Q Why don't you start right -- first tell me your name.

A I am Irene Shapiro, born Hess, and I was raised in a part of Poland known as the corridor. And that was between east Prussia and Germany proper. So I lived in a small community of Jews, and in 1938 we moved to the northeastern part of Poland, a big city of Bialystock. That's the first time I became part of a large Jewish community, and first time also I spoke some Yiddish or at least tried to learn some Yiddish. That's where the war found me and for two years we were under Soviet occupation and I finished my high school there. And then I was confined in a ghetto of Bialystock, which organized an underground. I became part of it, hid some weapons. I was given the prerogative of going into the woods, which I did, telling my mother that I was with a lover. Can you imagine a young girl disappearing from home? But we didn't have enough weapons to go around and a few of us were put back into the ghetto and I was one of them. So I stayed in the ghetto until the last day of it, which was in August of 1943, at which point we staged a heroic uprising. That is, we burned part of the ghetto. I was taken off the burning barricades with a hand grenade in my hand because the Germans didn't believe that I belonged in it. I was just a little scrawny girl. And I was put in line with my parents and we were taken into a depot where trains were waiting. We tried to escape from the trains. I didn't know how to get back to the partisans. But somebody there knew. I kept my skirt way up and begged people to give us some money and they wouldn't. And disgustedly it was too late. We were nearing the extermination camp. We sat down and decided to start singing. As we were singing our songs, the Germans were shooting at us and I was grazed by a bullet. Fortunately it passed between my thighs and just scarred it a bit. And we were taken to Lublin. Lublin had an extermination camp.

Q Before we get to Lublin, tell me -- actually I'm doing a documentary on women in the camps and women in resistance ---

A Yes.

Q ---so tell me what that was like.

A We were all into it. There was no such thing as men and women except for this one thing, you see. Older men were militarily prepared

because they had to be, they were in reserves or they had military training or they were former soldiers, so that we didn't have. And there were few weapons to go around. It was decided that a young girl with a gentile looking face who can go to the village and buy food wasn't as important as a boy with a gentile face who could do the same and at the same time shoot properly or do things. At that point it wasn't crucial to leave me. They asked me to go back at some future date, perhaps there was an extra rifle available, would I be brought back. But it became too late. I was brought back and the ghetto was surrounding.

Q When you were hiding guns or bringing food to people or whatever you did in the resistance, what did you do in the resistance? What did you feel like?

A You know, it has a fancy name. It amounted to surviving. Even in the woods it was a matter of hiding, of having a little hole underneath and hide. Of going to the village and getting food. That's all. If occasionally we put some dynamite and exploded one or two trains, that was nothing. It was to survive. We were divided. The young said let's go, to hell with history. We didn't know that some day later some American Jews would say why didn't you stand up and fight? We were ashamed of you. This is what I had to hear today. But at that point we didn't care. We wanted to survive.

Q Does that make you furious when you hear that?

A Yes, I'm awfully awfully upset. I've heard people who would state had it only been for the German Jews not being so patriotic. I'm asking them how come you are so patriotic. The German Jews felt about Germany the way American Jews feel about America. Exactly the same way. Prior to Hitler, Germany was something like America. But you can't ask any people. They have the right to die in whatever way was most comfortable for them. How can you demand from people? I've seen people sacrificing themselves. Death was a thousand times more cruel. And have they achieved anything other than having one such American Jew say, well, there was such Itzhak Melamud who threw acid at the Germans, but nothing for Itzhak Melamud. His wife and his children were shot in front of him. So we had a sensible

way. We felt if we can, we the young, escape and hide in the woods, and if we can at that same time do damage to the Germans, fine. But to survive and represent the nation, that was the main thing.

Q Did you feel that you were being heroic or taking certain risks? Were you frightened?

A I personally was frightened, yes. I was frightened, I felt cornered. But then I had the same feeling in the concentration camp. So if I'd have my rathers now, I'd rather be in the woods with my other friends. I was caught and I was taken to the camp.

Q And what happened when you arrived at the camp?

A When I was in the camp I simply, I was young enough, strong enough, healthy enough, and had by chance not been sent to the gas chambers. So it was, as I said before, a waiting game. In other words, I passed one selection. Perhaps I'll live tomorrow. Tomorrow came, I did. Passed another selection. I lived. If in the meanwhile the Russian front moved forward and they transported to a quasi work camp, another lease on life. It was just a Russian roulette. You either went, and if you didn't go on that day, was there another day. And if so, is there something that will historically happen to facilitate another week. And that's what has been happening to me.

Q What would you do during the day besides hoping you'd survive till the next day?

A I went out of my way to make political contacts with whatever underground existed. I spoke French, I spoke a little Czech, some German. I went out and started asking where are you from, has anything been done, and sure enough I spotted people involved in underground and then found out. And we spoke about it. I felt exhilarated. I felt as if there was a tomorrow. Here we were. I was from Poland, they were from Czechoslovakia, from Hungary, France. We spoke about it. We helped each other. And then finally I did connect with the Russians who were trying to get some high officers out, and with the French, and even with some Polish women. So I would carry soup to somebody to be given up. Once I passed soup and hung around. That was what I did. Early in the morning I would go out and go where there was

talk,because there was no work in a concentration camp. You stayed in the cold and you waited to be exterminated. I left my mother and I walked around.

Q And these connections helped you survive?

A Yes. There was a feeling, well, if this exists there is a tomorrow. And that sustained me. And besides what sustained me was my mother was with me all this time. There was somebody to care for, somebody to beg for another soup for, somebody to beg for food for. My mother. Till the last moment I cared for her as if she were my own child, because she couldn't do anything for me.

Q Was there a last moment for your mother?

A There was a last moment. My mother was separated from me and placed in a place which was normally the last stop before they took you to the gas chamber. But that was after the explosion in the gas chambers and they no longer took from that place. She was there and I was on the outside. And the reason for which I was there was they held my hands when she was being taken away from me so I couldn't follow her. My friends wouldn't let me go. And then I was either getting sick with the typhoid fever or I just started vomiting day after day. I knew I was going to die. So I went with the first transport that was looking for women. I said to my mother, I'd best go because I'm going to die before you and you're going to see it. And my mother said I lived my life. May G-d bless. And don't forget your sister.

Q Where was your sister?

A My sister was in Poland and I can't talk about it.

Q And then you went on that transport.

— cont'd on 1.

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Q Where was your sister?

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Q And then you went on that transport.

- contd. on 1.

I think this is Tanya B. interrupting B. Leventhal at various points.

A We didn't go, we were shipped like cattle. That's very important to know that we were shipped like cattle.

Q What was the first time you were shipped away?

A From Ostrov to Pskov. That was the first cattle thing. And then from Ostrov back to Riga like cattle, and then from Riga to Stuthof. Worse than cattle. Worse. The lice you can't believe. The same lice ate us.

A They conducted searches gynecologically to see if we smuggled somethin

Q Were you part of a resistance---

A No, I come from a different city and I was not in the ghetto, in the Riga ghetto, because I was hidden already in a family, in a Russian family, as I told you. No, I had no heroism to stand for. Once a girl near me lashed at an appel, on a countdown, and I wanted to protect her so the chief murderer, he was not a, he was just a murdered in prison who watched over us, came and kicked me in the stomach and rolled me like a ball. But you survived.

A We were children, what could we think. We didn't even think deep. A lot of things the people my age survived because they did not understand the depth of the thing. It was an hour to hour struggle. We didn't understand the whole thing. It wasn't a personal persecution It was a mass thing, you know. I started to think after the liberation about these things.

May I say that a lot of Gentiles put their life in risk to save some families, but the majority, the Latvians, they are anti-Semites, they cleaned us out before the Germans came into Riga. So the ones that were good, you know, were far and few between. But I'm grateful to them, you know. But the majority, they hated the Jews. Everybody hated us. That's why we kept together. Because the rest of the world hates us. It's not because we love each other so much. That's the only way you can survive.

Q What were you going to say?

A She's angry but that's how it is. We are carrying a very heavy burden, you know, and it's very difficult to cope with it. Most of the time -- of course now the last thirty years we are busy building America. Most of the survivors children are children with very great achievements. A lot of doctors---

Q Do your children---

A I would say so. Not personally me,but a daughter who is going to be a doctor or a son who is going to be a lawyer. We have a lot of people that are older than us whose children are already doctors and lawyers. And just Americans, you know. We have nothing to be ashamed of really. We have contributed a great deal even to the Jews of the United States.

~~[illegible]PARAD~~

IRENE SHAPIRO

------that we could think of, and one day in the Bronx who comes across this young person in the park and we recognize each other.

Q You were in camp together?

A We were together from my home town in Bialystock. And I knew her sister was, my father was a professor of music, so her sister was his favorite ballerina and pupil. So we go a long way back and my G-d---

Q And what did you feel when you were singing, I mean, you would sing these songs, you sang the songs on the train.

A We sang because we were hungry. No, that was later. We went through the entire war together. I don't think she was in the same wagon, the same train. But then when they took us together to Lublin, together we volunteered to be seamstresses, then we became, knitting we were sitting together, we had the typhus together, we survived our hunger together, and she sang and so did I. Now, I was a folk singer, she was a classical singer, so she went down on her level to support me and she would do a folk song that we knew together. Other girls would join in, forget that we were hungry.

Q I was just going to ask if there was any relief from what was going on.

A Oh yes.

Q So it came from music.

A Yes.

Q And you wrote songs?

A No, I just sang. I'm a professional singer. I was all my life. In the camp there was no need for classical singing, was need for, we sang old Bialystock songs. There were some that dated way back to Czarist Russia and I gathered them and then I became an American folk singer and I added all these songs to my repertoire of American folk songs. And that was very enjoyable. So I retained them. In fact, I wish I could meet somebody. If you

know somebody who wants to collect songs, whose offers are long---

Q My best friend is a Holocaust scholar who collects poetry.

A The words, but they are in Polish. I carry with me -- there was not a Yiddish but a Polish Jewish culture, and I know those songs, they were Jewish songs but in Polish.

Q Do you remember any of them?

A All of them. I never forget songs. Melodies or words. And so I have all these songs and I wish I could sit in front of a tape and have it taken off my shoulders. I just don't want to die knowing that I remember them and nobody would take them off my shoulders.

Q I will be happy to -- would you sing them for me or prepare a tape for me?

A I would gladly do that. Get me a piano or a guitar and I will one by one do it so that somebody can have this recorded.

Q I'll give you my address. My friend is a scholar at Stanford and he's studied it for twenty years.

A Stanford is not too far from us. Fine. I am in New York City. I teach at the Bronx High School of Science.

Q Stanford is in California.

A Stanford, California. Well, I am going to be in Oregon this year.

Q But I promise you, I will take care of the songs.

A Please get somebody who would want to.

Q I will do my best.

A They will have a wealth -- and let it not perish. Some of these songs-- I was in Israel now and I have the name of people who wrote them and nobody knows them. And just as a child I, a daughter of a musician, remained a musician and I memorized them.

Q You have to go back to the bus?

A No, we are staying private. So I'm going to see you.

BLANK

A Yes, I'm telling you the difference. It's the same old difference with women, which is that there was sex that could be sold or that could be exploited, just as it is today. Exactly the same. And I am a feminist, I'm telling you looking back. I feel a sense of pity for the women, the intelligent educated women would get out from under some benches and say Irka, I hope you're not judging me too severely,

but I was just so hungry. Men came to work in our camp. They would send us carpenters and such. And for a cup of soup, they could have whoever was willing and able to do that. I have, I know a young girl, she was fourteen in that work camp, and she sold herself for food to a sixty year old grandpa. And that girl was afraid to look me in the face when it was all over. And now in Israel I finally got a call through. She finally now a woman, a mother of three, who was brave enough to see me here. Another case. They were known as cousins and such. So shall we say women were to blame or men who exploited the situation, who weren't comrades enough to give that soup free. Had to be paid in kind.

Q This was a Jewish man, not---

A Jewish man. Oh no, Nazi men were not allowed to. That's nonsense. They didn't need Jewesses. That's a myth. Very largely with few exceptions, an exception Jewess. These Germans were facing a severe penalty. No, those were Jewish men, were Russian, whoever came to camps to work.

Q Did you develop any feminist---
I've been real involved in the women's movement for almost fourteen years. Did you develop any ideas about feminism at that age or in that---

A I was always different than girls who sat around waiting to find a husband and all of that. I fought for the right to be me. I went to study medicine and things that women were supposed to do. I came and fought my battle here in the United States where I studied a book on electronics and women would say to me, Why are you competing with your husband, who was in electronics. And so forth. And so I stayed in the sciences. And I always was fighting my battle. I came here and wanted to study medicine at Yale and I was told that the next spot for a girl would be available in a couple of years. There was seven girls in medical school at that time and I could get in.

Q But you saw women partisans and women fighters who were---

A Absolutely. I see them now. There's a woman, Grossman, Hika Grossman, one of our leaders, who's gone to Poland now. You've heard of the

celebration and preparation in Poland in commemmoration of the ghetto which has ifs and buts and so forth. She's going. Oh yes, there were girls. My friend who is now in Israel and was a shooting girl, and had I been allowed to stay out I'd become a shooting girl too. I mean, after all, what does it take to learn to shoot a gun. Mechanical ability, that I don't have, and I was really scared of guns. But I composed songs for the underground, you see, I was a different kind of girl. I wasn't the strong-fisted kind at all. That wasn't needed at that time.

Q The women in the underground were equals and were considered leaders and respected as---

A Were respected, oh yes. Were respected, were equals, as far as I could tell, yes.

Q Do you remember, can you sing a part of a song that you wrote or---

A Yes, but it will be in Russian. Where's your guitar?

(Sings song in Russian.)

Q When did you write that?

A I wrote that in 1944 and that's what it means. The storms of the war have now engulfed the whole world and the blood of the working people is flowing. And yesterday's free children today were a tribe of slaves enclosed in the ghetto. We're isolated from the world and we are hit with the fascist knut -- well, fascist something. But if it's tough to live today, we still will be awaiting a better tomorrow. And so it goes.

Q It's beautiful.

A I've written many, many songs, including love songs, popular songs, and I had a collaborator. He was a poet. He died. And that's how I kept myself alive in that ghetto. I either painted. My paintings of the Bronx High School Science Holocaust Center, they're really meant for my children. They are paintings of what it was like. I did it after liberation from memory, but I was, I think, a better musician. I don't know if my son, the musician, would say that. You see, he's a rock and roll person, and I am not. So he may not acknowledge my type of music. But I was quite musical and wrote

quite a few songs. And that kept me alive in the ghetto other than being involved in the political movement.

Q These documentaries I've just listened to, I'm sure I've heard your songs.

A I doubt it, you see, because the songs that were known were propagated. I was asked to write a song. I didn't know anybody. We were allowed to know two people. I had one liaison, a fellow who knew me, and two other people. Four of us knew each other, no more, so that anyone be caught. That was a survival tactic. In fact, I do know that the person who was in charge of me, his name was Beryl Schvartzman. He turned traitors. And it was just lucky that he -- I'm told that he had his likes and dislikes and he liked me. So he didn't give me away. So he asked me to write a song, which I did. And by the time the song was finished, nobody wanted it. People who needed it were in the woods and I was sitting there with a song. I guess they said to me to write a song I'd forget about the fact that they'd sent me back home without the weapon. They thought well, let her feel that she's good for something. And so I did write that song. But it wasn't used, it was too late. It was towards the end.

Q So what was liberation? Where were you?

A I was liberated in Germany. I was in a camp, Leibshtadt. I was liberated by the Americans. We were being led out of that camp. This was a work camp. Now, that was a work camp. We were led out of that camp -- this was towards Aken where the American army was stalled for quite a while. We knew that they were sitting there, couldn't budge. Finally they did move and we were surrounded by -- that was Patton's army, he was further south. I forget who it was. Then came the British Royal Artillery for whom I worked for a while, but the Americans noticed us from the scouting planes. They realized that this wasn't an army, we were wearing blankets, and they knew from their experience that they'd better hurry. So they cut through wires and dashed over, showed us their bloody hands, and there we were sitting in a field and the Germans were leading us to be shot, disappeared. And then my friends turned to me, Irka, come on, you're the Britisher -- because I spoke English. I walked over. There was that time a Yankee chewing his gum and I came over and say Who are you?

I'm an American. Who are you? And I answered I was who I was and I looked at him and said, What do you mean you are an American? How did you get here? He says what do you mean how did I get here? I didn't swim. I didn't really put the two and two together. I kept on asking are you sure you're an American and not a Britisher? He said no, I am really an American. We had no idea that the Americans had landed. And so from this point on I worked for the army, first the American army, then the British army took over that part of Germany.

Q And then where did you go? Where did you settle here?

A I went to Heidelberg to study medicine, and in 1945 I was discovered. They took photographs and the Philadelphia Enquirer carried those pictures, myself and a cadaver, myself and a medical professor, etc., etc., and my family in Philadelphia discovered it. And I received a telegram you are registered with the American Consul for coming. But I didn't have to wait because President Truman at that point issued a collective visa for 2,000 professionals and students. So I was the first one to arrive in the United States.

Q Are you bitter that the United States didn't allow Jews to enter during the war?

A Yes. I didn't know that. And this is the first time I was furious. Absolutely furious. I simply walked out of the room when the television was on. Couldn't face it. Everything else somehow we can take. That made me furious.

Q So this one's a big question but how does one cope? How can you live with what you've been through, the memories? What did you tell your children?

A How can I cope? How did I cope?

Q Yes.

A I think I pretty much became very busy sculpting a new life for myself I immediately went to college. I graduated from college. I got my Master's degree and another one and worked and founded a beautiful family and a whole bunch of friends. And that took up part of my time. Deep down, what I went through, that did remain. However, it

made me into a Jew. I came from a family of fairly assimilated Jews. By fairly assimilated, I mean Jews who knew they were Jewish who were -- as you say here in this country -- a once a week Jew, going to the high holidays---

Q Once a year.

A Once a year. Okay. Those were my parents. Except there was Zionism in my household. I was taught Hebrew. But I wasn't as deeply involved other than being a Zionist as after that. So I made sure, first of all, that my children knew some Yiddish and both of them were enrolled in Sholem Aleichem folk shul, because I didn't speak Yiddish. That was the language of the masses and my parents considered it beneath our, you might say, class. But I made sure that my children had all the holidays. We celebrated Chanukah. I even prevail upon my American husband to come down somewhat from his status of a typically American young guy who's been bar mitzvahed and that was the end of it. And we celebrated holidays. I was busy doing all this. But I did something else. I went back to Poland. I went to all the camps. I took my family. I had my cry there, I went---

Q You had your what?

A Cry my sorrow. I walked the streets of the ghetto of the Bialystock. I went to my high school. I really lived all of this three times till I got it out of my system.

Q Did it help you get---

A Oh yes. I talked to the shadows. I looked for the shadows. I apologized to them for my living. I stood on the other side of the ghetto wall and looked and I said, Is there some memory of that little Irene looking at me here? Now we're grown up. And I was a child. I wrote letters to grown Irene. Dear Irene. And I said that to myself standing there in 1972 in Bialystock looking into the ghetto. Dear little Irene, are you there looking at me here free? And I went there without my children the second time and the third time. So I did go through this soul-searching process, you might say.

Q A lot of survivors seem to have really good marriages and beautiful children. How is that possible? What happened? I mean, how did you teach them? What did you decide to tell them about the camps?

A I left it to what New York had to ffer, and it had to offer. I took them to a place like Sholem Aleichem's shul in Vermont -- no, Mount Vernon -- which there was a haggadah in English which was also commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto. I subjected them to it on the outside first. I sang songs, folk songs, and then I waited for them to ask me questions. They haven't. Today my daughter explained, she might tell you what happened. It was a maturation process in them. So you see, I didn't force it onto them. Maybe that was better. They came to it. And don't forget, their father is a third generation American. So they're not really totally children of survivors. That's the difference. They had an American home.

Q Did you feel that you had to wait to absorb it or---

A daughter Well, I think as a young child I had a need to feel just like my friends and I realized that my mother was different and I think to an extent I rejected that. I don't think it was until I was fourteen and my mother took me to Poland and Germany to the camps that I really became aware and as an adult and even more so as a mother myself I have been feeling more and more and more a relationship and a need to find out more, but it wasn't until I reached that level of maturity.

Q It must've always made yourself proud that your mother was a Resistance fighter. I mean, was that something you thought of?

A Son I don't think I really thought about it until recently. I don't know. Somehow I get the sense that I experience through my mother some of the things she went through. I think growing up I sensed that -- I had the same feelings as my sister -- you know, I wanted to belong with a gang like anybody else, but I always felt that there was something different about me and I think it's just as I grew up I, you know, became to understand why that was. But when she took me back and as she talks about it now, I just get the sense of familiarity somehow, you know, like I've been through it somehow, it's come through her relationship with me. And as far as passing on to the next generation, I don't think I could do it by telling stories like she can. I would hope to do that through my children just through my experience of growing up with my mother.

Q And it must've taken a lot of strength on your part, I mean, not as much as hers because she went through it, but a lot of sensitivity and---

A Husband We love each other very much, and when you have a good strong love and broad shoulders, a lot can be undertaken and I'm very supportive of her.

Q That's fabulous.

A Irene We are two teachers, we both worked all along. We make our decisions together. I don't stay in the kitchen. My husband is there with me. We share. I plan the trips. We travel all over the world from Borneo to Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, on a shoestring. Have been all over the world travelling and meeting with plain ordinary people. He's along with me. I do the planning, he does the fighting, and that's the kind of marriage we have and that's the kind of marriage I witness in my children as well. There was no question of my having. I joined now but I didn't have to go into consciousness raising sessions because my consciousness was raised all along. I was a scientist. I was not feminine at all. I don't use makeup and I don't spend my good money on clothing and I don't feel I have to make myself beautiful where I'm not. And so I'm me. And he was different from other men. He doesn't have his macho. I don't have to prove myself to him and he doesn't have to prove himself to me. We're comrades.

Q What a family. Is there anything else---

A That was violence against women. That men couldn't curb their drive. And I don't believe -- I'm a biologist -- I do not believe that the accumulation of sperms necessitates degrading that half human being. I don't believe that this was necessary. It's yet to be proved that male has to do it. I don't believe that there is this tremendous urge. Not to be able to overcome in view of the extenuating circumstances.

Q That was one of the things that upset you the most---

A Yes.

Q ---was this rape or exchange or---

A That's rape. Taking a fourteen year old child as a mistress by a sixty year old man, because he had the food. One way or another he

was a policeman in that camp. What is it? What would you call it? Or coming to camp and saying -- there were women waiting for they were hungry. Can I blame women? They were hungry, they had something that men desired. And I was lucky because I was given soup for being a comrade, for being a part of the underground. They didn't have that option.

Q Did you have to make moral choices that now you feel you would've done something different? Did you have to steal food or whatever?

A No -- where was there to steal food? I mean, I wasn't capable of fighting other women. I was too small and not strong enough at that point. My biggest moral choice, which I still can't forgive myself, is leaving my mother. Where does the instinct for survival start? How can I justify it? That was the hardest thing. I lived through childbearing age raising my children and crying Mommy, where are you? I left you. I wish I could do it over. I relived it a thousand times writing different plots as to how I could've stayed and how I could've had her to be a grandmother to my children. This is the hardest thing. I am now fifty-seven years old and I still can't get out of it. I still think perhaps maybe if I pushed her with me, maybe I could've; maybe I could've taken her with me. Maybe she would've lived. And that last moment where I went to work in Germany and she stayed in Auschwitz. And I cannot forget it.

Q I'm sure you said to yourself a hundred times---

A I understand that I probably would've died. I really was on my last leg and that Germany saved me. I was sick, I became much better there. In fact, so well that the Germans were asking me whether I was at a resort by any chance. That's how much better I became. And I was sure that my mother would survive because I left her well protected. The Russians marched and I left in November, end of November, and January the camp was taken over by Russians. All the old women were liberated, yet she wasn't there. She was somehow sent somewhere else. How she died I don't know, but she perished over there.

Q Did you lose other members of your family?

A My father was shot. I don't remember whether I mentioned it to you. He was a very, very fine violinist, and a composer. Well, my son is trying to live up to his grandfather's calling. I was told that he was in the orchestra in Lublin. That meant he had to play well. They were shooting and executing people. He went last. And it was a tough thing for him because he was a prisoner of war in Russia and that was during the first World War, and he was executed there only he didn't know that they were using blanks. So to go through that and then going through that again to die like this is very hard for me to think about.

Q Let me ask you one last question and then I'll let you all go and thank you for your time. How are you feeling being at the conference?

A I'm a little lost. I don't know what to do with myself. What am I supposed to do? I don't know any people and there is a reason for it. I wasn't in a camp after liberation. I worked for the army. So I know more G.I.s than I know displaced persons. I'm not likely to find too many people that I know. I walked around showing myself. They're not likely to find me. Also I wasn't yet an adult really, a teenager in the ghetto. It was a high school type of situation, and my high school friends who survived I am in touch with those friends. I just came from Israel and they made a big party. I know every boy and whoever danced with me and all this is with me. But I didn't establish adult ties to carry me through, and then I was busy working for the army. And I do, I'm still hoping to find some of the girls who were after the liberation, that little liberated town of Kanitz where the first batch of Jewish women liberated by Jewish G.I.s who were coming to us and trying to have us identify their mezuzahs to make sure that we're Jewish, because they've never seen a live Jewish girl. This was a famous place. Everybody was Jewish and all of the United States Army was coming on holidays with us when they liberated us. So I was there with some Jewish girls. I'm hoping to find them. Other than that I did it really for my children.

Q How are you feeling about being here?

A I'm feeling grateful that I can share this with my mother. I feel also the obligation to pass it on to the third generation. I feel in a way that I'm a spokesperson for that reason.

Q How are you feeling?

A I felt like it's fulfilling a need for me. At some point I just felt like I really had a need to share this with my mother and I called her and told her that.

Q Great. What a family. How are you feeling about this?

A Walking in for the first time I realized that there are probably thousands and thousands of people with -- for me, knowing Irene it's always been this individual story, and you come here and there are just thousands of them that are just as remarkable or unbelievable in this day and age. You know, it just doesn't seem possible that there could be so many people who've experienced this kind of a thing.

A There is one thing that I would like you to do for me.

Q Yes.

A I told you I teach at the Bronx High School Science.

Q Right.

A This is a very special school. One and only in the United States. And there I am only known as a teacher who produces so many Westinghouse winners and so many advanced placement biology graduates and so many students in the honors classes. And I will retire in three years. And I'm desperately trying to make a contact as a Holocaust survivor. Here I am a walking relic in this school in a school where a Holocaust Center was established, things were purchased, and yet no one, but no one, came forth to exploit this resource. A walking living person who can tell the teenagers what it was like to be a teenager in the Holocaust. And I have to go around begging, please ask me to come to your classroom and talk. I am angry, disappointed, that people who run a center in the Bronx High School Science do not consider it their duty, while I am still there. This is what this is all about. Give your students -- that's the real chance that my students have. Finally I contacted a student

myself and I said, Please interview me. And the little girl, the little black girl sat, tears running down her face, and we're doing it on our own. Well, I would like it to be known that I am a very willing resource person. There probably aren't too many teachers who are survivors. And a child would make an association. It wouldn't be some strange creature. There is a teacher, their teacher, who was a teenager. I can tell them about it. I wish to do it. How can I get students and become more than a bio teacher?

Q Okay.