

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Chaim and Selma Engel**  
**March 30, 1998**  
**RG-50.549.02\*0014**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Chaim and Selma Engel, conducted by Ginger Miles on March 30, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Branford, Connecticut and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview

**Interview with Chaim and Selma Engel**  
**March 30, 1998**

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection.

This is an interview with Chaim and Selma Engel, conducted by Ginger Miles, on March 30th, 1998, in Branford, Connecticut. This is a follow-up interview of a United States Holocaust Museum videotaped interview conducted with the Engels on July 16th, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. I am sitting with both Chaim and Selma Engel and we are going to have introductions, have one side together and then move on separately.

SE: My name is Selma Engel and I live in Branford and I'm a survivor for Sobibór.

Q: And your name before you married?

SE: Was Selma Wynberg. My nickname is really Sacha, but my parents made Selma out of it, because it sounds better.

Q: And how do you spell your last name?

SE: W-y-n-b-e-r-g.

Q: Okay. And when did you enter Sobibór?

SE: April -- the fourth of April, desirts, 1943, I came to Sobibór.

Q: And --

CE: And my name is Chaim Engel. I live also in Branford. And I'm 82 years old and what do I have to say more?

Q: When did you enter Sobibór?

CE: Oh, we went -- we came to Sobibór in 1942 -- in -- in November of 1942.

Q: Okay.

SE: I was born in Holland and I was the only girl for four children and the youngest and when I came in Poland, I met Chaim, we had to dance front the Germans, because it was kind of a sadism that the fire is burning and all the dead people got bur -- were burning there and it was a -- smelled from smoke and -- and that's -- there was a sadism was some that we had to dance under these circumstances. Was some Jewish people what had an -- an instrument and they were playing the music and that's the way we met. Chaim asked me to dance. And that's the way we met.

Q: And what language did you speak?

SE: Love. What did we speak for language? He spoke Yiddish and little bit German and I pou -- spoke Ger -- a little bit German, so that really was the language that we spoke. We didn't have much time to speak, really, together. Of course --

CE: Go ahead. I came from Poland and I spoke Polish and German and we met, as my wife just said, we met with the -- the Germans looked for things to -- sadistic things for us -- th-they -- w-while the fire, as she said, the fire was burning from the people who had just came on transport and they made us dance and they took the people with their instruments, they played and we had to dance and I ask her. And that is where we met.

SE: You had to ask me.

CE: Yeah, that [inaudible].

SE: Yeah. German [inaudible]

CE: I had to ask her and that was we met, that's about.

Q: Do you remember, in the language of love, what you first talked about?

CE: I don't remember. It probably was about anything.

Q: I see.

CE: Anything about the camp, things like that.

Q: And did -- it seemed in the transcripts that you knew and in general, Polish Jews knew a lot more than Selma, or than Dutch Jews about what was happening at first. Is that --

CE: Well, well, we -- before even I came to Sobibór and we saw people go -- my father, a matter of fact, came six months before me to Sobibór and he went to a camp, so the rumors were that people go to the -- to the gas chamber. But this was so incomprehensible that nobody won't believe it. But [indecipherable] when we came to the camp -- a matter of fact I came with my brother and they pick me out to work and when he went to the gas chamber. So then we knew what's going on. So that was not any more a rumors, there was facts, what happened. Separate --

SE: [indecipherable] sort clothes, that you found the clothes for your -- for your brother and that's the reason -- the moment that you saw the pictures from your brother and things like that.

CE: Yeah. That -- I found the clothes from my brother, was -- they took us for the work -- after we came in, they took us to work by separating the clothes from the people from the transport and I found the clothes from my brother and pictures. So, that was my experience coming first to Sobibór.

Q: You came with him?

CE: With him together.

Q: Came together?

CE: Yeah.

Q: And were you immediately separated?

CE: Yeah. When we came out of the train, they separate, but I didn't know what picking out means. They picked out from transport, from about 1000 people, about 20. And I happened to be with 20 from the 20 people. So by -- we didn't know what it means, picking out, but it meant to be working in camp.

Q: Instead of?

CE: Going to the gas chamber.

Q: I know you've had a long time to think about this, but do you -- do you have any idea why they picked you?

CE: No, he asked me -- what did he ask me, something -- where I come from and I told him from where and he says, "Come out." And that's it. No reason at all.

Q: Okay.

CE: Just luck.

Q: And, for you?

SE: I came with a -- a whole bunch of girls what we met in -- in jail in Amsterdam. I was in -- in -- in Amsterdam in jail because -- in jail because I was hidden and that was a punishment. And so we met a whole bunch of Dutch young girls. The youngest was 16 and I was the oldest, I was 20. So and -- and then we stayed together, we went to a concentration camp in Holland first and then we went to Westerbork, where all the Jews went through, then we went -- sent to Poland and we went in a freight train, it was the first freight train what went away from Westerbork. And there wen-went three days and three nights in the train and when we came on, all the Germans were standing there and because we were all young girls, they took us on the side, where all -- the first transport where they took Dutch girls out. And they say, "You stuus, go stay on the side." And that was it.

Q: The side of the train?

SE: No, we were already past the train. They were already off from the railroad station. We passed already that we were standing there and then could we see that the women and the children went straight to the gas chamber and the men had to sit on the side and they had to take their shoes off and they have to bundle the shoes together because everything was sent to Germany, so the shoes had to be together and not when they're loosed and get it lost. So -- and that we show, also that some German gave them a card and they had to write home that they came now in Sobibór and -- and that they are safe here. And then we was --were -- that we walked to camp one. Sobibór was divided in three camps. Camp

one was where we slept, camp three is where we worked and camp two was where we worked and camp three was the gas chamber. So then we walked to -- brought us to camp one. And so far we don't know what was happened of that moment. I had to go to work -- b -- also by the clothes. Assorting clothes that afternoon, from the people what went to the gas chamber. Also an uncle, a brother from my mother, came -- had thre -- three children -- three or four children, I don't know exactly, to Sobibór. When they want to take me out, when they came at the same transport as I came to Sobibór.

Q: And?

SE: And he went to the gas chamber. But I hear -- it was after the war that I saw all the papers and the names.

Q: So you did not even know they were there?

SE: I didn't know even they were there. Not in the moment.

Q: So your main pals were these girls?

SE: The girls.

Q: And, do you think that -- I asked Chaim what made you -- why did they choose you to stay. Do you think that they choo -- chose you because you were young, pretty and --

SE: We were young and we were with whole bunch of Dutch girls -- 19, I think. And they all took us because we were young girls that could work there. And that was -- that was the only reason.

Q: So the women and children, they tended to?



SE: Oh, they went all to the gas chamber. Women and children and -- and e-everybody else. Everybody else -- it was a transport for 2,000 people, they all went to the gas chamber. Straight to the gas chamber.

Q: But you did not know this at first -- when you were first --

SE: Oh, I had no idea. You know, my mother was called and my brothers were c -- picked up and I started go to my mother. Only thing what I want and I could have gone ar -- out of the concentration camp, I could -- in Holland, I could got away and in the police station where I was in -- in Utract, I could have got away. But I want to go to my mother. I was -- I thought, is a big camp and I will find her -- and my brothers. So, my mother went to Auschwitz and my brothers, too. I didn't know that, I heard it was later on when the inf -- when they took all the information for the Holocaust museum.

Q: How long had it been since you had seen your mother when you arrived in Sobibór?

SE: I was hidden in 1942, in half year? Something like that, a half year.

Q: And you had never been separated from her?

SE: No, no. I was the youngest on the children, I was always together with my -- my mother.

Q: And so, you might have been feeling a certain way, that you would see your mother in Sobibór?

SE: Yeah. No. Perhaps, I didn't even think. You va -- you have no time to think when you came in Sobibór -- starting screaming and hitting with the whip and -- and you have

no time to think, really. You didn't have time to think about what -- what will happen.

You had no idea, absolutely no idea.

Q: Hitting you with a whip?

SE: Not me, no. But it was one woman -- they scream and say "Out, out, out ." And -- I don't remember exactly, we fell over each other. I mean, there was one woman which throwed away her -- her backpack and also her baby fell and does she say, "Oh, my baby." And then the German hit him with a whip in the face, the blood was streaming. He said, "I will take care of your baby." So -- and there was -- there was a n -- an -- babagun, it was a tremendous noise and it was a trolley which comes out and there were the old people were put in and children what were loose, they put in the trolley and that went straight to the gas chamber. So it was just -- you had no time to think.

Q: Do yo -- did anyone there, in authority, speak Dutch?

A: Oh, yeah, there were some Dutch men were there, but I know even from my hometown, I saw them the first day when I came to camp one, where the brought us to camp one, I saw the Dutch men, and they di -- aniss -- and I know them very well, they came from my hometown. And I say, "Hi, how are you?" And they didn't say anything, which is so strange because one was -- his parents were my best -- parents best friends. And later I spoke to them and they told me what is going on. And they were all killed -- a few weeks later, all the Dutch men, 72 Dutch men were shot to death because they say they want to run away and it was not -- I don't believe it was true, because there was no place where they could run to. But perhaps was yet true, who knows?

Q: So, how long were you there before you met Chaim?

SE: The first day.

CE: [inaudible]

SE: Yeah, when we came on [indecipherable]

CE: Oh yeah, that's right.

SE: When we came on, the first thing what we had to do when we came in camp one, we had to dance. That was the first day.

Q: So even before, you were also working in the same job?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah.

Q: And you worked together each day?

CE: Most of the time.

SE: Yeah.

CE: Most of the time.

SE: Yeah, something like -- yeah. We don't know.

CE: Unless -- unless it was, like we had a transport of th-the women -- they took away [indecipherable] to cut their hair. And they picked people -- anyone they picked to cut their hair. So I -- sometimes I had other jobs. Th-They picked me sometimes to -- to cut their hair, to -- so, but usually they was separated [indecipherable] main wall. That was their job, most people, job.

Q: That was your main work?

CE: Job -- that was the job, yeah.

Q: Okay, I'm going to take something out here. We are looking at a -- a map of Sobibór.

CE: Yeah. We're looking in the map. Here where we slept and somewhere here was where we worked --

Q: This is called --

CE: Lager two. And lager three was here, where the deaths were, deaths.

Q: Yeah. And so -- so the dance, would have been held where?

CE: In the [indecipherable] where we were, here.

SE: The what?

CE: The dancing.

SE: Oh yeah, it's all -- just an open -- an open, where we came in.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah, just a -- open there.

Q: Near the first front gate?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Near the front gate?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And was it -- was it just on -- on dirt ground?

SE: Yeah.

Q: On dirt ground?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And, was it social dancing, partner dancing?

SE: Was very short, I think. I don't remember much about it, really.

CE: [indecipherable] yeah.

SE: Was were very short.

CE: The -- the people what had instruments, some Jewish had -- with some instrument, so they told them to play music and they say, "You go and dance, you have to dance." That's the way it was, I don't know whether it last longer, maybe last five minutes, maybe even not.

SE: [inaudible] I have -- we have, yeah.

CE: No, no.

Q: Oh, so this is not -- not like a big dance?

CE: No, no, no.

Q: Just a moment in time.

CE: Just -- just -- just --

Q: Just a few people that --

SE: Yeah. I don't know -- I really don't remember much about it.

Q: You had not even spent one night there --

SE: No.

Q: -- when this happened?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So was it maybe your coming that made them say that?

CE: I don't know. Maybe -- maybe, I don't know.

Q: [indecipherable]

CE: The Germans, I don't know makes them -- the dancing. There was a satisfaction from them that they saw the people, the fire -- big fire from the people who were burning and the same Jewish who came with the same transport, dancing. So that for them -- for them was it -- the sadism was so [indecipherable]

Q: [indecipherable]

CE: Yeah, that was so strong for them that it was right for them to do it.

SE: They did always something like that. Or we had to walk all around like in Sing-Sing and I had to sing for hours or -- they had always some punishment. Or we had to stay the whole night of role call.

CE: Yeah.

SE: You know, they -- they -- they always found something -- punishment for us to do.

Q: I -- I know in your previous interview, you -- you talked several times about singing, about being asked to sing. And so that's just what I'm trying to get a picture of, this dance -- also because you met at that time. So, did you actually see her? You remember seeing her and walking over and -- and did you touch each other when you danced?

CE: No.

Q: Yeah.

CE: No. No.

SE: We danced.

CE: We're dancing, so, but it was a very brief time and no, I really don't remember.

SE: Was the instant -- instant in love with me. I made a joke always when I speak in schools. No, what it was -- I didn't like him at all because he looked really different than the boys from Holland. So he had some hat on and he had no hair -- your hair -- they -- they cut your hair. And he had the very strange pants on. So I didn't like him at all.

CE: See what you got?

Q: But did you -- did you talk?

SE: No. The first evening? No, we didn't.

CE: No, no.

SE: No, we didn't. I don't know, I d -- we do -- I don't remember much of that time at all.

CE: [indecipherable] details.

SE: No.

CE: Is -- that's was to make a big impression on us in that situation, they said that we dance. That was to make the big impression.

SE: Yeah.

CE: But the details, I really don't know.

SE: No, I don't remember either, no.

Q: So, do you remember your first night in Sobibór?

SE: No, I don't re -- yeah -- yeah, it was terrible, w-we slept on wood, we didn't have nothing to put over us and was yeah, and it was a pail in the middle, that was the bathroom.

CE: [indecipherable] some blankets, I don't know.

SE: No, no, not yet. Later on we got some blankets. I think.

Q: You came in April, so was it cold?

SE: That I don't remember. I remember -- I don't remember all these things, I really don't. We never talk with each other about what happened. We never -- I never talk about it, so, did -- did a fin -- the finesse, the small things, we -- we put it out of our mind and I think that that's really that we have our sanity still. We don't drag on it, you know? So, I don't rem -- I remember that a -- a -- it was in May and I came in April and May was my birthday, my 21st birthday and Chaim brought me some whiskey, little bit and some -- frun pork fat.

CE: What -- what we did, the -- we had the Ukrainian guards, too. And the Ukrainians guards, if you get in communication with them and f-for -- you gave them some from the people -- were the things, what they picked from the luggage -- from the people who had valuable things like gold, other things. So if we gave them something, they brought us something.

SE: But you didn't do it, even, you --

CE: No, I didn't do it.



SE: -- you friend did it. He didn't -- he was miss -- he didn't do it, he has a friend what worked by the fire, what burned a -- all the papers and things like that. And he came lots in contact with the Ukrainians and he ask him.

CE: Yeah.

SE: And that I remember, that he brought me the liquor -- liquor -- I don't drink. And I didn't eat pork, that was the first time I'm alive that I eat a piece of pork and it tasted delicious. We were very hungry. We didn't get much to eat. And, you know, we were -- through much as possible, we were always together and we liked -- we were, that's what they called us in camp, bride and browt -- browticum, in German -- bride and -- bride and groom. Because we always walked together, so much as possible, aft we come, but we s - - we said in our hearts, how long and how long more.

Q: All right. And I wanted to know, now, from the dance, the next time that you would have seen each other would have been at the workplace?

SE: Yeah.

Q: Or the role call?

CE: Yeah. No, in the wor -- wh -- but the role call and the -- we went together to the same kind of work. She separated and I took away the -- the -- the -- we had it in suitcases, the stuff what we separated. I had to carry it away things like that --

SE: [indecipherable]

CE: -- most of that, yeah.

Q: Men and women working together?

CE: Yeah, and it's --

SE: Yes.

CE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And so, do you remember when you first began to talk?

CE: I didn't mak --

SE: He doesn't talk much now, shukar, so I don't think he talked much.

CE: Most when we talked is about the camp, it was the camp, really, because th -- it is --  
you don't think too far antuay think about the moment. The moment is --

SE: There's so much going on every day and there you talk about. You know, somebody  
was shot again or somebody was --

CE: [inaudible] that guy, can of fish. Have sardines or something --

SE: Yeah.

CE: -- and they caught him, they shot him.

SE: Yeah. [indecipherable]

CE: Seems like there always was something -- somebody shot every time, for no reason  
at all.

SE: [indecipherable] came on transport, if they didn't came -- came not -- it came not on  
transport, so we were scared to death when it doesn't come on transport, did we go to the  
gas chamber? So that's the whole -- that was your -- that's where you talk it, your -- your  
life.

Q: But somehow you knew that it was her birthday?

CE: Yeah, well, by then already, we knew.

SE: It was already a month.

CE: Yeah.

SE: April, May, yeah. You know, the minute -- a -- a minute was like a -- a -- a month.

Because it -- it was just a scary life there and -- and you know when a transport comes, y-  
y-you do something wrong and I saw many times people from my hometown walk into  
the gas chamber. So -- when you would have say hi to them, then they would say, "Oh,  
you say hi to them? You can go too." So you was always afraid, you know, to do  
something wrong, or -- it -- it was. It -- it -- it's just -- I -- I -- thank God I don't  
remember exactly.

Q: Yeah. And your best friend, what was his name? The fireman?

SE: The fireman? Joseph.

CE: Joseph.

SE: [indecipherable]

CE: No.

SE: Si Joseph?

CE: Joseph.

SE: Joseph.

CE: I don't know the last name, forgot.

Q: Was he Polish?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah, I think so, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SE: [indecipherable] was Polish and he was very young, he was 16 - 17.

CE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did you have friend that you had known before, when you went in?

CE: No.

Q: All your friends were new?

CE: All friends were to -- made in camp.

Q: Oh, okay. And again -- I want to ask again, what language did you and -- I -- there are so many reference in both of your transcripts to language, that the Polish had more of an advantage in a way and that they knew --

CE: We spoke Yiddish, mostly.

Q: To each other?

CE: Now -- we now, we spoke German. A broken German.

SE: Actually when I didn't speak Yiddish.

CE: A broken German [inaudible] German.

SE: Yeah. Even I -- I didn't know Yiddish. I learned it in camp, but --

Q: You learned Yiddish, and did you --

SE: At camp.

Q: -- learn German?

SE: No, German I spoke because the German were in Holland, and so you have to speak German and -- German isn't language what every Dutch pe -- the Dutch people speak, German and English. Is an -- is similar.

Q: And you also knew German?

CE: Yeah. I -- I had in school German, when I was still in school.

SE: [indecipherable] he was ook in German and -- and prisoner of war, in Germany.

CE: Yeah, that's right. I was a prisoner of war before. I was in the Polish army and I was a prisoner of war and then they freed all the Jews in March of 1940, they send all prison - - Jewish prisoners of war back to Poland. And I -- when I came back, my father -- I had my father and brother -- they were not any more, and we [indecipherable] the list, and then they -- dic -- deported to Lublin, by Lublin and I followed them. So, my father -- they -- he went about -- in June of July of 1942, he want to -- to -- to send to Sobibór from Bakerout and I went in Mar -- in November -- in November. But I want to say something else. You ask me a question. Oh, what language he spoke. So, but I -- when I was still in -- I spoke really more than Yiddish and German, because I -- before I came to Sobibór, I worked at a farm and when I came back f -- as a soldier, as a prisoner of war, I went come work at a farmer and it was a Ukrainian farmer and I worked there for two years, and --

Q: He spoke Russian?

CE: Ukrainian, was more or less the same thing. So I spoke it very fluently, but I forgot it, really. So while in camp, we spoke mostly Yiddish. Yiddish and German I talk with -- spoke with her.

Q: And the SS guards, the Nazis, did they understand Yiddish?

CE: No, I don't think so, no.

Q: Well, what --

SE: We never spoke to them. We never spoke to the Germans. We had no contact, personally with Germans, so we -- we never spoke to the Germans.

Q: So your contact with the guards would have been Ukrainian?

SE: No, th-they were -- they were oversme, you never spoke with them, they were your -- you -- you --

CE: They watch you always.

SE: They watch you, yeah.

CE: They attend you -- they watch -- watch you what you're doing.

SE: We were below their level, they didn't speak with Jews. They di -- anyway, they didn't speak to us, ever.

Q: So, was it important to develop a secret way of communicating from the very beginning -- language, both in the eyes and also little words, that only you would understand?

SE: Oh, we had names for the Germans.

CE: Nicknames.

SE: Yeah, nicknames, so we know when -- when the German came, then we called him.

CE: [inaudible] somebody came and we wanted t-to get noticed everybody, so we said,

Fieecru, we called one -- there was a terrible --

SE: It was wagna.

CE: Chairman, it was a wagna. So we called Fieecru. That -- everybody knew what Fieecru is, you see? So that's it. Oh, we have -- the Rolf we called, I forgot the names.

We had for almost all of them we had some name.

SE: Nicknames.

CE: Nickname. That just among us, we understood what it is.

Q: Can you remember how you decided -- because I was so impressed how the two of you spent so much time together, you know, all the time -- how you would communicate to each other, where you would meet tomorrow or the next time or --

SE: No, what it was, I was good -- we were not allowed to take any food when the packages came and I was on -- on -- tomboy and I didn't see the danger, I think. So I took always a lot of food home -- home, where we slept and then I s -- I -- I divided it to Chaim and I had a cousin there and her -- and she had -- and another girl. And I came with another girl, Ula -- Usla Stence, she was a survivor, she's died very young, in -- in Israel. And, so I div -- we divided the food always with -- so that we met each other again in the evening.

CE: In the evening, after work.

SE: After work, we met each other and what I fo -- what brought a food we di -- we were eating. Because the food which you got in Sobibór --

CE: You couldn't --

SE: -- you couldn't -- you couldn't live on.

Q: So, this was another way that you survived.

CE: That's right.

SE: Oh, that's right, definitely, yeah. When av -- when we would have eaten just as food what the people get, a lot of peop -- Dutch people came and they didn't get that extra food when they didn't worked an-and assorting clothes and we couldn't divide it to -- over so many people, but how much can you put in your underpants and in your bra, you know? And so, they died very soon, a lot of them died very soon and got sick and it -- for the food alone, what you got at Sobibór, you couldn't live.

CE: If they caught you, they shot you.

Q: If they got you what?

CE: Caught you, a -- have some stolen food, they shot you. And a lot of people got shot, but anyway, regardless, whoever worked at the clothes, couldn't stand the temptation not to take it and they stole the food. And if they caught you, they shot you.

SE: One man, they shot him because he opened a bleke of sardines and he put them on a piec-piece of -- of an old door. And he was almost dead, they almost killed him and they say, "That will happen to you when you open a card -- any sardines or anything you



open.” And we all had to look at him and we all stand outside -- that was from the beginning where we were in camp.

Q: I am going to ask the question and then change the other side, so you can think about it. I would love to know something about the time between work and sleep, how you occupied your -- your time during that time and we're moving over to --

SE: [inaudible]

CE: Well, [inaudible]

Q: -- side -- we're moving over to side two of cassette one.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Chaim and Selma Engel. This is tape number one, side two. We are talking about, if possible, the time spent between work and sleep -- what would you do, how would you spend time together, or separately?

SE: Most of the time, was -- is something going on, like or -- or came in a transport, unexpected and then we were closed up, we were scared that they want to kill us. Or -- we didn't do much.

CE: If -- if we -- it was no transport, nothing special, is when we came back, they gave us some food, some soup. We called it spit soup, because it was -- I don't know, from the skin from the corns or something, there was --

Q: Corn husk.

CE: Corn husk, whatever you call it, that was our meal and a -- we got a bread what they divided bread about a three f -- quarter of a foot long, divided by five, six people. That's what you had to have for 24 hours. And some black water which are called coffee.

SE: Yeah, but also --

CE: [inaudible]

SE: Yeah, when I came home -- when we came home, w-we were on the lice and the -- and the blank -- I had a blanket over and it was -- i-in the [indecipherable] animal is oke -- dirt, really and so we -- the whole evening, we were trying to get the lice and -- and all the other vunsen, I don't know what the name in English is, but we get -- t-take it out. So what did we do more? And I was taken -- I got typhus.

CE: That --

SE: I got typhus.

CE: Yeah.

SE: So he came always over and made sure that I eat something or something like that and hold my hand. And I wa -- I was very sick. I think I was a long time sick in camp. I don't remember much about it. But -- so that's the reason there's a big piece in camp that I don't know anything.

CE: That's basically what happened. We were busy -- we were busy -- we had only free really, that there could be no -- any activities, maybe an hour or something.

SE: An hour, yeah.

CE: Something. And -- and nine o'clock you have to sleep -- go to bed -- sleep, closing.

That's -- that --

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah.

SE: [inaudible]

Q: So in this larger one --

CE: Yeah.

Q: -- well, the men had a barrack and the women --

CE: Oh, yeah.

SE: Here -- we slept here and there slept the men. We slept here.

Q: So about how far apart were you?

SE: Pretty far.

CE: Yeah. I would say about 50 -- no, 150 feet. Something like that.

SE: I have no idea, no, maybe I'm [inaudible]. I don't remember.

CE: [inaudible]

Q: Did they -- did they, even though they -- the -- yeah, I guess it was your friends who called you the bride and bridegroom?

SE: No, the German, too.

Q: The German too?

SE: Yes, that's true.

Q: Did they have --

CE: Because we were always together on this --

SE: That's right, we always together.

CE: On the role call we were together, we were together --

SE: [indecipherable], sometimes at night we would stay to the role call in our ono where we were staying and -- and we made sure that we stayed together, we -- you know, and then this vonsta was the -- all these people were shot, we made sure that we stayed together. And -- and we walked to work. I don't know, that I don't remember.

CE: They saw that we always are together so that's the reason they called.

Q: So this brings up the question, although I suspect the answer, did the Germans have any way to -- to -- they recognized any Jewish marriage?

SE: No.

CE: No.

SE: No. We never -- we didn't even think about marriage. No, no, no -- you did -- no, not at all.

Q: When did you actually get formally married?

A: In Holland, where we came to Holland.

Q: Not until Holland?

SE: We went to the town hall once, with two people --

CE: After we ran away. After we ran away -- we ran away of 1944. So the Germans were --

SE: In 1944 we got freed. And -- and the Germ --

CE: Sorry, in '43, I'm sorry.

SE: Yeah.

CE: In October 14, 1943 was the uprising and then we ran away and we ran to the woods, and you better tell about in the camp -- in the -- when I ran away, we met the other group of the uprisers.

SE: Oh yeah, we met a group of -- of -- of people and they want to shot Chaim, because they -- we thought we go together with them -- my -- because that -- that they didn't like me, I spl -- jumped in front of him and they didn't shot him because I think they didn't want to shot me. So we went just away with the two of us, and we were hidden somewhere by a farmer in a little town. Chaim give the man some money and we were slept in the attic and in that town, what we had later, they -- they found a lot of -- lot of Germans -- lot of Jews, the Germans went after, looking. And thank God they moved --

CE: Oh yeah, when we ran away, we were almost four miles from the camp in the morning, after running the whole night, because --

SE: [inaudible] your question, what was your question?

Q: Okay, we got a little bit ahead of ourselves and so I think what I want to try to do right now, is to stay in Sobibór and I wanted to ask you each, other than each other, can you remember the names of your friends? Did you make good friends?

CE: No, I don't. I don't remember any names of friends, because it was short-lived friends, because we met them in the camp and later we mostly didn't see them any more.

SE: They died all.

CE: They all died. Most of them died.

Q: And so --

SE: I had -- I had some very good friend. I had -- va -- what I came together from Amsterdam, from jail, Ula -- Uja Lestan. And I had a cousin there. So, U-Uja Lestan --

Q: And your cousin's name?

SE: Annlee Nattons. And she came from Holland. And Uja Lestan was German, was -- she came as a little girl to Holland. And she made it, she ri -- she suffered -- she suffered tremendous, she was in the woods and she su -- su -- traveled to [indecipherable], so she was my best friend. She was my buddy, too. When you get sick, you have to have always somebody next to you, what -- what helps you and things like that. So she helped me a lot and Chaim of course, too. And -- and so we helped each other. I mean that was always from -- Uja Lestan made it. So we had it, in camp. But I didn't -- that was such a big secret, the uprising, that I was not allowed to tell anybody and -- and she was not allowed to tell anybody, so we really didn't tell anybody. I didn't tell anybody. Of course that was -- like a very big secret. You just have somebody what gets hys-hysterical, then you lost.

Q: Yes, and I was thinking that maybe since the uprising seemed to be organized primarily by men, that mi -- there might have been a very quiet inner circle of women who knew.

SE: Yes, that's the way -- that's the way it was, there was a --

Q: And you -- you were one of those women?

SE: No, Chaim told me. I was not -- not involved with anything with it.

CE: Be-Because I was -- because she was Dutch and she didn't speak any Polish, and it was very -- only between the Jewish -- the Polish Jewish and the Russian Jewish, that we -- that we -- the planning of the camp -- of the uprising. And it was so secretive that even I was not involved in, because I went with her, they didn't trust. But my friends were involved in it and I knew always what's going on.

Q: So, do you remember which friends? The names?

SE: Joseph, from the fireman.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Joseph the fireman.

CE: Yeah.

SE: He told you everything.

CE: Yeah. I -- I think I had some other friends, too. I don't remember the names of it.

Q: And Joseph the fireman -- by fireman, what does that mean, that he --

SE: He had to burn all the pictures from the people and all -- all the -- most --

CE: Documents.

SE: Documents what -- what came in, what came out of the clothes.

CE: The waste. Paper waste, there was a place where they burned all the documents people had, pictures. Ev-Everything what could burn, so there was burning there. Th- There was a fireman specially here, the place where --

Q: Was he Polish?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah. Come from Obleniss -- [indecipherable] from Lindbergh.

Q: Did you have any friends from your village?

CE: No, nobody. No.

Q: So you -- she maybe had more girlfriends than you -- you had --

CE: Yeah, she did.

Q: -- guy friends?

CE: I -- I have -- as I say, friends with -- made in camp, where slept next to me or we worked together, whatever. But not really fr -- fr -- what you call friends, it's not friends. Friends as could be in a situation like that. So, I don't know.

Q: I mean --

CE: Yeah, oh, matter of fact -- I had one friend what -- I don't know if he still lives -- h- he -- Could -- Could Thomas. Could Thomas was the one what was like a medic. He -- whatever possible, he sometimes, he work with a medication or something for -- so he was also my friend, but that was not a friend that really, because --

SE: He's a very selfish guy.

CE: Yeah.

SE: He lives -- and Chaim had typhus and he helped -- Chaim helped him when he has typhus, when Chaim had typhus -- and typhus, when you have typhus, you just don't know what you're doing, you go -- and it was in the winter and he didn't help Chaim. So --



CE: And you have a very high temperature when you have typhus, but you still go to your work. And when he had it, I helped him and I -- when I had it, he didn't do anything for me. So that's the kind of friends I had.

SE: It was typical in a concentration camp. Everybody is --

CE: For himself.

SE: -- is for himself, you know? Is -- they're very selfish, most of the people. Most people are very selfish. Not Chaim. Most people are.

Q: So, your friend the firemen, did he -- he knew he was a part of the underground, or --

CE: He knew it, I don't know if he was especially. They -- if you want to talk about the uprising -- you say you want later to talk about.

Q: Okay, well --

CE: Right. Can I tell you?

Q: I think we're ready now.

SE: Yes. You tell [inaudible]

Q: I think we're ready now.

CE: For the uprising?

SE: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, I think so.

CE: All right. The uprising was before -- before the -- the see -- about a month before the uprising, they came -- Russian Jewish prisoners of war, to Sobibór, from Minsk. And they picked out about 30 - 40 of these people to work in camp. And among them was one

Russian captain, who had -- a Russian captain -- Paturski, we -- Sacha we call him. And, as I say, he was a captain in the army. Now, we had plans and we talked about an uprising and there were different plans, some realistic and some not, but there was -- the ma-main thing what was lacking is the courage and a good planning. When he came there -- when they came there, w-we start to talk with him, they want to run away the first day. So we told him it's not so easy to run away and also told him that we have our mapl -- our own plans and let's talk it over, maybe we can do it. Anyway, it ended up, we're talking so much, we made it up to make a plan how to escape. And the plan was that we worked usually til five o'clock, so decided at four o'clock, th -- our uprising will -- will have started. And the way it would be is, in each group, we work with group -- we had always about two, three of Germans what supervisor of the watch does. And it was decided -- people were assigned to go and kill and this -- each group, two -- two people were assigned to kill the German and just hide him with a magazine, whatever and then go through like nothing happened. And all the -- the wires were cut -- electric -- telephone wires were cut and that one -- that's the way for about an hour -- in this hour had to happen, everything. And it was progressing very good. And the barracks where we lived here, there were working places --

Q: You're pointing to --

CE: Here, here --

SE: No, that's where the German lives.

CE: Yeah, yeah, no. Here were also -- were also like skoltchmids, tailors and shoemakers and the Germans, they usually work for the Germans, yeah. They usually work --

SE: No, looks here, here --

CE: Yeah.

SE: -- here [indecipherable] that's where the German live.

CE: They usually --

SE: Here's the tailors and the -- and the goldsmith. Here was the sh-shops. And here's where the man slept and here's where the women slept.

Q: So the shops were in between?

SE: In here, in here, in -- in here.

CE: In the same barrack of the same section.

SE: Here we have ever slept. With no bivon.

CE: [indecipherable]. So, they usually work for the Germans, they fit on shoes, coat, things like that. So they called in these people to come to measure out shoes fitting or things like that. Why that happened was they killed their olversum, so there was killed about -- I don't know, about 10 - 12 jammers, about three - four --

SE: We don't know exactly.

CE: Roughly about. And some were cleaning card. And when it was five o'clock we went back from the working place to the place where we always went back, where we slept, to the -- the main gate. W-We came back and there was already tension a lot, because people start to see what's going on, there was nervous and confusion.

SE: They start already shooting all over, from ou -- every side. Did you tell the -- oh.

CE: That's all right.

SE: When we -- Chaim say to me, "You have to be in four o'clock by," -- there was a -- and one building there were older -- m-medicine and all the little things was in that building. So, said he'd be -- on four o'clock -- where was the building, here? I don't know where the building was.

Q: Was it near the front gate?

SE: No, no, no, there was a vamp for everybody

CE: No, no. [indecipherable] camp -- camp two, somewhere.

SE: Yeah, somewhere in camp two here, there's a buil-building. And I was there and I walked out, he said, "Put a lot of clothes on." So I put all my sweaters and another vest on and I walked to him and I -- and when we were standing there, one of the men were -- went around and told how many are all killed, say to one of the guys, which is staring at us outside, you have to go and kill this German, that was Newman.

CE: Newman.

SE: What was the -- no.

CE: Baker, I think.

SE: Baker? Oh yeah, Baker. And he -- this man was in an office, on the way -- this office -- let me say here, when we walked here, we had to walk past this office and he was there, so said Chaim, "You have to go. Because w -- are already so many killed, SS's

killed, when you don't go, we're dead anyway." So, he didn't want to go, so Chaim went instead of him. So Chaim stayed and I went inside and took a knife --

Q: You -- you went in the office, also?

CE: No.

SE: No, I went in that -- in that building where all that food were -- a -- our things were and I'd give him a knife and at once he was gone. And I was so upset, it was Chaim, it was Chaim. So I li -- I went looking through this office and I hear screaming like -- oh, there was a pig k-killing, so much noise. And he help, with another capo, a Jewish capo, helped to kill this Baker.

Q: And were -- this was not part of the plan?

SE: No.

CE: Not at all, there was -- because I -- as I say, I didn't had any assignment.

Q: You what?

CE: I didn't have any assignment that I have to kill somebody, but the situation was so last minute, you do what you can to save the situation. Because w-we would have been killed anyway, without the uprising, especially with an uprising, so it was just a question of -- of [indecipherable]. So, I figured, if the fellow want to go in, so I have to go and we went together -- a matter of fact, the knife I slipped -- the knife I shoved -- knife I cut myself and I came out, I was bleeding and Selma gave it -- she had a handkerchief, she bandaged me and it was full of blood. And we went to the front gate, aft --

Q: Let's stay with the -- the killing a little bit, just because it's such a -- I know -- a terrible experience to -- first of all, you were not chosen to do that, but who was it that told you to?

CE: There is another fellow, as we said, he was assigned to go to do that. But he got afraid the last minute, so we didn't have anybody to go and it has to be, as she said, he was in a place where we had to pass there and if we wouldn't have been, we would have been all in danger, so --

SE: And if one person couldn't go -- that it was too much a job for one person, so one -- ch -- p -- Pazifski --

CE: Pazifski.

SE: Pazifski. That is in capo was that and he went, so he couldn't have done it alone, so he --

CE: Yeah.

SE: -- had counted that somebody else comes there too, that was the --

Q: A capo?

SE: A capo what went there, he killed three other ones and then he went there and he got killed later himself, he didn't come out. And -- and so Chaim went there and Chaim, when you killed that man --

CE: Yeah, I said, it -- it's job with the knife, I said, "This for my father, for my brother, for all the Jews which you killed," that's when I jabbed him with the knife.

Q: So you killed him with a knife?

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah, but not alone --

CE: Not, the --

Q: He did with somebody else.

CE: The other one -- was another fellow too, he stabbed him too with the knife.

Q: The capo?

CE: The capo yeah, both -- we both did it.

SE: And you know, also, the reason that we know for sure there would something happened, th -- lately the camp got very big, we had to build up lots of barracks and -- and it got -- they build it up that 100 -- 100 people could sleep there. So we se -- we know for sure there's something going on. And it -- and there came no transports, there were no transports any more. And the Germans -- they were already pulling back. So we thought they're building perhaps for the Germans in camp. And so we were -- we know that -- and it was something that was not s-safe and we know thewas was going on. So that's the reason also that -- that they pushed it more and many Russian militaire came to camp and he wants to run away the first day what he saw what is going on and that helped all -- of course, too. When it was o -- the reason was also that they made the camp very big and a lot of Jewish people came also there, from Minsk and so, we thought, why are they building so much? It so does -- and it wa -- there came no transports, so the camp was really not necessary for the Jews any more. So that's the reason also that we -- that they thought it is very important that there is an uprising.

Q: And y-you seemed to know right away that they were talking about it, but then when it became to a plan, they did not share it with you, or -- how did you find out?

CE: No, as I say, I have the friends, what they were involved in and I knew always what was going on. So I knew about everything what's going on, so.

Q: Did you know that they were meeting, many of their underground meetings happen at the women's barracks?

CE: Yeah, yeah they -- I met -- I -- I know -- I knew about whatever was talk about them -- the uprising, I knew everything about. But, as I say, I didn't want directly involved in it, because -- that was becau-because my friends were in it, but the - -the head of the uprising, he made restrictions, how many people, because it was -- kept it so secretly, if it comes out, it's the end of it, so.

Q: Must be hard to keep a secret in a camp.

CE: That's right. People get desperate and people talk too much about and there comes out too -- too quick.

Q: And the feelings you have had since about -- how did it feel to kill someone, because you ju --

CE: You are not amont, you -- you live differently in a situation like that. You don't think you -- five minutes ahead. You just live on the moment. You do what you have to do this minute. That is -- that is way you act, we -- because you know your death is any minute before you, so --

Q: And did you use the knife that Selma gave you, or did you have a knife?



CE: No, no, that is the knife she gave me. I didn't have a knife.

SE: It was a bread knife. Was just an ordinary bread knife.

CE: [inaudible] knife.

SE: Yeah. It broke off

CE: No, it broke off, I cut myself here.

SE: I know that, too.

Q: It broke off in the body of the -- of the SS?

CE: No, I slipped. Slipped in my hand there.

SE: I thought that the knife broke off a piece.

CE: No.

SE: Oh.

CE: No.

SE: We never talked about it and we never go join the [indecipherable]. There's a part where we don't talk much about it.

Q: Yeah, I -- I know. I'm only asking for to clarify anything, any little detail that you might remember, might help to clarify this story, you know, so.

CE: I -- I think that what we told you, there should be clar -- clear tha now.

Q: Okay. Okay, the -- the other part I would talk about now, how -- how you got out at the gate and where you were in relation to everyone else who was running and the mines and --

CE: Well, when we came back from work, when we c --

SE: [indecipherable]

CE: When we came back from work, we -- as I say, we walked normally like always, after working in a -- all oddly way -- we went back and we came to the main gate, where we lived, through -- through here -- through here, over to here is the gate over here.

Anyway, we came back there and there was, as I say, a big confusion, everyone is standing. A lot of people ran on to mines and got killed there. A lot of people ran to the front gate and dustare got killed there, too. Somehow we ran to the front gate and we were lucky, we came out of the --

SE: They started shooting already.

CE: And there was --

SE: Franzel started shooting already.

CE: [indecipherable] started shooting way ahead time, because there were some rifles, some of the people from the camp, they were -- already had some rifles. So they were also shooting. So the chairman, Franzel, he had a ha -- an emerald in his hands, yeah?

SE: [indecipherable] pail, I sawsee in the front of him. And also the people on the towers, they starting shooting too.

CE: Yeah. So anyway, we went to the front gate and we got out of the front gate.

SE: Over you hear, on the -- on the -- on both sides you hear the mines falling -- and that people falling on the mines. So you hear that on both sides.

CE: We ran as fast --

SE: We heard screaming.

CE: Yeah, we ran as fast as we can -- we had --

SE: And shooting in back of us.

CE: We had still a quarter of mile we had to clear, to the woods, because from the entrance to the camp, til there was still about a quarter of a mile and it was raining, I think, or something. It was raining.

SE: [inaudible]

CE: And we came in the woods and so we start to ran as far as we can, but it seems we didn't go too far. Was the whole night running, we were about four miles away from -- from camp.

Q: And were you with a group at first?

SE: No.

CE: No, we were always [inaudible]

SE: Just were the two of us. We were just with the two of us. We run and run and run, we were just with the two of us. And --

CE: Again we -- the thing that -- we were in the woods for an hour, maybe something, we found another group -- a group of our other inmates which ran away and they had some rifles and --

SE: But we just told this story.

CE: Yeah.

SE: That we -- just told you the story that they want to shoot Chaim and then I jumped in front of him and then they didn't shoot him. I jumped --

Q: Why would they want to shoot him?

SE: Because they didn't want me. They were afraid for some Dutch woman what -- what -- what will they do with somebody who -- what doesn't speak Polish and not Yiddish? So they want to get rid of me, that's what we think, we don't know. Anyway, we went farther just with the two of us.

CE: That they didn't want us.

SE: Yeah

CE: That they didn't want us. So we just --

Q: It was too many more, or?

CE: Yeah. Well, I don't know the reasons. Anyway, they didn't want us, so we decided to go on our own. I was thinking, because I -- as I said, I worked as a farmer before I came to Sobibór, I thought maybe I go in this direction. So --

SE: We walked with the stars.

CE: We walked --

SE: Out the stars, was a lot of stars and when it was night we walked and in daytime we were hiding in the woods or in an -- ha-haystack or -- sometime -- once we went stayed with another farmer what Chaim give him money, again. So we -- we slept outside and we eat the things what we saw on the -- on the field. Til we came one day -- and we don't know really the time, it was 10 days or something like that, til we came by a farmer. Chaim ask him if auseda -- if we could stay there.

CE: We had -- when -- before we ran away from the camp, we were thinking about sometimes they ran away. So we were hiding valuables, what we found in the luggage, like gold, diamonds, money, things like that. We were hiding it over at this fireman's place. The fireman -- because there was everything fire burning, so we brought some valuables sometimes and he was hiding in the ground. When we ran away, then we can take it with us. Now, before we ran away, the day we sort of go to ran away, we took all these things what we put away and put it with bandages on our legs, so we had money and valuable things we had with us.

Q: By we, who do you mean?

CE: We. I -- I ran away. When we -- the people ran away, probably all of us did the same thing.

Q: No, I mean your valuables. You said we, were there more than you and the fireman that hid your valuables there?

CE: I -- I say we, but I mean ma --

SE: He always says we.

CE: I mean I --

SE: You.

CE: -- was hiding --

SE: You took that. You did

CE: Yeah, and I took it with -- with me, the money, because I thought that we would go to ran away. And so, that is if we had money after we're out, so we had money and

valuables with us. So when we ran away and we came to people, we wanted to be hidden. So we offered them, we said, "Whatever we have," and we showed them what we have, if they go to keep us, say, "Can I have everything?" Til one day, we came to a farmer, he was very nice to us and he says -- we ask him the question of he wants to keep us or the money. He said, "I cannot do it, but I have a brother what lives about 10 kilometers noss - - away from me and he lives on little more isolated place, he probably willing to do it." And he took us, he put hay on a wagon -- this atop was an old lady and me he put on olm wagon, excuse me and -- and covered me with branches and he drove us to his brother. Now, that was very dangerous, because if the -- on the road was caught us, we all would have been dead on the spot. Also his family, which was very --

SE: Caring.

Q: This is the end of cassette one, side two.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Chaim and Selma Engel. This is cassette number two, side one. Okay.

CE: So, this -- he took us to his brother and we talk with the brother and the brother agreed to keep us.

SE: No. No, we -- we had to wash ourselves and he saw that the money what we had all on you. And then he started to keep us.

CE: She knows the detail better.

SE: Yeah, I can remember that very well.

CE: All right. He -- he agreed to keep us and -- and we were there with him for about --

SE: Nine months.

CE: Yeah, for --

SE: And we -- and was we -- I -- I saw that -- and now we think it is -- was an heroic -- heroic -- heroic -- how you call that?

CE: Heroic.

SE: Heroic thing, what he did, but we had a very difficult time. We lived together with a cow, on top of the cows, we were covered with fleas on us, we had lice, we had a scabies and we were undernourished and we didn't get much to eat and there was a pail in the front of us and that was our bathroom. And we -- we slept under a roof there were holes in and -- it -- and rats and -- and -- and -- and we were -- we never could wash ourselves and we never -- they were afraid to get -- to come downtown -- downstairs, so nine months

long we didn't wash ourself and -- it -- it was a ver-very difficult time. Very, very difficult time. But still it was tremendous what he did, because he could shoot a -- shoot us too, like Chaim's friend, what was on the fireman, he went to a farmer and the farmer say, "Yeah, I will take care of you, you can stay here." And in the middle in the night he went to him and killed him with a hayfork and took all the money what he had.

Q: Now, I wanted to ask you how you found out about that story?

SE: What story?

Q: How did you find out that the fireman was killed?

SE: Oh, that we heard after the war, from somebody -- from a gavy --

Q: After the war?

SE: Yeah, after the war we heard.

Q: Okay, because you -- you then went after the war to a Sobibór --

SE: No, we -- we went to Helm, there's a little town next to where we were hidden and there all the Jews told their story. In a house we stay -- after the w -- 1944, when -- after nine month that we were with the farmer, then we went to Helm, that was 15 miles from that, we were hidden and there ca -- we came together in that house that belonged to a Jewish people and it was a hundred people were there, but all for the partisan and everybody and everybody tells the story. And then they tell the story, people what know about y-yashi and he told us about that.

Q: When was the -- where were you for the end of the war? Do you --



CE: We were at the farmer and -- matter of fact, a day before the Russian came, is -- is the children -- not the children --

SE: No, d-day before the Russian came, there was some birds and they flying up where we were hidden. And there was all children playing and they went -- run after these birds and at once they saw us. When they came on top of us and we were hidden there. So they went downstairs, but it was already the whol -- there were a lot of people already there, because they ran away from the Germans, like Polnisha people and so that was our safety, because the next day the German came and --

CE: The Russian came.

SE: The Russian came and freed us. So, thank God that was -- just happen. So thank God it was -- just happen. Ma -- the ti-time that we were hidden, once also that we moved, when we were laying on straw on the -- on the roo -- a-above the cows. So yavae you move a little bit that you can here and we moved and somebody was there and he say, "What is upstairs?" And he say there's some birds or something like that. So at that time, when he slept, I was not allowed to sleep and we were very careful that nobody could hear, so we had to lay very, very quiet and always when we were sleeping and we couldn't talk, only whisper. And we couldn't walk. So, i-it -- it was very, very difficult, very difficult, nine months long. After the war, when I started walking, I was so weak that I couldn't not -- almost not walk. And when I said -- and when the war was over and I came out, I was six months pregnant, but I didn't know. And a woman from the family saw it on me, ma -- we say no, no, no, no. And she --

Q: She said no?

SE: No, she say that I was preg -- I say no. Well, we didn't know. We didn't know. I had never my period, so I didn't know that the -- if I felt pregnant [indecipherable] and I didn't know much about the whole thing anyway. And he didn't know much about it either. So, she wanted to send us away. Well, we say, no, you imagine it. It's just she's ve-very weak and she's just do-doesn't eat much and that's the reason she looks so bad.

Q: Well, how did she see you?

SE: You could see it on somebody what is pregnant, yeah.

Q: I thought you said you were hidden.

SE: Yeah, we were hidden. Once she asked us come down of she -- she brought perhaps the food to us.

CE: No, that was so -- they -- they didn't believe that we gave them all the money --

SE: You're right, forgot.

CE: So, they put us, for one night to sleep in another bed a porks -- bed of pigs.

SE: They were pigs, yeah.

CE: Bed of pigs, so they -- we went down, they saw us, they said --

SE: And theys get to saw us, yeah.

CE: And they checked at everything --

SE: Yeah, checked at --

CE: All the -- we gave them all the money or something.

SE: Well, we gave them all the money, so we didn't have anything. Yeah, yeah, that's was -- dusun --

Q: So you -- you had no -- you had no idea of your physical condition?

SE: No. No, absolutely no.

Q: You felt no kicking, or?

SE: Yeah, ma he say he -- he saw -- he felt, too, he -- when I said, "Chaim, do you see my stomach goes up and down?" Says he, "My stomach goes up and down, too."

Q: He's -- you said what?

SE: That's true. He say, "You're imagining it, you're imagining it." So I thought also I imagine it. We had -- had no idea. We didn't walk, we didn't -- lay down nine months long. We didn't -- only whispering. We getting much food, so that's the reason that it didn't s-show.

Q: So, it was at this place that you were aware then, that the war was ended?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah.

Q: And how -- who told you?

CE: The Russian, we -- c -- you saw the Russian soldiers, they came and we met them, we went down, met the soldiers. And the next day of two days later --

SE: We saw the Germans running away.

CE: Yeah.

SE: We saw from far away, we saw t --

Q: You what?

SE: We saw the Germans running away, far away, you saw the Germans running away.

You could see them.

Q: From the barn?

SE: Yeah, from the -- from the -- from the roof, there was a little hole and we were -- that's were all we did, l-looking through the hole and watching what is going on.

Q: How far were -- away from Sobibór were you?

SE: How f -- I don't know.

CE: I don't know. Maybe 10 miles.

SE: 10 miles.

Q: 10 miles.

SE: Mostly we're watching were -- storks were on the -- on the roo-roof and we were always watching what the stork did and the stork went away. So the farmer say you have to go, because this -- come -- something dangerous happened. Wh-When storks don't stay, then there is something going on. So one day he say to me -- then the next day he say, "You know what? Do you -- what are you doing, do you look all the time at the storks?" We say yes. He said, "Stop looking." And then the storks came back and then we didn't have to go away.

Q: So he was very superstitious.

SE: Yeah, well --

CE: Yeah, well it was dangerous, what he did.

SE: Yeah.

CE: If they were caught us, they will all be killed. It was very dangerous.

SE: Yes, it's very, very dangerous.

Q: So was it him who came to tell you, or did you --

CE: He -- he brought us every day some food.

SE: No, we could see it, that the Ger -- that the Russian came. The airplanes came over and we saw the Germans running away. So we saw that was that the war was over.

Q: And so, did you come down?

SE: Yeah, we came down, yeah.

Q: And where did you go from there?

SE: After -- when we came down, it was all the people what helped us were there -- were there. Also the family what helped us with the wagon to bring, they were all hi-hidden, they all ran away from where they lived and they went to this farmer. And from there, Chaim start working on the field with the man, because I couldn't walk, so thought perhaps when I learn a little bit walking again. And til one day, the farmer said, "You know, you have to go away," because they hear that are Jews here and the-they -- they -- we -- he was afraid that they want to kill us. So then he brought us off the wagon --

CE: To Helm.

SE: -- to Helm. I -- I remember he brought us and was an black cat walked -- passed by, so he went back and then -- yeah -- and then he brought us farra, yeah. So --

Q: And you were, by this time, almost about to --

SE: No, I ti -- I was in the six months, so I had three months now to go.

Q: And you moved to another place?

CE: Yeah.

SE: Now we went to Helm. In Helm there were all the Jews what -- I thought we were the only Jews what were alive, because I thought every camp is like Sobibór. And it was oh, a hundred people came there, to that house and we slept in a single bed, we didn't hadn't have nothing. We had no money, we had no clothes and we were very weak and we came there and Chaim started working and they had the -- Chaim had to go in the army, the Russian -- in Polish army. So Chaim started working in the hospital as a nurse, he doesn't know se -- he doesn't even know how -- how blood looks. And I started sewing for people. No, I started first cooking in the kitchen and then I burned my foot. And then I started sewing for people to make some money and we made some money, just to live on. And then we had -- it was somebody what the -- all the Jews went back to Sobibór because the -- gesundheit -- and all the Jews went back to Sobibór, a lot of people went back to Sobibór, because the only sabotage which you could do in camp was ha -- taking the money what came in, fr-from the people that went into the gas chamber and they hide it in the ground. So they went back to Sobibór to find that money. Well, there was a lot of money hidden all over.

Q: It was abandoned? It was abandoned?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

CE: Yeah.

SE: So, they were killing each other. So he didn't go. I said, Chaim, we made it so far, we will -- we'll make it without the money.

Q: You mean Jewish people? All the Jewish people?

CE: Yeah.

SE: Ye -- All -- all Jews and not Jews, everybody, everybody. So one wom -- man had dol -- gold dollars and it was the number was gone. So Chaim knows already a few people around -- well, we lived a year there in the area for Helm and so Chaim say to this man, "Give me the money and I will go and find somebody where I know, perhaps he can change it for me." And at night when we sleep, we put it under our heads and somebody stole it. We don't know who. So the man didn't believe us, of course and so we -- Chaim made some money, he gave it to him. Now 10 years later, we live in Israel and is in a whole group of people from Sobibór coming together. And I say to the man, "Do you remember, the hundred dollar for you, it was under my pillow, that -- that w-we -- somebody stole it under?" And the next day he was there, he says you owe me hundred dollar -- dollar.

Q: He said, you owe him?

SE: Hundred dollars for the hundred dollars was stolen and --

CE: So anyway, that's beside the story too far away. So --

SE: No, that is co-connected with the whole thing that it -- ot later, you [indecipherable] any more.

CE: Yeah, then we had somebody, you know, a Frenchman, what is his name?

SE: No and then we -- we -- we were in Helm and -- and we couldn't stay there, because we lived in a very small area, with hundred people and -- and -- a --

Q: This was an apartment house?

SE: No, was a whole house. Was a whole -- just a house, like this.

Q: A house with a hundred people?

SE: A house. Yeah, they all slept on the floor.

Q: Were they Sobibór survivors?

SE: No, from all over, everybody. From all over. Alls partisan, all people from all over.

Q: Jewish?

SE: Most, yeah, all Jewish -- all Jewish. And so, we couldn't stay there longer, because we slept together in one small bed and it was not to eat and there was nothing for us to do and he had to go in the army as soldier and --

CE: [inaudible]

SE: So -- so -- where am I? Then we start -- we went away -- were freight trains and we trekked from one town to the other an-and in every town we found was some Jews what lived there, where we could sleep overnight. So, one day, we f -- met a man, it was a fr -- somebody from France and he was also a survivor from Sobibór and he told us, "You know, I -- I was -- I live in a town," -- Chaim had to go in the army, in the Polish army. And said he, "I live in a town," Partsiff was the name of the town, "and there's a Jewish woman and she owns a lot of houses. And when you change your name and grow a



mustache and say I think a few years younger or f -- older, older. Then you don't have to go in the army." And so that's what he did. And we went with this French man to the --

Q: What name?

SE: I forgot his name.

Q: No, what name did you change to?

SE: To Krishev, to his mother's name. Chaim's mother's name, Krishev.

Q: Can you spell that?

SE: You have to ask Chaim. Krishev. And -- It's a Polish name. And so we went to that town and there we came and the woman gives us an -- an -- an -- a room. One room and - - and -- and two rooms. And it was very, very neglected, it was -- windows was -- you could put your fingers in between and we didn't have anything, absolutely nothing, no bed -- no -- no chair, nothing. So Chaim started taking from other houses, wood what was t-turned down and he builded a bed for both of us and the baby was slee -- and then later, yeah -- and then later we were so -- was sawing wood, Chaim got pain in his back and the same night, I got pain in my stomach, so -- I didn't know of a -- Chaim had pain, yeah, so anyway, I had to go to the doctor -- to the office.

Q: Could you talk about the birth?

SE: Yeah. So, where -- I -- I had pains, but I didn't know -- I didn't know how -- what kind of a pains it was, or we had to walk to the -- was a school and that was once a Red Cross from the Ge-German doctors were there and I had to walk, we had to walk five miles and we went to that school and there it was then the hospital, temporary hospital.

Q: You were walking in pain?

SE: In pain. And when I came there, I -- they put me in a b -- in an -- on a mattress and they say, "Wait til your -- the baby comes out, then we will help you." Were -- that were German doctors. I didn't know. And I was in tremendous pain, because I didn't walk all the months and it was very hard and I had very tough labor. And Chaim wasn't there, Chaim was not allowed to come.

Q: Where was he?

SE: Making some money, traveling to get -- make some money because we have no -- we had no money.

Q: But he walked you to the hospital?

SE: He walked me to the hospital, yeah.

Q: So he was there?

SE: But he was not allowed to stay there. He was not allowed to stay there, he had to go away. So -- and I was th-three days, four days in -- day and night in labor and this Polish woman, where I couldn't speak with, say I have to push, have to push and so I pushed and pushed and finally the head came to see and then they say, "Go and walk to the other room." So I walked to the other room and the baby came and the baby was healthy and they didn't want to touch me when I had an -- an -- a skin disease, a s -- s -- scabien. That's a very -- from dirt -- from dirt -- that is something which you get from dirt, over my whole body. And so they didn't want to -- the doctors didn't touch me and when I was bleeding too much, they looked under the bed, and said, "Sure, she's bleeding not

too much, because it doesn't drip under the bed." And they didn't give us anything to eat and it -- it was -- it was horrible. So I've -- that was -- are still very anti-Semitic.

Q: Who?

SE: In that -- in that --

Q: Who cut the cord?

SE: Oh, I walked to the other room and they cut the cord and --

Q: You did?

SE: No, th-th-th-there was some nurses and doctors. And then I had to walk back to the other room after the baby was born and I --

Q: Holding him?

SE: That I don't remember. That I don't remember. My -- I got the baby in my bed and they didn't do anything. They didn't clean it, they didn't touch it, they -- nobody touched us. So, after five days, when I was there, Chaim came and took me -- took me on a wagon and he took me home to that apartment.

Q: And the baby was --

SE: And th-that was all -- that was in October. Was it October? I forgot already. Nine October. October ninth, I think, yeah.

Q: A boy or girl?

SE: A boy -- was a boy. And --

Q: You named him?

SE: Yeah, I named him Federant -- F-Freddie. No, a-amy -- Em-Emanuel, because Chaim's father's name was Samuel and my father's name was Samuel. So we called him Em-Eman-Enam-Emilchi-Emilchi we called him. And he -- it was a very health -- it was an healthy child, was very small. When the Polish -- was more Polish Jews in that little village, Partsiv and they came and they say, pf-pf-pft -- in that -- in Holland they don't do that. And that means th-th-the me -- ghost -- there will be the bad ghost blowing away, because the baby was so small. The typical Jewish things that they say, pfft -- tu-tu. The ba -- the bad things, they will move away. So Chaim was always traveling to make some money. He went on a train and traveled far away to make some money to b-bought stuff from where the German moved away and they sold it by us, because that was the only way that -- what could he do? So --

Q: You were in the two room house?

SE: Were two -- was not a house, was a little apartment. It was -- it was we had no pots and pans, where there was no heating, there was no -- it was the winter -- we got winter in.

Q: No way to boil water?

SE: I had a big pan and there was a hole in it, put it -- made bread, all bread, I stuffed it in and -- and we had to make fire wet wood. It was very poor, very primitive.

Q: So you could make fire?

SE: Yeah, you could. Well, wood, what we found outside on -- in the ho -- old houses in that [indecipherable].

Q: You made your fire outside?

SE: No, in -- in the -- wa-was on stove what was made in the -- did the -- but it didn't work very well. And, so that -- we make then hot water and we cooked this way. Chaim told me how to cook, he doesn't know how to cook a potato, my -- he taught me how to cook. And so the baby was -- did -- did -- no, the baby was sick. When I had dysentery and the baby got dysentery, so it was not a very healthy baby, and --

Q: You were nursing?

SE: I was nursing and I didn't know how -- I -- sort to hold him, the baby on the -- on my breast. And there was another girl what was alive, Usula Stern. And she was alone and she was in an house with all Jews and she was very unhappy, so she came to live with us. And that -- so then I had some company, because Chaim went away always, for -- sometimes for six weeks and I was all alone with the baby and I couldn't talk Polish and I -- and I --

Q: You couldn't talk what?

SE: Pole -- Polish -- Poles -- Poles. And only -- Polish.

Q: Oh, I see, you couldn't speak to anyone.

SE: I couldn't speak the language. Couldn't speak the lang -- so I couldn't speak with anyone, I cou -- I didn't know what water is, milk was and breads and vegetables, that if -  
- few words I could say.

Q: And they didn't speak German?

SE: No, nobody speaks German in Poland, nobody. So it-it was -- and I didn't speak Yiddish, so with the few Yiddish peo -- Jewish people I couldn't speak with, when they s -- s-speak German, so it was a very miserable time. So this girl Ula came to live with us.

Q: Dutch?

SE: How poor we were -- Dutch -- and how poor we were, but we took her in and that was for us an blessing. So he could go away and I was not alone. And I was much happier person. So then one day, Chaim was in Lublin and there were -- he met an -- an -- and a Dutch captain. And Dutch captain say -- say to him that we go on a transport to -- to Russia, because the war was still going on b-by -- in Warshow, inst -- the -- the -- the German -- the Russian was standing before Warshow, yeah. They were standing before Warshow, the German -- the -- the Russian. Oh.

Q: I was wondering if maybe while we're in this place, we could go to Chaim now and find out how you made a living -- where did you go when -- when you had to leave her alone and how did that feel?

CE: Th-The places where the German moved away, there was always some more products mal -- things that they could buy and sell.

Q: Where the Germans abandoned?

CE: Where the German were, yeah. So there was -- they left -- there was -- where the Germans were was still -- they had more -- there was certain products, so we are always went there -- the way I went -- the way I went there is -- there wasn't any really --

transportation. I went with fate wagons, I just tried to -- like hijacking, but -- not high -- not hijacking.

SE: Yeah.

Q: Hitchhiking.

CE: Hitchhiking. Hitchhiking -- with the train, I went with the freight train, I just went on the train and -- and sometimes --

SE: The cold -- was winter. Was cold and winter.

CE: So, I went and I bought certain merchandise and I brought it with me and I sold it where we -- where we lived and I made this mon -- that's the way I made money and -- and she could live on this money, of this money what -- what I made and sold, so she could live and I could go again buying. And that's the way really, we su-supported ourself.

Q: And you would be gone weeks at a time?

CE: Yeah, because --

Q: Where would you sleep?

CE: Sleep -- ask for, I -- mostly was with a Jewish people, you know, you -- you knocked on the door and you say you are Jewish and thingstha the Jewish people. There were some Jewish people down here. So, that's where I slept. And one day I came in some place and -- and I don't know, there was not Jewish people and they were having some drinking, some this ome woodka, someth -- what they make and I drank that and I was so

drunk, I slept the whole day, I slept whi -- during the day, I happasli all day. And so that was once happen --

SE: And when you woke up, they stole everything from you.

Q: What?

SE: And when he woke up, they stole everything from him.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Everything what he had.

CE: I had zow that was really illegal what I did, so if the police caught you, they -- once they caught me, they took me, everything away. And I was desperate, I mean that's the only thing, with the little we sell, that we could buy again and that's what we support ourselves.

Q: What kind of items were you selling?

SE: [inaudible]

CE: I remember I had shoe pasta --

SE: I never saw what he bought, I -- it was [indecipherable]

CE: -- shoe pasta -- I don't know -- don't remember -- I remember just shoe pasta, remember. And it was very scary to go where I lived, but there you could get more. I want to Bialystok, to places where they just left. And that is the way we support ourself, til --

SE: Why was that -- why was that not legal? I don't understand.

Q: Well, like a -- for a license, you had to --



CE: Yeah, there was --

Q: To this day, even in New York, you have to have a license to sell.

CE: Anything.

Q: Is that it?

CE: Yeah, that's what it is. So once a sasaga caught me and they took all my merchandise away. I was very desperate, very --

SE: [indecipherable]

CE: Yeah, I -- somehow I got something back, I think it's -- because I could do it. I -- I don't know how I got the first money to buy the things.

SE: I don't remember.

CE: I don't remember either.

Q: So was it hard to be away from Selma?

CE: Sure. But -- but just all the way we had to have -- we had to live. So we had to have some support and that was the thing I could do. And --

SE: You had no choice. Nobody helps you. And no -- nobody helps you.

CE: That -- that what we did.

Q: I -- I am just thinking a -- what -- since we're talking so much about the way you lived, I wondered how -- outside the camp, were you able or did -- were you interested in celebrating of the special Jewish days?

SE: We didn't know even it was Jewish holidays. No, we didn't do.

Q: So there was no such celebration in the camp either, like Yom Kippur?

SE: Yeah, there was. Oh yeah, there was.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Oh yeah, there was.

CE: The helper to this Friedlander, he was a son of a rabbi, he was one of the organizers on the uprising and he kept up with the things. He -- he -- when Yom Kippur was -- you know, when Yom Kippur date -- on day of Atonement. And he kept up this kind of thing, but we --

SE: You know, we went away from that village, was it not that we want to --

CE: Yeah.

SE: The partisan or the not Jewish partisan what lived in the woods, they want to kill all the Jews what lived in that village. So, middle in the night we went away and we went to Lublin. And then we went to -- in Lublin, to a Jewish fellow what ran away from camp. Met somebody else.

Q: A survivor.

CE: Yeah.

SE: No.

CE: He ran --

SE: He ran away --

CE: There was once -- there was a group working outside of the camp and -- and there were -- they killed -- these people, they killed a -- an Ukraine guard and they ran away.

SE: Two.

CE: And he was one, yeah he was one of the search for this survivors. And he later lived in --

SE: Yeah, [indecipherable] Lublin.

CE: -- in Vineland.

Q: He left earlier?

SE: [indecipherable]

CE: Yeah, he -- he ran away before the uprising was even. They killed a -- the Ukrainian, they ran away.

Q: Do you remember his name?

SE: Potslevnik.

CE: Potslevnik.

SE: Pots-Potslevnik.

CE: Yeah, he doesn't live anymore, he died.

SE: He -- he died.

CE: [indecipherable] years ago.

SE: He died very young.

CE: Yeah.

SE: He men -- died at least 20 years ago.

CE: At least.

Q: So, did he help you?

CE: No -- yeah.

SE: Yeah. We stayed with him.

CE: We came to stay in his house.

SE: And del Chaim heard about the Dutch cap-captain dat in -- in Lublin so -- he met somebody and -- and they told him that they are going to -- met a train, they are going farther and they will try to get over -- I don't know what they say to you, what did they say to you?

CE: Well, there was a lot of Dutch prisoners of war, somehow they came to be there. And th-the captain told me that they were a transport for this prisoners of war, that they can go back to Holland. Now, the war was still going on -- this Warsaw was -- was o -- the only way they could go is through Odessa, through the Black Sea around Europe, to the Black Sea to Marseilles, to France.

Q: Why?

SE: Yamabee?

CE: Because that's the only way.

SE: First we have to go to ba -- to Odessa. We went over Romania, Hungary -- Hungary and we went to -- to the -- to -- and it tooks at least two months that we sit in an freight train, met 40 - 50 people in two levels and we had a little baby and every time when the train stopped, you ran to a farm, you know, if you could get a little bit milk and I went in the front by the steam from the water, so that I could wash a diaper and -- and was no bathroom there and it was -- we get very little to eat and it took two months and then we went first to Romania and we stayed in a --

CE: Czernowitz

SE: In Czernowitz and we stayed in Czernowitz in -- in an camp, with the -- with Gypsies and -- and I was very sick and the baby was very sick from diftary -- dif -- no, dysentery.

Q: Now we are going to end. This is the end of side one, cassette two. We'll be back soon.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a interview with the Engels. And it is cassette two, side two. And we're -- we're moving now and we can just continue where we are.

SE: We were -- he doesn't sp -- he doesn't speak. We were in Czernowitz and -- and I had to go to the hospital, because the baby was so sick. And so we came in a -- in a Russian hospital and we were very, very poor and we didn't have anything. We lavav with people what had ti -- ti -- dist -- no? Syphilis. And that's what you can get, so, Syphilis. I didn't know even anything about Syphilis. So -- and it was a baby that had Syphilis and it was terrible. It had no blankets, it was a terrible situation.

Q: Not your baby?

SE: No, not our baby. My baby had dysen-dysentery. And so we went with -- and my -- one day Chaim comes, middle in the night and he says, "Selma, we have to go."

CE: The time goes further. We were told what time we stopped with the train -- the train stopped there for a day or whatever and then I hear the train goes away. So I quickly ran to the -- to the hospital and I took her out -- sick, I took her out with ch -- had the child,

that we came back go to the train, but on the train we'll fitta. The train went to Odessa, til Odessa. And -- and -- and Odessa and what was in Odessa?

SE: In Odessa we were -- three months were we in Odessa. And it was -- that's the first time that we hear something from the Red Cross. We never heard anything from the Red Cross before and we -- they brought some food, the now -- the -- now we get good food and the baby got normal food and we got clo -- no, we don't get -- ge -- any clothes.

There were more German people what say they were -- o-okay in the war and they got everything. So by -- the baby got very healthy and it was very beautiful on the Black Sea and we could go -- and who was it too, the father of Anna Frank was there is there, in that same group of people.

Q: On that boat?

SE: No, but -- but on the -- in the camp. Now I talk about we're not up the boat yet.

Q: What was the name of the camp?

CE: It was in Odessa, I don't know.

SE: In Odessa, there is the camp for -- for -- vacation camp for Russian people that go there.

Q: It wasn't like a displaced person's camp?

SE: No, no, no, no, was just an camp for Russian people go on vacation. And --

Q: And they let the Red Cross come in?

SE: Red Cross brought stuff there. Not that we saw them at that -- wethum -- we got food and we got everything. It was ve-very good. And after three months, Chaim was not allowed to go away from Pol -- from Russia. He was smuggled on the boat. So -- so --

Q: And could you explain --

CE: It wa -- it was only for the Dutch people. So the boat went with -- only, as I said, with the pri -- Dutch prisoners of war and Dutch people. And because of her, I kept quiet, alt -- I'm quiet always, but especially kept quiet -- kept quiet then and she were the talking and there was a captain, a Dutch captain. He was very friendly, very nice and she talk with him. And yeah -- and that's the -- I came over -- he probably didn't -- I don't know if he knew or not if I'm Dutch or not. Anyway, I came on the boat.

SE: There was one girl that couldn't come, remember?

CE: That's right. With the boat left and one girl tried to get on the boat, she didn't and we saw her stay in there, the boat went -- left and we went away in [indecipherable]

Q: You remember her face?

CE: Nah.

Q: She was Dutch?

CE: I don't know. Probably not, [indecipherable]

SE: Probably not.

Q: And how did you -- did you -- did you meet Anna Frank's father?

SE: Yeah, but he was so much older, so I didn't know that he would be once famous -- when he would have known that he would be more famous, I would have gone to him.

But he was so much older that I was not really --

Q: Was he alone there, or --

SE: No, he was with more men there, to ke -- also together. They came out of Auschwitz, I think. They didn't -- came from somewhere.

Q: They were coming from Auschwitz?

SE: Yeah, they came from Auschwitz, from the group. I think.

Q: Going back to Holland?

SE: Yeah, I think.

Q: You remember any other -- were there any Dutch friends of yours at Sobibór, or --

SE: No. Ula Lestan? No, I don't know anybody. No, nobody from Sobibór. Only Ula. Ula was in there, too.

CE: Ula was on the boat?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

CE: Oh, oh.

Q: Your friend who had stayed with you was also --

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did she travel that whole time with you, with the freight trains and the baby and --

SE: I don't think so.

Q: But she ended up there?



SE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: In the same place. Anyone else there that you knew?

SE: She was much -- she was much younger, she was three years younger. I was already an old lady with a baby and she had na -- she was a young girl, so she met young people there.

Q: So was there anyone else you recognized?

SE: Yeah, there was somebody from Holland that I recognized, but I forgot his name. Alzafun -- fun Davint or somebody from the city, Davint or -- but I don't remember his name, no. But when we went up the boat, I -- I was very nervous that he got up the boat, so I couldn't nurse the baby. And I went to the kitchen, that's where we think it was and we got milk and it was I think too heavy. We don't know what it was, but the baby was -- was very good, healthy and there was nothing wrong with it and it -- we don't know what happened, but it died in 24 hours.

Q: On the boat?

SE: On the boat. And was buried in the sea.

Q: And -- and how was that -- what was that like?

SE: Oh, what was that like? That was horrible, that was -- that was -- was horrible, was just -- was really diffi-difficult time. He was -- I was very young and un -- unexperienced and -- and we -- I don't know. It was very hard.

Q: Was there a rabbi on boat?

SE: No, was nobody. Was no doctor, was nobody, no.

Q: So you had no doctor and you discovered the baby was -- stopped breathing?

SE: No, the baby didn't -- throwed up of something like that and got very sick and looked terrible, so they put it downstairs, there was a little room for the sick people, but it was no nurse, there was no doctor and they put the baby there and I went downstairs and I tried to s -- anyway, it died.

Q: Yeah. And -- and you -- who helped you?

SE: Nobody helped us.

Q: Nobody helped you?

SE: Nobody helped us, ever.

Q: Nobody was with you when --

SE: Nobody. Chaim.

Q: When you -- when you buried the baby?

SE: Nobody. We had to put the -- the captain and --

CE: The captain.

SE: -- the [indecipherable], they throwed it in the water.

CE: In a ca -- in a casket.

SE: Yeah.

Q: You had a casket?

SE: No, not in a casket.

CE: Not a casket? [indecipherable]

SE: No, it [indecipherable]

Q: You wrapped the baby?

SE: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

SE: I didn't. They did it downstairs. Everything damy.

Q: Someone wrapped the baby?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So they did -- someone else did the wrapping and --

SE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: You were not there when the baby was put in of the sea?

SE: No, no, no.

Q: And no doubt it was a very --

SE: Of course was a -- yeah...

Q: I'm sorry, I'm sorry now.

SE: We were a -- yeah, eight days later we were in Holland. We came o -- in France and they -- they cle-cleans midi and masai and they spra-sprayed a form of DDT. And we were under the louse still, lice. And -- and we went -- we -- they were very nice to us. They made food for us.

Q: Who is they?

SE: I don't know.

CE: The French people.

SE: French people.

CE: On -- all the station where they stopped, when we passed there, they were -- they came with wine, you remember?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

CE: In Fr -- in France, in the stations, where we passed it over -- they came with wine, gave us, you know --

SE: And food.

CE: And food.

SE: And they made a dinner for us, I remember, with white tablecloths, we had a dinner there, somewhere. Oh, so many years ago. And then we went to Belgier, that was not so nice and then we came to Holland.

Q: Traveled by ground?

CE: By train.

SE: By train.

CE: Yeah.

SE: By train. And we came to Holland, there's a -- more people? We don't have to eat for you, what are you doing here? That was Holland. That was the beginning of my beautiful co -- Holland, what I was so in love with.

Q: How was that, seeing Holland after the war?

SE: It was horrible. Because your whole family was killed and you have nobody left, so I had a brother. My brother was hidden in Holland and he had -- and -- four kids, and -- no, three kids and they were all hidden in Holland and -- and the hotel for my father, mother

had a kosher hotel in Zwolle, in town in Holland and that was still there. So we went first and got an guarantee --

CE: Quarantine. What do you mean?

SE: Where we went in the school, when we were not allowed to go out.

CE: Quaran-Quarantine.

Q: You were quarantined?

CE: Quarantined, yeah.

SE: Yeah, yeah, quarantined.

Q: How was that?

CE: I don't know, bec-because we came back from some camp, so I don't know.

Q: You were trying to ask if you --

CE: Why do you la? About that you are better than me, I don't remember. Holland, you talk better about Hol --

SE: So we came in that camp and they were -- were not very friendly to us and so -- and she di - -and so we had to stay first in quarantine for three days and sleep there on the floor in the school building and finally we went with the freight train, they brought -- freight car, they brought us to my hometown. And I remember that I walked to the home and I whip -- I have a whistle. I don't remember the whistle, but we had a whistle for my father and mother and -- my brother didn't feel good and I come walking in, he said, "Esee, I thought I -- I'm not only sick, I thought I'm crazy too, when I saw you

walking.” So I came to the hotel and the Germans were in the hotel for my father and mother, and --

Q: Your whistle now, did you make it?

SE: [whistles] So-Something like that, was a whistle.

Q: Did you do it when you came up the --

SE: Yeah. I whistled to my brother -- to the ho-hotel, to the -- I thought my brother is alive. I had such a feeling that he was alive and I know he was hidden in Holland.

Q: And did -- did someone answer the whistle?

SE: Yeah, he -- no, he came down and he saw that that was me.

Q: After how long?

SE: After five years, four years, five years.

Q: Five years?

SE: Yeah.

Q: So you had not seen the children?

SE: No, I didn't know there was -- yeah, I saw the children w-w-when they were babies, when they were one year old and one and a half years old. So -- I don't know if the children were there already, the children were there from the people where they were hidden? Yeah, the children are there.

Q: He was at the hotel?

SE: He was in the hotel with his wife and the hotel was dirty and it was unbelievable. So Chaim and I, we start cleaning the hotel and we build --

Q: You moved in?

SE: We -- yeah, what was my parents hotel. So was -- my brother was really out of the hotel, when he was married and he lived in another town. So he came back also to the hotel, that only thing what we had and we cleaned up the hotel, Chaim and I, we cleaned up the hotel and we did business again. It was a very good business, because it was on a cattle market, where every week people coming there and bringing cows and the farmers come and buying it. So -- and it was, the -- my father and mother had in that time, was a - - only Jewish hotel, kosher hotel in the whole state, like from -- like Connecticut is Overiceal. So we made very good money in the hotel, but we didn't get along. I have a sister-in-law what is -- didn't do anything and had four children and an -- and it -- it was not a very good understanding. So when we were a few years together, we went out of the business and Chaim met somebody somehow, somewhere on a wigarin -- in -- in Holland you have to have an -- an -- an -- an --

CE: For every business, you have to have a permission -- a -- a -- fahermy.

Q: License?

CE: A license.

SE: License.

CE: And, so it was hard to get a license, but you could -- from her family was people what had textile business and they died, so you -- you could get -- this licenses you can get on your name. So we got a license for textile business. But it was very hard to get a location where to open a business. So I met somebody which she didn't like and -- and I -

- he had the location and we had the license and together we start the business and we did very well in this business.

SE: Til he swindled Chaim for all the money what he had. There was some -- there was the Korean War started out and business got a little bit slower and I don't remember exactly what he did, but anyway, we just came out with our own money. And --

Q: Now, the reason you left the hotel, was?

SE: We didn't get along together with my brother and sister-in-law.

Q: So it was you, but not your brother who left?

SE: No, we did, because he was the oldest in the family and we thought he did --

CE: I came as a stranger and I felt --

Q: What?

CE: I came as a stranger, so I felt, if somebody has the business, the hotel, he should have it. So we just did --

SE: And he was the oldest one for the family.

CE: So we decided -- we decided --

SE: Yeah.

CE: That we would go -- we -- we go to start this textile business and him have the -- the -- the hotel.

Q: So you got no money for the hotel, no --

SE: Not on the moment, no, we didn't get anything. We told him that he should pay us some money, but he never did, because --



Q: How many months were you there?

SE: A few years we were there.

Q: A few years.

SE: A few years. Yeah, a few years. At least, because both kids got born in the hotel.

Q: Now, could you -- now let's do, that's a major -- could you talk about the children born?

SE: Yeah, the -- a the -- va -- I got --

Q: And your marriage?

SE: Yeah, our marriage.

Q: When did you get married?

SE: Oh, we couldn't get married right away because the Dutch government was still in England and also the -- the Polish government was in England. So we couldn't get married in Holland and I was very depressed and -- and my whole family was gone and I -- I looked for them, I went to -- always looking to every town and was nothing there. So, I was -- I wanted to have another baby of course and so we couldn't get married, so finally we got permission from the government, they called us up that -- that -- that we could get married. So there was --

Q: The government?

SE: The Dutch government, yeah. So finally, we got married in Holland.

CE: Yeah.

SE: We got married once in Poland, then we went to the town hall and changed our name.

CE: Yeah.

SE: And then -- that -- it didn't come from the Dutch government and then we got married in '45 or '46.

Q: And when was -- when was the Polish wedding?

SE: No, we didn't have a Polish wedding. I mean, just for the Dutch government we got married.

Q: Oh, you said you got married in Poland.

SE: Poland. That was not a wedding, we just went to the town hall and we changed our name and we say that and that name and took both the same name and were two witnesses and they wrote us down that we were married and that was it, in the town hall, in -- in Pol --

Q: What -- what year was that?

SE: That was in 1944

CE: Four, yeah.

SE: Of -- yeah? '45?

CE: '44, yeah.

SE: Yeah.

Q: Soon after the war ended?

CE: Yeah. We were -- as I say, we were freed already because we were on the side of -- from this side, is the Vexua -- for the river, the wall was by Warsaw. And so the sides from Russia was freed already, they see -- because they're free, because we were in '44 freed and the war ended in '45. So the war was still stagnated -- s-stalemate -- a stalemate, there was -- th-there were not -- not -- didn't move, nothing happened. Til in '45 when the Russian -- Russian moved further to Berlin, things like that [indecipherable], so we -- we were freed already, although the war was not yet over completely.

SE: Yeah, we told you that before. But --

Q: Not the wedding, I -- I didn't hear about --

SE: No, yeah, when we're telling you that we changed our name in Krishev, you remember and you ask me how -- yeah, yeah.

Q: Oh yes, but I didn't hear you say you got --

SE: Yeah, then we took the papers out and that we were married. That was --

Q: Okay.

SE: You know. So, when we came back to Holland, the head of the police in my hometown say that all the people from Poland had to go back to Poland. So, he didn't want to go back to Poland, of course, so I -- he went to Amsterdam, to people what we know and he stayed there for three months and I give up my cit -- Dutch citizenship, because I was afraid when he was sent to Poland, I will stay in Holland, I want to be sent where he goes. I wa -- somebody else should have told me don't do that right away, but I

did it. So, from that time, I had to every week to the police and melk myself, because I was in str -- in -- anoth -- Dutch cit --

CE: Foreigner.

SE: I was a foreigner, I was not a Dutch citizen any more.

Q: And -- and were -- and --

SE: And report myself to the police.

Q: And what was the purpose of his going away?

SE: I don't know. The light at the police say it -- it's -- said it was a mistake, after three months and he didn't have to go away and he could back -- come back to Holland -- to my hometown. So then we stayed and then we opened that -- and then we went out of the hotel and we build our own house. We had it built an house. Because we -- in Holland, was nothing there and th-th-the Dutch people suffered also, tremendous, it was very big suffering not only for Jews, but all for not Jews. The Jews were especially -- and also there were more Jews killed percentage-wise in Holland -- from the 125,000 Jews what lived in Holland, came only after the war, 15,000 dollar -- to 15,000 people back. So there -- as a percentage-wise is a very big, big amount of people are killed in Holland. So -- and so when -- when I give up my citizenship -- was very hard of course. For me was very hard, I came back to Holland and I dream from Holland and the people were not so friendly, nobody really want to know anything from two people what have no money and want to start all over again. So, we had a --

Q: No one remembered your family except your brother?

SE: Oh yeah. No, they remember our family. My -- there were not many Jews left and there were a lot of people what went with the Germans. So, it -- it was -- you didn't know, people that you thought were your friend were really not your friends. So we were very lonely, really, in that time. So we started the textile business and we did very well, we builded a house and we lived a little bit above our l-level. We bought too much, beautiful furniture -- was not my idea, was the -- my husband's partner's idea. And I didn't want this, but I didn't have anything to say, so they did everything for me. So, one day, when the Korean war started out, th-the store didn't do that well, and the man what he has his partner what I know was not a nice person when he started with him, he was desperate, Chaim. He swindled us for everything. And in Holland, it's very hard to start anything. For everything what you do, you have to have a license. When you will start a textile store or you want to start a vegetable store or you want to start anything, you have the license. Only not with the ice cream. So Chaim could buy a business in ice cream and in something else.

CE: [inaudible]

SE: In Breedan, another town. So he -- I had two little babies, so I didn't want to go with him and he went by himself and he came weekends home. And it didn't do well, so we lost also that money that we had -- we lost also in that business. So I -- I see -- I was always a Zionist. I always wanted to go to Israel. I think --and I had an uncle was a doctor and he went to Israel and he say, "Come to us, oh I am much happier, whatever do you do here." And we have no choice also, it was very hard for Chaim to be -- go back to

school, we had two little children, how you going to go back to school? We had to make a living. Nobody ever helped us. Oh, we got some money from the Dutch government, for -- that they stole everything in the hotel. So, davide -- divided with my brother. So --

Q: So eventually the hotel went back to another owner.

SE: To my brother.

Q: Oh, I mean other than your brother. When did you get the money for the hotel?

SE: So, later on, my brother's paid us some -- some money for the hotel. Not much, but a little bit money.

CE: Yeah?

SE: Oh yeah, definitely yeah. And so -- so then we went to Israel.

Q: Before you get to Israel, could you talk just a little bit about the birth of your children?

You had a boy and a girl and when -- when they were born and where you were.

SE: In the hotel, we were in the ho -- we lived in the hotel with my brother and their children.

Q: And this town was?

SE: Zwolle. Z-w-o-l-l-e. And we went to the hospital and the baby were born, I had a d -- a girl, that's one of the girl, that's my daughter.

Q: And her name is?

SE: Alida. And two years later our son was born, Feren, Freddie. Freddie Engel.

Q: What years were these?

SE: That was in 1946, '48. And they're wonderful kids.

CE: '46 and '48

Q: She's a redhead?

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah. Chaim's father was red. And my brother was red.

CE: In that -- people, this picture made my daughter worked somewhere and there was a painter came there and she -- liked her so much, she says, I go to paint you. And she painted her.

SE: Yeah and then she wants to sell it, she couldn't sell it and duza -- and then five years later she saw her in a store where she worked and she said, "Gee, I have a picture for you, you would like to have it?" And she came home, she says, "Mom, would you like to have it?" I said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Go quickly back and get it."

Q: Right here.

SE: That's the painting.

Q: So y-your -- we haven't discussed your philosophical or political beliefs up to now and you say you were a Zionist. Was there organization in Holland you were a part of?

SE: Yeah. When I was a child.

Q: Could you talk about it a little?

SE: Yeah, when I was a child I was belong to a Je -- a Jewish Zion -- Zionist's organization for nin -- from that I was eight, nine years old and we did, we sang always and we made un -- went to camp and to Jewish camps, the camping and -- and I was very active in that and -- and then I -- I never thought that I would go there, because my

parents would never have allowed us -- only girl -- that I would go there. So then in -- and after the war, when my uncle, my only uncle what I had the [indecipherable] was not a real uncle, was a second cousin, was a cousin from my father -- from my mother. So, then he went to Israel and --

Q: His name?

SE: Ithzak Cohen, from Appledon, he was -- and so he went to Israel with his wife and the four -- three children and so -- and then we had no choice really, we didn't want -- and what will we do in Holland? And Holland was not nice to us. Th-Th-The Dutch people didn't help us, the Dutch governor didn't help us, wa -- it's -- I felt like a -- was nothing there, really. Was really nothing there. He loved Holland, Chaim.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about what you thought about Holland?

CE: Well, I loved Holland in comparison with Poland. Holland -- Holland was really ideal. Something new for me. So I loved Holland very much. So -- that I can say about Holland. Holland is a nice country and as -- as she told me from before the war, was the - the situation between the Jews and not be Jewish people, was very good. But after the war it changed a lot. A lot of [indecipherable] until after the war. A lot of people were with the Germans, as she said. She said this your friends and this is not. That's what my experience was as far Holland concerned.

SE: But -- but I had a brother from 22 what went to this Auschwitz, I had a brother from 24, my mother was 52 or 53. So, you know, what do you do in Holland? And I didn't get along with my brother and his wife.



Q: Did you feel that anti-Semitism was very strong after the war, or?

SE: I remember that I wen-went -- they called us for the -- for -- for food stamps, everything was food stamps, say come in the office and I hear somebody say, "Here, see the Jews can go ahead already." And you feel that they -- that they didn't -- they were not -- did first of all they didn't believe there was a Sobibór. That took us a year to tell people in -- in Amsterdam from the Je -- from the Jewish organization that there -- that there was a Sobibór. And --

Q: You mean?

SE: Nobod -- that nobody believed that we told something that was the truth, they didn't believe you. And -- Hol-Holland, I didn't like Holland.

Q: You mean even Jews did not believe you?

SE: No, even Jews -- nobody believed us. Later on, they saw that was true and --

Q: Even the Zionist organization didn't believe you?

SE: I didn't spoke with anybody. It was an -- a professor in Holland what wrote a lot of books about a second World War and in begin, they didn't believe us. Nobody believed us, that they -- they -- they didn -- they never heard about it, because it was prese -- it was completely liquidated, Sobibór, so how will they know? And they say that they didn't -- most Dutch Jews were, a lot of Dutch Jews went to Sobibór. It was a very big g -- group of people what went to Sobibór, so -- and then -- if also -- after the war, everybody wrote us letters, and they want to know, ovwy the family was and if we know the family. So we

had stencils made from letters that we could write to people back, that we just had to no -  
- put notes in it. We paid everything for ourself always.

Q: Survivors looking for --

SE: Yeah, for the family. And -- and -- and also for money. Who -- who died first get the  
money and who dies later, you know? So --

Q: Where were they writing from?

SE: From their own home, where they lived already. From all -- all over people, over  
Holland and over -- America, from England, from all over we got letters.

Q: Okay. Did you get letters at the hotel?

SE: At the hotel, yeah. Yeah.

Q: Okay. So they knew somehow.

SE: That -- yeah -- yeah --

Q: That you were there?

SE: Yeah, somehow, yeah.

CE: We were --

SE: The Red Cross knows already

CE: -- to the Red Cross --

SE: Yeah.

CE: -- and they knew that we are survivors came back.

SE: Yeah, yeah.

CE: So they got our address from -- from them.

Q: But through your entire experience, you never spent any time in a displaced person's camp?

SE: Never.

CE: No.

Q: Never?

SE: Never, never. We did everything by ourself.

Q: So you -- we're soon going to go to another side because I think we're going to use that other side as the way to get to Israel.

SE: Yeah, we went to Israel, yeah.

Q: Okay, so this is the end of cassette two, side two. We're moving on.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Chaim and Selma Engel. This is tape -- cassette number three, side one.

SE: No desire to go ever back to Holland. We went many times back to Holland and is nothing there. There's nothing there, there's only houses what you know, people don't know you any more and I never want to go back to Holland, ever.

Q: And I asked you about the Dutch language and you -- you said now -- what did you tell me about?

CE: Yeah.

SE: That you speak wa -- you -- you speak that.

CE: Yeah, we speak Dutch. I speak Dutch, I read Dutch, I write.

SE: [indecipherable]

CE: I know better what -- but I -- I can communicate better wi -- in Dutch.

Q: You can?

CE: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So how many languages do you speak?

CE: I don't know, about four or five.

Q: Which one do you use the most?

CE: English.

Q: English.

CE: And Dutch.

Q: And Dutch?

CE: Yeah.

Q: So the two of you are -- in your every day lives, speak --

CE: No, normally we speak English, but --

SE: We try to speak English when we -- we throwing a lot of Dutch words in between.

Q: So even -- even though -- so even though you are not -- not happy with Holland, you still identify very much with the language?

SE: Yeah and also it's very interesting when I see something on television from Holland or something like that and I'm very interested. Mm-hm, yeah.

Q: So were you sad to leave Holland at all or -- did you want to go to Israel too?

CE: Not really, no.

SE: He wanted to go to America.

CE: I want to go to America, but I was a Polish quota and it was so far away it could go, so we could go to Israel, so we decided to go to Israel.

Q: Could you explain what you mean about the quota?

CE: Well, each country -- to come to America, each country has a quota, so many people from this country can come to the United States. And that seems -- the Polish quota -- there was so many people wanted to go, that the quota was ve -- it was very little, so I didn't have much chance to go from Holland to America.

Q: And did you feel that there was no alternative, that you had to leave Holland?

CE: I think so, because that was involved, everything, as we talked about, you needed a license for everything. And I was always in -- in business and I -- I had to go study again to get this license, it was a process maybe of two or three years. And there was too much for me.

SE: We have no money, so we couldn't afford it.

CE: And also -- of the money, we -- yeah, the money we [indecipherable] lost a lot of money, so that -- that made it -- we thought we -- when we tried to go to Israel, as we were pictured, what it will -- we get there, I thought ideal -- that we could live there and forget about business, but --

Q: Forget about what?

CE: About business. Because we went to maxasittafee what is -- what is a f -- farms, but you live -- you live by yourself, but the farm is mutual.

SE: Kibbutz. There's a kibbutz, where the people, where the children can live in the house. The same system was in a kibbutz, but t-the kids live at home, not in an -- in an house, when -- where this -- enk -- is not any more, but in that time when we went, in 1950, that was that the kids lived in an home. So maxasittafee is that the kids live with the parents, but the -- the system is like in a kibbutz. Everything is copatheef.

Q: So during the day they stay all with other children?

SE: Yes. During the day they stay all with other children, at night they sleep at home.

Q: And what did you two do during the day?

CE: I worked on the f-farm, as farmer was to work there -- I farm, I work there.

Q: What crops were there?

CE: I'm sorry?

Q: Which kind of farm?

CE: I was picking --

SE: Vegetables?

CE: Vegetables and the -- and the gra -- wi -- gra -- gra -- no?

SE: Viney -- Vinegard -- you worked there.

CE: Yeah, vinegard, yeah. I was picking out -- weeds pil -- pulling up, work hard in the hot, very hot sun -- in Israel is very hot and --

Q: And that was new to you?

CE: I hated -- I'm sorry. Oh yeah, I broke also were the chickens are -- the chicken farra.

That's what you want to say, I forgot about. That's --

SE: That you were all alone and he had to work there all alone, the big field and he was always in business and they put him there in the field from hundred acres and he had to work there all by himself, to weed between the plants and it was very stupid to do that, because he was very unhappy. He had nobody to talk and in the hot sun and tha-- that what the work -- what he did from the way we came there. And then --

Q: How did you get the land?

SE: Oh, we had land, in the kibbutz, they had land.

CE: The ki -- they had the --

Q: The land belonged to someone else?

CE: To -- it belonged to the --

SE: Yeah, to the kibbutz.

CE: To the organization, whatever it --

SE: With all the neighboring, the [indecipherable]

CE: So we worked just on the land and then you got -- you got whatever -- whatever got equal to live on it, you got a certain income, whatever it is, but the -- the land didn't belong to you, nothing belonged to you.

Q: You were working alone? Not with others?

CE: Well, sometimes alone, but it's terrible, I felt miserable to the fi -- maybe from the second day on. And --

Q: The first day was okay?

CE: Probably, I didn't --

SE: When we came to -- when we came to Israel by boat and I went to my family -- to the doctor, where I told you I have -- Dr. Cohen, what lived in Appledon and they lived up the Carmel, a nicest spot in Haifa and he went to his family in Tel Aviv, in Yafou and there were all the immigrants what came back, which was in 1950, I mean Israel was only two years old. And where we came to Yafou, where all the immigrants lived in a small house and very poor, he came back to Haifa, where I lived with the family -- the first few days we lived with the family -- and he says, "Selma, how about we go back to Holland?" He hated it from the minute -- moment that we came to Israel, he didn't like it. So then we went to the kibbutz, what was really an kibbutz, what -- the sys -- same system as a



kibbutz and he had to work in the field and later he worked with the chickens, but he hated it too. And I worked also in the fields, we had to pick apples, but I thought -- I loved it, because it was for Israel, I build it up and I -- I was very idealistic and I -- I just loved it. I got an -- that handkerchief around my head and I was 28 years old and -- and -- and I didn't have to sit the slofes with the kids the whole day, I did go to work and so -- and so we worked in the field also, picking grapes in the summer and later I had to bake breads in the -- for the people wh -- in the kibbutz. I had to go at two o'clock at night in the winter and made dough. I never made bread before in my life, but they told me how to do it and I had to go in the mud til my knees and it wa -- it was very muddy there, was no street or anything and sometimes I fell. And then six o'clock in the morning I had to bake the -- make the dough the -- make the dough and put it in the oven.

Q: What kind of bread was it?

SE: Any kind of bread. Was -- didn't taste good. I remember it didn't taste good. My -- I don't remember much about it. I know just that I had to do the work. And then, he went every day that we had off, he went looking for something else -- when he hated it so much in that system that finally we -- we had somebody, we -- w -- that's -- when we were nine months in that camp -- in that camp -- in the -- in the -- in the maxasittafee mouletta. It was very nice -- were a lot of Dutch people, a lot of intellectuals there and we enjoyed it, I enjoyed it very much, it was very nice atmosphere.

Q: Was there a night life, a social life?

SE: No, nothing. Absolutely nothing. You're just working, he was dead tired. Wh -- he come home, he went to bed, it was just -- that was all we co -- did.

Q: And no religious observances?

SE: Yeah, now there was the holi -- big, high holidays was the -- the -- but not Friday evening or something like that, no, nothing. Was not kosher or something like that, no. And so then, Chaim went every week looking for somewhere and finally, after nine months being miserable and depressed, he found something in a town that he could go work as a waiter. And so we went and then we went -- the whole family and we went to that little town, that was Banatanya, beekitchock and finally we got -- we found f-family what one -- that we could rent a house from and was -- and we -- and -- was very -- and then it start very hard, but now we had to live and make a living for ourself. So he worked as waiter at nights, we didn't make -- at night, but -- and he started at night and he didn't make much money and -- and I worked in the fields as a -- as a laborer. We had fr -- Dutch people next to us, Dutch farmers. And they -- I worked for this Dutch farmer, I took the potatoes out of the ground and worked in the field and make a little tent for the children that they could sit out of the sun and --

Q: Children came with you to work?

SE: Oh, yeah. No -- the children went to school, when they not went to school, they had to be somewhere, I couldn't leave them alone.

Q: By this time they were what age?

CE: Eight, nine, 10?

SE: No. Four, five years old. Four years old or six years old.

CE: [indecipherable] They were born in '46 and '48 and we were in '51, we came.

SE: One. We [indecipherable] in '51.

CE: Yeah.

SE: So they were five, six, six years old. Six years old and eight years old.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah, so and then I worked in the field and he was always out. We brought with us from Holland, lots of food and lots of clothes when we thought we'd stay our lifelong in a kibbutz. And so we brought vitters, everything will 10 ti -- for 10 years ahead.

Q: Vitters?

SE: Boots. And clothes and food and sugar and I don't know, was --

Q: From Holland?

SE: From Holland. So he went out to Tel Aviv and sold all that things so that we had some money. So we had very nice neighbors, they were Dutch people, they were very well-to-do Jewish people. And -- so one day he say to Chaim, "You know, there is a woman here what has a vegetable store and she wants to s -- go to America, she's going to America. You should buy it." Said Chaim, "How can you make a living in a vegetable store in a village?" And he didn't want to buy it, said he, "I give you the money." So we made already a little bit money and as the Dutch government, from the Dutch group of people, Anglo-Saxon, and they want very much that people from Europe stay there, they

want to have very much that Anglo-Saxon come there. So they helped us too and they gave us some money, borrow.

Q: Who wanted?

SE: An organization -- a Jewish organization from Anglo-Saxon. They want to have that people from Europe and from Holland and from -- from England that they stay there in Israel.

Q: In Israel?

SE: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

SE: So -- so they helped us out financially and we had some money from ourself already saved, so we bought that vegetable store. And because he's a very good businessman, he builded that up, but he still wanted to go to America. Anything else -- we builded it up, we worked very, very hard -- very hard labor. Went up five o'clock in the morning and -- and we went to b -- to bed on seven, eight o'clock, for could almost not walk any more, we had to carry 50 pound -- kilo -- 50 kilo potatoes -- bags and things like that. And we builded the business up, we made a very good living. But the money what we made, we made over so much is possible to America, because he wanted to go to America. He wanted to go on a boat to America, he wanted to go just -- there was one thing he wants -- to go to America. So this uncle and aunt -- the doctor -- went to visit to America and -- and went to Buffalo. And they had friends there and they told the story

for Chaim -- that he went out of a camp and it's a whole story and that he's unhappy there and this man who is a stranger, gives an affidavit. And met this --

CE: You know what an affidavit is?

Q: I don't know in this case.

CE: An affidavit is somebody states guarantees for you, if you come here, you're not a -- a boarder for the government, they will support you. It's like a support -- the affidavit -- that's what it is.

Q: Okay, I know, like sponsor.

CE: Sponsor.

SE: Yeah, sponsor.

Q: And before we get to America, could I ask, because I didn't know -- you had relatives -- family in Israel?

CE: Yeah, some cousins -- some co --

SE: Real cousins you had, first cousin.

CE: [inaudible] who would I have there?

SE: Chaim, your first cousin --

CE: [inaudible]

SE: -- what is his n -- what is his name?

CE: Sonia? No.

SE: But Esthee's father, mother.

CE: Oh yeah, second cousins I had, second cousins.

SE: That's a real cousin.

Q: So the first day, you went to -- to see them.

CE: Yeah, I went to see them.

SE: Oh, you had Yule too, that's a first cousin.

CE: Yule, that's right, yeah. [inaudible]

SE: And he had to go in the militaire, tell about that you had to go to militaire in Israel.

CE: Yeah well, also -- also you have to go as a reserve -- in the reserve, you have to go every six months or whatever, you have to go for two months or three months. She knows better the story. Tell her the story.

SE: You have to go every year, six weeks in the militaire.

CE: That's right.

SE: You tell how it was.

CE: Well, I was -- in that time I was 42 or something -- wait a minute, how old?

SE: You were 35 - 36 years old.

CE: I tell you, she [indecipherable] -- I don't know. Anyway, so I had to go the same with young soldiers, recruits, near the first one and I didn't feel more like going and doing these kind of things. So were --

Q: You were much older?

CE: Yeah, I was older. So, I don't know, I went and -- and I hated that I have to go to be a soldier again. So, I don't know what -- I don't know what you want to tell about the soldier.

Q: Well, so Israel was very much more regimented than you had hoped?

CE: Su-Sure -- well I didn't feel like -- I went through a war, I was a soldier in the Polish war -- in the Polish army. I wanted [indecipherable] before the war, I was a prisoner later. So I didn't feel like going any more of this. Although that --

SE: You hated it. And he had to go also -- also on parole in -- in the town. We were always on parole in the town. And -- so, he was very unhappy in Israel -- very, very unhappy in Israel.

Q: Can you say it was too hot, it was too regimented and what else about it did you --

CE: It was nothing from more what I -- the life what I pictured for myself and what I did in Holland, it was completely something the opposite, I think and so I couldn't --

Q: It sounds like you -- you liked Holland better?

CE: I sure liked the -- liked Holland. So -- but the life what in Israel, I didn't like that life, I didn't like -- I saw many things what I didn't like about.

SE: He spoke Hebrew, I didn't speak Hebrew. So he had it much easier than I have. But he -- he was very unhappy there.

Q: You speak Hebrew also?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah.

Q: Wow.

CE: Yeah.

Q: But still -- even though -- Selma was unhappy in Holland.

SE: I wasn't -- not -- de -- because wh -- the circumstance make my unhappy, that we had no -- didn't make -- couldn't make a living. Because he could find something to do what he could do and was happy. So that way -- that was also the reason that ve -- va -- and done what a -- what we have in Holland. No, I -- that's the best thing we ever did, that we went away from Holland. I'm thank God -- I'm very happy that we went away from Holland. That's the best thing we ever did.

Q: When -- when you were coming to -- you talked about the quota for -- is this for Polish in general or for Polish Jews?

CE: No, it's Polish, just Polish, yeah.

Q: Polish all together?

CE: Polish together.

Q: And was there -- was there some difference in Israel, in the way they saw a Dutch Jew or in the way they saw a Polish Jew, or was that just totally equal?

CE: I -- I think it's equal, yeah.

SE: Was equal, we had no problems, no.

CE: No, no, it was equal.

Q: And in America, was there a difference? When you began to prepare -- to make your preparations to come to America, was there a difference in the way they saw you?

CE: I don't think so, no, there was not, no.

SE: No. We say always that he was Dutch. He spe -- he's more Dutch than Polish now, lately. He went to the Dutch side to the family. So -- na -- so no.



CE: There was no -- any difference.

SE: No, there was not -- no, was no problem.

CE: No.

SE: No, no, no. He's a very nice guy, so like they -- everybody likes him better than they like me.

Q: Oh.

SE: So that was always.

CE: Nobody ask you that.

SE: That's the truth.

Q: That's right, we weren't asking you that. So, do you want to take a break, or do you want to --

SE: No, go ahead.

Q: Go -- we're preparing then to go to -- to America. For you this is very important, so what kind of preparations did you need to make other than the affidavits?

SE: Nothing.

CE: Nothing really, nothing, just --

SE: There was a couple, what lived in the same village, they went a year before us, so we didn't have anybody to go to and we thought we go first to my brother. My brother was i- in between, immigrated to Canada. He lived in Toronto.

Q: The same brother with --

CE: That had the hotel.

SE: Yeah, with the four children, yeah. And he sold everything and he moved to Canada. So we thought we go to my brother. But my brother --

Q: He was also unhappy in Holland?

SE: Yeah, yeah, could say that -- that, I think -- he was not very right for th -- for that business, because my sister-in-law has two left hands and was not a good housewife, so the hotel was very neglected. And a hotel has to be clean and nice and -- and it was not and I think that's one of the reason also, that they moved to Canada. And they were planning first to go to Israel and that's the reason also we went to Israel b -- fore. But they went to Canada. And so when we went to America, we thought we can go to Canada. But when you go -- where you emigrate.

CE: When you emigrate, you have to come first to the country where you emigrate to and so we didn't have any address here. Yeah, you can't -- when you -- but first you have to come to the place where you emigrate to. In other words, you have to come direct to the United States and after so many weeks, you can go out of the country. So because we planned to go first to Canada, we couldn't do that, so we had to find somebody that we can come to United States, because didn't have anybody here. So, in the place in Israel where we lived, was a couple what we knew, they moved to Westport, and --

Q: Connecticut?

CE: Yeah. And that was our only address we were in contact with, so we written them, tell them the story. They said, "No problem, come to us." So we came to Westport and --

Q: With your children?

CE: Yeah, with the whole family. And we didn't have yet a house, nothing. And they lived in a very small house, and they took us in their house and we lived there for a week, I think. We rented a house --

SE: An apartment.

CE: An apartment.

SE: For only 25 dollars a week -- a months.

CE: Yeah in -- in Westport and he --

Q: What year was this?

CE: '57. And he was a clerk at Cristida's, did you hear Cristida?

SE: It's a grocery store.

CE: Yeah. He was a clerk there and I had to have some job, although we had some money with us. We took here some money with us. So we had a job -- so he found a job at Cristida's for me, that I work at Cristida's. I --

Q: You had sold the vegetable store?

CE: Oh yeah, we sold it, yeah.

SE: Yeah.

Q: In order to move?

CE: Surely.

SE: Yeah.

CE: And so I got the ciz --

SE: [inaudible], when we sold the vegetable store, we thought it's better for the children that we don't go by plane, and we go by boat. It has a smaller -- it has a longer time for the -- the -- you know, to go over for the hot country --

CE: [indecipherable]

SE: So we went to Italy -- we went to Genoa and -- and we stayed there three weeks. And was very nice, but both got very sick.

Q: Vacation?

SE: Yes, somehow a vacation, too. And we stayed there and denfa went by boat from -- from Italy to America by boat.

Q: Landing in?

SE: In Amer -- in New York. Uh-huh, in [inaudible].

Q: So, I mean -- I know everybody tells this story, but before you get much further into west -- into Westport, did you -- did you have a feeling, when you saw the lady there?

SE: I don't remember.

CE: I don't remember that.

Q: Did anyone [indecipherable]

SE: I was too sick. I was very seasick, four weeks long. Of three weeks long, of two weeks, I don't know how long it took. I was very sick.

Q: Seasick?

SE: Seasick, boy was I seasick.

Q: And did they meet you there? Or did they meet -- someone meet?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah, the sist -- the sister came.

SE: And -- and Trudy.

CE: And Trudy too. Yeah, they came --

SE: [indecipherable] and they picked us up.

CE: They picked us up.

Q: Are you still friends to this day?

SE: No, she died.

CE: They died.

SE: Yeah. And we're not -- and with the sister we're not so close. We call each other once in awhile, but we're not clo -- del --

Q: Her sister?

SE: Yeah, her sister, what picked us up. And they both died, yeah.

Q: So, I'm sorry, you were saying you went to work at Cristida's?

CE: Yeah, I worked there for about nine months I think.

Q: And did you have English language -- speaking?

CE: My English --

SE: Yeah, he spoke a little bit.

CE: I spoke very little. My job at Cristida's was -- Cristida's has orders. If you want to order groceries, you call it in and you take orders. And my job was to take these orders. Not alone my English was bad, but I didn't know the items even, what they're talking

about. Anyway, I struggled through about nine months and then I already planned to do something else, because that is not what I wanted to do. So, they had Arnold's bread, you know Arnold's bread? Arnold's bread has the routes. You buy a route, like a franchise. You buy a route, you have it -- your own truck and you deliver to different stores and -- and I -- if somebody what came to -- from Arnold's to this -- to Cristida's, he wants to sell his route. So we bought -- bought -- I bought this route. I bought this route from him.

Q: You buy the truck, too?

CE: Yeah, everything. So, sure I had to pay him time because I didn't have all cash, everything, but we had some money and we gave him some and through the years we paid him off that. And we did pretty well. I mean, I had to go out every morning, three - four o'clock in the morning and five days a day and this -- that's what it was. But I already was thinking we could do it --

SE: He hated it, again.

CE: I was thinking already, what do I next -- what I buy next. So, because I didn't know the country and didn't know exactly what's going on. So I look for something what it looks a little simple. And I thought -- I saw a different card shop, I thought might be -- that might be something that I wouldn't have trouble with my language and things like that -- wouldn't be so difficult. And I -- my route was in Stamford, Stamford and area.

Q: Connecticut?

CE: Yeah. And I look constantly, went to brokers, I looked in newspapers. Take one day, I saw a store in Stamford, it was for sale. Now, I didn't know it that was a new development in that time.

SE: He didn't know anything about the new development or things like that.

CE: Anyway, we --

Q: Redevelopment?

SE: Yes.

CE: Yeah, that was before the big change in Stamford, Stamford had big changes, I don't know if you're familiar with. Stamford is in a way, a small New York. But it was before that time, everything downtown, they changed and things like that. Well, we bought it in the bad time.

Q: At a bad time?

CE: Yeah.

SE: And it was a very neglected store.

CE: Yeah, so anyway we -- we made something out of it, we made a --

SE: We worked very, very hard, the two of us.

CE: We work hard -- but make -- we made a good living, everything.

SE: And we have to bring two kids through college.

CE: Yeah.

SE: From that store.

Q: The kids by now were -- how old were they?

SE: They were -- were 10 and 12 when they came to America. So they are now 14 or 15, something like that.

CE: Something like that.

Q: And you were working?

CE: In this store, in this greeting card shop.

SE: I was [indecipherable] to, I was -- we worked together.

CE: And she worked too, so we worked together. And --

SE: And we lived in Westport, so that is 20, an hour -- 45 minutes driving.

CE: Yeah.

Q: So you went from bread to --

CE: To a greeting card store, gift and greeting card store. We did -- we maked a living, a good living, I think so, huh? Yeah.

SE: Mm-hm.

CE: Yeah, we could afford the kids I think too, they went to college and we could --

SE: We're not rich, but we could make a living, we bought a house, a little house in Westport, yeah. And then our daughter got married to an young man what -- she wanted to go to Israel and she -- and we say, "Okay, you want to go to Israel, we cannot afford it, you go and work." She worked in a grocery store and there was a man what owns it, it was a young man and he was Jewish and she never went out with a Jewish boy. So she married him and it was not a couple at all, they didn't fit at all. But anyway, they have --



they got married and after that they were married a few years. He was manager in a jewelry store, Sachs-Libby's, was a big store from here, in -- in -- in --

CE: New Haven.

SE: In New Haven. And he was in Altsaybrook manager in a store. And s -- de -- Sachs-Libby's wants to sell that store and we had a buyer for our store, so we bought the store and took him in as partner -- the son-in-law, and he had the knowledge and we bought the jewelry store in Altsaybrook.

Q: So you went from greeting cards to jewelry?

SE: To jewelry stree. And the -- and then, after that, we had the store a few years, they got a divorce. But Chaim got along well with this boy and so Chaim works with him and when he didn't work in the store, what many days he didn't work, when he had to do outside work, I worked in the store. And so we build it up. That store was look a very neglected store. We builded up that store and we did very well and we saved and we traveled a lot. In between, we had to go to trials in Germany a lot.

Q: I think that's a good place to go to the next side of the tape.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

SE: And the ki -- when the -- when the kids were small and -- and I told the kids about camp of something like that and Ch -- and the minute Chaim came in, we stopped. So, I sort of thought I didn't tell the children much. And when I say to my son, "Did I ever told you something about camps?" Said he, "Always." So --

Q: Your -- you son said --

SE: Always when he -- said that I tel-told him always about camp. But they didn't know the story real, til they saw the movie, that the movie came out.

Q: Which?

SE: Of the -- when the book came out.

Q: Which book?

SE: "Escape from Sobibór," from Richard Rashke. But Chaim never want to talk about it. He -- he -- also, he doesn't want to talk about it. So we talk -- but together we never talk about it. There's parts -- some anecdotes or something like that, you know, that somebody died or -- ma -- so we never talk about it, never. Only when we go to school, we te -- we tell the kids in school, the minute we go out, we don't talk about it any more. Never.

Q: Has the process of going together to schools to share your experience been meaningful?

SE: Very. For me, is it -- I think does something that I can express myself in it and then that's the reason we don't have to talk about it together, because we speak in schools. I suffer tremendous, now I'm older and have more time, that we have no family. We have the two children, thank God. But we're not close to our son, because his wife doesn't like that. And -- but, I miss tremendous that we have no family and that my brothers got killed so young, now I -- how young were they? They were 24 and 22 and he wa -- one, the 24 was married, met a young woman and -- you know, and my mother --

Q: And the Canadian brother? Canadian brother?

SE: The Canadian brother died when he was 62, he was so bitter about everything that he -- he was very unsuccessful in Canada and he didn't do financially well and -- and so he ha -- ha -- was very heavy and smoked a lot. He died 20 years ago. So, he's the same age as my husband, so he was 62. And he smoked a lot and -- and dr -- drink 10 cup of coffees a day of something like that. And he was very unhappy here. So, he went to the hospital and -- with a heart attack and he died. And -- so we're very close with his children. His wife is in cr -- sis-sistophrenic and she's now very sick in the hospital. She was a very strange woman. And we were very close with his four children. And my daughter gets married this summer and the children come all over and we coming at -- at least once or twice a year together with his children and very -- and the kids came, when they were younger, they stayed always in our house and -- the whole summer and they came a lot here. So we call them every week, so we're very close with his kids. That is really our closest family.

Q: These are the four children that when you were returning to the hotel in Holland, you whistled and these were the four children that you saw?

SE: And yeah, yeah, yeah. No, there were three. The mo -- the other one was born after the war. In three da -- three -- she was pregnant five months when the other one was born.

Q: So because Chaim does not like to talk about the experience, have you had other friends from -- when you meet other friends who are also survivors, do you talk about it?

SE: We have no -- no friends what are survivors. Absolute none. We have only American friends. We have one couple what are Dutch, we came together what is from Israel and they were hidden in Holland. So we have no friends and we don't belong to an organization. What has to do with Holocaust -- we just do talking in schools and as volunteer -- volunteer of course, we don't get paid for it. And we are not -- what do we have to talk about it? They have to tell their story? Their story is worse than our story, I mean -- we have nothing to tell. Wha -- we told on the Holoc -- we told for the Washington and we did here in Yale, is in -- in --

Q: You also have been interviewed by?

SE: By Yale, that --

Q: What -- what [indecipherable]

SE: University. There's a special department where they have that -- also tapes, that and - when Chaim comes, he tell us his name. And -- an archi -- the archi -- they call it the archi in Yale. And I was not interviewed, just half -- no-not the whole thing. And -- and I think that's enough for us, that's enough for us, I think -- what can we do more? There's a book written about it and that's it.

Q: Did you contribute with the writer?

SE: Yeah. Of course, he came her for two -- two, three days with us, stayed with us here.

Q: When -- when was that?

SE: Seven, eight, 10 years ago, when the movie -- after the movie, so when they made the movie. No, when they made -- no, 10 years ago, something like that.

Q: I guess I don't know which movie you mean.

SE: There's a movie about "Escape from Sobibór," on television, was a movie, yeah.

And --

Q: Documentary?

SE: A documentary. Yeah, but also made in Hollywood, really. And it was very well made and -- and -- w-we thought it was the way it was.

Q: So the writer came here? Or the director?

SE: The director came here.

Q: Stayed with you?

SE: Yeah, he stayed with us. When he made a book. The -- the -- the movie we were not involved. We went the last week -- when they made the movie, we went to Yugoslavia, they had a made a movie in Belgrade. But we were not involved with advisors, there was Esther Rabb and yo-you -- another guy what writes a lot of boo -- writes books too, Toivy -- Toivy -- Toivy Blut -- Toivy Blut.

Q: Were they involved in Sobibór?

SE: Oh yeah, they were survivors for Sobibór, yeah.

Q: Did you know them there?

SE: Oh yeah, I know them there, very well, yeah. I know them there. And so --

Q: So you went for the making of the movie, too?

SE: Yeah, we went to the -- see how it made was and made and we saw all the people, the movie star. Alan Arkin was in there and -- and Luther Howard, is a Dutch movie star

was in it and -- yeah we wait -- went in to see the -- also, we paid for ourself, we always paid everything ourself. We didn't get any money from anybody. Only when we went to the trials in Germany, the German government paid for the tr -- the trip and living there, in Germany.

Q: And what year was this?

SE: I think so -- that was -- it started in 1950 and then we lived in Westport, so that was in ni -- in the si -- from 60's til the 70's.

Q: How many times did you go?

SE: We went four or five or six times, something like that we went to different trials.

Q: And would you say what trials you're discussing?

SE: We were in tr -- trial, there was an -- va -- an-an -- vun -- four or five SS's, which were in camp and we had to deci -- w-we -- vosses, so we recognized three.

Q: Now, the name of the trials, did they have a famous name?

SE: Franzel was one and Wolfe was the other one -- no. They don't ha -- Sobibór is not very famous. Foots --

Q: These were individuals who were being tried?

SE: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Individuals.

SE: Yes.

Q: And this happened where? In Germany?

SE: In Hagen, in Germany.

Q: Hagen?

SE: Yeah. And then was also on trial from -- Connaught was his name and that was -- in Frankfort amine, that was in 1950. And we went there, too. But that was paid, from th-the -- in 50, this was a Jew-Jewish organization where we got money from, when we didn't have any money in that time. But -- to -- in Germany, that was the German government pays for that we went there. We stayed in a hotel and it was some more people we met from -- from -- from concentration camps.

Q: Did you -- did you meet people from Sobibór?

SE: Yeah, yeah. I met --

Q: People you had known then?

SE: Oh yeah, I know them, yeah. I -- I know these people, still we stays in contact with them now too. Not much, but a little bit. You know, we're not friends, they live -- live in Vineland, New Jersey, Est-Esther Rabb, she's very active, she made -- I heard her own play -- play she made -- somebody else made this role for her, fo -- about Sobibór, I don't know, I was a -- in -- and the other one writes a lot of book about Sobibór. We don't. We speak in schools, we speak in -- in organizations when they ask us -- for the Rotary Club or something like that and that -- that -- there it ends with.

Q: So when you went to the trials, tell me about it.

SE: That was very scary. That was very scary, to go to the trials, because you showed it -- these people and y -- and you know these people, so you afraid that you start laughing

and say hi. Because, you know, yo-you were scared to death, you don't know what you're doing. So --

Q: What people?

SE: The SS's. And so -- well they were in regular clothes, they were not in uniform and they looked different, so -- but --well, so -- quickly, when you start telling the stories and you hear what the other ti -- telling the stories and it comes all back to you. And to live in Germany and go to a restaurant and you think, "Who was sitting in this chair? Who killed my mother, who killed my brothers? Who killed my family?" To live in Germany - - walk in Germany was for us, unbelievable. So, when it was the trial, a Monday and there was nothing on Tuesday, then we went quickly to Belgian or we stay overnight in Holland, we went to Holland and stayed over. Went away from Germany. So -- so that's the way we dealt with the problem in Germany. Germany was -- is so -- so perfect, everything is so perfect there, that's just unbelievable. Everything was -- is just -- it kills you.

Q: So, back to seeing the -- the SS -- the -- the men who had been --

SE: Very cruel, va -- vant -- both -- both of them. Didi -- you don't want to -- you don't want to talk with them. I didn't -- we didn't want to talk with them. We didn't want to have anything to do with them and we just told what we know. We didn't make stories up. We -- y -- so, we told just what we know. And we didn't know so much as perhaps the other people what we think, because we lived really, a little bit for the two of us, when we were in camp. And we know just what happened in -- what we saw. But we



didn't -- we had not a good job there, that we could go from one place to the other and the other two that had a good job there, they could see perhaps more, we don't know. So we didn't have so much to say and we just always say -- when we tell something, what we remember now. We don't tell anything what we thought it would be this way. So we didn't -- Chaim had to say something -- was in -- Chaim -- was a dentist -- Chaim saw this is --

CE: Well, you see, the Germans they wouldn't -- they were not punished alone, because they were in a camp. You have to see that they did something, killed somebody or -- or mistreated somebody, then they were punished. At least big and I saw the Franzel, he shot somebody, a dentist, Presnol I think his name. For no reason, he shot him. And I testified that in court. She pulled me though, motim, affpreds. Anyway, so I testified that he shot this man and because of that he got 25 years in prison.

Q: Only 25?

CE: 25. And later on, I -- somehow I heard it later, he -- his lawyer appealed and they reduce his sentence and he went free and there was another trial. I don't know exactly what happened. But anyway, the punishment was because we -- somebody witnessed -- saw that he co-committed some crime or abused somebody.

Q: And you were the only person who --

CE: I am the only one who saw this. Because there was not many survivors after the war.

SE: Perhaps the other survivors told also something, we were not there, but --

CE: Yeah, yeah.

SE: -- they told, so perhaps they told something, too.

CE: Yeah, anyway.

Q: But he was -- he only got 25 years.

SE: Yeah

CE: 25 years.

Q: Did you ever have -- whether it be real or not, a fear that he would find you again? For testifying?

CE: Oh, no, no, no, no.

SE: He's a sicko.

CE: A matter of fact, even the lawyer what defends him -- defended him, was very nice to us. He said, h-he knew what we telling is true, so --

SE: I remember that there came somebody and say, "It is an hoax, it is not such a concen --"

CE: Oh yeah. There was -- while we were sitting in the outside and waiting, there were -- there was some German, they say -- he said there is a hoax, it's not true what happened, the whole thing. But in the other way, we were once as witnesses and there were some German teachers and also some people, they made a welcome committee -- committee for the -- all the witnesses. And through this teacher, she took us once to a German school to talk about the concentration camp. What now?

SE: And the lawyer say to you -- the lawyer say to you, "Don't listen to that guy, I know that is the truth." The lawyer for Franzel.

CE: Oh.

SE: Do you remember that?

CE: I tell you -- you tell the story, you --

SE: No, but it was -- he talked to you.

CE: Selma, you think I remember that? I [indecipherable]

SE: The lawyer from Franzel came to Chaim and he say to Chaim -- do you remember -- and, "That is not true," but if that guy said, "Don't talk to him even. We know it is true that there was an Holocaust." That was the lawyer for Franzel say that.

Q: And what was it like to be in the school with German children? Did they believe you?

CE: Some yes, some no. Because some -- some said th-the Wall Street is all Jewish and things like that -- some of them.

Q: They said what?

CE: That Wall Street is all Jews.

SE: The Wall Street in New York, that -- that all Jewish people are.

CE: With money

SE: And also, the -- all -- everything with money, th-th-that -- that was the Jewish people in -- well, there were no Jews in -- in Germany in that time when we were there. So they still have a very wrong impression about Jews, that Jews are only the rich people and they're sitting only in the money business.

Q: And that -- that' what the children were saying?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Some of the children. There was one or two asked questions like that. But in general, I think was a good reception. Because the teacher prepared them for -- I assumed they told them something.

SE: There was a lot of German kids what went to the trial. They had to go to the trials. A lot of Germans high school kids that went to the trials, every day.

CE: Yeah, yeah, they were -- they were in the court.

SE: Yeah.

CE: As --

SE: Listening.

CE: Listening, yeah.

Q: This was part of?

CE: Part of the -- I guess the -- the -- the programs -- education on the school, things like that. Because that was in '57 or '58, that was many years after the war, already. So they already start --

SE: [indecipherable] 60 and the 70's.

CE: They also -- they already start to teach something about the Holocaust in Germany.

SE: Was not so far into the 70's. We were -- when we were here, we didn't go to Germany any more.

CE: No, well it couldn't be the 50's.

SE: This was in the 60's and the 70's.

CE: Yeah, the 60's.

SE: But the 70's we lived already here and we didn't go to Germany any more.

Q: How many times did you go back to Germany?

CE: About four or five times -- four or five times.

SE: Six times.

CE: Six times.

Q: And so were there -- there's other trials other than the Franzel's?

CE: Oh yeah, there was other trials.

SE: Wagner and --

CE: Rolfe. Rolfe, Wag --

SE: And Rolfe and Wagner, Rolfe and Klumpf.

CE: Klumpf.

SE: You know that was a Frankfort amine, Klumpf, what I told you.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah. I told you that already. That was it.

CE: Yeah.

Q: During this same time in America, there was the Civil Rights Movement going on with black people. Were you -- have some feeling about that, or did you never relate the two?

SE: Oh, we were very upset what was going on in the -- in the south. Och, that was terrible, and w-we also perb -- boys went there and they got killed. Was a f-few Jewish boys were also in there and not Jewish, and they were --

CE: Sure we were upset to --

SE: Very upset.

CE: Yeah, with all the prejudice and things like that, what we know what it is.

SE: We couldn't understand it, because in Holland were not black people, in Poland were not black people and in Israel when we lived, there were no black people and we couldn't understand the whole situation -- we didn't understand how can people be so cruel? How ca -- how can something like -- happen like that? We were very upset about that.

Q: Did it scare --

SE: [indecipherable] too.

Q: What -- what scared you about it?

SE: That something like that in America could happen, so can it happen to us for the Jews, too. Who knows? Who knows, when something like that happened, that you just -- dishonest people because they were not a skin di -- skin color right? So unbelievable.

Q: Did you get involved or did you just watch very closely?

CE: No, we didn't get involved.

SE: We had a hard time to make a living, so we had hard enough that we re -- we couldn't -- no, we were never involved really, in organizations. We're not an organizat -- and he not at all. Bu-But --

Q: So the Zionist interest that you had before you went to Israel --

SE: Yeah.

Q: -- it was -- what happened to that?

SE: We very much for Israel. We are very much -- our heart is still a lot in Israel, because -- and we're not agree everything what is happened.

CE: If there would have bermin a Jewish state, probably would never have happened, the Holocaust, as it was. So, the Jewish state is very, very important for all the Jews. So there's -- that is what we alway -- w-we're maybe not religious, but our culture and our heart is still with Israel.

SE: We.

CE: We.

SE: I'm more religious than you are.

CE: Right.

Q: Religious?

SE: Yeah. I like to go to the Temple and I believe a little bit more than he does. He is not religious.

Q: Oh, this is something we haven't discussed. Is -- is --

SE: Not too important, talked enough.

Q: I guess it is part of -- of -- for a lot of people, the spiritual or religious aspect of their lives is part of their survival and you two are such survivors that I wonder if -- I mean I don't mind what the answer is, I'm just wondering -- has religion been at all part of your spirit, of your heart?

SE: No, I think it ma --

CE: Not mine. Let me talk for one second, not mine.

Q: And why is that?

CE: Well, what I saw what happen in this concentration camps, if it is you -- you pray, when you pray you say God will help you, God will tell you for your prayers and then God will free you from all the things and you see all innocent children, innocent men and women went to their slaughter and nobody -- anything did, how can I have a feeling about religion? I don't -- I don't -- I don't feel religious at all, because --

SE: He feels very Jewish.

CE: Jewish and there's no question about. I'm Jewish, as I say my culture, my heart is it, but as far religion concerned, I personally am not far of it.

Q: So your heart is with your culture then?

CE: That's right.

Q: And so -- you -- does that mean that you don't observe the Jewish days -- holy days?

CE: Well, I -- I -- I observe it as nu -- because it is a tradition, part of my culture, but I really not -- I feel to do it because I am religious, not at all. I do it more as my culture, my brought up -- I was brought up like that. I do it where we make all the holidays and things like that, but not because I'm strongly religious still.

Q: Well, culture is something for the heart, too, but for you it's -- also you -- you feel a little more strongly about re -- the religion?

SE: Yes, and I would have more done on the religion than Chaim would have been -- liked it. And then I would have sure -- the kids perhaps would have been more Jewish



than they are now. But I don't -- when I don't go to the synagogue, is okay with me too. We belong to the synagogue and we pay for it, because we think that's important. I don't know why he thinks that it's important, but -- it costs a lot of money. But we don't go much. We don't like the rabbi, so we don't go much at all. And -- and I don't miss it. I miss people. I miss terrible -- ivenna would be a Jewish club of a Jewish cen -- a Jewish center here in the neighborhood, I would go there. I miss it.

Q: Is this a very not Jewish --

SE: Very not Jewish. It has no Jews here. Far away.

Q: Uh-huh. I thought so. When you -- when you told me no -- no synagogues for --

SE: No.

Q: -- two or three towns, so -- so when do you experience cultural sharing with other Jews?

SE: Very little. Like we were this week -- where were we this week? Oh, there was a speaker -- was a speaker in the Temple, there was a daughter from Moshe Dayan spoke. Yeah, Ell Dayan. So we went there and the next week is the -- something else. And so there is a meeting for something we go.

CE: It's not about religious subject. It is about cultural subject.

Q: I'm not talking about religion.

CE: No, no. It was just about Israel, she talked about these --

SE: Oh, and we went to synagogue in -- out at that town

CE: Yeah.

SE: We went to a synagogue with an couple.

CE: Yeah, because it's nice to go. But we don't go ov -- often. But we went -- once in awhile we go.

SE: I tell you the truth, we happy that we are together and that we still are together. He's 82, I'm 76 next month and we just happy to be together. And we have some Jewish friends, we go to the movie, we go to a concert, we go to plays. And also the val, we go to New York. And we like Opera. So -- oh, we went to la -- an elder hostel last week, of two weeks ago. And we just -- so long as we are together, we enjoy each other company, sometimes.

CE: What do you expect after so many years, always?

Q: I think you're wonderful, wonderful company of each other. I -- I -- I wanted to ask you, we'll -- on the next tape, our last probably, what else you might want to talk about and also, what is -- I'm going to ask you on the next tape, what is the most important message -- since you talk to kids and -- that you feel it is to get across, when you share your life as a Holocaust survivor. So we're going now to tape -- cassette four. This is the end of three, side two.

End of Tape three, Side B

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

[blank]

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

SE: I am very bitter about what happened and that the Dutch people, that they think, because of the Anna Frank, that they think the Dutch people were very good -- after the war, but I'm very bitter that -- like that my whole family got killed, my -- I had -- my mother had eight brothers and sisters, my father had seven brothers and sisters. And -- and they were all married and they had all children and is nobody alive -- on -- two cousins what I have in Israel. And they're -- they're gone. And this week we talked about it and why I suffer so much, because -- they were never sick, we never had an -- an grave where we could go to. They just gone. Like off the -- they're gone -- in the woods, if they walking an-and I think that is it, that -- that make you so bitter, that they just gone. They just taken out of your life and they never came back. And that is very hard -- very hard for me. And for Chaim, too. I don't know -- he expresses himself not so, about it.

CE: Well, you said it good.

Q: Before we go away from you, did you mean to say or could you say a little bit more about how you feel of the anti-Semitism in Holland? Cause everyone thinks, because of the story of Anna Frank, that it was different from Poland for instance, or --

SE: Yeah.

Q: -- the -- the -- the image of the Polish is that they were very anti-Semitic, but the image of the Dutch is quite different. Do you think there wasn't so different?

SE: If I saw now that I -- when I came back after the war, I had the seamstress and she was the foulks German. I had some girlfriends from school, they were foulks Germans.

Q: What is this?

SE: That they were full Germans. They were full Germans.

CE: Corporated.

SE: Yeah, they corporated the Germans. And how come that so many Jewish people got killed in Holland? When there really -- how come in Belgian there are not so many killed? Not in -- in France are not so many killed? Not in Italy -- but in Holland are the biggest senta -- percentage-wise are killed from all these countries? I wonder why, when everybody would have been good -- the trains went on time, the -- perhaps they were bombed, but the next day they were in order again. How, why? There has to be some more anti-Semis-mis-dat -- anti-Semitism than there was really, that we know. My mother was on the way that she want to go hide somewhere. Somebody told somebody and she was caught. Excuse me. I was hidden by a D -- a Dutch people and de -- I had to go and visit some -- another family and when I was there, I had to put -- Dutch police came in and they caught us. After that I was away from this family, 28 Jews got caught in the same house. This man was a traitor, so was nothing happened to him in the war. After the war, they took him. But I didn't know there were 28 people caught there, so through us he got free, because I came back and I didn't know -- later I heard all the story.

Q: You mean you could have testified, but you defended your --

SE: Ma, I did -- because I didn't know. Later, after that he was free, I hear about that. But it -- but how come that so many Dutch Jews got killed? My whole family got killed. I have nobody in Holland left. So, I wonder wh -- that I don -- that there has to be something in Holland what was not kosher, not good. B-Because how could it be that -- that -- that -- the percenta -- percentage -- more Jews got killed than in any other country, e-even I think percentiz-centage-wise down in Poland. So di -- so, what is the reason? And that I said -- I said, widid the night -- sometimes I cannot sleep from it. And, because Holland, they think, Holland didn't help us anything, absolutely nothing. We couldn't get a house after the war, we came back. The Dutch government didn't help us at all. He had to go back -- from the first month, he had to go back to Poland an-and everybody knows how he suffered. They didn't trust us, because when we came back to Holland, because we were already a year free. How come that we're not sick like other people that came back f-from concentration camps? Holland was terrible to us. We didn't have any -- anything out of a Dutch -- that's for 200 years my family lived in Holland. And no, I'm -- that's the best thing ever did in my life, that we went away from Holland. The best thing.

CE: Yeah, you said it good [inaudible]

SE: Yeah. That's the way I think.

CE: That's the truth.

SE: Our granddaughter, Tagin, went to Israel and when she was in Israel -- she went and stayed there for an half year, she we -- wanted to go to Poland. So she went to Poland alone and traveled around in Poland, went to concentration camp and went to Sobibór,

went to -- to the people where we were hidden. And then she went to Łódź. And Chaim mother died in 1936 and we never know there was an grave from his mother. Because we hear that everything -- Chaim never went back to Łódź, he never wanted to go back. So she found the grave for my -- Chaim's mother and she made pictures from it and -- and it was very e-emotional for us, that we know that -- and it was -- we -- and Jewish people put a stone on the -- little stone -- they put it on the stone, that they can see that somebody thinks about them. And when she --

Q: A stone? Like a ---

SE: Little stone, a little stone, a little stone.

CE: [indecipherable] stone, pebble.

SE: Pebble, yeah. And mish --

Q: On top of the grave?

SE: Yeah, but she forgot. And when she went away, she couldn't find the grave back. So she went all looking for it, but she couldn't find it back.

Q: Oh.

SE: Yeah.

Q: Do you have any interest to go back there?

CE: No, no.

SE: No, no. We were now in Prague and we could have gone easy, no. He -- no -- I have -- no.

Q: No interest.

CE: By the way, this -- the people what helped us, where we're hidden, they both died.

You told her the story?

SE: No, the man.

CE: The man, the -- what -- we're hiding, the brother what brought us and the brother we were hiding, they live in a -- lived any more, but we -- financially we send them a few times a year, some money, whatever we can.

SE: Lots of money we send them.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah.

Q: Why is that?

SE: They were very, very poor.

CE: Well, they're poor and we -- I say gra -- gratitude.

Q: The family of the farmer that kept you for nine months?

SE: Yes.

CE: Yeah.

Q: You're still paying rent over there?

SE: Yeah.

CE: Yeah, we still send him a few times a --

SE: And also to the man were brothers, there.

CE: Yeah.

SE: You know, if -- when all the Jews came back in Helm, everybody tells the story, so we told the story that we give money -- we thought it was a lot of money, we don't know how much it was, it was some diamonds and gold -- gold -- thing is so, how much can it be? Chaim had it in -- in some glass case, you know? So we give all the money to this farmer. So we told that story, we trusted everybody like we tr -- like we -- that we were. So there were some Jewish partisan what -- what -- what always were stealing to make a living all these years. They went to the farmer where we were hidden and they stole all the money what they had, that we give them. Yeah.

Q: You found that later?

SE: Later, because in the beginning we were so poor ourself, we couldn't give anything and then we found out -- we did a little bit better, we starting sending -- we send them already -- 50 years we send them money. We send them 1000 dollars, both of them, 1000 dollars a year we send them. Cause the people are -- our kids went -- our daughter went there. The people are very, very poor.

Q: Are they alive still?

SE: The -- the --

CE: Some.

SE: The woman is alive.

CE: We don't know. We think the woman doesn't live either, because the last time we send them money, usually a week or two later, we get a letter that they received the money.



SE: He writes -- he does [indecipherable]

CE: This time -- the son writes.

SE: Yeah.

CE: So th-this time it took about two months til we got money and it's a different --

SE: We don't know.

CE: -- this kind of the writing -- no, I got the feeling that she doesn't live either now.

SE: This little boy was four years old when we were there hidden, so he suffered too, because is -- we were hidden there, so there was secret in the house and he wasn't allowed to tell anybody. So he deserves the money. So we know, even when she was dy - - dead, we -- we going to send it, because he deserves it. He deserves it, he had an hard -- hard -- yo-youth because of that, that we were hidden there. So -- so we sent the money. We -- Chaim doesn't get any money from Germany. He -- we did something wrong, wh- when we were in -- when we came to America, we had a lawyer in Holland -- in -- in -- in Germany and he say -- and we couldn't get any money, "No, you don't get anything, you don't get anything. You're not an invalid of -- you don't get anything." "So," said he, "I can get one a month, 800 dollars." So, we had just ope -- bought the greeting card store, so we took the 800 dollars and one in -- when you have just a business, it's like a big pit, everything goes in the business. And after that, we never got any money. We had to sign that we will never ask for money again and Chaim doesn't get any money from Germany.

Q: From the German government.

SE: No, no.

Q: And -- and many survivors do?

SE: All the survivors do. All the survivors get a lot of money. And that kills me. Not him, but me.

Q: I wanted just to -- when did you begin to speak publicly?

CE: Oh, I don't know how many years ago.

SE: Not so many years ago. 20 years ago.

CE: I don't know -- well.

SE: 15 years ago.

CE: W-We -- we -- we find that it's very important that we go to sp-speak to the children. It is very important, first of all, that we tell the story and number two, although they learn in the school about the Holocaust, and they see maybe pictures, they let them read some books, but it's different when you see a live person, from his own experience, tells the story. And I think it makes some impression on them, because usually, after we spoke in a school, I assume it is an assignment from the teacher that tells them to write about the -- the impression that we were there. And the letters are very, very, very interesting.

[indecipherable] Now, a matter of fact, one -- one -- usually the children write the letters.

One -- one these letters weret -- one's from a mother has written us a letter and she says in the letter, this says, "When my son comes home from school, I ask him, "How was school today?" He said, "Ah," just [indecipherable] and said, "Ah." This time, after we spoke there, he came back, he didn't wait even for the question, he said, "Oh, you know,

today we had some people from the concentration camp and it made so much big impression on me.”” She was so ex-ex-ex-excited about it, tells us the story. So I think, some expresses more than the other, but I think 50 - 70 percent, it makes an impression. They will remember always, they will tell always, if somebody denies the story, they will always know to remember, when I was young, there was somebody what was there, he told us our story. So we find it very rewarding for that reason alone. Is it one percent of two percent, that it leaves some impression on them. So I think that’s the reason we go really talking on school.

Q: And you also are very involved, I remember, even in our trying to arrange when to get together, with giving food for the hungry. Could you talk about that?

CE: Well, that is more hers a sa -- sa -- up -- subject.

SE: Now, I started it. I didn’t have anything to do and I was on -- very depressed, so I thought -- I worked in the hospital, but is very hard working in the hospital, because it is so far away from here and is no traffic. So, I started working in the soup kitchen, cooking. But -- it is very primitive and very boring and you cannot cook really. So I looked for something else. So there’s an organization, a Rachel Table, in New Haven and they picking up -- this is ju -- an Jewish organization really, and they picking up from different places, volunteers, food and bring it to soup kitchens. So, I started doing it, which was very heavy work, because there’s sometime very heavy trays of big -- so Chaim -- we do it now together. We picking up food from different places, from restaura -- from bakeries mostly and from stores and we bringing it to the soup kitchens. And we

ha -- we have one soup kitchen in Branford and wh -- we have a lot of voluntun bring it wi -- to a man's shelter in New Haven. That do we three times a week. We do it Monday, Wednesdays and Friday.

Q: Do you -- do you connect -- I know you don't every day, but I mean, is there a time when you connect the fact that you were getting food for people to a time when you did not have it?

CE: I don't think so.

SE: No, no.

CE: No, I don't think so. We just do it, no matter what, just we feel we have the time and we need volunteers for that. So we took [indecipherable]

SE: We are Indian givers, we are like a -- when I have clothes, I give -- I see poor people there, I ask them, "What things can I give? I have a very good coat, I don't want to wear it any more." And then I did -- I don't give it -- I give it to the head from the soup kitchen and she gives it. So -- things like that I do and -- and clothes, we give and -- we easy -- we like to give what we can. We're not rich. We're not rich people. We're -- I-I'm always scared to death, God forbid one of us has to go in an nursing home. Chaim was already very sick, he had already once a stroke, was paralyzed, has very high blood pressure. He's not a very -- thank God he's now in very good condition. But -- so that's a very scary time, here, now -- to get old, very scary.

Q: In America?

SE: Yeah. I'm very afraid. I'm very afraid, every day. God forbid something happened.

What will we do?

Q: You mean financially?

SE: Financially, yeah, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. I see. It-It's not -- it's not fair.

SE: No, it's very scary, very scary, yeah.

Q: I wanted to know, you know, about the children also and I -- I've heard so many -- of so many situations in which, as a Holocaust survivor, it's very difficult to approach the subject with your children, or you don't want them to know, or why should they know and you --

CE: They know, but they know -- but we -- some --

SE: Our daughter is very open, and she goes with a Jewish man.

CE: Some -- some survivors live with it for every day, we never did it. We put it aside.

And our children know about exactly what happened, but we don't talk often about.

SE: I don't think you're right. Freddie didn't know, but after that the film came out,

"Escape from Sobibór," and the book, now he could put the things together how it was.

We never talked with him. Our daughter is now a little bit easier. When she has a Jewish boyfriend, which is very active in the Jewish organizations. But w-we -- we don't -- we don't -- we have a daughter-in-law what doesn't want to hear about it at all. I don't think she ever -- she doesn't think it's so hero -- heroic -- that what we do -- our lives and things like that.

Q: She's not Jewish?

SE: She's not Jewish, no, and [inaudible]

CE: Prosperous [inaudible]

Q: Prosperous?

CE: [inaudible]

SE: When she hears it later, I don't know.

CE: She's the nicest person when you go there, no joke.

SE: No, that's true.

CE: Really true.

SE: Yeah.

CE: If you go there --

SE: She makes the Seder this year -- yeah, she's wonderful. But there-there's no closeness and is perhaps our fault, who knows? We ca -- what do we do [inaudible]

CE: It is not our fault.

SE: That's what you say.

CE: I think we are --

SE: I don't know

CE: -- we are very nice to them.

SE: Anyway.

Q: I -- I just finally want to ask, I think you've answered it, but there may be -- what is the most important message, you feel, to get across when you share your life as a Holocaust survivor?

CE: Well, I would say it is good that -- or I don't know how much people will believe in the stories, because there's always -- people never experien -- always when I go to the children, I tell them about -- about the experience we went through, I said, "No matter how good we tell it and no matter what pictures you see and no matter what you read, never -- nobody can imagine what is has to be in a situation like that. You have really to experience by yourself to know what we're talking about." So, I think when we tell a story, for us it is so deep, it is our life, but for those the story is, it just maybe 10 percent getus of the feeling what we have. So, that's the best we can do. We tell them the story, if they want to believe -- some will, some not. People would have more compassion and people would understand more what life is if they says by themself had a hard time to live, they understand what can be. But otherwise, some people just doesn't beat up, doesn't t -- go through. So, we do our best, but how much it is and if realfrence, I don't know.

Q: And you -- though, if they were going to apply it to their lives, what if they said something like, "But nothing like that will ever happen here," what would you warn them to -- you said in the other interview to stay alert. What did you mean by that?

CE: Well, no-nothing begins big. Even Hitler didn't begin big, it was very small. You see here, i-if you see something comes up -- what you think the Ku Klux Klan, you had the

White Supremacists -- is that the right word? White Supremacists. And all these things, you think that is small, but they can -- not always, but it can grow to be something big, so you have to be alert. If you see something like that, think that could grow. Not always does it, but you have to be alert. That's what I meant by the 'be alert.' So, you be aware of it, what's going on.

SE: On the moment is here, in Guilford, is a movie on television, I don't know exactly what it was, but I was yesterday to a Haddassah meeting and they said it was very anti-Semitic. They say something about the Jews and that it was not written, that what the station say, we don't have the same opinion and the-they sa-say they going to call today, the -- today's Monday?

CE: [inaudible]

SE: Yeah.

Q: Very anti-Semitic [indecipherable]

SE: Yeah. About the Jews.

Q: Documentary?

SE: No, was just a -- a film -- w-w-was somebody was speaking, like in the church.

Q: Oh.

SE: Uh-huh.

Q: So, it's danger, it could still happen.

SE: Yeah. Still can happen, it can -- still happens. Sp-Specially when here -- here -- when we moved here, 20 - 40 - 30 years ago, there were no Jews here, in this town. We were at



-- we were one of the first -- were a -- there were a -- a dentist and a few, but they didn't -  
- they didn't know what Jews were here. Now, there live more Jewish people, not many,  
but more Jewish people here and there's a synagogue and so -- no -- and there'll be more.  
But here in -- if here was in --country club not far from here, was no Jews allowed 10  
years ago or 15 years ago.

Q: Can you apply that to what happens in America now with immigrants who come or is  
there any similarity or --

SE: No.

CE: No, I don't think so. We -- we have too many --

SE: W-W-We didn't know too much about it.

CE: Yeah, I s -- as I think, I believe at least, because we have so many minorities in  
America, so is less chance that something like that could happen again. Because you have  
-- first of all, it's all these people come from different countries, either it's Irish or it's  
English or Italian or whatever. So people have some roots somewhere else, so they don't  
feel -- like Germany, there was German and German born from -- from [indecipherable]

Q: There still is.

CE: And still is. But th-the same feeling, it's not here in the United States, they still are --  
are counted from immigrants. These -- two, three generation back, they all came from  
somewhere. So, my feeling is that things that -- that shouldn't happen, logically shouldn't  
happen here. But I could be wrong.

SE: Well, before the v -- in 1910 - 1915, there were no Jews allowed to be -- work in banks here in America and the Jews had a very, very hard time when you speak to people what lived here before the second World War.

Q: And wasn't it hard to convince the United States government to come and help the Holocaust victims?

SE: Was a boat with the Holocau-ca-ca-caust victims was here -- what the boat was here on the harbor and they send them all back and they all got killed in -- in -- in Auschwitz.

CE: Yeah.

Q: What year was that?

SE: Nineteen-four -- in the war -- 1942, or the 43 - 42 - 41. In the war. So --

Q: So is there anything else, even through the Sobibór or the journeys that you two have taken together, is there -- is there anything else you want to add?

SE: That we live -- hope to live long -- another few years together. No, I did -- I don't think about.

Q: About your relationship, it seems to be the thread which has kept you who you are, the entire time, from the moment that horrible music and forced dance happened -- that it --

CE: I -- I don't think so. I think we tried to be straight people, honest people and we live our life and we try to help poob -- some people. But that's about everything. I wouldn't know what to say more. In re-regards that people learn something from the experience. No, we do our part, we tell our story, and you know, how much people will accept it.

And if it gets bad time, you never know. People becomes -- becomes bad. They became bad, so --

Q: I -- I got such a feeling of reading about Sobibór and reading your two transcripts and how it was difficult to know who to trust. I felt -- I wonder, is it difficult in life to -- to trust after going through an experience where it wasn't just Jews or it wasn't just the Germans, it was also your own who were difficult to trust at times? Has that occurred to you, or --

CE: Well, i-i-it's individually, how the person is --

SE: You got it -- you're not very open person.

CE: Well, well, what do you mean not open?

SE: You don't tell your inner thoughts ve -- not very easy and -- and --

CE: Well, that's my nature, but it's nothing to do with that. Maybe is that I don't know --

SE: Actually that has to do with it.

CE: Maybe. Some people a -- don't talk so much about certain things and I'm probably one of them. So --

Q: Well, I think you've talked a great deal today and I thank you.

CE: Maybe.

Q: No, you have. And Selma, you have anything -- anything else?

SE: No, I don't have anything else to say, that I hope just we get a nice understanding with our children and -- and that we have a few --

CE: [indecipherable]

SE: -- happy na -- happy and healthy years na -- ahead of us.

CE: Times like that, they'll never happen again, that's what we hope.

SE: Yeah, that's what we hope, that times like that never will happen again. And we suffer still under it and that's -- that that never will go away.

CE: No.

SE: No.

CE: We miss it mostly with holidays when you come to get back together with family, what we don't.

SE: We have no family.

CE: And that is -- that is a big thing what we miss.

SE: The children, yeah.

CE: The chil -- miss.

SE: Yes and it's very sad and -- and nobody understands that. All the people what we go around with, th-they don't understand, absolutely not. They cannot understand it, was they never -- I mean they have families together, they will not -- comes not in the head of to ask us over, almost never. We don't want to go really, because we feel even more lonely when we go to another family and they have so much family and we sit there just the two of us. So we not go. But that doesn't say, would be nice when they invite us. We have some friends what invite us.

CE: Yeah.

SE: Yeah, we have some friends what invite us. We couldn't complain too much, so -- so long we are healthy and together, that's the ma -- moment and I -- all the other things, forget it. And now I'm going to make some soup.

CE: All right, we finished? Okay.

Q: Go ahead now.

SE: So when I expected a baby and I was so in -- in labor, the doctor came to me, said, "When you're not quiet, we throw you on the street." Because I was not allowed to scream so much, but I was five days in labor, no? Yeah. Not three days, five days in labor. Because I didn't walk all the time that I was pregnant. And so it's more things that -- that the -- the doctor didn't even touch me because I had scabies. So th-th-they didn't even look at me and -- and that was the first child and -- I mean, da -- da -- you cannot give -- what happened really to us, in all this time, all these years and also after these years, you cannot tell the suffering, what we did really. What -- what -- what they did to us. Even you come back to Holland, I remember I walked all over and -- and all the places where the whole family was and -- and it was nothing there. So -- so, not just the concentration camp, but all the after on too. We -- we cannot tell what really happened to us. And we don't -- we don't know -- we thank God we cannot tell it. Because that so many people were telling the story, they crying and they crying. Perhaps we cannot sleep tonight. That can happen, from that we tell the story and we get nightmares. But still you cannot bring out the suffering, what it was, every minute.

CE: What you say is, nobody can understand it, what you suffered.

SE: Stand. No, also -- and you cannot tell it also not.

CE: You can --

SE: You cannot tell the story -- or how much you tell, you cannot tell the suffering.

CE: It sounds different to us than to you. Than to the other what listens to. They can --

SE: And I was thi-thinking when I was in the kitchen --

CE: You have to be in this?

SE: I was in the kitchen now and I thought, "Gee, I didn't tell them that the -- the -- the doctors say we got to quiet you, throw you out on the street." They didn't even -- they looked under the bed if there was blood that come off, they have to do something for me. I mean, they didn't even help me when I was in pr -- so in pain. I mean, there was nobody there. I mean they -- and that not alone, it was always, you were so afraid, that every minute you could be dead, in camp. And that can you not tell -- something what --

CE: What you mean nobody can understand it, that what it is.

SE: No, and -- not alone --

CE: You tell it.

SE: You cannot tell it alls enough.

CE: Take phone.

End of Tape Four, Side B

Conclusion of Interview