

*3 copies made*

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

INTERVIEW WITH: GAIL JABLON  
INTERVIEWER: HOWARD FELSON with BRUCE WASSER & BRIDGET SARIA  
DATE: MARCH 20, 1985  
TRANSCRIBER: ROSEMARY BOLLETTINO

-----

BY MR. FELSON:

Q First of all, can you tell me your -- tell me where and when you were born and what your name was when you were born.

A I see. Oh. You hold it.  
My name is Gail Jablon. I was born in Bi-al-bo-lask. My name was before when I was not married, I was Gusta Chopniek, from mine parents' name, and in Bialbolask I was born, and raised I was in Warsaw.

Q Where is Bialbolask?

A Bialbolask is near, is between -- I don't know if you know this area there, you see. This is near Lublin, you know, between Men-der-shetz (Miedzyrzec). I don't know if you know the Miedzyrzec or Bres-ty-a, Pres-nah, Bog-Em. See, that's the area there, the small town which I was born, and raised I was in Warsaw. That time actually the Germans came to Warsaw when I was there.

Q When were you born?

A When I was born? I was born in April the 8 in 1922.

FMRRN TRANSCRIPT

CORBY GROUP NJ: 1-800-822-0190 NATIONWIDE: 1-800-255-5040

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Q And what can you tell me about --

A So, the history of my life. So I --

Q Tell me about -- I am interested to know what kind, what your family was like, how many -- how big was your family.

A My family was, in family, all we was five kids, four sisters and one brother. They all was killed by the Germans. Mine brother was killed, was a horrible death he had. My sister with my mother was deported, you know, on the trucks and they, they was gassed.

Q You lost your whole family, your parents --

A Lost my whole family and I am only one survivor.

Q Was your family very religious in Warsaw?

A My family was medium. They was not Orthodox. They still was religion. They went to schule, my father every Saturday, see, and he prayed home and once Saturday they went to the schule, you know, to the temple, and my father passed away a year before the war, and sometime my mother was jealous because my father passed away a year before the Germans came. She says, "I wish I would die before," you know. She saw all my sisters, you know, see how the Germans killed and things. Finally, she got the same way, see.

They send my mother and my sister, they send on the trucks. I find out from -- They took trucks with, you know, they took the pipes, you know. How you can explain that, the gas, with

1  
2 natural, with the pipes and gassed them in the trucks, was that  
3 transport in Bialbolask.

4 Q Did you grow up in the village?

5 A I was actually grow up in Warsaw because this  
6 happened when I came back. First they eliminate the big  
7 cities, you see.

8 Q Tell me what happened? Do you remember, when the  
9 war started were you in Warsaw?

10 A I was in Warsaw.

11 Q What were you doing?

12 A I was working. I was working, I was a governess  
13 by people, by rich people, and I had two kids and I stood  
14 there to the last minute. I was there when, you know, the  
15 war broke out. So they couldn't even afford to feed me so  
16 that time I had my fiance, so we, I worked on the streets  
17 selling some goods, you know, from wholesales. We had to  
18 support ourselves, and that time, after that, they start, the  
19 beginning they start, the Germans they start to take this,  
20 the Jewish people with the beards, because they didn't recog-  
21 nize me I was Jewish, because they didn't know. I didn't got  
22 the beard or mine, others, my friends, so they took the people  
23 what they get, the old people they had beards and they took  
24 them on the streets and they cut off pieces with the face, just  
25 to punish, is Jewish, that time started, and people was really

1  
2 afraid, and after, for awhile was open. The ghetto, was not  
3 the ghetto. After was a, about a few months later they start  
4 to close up in Warsaw like a ghetto. You cannot go there.  
5 You cannot go there, so if you had to move out in the Jewish  
6 areas where was more Jewish, and they eliminate, you know,  
7 lots of streets which was the Aryan street, you know, Gentile  
8 street. So they took the street away and they put us there  
9 in the cheaper sections where all the poor Jewish was, and all  
10 mixed up. We was there for long time.

11 Q Mrs. Jablon, when did you first realize that Jewish  
12 people were in danger? Before, you told the story about the  
13 beard. Were there any signs that you knew Jews were in  
14 danger?

15 A They was signs. In the beginning they start with  
16 the beards, cutting, and after that they start every Jew  
17 supposed to wear a, what is the name, a yellow -- a white  
18 with the Star of David, so we already see we couldn't get away.  
19 Who was not wearing the Star because, you know, they didn't  
20 recognize, the Germans actually didn't recognize we Jewish  
21 or not, so, we had collaborators like Jewish policy. They  
22 know we Jewish, or the Polacks, the kids, you know, Polish  
23 kids, other Polacks, they recognize we Jewish and they say,  
24 "Oh, she's a Jew. She's a Jew." That's what they started,  
25 you know.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Q Did -- Were you in Warsaw when --

A I was in Warsaw at that time.

Q You were there when the war started. What do you remember? Do you remember the planes bombing the city?

A Oh, the planes -- Oh, sure. Oh, you wanted more -- You want to know more about the Germans, what they did to the Jews, not the bombardments from the -- That doesn't matter, to the Jewish or to the Christian. They bomb anyway. So. I tell you only when they --

Q OK, but how long did it take for the -- Do you remember when, how long after the war started, do you remember the troops came?

A It was about -- I was in Warsaw like this going on, not severe yet. Like about two years, you see, after they started already to evacuate people, drop them on the street and take them, so was really bad, you know. They didn't let us work and, you know, we couldn't have, we didn't got work in the shops or some place, so we had to do something, you know.

Q Was -- I'm just trying to get this straight. Was this after, do you know --

A No. During the war.

Q Was this after the Germans attacked the Soviets?

A No. Oh --

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Q Do you remember that?

A No, no, no. That was not after. That was before.

Q It was before?

A When the German attack the Soviets I was in the concentration camp.

Q Already?

A Oh, sure. That time was, you know, it was different. I was already almost taken, you know. So we was -- After that we was in the ghetto and I tried to, you know, to work, like have my own business with bread, you know. Everyone went to the bakery and bought themselves some bread and stood on the street, on the Jewish, in the ghettos with a, you know, a piece of like, like you see on the black market there. Not black market. On the -- How you call that, where you go, you have a stand, you have the bread, and I was -- Wires all over because otherwise the Jewish people they steal from you too. You know, they came over and they didn't got the money so the minute when you walked away or looked away they grabbed a piece of bread. The hunger was terrible. People died, dying on the street, you know. They didn't got no bread, no money to help, so that time was really bad.

So I says, two years later I says I better go to my grandmother's town, to Bialbolask because my mother went there, you know, first, and she wrote me, she says, "Why don't

1  
2 you come over to the smaller town? They don't bother us."  
3 Because, you know, was near there, Russia. "Maybe you want to  
4 escape to Russia before, you, you know..." So I says, I had  
5 my boyfriend and I says, "Why we don't go to Bialbolask," I  
6 said, there. So it took us long time because I couldn't  
7 travel after the ghetto, you know. You couldn't travel because  
8 the ghetto's, you know, seven miles. If you go out from the  
9 ghettos you be shot. Lots of people was, you know, if they  
10 recognize you. They recognize you only when somebody tell  
11 you, "She's a Jewish."

12 So we decide, me and mine boyfriend we decide to go to  
13 Bialbolask by train. How? I had some Polacks. We paid them  
14 the money to smuggle, you know, on the other side, to the  
15 Gentile side. So I went there and with, you know, on the train.  
16 On that train was all smugglers, you know. They smuggle from  
17 one city to another. The smugglers they hated the Germans,  
18 even the Polacks. They was actually good to the Jewish people  
19 because they saw how they treat us and they killed us on the  
20 streets.

21 So we went. I was on the train with my friend and I  
22 talked very good Polish so they didn't recognize me I'm Jewish.  
23 Just my face showed because I was not blonde that time. I had  
24 her hair, see, and most Jewish people they had dark hair like  
25 you. I think not so dark.

1  
2 Q Brown?

3 A Yeah, brown. So I sit there. Was full with smugglers.  
4 So they say, my friend, they never recognize me as a Jew be-  
5 cause he was really look like a Gentile. So he was on one side  
6 and I was on the other side and I stood and it was packed with  
7 people going from Warsaw to Bialbolask for, you know, there  
8 was butters and eggs to take to a big city to buy, to  
9 smuggle.

10 So he says to me, one Polack says to me, "You're not a  
11 Jewish woman, girl." I was, that time I was young. 20, 21.  
12 I say yes. If I would say no, he would say, you see. I says  
13 Polish. I says, "Sure I'm Jewish," and the other guy says,  
14 "Oh, gee. I think she's too sure. She's -- I don't think so  
15 she's Jewish. She talks very well Polish." You know, so,  
16 because he asked me to sit down. So I says, "Don't bother.  
17 I will sit on you, on you leg." You know, he was sitting, so  
18 I says, "I will sit down." And after, he says -- He actually  
19 save my life. So he says, "Listen, I'm not sure. I don't  
20 think so you are. If you are," he says, "don't forget the  
21 train will stop before the station. On the station you have  
22 a very big control. The Germans, they stay there on the train  
23 and they have a big control to capture some Jewish smugglers,  
24 to kill them off." So we bought off the conductor on the  
25 train to stop half-way from that city. "If the train stop,



1  
2 you better go down if you Jewish." If I would no, I wouldn't  
3 be alive today.

4 So the train stopped and I tell mine boyfriend, I says the  
5 same way I tell him that, and we went down and right away we  
6 on  
put/our bands because otherwise they would say, "Where you  
7 come from?" I would be shot to death.

8 So, like, I'm living there. I saw lots of Jewish walking  
9 there in that city, and after I asked them, "What's the matter  
10 here?" He says, "Here is not so bad like in Warsaw. In  
11 Warsaw they already deported lots of men, particularly men to  
12 work and we never saw them again back. They killed them off,  
13 so, little by little.

14 So I was there in another ghetto in Bialbolask (Biala  
15 Podlaska). There I was about, was a year. It was quiet and I  
16 worked in a restaurant. YOU know, I had not bad, and I had my  
17 mother there and my sister, you know, there, which she was too  
18 with the kid. Her husband was killed, you know, during the  
19 war. He was a soldier. She was with my mother, and they was  
20 together. And after that I worked there, and was not so bad.  
21 And so long didn't came, Judenrein, each time they made, the  
22 Germans made right away, like a pogrom, you know, and they  
23 say everybody has to come out on that place, you know, the  
24 men particular. They hide themselves because know what's  
25 coming, you know. "Only to work," they say. We never saw

1  
2 them back there even. They started already. It was finished  
3 with Warsaw. They started with smaller towns.

4 So each time they went out, they took them. We never  
5 saw them back. After they hide themselves, so they looked  
6 in the closets and they took them out and shoot them to death,  
7 on the, there, in the smaller city, in the square. Took them  
8 all out and shoot them, like animals.

9 It was a hell of a time. You know, I can sit hours and  
10 hours and remember others. You know, is not this only.

11 Q How often did they do that?

12 A How often? About every two months, every three  
13 months. How they liked it. After that it was time to, you  
14 know, they eliminate all the time the ghettos, you know.  
15 Like one street they took away. Another street they took away  
16 because they deported some Jewish in another camps, so we  
17 was smaller. So they took away, smaller and smaller, and  
18 sooner or later they --

19 One night I was asleep. My boyfriend was in another room  
20 there, and we heard knocking on the door. "Out. Judenrein."  
21 Imagine, Judenrein? We was young and I say, "Oh, gee. I will  
22 not go, you know, to the camps." So, shooting, they shoot us  
23 out. So I decide to crawl over a wall and go, you know, to  
24 the Gentile side. So we successful. I pass by and that was  
25 about two o'clock in the morning in the wintertime. We went  
in. I know the area there where, because we was almost born

1  
2 there and raised.

3 So I went there to a cellar where the potatoes was there.  
4 It was actually open. So we was there and next to us, like  
5 this house, and next to us, like this, the other home, was a  
6 big hospital with people. Actually was a Jewish hospital with  
7 Jewish people there, all sick people, so in the middle of the  
8 night I fall asleep and my friend, my boyfriend says in the  
9 morning, says, "What happened? You heard something?" He  
10 says yes. "Good thing you fall asleep. I heard all the  
11 people from the hospital. They took them out and they shoot  
12 them all. They screaming," he says, "was horrible." He was  
13 very sensitive. He was very good man. Really. He wrote  
14 some books, you know, and he buried them some place in Warsaw.  
15 I don't remember where, you know. And that time I was sitting  
16 and I says, "I'm going for two, three days," and after that  
17 I says, "I will better go out to my neighbor, to a Gentile.  
18 She wouldn't announce me," you know, "I'm here."

19 So I went there and I ask for, at least for a little bit  
20 water and bread. We was sitting three days. We didn't eat,  
21 just potato we try to eat, a raw potato. So after that I  
22 says, "You sit here and I will go there." Was about four  
23 o'clock in the morning. Was still evening. And I knocked on  
24 the door to my neighbor. She saw me. She was real surprised  
25 and she really cried. She says, "Gee, what are you doing here?"

1  
2 And he was a fire from the fire department, her son. He says,  
3 "You know, I have orders to all -- If I see a Jewish woman or  
4 Jewish people, to give them to the Gestapo." I says, "Go  
5 ahead." I know he wouldn't do it. They very nice people.  
6 Some Polacks were very nice people too.

7 So they give me bread. They give me some water, you  
8 know, like tea in a bottle and everything. He says, "Gee, if  
9 I would know my neighbors wouldn't announce, I would hide you  
10 here." It's just the minute when they see -- They had an  
11 order. If you hide some Jewish people, the whole family goes.  
12 They will shoot. They didn't want to risk the lives.

13 So I was -- They tell me and after I ask him where is the  
14 Jewish people went? They say they -- some they deported to,  
15 about twenty-five miles in another city in another city,  
16 Mi-zoich -- Miedzyrzec in Polish, so, in another --

17 So I says, "Next day," I says, "early morning I will go,  
18 and it's not a thing to sit in the back, there, you know, and  
19 eat potatoes." So I went next day. I went in the morning,  
20 early in the morning. I went by the freeway and I want to go  
21 there, to the city, you know, by, just like Gentiles, nothing,  
22 because if they would see us, so they would shoot us.

23 I saw some people working, you know, the Germans, and  
24 they had some people working like slave labor, you know. And  
25 they saw me from far away. They saw me and I was, I says I

1  
2 will not say anything. Otherwise I will be killed. And  
3 they really risked my life, you know, and they say, "What's  
4 happening in town?" They screaming, like this, and I just  
5 walked and I didn't pay attention to them.

6 After that I went there and I saw the people. I went to  
7 that city, Mizic. That was Mizic. I will tell you.  
8 People was sitting like, you know, in the, in one room. It  
9 was maybe like, a room like this. Was maybe 40, 50 people  
10 was sitting there because when I came to the town and I tell  
11 them I'm coming from, to the police, I didn't know nobody in  
12 that town. So I says, "I like to have some place to sleep or  
13 to be, because I don't -- I lost all my family. I don't have  
14 nobody." The police sent me into a family there.

15 Q Where was your family now?

16 A My family? Where?

17 Q When did you lose them?

18 A I lost them when was Judenrein.

19 Q Can you explain what that means?

20 A Judenrein means, clean. That -- I lost my mother and  
21 my sister, before was clean out the Jewish. Judenrein means  
22 all the Jewish has to be cleaned out from the city. No  
23 Jewish shouldn't be in the city, just the Gentile. So that  
24 time I know I lost my family anyway.

25 So I tell them I don't have nobody. Really. "Please give  
me some place to be." So I was there and they -- I was

1 sitting in the police station and they say, "OK. We will give  
2 you a place there." And I had one place to sit. There was  
3 about 30, 40 people and I was sleeping just on the floor with  
4 my coat over, you know, there. And that was our--our--

5  
6 After that I had some work because I was a little bit  
7 nursing, because you have to go through a few, a governess,  
8 you have to go through nursing too. You have to know how to  
9 nurse people and things. So I applied. I'm a nurse. So  
10 when people, richer people were sick, even Jewish people  
11 they was rich, they could afford, so they hired me. She had  
12 some typhus. I already, you know. Some typhus. So I was  
13 like a nurse to her and beside that I had some food, and you  
14 know, and I slept there and was not so bad.

15 Each time every month they made all the time, the Germans  
16 says, "Get out from the," you know, "from the houses." They  
17 want to count the people, how many people, so who they wanted  
18 they took them. You know. Some people they smuggled, you  
19 know, the food, you know, from the areas from the Gentile  
20 side to the other side, and what I can tell you? After that.

21 Q How long did you stay there?

22 A With these people I stood there for a few months.  
23 After that, she, she got better and some, they offered me to  
24 marry some man they wanted marry me, you know, even things.  
25 I says, "Mine, mine boyfriend actually." He went, he says,

1  
2 "Why don't you go and hide yourself some place in the Gentile?  
3 You look like -- " And he didn't, he couldn't even speak  
4 Jewish. I speak Jewish. I says, "Go ahead and help yourself.  
5 Be. I don't have nobody and you can help yourself." So he  
6 went some place. I don't know. I heard he got killed anyway.

7 So, I was so in love I didn't see nobody else, only him.  
8 So somebody, lots of people they ask me to marry them, you  
9 know, in the ghettos even, and sometime I cried. I says my  
10 peace is bad. They want to sleep with me, natural. And I  
11 says no. I says, "I have time after the war." "This is the  
12 war. We will not survive even. What's the difference?"

13 So after that, the ghettos was so bad they took out,  
14 sometime they came in and took out with Jewish police help,  
15 they took out some Jewish people. They shot them out, you  
16 know, they shoot them to death and I saw this. For me was  
17 not interested no more.

18 So after that I was sitting one time, was Judenrein and  
19 I went to the bunker. They say, you know, "Clean out. Every-  
20 body has to go out." So I went to the bunker. I was sitting  
21 there for one week or two weeks there because some people  
22 they share, you know, in the bunkers already. They share  
23 something, food. We didn't got, or we sit and we sit. Maybe  
24 will pass so we can go out that time. No. They couldn't go  
25 out. Every day the police, the Jewish police was screaming,

1 "Get out because we will, the German will dynamite the place.  
2 Get out. Is -- Everybody has to be on that place. You see  
3 that place?" So we didn't got a choice. We went out and we  
4 went out all on the place. They -- We waited in a barrack  
5 there. We waited in a barrack. You know, they examine  
6 everyone in the barrack. I was laying on the table, you see,  
7 a table like this. One German was in one side and the other  
8 German was in the other side. Naked. They looked even between  
9 the legs, maybe I hide there gold or things, so that time they  
10 deport us to Majdanek. In Majdanek some, on the trains, you  
11 know, some people wanted escape, so they shoot us on the  
12 trains, you know, they shoot us. One was shot near me. He  
13 didn't even feel it. So I said, "Gee, what is blood, my  
14 legs." He says, "Oh, I'm shot because you can feel later  
15 through the leg." He says, "Oh, I cannot move with my leg,"  
16 so you know, we was a few hours to Majdanek. Takes long time  
17 to go there. So he was screaming, "Water, water." We got not  
18 water. We got bullets after ask the water. One, when we  
19 arrived to Lublin--to Majdanek, so the train was stopped,  
20 and one train, when I went down, you should see. One section,  
21 the train, they open up. All the cadavers fall out. They  
22 was so many people in that train. They couldn't breathe. All  
23 was blue and black. They suffocated, suffocated there.

24  
25 Q How long was the ride to Majdanek?



1  
2 A We rode to Majdanek, like, almost a day, you know.  
3 They didn't run so fast. They stopped, you know, the Germans,  
4 on  
up/the, all the wagons, you know, the trains. They was  
5 guarding us on top on the trains with the Germans, the SS.  
6 If somebody escaped they shoot him, you know, and they shoot  
7 so  
in the wagons, so when we open up/we went to, like, take a bath  
8 like in, you know, that was in Birkenau. No. That was in  
9 Lublin. Birkenau was later.

10 So we went there and lots of people they had the children  
11 with them and they stood, the children with the mothers was in  
12 one side and the singles like me, younger people was on the  
13 other side, so after that they say, they say -- They took  
14 away the children. They say they gone to a children camp.  
15 The mothers didn't want to separate them, you know, the mothers  
16 didn't want to be separate from the children, so they scream.  
17 They took by force and took away the children from them, and --  
18 or some of them they took together, you know. So -- We went  
19 to a, you know, to -- Before the camp you went to a shower.  
20 We was thinking, we looked, maybe is gas there. No, it was  
21 really shower. We took a shower and after, we went to  
22 Birkenau.

23 Q And you heard about the gas?

24 A Oh sure, we heard about the gas. We heard about  
25 the gas because we was in a -- Before, you know, when I have

1  
2 to talk to you from first and each time I have something coming  
3 to me. I can sit day and night and tell you stories, you  
4 know. So I was --

5 I know it's something because they tell me, even Treblinka.  
6 You heard about Treblinka? You see, before we went, we went,  
7 I would be a passenger to Treblinka, so before we went they  
8 deport us to the barracks. They say somebody escaped from  
9 Treblinka and came to these barracks and they tell me, they  
10 tell us, they say, "Gee, you stupid people. Why you sitting  
11 here? You will go to Treblinka. They will kill you all."

12 So some people was already, you know, tired from running.  
13 They say, "What God will do it with us, we will go." So I  
14 says, I says, "I will not go yet." I was a young girl. So  
15 I says to the German, they stood in the front and I says to  
16 that German, "Listen, I know German how to speak," and I tell  
17 him, "Listen, I have to go. Could you let me out?" He go,  
18 you know -- "I cannot just make here," and says, "Come back  
19 if you go out." He never saw me.

20 So I went from the barracks. Actually I went away to  
21 (Mazycie)  
22 the ghetto, to Mazh-ur-zha/ ghetto. You see, that's where I  
23 survived, and I heard that all transferred went for death to  
24 Treblinka, and that's it. We never saw. They all transferred.

24 Q And you just walked off?

25 A I walked out. Not Majdanek. Majdanek you couldn't

1 walk out. Just the transport to death to Treblinka. Treblinka  
2 was not a camp. Was a, was like, Treblinka was, they made a,  
3 in Poland they made a, how you call that, a special, to kill  
4 people. They made a floor, you see, with a, like -- You have  
5 revolving floor and the people stood on the floor and the gas  
6 came out. And that floor was turned over in the grave there.  
7 You see, they had so much. That's what they tell us. I  
8 didn't see it. I was not there. Otherwise -- Because people  
9 still escape from Treblinka. Treblinka was a death camp.

11 Q Like a factory?

12 A It's a factory. Actually.

13 Before we went to Auschwitz -- before we went to Lublin  
14 that was the, Treblinka was the first, what they went, if they  
15 didn't lie, they was -- they had too many people in the camps,  
16 you know, so they had selections. They selected in the camps,  
17 they selected every month. They selected. They didn't like  
18 you, you looked skinny or something. To the gas chamber.  
19 You see, I was there. I was in Birkenau, I was in Lublin. In  
20 Lublin was not so much selections there. They transferred to  
21 Birkenau. See, I am already shaking when I start talking,  
22 you know, from the past.

23 Q I'm confused as to where, from which place did you  
24 walk away?

25 A I walked away from the place before they took me to

1  
2 Majdonak.

3 Q It was a transport or --

4 A Yeah, that was the transport actually to Treblinka  
5 and we was waiting for the train -- Not trains. Automobiles  
6 to take us.

7 Q Some people would go to Majdanek and some people  
8 would go to Treblinka?

9 A Yes, that's right, so our -- because we was on place.  
10 You know, they took us altogether in that place and they said  
11 that transport go there and that transport go there and I was  
12 actually in Treblinka side, you know, there. So I went. I  
13 wind up and after I escape was not far from Miedzyrzec.  
14 Jewish it's Mizh-ritz. So I was, so I says, I will, better.  
15 I'm going out, you know, and not come in because they tell me.  
16 I said, "Are you sure they go to Treblinka?" because we know  
17 Treblinka what is. Says, "I'm sure that barracks you got to  
18 escape." Some escape. A few. They came to the ghettos.  
19 What's different, one ghetto or another. So I went to the  
20 ghettos.

21 So one person alone is difficult, you know. You don't  
22 have money, you don't have nothing. Nobody to help you. You  
23 see. Everybody was against you. Everybody was selfish for  
24 themselves.

25 That's right. It's not, you know. You had lots of

1  
2 collaborators. Even Jewish people couldn't help you. I was in  
3 the ghetto there, in the Jewish ghetto, in the ladies' ghetto  
4 where I went, so when I -- I couldn't -- I didn't got food.  
5 I didn't got nothing. So I got, I was sick. I got typhus.  
6 See, I worked for somebody for typhus so I caught it. You  
7 know, I was laying by the door and I was swollen like this,  
8 all over, because I couldn't, nobody give me food. Is only  
9 one thing, water I could have. So I drink the water with  
10 typhus, and that's the worstest thing to do, to drink the water  
11 when you have typhus, you know. The temperature is so high,  
12 I couldn't even -- Some people they say, "Gee, you talked so  
13 much stuff." This they tell me, stories, because I was un-  
14 conscious, already in coma, the high fever, and you know,  
15 when, after that when I, you know, got well a little bit, I  
16 couldn't walk. I had to walk with, like a dog, with four, you  
17 know, with my legs and the hand. Because after that I says,  
18 "Could you give me a mirror and look." I looked. I couldn't  
19 recognize me, myself, because mine eyes was in and everything  
20 was so swollen from, you know, malnourished, everything, in  
21 the ghettos.

22       Some people, it's lots of people died from that and I was  
23 lucky. See. Was not the time for me to go. I was a strong  
24 girl actually, a working girl all the time. So I think that's  
25 my surviving, the will from survive.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Q How long were you in this ghetto?

A Oh, I was in three ghettos. Don't forget. I was in Warsaw ghetto first. I was in Biala Podlaska ghetto and Nieswiez ghettos. Three ghettos I survived. It's not easy.

Q How long were you in the last one?

A In the last one I was about a year. Not long. Even, not a year even. I don't know. Maybe six months. I had heard some people they hear from the ghettos, which I slept with on one bed in the camps, this -- She's Frieda Grynszpan. She's ran off in San Francisco, I think. Oh, no, not your mother. No. Mrs. -- What is the name? Mrs. Lateina. She knows her. Selfish people.

Q What happened to you after that, when you left that ghetto?

A What happened? That's what, they deport me, you know, to Birkenau. After the ghetto, you know, I was sick and I was -- And you can sit day and night and I will never finish.

So I was in Lublin. That's Lublin. Things. When our transport went down, that's what I tell you. That's what was there and we took a bath. We went to camp and first thing they, people was there. Came in. They was afraid to tell them. They was shot, you know, with the bullets because otherwise you go to, they will shoot them and they will not go

1  
2 to the camps, you know.

3       So after that, they was in Majdanek was a horrible camp  
4 I will tell you. So I was there and we was in the barracks and  
5 people was shot and after that they didn't got help. Nothing.  
6 And next day they was screaming, "Help. Help." You should  
7 see the wounds. You know, the wounds was all with worms, you  
8 know, from the wounds. She was screaming, they eat her alive,  
9 and after they took her away, and they took her to the gas  
10 chamber, you see. Was something, you know. Over there in  
11 Majdanek you could see the, you know, when, on the, every  
12 morning when we went out. Was very hot in the summertime.  
13 You could see the lice crawling on, in the sand. You couldn't  
14 get away from lice there. We was thinking, "Gee, maybe we'll  
15 go out there."

16       One day they took some transports from there, deported.  
17 So I was the first one. I says, "I don't care where I go.  
18 I'm going out of there." Some people even before me, it was  
19 a man in Birkenau. They didn't got water. They just urinate  
20 and they drink their own urine, you know. And after that  
21 they, I was the first transport to Birkenau.

22       Q     From Majdanek to Birkenau?

23       A     From Majdanek, because they say, the healthy one, the  
24 nice looking one they wanted, you know, and I, you know, we  
25 went to the bath and they took me. I was glad I went from

1  
2 Majdanek out. That was a camp, it was a disaster. Nobody  
3 I think could survive there. So I went to Birkenau and  
4 Birkenau was not so bad.

5 Q How far was that --

6 A You know, is -- from this -- This was in Lublin,  
7 actually, Majdanek, and from Lublin this was, Birkenau we went  
8 I think almost a day and night we was, with the train. Train  
9 doesn't go fast, so we went there and they give us, you know,  
10 other punishments there, you know, and every day we had to go  
11 down about five o'clock in the morning and stay on the cold  
12 weather and count how many people, you know. The SS, the woman  
13 even went out from there every day working, slave labor, you  
14 know, in the fields. What kind labor? Took the, took the  
15 stones from this side to put them in the other side. If you  
16 didn't watch out, you know, if you didn't do what they wanted,  
17 so she stood, that was SS woman guard us in Birkenau, so she  
18 stood with a, what is this, a leather -- how you call that --  
19 whip, yeah, and they whipped us good in the back, you know,  
20 and we couldn't say anything. More you said it, more you got  
21 it, you know. And every day was the same story. We came, we  
22 came there for, for a few months in Birkenau, so I was working  
23 on the fields and I was sick and tired.

24 So after that I met somebody from Holland. He was already  
25 a little bit bigger. Even in the camps you had privileges if



1  
2 they work for the Germans a little bit. So I think I was not  
3 a bad looking girl. So he says, "I could help you." I says,  
4 "How you can help me?" "To give you another work some place,  
5 inside work." So I say, "Gee, I would appreciate," you know,  
6 and he gave me some cigarettes, you know, packages to --  
7 We organized there. The cigarettes we give to the Germans  
8 woman what they sit there for prostitutions, you know. We  
9 sit with them for prostitution and things, so we sold it to  
10 them for bread, and they got more bread and everything. So I  
11 traded. That was trading, organization they call.

12 So afterthat he, he actually tell there the, the, the  
13 German, I think, in the schreibstuber, there with the office,  
14 they want to transfer me to a factory.

15 Q Transferred you to a factory?

16 A To a factory. That was the union factory, they  
17 called. Is ammunition. We worked. Lots of woman they had  
18 privileges. Who had a privilege they worked there, so I work  
19 there inside already with men, even. The men. We couldn't  
20 speak to each other. It's just, you know, we talked and it was  
21 there Czechs, Jewish, Gentile, Germans. The Germans was  
22 sitting, you know, for robbery in the concentration camp, for  
23 prostitution and other crimes, you know, and we was the crime  
24 victims too, you see, the Jewish people.

25 So I was there working. I think I worked there almost,

1  
2 almost a year. I don't know. I didn't count. There was no  
3 counting days. Just every day we marched out from the --  
4 walked about two hours to the ammunition factory, you know, and  
5 at least they treat us not bad because the factory, you know,  
6 and we could organize, you know, with the men, you know,  
7 organize the food. They give us this, take this, and they  
8 control us, pretty when we went into, back to the, to the,  
9 what is that, back to our camp.

10 So every day was a control. You know. They control  
11 actually the German. The first, the first 300 was marching,  
12 the German woman. The people, Gentiles, this criminals,  
13 prostitution criminals, so they had letters, you know, written;  
14 they shouldn't have that. They had cigarettes. They had this,  
15 and they smoked. You know, they shouldn't have that. So  
16 they took everything away, and I that day, I had -- because I  
17 had like -- We was three together like sisters. I had one --  
18 We lived together, all, you know, together. So it was, they,  
19 in the work, we organize all together. One. I was the biggest  
20 organization, what happens. So I had a big sausage, like this,  
21 to smuggle in the camp and, one, and I had butter and I had  
22 some cigarettes, and was -- it was a control, so they --  
23 Gee, they was crying, they say, "Throw everything away because  
24 otherwise they will kill you." I says, "I have time. First  
25 they will do it with the Germans." You know, that was 300

1  
2 Germans group. They -- I have always time to do it. So they  
3 came to the last people, the Germans, you know, womans. They  
4 control them and they say, "Go ahead, march in." I kept here  
5 on the side, one, and here, one, you know, like this, and  
6 marched. And I didn't say -- Boy, they kissed me. Says,  
7 "Good thing." Everybody was throwing everything away because  
8 they was thinking, everybody, you know, they don't want to  
9 be killed.

10 So I got lucky, see. I risk a lot. When you're young  
11 you risk lots of things, you know. So, that time I worked  
12 there. What I can tell you? I work there and saw lots of  
13 dying. We had to, you know, we had to hide our food. Some-  
14 time I share with others. I cannot say that I could -- I give  
15 them some when they couldn't organize. They was sick. /I  
16 helped them. I given them even some food. How much food  
17 you can give? You cannot give everything away from you.

18 In the night when I was asleep, all disappeared, my food.  
19 When I slept somebody stolen and I know who was, because  
20 after that I went to her bed. I saw my, all my food there.  
21 I says, "Why are you stealing? I give you some food and I  
22 share with you. Why are you stealing?" So if I would tell  
23 that to, to somebody out, they would, they would, so that's  
24 the gimmick was, you know. Some, when they didn't survive,  
25 you know, sickness, and every, every two weeks or every month  
was a selection on the, you know, when they count the people

1  
2 how many, because they have to count. Maybe you didn't escape,  
3 or some, so many. So they count, if you was -- Selection day  
4 was the worst thing came that, you know, Hessler -- You  
5 heard about Hessler? They -- He was not so bad. You know,  
6 is funny. He killed lots of people. He was not bad. If you  
7 had the guts to go to him he was -- and beg him, "I can work.  
8 Don't put me through the gas chamber." He let him go. He  
9 was thinking sooner or later they will go, you know. That was,  
10 Hessler was, I think -- I think he was on trial some place.

11 Q Was he the commander?

12 A He was the head commander, Hessler, from the camp  
13 in Birkenau. Nice looking fellow. He's a middle age, was.

14 So he was standing and he didn't selected. He just, the  
15 woman SS was selected all the woman who was skinny looking,  
16 you know, sick looking, go there. They took him to the gas  
17 chamber because they needed healthy people to slave, you know,  
18 to work for them. So one, some girls they did, they begged  
19 him and they let him go, you know.

20 And after that, what was it -- Yeah, after that in the  
21 camp it was they wanted transport some place else, so I says,  
22 "Why should I sit here again? Maybe it's better another camp."  
23 So I went back again to another trans -- You know. I went in  
24 and took a bath. You know, they have to see you naked, how you  
25 look, if you look skinny and not good. I was, you know, I was

1  
2 a poor girl and I was a working girl and I was not in the  
3 luxury. Who was -- Really rich people couldn't survive. They  
4 couldn't suffer the things what they suffered, you know.

5 So they took me to that transport and I went to the,  
6 from that transport I went to Ravensbruck. Imagine? I was  
7 thinking maybe, oh that camp is a working camp, is a  
8 beautiful camp. That's what they tell us. It's the best camp  
9 from all of us, because they was not too many people there.  
10 So I went to that camp. It was a hell of a camp, Ravensbruck.  
11 I went there and sit, was laying there with lots of people.  
12 We didn't even, we couldn't even walk out. That was already  
13 almost the end, you know.

14 So I went there in Ravensbruck and I work. I don't know  
15 what kind work we did. We didn't even do work outside because  
16 the walls was, you couldn't see even the streets there.  
17 There was walls that high, maybe. About, oh, about 20 feet  
18 or 25 feet. You could only see the sky and the camp. That's  
19 all. Ravensbruck.

20 Ravensbruck in Holland, I think was the biggest criminals  
21 there. The German criminals was in this camp in Germany.  
22 So from there we was sitting in -- And after that I say, "I'm  
23 getting out from this camp. Otherwise I will not survive in  
24 that camp," because there was the worstest camp, even worse --  
25 Once you go one camp to another was the worstest one, so they

1  
2 took another transports. Some when they exchanged people even,  
3 they say, Switzerland, you know, they say to exchange people  
4 like this to Switzerland. So we did -- we didn't believe  
5 them, and as I think, was not true. It's just, you know.

6 So I went with another transport. I wind up in Retz-off  
7 in Germany. Retzoff was not bad. Was a small camp on the,  
8 on the -- what is the name? There was airports. Small camp.  
9 He had so many camps we don't even know how many camps he had.  
10 So we was there only woman camp, small. So I wind up with my  
11 friends. We was there working on the airport. You know, there  
12 the Germans, they had to clean it up, there. After that I  
13 was like a supervisor for a commander, you know. You know,  
14 you have a group. So I had a group from 25 woman. It was  
15 Russian woman I had, and I was only Jewish, one Jewish, which  
16 I tell them what to do. So we went there and dig the holes  
17 when the Russian bombard the fields, so we had to clean it  
18 out, and the SS was not there. Nobody was there. Just one  
19 woman SS. She guard the whole field there, the airport.  
20 So I says, "Gee, girls, relax," I says, "because she's not  
21 around and why should you work?" And they say, you know, even  
22 Russian woman, they say, "We work for us. Pretty soon Russia  
23 will take over here." Which wasn't near, near the end. So I  
24 say, "Don't bother." I didn't know she was watching from far  
25 away. We stood and we didn't work. So she came, after that

1 she came to the place. She says, she says, "You stood and  
2 you didn't tell them to work. What kind supervisor are you?"  
3 I said, "They already finished," because we had to finish one  
4 place only. "We already finished." She says, "No, you have  
5 to work to that hour when you go back to your camp. We pay you  
6 camp for that." So, imagine what I could. The people didn't  
7 got beating. I got beating. So she give me some schmitz,  
8 you know, with this things and they was screaming to each  
9 other, "You see? You didn't watch." You know, they didn't  
10 watch. They should watch too. So we made gymnastic for  
11 that. We -- They didn't give us food because of that, you  
12 know. We had a hell of a time, and sooner or later was a few, a  
13 few weeks later, we worked on the field. All of a sudden, you  
14 know, we see German airplanes. They bombard us. We didn't  
15 even know. The German airplane to bombard the airport! A  
16 German airport. That was not the Germans. The Russians took  
17 over a German airfield. They took the German's airplanes and  
18 they bombard, you see, and the Germans was all over the places.  
19 They went, and we was free, so we will, we go -- We went back  
20 to the, to the camp. After that we actually worked out already,  
21 you know, ourselves because was already to the end.

22 I didn't tell you the whole story even, with the march,  
23 a death march, you know, from Birkenau to another camp, you  
24 see, because that time, you know, day and night we marched.  
25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Q When they were evacuating --

A Evacuated, yeah, because the Russian approached, you see. There was march, day and night was march. Who couldn't walk, they shoot them, you see.

So what I can tell you? I can tell the stories little by little, stories and stories. Will never end, you know. Sometimes you forget, you know. You get mixed -- If you talking too much you get mixed up with everything. So I think that's it, and after that, you know, they was end and they escaped from the -- The Russian approached so everybody was on your own.

So I went out there in Germany and I saw Russian came in and I says, "What I'm going to do?" He says, you know, "Go," you know, "to a camp." You know. "We set up a camp," and we went. I was liberated by the Russian actually, you know. They set us up a -- Oh, you see, they took away from the Germans, like here, the whole street took away, and every nationality. I didn't want to go back to Poland so I says, "I'm from Belgium," because, you know, I suffered so much in Poland. So I says I can always go back when, after, you know, when is quiet down because I had in Belgium mine uncle with my aunt. So I says I'm going there. Maybe I find somebody. So I didn't say I'm Polish. I'm from Belgium.

So they put me in a Belgium block because one block was



1  
2 for Belgium, one block was for the French, for Russian.  
3 Everyone, they waited for the trucks or for the trains to  
4 deport them to each country, you know, and I waited to the  
5 last minute. I was there with the Russian. They give us food.  
6 They give us the best. I cannot, I cannot complain. I don't  
7 know why. So, others they can complain. That's their  
8 business.

9       Because I was the last minute, and when the American took  
10 over because that was in Germany by the Elba, you know. One  
11 side, Elba side was the Russian, one side was the American  
12 side. So I says I have to go on the western side, you know.  
13 So I went there to the American side. You know where the  
14 American put us? On the fields on the rain. You think we  
15 didn't complain? We complained to the American soldiers and  
16 everyone. We says, "Look at us. Why the Russians took us to  
17 the best homes, and here you, we -- you don't let us even go  
18 into our home and wash our face." He says, "We cannot do that  
19 with the Germans." That's what the American says. "We cannot  
20 do that with the Germans to send them out from the homes.  
21 We gentlemen. The Russians is different." See. I says,  
22 "We suffer so much to wait for you liberation," which was true.  
23 I tell him that, "and now we have to laying in the rain and  
24 wait for the trains coming to deport us to -- I mean to  
25 Belgium." You see. So I went -- That time we wait for the

1  
2 train. The train was busy with the soldiers, you know, with  
3 the -- Because was not too many trains that time after the  
4 war.

5 So we waited. We went to Belgium. Belgium they took  
6 pretty good care of the Jewish people, the Jewish solidaritate,  
7 you know, so they give us a, that time they give us an apartment,  
8 me and my friend both together, two girls, we had. And after,  
9 we find work, we was on our own, see, and I find a husband in  
10 Belgium.

11 That's the -- After, I didn't want to go back to Poland  
12 to nobody else. I says I will emigrate to the United States  
13 far away from wars. So that's what I wind up here.

14 Q Mrs. Jablon --

15 A Yes.

16 Q -- you talked about Majdanek. Could you tell us  
17 what type of clothes you would wear when you were there, what  
18 kind of food you had to eat, what were the barracks like?

19 A The barracks?

20 Q And the food and the clothes that you were wearing.

21 A The food, the food they give us piece of bread in  
22 the morning, you know, like they had one rounded bread. They  
23 cut maybe about eight or ten pieces from one and they give  
24 to everyone, in tea. That's in the morning, and in dinnertime  
25 they give us some soup, watered soup. Maybe you could find

1  
2 one piece of potato in it, you know. If you didn't, was not  
3 smart to organize, you starved to death in the camps, so --

4 In Majdanek we wore clothes that's what they give us.  
5 We didn't wear this stripes in Majdanek. We wear normal  
6 clothes because when the transport came, you know, they took  
7 everything away from us. Some, they took them to death, so  
8 they give us shoes, other shoes, dresses, you know. They give  
9 us, you know, what to wear, or coats in the wintertime, and  
10 Birkenau was already different. We wore some, you know, the  
11 stripes. Some wear the stripe jackets, you know, and clothes ,  
12 normal clothes. If you was in a high range organization, you  
13 got nice clothes. You worked in a -- If you worked -- There  
14 was very hard to get work in the place where the transport  
15 came and they took everything away from them. They got,  
16 already gold. They got everything. People hide it in the  
17 clothes, you see. I was willing to work there. You know, you  
18 had to have, you know, connections everywhere, <sup>even</sup> /in the concen-  
19 tration camps, you know, and I had --

20 One woman she had an old, you know, where we slept. This  
21 was not beds. This was, how you call that -- Coy-ers. How  
22 you call it in English? You know, like wooden beds. Big,  
23 big ones. I don't know if you saw it, how many we slept.  
24 We slept about -- Wait a minute. Four here -- About seven  
25 people in one, and when we had to turn over everybody has to be

1  
2 turn over in that bed. Yeah. Was seven. We had to -- You  
3 know, our clothes was underneath. We press them good overnight,  
4 because they give us some blankets, you know, thin blankets,  
5 and on -- We slept like this on the wood. That was wonderful.  
6 It would be wonderful to sleep on carpet. Got used to it.

7 You know, some when they died, lots of Greek, Jewish  
8 Greeks they couldn't, because the climate. I think Polish in  
9 Poland, you see, they from Sav-u-nicky, and they had terrible  
10 time to live. Lots died. You know, and was, is not described,  
11 you know, what people suffered there. Every day. You know.

12 I don't know if I would survive now. See. It's a  
13 different life, here. In a concentration camp is not -- You  
14 know, here in the jails they complain, don't have a television.  
15 You see, they complain. They hunger strike. I just look how  
16 they treated here criminals. We was not criminals. When I  
17 was working in the Retzoff there, in German airfield, you know,  
18 in the airport, so we had young people coming there, the Air  
19 Force people, and they stood, and we was young girls. They  
20 say, "Gee, why you sitting? Why you working in the camps, in  
21 the concentration camps?" I says, "you tell me." I talk good  
22 German and I says, "You tell me you don't know why we sitting  
23 here?" He says, "No. Why are you working here, young people  
24 like this." They says, "Yeah, you criminals." I say, "We not  
25 criminals. We Jewish." He says, "What you mean, you're Jewish?"

1  
2 Because you're Jewish you are verbrecher?" Criminals is  
3 verbrecher in German.

4 I say, "No. We Jewish. Don't you read," I says, "what  
5 Hitler does to Jewish people?" He says no. See, they don't  
6 know. They send him some place, you know, in the airport they  
7 don't listen maybe to the radios, so, because he talked all  
8 the time, you know. They didn't want to know -- Maybe they  
9 know. They didn't want it. See. Young Germans they didn't  
10 have nothing to do with the SS. They're just from the air-  
11 field. See. Nice looking fellows. Some --

12 One German, even SS, he was a guard for us. He fell in  
13 love with a friend of mine, you know. So every day he came and  
14 gave us some bread and he really loved her. After that I  
15 think one announced the other, so after that I say, "What  
16 happened to Hans?" He says, "They send him out, they send  
17 him out to Russian front." I says, "Why?" "Because he was  
18 involved with the haeftling." You know, haeftling. You know  
19 what is a haeftling? A prisoner is haeftling. See, they  
20 counted haeftling in, so many haeftlings. So he was involved  
21 in there and after that they say they shot him because he was  
22 involved. See, he shouldn't talk. Should nothing. Sometime  
23 he give me, for her to give her something. You know. They  
24 took a chance. Someone, not too many, they was scared to  
25 death, you know.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

It's a hell of a stories.

Q May I ask you, was there a time when you were in the various camps where the Nazis did things to you? Did they ever force you to, did they ever cut your hair when you didn't want --

A Oh, they did, in Birkenau. Not in Majdanek. Majdanek they didn't. In Birkenau when we arrived right away they took us to the baths and they right away they give us the numbers and they cut our hair, straight like this. They didn't cut like this, with this. They just clip them off, all, and we looked at each other on the baths. We didn't even recognize ourself.

Actually, I was glad they cut mine because I had typhus. When you have typhus fever, your hair, your hair get, they go out, you know. Is better -- They tell me even there, "Why don't you cut your hair, shave your head, because, because your hair will fall out sooner or later." So I was glad they cut it off. After that I had healthy hair. You see, after that they didn't cut no more. Only once.

At least if they want to punish you if you didn't do something or things, and they want to punish you, they cut your hair again. Is only once when we arrived in Birkenau they did that to us. And we always had to cut short, you know, for cleanliness, you know. Everybody was -- Nothing on the

1 head. Just like my hand. They shaved us.

2 Yeah. You didn't hear that? I think you heard that.

3 Yeah. See, sometime everything start together. You forget a  
4 lot.

5 Lots of stories, even, you know, what happened to me.  
6 Poland with hiding in the ghettos. Lots of things, you know.  
7 Not the Germans. I didn't got nothing.

8 I had one time with the Germans when I am at work in the,  
9 in the restaurant, you know, in the ghettos. So is one German  
10 wants to, you know, he wants to give me some drinks because  
11 I worked in the restaurant where was drinks. So he wants  
12 me to, give me, to drink with him and I don't drink. I don't  
13 like to drink. I never liked. So he says, "Gee, I'm sorry."  
14 I says, "I don't drink," and he was drunk a little bit. One  
15 was a dolmetscher. You know what means a dolmetscher? You  
16 translate. The Germans to Russian. Because he, that man worked  
17 for the Russian there in a camp some place. He's on -- Is not  
18 a camp. It was in the prisons, Russian prisons. He was like  
19 a dolmetscher. He was with him.

20 And so he tell me to drink. I says no, or I couldn't.  
21 I was free. I was not in the camp, just in the ghettos.  
22 Worked for that lady, you know. Boy, you should see him.  
23 He almost killed me, if not him -- You know, he took out the  
24 gun and he wanted shoot me, but not that guy, the other German  
25

1  
2 dolmetscher. He was a pretty smart fellow. He says, "What  
3 you doing?" He says, "She refuse me to drink." So he kept  
4 him away and I run away. Boy, I was that time I was scared  
5 to death, you know. He was -- When he was not drinking he  
6 came always to that, you know, restaurant and we talk with  
7 him and he liked me. I don't know. You see, I refused him,  
8 to drink.

9 So after that when they deport mine sister and my mother,  
10 things, and I didn't know where they go. So he tell me that,  
11 you know, he says like this to me, next day, he say, "You know  
12 where the people went? You was lucky. You was young, you  
13 know, and you working here. That's what you're here. They  
14 took the people, they say, they took him to the trains and they  
15 all gas them." We couldn't, didn't want to believe that. How  
16 we know? They all gas them on the train -- on the communes,  
17 you know, in German they talked, and, you know, this big trucks.  
18 They put this gas pipes in it and they gassed them there.  
19 That's what he tell me that. I think that was true. He tell  
20 me the true story, and I says, "Oh, I don't believe that.  
21 They took them to camps." See, we couldn't believe it. I  
22 was -- was true story.

23 I was actually, actually I was after the war when I was  
24 here, when is that? in '59 I went back to Poland to see my  
25 neighbors, to see maybe, I'm a survivor. Maybe my sister or



1  
2 somebody else, so I went there. They trick me. Everybody was  
3 here. Yeah. Mrs. Lateina and everybody."You go back to  
4 Poland, they will kill you there, the Polacks." I says "I was  
5 not cooperating with the Germans. Why they will kill me?"  
6 I have nice neighbors and think, so I went back there to --  
7 there, where I was deported to Biala Podlaska there, and I went  
8 with my son, you know. He was that time he was 11 and a half  
9 years old. So I went there, and they give me some, there the  
10 room to sleep. There was no hotel in that town, that time,  
11 you know, and I saw some people and I ask him if he saw, maybe  
12 I'm alive -- my sister or somebody. They didn't see nobody.

13 I find some people, Jewish people what they married to  
14 Gentile because they hide them out, you see, during the war.  
15 So she married him, you know, because he hide her out, you  
16 know, so, and that's it. Didn't see nobody. So why should I  
17 go back? Bad memories.

18 I went there, cemetery, I went there, in the streets, was  
19 very sad, you know, if you by yourself, and all this memory  
20 comes back, so I don't want to go back even to see again.  
21 See, that's -- It's gone. Yeah.

22 Q I have another question. When you were at Birkenau  
23 you talked, told us about the selections.

24 A Yes.

25 Q How often did they occur?

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

A Occur? About --

Q And can you tell us what, how one exactly worked, as you remember it.

A How it worked?

Q How did it go, how did the selection work?

A How selection -- We went out on the selection, on selection day. So everyone stood and they count how many people's there. So, the woman, the German woman the most, they just say, "You, you, you." Like this. "You. Out from the things." They went out and they had to go. Nothing to do. If they select you, you go, you know, to the gas chamber. That's what they wanted. Selected some people. Lots of people. Some people they got sick, and that's it. If you got sick in the camp, you are finished, you know. Even a small --you know. Sometime people got diarrhea, and they hide it, you know. Things. And I had too one time and I passed it, you know, from -- And I always looked good. I don't know why. I was look good. I was, always was a happy one, see.

I was -- Since I -- You know, I didn't finish the whole school because mine parents was poor. I couldn't -- You know, they couldn't afford. In Poland you have to pay for everything before the war, you see. So I only finish about six class, six classes, not even high, highschool, so I went

1  
2 sin-den so I went and worked all the time. I went to night  
3 school and took some -- I liked to work with children so I  
4 took some governess work, so that's what I worked, and after  
5 that, I took, in the wartime I worked everything. I worked  
6 housework. I work everything so to eat. I was not afraid to  
7 work. That's what I worked and during the war -- you see, by  
8 Gentile in Poland in Biala Podlaska. When I came and she saw  
9 me, you know, because I was a good worker and she saw me  
10 that time I came with my son and I came, you know, from the  
11 United States, I had -- She says, she says like that, "Gee,"  
12 she even ask me to -- I wrote to her so she asked me to send  
13 her some medicines, you know. Medicines. Yeah, they have to  
14 have. How I can medicines to send, you know. I have to have  
15 prescriptions from doctors. They couldn't understand that,  
16 you know, I think. So I sent some people even packages to  
17 Poland, you know. Cost money each time you send, and if I  
18 wanted something, it's not the question I wanted some -- you,  
19 know, what they have good. What is the name? Mushrooms.  
20 They have the best mushrooms in Poland. Delicious. One they  
21 send me a package dry mushrooms. You could smell the whole  
22 home. You can smell mushrooms. You know. They good.

23 So, I helped them out a lot.

24 And when I worked there, you know what they say? Never  
25 in the history, Jewish never worked for Gentiles in Europe.

1  
2 You know that? Particular, housework. Never. Because they  
3 didn't took it, because before the war was very big anti-Semitism, ~~s,~~  
4 you know. You know what means anti-Semitism? The Polacks  
5 was always Fascist. They didn't like the Jews, so they wouldn't  
6 give me work, housework, and she tell me always during the war  
7 when the Germans was there, says, "You see what kind good  
8 living we have now? Now the Jewish work for us. We had to  
9 work for the Jews. Now you work in my place." See, they  
10 tease us like that.

11 Yeah. Was a good life. I have nothing to them because  
12 they, you know, they give me not too bad life there. They  
13 couldn't hide me out. That is I know because last time was  
14 Judenrein I was there, up on her -- things she didn't even  
15 know I was hiding in her place, you know, and she robbed. I  
16 will tell you when they evacuate all the Jews and she had on  
17 this, you call that upstairs?

18 Q Attic?

19 A Attic. She had all Jewish stuff there wrapped, all.  
20 See, the Gentile, they took everything, and so I was no shoes  
21 on, nothing. So I took a pair of shoes, you know, and dress  
22 myself well, because I came out from a bunker hiding myself,  
23 so I dress myself. In the morning I says, because I came, knocked  
24 the door to her and I says, the neighbors, and I say, "Gee,  
25 why don't you hide me here overnight or so." She didn't want

1  
2 it. I worked for her for almost, almost a year. She didn't  
3 want to hide me. They was scared to death because they had  
4 families and they didn't want the neighbors, for the neighbors  
5 they was afraid. So there's lots of neighbors. They could  
6 announce. So I went quietly up and hide myself overnight, and  
7 went on the freeway for myself. It's a hell of a time.

8 Q Just one more question.

9 A Sure.

10 Q Why do you think you made it through all these  
11 experiences?

12 A Why? It's the will, the willpower. I had a will to  
13 live. I was -- Even a young girl, I remember when I, you know,  
14 foolishness. We want to, to a, what is the name, how they  
15 predict you what you will be in the future. How you call  
16 woman like that?

17 Q A fortune --

18 A Fortune teller. I went one time to a fortune teller  
19 in Poland. She tell me stories what is now true. You know  
20 that? I tell my husband when I married him, I say, "You know,  
21 she tell me when I went to her, she says like this." She was  
22 the best one, and I borrowed some money to go to her. You  
23 know, I was with mine boyfriend in love. I says, you know,  
24 I didn't, I was -- That time I says she's crazy what she tell  
25 me. She tell me you will pass in your future. You still

1  
2 young. I was, that time I was 18, 17 years old. So she says,  
3 "You will pass in your future horrible things. Hunger and scary  
4 things in Poland," she says, "different." She says, "You have  
5 a boyfriend. You will not marry him. You will have another  
6 husband some place far away, abroad." I looked, like, you  
7 know --

8 After that, you know, in the camps I even repeated my  
9 friends what we sleep together, says, "She was crazy. See  
10 where I am? Where is my friend? He's dead, you know, and  
11 where I get now we waiting for dying," and she tell me, from  
12 there. And she tell me I will have one child, which I have  
13 one child. I never had another one because I didn't want it.  
14 I didn't want -- Actually, I didn't want -- I will tell you  
15 the truth. I didn't want to have any kids, which I saw the  
16 things, the horrible things what they did, the Germans, to the  
17 Jewish people. You know, they took children in mine eyes.  
18 They took him like a ball. They throw him on the air and  
19 shoot him on the air. So I says, can happen again, and I  
20 think can happen again because here we have a lots of  
21 Fascists here too what they don't like Jews. Don't you think  
22 so?

23 So, So I says, if I -- I told to mine, even to my  
24 friends, "If I get married, I don't want to have children. I  
25 don't want to see them suffering like I did." I was strong

1  
2 enough to survive because my willpower and I wanted, each time  
3 I want to be, you know, have better life than I had with my  
4 parents, with myself. That's what I approached. I don't like  
5 what somebody else has better and better. I don't think so,  
6 I need better. I have everything what I need.

7       Is just my husband is, he's a dying man. We planned ac-  
8 tually to retire 65. He will be 65. I am already 62, and  
9 retire and go places a little bit. Go there, go here, you  
10 know. You see how you can plan? It's already almost five  
11 years he's so, like this, getting worse and worse. Used to go  
12 out a little. Now he's going in and out in the hospital.  
13 See, that's life. We cannot plan nothing. I survived. And I  
14 And she tell me, all the story what she tell me is true. I  
15 will pass sickness, so many horrible things, and you will  
16 have a husband, you will -- far away I will marry and we, you  
17 will have a good life, and that's the end of it, she tell me.  
18 And, which is true. See?

19       In Polish it's different, she says. Can be worse, can be  
20 worse. It was during, actually it was during the war she tell  
21 me that. "Can be worse than now," I says, "with the Germans?"  
22 See? It was worse. The camp was worse, and after that she  
23 says I will, "You will survive with very hard -- You will  
24 survive. You will go far away abroad."

25       I was thinking maybe because I had relatives in London,

1  
2 you know. So mine, they planned, some relative they came to,  
3 you know, to Poland and they wanted have, you know, to my  
4 father, they talked to my father. They say, "Why don't you  
5 give us a daughter? You have four daughters, you know, and a  
6 son." Son was the smallest one. He says, "Why don't you give  
7 us to adopt one kid, you know, because we was not --" My  
8 father says, "Gee, you crazy? I have -- I love them all."  
9 What's the difference? See, he was Polish, still loved his  
10 kids, you know. And after that when the war broke out my  
11 father regret, which they wanted me, you know, to go there, to,  
12 to London, you know. He regret he didn't give us, he didn't  
13 give at least one daughter, you know, because they start to  
14 talk when mine father was alive they start to talk about the  
15 war with Germany, was already starting, you know.

16 I have here even a book -- not a book. The Polish organ-  
17 ization send me here, I think an article from the Holocaust,  
18 you know. They tell me too to tell them some stories, different  
19 stories which -- I have here in English, even, they write,  
20 which in Berkeley they located, the Holocaust pass through  
21 which Jewish was hided by Gentile. They want to put up in  
22 history, you know. We survived. I was not hided by the  
23 Gentiles. I can tell them only what some good Polacks they  
24 give me food when I was hiding. They didn't hide myself,  
25 you see. They was afraid, which that article writes this kind



1  
2 stuff. You know. They here, Polish organization here. You  
3 have lots of Polish people here. Not Jewish, the Polacks.  
4 They write from one article says, one collaborator worked  
5 with the Germans, you know, before, which was the pogroms.  
6 You see, with Jewish pogroms when -- You know the history?  
7 Pilsudski was in Poland. Ha?

8 Q Yes.

9 A He died. That's the worstest. Pilsudski liked the  
10 Jews. That time they didn't fool around nothing with the Jews.  
11 When he died, that started. (inaudible) Beck, he was a Fascist,  
12 so that started, the Fascists, you know, they came, and they  
13 started to attack, you know, Jewish. That was the German  
14 sympathizer, Polacks. They start to attack Jews, you know,  
15 and break the windows and not to let in, you know, in the  
16 restaurant, Jews. You know that, after Pilsudski died.

17 Q After World War I?

18 A No, no, no, no. I am World War I?

19 Q After World War I in the '20 --

20 A Oh, that was after Pilsudski. You know, Pilsudski was  
21 president in Poland. After Pilsudski die so the pogroms  
22 started. Start in --

23 (End of tape)

24

25

Tapes: Jablon 0  
Recht (x2) 0

---

Transcripts

Hanover	POLE41
Jablon	POLE30
Recht	POLE21
Gleibtr	POLE22
(hotz pp)	

Barbara  
Ustanko