where the gas chambers were.

So what was the first thing they did with all of you?

They fed us. And they made sure that time bombs, were no time bombs around the barracks. So they kept us in the barracks, and they fed us and took care of us.

And then I think a couple of days later, they had-- my sister knows. I don't remember that no more. But we had trucks or horse and buggies, or something like that. I don't know.

They transferred us out and got us on a train. And they transferred us towards Czechoslovakia, I believe it was, into Russia to Odessa. And I don't know if those soldiers did it, but the Russians took care of us then.

And it was wonderful, like I said. Boy, wouldn't that be nice if somebody would find some of those Russians, and I could meet those guys just to thank them for saving my life. Because Bep and I, we were on our end. We really were.

So that's why we love each other very much. We have a lot of fights. We fight, and we have a lot of up and downs. But wow, what we did for each other in that camp is just unbelievable.

And nobody can understand it. Because that was really we were fighting for each other and just hoping that we both would come out and live a life. And we did. We do. We have a pretty good life now. I mean, we have a nice home, and we travel. And this is what I want to do for my grandchildren.

[INAUDIBLE]

So they know later on, they can tell about history, what their grandmother went through. But it's good to talk about it. It's very good to get that out. So now and then, I still have nightmares, but not as frequently as what I had in the beginning, before I spoke about this.

Helps to speak.

Yeah, it really does help, really, and especially if somebody listens to you, yeah. It helps. I mean, you can tell a story, but sometimes people look at you, and they say, yeah, right. But if somebody sits there and listens to you and

sympathizes with you, it gives you a good feeling. And I thank you for it.

Thank you. I just have one question.

Sure.

When you were liberated, did you feel free? Could you taste freedom?

Not yet. Because we still saw soldiers. It's not the same as seeing a person in a suit or in a pair of pants and the shirt. We still saw-- so now what? Now what's happened?

We had no idea that Russia was that far already to Germany. We didn't know the war was over in France or that the Americans and the English had come. And we had no idea what was going on.

So when we saw those soldiers, we still were frightened. And when they put us on the train, we still were frightened, until we got into that camp in Odessa. There were quite a few prisoners of war and not Germans.

But this is very interesting. A lot of those German guards were hidden with us in Auschwitz. They did not go on the death march. And they came with us to Odessa. So in Odessa, the Russians found out. Excuse me.

So we all had to shower. They brought us tents, beautiful tents. And there were showers in there, like the army showers. And everybody was examined under their feet and under their arms. Because there's where the SS was tattooed. If you were in the SS, they were either tattooed under their toenails, on the toes, or under arm. And quite a few were caught.

What did they do to them?

I don't know. Don't know, don't know. I never found out in Hamburg, either, what happened to those guys. But that was quite an experience, too. You were sitting there, like I'm sitting here, and here are all those guys sitting behind you, who had done all the bad stuff in the camps. And old men they were and smiling and laughing-- terrible.

Did you feel like you wanted to get revenge on them when you heard this?

Yeah. I could kill every single one of them. Yeah, I could really. I could really. I really could do that. And I'm a very gentle person. But if I knew the people, if I had the people in front of me, I wouldn't hesitate a minute of what they had done to me, and to all my brothers and sisters, and all over the world, and to poor, innocent children.

We had in Auschwitz a lot of children. Never happen, never know what happened to them. But they were about four, five, six years old. We saw them playing sometimes outside, and stuff like that.

I never spoke to them, but we did see them. So I don't know what happened to them, probably all gone, too. But those were the first children I really saw, was in Auschwitz.

[INAUDIBLE]

Yeah. I never saw them anywhere else.

After liberation, did you and Beppy go back to Holland to look for your family?

Want to see who was-- yeah.

You saw them.

Yeah. I told you. They ask us if we want to go to Israel.

Israel, yeah.

In France, we arrived from Odessa. We went on the boat to Marseilles in France. And we came off the ship there. And on the docks, there were a lot of tables with people sitting there and people who spoke Dutch or German, or whatever, or whatever language it was. And we went to the one who spoke Dutch.

And well, like I said, the first question they asked us, would you like to go to Israel? And wow, my sister and I, we looked at each other, and no way. No way would we like to be with a whole bunch of Jewish people again, never, ever, not in those circumstances, or whatever.

We wanted to get away from it. We didn't want that at all. It was the furthest from our mind.

So then they put us on a train, and we went to Holland. And you could go every day to the Red Cross there and find out who had come back from the camp, who had come back from on the grounds, who were hidden, and so on. And we found two of our aunts that way, you see, with one aunt with her daughter and my other aunt with her husband and the two children.

And they had come back. So we had a little bit of family left then. But then they all died. They're all dead now, too. So I only have three cousins left now, the kids. The kids are left. But at least we had a few relatives. And we had quite a few relatives before we went into the camp.

Do you believe in God now--

Yeah, oh yeah.

--after all that?

Yeah, I believe in God. Oh, yes. And I believe in justice, and I believe in God. But what the Germans did to us was no justice, no. That was no justice.

When you speak at the high schools when you leave, do you ever leave them with any sort of words of wisdom or lessons?

That it could happen here?

Mm-hmm.

Don't take nothing for granted. It can happen here. It can happen anywhere. It can happen anywhere.

We thought we were safe in Holland. So did a lot of people. But we had the same treatment everybody else got, and we thought we were safe.

We took all the other countries in, and Holland never really opened their border for nobody. They were very like Switzerland, a very close-knit country just for themselves. So when all the terrible stuff happened in Germany, they took all those Germans in. And we figured that would never happen to Holland, never happen to us. But it did.

Before we talk about your pictures, is there anything that you want to say, any last words, anything to your granddaughter--

Yeah.

--grandsons, what--

Well-- well--

Whatever.

Courtney was here in May, or April, in the spring break, and she asked me if I could tell her some stories about the concentration camp. And I told her, I really couldn't do that, not sitting opposite her and telling her this. That I couldn't do, but that I would be trying to see if I could have a video made.

And I'm so glad that I called you guys. Because I know that Courtney is going to be delighted to see and hear what happened to her grandma and also, for my other grandchildren. And I think Julia is a little bit too young. She's only seven.

But I'm sure my kids are interested in this also. And I just, well, what else can I say to my children? I did it for my grandchildren. That's what I did it for.

We're so glad.

Yeah, I thank you so very much for doing this.

Thank you.

And I wish to contribute something to the Holocaust, the project, people here.

Thank you, too.

Thank you very much.

Now, if you want, we're going to Xerox these photographs and include them with your tape. But you can talk about the pictures and hold up the book and tell me.

This is Beppy and me.

OK. And this is at the orphanage?

That were the orphanage.

OK.

And I understand we have our Shabbos uniform on there.

OK, the dark--

Do you see the black shoes and the black socks?

Yes.

And you see them on the ladder. As a matter of fact, it might be in one of our aunt's backyard, or something like that, that they took that picture. That is Beppy and me. And we were approximately there 8 and 10 years old.

And then I want to show you this one. Now, this is Miss Frank.

Oh, OK.

That is the one who we went to Sobibor with.

This is Miss Frank.

And then Beppy was her little pet. Wherever Miss Frank walked, Beppy went with her. When Miss Frank sat in the garden, Beppy sat in the garden with her in a little garden house. What do you call that here in--

Like a pagoda?

Yeah. Yeah. She sat there and had a cup of tea. Beppy sat with her there. And she was the headmistress of our orphanage.

And what was the name of the orphanage again?

Well, wait a minute. Here. Well, it was the Israelis [NON-ENGLISH].

OK.

You want to see it?

Yeah. OK. And that's the orphanage?

It's Dutch. That's the orphanage.

OK. Any other?

Yeah, I got a couple more, if you're interested in it.

Yeah. And then we'll Xerox them.

OK. Wait a minute. I just want to show you this one. Here is where we played basketball-- I'm the last one here, this is me-- where we played basketball in the yard.

OK. That's great.

Isn't that great? And this is when the Weiss Haus-- or the Netherlands Israelis Weiss Haus, [INAUDIBLE] Weiss Haus, was 175 years old.

That's nice.

Oh, wait a minute, one more. Here, this is the Netherlands Israelis [INAUDIBLE] Weiss Haus. Take this off.

That's-- that's-- OK.

Now, one more-- these are the stars we wore.

That you had to sew on your uniforms.

Yeah. Those are not me, but those were the stars we had to sew on all our clothes.

OK. Let me see. I've one here. There's plenty more, but I mean, you're going to X-ray them anyway, aren't you?

Yes.

This is-- it says, [NON-ENGLISH]. That means Jewish quarters, Jewish quarters, in Dutch and in German.

OK.

That is what on every corner in the Jewish quarters was this.

OK.

And there's one more here. Bep and I had a lot of fun looking. Here's when we came from school into the orphanage. And this is my sister. And I'm in the back here. This is the way we walked from school into the orphanage every day.

This is Beppy and that person in the back. OK.

Nice?

Yes.

Oh, this one we did.

Yeah.

Well, I think we did them all, then.

Thank you. Is there anything else you want to add?

No, I don't think so. I just thank you very much for having me here. And I just hope that my grandchildren will treasure this. And what else can I say? I'm glad to be alive.

And I thank the good Lord every morning when I wake up. I say, thank you for giving me another day. And I always have a smile on my face, because I'm lucky to be alive.

I see. [? You have a beautiful smile. ?]

Yeah, thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

[INAUDIBLE]

It's the end.

Yes. Well, the tape's running. I'll just switch on to stop here.

Oh. You want me to get up then?

Yeah, you could, whatever is comfortable.