

Interview with ARANKA MANHART  
Holocaust Oral History Project  
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Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Q. Good afternoon, Aranka. You tell me a little bit where you were born, when you were born, and about your early family life.

A. 1914 in Szentes, Hungary. It was a very small town, now it's really big and beautiful.

My father died in 1923. He was killed by the Rumanians. I was 9 years old, and Rumaniam soldiers came into Hungary, and my father went out near the curfew. You cannot go out on the street before 7 in the morning, and you have to be in at 7 o'clock at night. And my father, to be able to get some meat for us, left the house at 5 minutes before 7.

Q. The curfew was for everybody?

A. Yes, it was not a Jewish thing - in those days I don't know why they were over there, whether they were looking for Communism or why. I never find out. My mother never wanted to talk about it, never. Maybe I'm going to look back one day, but right now, I just don't know why there was a curfew. But Rumania took over that part of Hungary. and we were just in it.

So my father went out, and four soldiers were standing in front of our house. And my father told them that I have six children, and I like to be there early to stand in line for meat, because you just get it once. They let him go, and when he was

coming back with the meat in his hands, the same four soldiers killed him. For the meat. And a neighbor was looking out from the window, and he came over to tell my mother that your husband is laying on the street. So they rushed him to the hospital, by then he was dead. For no reason at all except he was taking home the meat.

So that's when I was nine years old, and my mother with six children.

My mother came from a big family. Her brothers lived in another town, and he was a very well to do man and a good man, and he right away took over. He took my two brothers to his house. They sent me and my younger brother to the (Dorpester) School. And my mother was with one child, the youngest, which was heartbreaking, but she couldn't do anything, you know.

Q. What did your father do? What was his profession?

A. He was a professional. He had a business of, ah, I don't know how you call it. Today they think is a \_\_\_\_\_ or something like that, but it wasn't that big name, you know. But he had people working for him. He was the boss. So. He was a good man.

I remember when he came home, wintertime, he had big pockets, six children, three of us in one side, putting in hands to his pocket. He always brought something.

So there was my mother, and her brother finally took her over too. So she sold the house, and my youngest brother, they all went over there too. Next they bought a house for my mother, a smaller house, and my youngest brother was with her.

And then, I was in Budapest, and my next brother was a year

older than I. He was in a private school. He was in a boys' school, and I was in the girls' school, and we met once in a while, not very often. My brother would rather choose the football game than see the sister.

But every summer we went home, and that was the only time I saw my mother because we didn't have the money to visit more often. And my mother didn't want to tell anyway. So that was it.

But they were so good to her. He brother was the most wonderful man you ever want to meet. The way he went was something (terrible).

So anyway, I didn't see my mother after when the Germans came. I couldn't travel. A (no?) Jewish person can't go. But my next brother, who was three years older than I am, he had a friend who was a soldier. A Gentile. And he knew that I want to go to my mother. My mother always wanted me to be with her, because Budapest she was so lonely, you know, I was alone.

Q. Your mother was in Budapest?

A. No, she was in a small town with her brother.

Q. Oh, I see, I misunderstood you.

A. So anyway, my mother was there and it was really about her daughter who is alone in Budapest, and wanted me to go home because she thought maybe maybe they going to bomb. We never dreamed that they going to take the Jewish people. In those days, at that time there was nothing, yet.

Q. Then I want to go back a little bit now. Were you brought up with a sense of religion?

*spelling*  
A. Yes it was a school where you could keep your religion. We had a Jewish Rabbi, I still remember his name. We made fun of him because his name was (Latzel) and that means "eyeglasses." His last name was Latzel and we made fun of him.

Q. But you didn't come from an Orthodox household?

A. No. No. No. But my mother was religious. We had a Kosher house, but not Orthodox. We didn't have to pray all the time. But my father especially, he wasn't very much interested in keeping -- we had to keep it, but not very strictly. My father was the one. My mother came from a family who always kept everything, especially her brother. A wonderful Jewish man. So anyway, anything else that . . . ?

Q. The school you went to, was it Hungarian, in Budapest?

A. Yes, it was a girls' school.

Q. Now, were there a lot of other Jews?

A. Oh yes, one of them is in Paris now. I grew up with her since I was nine years old, because they took me in. She's still there, she's married, and has a child, and I think she's a grandmother now. We just kept in touch with this today because I was together with her all the way through the last war, and the last day of the war.

Q. Did you encounter any anti-Semitism at that time?

A. Oh, always. Ever since I was a little girl. I remember that small town as a child, the Gentiles were saying that the Jews should be in Budapest hanging on a pole or something. As a child I heard this all the time. Always. The Hungarians are very anti-Semitic.

Q. Did you personally experience any?

A. Not personally. Nobody knew really, I mean, nobody knew on the street I was Jewish. Inside at home I was very safe, or even at the school. In that school was a very wonderful place to go, because this was like my second home.

Q. The teachers treated everybody equally?

A. Oh yes. We had a different class for Jewish . . . like we wanted to do it here ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) to have a Jewish class or a Christian teaching. I don't believe those things. There it was ok. We were always like children. We were young, and I didn't feel any discrimination, because they were very intelligent people heading that school.

Q. What languages did you speak at that time?

A. Hungarian. My parents spoke German. I remember they didn't want us to understand what they want to say, they spoke German. I said, I have to learn German. In school, the second language was German, but I didn't keep it up, so . . . I am not very interested in German, which is too bad maybe.

Q. So you went to school how many years in Budapest?

A. I finished high school. And then my mother said to all of us --on a weekend in the summertime when we all got together--that we all wanted to be professional people, and my mother wanted. I started to learn, actually I took two years of kindergarten teaching. But then the war was on the air, and my mother said to us that you all should learn something to do with your hands, because the diploma they can take away from you. And you know that saved my life? (Tape twisted here - play carefully.)

I learned how to sew. And I was sewing for the soldiers,

for food. Even the Russian soldiers. I am making their caps, I was sitting on the street, because my house was bombed in front of it, and my machine was right there. My fingers froze to the machine, it was so cold, because I had to sew, I had to do it for food. That was when the Russians were there.

Q. But tell me, when Hitler took power, what news did you get in Budapest?

A. That was 1944, March 9th. That's the time I started to remember that . . . what . . .

Q. Yes, I am sorry, you misunderstood my question. I am going back to 1933. That's when Hitler took power in Germany. I want to know if any of this affected you at that time in Hungary.

A. Not much. No.

Q. So the first time you were really conscious of what was going on, when was that?

A. The first time was the year--if I remember '44 when the Germans came in. My mother was still in that town, but she was already in a ghetto. And I couldn't visit. I got (house?) papers. My brother's friend who was a soldier, for all that I had I sold it for him to take me with him as his wife. I wanted to go with my mother, I just wanted to be there. And that guy reported me to the Gestapo to the German, I mean the Hungarian Nazis.

Q. The one who was going to take you to your mother.

A. Ya. the Hungarian soldier.

Q. And in what year was that?

A. 1943, I think. I remember it was winter and I was waiting for him to take me, and standing close from the railroad station,

standing there like this, and I was waiting he's coming over. And two Nazis, Hungarian, because the Germans were not doing yet in Budapest. So these two Hungarians came over and took me on my both sides.

I say, "What I am doing?"

He says, "We know who you are. You going to pay for this what you did, you wanted to pay him off and all this, a Jew and you are a Jew."

"Yes, I am a Jew, I cannot . . ."

So they took me into a terrible place.

Q. They took you where?

A. Into a place where it was the most famous. It was just about 2 blocks from the Opera House in Budapest, the main street. And that was the ( ) where they took prisoners like me, from the street where they picked up people they didn't like or they knew that was a Jew. So it started August '43. It's very likely . . .

Q. In '43, did you ever hear anything about concentration camps?

A. Oh yes.

Q. When did that first come up? Do you remember when you heard about this?

A. But then they let me go. And my mother wrote to me. And I got the cards. My mother was already in the ghetto in the same town, in the temple. That was their ghetto. And she still believed God will help. She was very religious. And that kept her strong until the last minute. SO all those little cards she wrote to me where about ME because she said in Budapest it is a big city. What you are going to do there, too bad you couldn't

come, but now maybe better you don't because now we are here. She told me where she is.

And the post master who knew us, he sended the letter, otherwise I would never get it. Even I sent a package to her, my mother, and the package came back. And I knew this was . . . . So that was the most terrible thing, to get back that package.

Q. What happened at that time with your brothers and sisters? How many brothers do you have?

A. I have four brothers. I was the only girl. One brother of mine who is still, thank God, still alive, the youngest brother was taken the <sup>e</sup>v~~r~~y first time.

Q. What year, do you remember?

A. '43. He just got married. He was married for a month to a lovely young girl, and they came and get him. I remember I was in the same house, in Budapest.

Q. They were all in Budapest, your brothers.

A. Yes, they were all in Budapest. In that boys' school.

Q. Who stayed with your mother?

A. You mean when she was alone?

Q. Yes.

A. Her brother, she stayed with them.

Q. She stayed with them.

A. She gave up everything, when the children were not there anymore, and she was just like one of them. My mother's brother had five boys also, so to have more ( ) was nothing to them. His wife, they were wonderful people. the most wonderful people.

Q. So you really are the only girl in the whole family?

A. I was the only girl, and that's why my mother was so worried. She said thank god that you are not here because she was telling about the neighbors who we used to know and they were all together in the same room.

Q. It was all in the synagogue.

A. Ya.

Q. In one room, they were all packed in there.

A. It was not too many Jews in there, I don't remember how many. I was the only one who really escaped. Because 36 from my family were killed. Three of them were rabbis.

Q. Where did the rest of your family live?

A. They all lived in that small town. My mother had a big family. Her sister, who had four children, one is still living in the same ( ) where I was born, in the house where I was living. And I introduced him to his wife, and they're still together, fifty years.

But my mother stayed with her brother and his family, because she was alone, and she was a person who was not very independent.

Q. What was her name?

A. Rose Roth. That was a big family, very well known. They had a very big wholesale meat business. And behind their house was the river, not ( ) but a smaller ( ) River. And they came with boats and they took the meat to Budapest. I mean, that was his business. So he was a very well-to-do man, but all that he wanted to do was to help, anybody. When somebody arrived to the town, a Jewish person, they told him go that house you can get food over there. That kind of a people. And they are all gone.

Q. Do you know how they perished?

A. My mother -- one person came back who's in Israel now. I'm in touch with them. She was in the same wagon when they arrived to Auschwitz. And ( ) guess they were the last Jews the Germans took, but they rushed them to Auschwitz. They had no time. Right away they arrived, as this girl told me. I said don't tell me about my mother because I really don't . . . . I don't know how she was in that wagon. I know how she died, but .

Other people were there two years, the Polish or the Czechoslovakian. But the Hungarians were the last Jews they were taking. Because Hungary was still free. We didn't have the Germans around until 1944. And that date I never forget. I said the girl, from <sup>Czechoslovakia</sup> Czecklosvakia, by accident, she's in Australia now. She was . . . can I tell you?

Q. Certainly.

A. When the Germans came to Hungary, it was 1944, March 19. They walked in, and the Hungarians were just happy. Two years before they came to Hungary, 1942, I was free, you know, ha! nothing can happen in Hungary. We just didn't believe. WE heard something, you know people were saying, it came over the French Jewish Voice and other things, that it's going to be terrible. We didn't believe these. It cannot happen in Hungary.

So one day, I was lucky enough to get out from my apartment. By then I was on my own, I was out from School, naturally, and learning how to sew. And I had an apartment with a friend of mine, she lives in Canada now. So I went out out to shop. And in front of the house was a girl walking by. And she was dressed

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 in a peasant outfit, and her clothes were almost ( ) it was cold. It was about November, 1942. And her shoes were in holes. And I looked at her as she was walking by very slowly, her tears were coming down, and I said to myself, this girl is Jewish. She looks, and I stopped her, and I asked her, can I help you?

She was so scared, and she put her fingers . . . I said don't worry. She couldn't speak Hungarian. So with my little German I can ask her. I said don't worry, I am not going to do anything. You need something? You look like you hungry? You need clothes? Please come up to my house, and then you go.

She stayed with me for two years. And we are then, oh we were free. Her parents were already in the concentration camp. And her parents helped the peasants on that boarder, paid them, <sup>took</sup> to ~~take~~ their daughter over to Hungary because Hungary was free. So that's how she arrived there without any, not one soul, and that's how I <sup>found</sup> find her. Wasn't that lucky. I felt so lucky. And she was the most wonderful girl. My husband met her, she came over to.

So she stayed with me, and then in 1944, March 19, we have a ticket to the movies, she and I. And we looked outside, noise, happiness, music and everything. The Germans were marching in, and this girl, her face was white as . . . I said don't worry, nothing can happen to you. But then, I had a feeling that we had to do something. Because we are not going to let them do what she was telling me. I knew what was going on then. She left her mother and her father and her little sister, 3 years old. Her mother want her to go.

So anyway, I had my brother who had a fiance, a Gentile girl. And she said, you'd better get my papers, and my sister's papers for your girlfriend. Because I heard from somebody that's how they doing it, that's how you can save yourself, with my papers.

When the Germans came, they closed off streets, and they get you with your papers. You have to carry your grandmother papers with you to prove that you are not a Jew. So luckily this girl had all the papers, and she put an ad in the paper that she lost them, in the newspser.

So this girl, the Czechoslovakian girl, I named her Mori. I was "Julie" and she was Mori. But her real name was Blanca. So she was my sister, she was younger than I am, and it was just perfect, everything on the paper. So then we still stay together a little bit more, and she says to me, I think we are getting into a very dangerous time. Maybe I better leave you.

Q. I'd just like to know her age.

A. She was 19 then. Much younger than I was. She was a lovely girl. Then I said OK, Mori. I just had to tell her name all the time because she gave me her real name and her address, and I put it in my purse in a place where if they kill me I will know her name because I can look at it. I just put it down, down where nobody can find it; I have a little hole in my purse, you know.

So she left me. I said, you know Mori, where I am. I won't know where you are, she won't tell me, she says I don't want to cause you trouble. I look Jewish, you don't. And she was right. When you look at her, as a beautiful girl, she's a Jewish girl is beautiful, she has gorgeous hair and everything.

So I didn't hear from her. And then came the time when they took us all, even if I had a paper. The house where I lived got to be a Jewish house, so even with my papers, I couldn't get out. So I was stuck in that house. And then one day this friend of mine who I lived with, actually not Mori, her name is Bella, she lives in Canada, Montreal. I just talked to her yesterday, I told her about you. She said tell everything. You cannot leave me out because we did everything together. It's true what she went through.

So anyway, you have to get out from here, Bella told me. She was a very strong woman. Very strong. I wasn't, you know.

Q. Is she your age?

A. She was older than I am, she's eighty years old now, not too much older than me. And she was engaged to a wonderful man, who was taken by the Nazis, naturally. (And I may mix it up, but this is the way it comes to my mind. I have to talk about her because she saved my life, really. As much as I saved Mori's life, she saved mine)

But he was taken by the Germans, her fiance, who was a very well-to-do man. And he left lots of money to her in case if she needs or he needs or something. So one day came a note from a soldier to her that the train that is supposed to take them to Auschwitz, something happened to that train and they stopped at the border. And he paid the soldier, to say that her fiance is in that place, so could she save him out from that place.

So my friend had a man who was very much in love with her. He was a Gentile and she had nothing to do with him, but he loved her. We called him Bunny, Mr. Bunny, that's the name we give

him. He had a truck, you know. And she called him and said this time I really need you, could you help me.

Sure, anything, anything you want. So they went, she was sitting with him in the truck, and they find the man, her fiance, and she stayed in the truck, and the man got out, and the soldiers they were there.

And he said that is the man I want.

And they said, what do you mean? They go to Auschwitz. This is a Jew.

I know. But you know, that man owe me money, and just give him to me just for a minute. I'll take everything off of him, and I'll bring him back, I promise.

So they let him go. So they took him to my friend, and they went to a small part of \_\_\_\_\_. My girlfriend's sister married to a Gentile and nobody knew that they were Jews. So they went over there, these men took them on the truck. I don't know how far the town was. And they built a wall, and any time they came to look for escapees or Jews they hid behind this wall, which you can't see. There was a door you cannot see. That's how they survived--together.

Q. You mean in the apartment, they built a wall?

A. Oh no, no, that was her sister, who lived in a small town. These men took them over there to her sister. And the husband was a Gentile. The little town didn't know that she's a Jew. So they had their own \_\_\_\_\_. So with their money, they built, like this would be a big room, OK? And they divided it so they would be able to hide if they come. Because the wall was made that no \_\_\_\_\_. So that's how they survived.

So when they came back, was the war over. But in the meantime, I was living on the apartment in Budapest with Bella. Not married yet, nothing happened with her.

All of a sudden a soldier came into this Jewish house and said he was looking for Aranka, which was me. And my girlfriend said go, and I said no I won't go, they have to take me. Bella told me just get out from here. I want you to get out. They asked for you, you go. I had no idea where he is going to take me. Only thing my mother sent me a feather comforter, that's what I am carrying with me all the time; it was very cold. And I picked this up, and I went with these soldiers.

And he won't talk to me. I said where are you taking me? I want to know where we going? He didn't answer. And we wound up in a very well-known street in Budapest, it's almost a ghetto. There's a big business there; I knew the owner. They were selling material, and everything was empty except one room was full of sewing machines. So he put me in and left me. On the inside, I met my girlfriend who is in Paris now, she was there already, and a couple of Polish friends who were supposed to go to Auschwitz.

So one man--and tell me, how can I find him?--he took about a hundred young women and men to his place and he saved everybody.

Q. A Hungarian man?

A. Yes. He was a Jewish man, but he wore a uniform like a very high officer. A Hungarian uniform. And he put two hundred uniformed Hungarian men in front of this place, and nobody can come in. He paid them. He had lots of money. Who he was, I

knew; he would never say it.

So we were there and by the town they were taking almost everybody, except these hundred were saved. Nobody dared to come in because the soldiers were there. The Nazis led the Hungarians to the back fields to do the dirty work.

Q. Did you have to wear a star or an arm band?

A. Being a dressmaker, I had the most beautiful silk yellow \_\_\_\_\_ seven centimeter it has to be. I was just lucky. Who would ever believe I was Jewish?

Anyway, this Blanca showed up. And I said, I'm so glad you come because now I teach you how to sew. We were just pretending to sew because this man paid for everything. The food, everything there. But the sleeping area was the place they used to keep materials. I slept on a shelf. The food was good, and the company was wonderful. We just locked out. And he told us, It's going to come a time when I cannot save you. Then if anybody has false papers, I'm going to let you know when it's time to leave. Because comes a time when I cannot leave.

So almost everybody left. Moliko left already, Blanca left. And she had a nice friend, blond, blue eyes, handsome young man. I was so happy for her, nobody else had a boyfriend. And he came and gave that to her. So then she left. She says, I know where you are. If I ever need you or you need me, I'll be here. So I never saw her. So when, let's see, where was I now?

Q. You did not know where she went to.

A. No. And I had no idea until I heard from her over here. I had her name and address in Czechoslovakia. And then I got married

to Loren. I sent only that I'm married to Loren, and live in San Francisco. That's all. And seven years I didn't hear anything from her, and I thought she was dead. I didn't know anything. Seven years, my little girl then was about three years old, and she was in the Jewish camp. That night she was going to sleep there that night with the children's part. And I say that's my day, I'm going to go out, and I'm going to have a good time in San Francisco. And just before I left the house, the telephone rang. I said, shall I go back or not? So I went back, and the other side, the phone says, "Guess who is this?"

I said, "I have no idea."

And she says to me, "Blanca."

I says, "Blanca . . . ?"

She says, "Morika."

I said, "Oh my God." You know, the whole thing came back to me.

Q. What year was that?

A. Linda was 3 years years old, she's 36 now; 33 years ago!

So I said, "Where are you?"

She said, "In the San Francisco Airport."

I said, "Please stay there. Don't go. I'll be there." I thought maybe she needs me. So I called my husband; he was working at that time in Berkeley, and he knew the story. Because you don't say things like that, people won't believe it. So I said, "Morika is here, I'm going to get her."

"Oh yes," he says, "You run and bring her home."

So I did. I went there, and she was with her husband, she was married, and I said, "Don't say anything until we get home,

because I just can't believe it is you."

She didn't look any different, and she says I didn't look any different either. Because we were ten years older, you know the things we went through, so the ten years didn't mean too much to us. Oh, the happiness to see each other!

So when we arrived her<sup>e</sup>, my husband he came home early and had coffee and pastries for us.

So she was telling stories. All her parents were killed, I mean her mother and father and their little girl, two year-old. And she went back. She survived, but she went through a lot. She went through a lot.

And I said, "What happened to that nice young man?"

She said, "That was my brother."

Even from me she kept it. She said, "He was with me in Australia. I thank you for teaching me how to sew because that's what I made my living when we got to Australia."

The way it really happened, she went back to see if anything happened, you know, if her par~~ents~~ents or anybody she could find. She couldn't find anybody. So she met a very nice man there, and he was a furrier, and he couldn't stay there, and she couldn't stay there. So they .....

Q. He was Jewish?

A. Oh yes. Oh yes. He went through the same as she did. So he was with her in my house. So they got married, and they couldn't stay there. And she was pregnant, she had a seven months old baby when they decided . . . she really wanted to come to this country, but it didn't matter. But Australia, they were easy.

So they wind up in Melbourne. And she said, You know the first day I made a blouse, and <sup>thanks</sup> ~~that~~ to you to teach me how to sew. I sewed it. And the next day, I made two. And now they have a factory, 150 people working for them, just to know how to sew, you see. And she start to send me clothes, and I said Don't, silly, don't. And then she was send me little bears, you know, koala bears.

So anyway, she's very happy, she has two children. They go to a Jewish school. She's very religious, oh yes, in Montreal they went. . . . . So, that's it.

Q. Wonderful story, a story with a happy ending.

A. Oh yes. But I asked your brother, I said, "I liked that boy so much."

She said, "He liked you too."

"You didn't tell me that is your brother."

Q. Aranka, let's go back a little bit to 1944. If you can remember, I'd like to know a little more about 1944 when the Germans came in and what happened. And also if you remember at all having heard about Raoul Weilenberg (?)

A. Oh yes, my brother lived, I met him, actually I didn't meet him, but I was standing there waiting for the Swedish Embassy to get some papers. And all of a sudden, the Hungarian Nazis are coming. So it was a \_\_\_\_\_ there, a young woman with a baby was there standing, not Jewish, to escape, because they took all these women. They took them all, you know. We were all women, The Nazis, 60 of them, all of them in there. And I saw this little baby in the arm of the woman, and she was standing right next to the Embassy, she had an apartment house there. So to

escape, I went to her and talked to her little baby, and she said, "Come on in because there's going to be trouble, because the Jews. . . you know," she was saying.

I said, "I think so too." She let me in, until the whole thing was over. And I could never get to Wollenberg, but my brother knew some Wollenberg streets. They named a street after him. So I never saw him personally. But he saved lots of . . . when he heard what happened to these women there, he just went out of his mind.

Q. Now tell me, what did the Hungarian Nazis do with all of these women?

A. They shoot them in the water. I was once in the row too, but I escaped. They were picking me too. At the same time--I didn't finish that--my brother's friend, the soldier, that's what they wanted to do with me. And they took ~~my~~ in to this place, I told you, next to the Opera House, it was a place where they took the people who they didn't like for some reason.

And they took me there, and all night long they were asking me questions, that I'm a spy for America, because I was corresponding. I had a friend here, and they find a letter in my purse. This guy told them, the soldier, that I'm corresponding with America, and I'm a spy for America.

And I said, "I don't even speak English." But we can read between the lines, you know.

But they kept me there all night, and every time they ask questions, they kick me.

Q. When you were asked those questions, were you alone in the

room, or were there other people with you?

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A. No. You see what they did, they had all the rooms, this was arranged long before they came to Hungary. Every room was as small as this corner(?). There were thin walls so you could hear down the room from the other person who was tortured, but I never let out anything. But you know, it's a funny thing, they never hurt me. Never. They kicked me and I have no feeling. And they said, "You know what's going to happen if you don't admit that you are spying for America. We're going to take you to the river."

I said, "So what? Take me to the river." They were so power, I could feel that I could look at them and they're afraid to look at you.

Q. No eye contact, right?

?  
A. Ya. So then they lined us up. Every dirty(?) thing they did early in the morning, so they lined us up, about 50 women. And I remember they put us together with a little string, nothing heavy, to march to the river. The end of the street was the river. And I thought to myself, I just hate to go to the cold water. I will die on the street.

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"No, no, no, you just go ahead."

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A. I cut it! She helped me to. She bent down with me.

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And they said, "If you feel that way, go ahead."

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So they all went. And the house--now this is something--it was a curfew. So to get into my girlfriend's house--all the managers of the apartment houses were Nazis. And they would report anything special or suspicious. So now you can imagine, I was sitting on the corner of that place where they interviewed me

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am I going to say when I ring the bell--because you have to ring the bell to let you in to an apartment house--what I am going to say to the manager. For \_\_\_\_\_ I won't lie. But for my life I'm going to lie.

So she opens the door, they were worse than the men. So she says, "My God!" (She never thought I was Jewish). "But where are you suspicious, where are you coming from? I'm going to report you to the Gestapo."

And I said, "Why would you do that? I am rushing and running away from those dirty Communist Russians to my girlfriend because my house was bombed out in that little town, and I'm running, look at me."

"Oh ya, I'm going to ask your girlfriend." She lived on the second floor. And she came out, honest to God, this whole story is true. She looked down to me, and I looked up to her, without a word, she says, "Oh poor thing, you were bombed out. Come on up. I live next door . . . . ."

Q. Clever. She picked you up right away.

A. Until today. Now she is dead. Last year she died. I miss her as long as I live, because she was my very best friend.

"Why did you say that?"

She says. "I don't know."

She said exactly what I said to this woman. That I was bombed out, and from the Russians and I lived next door from her. For forty years, we are asking each other, why did you say that?

So that's how I was saved. And I went up to her place, and I stayed with them.

Q. What happened after that? In what year are we now, 1944?

A. 1944, until Christmas, when the Russians were already getting in. We could hear shots, and I thought They are here! I thought the Am<sup>e</sup>ricans. I was listening to the radio to the Hungarian translation from England. I had a very good radio, so I could listen to that.

Q. Could you speak English at all?

A. Not one word.

**END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE**

**BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO**

And he came and gave that to her. So then she left. She says, I know where you are. If I ever need you or you need me, I'll be here. So I never saw her. So when, let's see, where was I now?

Q. You did not know where she went to.

A. No. And I had no idea until I heard from her over here. I had her name and address in Czechoslovakia. And then I got married to Loren. I sent only that I'm married to Loren, and live in San Francisco. That's all. And seven years I didn't hear anything from her, and I thought she was dead. I didn't know anything. Seven years, my little girl then was about three years old, and she was in the Jewish camp. That night she was going to sleep there that night with the children's part. And I say that's my day, I'm going to go out, and I'm going to have a good time in San Francisco. And just before I left the house, the telephone rang. I said, shall I go back or not? So I went back, and the other side, the phone says, "Guess who is this?"

I said, "I have no idea."

And she says to me, "Blanca."

I says, "Blanca . . . ?"

She says, "Morika."

I said, "Oh my God." You know, the whole thing came back to me.

Q. What year was that?

A. Linda was 3 years years old, she's 36 now; 33 years ago!

So I said, "Where are you?"

She said, "In the San Francisco Airport."

I said, "Please stay there. Don't go. I'll be there." I

thought maybe she needs me. So I called my husband; he was working at that time in Berkeley, and he knew the story. Because you don't say things like that, people won't believe it. So I said, "Morika is here, I'm going to get her."

"Oh yes," he says, "You run and bring her home."

So I did. I went there, and she was with her husband, she was married, and I said, "Don't say anything until we get home, because I just can't believe it is you."

She didn't look any different, and she says I didn't look any different either. Because we were ten years older, you know the things we went through, so the ten years didn't mean too much to us. Oh, the happiness to see each other!

So when we arrived her, my husband he came home early and had coffee and pastries for us.

So she was telling stories. All her parents were killed, I mean her mother and father and their little girl, two year-old. And she went back. She survived, but she went through a lot. She went through a lot.

And I said, "What happened to that nice young man?"

She said, "That was my brother."

Even from me she kept it. She said, "He was with me in Australia. I thank you for teaching me how to sew because that's what I made my living when we got to Australia."

The way it really happened, she went back to see if anything happened, you know, if her parrents or anybody she could find. She couldn't find anybody. So she met a very nice man there, and he was a furrier, and he couldn't stay there, and she couldn't stay there. So they .....

Q. He was Jewish?

A. Oh yes. Oh yes. He went through the same as she did. So he was with her in my house. So they got married, and they couldn't stay there. And she was pregnant, she had a seven months old baby when they decided . . . she really wanted to come to this country, but it didn't matter. But Australia, they were easy.

So they wind up in Melbourne. And she said, You know the first day I made a blouse, and thats to you to teach me how to sew. I sewed it. And the next day, I made two. And now they have a factory, 150 people working for them, just to know how to sew, you see. And she start to send me clothes, and I said Don't, silly, don't. And then she was send me little bears, you know, koala bears.

So anyway, she's very happy, she has two children. They go to a Jewish school. She's very religious, oh yes, in Montreal they went. . . . . So, that's it.

Q. Wonderful story, a story with a happy ending.

A. Oh yes. But I asked your brother, I said, "I liked that boy so much."

She said, "He liked you too."

"You didn't tell me that is your brother."

Q. Aranka, let's go back a little bit to 1944. If you can remember, I'd like to know a little more about 1944 when the Germans came in and what happened. And also if you remember at all having heard about Raoul Weilenberg (?)

A. Oh yes, my brother lived, I met him, actually I didn't meet him, but I was standing there waiting for the Swedish Embassy to

?  
 get some papers. And all of a sudden, the Hungarian Nazis are coming. So it was a \_\_\_\_\_ there, a young woman with a baby was there standing, not Jewish, to escape, because they took all these women. They took them all, you know. We were all women, The Nazis, 60 of them, all of them in there. And I saw this little baby in the arm of the woman, and she was standing right next to the Embassy, she had an apartment house there. So to escape, I went to her and talked to her little baby, and she said, "Come on in because there's going to be trouble, because the Jews. . . you know," she was saying.

*Spelling*  
 I said, "I think so too." She let me in, until the whole thing was over. And I could never get to (Wollenberg) but my brother knew some (Wollenberg) streets. They named a street after him. So I never saw him personally. But he saved lots of . . . when he heard what happened to these women there, he just went out of his mind.

Q. Now tell me, what did the Hungarian Nazis do with all of these women?

A. They shoot them in the water. I was once in the row too, but I escaped. They were picking me too. At the same time--I didn't finish that--my brother's friend, the soldier, that's what they wanted to do with me. And they took me in to this place, I told you, next to the Opera House, it was a place where they took the people who they didn't like for some reason.

And they took me there, and all night long they were asking me questions, that I'm a spy for America, because I was corresponding. I had a friend here, and they find a letter in my purse. This guy told them, the soldier, that I'm corresponding

with America, and I'm a spy for America.

And I said, "I don't even speak English." But we can read between the lines, you know.

But they kept me there all night, and every time they ask questions, they kick me.

Q. When you were asked those questions, were you alone in the room, or were there other people with you?

A. No. You see what they did, they had all the rooms, this was arranged long before they came to Hungary. Every room was as small as this corner(?). There were thin walls so you could hear down the room from the other person who was tortured, but I never let out anything. But you know, it's a funny thing, they never hurt me. Never. They kicked me and I have no feeling. And they said, "You know what's going to happen if you don't admit that you are spying for America. We're going to take you to the river."

I said, "So what? Take me to the river." They were so power, I could feel that I could look at them and they're afraid to look at you.

Q. No eye contact, right?

A. Ya. So then they lined us up. Every dirty(?) thing they did early in the morning, so they lined us up, about 50 women. And I remember they put us together with a little string, nothing heavy, to march to the river. The end of the street was the river. And I thought to myself, I just hate to go to the cold water. I will die on the street.

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A. The Russians were coming in, and they just went through the town in a hurry. The house where I stayed, with Gentile people, with false papers, now this is a story. These people didn't know I was Jesish, and I stayed in their house, because the place where the soldiers took, me, with the sewing machines--do you remember that place?

Q. Yes.

A. But we were not sewing, it was just a name. So this guy was sewing. This was a Gentile guy who did the sewing. So they thought we are working and they didn't bother as long as somebody And he came to me and he says, "When are you going to meet me?"

Because this man says he cannot keep people here too long because the Nazis are coming in and we all have to go. "I'm a Gentile person and my wife is Jewish. So I took our two children and my wife down to a little town, and \_\_\_\_\_ they committed suicide. So I'm a single man, and I had a housekeeper who cooked for me and everything, and I will need you because I need somebody who can sew because I am sewing for soldiers. I have to deliver their clothes and I can't get anybody anymore because the minute the Germans arrived to Hungary, we were bombed. All over. We couldn't get anything. I was going out because I was starving."

So he took me in, and I lived in that street, which I can walk to his place. He recommend this place for me when I had to leave that place, when we couldn't stay there any more. Do you remember there came a time when he said, "Who has false paper?" and I had false paper. So I was the last one who left that place, and I still didn't want to go. That man told me "Please go, because I want to save you." He says, "Ok now I have a \_\_\_\_\_ and a card, and I know of a place . . . this Maria, you know the girl, she rented me a place as a Gentile person and she paid already two weeks before I went there."

So finally I had to go. And when I arrived to that place, the woman, the owner of the place, looked at me. The chauffeur took me, in that man's car, he took me because I was the last one to leave the place and no way to get out from there. It was all locked up, the whole street. So only way I could get out is this chauffeur who looked like a peasant, he was a Gentile guy. As

his wife. He took me. Because they stopped us, every minute, and he says, "That's my wife. She's sick. I have to take her to a friend house." So he took me there. This man paid him, I don't know what arrangement was between them.

And when I got there, this woman opened the door, but the chauffeur came up, and she says, "Oh, I have to apologize, because I was so sure that only a Jew could do this--to pay two weeks ahead and not to come. I almost reported you to the Gestapo."

And this guy, he was a Gentile, the chauffeur, says, "You telling to my wife that she is a Jew? You know, I could hit you for that."

She apologized. She was almost crying.

So he says, "My love," he says to me, "I leaving now, and I'll be back." So I stayed. I never saw him again, and I never saw that man, and I wish to God to know who he was. I don't even know his name or anything. The one who saved that many people, hundreds of us.

Q. I meant to ask you about him. You didn't even know his name?

A. No. He won't tell nothing about him. Nothing. I knew he was a Jew. And I knew he came from a small town in Hungary.

That's all I know about him. Nothing. You see this Bella who is in Montreal, she wasn't with me. The only girl was with me was who's in Paris, and she's the same as I am; she didn't know who the man was. He saved us, just like that Molenburg[?], and I don't know if he was a Jew. He was a Jew.

Q. You never know what happened to him.

A. No. I know the street where he lives, \_\_\_\_\_.

I know the building where we stayed and he was in it. \_\_\_\_\_  
by a woman who I knew. I met her by accident in \_\_\_\_\_.  
I told her that \_\_\_\_\_.

Q. That's very sad that you don't know his name.

A. I would give anything if I could find out who that man was. Even the tailor, he knew him, but he is dead. I went back to Hungary to look up this tailor who hired me. And the only thing I could get from him was food. Because I had no food, no tickets. If you are a Gentile, you get food tickets, but me, I didn't have any. So he knew I was a Jew and he says don't tell them, and he introduced me to his friend who I stayed, lived until the war was over. Like false papers. I was \_\_\_\_\_. That was my name, you know.

They had a daughter and a nine-year old son. And I made him little pants--you see how much you can do with your hands?--I made him little pants and from that his mother loved me. So I stayed with them, not knowing that I was a Jew. Because I think they would report me, they were very bad people, except the little boy, nine years old. His sister went out with the soldiers. She was a beautiful 16-year old girl, she was with everybody. She came home, she said, They kill the Jews like flies, they dying in the ghetto. And this nine-year old boy said, How can you talk like that? They are people.

And you know that little boy was killed, in front of a movie, they wer out playing, and he picked up a bomb.

There was so much tragedy. I was glad to leave the place. On my street I saw so much.

Q. How long did you stay there?

A. I have to think when did I go there. Soon as the Germans came, when they closed up the streets, because I had to have a place. He needed me, you wouldn't believe it, but I believed it. I smelled(?) uniform. He was sitting on the top of a \_\_\_\_\_ in his office there. He told me, This is Eichmann. He is the head of the Nazis in Hungary. He says, You, just don't be afraid. You just go in there.

I says, Send ME! You know who I am. I'm a Jew. He says, Just don't be afraid because they are not afraid of you. Just look at him in the eye and say, Heil Hitler, and inside you say, Drop dead! \_\_\_\_\_

The only time I saw him \_\_\_\_\_ was when he was put to death. That's the only time I saw him again. Only once I saw him, and I took his uniform. He had a dog by his feet, his shiny boots, I never forget that. He was sitting on the top of the table, a big German shepherd and a stick, and he was kind of hitting his boots, his shiny boots.

Q. Did he talk to you at all?

A. No. I didn't speak German. I just said, Heil, and put the uniform down. He was glad that he got it because nobody worked anymore. We were \_\_\_\_\_. And this guy was not afraid, you know. He had one more person hired who was a doctor, and he didn't even know. We were sitting by the window, and the window was shaking while we were bombed all over. And I said to him, I just don't think I could come anymore.

So the \_\_\_\_\_, who he recommend me to, they had no place for me. She told me, You go up on the first floor.

? This woman has an extra room, and you pay her and she's going to keep you. So I went up there, and find a couple who hated the Jews. They were so Nazis, the woman especially. The man maybe wasn't so bad. But I was occupying a room which had no heat. It was very cold. And the man--I think he was crazy--came one night to my room. He was so afraid of his wife because she was really a very mean person. They were always fighting with each other, almost hitting each other. And he came and stood in front of my bedside and said, \_\_\_\_\_ look at you. And he had no teeth(?).

I said to him, If you don't leave this room, I'm going to scream and your wife's going to come in. So he left me alone.

? And then I went on the streetcar to take this uniform, I never forget. He can after me, and he stood down there. I was going up on the bus. "\_\_\_\_\_ I'm in love with you," in Hungarian. That was my romance.

Q. It's a good story.

A. But I had experiences with the Russians, too, you know.

Q. I'd like to hear about it.

? A. The Russians came in, and they were really just going through the town. \_\_\_\_\_ was still German; they were Nazis. And they knew it. My side was already Russian. And they were like ants, millions of them. You don't see the street from the Russians. And everything was USA, the tanks, everything what they brought in. And they were fighters, they were not afraid of the Germans.

And the Germans, many of them took their uniforms off,

running on the street on their. It was cold, but they were scared to death, because they didn't then to find them in uniform. So you could see many of them.

Q. What happened to you now when the Russians came in?

A. Oh. When the Russians came in I was still with that terrible couple upstairs, where I made the pants for the little boy. I said to the mamager, I'm so cold up there, and they're fighting. And she said why don't you come here? We can sleep together, three of us in one bed.

So, Ok I went down, and it was warm, a kitchen, she had a little food. And the manager knew that the second floor was the Germans, they run away from the Russians, and they left food there, so \_\_\_\_\_ . So I had something to eat.

And then, I had a boyfriend who I really loved. I was going to marry him. And he was alive until the last day almost. Nine boys were coming home from Auschwitz or somewhere. And they were coming through the Viennese woods, at night, waiting until morning comes just to get back to Hungary. Walking. And they were telling me, Geroge is coming. (That really was my first love, I was very young.)

So we were waiting for him. And he was with his best-- my girlfriend who saved me at the second floor, you know--her husband, and this George, they were together always. And when I went to see each other and making dresses, they said the boys are coming back.

So one day, I missed to go there, and she didn't see me for a couple of days. And I went over there--what did you hear

anything? And I see her husband, who was supposed to be with George, coming down with a pipe in his mouth, and no George. I had a terrible feeling. If he is alive he would be here. We were going to get married, you know. So then he saw me. I could see that he wished he was dead. He wished he was just going down and disappeared because he couldn't tell me what happened.

He was a very strong boy, and he kept him alive with him. And the last minute in the Viennese woods, one shot got his brain. They all survived except him. He couldn't tell me.

I said, Where is George? He said come on up to our house, and they were all sitting there. My girlfriend says, I never forget you when my husband told you what happened. You were sitting down like this, and you just put your hands down. I would scream and holler, and you didn't say a word. I never forget this.

That was my . . . the worst thing. So . . . See how much tragedy a person can live through? Some people don't appreciate life.

And the Russians came in, OK. Then George's uncle heard from somebody that I am staying. He was looking for George too. Because his whole family was killed. He couldn't live through anyway, he was so close to his mother. Maybe God took him because I don't think he would . . . .

So anyway, somebody told him that I am staying with this family. They didn't know I was a Jew. He came in, I was still in bed with the girl, in the same bed. And he said, Tell them Aranka is here. And my name was Julia Printz. They said, No.

But he said, Yes, she's in the false papers. These people, honestly, I think she would have just dropped dead or something, to think . . . Because they could have killed if they found me in their place.

So I had to leave right away. Two Russian soldiers came in. They were Jewish. They were Jewish soldiers. One spoke German, and I told him that I am Jewish. And he said, They told us not to say we are Jews in Hungary because they are very anti-Semitic. So our government told us not to say we are Jewish.

The mother could speak a little Russian, The Jews, the Jews. And he said, How could you stay with them? I said, Where would I stay? I had no place, but now I have a place, I would go if I could. But the streets were bombed, on the streets were people dying. So he says, We take you if you want to go. And I remembered that car they had stolen, they took me to that. They didn't want to believe that I was Jewish, so I had to tell them the \_\_\_\_\_ . Because if I don't know, then they don't take me.

Q. Where did they take you?

A. My girlfriend had a lady friend. My girlfriend who's in Paris, her mother-in-law had a maid. She was the most wonderful person. She took over their belongings and cared for everything, so she gave everything back to them, and that's the place I went. I stayed with her. She served me, I never put my hand in the \_\_\_\_\_. I have beautiful things she gave me, that crystal vase over there.

Q. Lovely.

A. She made me by hand a tablecloth for Linda, for 5

o'clock tea.

Q. How long did you stay there?

A. Until I got the note from my fiance. The friend who died. How can I go back that far? 1939. This family in Budapest, her brother was a personal doctor for Roosevelt. And they have two sons. And one of the boys was in love with me and engaged to marry.

Q. What were their names?

A. Turani. So they sent for them through their connection. They left Hungary in 1939. He didn't want to go without me.

Q. They left Hungary for where? To?

A. To America. But the time that they were leaving, already in Italy, they could only take American citizens on the ship. And they were almost sent back. But because her brother was a personal doctor of Roosevelt, they could go on the boat. Roosevelt sent a message to take these \_\_\_\_\_ on the boat. So they got to America. And I was engaged to him. For eight years waiting for each other. But I dreamed him. You can feel something. I was very young and he was very handsome, good family. His mother I loved, we were just such good friends, you know. When they left he said he is not leaving without me. But they said no, even if you marry me they cannot take me because that was a very strict thing. You had to be married already to get on the quota. So I stayed.

That's when I met the other one I really loved. But he kept me posted, he write to me. And then there came time when we couldn't write to each other, no mail or nothing. And I thought

he's forget me and everything, and then I was going to marry another one.

So then when the war was over, and I stayed with this woman, my girlfriend's maid lady, Maria. He looked for me thorough the Red Cross, because I moved from house to house. So they find me. And he send a telegram, 50 words, paid to answer, that he hoped to God that I survived, and if I am, please answer me, I'm waiting for your answer.

So I answered. I was there alone, nobody. I answered that I'm alove, and if he still wants me, I'm ready to go. And he sent pictures of his home, you know the Twin Peaks . . .

Q. So he was in San Francisco?

A. In San Francisco. He was a soldier, he was a flier. He was let out because he was injured by dropping too early, but it was not too bad. But something was bad anyway--his brain. That wasn't quite normal, but I didn't know.

So anyway, I came, and he waited for me at the airport. I dressed like .....I have a picture, do you want to see it? The way I dressed?

Q. How old were you at the time?

A. That was 42 years ago! He was waiting for me, and he had a camera to take pictures of me. It was a beautiful day. And I dressed from Vienna because I had to stay in Vienna for 6 days because we had no airport to able to get out. I was afraid the Russians take away my passport, so I had to get out. And I stayed in Vienna for 6 days until my plane was leaving.

So when I arrived to San Francisco, it was a beautiful day, and I came in there warm because it was cold in Vienna, it was

the end of December.

Q. What years was that?

A. '45. Excuse me, '46. My husband's mother came the same time.

So he ordered me to go back two steps. There were people behind, I can't. He says, Go back two steps, to take a picture. And I had to go back, and people wanted to come down. And by the time I went down to him, I had a feeling that maybe I should go back. That's the way I felt. And my feeling was right.

We got married. His mother loved me, and I loved her. She was my best friend. Without her I would go back to Hungary, because you can't imagine. Ten days I stayed with him, and that ten days was worse than the whole war. Because he was a homosexual, and I didn't know it. I thought how nice--he never want to go to bed with me.

Naturally when we went to Palm Springs on honeymoon, he accused me of all kinds of lies about me, making love to the pilot on the airplane. So he was not quite normal. And when we came back from Palm Springs after ten days, I didn't know how to answer the phone or anything, the store or the kitchen. And he left in the morning and didn't come back again until night. I was all by myself in that big house. Nobody to talk to. I didn't know where I was, but my exact number of the house, a beautiful home. He was a doctor(?)

Q. Where was the home?

A. In Twin Peaks. Number 80. Everything was there for a woman. His mother put clothes, robes, suitcase, everything.

Q. Like a fairy tale.

A. I stayed in the house, and my mother, she didn't want to disturb us. After 3 days, staying in bed, I stayed in bed, I didn't even have a cup of tea. He didn't care. So his mother finally called. And I picked up the phone, and I couldn't talk. I just cried. And she said, Ok, you dress up, and I'll go and get you. Put everything on because it is very cold outside.

So he sent to Hungary \$2000 before I came. \$2000 was like Rockefeller to me. I was the richest person, Jeweleries, furs, everything. I had to spend it, you know. And when his mother came to get me, I just didn't want anything. Anything from him, I hated it. His mother said, please take the fur coat because it's so cold, you don't have a coat. I didn't want anything from him. The jewelries, I put everything on the table. I have the coat; I never had it on. It's wrapped in my closet, I still don't like it.

So we started a divorce. And the mother and father was my witness. And they told me, if ten days it counts no marriage, maybe they say it doesn't count and I have to go back to Hungary. And they going to take responsibility for me, because they never had a daughter. And they kept me. Wonderful two people, I don't know how they had a child like this.

She says, This boy of mine never gave me 25 day happiness. He was always a different person. But she was hoping, because he really loved me, he did everything to get me here, the money and everything. So anyway, I stayed with them. But I found out, you know, that's not the happy way, after all this the mother of the boy, he cannot come to see. So I ought to find a job.

The minute I left him, the divorce lawyer was my English teacher. He says to him, Go back to this girl on your knees. He says how much money do you want? I said, Money? He's not my husband, I don't want any money. He said, That should go into my book because nobody ever said that. He said, At least you should get \$100 a month, that was 42 years ago.

The first \$100, I sent it back. Because I had a job. I looked in the telephone book, and I find a Hungarian name, and I called her up on Geary Street in San Francisco. I said, "Do you need a dressmaker?" She says, Yes. I said, I don't speak English. She said, That's fine with me, I speak Hungarian. I've been here 30 years, but I still .....

So I went up on a Saturday when nobody was there, and she tried me out. She had a big machine, and I have a little machine in Hungary. She said, Do you know how to? And I was afraid to say no because I thought maybe she won't take me. I said, I know how to. She gave me a job. It took me two years to ask her, why did she do that to me, with pins to put in the arm. I just basted everything in Hungary. She said, I give you this job purposely. I knew if you could do that, you could do anything. And it was true.

So. I worked for her for two years. And I met Loren in the Jewish place in San Francisco, dancing. I went with another boy and Loren went with another girl he didn't care for. He went to get me a Coca-Cola and Loren came over: Can I have a dance with you? I said, I'm so sorry, I do not speak English. He says, I speak Hungarian. We didn't dance, we just slept(?). Two months

later we were married.

Q. Two months?

A. Two months. My daughter was a year. But my divorce was over. But his mother--my first husband's mother--got me the wedding dress, not so white, but she was so wonderful. She died almost in my arms. I went every day to the hospital. She was eighty years old then. But I loved her. She was really best friend of mine. And the father, wonderful two people.

Q. You've known a lot of really good people, haven't you.

A. Oh, I've no use for people who are no good. I can feel, you know?

Q. So you settled with your husband?

A. Then I sleep with his parents. Then I talk to her, I say, This is not right. I'm going to look for a place. I don't want to be alone, and I know of a good working girls' hotel in San Francisco which was kept by the Salvation Army. It was a beautiful hotel, with lovely music, and you have your own room. I made \$28.00, and I paid \$23 for breakfast, dinner, and a room. And no man can come up. And that was wonderful. Just to the lobby. So I stayed there until I met Loren. Then we got married, and then we were very, very poor. Because he came out from the army, here.

Q. How long had he been over here?

A. Two years.

Q. And your husband comes from where?

A. He is from Rumania, border of Rumania. But his mother sent him to school, so he finished chemistry, chemical engineering in Strassbourg.

Q. Does he speak French?

A. Oh Yes. He speaks five languages. He was lucky you know, because his uncle--maybe you heard on him: Michael Cortese, who made Casablanca?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. That's his uncle, his mother's brother. And he sent for him to leave France because the Nazis<sup>S</sup> were coming. So only way he could come as a student, and he already had his master degree in chemistry. So he had to go to school here.

And the war broke out. Then he volunteered, and he was in the South Pacific for two years as a soldier. Volunteered, otherwise he would have to go back. Because only way he could stay longer is to go to school. He didn't want to go back.

Q. And you said you have been back to Hungary?

A. Yes. I have two brothers left who I see both of them. Because I didn't let them go the day when they took them the first time. One stayed with me overnight, and the next group when they all came back. And my oldest brother, who is still alive, he also escaped. They were taking them. And who can they go to? Sister. And the Nazis were coming in to look, and I had false papers.

*spelling?* And at that time we had the riechtoff(?), so I put them down there while they were looking for escapees. They said they find more than 2 eggs in a household, you are guilty. So everybody was Jewish in that house, and they were breaking the eggs down there, and my brother . . . I didn't know if I should cry or laugh, he was covered with egg yolk, his face.

Q. I don't understand, Why did they throw the eggs down there?

A. The Nazis thought the Jews had more than 2 eggs in one family, so they threw them down there not to find more than two eggs in the household. But my girlfriend Bella, she was smart because she broke them all up and everybody was eating eggs. So we had fun, too.

Then they said everyone who escaped, because many escaped, If they voluntarily come back, they will not be punished. So my brother wound up in Austria, Vienna, which was not too bad. And if he would be here, here would be one of the richest businessmen. So he was helping someone.

One day I was walking in Budapest, after the war, and behind me, two young men was talking to each other. One says, I am looking for a man, his name is \_\_\_\_\_. He saved my live over there. He always had enough food to share with people. Now I'm here with all the money my parents left, and I want to help him, and I don't know where he is.

I said, You're talking about my brother. He opened a business for him, a big store on the main street.

Q. What were your feelings when you went back to Hungary for the first time.

A. I didn't recognize it was so changed. All the memories were so bad.

Q. How many times have you been back?

A. Last time was three years ago, maybe five times. All my people were there. I had nobody.

Q. Did your husband go with you?

A. He is not that interested. He hates the Hungarian Nazia. He

had a very bad time when he was in college in Rumania. He never met my people. He says I didn't marry your people.

Q. And you told me before you have one daughter?

A. Yes, I have one daughter. I was 37 when I had her; I was 30 when I got married.

Q. Have you told your daughter all about your past?

A. She was not interested. I think maybe she will be now, she has a husband. He loves her very much.

Q. When were talking before, with your very good coffee and strudel, you told me what happened to your daughter in school.

A. She was crying, and she was nine years old. She said, Mommy, is it true, maybe my daddy killed Jesus because I didn't kill Jesus. I said, Linda, that is just a story, it has nothing to do with your daddy and nothing to do with you or me. It's just a story. She was surrounded by Gentiles. How can you talk to a girl . . . Steve, her husband, is interested. They've never been persecuted, they lived here all their lives.

Q. Did your daughter never ask you about your life in Hungary?

A. Never. She was not interested about Hungary. I think that's coming from her father, because he is not interested.

Q. So she never asked you a question?

A. No. Never. Never. She never felt Jewish. And I don't want to force any feeling of mine onto her. She was free to choose.

Q. Would you play this tape for her or give it to her?

A. I would. I told her about you. I said, Your son has to know. If I am gone, what can he learn from you, so I am the one

that has to tell what happened.

Q. So how did she react?

A. She said you are right. She had no connection to Jewishness at all. When she was little, I sent her to Jewish Sunday School, I sang her the songs. She was never interested.

Q. But apart from the Jewishness, it supprises me that she is not interested in your past, her family, her grandmother.

A. Nothing. Nothing. My people writing to her, they sending Hungarian dolls, she writes little notes, Thank you very much.

Q. It happens very often. I interviewed a lot of people who told me the same story.

A. She is a wonderful girl. She would do anything for me.

Q. Well, maybe it is possible for her to listen to the tape and get a little interest in your past. I am very interested in your past.

A. I don't know. Not yet. I think Steve would be more interested. Steve is getting her into a direction she should have been, which I couldn't do it.

I remember I was very much forced to pray. As I said, the (?) brother of my mother took her in, and her son was a very well known Rabbi--Rod Emmuel(?)-- he was a wonderful man. And how can I tell to my daughter that this wonderful young man who had 2 children, who kept a Friday evening ceremony in the ghetto, they made a \_\_\_\_\_ out of his head, the Nazis. That's how he died. And the 2 children, they killed them. 36 from my family. They are all gone. So I cannot tell. It's such an ugly, such a terrible to listen a young girl, to grow up with these feelings. I don't want them grow up feeling hate. And

they will feel the same hate if I tell all these. So she's a happy person.

Q. Well, I'm quite sure that you know best what to do.

A. I don't know if it comes a time, I don't think in my life, I don't think so. Steve's children from his first wife were raised Jewish.

End of Tape 1, Side 2

Begin Tape 2, Side 1

Q. Aranka, I'd like you to tell me a little bit about your friend Bella.

A. She lives in Montreal. She encouraged me to leave that place; without her I would stay and be in the same shoes as those people were. After the whole thing was over, she came back, walking back with her fiance. She was almost nine months pregnant, walking, because there was no transportation.

Q. Where was she walking from?

A. From that small town where her sister was hiding them behind that wall.

Q. How far away was that?

A. Pretty far. And about a month later she gave birth to a lovely little girl. His parents were very well to do people, and they saved their money through Switzerland. So they built a beautiful place on the Buda(?) side, where the little girl was supposed to grow up. Then the Russians took away everything, so they had to leave.

*spelling*

So they still have money in Switzerland, and her dream was to come to this country to be near to me, but they can't come to this country, so they wind up in Montreal.

When I left with the soldiers, that's what I want to go back to. She stayed. The Nazis were coming in, and everybody had to take as much as they could carry. And half way going on the street, they had to drop everything and put their hands up and walk like this and leave everything there. And then the Nazis called their people to pick up what the Jews left. Because they told take very valuable things with you. See? You see what they did?

So she had that little bag with her, and how can you carry things when you have to walk like this? So they were walking and walking a long time. She said she was so sick. They got into a town, where finally they let them stop, and the doctors came out from the hospital in that town to help the sick. And one doctor told this Nazi that this woman is very sick and she is going to spread her illness--typhoid or something--and he has to take her to the hospital. So he did. And overnight her black hair got to be white. Overnight. But they cured her. They were very good to her, these people in the hospital.

In Hungary she had a business of making slips and panties, and she had a couple of helpers. So she wrote to her girl, a Christian, that she's in this hospital, would she come and help her. So she came and she took her home with her. So that's how she survived.

Q. And the rest of her group were taken away by the Nazis?

A. Everybody was \_\_\_\_\_. Nobody came back. Luckily she

was so sick.

I remember the house we lived in, we shared an apartment. Across the street was a hospital, and there was a nurse who was the head dietician, a wonderful person. And my friend made her slips and things, and they got to be very close friends. And she had a cape, and she came over many times, bringing food for us. See?

When the war was over, the Russians found out that this hospital was working for the Nazis. This nurse had nothing to do, but they didn't care, and they put her onto a terrible place. She was a dainty person, her hands never touched any . . . They put her into a cemetery, to work out in the cemetery with her hands. The Communists, the Russians.

So we find out where she was, and was no transportation at that time. Bella and I, we had a backpack filled with food. And we walked to her. And she was out there, sitting and working. That's the last time I saw her.

Q. Aranka, you can pride yourself for having helped a lot of people.

A. It's nothing to me. I don't feel I'm doing . . . it comes my way somehow. I don't look for it. I have friends who say the same thing, almost everyday someone says something. I listen. Because when you suffer, even if I didn't suffer physically very much . . . .

Q. Aranka, I really enjoyed talking to you, and thank you for sharing your very interesting story.

A. Thank you for asking me, because it makes me feel, I don't

know the word.

Q. I wish you lots of luck, a long life, and lots of joy with your grandchildren and family. It's been a privelege talking to you.

A. Thank you very much.