This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. This is tape number four, side A.

Tell me about how much of your experiences you shared with your children.

Well, as I started to say-- this is interesting, because when my husband and I first met, of course, we talked about our backgrounds and what happened to him, what happened to me, and in general. And very much aware of each of our histories. And then we married.

And we really never talked about it anymore-- very little. Perhaps alluded to it here and there. And then, the children came. Tanya first in '57, and David in 1960. And I think neither one of us ever really made it a point to sit down and say, well, you want to know about what happened to us?

We may have touched it. We may have talked about it here and there, but not in depth. And I think, as we got older, as we were less involved in the children's lives-- namely, once they were out of college, and out on their own, if you will-- I think much later, we started to think more about it and to discuss it more. And even going more into details of what happened to us, particularly.

In my case, because my husband was always much more reluctant to talk about it, because his parents, of course, had a very horrible ending. And as we sometimes said, he never really had a chance to grieve for them. And it was always a little difficult for him to talk about it.

And as time went on, it wasn't as if we were hiding anything-- we answered, and they knew I was in hiding and where I was in hiding, and so forth and so on. But I think it became very much topic A after we got involved with the Holocaust Museum, and after I gave my testimony, and after my tape.

And I think, then, we started to talk much more about what was than we did in the earlier years. And I think part of it, it really wasn't deliberate, I think it was more we were very much engaged in working, bringing up children, and making a life. And did not really dwell on what was.

And I think, as we got older, we thought back more about what happened. And it's a reminiscence, really.

And again, as I said, the tape was sort of a final presentation to them as to what and the whereabouts the where. Also, my sister-in-law in Israel, just recently sent a little precis on their trip from Holland to Geneva. She wrote it in Dutch, and my husband is going to translate it also again for all the children to have.

But all this, interestingly, happened really in our later lives, and not early on. And I think there's a good reason for it.

How did you come to give testimony at the museum? Did they contact you, or did you get in touch with them?

I got in touch with them. As a matter of fact, my cardiologist, what was to be his daughter-in-law, worked at the museum. And my cardiologist, I had told him where I had been in the war, and he told me to contact her, or I contacted her, I don't remember. But that's how I made contact with them regarding the testimony.

And would you comment on what it meant to you and your husband to volunteer at the museum?

Interestingly, my husband-- we were invited to the opening of the museum, and he did not want to go. It was difficult for him, emotionally.

And then, I went and toured the museum. And I thought it was very well done, but he did not go with me. I took my mother, as a matter of fact. And he told me he couldn't, it was too difficult and too emotional.

And then, one day, I was out of town, and when I came back, he said, I went to the museum. And he was really very

impressed, and he had spoken to someone in the photo lab-- I don't know how-- and coincidentally, she, this lady in the photo lab-- can't think of the name right now-- Genia, Genia Marcon was her name, her family name was same as someone that my husband used to know in Amsterdam.

And talked to her, and she said, why don't you go and volunteer? And that's how he became. And he's been very involved, and very, very much engaged. And then drew me in, too.

And but it took a little while.

Yes, I would-- I'm sorry not to be asking him about this, but I wonder if that is something that he feels he's doing as a tribute to his parents?

Probably, I would think so. Probably, yes. That--

I wonder if you have any thoughts, too, about the ways in which all the Holocaust survivors of the camps, and of those who were in hiding, or those who came to America, do you have any thoughts about ways in which they have enriched life in this country? What they have given to the United States?

That's difficult to answer, because I have not really thought about that. So it would-- it's going to be a pretty superficial answer. There are many of them who have made significant contributions to the United States, and life in the United States, I think. As witnessed by the people that are very actively involved there, Mr. Lerner-- and Lerman, I mean, Miles Lerman, and so forth, and Benjamin Meads, they have done wonderful things. And I'm sure there are very many others.

I want to add, though, something else-- there is the Hidden Child-- what is it called? No, not the Hidden Child, I can't think of the other word. It's a group of surviving children that were in hiding. I have been-- they were in touch with me, I know someone who's involved in it.

And I don't very much believe in all these organized-- the children of survivors, and the hidden children-- how helpful that is or how meaningful that is. I guess to join together and to discuss what happened, I don't think it's very productive.

So you mentioned speaking at your grandson's school.

Yes.

Do you do much speaking about your experience? Or was--

No, as a matter of fact, it was at my grandson's school. And then, I met a lady who belongs to a church, and she asked me, would I speak to her church group? And I did. And as a matter of fact, the church group was so awfully nice, they sent a donation to the museum, which was lovely.

Other than that, no, I haven't.

I want to ask you about what your views are on this quotation-- it's just something that I think the Holocaust Museum thought was of interest. And it's Prime Minister Netanyahu saying, "This is the lesson of the Holocaust, this and only this, that the existence of the Jewish people is tied to Jewish sovereignty and a Jewish army that rests on the strength of Jewish faith." And that's something that Netanyahu had said in ceremonies after the march to remember the Holocaust.

But do you have any comment on that?

I think that's hard to comment on. In other words, what he's saying is, really it's the Jewish faith-- and in a way, the Jews bonding, sticking together, that helps us survive.

I think the state of Israel-- has been the creation of the state of Israel has been a very important milestone for the Jews. And I think without the existence of the state of Israel, I think we would be far more vulnerable than we are now.

Desperate, you mean, while in hiding?

Yeah. Really, I'm interested in knowing-- since there were times when, in your testimony, you really are using a real sense of humor that perhaps your mother used, calling your hiding place the palace, and when there would be a knock on the door, which was the panel that was really showing the humor was keeping you going.

But I wondered what the funniest times were, and the most-- and the most dreadful, the most anguishing, or desperate?

Well, I think the most desperate, or anguishing times was when I was fully aware how very ill I was, and it was frightening, because my hearing at that time was impaired. So that was very, very--

And the frustration of being indoors all the time was very, very difficult, where I couldn't see the sunshine. And had a real longing for the sunshine. And the happy time was that one and only time when they carried me out into the wheat fields and I did see the sun.

Funny? No, there was not very much that was funny. The mice procreating above us, maybe it was funny. No, no, no, I can't say there was anything really light, no.

And anguishing, yes. To me, there was always a certain fear, notwithstanding my mother's constant optimism-- are we going to get out of here? And what's going to happen once we get out of there?

No, I can't really address that too well.

Are there times in life now when you're suddenly-- you spoke of your dreams before, but I've wondered if there is a fabric, or a smell, or a situation which will suddenly take you back to that time?

No, not really. It's interesting, I can store it away. I really think very little about the time, and there's nothing that, as you ask, fabric, smell, or-- smell, maybe if I drive past a silo, I will suddenly say, hmm, that smells familiar. But other than that, no.

It's a part of life that's finished. Not forgotten, but not with me every day. Because there's too much every day that is with me and that I need to look forward to and want to look forward to. So no.

Thank you.

This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Susie Schwarz. It seems worth mentioning that Susie Schwarz lives in a home that's full of space, and light, and openness, in contrast with her hiding places years ago.