

PAULA LAX

1 Q She's from Brooklyn, New York. What happened to you
2 Paula during the war? You might start when --

3 A We lived just in a small town near the schule. They
4 start --

5 Q Where do you come from?

6 A I'm coming from Rumania, Transylvania, Kipalnik Mashtood
7 (phonetic spelling on last two words) is the name for
8 the city that I lived. We lived close to the synagogue
9 and for us they start the first to take us to--

10 Q To round you up? They rounded you up?

11 A Yes, to the synagogue. There --

12 Q Before you continue, you and who else was in your family?

13 A I have four sisters, a brother, and my father. My mother
14 passed away two years ago. We was there in the schule
15 for three days until they bring together all the Jewish
16 family from my --

17 Q Hometown.

18 A --hometown. After they move us to a ghetto, another lo-
19 cation which is called Porpatak --

20 Q Porpatak. (Phonetic spelling)

21 A Porpatak.

22 Q P-o-r-p-a-t-a-k.

23 A Yes. Then we was for four weeks 'til the time come they
24 take us to Auschwitz. We travel around four days in big
25 wagons for --

1 Q Cattle cars.

2 A --cattle cars. We arrived in the morning, my father,
3 my brother were separated --

4 Q I understand. Just slowly, it's okay. You were sepa-
5 rated from your brother and father.

6 A Yes, and father. I and four sisters survived. Three
7 lives -- two lives in Israel, one passed away, my older
8 one is 53. My brother lives also in Israel.

9 Q How have you been since the war?

10 A I have lots of --

11 Q How do you cope with your memories?

12 A I cope with my memories fine. Everything is always
13 coming to mind, the best. I was the youngster between
14 the five children, and I miss the most _____
15 of growing without parents.

16 Q Do you have children?

17 A In '50 I get married. The other got married before.

18 I have one son, and my husband.

19 Q Could you please tell me Paula, what experience in the
20 camps stands out in your mind?

21 A I was three months in Auschwitz. I can say I didn't
22 know what I do. Now I find out how much danger I met.

23 I was in the _____ Block 20.

24 Q It's okay. It's perfectly all right to cry. That's natural.
25 Please tell me. You started telling me how you coped

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with your experience and your memories of the concentration camp, and what stands out mainly in your mind.
A Block 20 was one of the worser. _____ We didn't have baths like the other blocks. You went after rain with the hand pick up the water in the soil, the wet, we threw it away, and then we lay down. This was our bath.

Q Did you have any sense of what awaited you on the other side of the deprivation? Before you went to Auschwitz, did you know anything that something so horrible was going --

A No, we didn't. We didn't know that something like this. My father was very good friends with Rumanians

(AT THIS POINT THE TAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TRANSCRIBE BECAUSE OF THE BACKGROUND NOISE. BEFORE THIS POINT, WITH FULL VOLUME, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO HEAR. TOWARDS THE END, I COULD HEAR AS FOLLOWS:

Q Excuse me for interrupting because we are running out of tape. I want to ask you some crucial questions that will be important also to the cause, and I hope maybe some day we can get all the details. In the meantime --

A Yes.

Q --can you tell me how has Israel been meaningful to you?

1 A Israel mean a lot. Come late to this country --

2 Q Yes.

3 A --only in '7., and my husband have here a brother.

4 To show how much it means, my whole family live there.

5 My son married, and I intend to retire, to move to

6 Israel. I miss my country, and I miss my family.

7 America is a beautiful country, but what I get there I
8 don't have here.

9 Q Thank you. Can I ask you one other question, please?

10 A Yes.

11 Q There is an expression that the Jews went like shee to
12 slaughter. What do you think of that?

13 A It's right. That time I was too young, and I didn't
14 know so much the meaning like today, but really should
15 not be allowed to happen something like this. A nation,
16 somebody, for somebody's not loving -- If Hitler didn't
17 like the Jews, for this you have to die? They have to
18 kill a generation? It's not fair.

19 Q Do you think the Jews fought back?

20 A Yes, they fought back, and I have a Polish in Block 20.
21 I don't remember the name for the _____ but
22 she was not of us. She says, "You Hungarians you like
23 to go like the sheep to the Schlockhaus (phonetic
24 spelling(. You didn't do nothing like us. We are here
25 with how many years before you, and we didn't -- To

1 build up, you come to everything ready, and you let
2 them interfere to take you like a sheep.

3 (CAN'T MAKE OUT THE REST OF THE ANSWER)

4 Q One more thing, please. Do you speak about the Holo-
5 caust very often?

6 A Yes, I speak a lot. Always to my son, always when it's
7 coming from relatives, from the best, always it's com-
8 ing, this is Holocaust. We don't have relatives. I
9 always remember the relatives. My older sister, I think
10 she was also -- even if she didn't pass away in
11 Auschwitz, but after she bring with her this tense (?)
12 life, with four children, with not parents interfere a
13 lot in her life. She was 33 years old when she died.

14 Q I'm sorry. Thank you very much Paula for this interview.

15 A Thank you.

16 Q Unfortunately we don't have any more tape here, but
17 this will be very valuable for _____.

18 A I'm glad I can help something.

19 _____ (name) speaking with an interview of
20 Paula Lax, 1800 East 13th Street, Brooklyn, New York.