

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Frima Laub
November 23, 1998
RG-50.549.02*0030

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles on November 23, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Woodmere, Long Island 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 Frima Laub
November 23rd, 1998

Beginning Tape One, Side A

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

This is an interview with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles, on November 23rd, 1998, in Woodmere, Long Island. This is a follow up interview to a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum videotaped interview, conducted with Frima Laub on May seventh, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape one, side A. This is a brief ambiance in the home of Frima Laub. This is a few seconds of silence in Frima Laub's home. There is, in the background, all sorts of, I guess wind blowers. They are -- It's a beautiful fall day and neighbors are taking the opportunity to clean off the leaves. So, we are starting, along with the lawn material, which we will forget about. I wanted to ask you first, Frima, if you could give me your full name as a child and the name of each of your immediate family members and just a little bit about them. Maybe where you all were at first.

Answer: When you say at first, at first before World War Two, or during World War Two? Okay, my name is Frima. Maiden name was Glaser. We used Glaser-Better, B-e-t-t-e-r. My mother's name is Eta, my father's name was Mayer, M-a-y-e-r. My brother's name is David, my sister's name is Jeannie. You said you wanted to know more about --

Q: A little bit about where you lived before the war and what he did and --

A: Okay. Mm-hm. Okay, before the war, we live in a very lovely city, by the name of Volachisk -- I'm sorry, not Volachisk, Proscurov, which is near Volachisk and Potvolachisk, where the rest of my relatives were born. Some were born in Volachisk, some were born in Potvolachisk. But, we moved when I was still a little girl. We moved to Proscurov, which is a larger city.

Q: In the Ukraine?

A: And it was in the Ukraine, right and that's not too far from Kiev. Okay? We had the home there, of course. My mother was a housewife, my father was in the import and export -- actually mostly export, meat export business. My brother was studying in Kiev, in the engineering school and my sister was going to school in Proscurov.

Q: Okay.

A: We did --

Q: We-We'll -- We'll return later to your relationship with your -- your family members, but first, I wanted to ask you some of the things, just to clear up from the 1990 interview that was done at the Holocaust Museum. Did you have any idea of what year it was, or how old you were when you first stayed alone with the Gentile woman?

A: Yes, that was in 1942, after the second pogrom in Proscurov. This is where -- My mother felt that she had to leave the city, of course, with my sister -- at that time, we didn't know where m -- our father was. And my brother, of course, we didn't know where he was, since he was in Kiev, since before the war -- the war started. So, that was after the second pogrom, when my mother felt everybody was killed in the city and she

had to run away because they were searching for remaining Jews. So, that's when she left me with that Gentile lady. So, I was six years old, little bit over six, yeah.

Q: And I had a question -- two questions, actually, the first one being, do you know -- do you understand now and did you understand then, why your mother left you alone?

A: It's such a interesting question. Did I understand? I -- Obviously, I must have understood something when she said, "You have to stay here. I must leave with your sister. But," she said, "in the spring, someone will come to get you and bring you to me, wherever I'm going to be." A-And as much as I didn't like the thought that my mother was leaving, a-and I was, you know, I was crying and my excuse was, "Mama," I says, "but I have a headache." Cause I felt, maybe if I tell her I have a headache, she will stay. And she said to me, she said, "The lady will give you an aspirin, and you'll feel better. And here." She gave me a hundred rubles, she says, "In case you want to buy yourself something and you need money." So she gave me the hundred rubles and she kissed me goodbye, she walked out. Now -- She walked out, I -- I guess there was something that I must have understood when she said, "I must go, and I can't take you along," she says, "because it is too cold outside." And -- And i-in Europe, the winters are extremely cold. You can really freeze. And -- And I had very little clothing, because that clothing wasn't even mine, it was the clothing that belonged to somebody else from the first pogrom yet. So, I guess, in the way, I understood that it's cold outside and I might get sick or freeze and my mother said she must leave and I knew one thing, that, as a Jew, we had to

escape. So, that was my understanding, and I didn't make a scene. I just said, "My head hurts." That's all.

Q: Now, the part two of the question that I wanted to ask that I would -- while I was watching the video, that I wondered -- now, to step way back into the -- well, way up into the future from that moment, did you ever discuss this with your mother, about leaving?

A: Interesting. No.

Q: Okay.

A: Never discussed it and I never, ever felt any resentment. As the years went by, I guess somebody would say, "Oh, Ma, you left me." or "You abandoned me." I never felt that way. And I just never discussed it with her and I -- but I did asked her, when we were reunited and she held me on her lap -- see, now I remem -- I remember, and my first question was, "Mama, why did you leave me?" That I did, yeah. And she just explained to me again what she said, "I had to leave, it was too cold and I was afraid if I take you, you might freeze to death." Cause even the clothe -- my clothing consisted of knee-highs and a pair of short boots. A little skirt, a sweater and a little jacket with a scarf, that's it.

Q: And your sister was much older than you?

A: 10 years older. Right, she was already a big girl, so that was different.

Q: And speaking of the reunion with your mother and your sister. Where -- In the interview -- we are not quite clear from the video interview, what were the conditions, where did you live, did you work?

A: W-We lived in this very, very small town, it was occupied Romania and I understand this was still part of the Ukraine, but it was next to Romania and they call it occupied Romania. Mostly, there was a handful of Gentile people with a few homes, and -- a-and farms -- fields, they had a lot of fields. And this handful of Jewish people lived with the Gentile families, like we did. We lived with this Gentile gentleman. We were two families in one of his rooms, because that's all he had is one room. And -- And he slept on top of the brick oven and we had -- yeah, our life wasn't that simple. There was no bathrooms, either. If you had to go to the bathroom, you had to go out in the fields. Those days, things were not the way they are today. And so there was one bed, on -- on that bed there was a mother and a daughter whose fingers were a bit froze -- yeah, frozen from -- from the cold -- yeah, from the cold weather. They were trying to hide and wherever they hid, they obviously were not dressed properly.

Q: A Jewish mother and --

A: Yeah, a Jewish mother and a Jew -- and her daughter. So, they slept on one -- it wasn't really a bed, it was one of those four legs and -- a-a-and -- and some hay on it, I mean, that was the bed. And we had another bed, which was a little bit bigger, because my mother, myself, my sister and then later on, a cousin of ours joined us, too. So we all slept on the same bed and instead of sleeping horizontally, we slept diagonally. And if there wasn't enough room, so one of us will sleep on the floor. A-And that was o-our quarters. Now, what we did is -- is -- we had no money to pay for our -- our rent. So, we worked for this gentleman. Of course, we were very grateful, the fact that he even gave

us a place where to sleep -- where to sleep. So, we worked on his -- on his fields and I was one of his workers, and my job was to -- with my fingers, I would have to dig out the potatoes from -- you know, from under the earth. And I cleaned them up, put them in a sack and tied the sack and then, you know, just so -- drag it to his warehouse, which I don't know how many blocks it was exactly, I never counted it. To me, it was just part of my life. And for that, he would give me a loaf of black bread. So, we didn't have to pay for the rent and he gave me a loaf of bread and that was a tremendous salary.

Q: How often did you get bread?

A: Well, every day. I wor -- I worked every day. And so did, of course, my sister and my mother and my cousin. We all worked for him. Well, they -- they worked in different parts of the field and I worked, you know, digging up the potatoes with my hands, my bare hands, yeah.

Q: Do you remember what -- what -- what they did?

A: What -- I'm sorry?

Q: What your mother and sister did?

A: Oh, they were also working on the fields. Well, they must have -- they -- may -- may - - maybe they did different, you know, diggings, different, whatchamacallit, vegetables, you know, also it was -- everything was digging up, you know, because like he did the seeding and then, you know, y -- and you would have to -- in the springtime, that's what you did. In springtime, everything was growing and you had to rip it off of, or rip it out of the ground and bring it into his warehouse. So we were all just working on the fields.

Q: But you were not in hiding at this time?

A: No. At that time, it was not a question of hiding, because there was no ghetto, this was not a ghetto. You would just have to be very careful if sometimes a German would pass by in the street, you understand? Or -- Or someone, some other Gentile would know that you were Jewish, he might just go to the German and tell them, you know, in this house, they have Jews. So, actually, we were hiding out and nobody was supposed to know that we are Jews, except for the person with whom we lived, he knew that we were Jewish. So, that's how it worked.

Q: Was he -- What would have been his motivation, was -- was it political, was it -- was it a spiritual motivation? Was it circumstantial?

A: To say -- Do you mean to hide out Jews? Well, there were some good people and he must have been one of those people who -- who felt sorry for a mother and her children and he also felt, you know, that we'll be devoted and loyal. We'll -- We'll work for him, we'll help him out, because after all, he was all alone. And at the same time, he was, you know, saving lives. And that's -- That was really something very, very amazing and very important to us.

Q: That sort of reminds me a -- a little bit of what I'm reading about the -- the slaves in America and how there were certain homes, when they were on their way from the south to the north --

A: Took them in.

Q: -- where they stayed, I wondered, just jumping way into the future, did you have a -- make a connection with the Civil Rights movement at all, or the story of slavery in America?

A: You mean, at the present time, connecting their past and my past? Well, you know, in those years, in my -- my times -- you're talking 55 years ago, there was no such thing as Civil Rights, there wa-was only such a thing as good people versing not such good people. And he was one of those top people, who -- all he knew was perhaps for -- because of his belief, that God said, you know, you should help others and that's what he was doing. And the mere fact that he took us in, he must have been very special and -- and -- and obviously a believer too, in saving lives. So, you know, things were different then, as they are today, or --

Q: Do you have any idea how your mother found him?

A: No, but I am sure my mother was something very special. She was someone who was always ahead of everyone. And I imagine she just found out abis -- about this gentleman that, you know, lived alone and she must have approached him and -- and offered, you know, our services and he accepted them. So we are very lucky.

Q: Now, from there I would love to -- whoa.

A: That's the airport. We're not that far from the airport.

Q: Oh. From LaGuardia?

A: You see -- no, JFK. You hear that noise?

Q: Yes.

A: Every time -- This is not too bad, but every time, could be in the morning, could be during the day, could be in the evening, suddenly there will be a tremendous noise coming from the airport and I think it's from the airport, from that direction, and that will bring horrible memories to me and I sometimes just shake and I can't do anything until this noise stops. That reminds me, after the liberation, when we came back to Proscurov, to our home, every night for a whole year, until '45, the German planes, 30 or 40 of them would come over every night and bombard the city. And so, we would hear that noise, from those planes approaching us and then, of course, either we -- if we had enough time, we would run to shelters and if we didn't, we would just lie on the floors and -- and our ho -- our glass, you know the windows would be open and we would have tapes on them, that th-the -- the glass should not shatter and we would lie under our beds until they finished bombarding and they left. This is how I lived.

Q: Wa -- That's interesting that that plane would give us a cue, cause what -- one thing I -- I know we want to know about, is at the exact time of liberation, because you briefly mentioned it in the video interview and later you say that you never really felt liberated.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And I wondered, for a moment, if we might focus on your experience of the -- the exact moment of liberation are -- are -- and then the few days after that, from a child's -- how old were you?

A: I was, at that time, eight. Eight years old, that was in 1944. And, actually the Russians liberated us, okay, the Russian army. And there was -- it was really horrible, because for

a day and night, there was door to door fighting between the Russian soldiers and -- and the Germans. And, course the following day, when -- when we realized that we were free, that -- I ran into the house -- to that -- to our room, where that lady with her daughter were and these poor people, you know, their fingers were all frostbitten and well, while they were there, I used to go in the fields and look for a special leaf. There was a special leaf which, when you would put to the infected area, that at least alleviated their pain. Cause, you see, we could not get to a doctor and we were not allowed to go to a hospital and nobody was supposed to know that we were Jews. So, we couldn't call for help to help that mother and daughter who were constantly in excruciating pain because those -- that area where the fingers fell off, was just closing and half -- it wasn't completely closed. So -- So I was told that if I can find those type of leaves in the fields, then they would put it in -- o-on the affect -- in -- affect -- infected area and -- and that would alleviate their pain. So, I used to do that. But then, when we were told that we are liberated, we are free, we don't have to be afraid, well, I ran in -- you know, I was in the street and I ran in to give them the good news. And I was so happy, I was jumping and this poor lady, now I understand, you know, how she felt. Then, I couldn't understand. She took a broom and she started hitting me. And she said to me, "What is there to rejoice?" Because she and her daughter, they were really cripples. And -- And I was jumping for joy, so she beat me up with a broom. And she said, "Well, there's nothing to rejoice about." I says, "But we don't have -- the Germans are gone, the Germans are gone." She said, "Oh. So?" And that was that, you know, and I just walked out of the

house, because I was afraid she will beat me up some more, so that was that. Then, we also ran to see the first Russian airplane that landed in that -- in our little town. And it was on the hill and it was very big and I was so happy to see this big plane, because when I was little and I would go with my father for walks and I would see an airplane in the sky and I would say, "Papa, how does this plane fly?" And he would say, "There is a man in it." And I would say, "But it's so small, how can a person sit in it?" And he would say to me, "It seems to you that it -- he's -- this plane is very small. That's because this plane is so far, far away. But it's really very, very big." Well, this was my opportunity to see this big plane on the hill -- course with the -- with the Russian soldiers and -- a-and oh, ar -- that was a sunny day and oh, I was so happy. And then, we heard that this was the day that the Germans were planning to kill that handful of Jews that were hiding out with the Gentile people. They had already dug up a ditch for us. But the Russians came in and never gave them a chance to kill us. So, i-i-it was a tremendous celebration. I remember we were just dancing in the street and was just something so very special.

Q: Did -- The first few days after being liberated, did your life change at all? Did you continue to be in the -- living in the same place?

A: Yeah, mm-hm. We lived, I -- I think for another couple of weeks in the same place, because A, we had no money to go anyplace, we had nothing. So, I -- I -- I just wou -- don't know exactly how my mother got the money. I think what my mother did is whatever we had, like even the sheets she sold, like if you had them -- we had a sheet and maybe a pillowcase and maybe a blanket. She must have sold it to the people there and

that's how she got money for us to take a train and go back home. And so, it's a few -- was a few weeks later that we went home to Proscurov. And that was in 1944, April of 1944, spring.

Q: Before we go too much further, there was one more question which I thought was very interesting and that was, it -- it seemed to me when I -- when I listen to you now and when I heard your video, considering your age, that your recollection, your ability to recall is very, very clear and good and I wondered if -- if your mother ever helped you reconstruct the events that happened during wartime, or have you always remembered clearly, what happened?

A: Always remembered clearly. In fact, whenever I talk about my experience, it's -- it's right here. It's like I'm watching a movie. Right in front of me, there's a screen and I'll see it all over again. See, I can tell you how the sky was. When it was shining, when it wasn't. When it was raining. When we were walking -- the first pogrom when they lined us up and we were walking towards the outside of the city to the slaughterhouse. It was cloudy, it was drizzling, it was dreary, it was cold and yet, the liberation, it was sunny, the sun was shining, the sky was blue. I can remember everything. There just isn't a thing that I don't. And it's all just in front of me. Once I talk about it, it's in front of me. And not only when I talk about it. It's -- My life is like a back -- backlash? Backflash -- back -

-

Q: Flashback?

A: Flashback. Like, I'll walk in the street and I'll see -- I'll -- I'll hear a German Shepherd and that's -- right away, I got back to what has happened to me during those years with the German Shepherds. When I pass a house that has a -- that looks like -- a little like a barn o-or has a barn in back o-of, that brings back memories again. So, every movement in my life and everywhere I go, I see my past. I see a cat, brings back memories. Even -- That's just unbelievable, but even, you know, the Germans, the SS, their hats. They had these caps with like a brim up front, but up front was very high and then they had insignia, the insignia. Sometimes I'll see someone with a hat similar to that and it like takes me aback. Right away, I'll look at that. And, like I told you, th-the plane, that noise from the airport, right away I see the planes coming. God, there's just -- just about everything brings memories. But, everything is very, very clear, from the minute that -- when I was in my kindergarten and I was standing by the window, looking out to the backyard and the first bomb fell. Like a little -- you know, away from our -- from my school, but I was able to see the explosion of it and this is when the teachers realized that we were in trouble and they all called, you know, th-the parents and the parents came running and they took the children home and -- and of course, and on the radio we heard that -- that the Germans invaded us. So, from that moment on --

Q: How old would you have been then?

A: Oh, I was five years old.

Q: Okay. I think I better go to side two, because I have a feeling we're going to have a long story coming in liberation. So, we're now moving from tape one, side A, to side B.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: All right, this is tape one of the interview with Frima Laub, side B. And you were saying?

A: And I was saying that, because I was so young and this was such an impact on my life, that although perhaps I could not understand exactly what a war is, but I knew that I must survive. This I knew. And I knew that the fact that I am a Jew, nobody's supposed to know that. I have to be somebody else. And, for awhile, as you know, my name was not Frima, it was Lola.

Q: No, I didn't --

A: No, it was Olga. I forgot, it was Olga.

Q: Your name was Olga?

A: That's right. During the war, I was not Frima. I was -- We had to undertake a different -- different names in order for us to be somebody else. We were not supposed to be Jews.

Q: What was your last name?

A: Oh, now you are asking me for too much. I don't remember. I don't remember what our last name was, but we did have, believe it or not, we did have false papers, because you were not allowed to walk the street, they were -- we were all so -- the rosaca -- what do we call that? Curfew? Curfew, yeah. A curfew, right, in the evening? And if anyone was walking, then you had -- an-and ap -- you know, and a German would stop you, which they had the right to do it. If you show them the papers, then they would let you

go. If you didn't have papers, they would take you in for interrogations. So, we had -- we had false papers. And this all -- My mother took care on all these things. In fact, we got these papers from a church, from a pastor, because my mother realized, after the pogrom that they are -- or they were looking for Jews and -- and we had no place to go and so that means we would be in the streets, trying to -- you know, like she was trying to -- to see whom and how she would be able to get us where and how to leave the city. So, we went into a church and my mother spoke with a pastor and he gave us false papers, yeah. You see, I told you there were some good people in this world. If not for them, I wouldn't be here talking to you.

Q: I want to ask you about how you got -- if you can recollect, how you got from the knowledge of the liberation, then there was two weeks with the same farmer --

A: Or three weeks --

Q: -- and then -- or however --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- and then, do you remember how you traveled and what -- how you felt when you arrived in your next destination?

A: Home -- hum. Well, let's see. Of course, those -- the next few weeks are -- just by knowing that we don't have to worry about being killed and we don't have to hide out any longer and that we are going home, but we were not sure if our house will still be there, you know, because of all the bombardments and all the destructions and especially if it's a Jewish home, of course it was destroyed quicker than any -- any -- anybody else's

home. But the excitement was there, the fact that perhaps my father will be there and perhaps my brother will be there. So, i-it was a mixture of excitement that we were free and we were going home and the worry of will we see our father again, and will we see our brother again, or you know, my mother's son. And -- And then, of course, [indecipherable] my mother always had ways of how to do things and she got that money and we got the tickets and we got on that train and we made it home and it was -- i-it was a long trip. It was -- oh, God, I know it was long. It was at least six, seven hours of, you know, of traveling.

Q: By train?

A: By train, right, or maybe even more. I -- I don't remember exactly. Seems to me like it was forever, anyway. And we made it home and sure enough, there was our house. It was still there. Course, inside, everything was empty, you know. But -- And outside, it was only partially destroyed. Also, obviously from the shootings and bombardments. So -- But -- But the fact that the house was there, was a wonderful feeling, and -- and -- and then we began to -- to -- to hope that, you know, the family -- the rest of the family, my brother, my father will come home and -- but no, it didn't work that way. My mother was writing letters all over, you know, and the neighbors said that they did see my father with two Gestapos, walking in the street and that was the last time they saw him and nobody knew whatever, what happened to my father. So we -- After awhile -- After, you know ri -- writing to different places and not getting any response, we knew that we'll never see him again. And my brother, well, he was writing to us also. See, after the war, he also

began to write home, and we got his letters. And so this is how we, you know, started to corresponding and then he came home.

Q: Now tell me about how long was it and about his -- his coming home. You must really recall that.

A: Yeah. Well, first of all, wh-when we got his letter that he was alive, we were dancing. I mean, it was just wonderful. He is -- was the only brother, the oldest brother, the one and only. And we haven't seen him in -- in three -- more than three years, I mean, almost four years. And so the fact that, you know, that he was alive and th -- he would be coming home and so also, you know, my mother, my mother, my aunt, they write papers and you know, there was always a lot of paper -- a lot of paperwork, but it worked and he came. He was terribly handsome, my brother, so good looking. Tall, blonde, very good and very intelligent and he was, ah, it was just so wonderful to see him and -- we thought, you know, maybe he was in contact with our father, we just, you know, tried everything. But no, it just didn't work out that way. And then, you know, and my sister, my brother, they went out to work. My mother went out to work and in between she would fix up the -- the house outside, they made it look real nice. And we always had an open door for those who needed a place to sleep over. Even we didn't have many beds, but there was always the floor, so they could sleep on the floor. And whoever needed, you know, a meal or something, well our meal consisted of potato soup and that -- potato soup, herring and some black bread and that was very good. We did very, very well. Little by little, you know, we had the bed and my mother couldn't even afford to buy shoes for me,

so I would go to the bombed out homes -- houses and look for rope. And then, separate the rope and my mother bought me a crochet needle and I would crochet slippers. And I would take a cardboard, cut out the sole, put it inside and that was my shoes. And then later on, of course, I -- my mother registered me to s -- in school and she had to buy me a pair of shoes. So, she bought one pair of shoes and I had one uniform and I went to school in the afternoon and in the morning my job was, course, to clean up the house and make the beds, prepare lunch for my family, and they u-used to come home for lunch. And I washed my own uniform and I did my own pressing and every day you had to go to school with -- with a pressed up blouse, the blouse was always pressed. And my shoes that my mother bought me and then when I ca -- came home, I would take off the shoes that she bought me and put on my shoes, the ones that I crocheted. Hand crochet shoes.

Q: Was this a school of Jewish and Gentile children?

A: This was a public school. There were hardly any Jews. We were just about, I think, the only family that survived.

Q: Did you feel prejudice there?

A: Well, prejudice was always there. Anti-Semitism always existed. Persecution always existed, so I guess, from a very young age, I learned that strangers shouldn't know who you are. And I did very well in school and myeah --

Q: Okay, we -- we cannot change the neighbors activities, so we're going to move on.

And I wanted to ask Frima, how long were you there, in your home, and what was it that made you move on?

A: Okay, we were home for about two years. But before that -- before the two years of the -- again, I -- I went to school, I did very well, my mother was very proud of me. My mother received a letter from the government, the city government, that our house is too bi-big just for one family, so they were planning on having two other families moving in, to live with us. With that, my mother decided that it's time to go. And although it was extremely difficult to le-leave the country and the city and the home and -- and whatever she worked for, she felt that this was the time to leave. And so she again, as smart as my mother was, she again made all kinds of arrangements, got in contact with certain people who helped us get the right papers in order to leave the country. And that's what we did and that's where we started our journey from the Ukraine to Poland, from Poland to Germany, from Germany to France, from France to Cuba, from Cuba to the United States of America and God bless America.

Q: So, how long did that take?

A: To me it took forever. Is so much the trip. But --

Q: And you were how old when you were --

A: Well, when I arrived in -- in -- [indecipherable] in Cuba, because I lived in Cuba nine years. So, the age when I arrived in Cuba, I was 13. In fact, I can show you some -- some leaflets that -- I used to entertain. I -- I had a very good voice and my aunt was very much involved -- my aunt, who brought us to Cuba, she was very much involved and -- you know, in the Jewish organizations. And th-that was for her a chance to raise money for

her organization, by running a dinner dance, having her niece who just came from the -- from Europe singing all kinds, of course, Holocaust songs.

Q: Now, I want you to hold this -- this thought, is if we're trying to see where you were before. Those places where you were, you mentioned, but I'd like to go into a little more detail --

A: More details?

Q: -- about anything you recall, especially in Paris, and --

A: Okay, well, Paris was my last stop, so you want to --

Q: So let's --

A: Let's start from Poland --

Q: Yes.

A: -- to Germany.

Q: Yes.

A: All right.

Q: Your -- Your time in Germany, did you move from place to place? Did you settle for long? How did you travel?

A: Okay, we are now right, okay. Okay, our first stop was Poland, where we -- we were there only for about a day, or maybe a day and a half and then by train we went to Germany. No, excuse me -- yes, but before that, we had to cross borders, okay? We -- Yes, we did take a train from the Ukraine to Poland, that is correct. Then in Poland we stayed maybe a day or a day and a half, right. And then from -- from Poland, we had to

cross a border to Germany. Now, it is illegal, in those days, it was illegal to cross the borders, unless you had, of course, all the right papers, or whatever. Well -- And, of course, you cannot be Jewish, either. And that's already, even after the war. But, what my mother did is -- there were always people who for money would smuggle you, okay? And we were not the only ones, there were many Jewish people that wanted to get out of Poland and wanted to, you know, sort of run towards Germany or even Italy, wherever they were able to go and with the hope that from there, they will come to the United States or go to Palestine or go to, you know, different countries. So, this was -- the arrangement was a -- a military truck, who was not -- who was -- did not belong to the military any longer, it belonged to those group of men, two or three of them, who would smuggle people for X amount of money. And so, you know, you had to pay for each head, whatever it was and I remember so distinctly, this was this -- you know, th-those military trucks that have canvas on top? You know, those canvas trucks, right? And we must have been maybe 25 - 30 people, with little children, okay? Some were sitting on the side, you know, the benches on the side. Most of us were lying on the floor and -- and -- and people were sitting on top of those who were sitting -- who were lying on the floor. And when we got to the border, it was -- the guards stopped us and I -- we don't know what our driver told him, but th-the guards decided to check what -- what they were carrying in that -- in -- in that truck, right? So, as they started walking to the back, to open up the canvas and see what material they were carrying, our driver took off. And they started shooting at us. And he was zigzagging and we were not hit. Were we lucky?

I'm lucky all the time. And we made it to Germany, okay? Now, we arrived in Germany, it was dark. And there was a -- see, once you're in Germany, they knew that these Jews were displaced persons. So they -- no problem, they would just -- you know, ha -- we had to fill out papers, they would register us, who we are, blah, blah, blah and they would -- and -- an-and they was send us to Berlin. Berlin was like the headquarters for all the Jews that were coming from all over the world and from -- from Berlin, they would send us to different displaced person camps -- DP camps they were called. So, all over Germany, they had these DP camps, okay? Our camp was in Bavaria, part of Bavaria. And -- And the city -- the name of the city was Poking, but our camp was outside of Poking, our DP camp, which wa -- there were like -- there were wooden barracks and I don't know if these barracks were built after the war or they were there before the war, I really don't know. And -- But after the war, I found out that actually these barracks were built on top of a Jewish children cemetery. Jewish children were buried there. They were killed during the war, they were buried there and then these barracks were built, you know, before we arrived.

Q: How did you find that out?

A: Well, somebody that -- that was in that area told me, a-a-and I was -- I was shocked, because I -- I didn't know -- none of us really knew. So, what happened, so we lived in that area and in that DP camp, I don't know how many of us were -- but I do know that the museum has a picture of one of the barracks behind me and my sister. That was my school and that was also our entertainment building. We used -- I used to entertain, I used

to sing. And there were children who danced and this was our school and this was our social hall.

Q: To entertain each other?

A: To entertain, yes --

Q: And -- And how did you start your interest in singing, was it here at the DP --

A: At -- Wh -- Yeah, yeah, at the DP camp, right

Q: Did you by any chance sing when you were young, by yourself, because you spent so much time alone.

A: Well no, I -- those were not the times for me to sing, when I knew that I'm all alone.

Q: And when did you start singing?

A: After the war, when I came home.

Q: So, part of your liberation is, in a way was --

A: Yeah, probably you are right, yes, probably that was the reason. Yeah, come to think about it.

Q: Not to mention your talent

A: Well, I had -- No, I had a good reason to sing then, you know?

Q: And your sleeping arrangement in the barracks, were you separated the women and the men, and --

A: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. We had one room and we as a family, a whole family, you know the four of us, yeah, all four of us, yeah, my -- well, m-my father wasn't with us any longer. That's my brother, my sister, myself and my mother, right. We had one room

and you know, every family had a room. It was very -- That was very good. This is where the HIAS and Joint came in and they helped us. HIAS? It's the Hebrew -- Hebrew, God, the HIAS, how they -- they spell it? Well they, it's H-I-A-S. That's an organization that provides people who are need of food and clothing, they provide them. And also the Joint. That's J-o-i-n-t, Joint. They also an -- are an organization that provide, you know, the refugees and the Displaced Person with food and clothing, cause none of us had jobs and we had to eat. And so, whatever we got, it was no big deal, but it still was food, and - - and clothing. And --

Q: Your family worked on --

A: There was nothing to work, there are no jobs for us. We had no jobs.

Q: No jobs for money, but I mean, what did you do during the day?

A: Oh, oh well, you know, my mother would help out the sick people, somebody was sick. I went to school. Right away a school was set up. In every DP camp there was a school and we went to school. We would -- We were taught Jewish, Hebrew and the language of the country, yeah. And la -- as I said, and -- and the schoolchildren we used to entertain, like once a week, we would have -- you know, for the parents and the whole DP camp would come and we would entertain, singing and dancing and you name it and we did all these things. We also, you know, we had all kinds of competitions, bicycle riding and running and jumping and you name it, I mean we -- they kept us really busy. Yeah, it was --

Q: Do you have pleasant memories of that time?

A: They were pleasant because I didn't have to worry about pogroms and I was not surrounded by barbed wires and I -- and I didn't have -- I didn't hear the German Shepherds bark. So, that was like feeling I'm safe.

Q: Who were the leaders? Do you remember the leaders of the DP camps?

A: No, no.

Q: So, is there any other thought or experience you had there, before -- in Bavaria, before we move on to the next place?

A: Yeah, well, a-a-after this -- a-after Shlupfing and that's the DP, my first DP camp where we stayed, they suddenly decided to close this DP camp and they moved us to another DP camp, not too far, you know, a few kilometers from this one, which was a much larger one and the name of that camp was Volshtadt. It was also in Bavaria. So, we stayed in the first camp like, I think, a year or so and -- and the same amount of time in the other camp, until -- well, time came when they said, ofka -- of course, you have to move on. Okay, so --

Q: How did they decide that?

A: Well, usually what everyone tried to do is get in touch with their f-families or relatives in whichever country they had relatives and the relatives would have the papers ready for them. Like, we had papers to come into the United States, except, when we got from Germany to France, from where we were supposed to come to the United States, we were supposed to wait longer on that quota th-th-the am -- the American quota was very slow. I imagine they had maybe a lot of people. So we had to wait. And my mother --

Q: Now how did -- You -- You've gotten to the second DP camp?

A: Right. And we lived there for about a year.

Q: One year.

A: Yeah. Continued going to school. I also, in between, would help out mothers with little children like I was a babysitter. I mean, free of charge, you know. And we had synagogue who caught fire and you know, because these were old barracks, they were dried pieces of wood put together, huts really. I mean that's -- that's what it was. But we knew it was temporary and everything, you know, compared to what we had to go through during, you know, during the pogroms, this was fine. And so we were looking forward that, you know, tomorrow will be a better tomorrow. And sure enough, the tomorrow came where we had to take the train from Munich to Paris.

Q: Now did you stay in Munich at all, or just passing through?

A: No, we -- we just went to Munich to take the train to Paris and we did and we lived in a rooming house. I don't think it was a hotel, I think it was a rooming house. We had one room. We lived there for five months.

Q: Did an organization pay for your --

A: You see, I don't remember. I think it was a combination between the organization and my family in the United States who send us, you know, send money and packages at that time, you understand? They were also helping us out. So, I don't -- You know, I -- I -- I can't say if they were going to say if the organization paid for our stay completely or it was half and half. But, whichever way it was, they were always there if we needed help.

This -- This I do remember. Everyone said, you know, if we need -- you need help, you go to the HIAS or you go to the Joint and they will help you, and -- and I imagine they did.

Q: What language were you speaking then?

A: Well, when I wasn't in -- in Germany, of course I -- I spoke Russian and I spoke Yiddish and I spoke Hebrew and I spoke a little German and I hated the language. Course a lot of things also happened in Germany. I -- I -- I -- I don't know how I got it, but one evening, the night of Yom Kippur, I was sitting outside the synagogue and I suddenly got this terrible headache. I came home and I was running an -- a very, very high temperature. And my mother called a doctor and he came and he examined me and he said that immediately they have to take me in by ambulance to outskirts of -- of Berlin, because I am very sick and I might have diphtheria and that's a contagious disease. So, can you imagine? Here I am, I thought I was finished with Germany, but here I am sick and they taking me with a German ambulance to a hospital on the outskirts --

Q: From?

A: Berlin. Outskirts of Berlin --

Q: Wh --

A: From Berlin -- From the DP camp in Berlin. I mean, yes, you know --

Q: Let's go to the next tape. We're going to finish the story, but I need to change tapes. We're going to Frima Laub, tape two, side A.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles, on November 23rd, 1998. This is tape number two, side A.

Tell us where we are, because we started with this story --

A: Right now, we are ou -- we are back in Berlin, in the DP camp. This is --

Q: The third DP camp?

A: No, the first DP camp. I'm -- The reason I'm going back is because I want to tell you that I got sick, okay? Yeah, okay? How'd it ever go back to us -- but anyway, this is just a reminder as to what happened to me, while we were in -- in -- in Berlin -- in the Displaced Person camp in Berlin, after we arrived from Poland, and after we cross the border to Germany. We were there for a short while, but during that time, the night before Yom Kippur, I suddenly was -- was hit with a terrible headache, while sitting outside the synagogue and listening to the prayers. And my mother called the doctor and he immediately ordered a -- an ambulance to take me to a German hospital outside of Berlin, because I was very sick, and what I had was diphtheria, which is a contagious disease. And so, three weeks I was in that hospital, in isolation and I did not sleep and I did not eat, because I was afraid they'll kill me again. And I -- I was not allowed to have visitors, so my mother would come and stand by the window and just wave to me. And every time they gave me an injection, I would say, "This is it. They killed me." And I was afraid to eat, because in case there's poison in it. All because I knew I'm a Jew. I don't know if they knew I was Jewish, but obviously they did know that I'm Jewish

because they took me by ambulance from the DP camp. And the only people that went to the DP camps, were the Jews. So, after that, we went to the next DP camp and then to the next one, the third one, which was Volshtadt, and then from Volshtadt, we went to -- to Munich, to catch the train to Paris.

Q: Okay, now before we --

A: And here, we're on our way to Paris.

Q: Before we get on our way to Paris, just because this is so fresh in your mind, has your fear of Germans or the German language carried on through to your life to this day?

A: Absolutely. And --

Q: Could you talk a little bit about that?

A: Yes. Well, the language brings memories and many times I just -- I-I-I'll just -- I'll sort of cover my ears, not to hear the language, because it -- it brings memories in the -- and I really get very upset. I -- I -- I -- I -- I never felt really, completely free, you know, a-away. So, when I lived in Germany, there was still fear inside of me that, if they know that I am a Jew, something might happen to me, or they'll do something to me. And to this day, it didn't change. And the German Shepherd, that dog, when I hear him bark, I don't even have to see him. Terrible feeling. I -- I-I-It's very hard to end -- to -- to even explain. It's like my -- my stomach jumps. My heart starts racing.

Q: I never heard anyone speak about German Shepherds. How were they involved in your history?

A: In my life? Well, during the first pogrom, when we were rounded up, they came to the ghetto, where th -- th -- the SS came with the German Shepherds and so, that is to make sure that we don't run or we don't do anything, right? I mean, we were helpless anyway, because it was very early in the morning. It was just beginning to light -- to get light and we were sleeping and they started knocking on -- on the windows and on the doors. And of course, with that, as they were knocking, the German Shepherds were barking. And then ho -- all -- a-after we were lined up to go, you know, to the slaughterhouse I call it, you know, where they did the killings, on both sides of the roads, on the road that we walked towards the slaughterhouse, they had the SS, with the German Shepherds, standing there. And so, to me, as I was looking at them, was frightening. And during the time that I was alone, and I was walking the streets, I used to hide between the trees at night, when I would go back to the ladies house, to sleep under -- under her house, I would go between the shadows of the trees, I should not be noticed by the German Shepherd. Because, you know, they -- they -- if they see a shadow, they'll -- they'll run after a shadow. I was ou -- I tried to be so careful. I-It was unbelievable. And their barking just never left me. And the fear of what they can do to you, with their masters, I mean, i-is something that did not change my feelings and th-this is unfortunate that -- the language -- a-and I would just never go back. I keep saying, I would never go back to Germany, although sometimes I say I want to go back and see the place where I lived, the DP camps, but I'm not sure if -- if it's -- you know, what's there. It's probably nothing, it's a cemetery now.

Q: So you've never gone back at all to your --

A: No, I just --

Q: And what about Paris, since we were about to arrive --

A: Well, Paris, I would love to go back, I -- I told my husband I would like to show him -
- I hope that that rooming house is still there, where we lived and I would like to show it
to him.

Q: And so, in Paris, you didn't need to know French?

A: Oh yes, I learn quickly, a little bit of French. I -- Of course, I did not go to school,
because this was in the middle of the semester, so nobody would take me, but I kept very
busy. I did learn, you know, I had to go shopping for my mother, I did learn important
things.

Q: And the money, I --

A: And how to travel.

Q: And your money came from?

A: My aunts. Remember I told you my aunts and then, you know, my mother, every so
often, would sell something else that we had, and --

Q: Your aunts in Cuba?

A: I had an aunt in Cuba and twins in the United States, yeah, so they -- they really, all of
them helped us and th-that was very important, because none of us were able to work for
five months in -- in, you know, in Paris. But, we did do a lot of volunteer work. I, for
example, would babysit for -- for the young couples with children, all sort -- you know,

immigrants. They were in transit from Paris to somewhere, okay? And -- And if the mother wasn't feeling well, I would take care on the baby. You know, I was like a babysitter or a mother's helper. Then, once a week, there was a -- a -- a group of Moroccan Jews that lived on a hill and I don't remember the name of the hill, also, outskirts of Paris. And I learned quickly, how to travel by Metro and I would go all over Paris. I knew exactly where I had to go. And of course, as I said, I learned the necessary vocabulary that I needed --

Q: By now you were --

A: -- to -- to get around.

Q: -- you were a big girl.

A: Yeah, I was 12 years old, that's correct. Almost ready to get married. And I would -- I would collect clothing from different people and I would go to the bakeries and collect breads and cakes and pick up two valises and go to these Moroccan people and bring them food and clothing. And was bit heavy because there were maybe -- maybe, oh, I don't know, maybe 50, maybe 60 people, I don't know how many, i-it -- and they lived like in a cave. It wasn't even a house. It looked like a cave. And, of course, you must understand, not everyone was lucky to have a bed or a shower. So, I don't know how long these people were living there, but they developed an odor that when I used to come to the hill, before I even walked up, I -- I -- I held my breath. And then I would walk up and leave the two valises in front of the entrance and run away. That -- That's what I did,

for five months. So -- And my mother did other volunteer work and my sister did volunteer work and my brother did volunteer work, you know, whatever.

Q: What encouraged you to do volunteer work, your mother?

A: Yeah, my mother always did things. Our home was always open, we always had people coming, going. We had a large table and the middle of the table, there was that summervar -- the summervar. You know what a summervar is? It's that Russian, big coffee pot or teapot. That's summervar, and with glasses and -- and we always had people coming and my mother always baked a cookie, a -- you know, and fruits and people would have a -- a glass of tea, not a cup of tea. So -- And -- And this thing was, you know, with coal -- coal inside and that what made the water hot, and -- so it -- i-it was an open house and -- and after the war, it was also an open house. Remember I told you, whoever needed some potato soup, well, had a meal in my house and -- and if they needed a place to sleep, well, there weren't enou -- there weren't enough beds, but we had a floor, so no problem. M --

Q: I'm going to ask you something about your comment. I know you were just making it lightly, but when you said you were 12 and you were almost ready to get married, does that mean you were starting to get interested in boys here?

A: No, I'm just kidding you.

Q: Oh, okay. So did you have any social life? Who did you [indecipherable]

A: No. In Paris? None whatsoever, nothing. What we did in Paris is, you know, I would take my mother to the Eif-Eiffel Tower, and we'll go to Pigall, to the street of Pigall,

there was a lot of entertainment there. I would walk -- of course I couldn't afford to go into the opera, but I would walk from where I lived, just to stand there and look at this magnificent building, the opera. So, no, we -- you know, like every day, I would take my mother someplace else and we would just go and look, you know, and I remember the whole family one day, we went to Marseilles. That was very nice. You know, we kept busy. You know, I was never bored, no.

Q: But basically, you were there, sort of waiting to move?

A: Yeah, exactly. We knew it was -- We were -- It was just sort of a hop over place, you know? And after the five months that we were in France, we -- we went to Cannes -- oh, well, as I said, I'm jumping. We were supposed to go to the United States from Paris, except that the quota was delayed and --

Q: Quota?

A: Yeah, quota. There was always a quota. And my mother heard that there is going to be a World War Three, and so she became panicky and she said, "We must leave Europe immediately." So, she had a sister in Cuba. She call -- you know, she wrote to her a letter, and my aunt, you know, did whatever she was able to do, which wa -- it wasn't easy to come to Cuba, but my aunt again, you know, paid whatever had to be paid and made the right papers and we went from Paris to Cannes and we took a boat, a commercial boat.

Q: In France?

A: That -- In France, yeah that -- that's the Riviera, okay, the area of Riviera, which I don't know them, because again, we went there at night. But this is from where the

commercial -- a Polish commercial ship was leaving and we were the passengers on that ship. And for three weeks we were on that ship, going to Cuba.

Q: Do you remember it -- the other people you shared it with, or you -- it doesn't look like it was a pleasant experience.

A: No, because it was a commercial ship, I think we were the only family, maybe there were a few other single people. Not going to Cuba, they were just working on -- on that ship. We were the only ones who went to Cuba. But that ship made a stopover in Cuba, either picking up cargo or -- or delivering something. And this is how we wind up going with this commercial ship. A, because I don't know i-i-if there were any luxury ships going from France to Cuba and B, if there were, we probably couldn't afford them. So, this was the next best thing. Course, it was -- it was a very hard trip. I mean, i-i-it's not a luxury ship and we were all the way on the bottom there, in the cabins. And -- A- Although I wasn't sick, my sister was sick all the time, my mother was pretty good, my brother was pretty good. And --

Q: How did you eat?

A: -- it seemed like forever. Well, we didn't eat much, there wasn't much to eat, but there was bread and there was butter and there was milk and there was fish, I think, yeah fish. And that was fine. I mean, yes -- couldn't really starve, a hard boiled eggs, I mean, you know, you -- a fruits, looks -- they didn't feed like it's a luxury boat. You have to understand, to me this was already luxury compared to my life before. This was wonderful. But, the sea was rough and -- a-and three weeks is a long time when it's not

really the right type of a boat, you know, to travel such a long time. But, we made it and it was a beautiful day when we arrived in Havana. It was beautiful. It was sunny like this and then when we came out on the deck and we looked down in that little launcher, which is a little boat, there were my aunts, waving to us, oh. That was such an exciting moment in our lives, my God. These were aunts I didn't know, cause when they left, I -- I was very little and my -- my -- my grandmother, who was their mother, she left, I was six months old, so I -- I -- and of course, she died here, before I came. My -- My dis -- M- My maternal grandmother died the day after we were liberated and she did not know that her oldest daughter was alive. Isn't that sad?

Q: Your mother?

A: Yeah, my mother was the oldest daughter out of four daughters and -- and one son. She didn't know. And my aunts told me that she used to pray every day and say, "Oh, I wonder where my daughter Eta is with her ch -- family. Where is she? Is she al -- Is she alive, Is she alive?" And she died the day before. It was so sad. Okay, so --

Q: So these aunts were your mother's sisters?

A: Yes, yes. From my father's side, everybody was killed. In fact, on Yom Kippur of 1942, right? '42? '41? Get me, I think it's '42 - 1942. The whole town was wiped out. The whole town of Volachisk was wiped out. That included my grandmother, her sons, her only daughter, her grandchildren, you know, aunts, uncles, you name it. The whole town was wiped out. So, from my father's side, nobody. We had here a few cousins, my father's few cousins. One is in Israel, one was here, she already passed away a long time

ago. So, all we really had are my mother's sisters and my mother's brother. And so my -- th-th-the three sisters were in that boat, you know, on that little boat, launcher, you know, looking up to us while we were on the deck waiting, you know, to disembark.

Q: What are their names?

A: Oh my, well the oldest one next to my mother is Clara, and she passed away a long time ago. A lovely lady. We -- We lived with her for awhile until we were able -- she was the one who lived in Cuba and she was the one who made us the papers and we lived with her until we were able to afford an apartment. You know, until my mother went out to -- my mother never went out to work, I'm sorry. My brother went out to work, my sister went out to work and I went out to work. Mother's wouldn't -- did not work in those days, at least not by us. To us, she was a mother, and she was a widow and she's not to work. So my mother was a housewife and we worked. And then my other two aunts, the -- the other one who is next -- well, my uncle wasn't there, he was in Florida and his name is Abraham and he is not here any longer, may he rest in peace. And then the next sister is Margaret and she passed away two years ago and I have just one and only little aunt, my mother's youngest sister Elizabeth and she lives in Florida.

Q: Your mother's maiden name is?

A: Is Glaser.

Q: Glaser.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And that is the story --

Q: Of Cuba?

A: No, that's only the beginning, when we arrived.

Q: Do you want to take a break?

A: If you don't mind.

Q: No.

A: Okay. And I'm going to have a cup of coffee. How's that, okay? Is it okay?

Q: Absolutely.

A: Yeah, I need something for my throat.

Q: So we are in Cuba and you were telling me when we took a break what -- what you did when you were there. When you first there and how you learned the language, how you worked with a sick aunt and --

A: Yeah. Okay, well, when we arrived in Cuba, in Havana, it was during middle of semester. So, no school would accept me in the middle of semester. So, in the meantime, I learned the language on my own, and in three months I spoke Spanish fluently. It truly is a lovely, lovely language and lovely, lovely people. And we lived with my Aunt Clara, who brought us to Cuba, for about five weeks and then my brother, my sister, they got jobs and we were able to rent an apartment a block away from my aunt and we moved into our own apartment, a one bedroom. And well, after I spoke Spanish, my cousin who is Clara's daughter, and she's not with us any longer, Dorothy, she went with me to a private school and asked them if they would accept me, since I came from Europe and I

had finished six grades in -- no, not six grades, I finished about five grades in -- in Germany and they were -- after examining me, they were willing to accept me. Now, this was a private school of about 45 kids and I was the only Jewish person. And they were so enthused with me. And they liked me so much, of course -- oh, before they took me, though, I had to go through exams from first grade, all the way to sixth grade.

Q: In Spanish?

A: That, absolutely. Okay? And that's when I was accepted to the sixth grade, because I was up to par with them. And I was even better in math. I was very, very good in math. So -- And, plus the fact that, I-I-I'm a very well-behaved girl and I had the honor, and -- and I know that a lot of the kids were very jealous and they really resented the fact that I, as a Jewish girl, an immigrant coming from Europe, I had the honor of holding the Cuban flag every morning when we sang the Cuban anthem. And after the year -- you know, after graduating sixth grade, I graduated with a gold medal. And that was [indecipherable] school. Then, I did mention to you that my aunt [indecipherable] opportunity of raising money for her organization by running a dinner dance, and so I sang, you know, songs from the concentration camps and songs from the ghettos. And my a -- my -- my -- my cousin Dorothy, her daughter, she would play the piano.

Q: You sang in Spanish?

A: I sang in Jewish. There were Jewish songs and Hebrew songs.

Q: Do you remember what -- any one now?

A: Yeah, well, except I don't have the voice and if I start singing, I will start crying.

Q: Well, I don't --

A: They're very sad songs, they really are. They're sad. And wa -- I will just give you the title of one of the songs and that's "Puppyrosen." Puppyrosen in Russian means cigarettes. And the song is about a little boy who was left a orphan and -- and -- and he's standing at the corner of a street, trying to make some money and it's windy and it's cold and it's raining. And he's asking, "Please, buy this cigarettes, so you can save my life." Was a really very sad. So I can't sing it for you. And there were other, you know, very sad songs about Jewish survival and atrocities and horrors that -- you know, that we went through. But --

Q: What are any more of the songs?

A: Huh?

Q: What other songs?

A: Oh, let's see which other so -- oh, there wa -- there was one happy song.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The happy song was, after all these sad songs, it was, "I'm -- I'm going to Israel, and I'm saying goodbye to all of you and I'm so happy that we are finally free and we going to the land -- to our Promised Land, and -- and -- oh, and this land is -- is a blessing for the Jews and it was promised," you know, "by God and -- a-a-a-and this -- this land is so important to -- a-a-a -- the -- to the Jewish nation. It's like -- a-an -- i-it -- it's so important to -- to -- to the Jewish nations, like the right hand is to your body." I mean, a-and there's other which I -- offhand, I just -- I can't think. Well, anyway, she raised a lot

of money, because so many people came an-and later on I'll show you, I have one of those flyers that she made out, with my picture on it.

Q: She was raising money for Jewish organizations?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, for Jewish organizations and the organizations in Cuba which dealt with, you know, children and poor people, or whatever. No, I need my thi -- I got it, I got it, it's okay, it's okay. You know, so --

Q: You can stop whenever you want --

A: No -- no --

Q: -- and have -- have some coffee.

A: -- that's okay, that's fine, no. So that was that and course, after I graduated my Spanish school, I -- I -- I -- I took a job in a factory -- my cousin in a fac --

Q: You graduated from school at what age?

A: Yeah.

Q: At --

A: At 13 - 13.

Q: You graduated at 13?

A: Yeah, 13 I graduated sixth grade.

Q: Sixth grade. Oh, okay.

A: That's it.

Q: And that's as far as you went in Cuba?

A: No, no, no. At that time. Then, I -- I -- I had -- Took my -- I had a job and I worked in a factory and I was -- I used to pack merchandise and I -- I -- in the shipping department, okay? And I would go to school at night. And that's how I continued my education, by going to school at night. And in turn, my -- my -- my aunt got very sick, the one who brought us to Cuba, Clara. And she -- she had her kidney removed and -- a-and I felt so obligated, you know, to -- to her, for being so good to us and bringing us to Cuba and setting us up and helping us and -- and buying me things, clothing and all the things that I -- I -- I wanted to be her nurse, yeah, so I can stay with her until she gets better. And luckily, because I stayed with her, I discovered that she had diabetes. After surgery, she developed diabetes. And how did I detected diabetes? Because I would change her wound every morning. And one morning I took that sheet and I hung it outside, she had a balcony by her window. You know, by her room and later on when I went to take it in, I saw ants crawling on that area and I knew it had to be sugar, glucose.

Q: All right, now we're moving over to the other side of tape two.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: All right, this is tape two, side B, of an interview with Frima Laub. We are in Cuba and in the hospital with your aunt.

A: Yeah, and so when the doctor came, I told him, I says, "You know, doctor, this and this is what happened. And sure enough, when they -- after they tested her, they found out that she had -- she developed diabetes during surgery. Isn't that something? You

know, from the shock, many times people develop diabetes. Well, I remained with her at the hospital 24 hours a day for five weeks, until she got better and then she went home. I went home and I continued working and actually, I was able to take off from work because I worked for her son, her son had the factory, so it was no problem. My siblings worked. My mother did not work, because in those years, and according to our -- our way of life, a mother should not be working. Her place is at home, and that's what we did. My mother stayed home, she was a housewife and all of us worked and we all, you know, chipped in and paid for the rent and we had a one bedroom apartment, my mother and I, cause at that time already, my sister got married and she lived in a different city.

Q: To a Cuban man?

A: Yeah, yeah, someone --

Q: Jewish?

A: -- ah, Jewish, yeah. A Jewi -- Cuban Jewi -- a Cuban Jew. And -- And my brother had his own place in Havana and my mother and I, we lived on the outskirts of Havana, we had the one bedroom apartment. And not too far from my aunt, of course, you know. And I -- I had -- I had a lot of friends and I loved the Cuban people. And w-we were never afraid we would, you know, go out at night and walk, one, two o'clock in the morning. Nobody ever was afraid of anybody, everything was very peaceful.

Q: Who was the leader of Cuba at that time?

A: At that time, was Batista. Fulgencio Batista. And -- In fact, while talking about Fulgencio Batista, a group of us, we were -- we had some friends who worked in

Batista's summer home, Valadero Beach, and we were -- you know, we went to Valadero, which is very beautiful town near the most beautiful beach in the world. We went to spend some time by the beach and our friends who worked for Batista asked us if we wanted to sleep over in Batista's summer home, since the family was away. So we did. How about that? Boy, boyo.

Q: How old were you then? Teenager, right?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: At that time I was already a teenager, but to me it was something very exciting, to sleep in a president's house. Hey, that was quite an honor.

Q: Were most of your friends and associates Jewish?

A: Well, where I worked -- you know, later on, of course, I changed jobs. 15, I already worked -- was it 15 or 16? Probably 16, excuse me, at the age of 16, that means three years I worked in the factory. Then, I -- I -- I worked in a department store as a buyer. I -- I had all kinds of friends. I had a Italian friend who had a beautiful voice and he sang like Mario Lanza. Oh, he had such a beautiful voice. And, of course, we used to sing at all our friends weddings. That means we worked -- we all worked the same place. So there were a few who were getting married. So, when we used to go to their weddings, he -- oh, what was his name? Ooh. Gino, I think. Gino, Gino. We would sing together.

Q: In Spanish?

A: Of course, yeah, that was in Spanish.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Well, we had s -- had Syrian friends. I had Italian friends, I had Cuban friends, I had Jewish friends. I also had a -- an Oriental friend. Yeah, I -- I -- I was beautiful. Only, we were just --

Q: There -- There was a large population of Chinese immigrants into Cuba also, wasn't there?

A: Yes, I would say yes and I'm thinking that it was not as large as -- the -- it wasn't very large, because you see, i-it's a very small country, a -- really very small, so mostly, everyone settle in Havana, so there was, you know, X amount, a small population of Jewish people, Chinese people, whatyouma -- Syrian people, you know? But e -- you can call it, I think, you know, if you say for -- for a little country like that, maybe it was, you know?

Q: I get the feeling that in Cuba, you did not feel so much prejudice, is that true?

A: That is very true. That is very, very true.

Q: Even though they are just -- for the most part, traditionally Catholic?

A: They were just wonderful. There were truly -- They're -- They're not hostile -- They were not hostile people. They were very compassionate people. A-And --And if they heard, oh you came from -- from Europe, oh then, you know, they have to extra care -- extra good care of you, you know? This is the type of people they were. They were also people like -- if they would have a piece of bread and you tell them you're hungry, they'll give you half of their bread. Without asking any questions, it doesn't matter who you are.

So, this is the type of people that they were. Of course, I don't know what kind of people they are today. Must understand, it's been over 40 years. Now, leadership had changed, and people changed --

Q: Oh, but yi -- that's not why you left?

A: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Not at all. The reason why -- I left before Castro came into power and that was simply because I felt that there wasn't for me, enough, in Cuba, as far as a social life, as far as marriage. You know, like -- are -- and I felt that -- and my aunts really wanted me to come here. That was a good reason. So they quickly made up papers for me and I came to the United States.

Q: Your mother stayed in Cuba?

A: Yeah, my mother stayed in Cuba. My sister was married and she stayed in Cuba. My brother came to the United States before I did.

Q: Oh, so he was already here?

A: Yeah, he was already here. And then I came, you know, for -- on a temporary we -- visa, to see, you know, do I like it, don't I like it? You know, what's doing. And while I was here, Castro came into power, because I came here in 1957, okay? And Castro came into power 1959 or '60, something like that. 19 six -- maybe '59. Oh well, something like. So, I -- I came here and I lived with my aunts.

Q: So you never went back?

A: Oh, yes I did. I went back to visit my mother, yeah.

Q: Okay. Many times?

A: N-Not many times, because then my mother decided to come here, too, so --

Q: Because of the political scene?

A: Because she felt my brother's here and I'm here, then -- and her sisters are here, so what is she going to do there, you know? And the other sister were here already, too. You see, like, my aunt also moved here. So my aunt and -- my mother decided she may as well stay -- come to the United States. Why stay in Cuba?

Q: Do you remember any particular feelings of sadness about leaving from one place to another, or --

A: I -- I -- You know, I -- I really didn't feel sad, because I knew Cuba's only 45 minutes from -- from Miami, so it's not like you going away -- far, far away. And then, the fact that I'm -- I'm having family here and my brother's here an-and my mother was willing to come, so I didn't feel that I was lonely, you know, that I'll be alone in the world, so no, I -- I always felt I can go back to Cuba. Uh-huh, you have a ha -- an hour. Uh-huh.

Q: All right, so, in your arrival to America, where did your family live and where did you first settle?

A: Okay, the first stop was east New York. My aunt lived on Miller Avenue.

Q: On what?

A: Miller Avenue, in east New York. And, very lovely area and this is my youngest aunt, who had -- I mean, one son passed away, unfortunately, but at that time she had two boys and her husband and they lived in an apartment, but she had a room for me. And we got

along very well and I really was very happy, you know, be wi -- in her house. And during that time, my brother got married, my mother came to the wedding. And --

Q: Your brother married an American?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, got married here. And then, oh yeah, then I decided I wanted to stay here permanently, so -- but I was here on a temporary visa and the only way for me to remain, I either had to go to school or marry an American. So, I decided I would like to go to school. But then, you know, not every school is going to admit you and I wanted to go to a Yeshiva University. That's a teacher's institute for women, a Yeshiva University. So, I -- So -- I -- Then, at that time, I moved to another aunt of mine, who is not here any longer, Margaret and I went -- Manya, we used to call her, and she --

Q: Manya?

A: Manya, yeah. Russian name.

Q: That's pa -- a Russian --

A: Russian name.

Q: And you're speaking English now.

A: I know. So I call her Margaret.

Q: So where did you learn English?

A: Oh, English. Oh, wa -- English, I learned in Cuba.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, right. I learned in Cuba, in my -- you know, my -- my courses, I took English. Just like I took shorthand and I took typing, you know, commercial course and everything else. And I took bookkeeping. You name it, I took a lot of things. And let's see, where was I now? And --

Q: Yeshiva.

A: Okay, right. Okay, so -- so my Aunt Manya took me to meet her rabbi, who is now a - - a -- the chairman of the -- oh, what do you call this? Big organization, I just forgot the name of it, but okay, his name is Rabbi Arthur Schnier. And he really deals now, at the present time with -- with relationships between Judaism and Christian -- Christians, you know, yeah, he's -- I forgot what he called it. I'll tell you in a minute.[indecipherable] Yeah, okay, so I went and I met Rabbi Arthur Schnier and h-he was always involved in politics and he knew a lot of people in Washington and he knew a lot of people here. And anyway, my aunt told him the story, that I would like to remain in, you know, this country and I would like to go to school. And so my choice is Teacher's Institute for Women, I would like to be a Hebrew teacher. And so he said, "Okay, I'll see what I can do," and he arranged for the Yeshiva to accept me, but before, I had to go through exam. Now, I never had any background in the Yeshiva or anything like that, but they gave me two weeks to prepare myself for the exam and I did very well, I was accepted. And after I was accepted, I -- I was going to -- to school three times a week and -- and I worked 20 hours a week. I was allowed to work 20 hours a week, so I always had, you know, a few dollars of my own. And I -- I-I met, in my class, my classmate. We became very good

friends, with this young lady, her name was Sivia and she lived in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and she would occasionally invite me to her house for, you know, for the weekend. And then one day she said to me, "You know, I know s -- a very nice fellow I would like you to meet." And I said, "Oh Sivia, I have so many blind dates. I really don't want to meet any more." And she said to me, "But he's very nice, and I do want you to meet him. So, let me give him your telephone number and I'll never bother you again." Well, she gave Harry, my husband my telephone number, and he called me. So, we made a date, the day my brother was getting married. So he should come to the wedding and pick me up. And that's what he did. And so, we met. And we went out and I guess there was something that we developed in common. And then, after, you know, dating him for about five months -- from January, February, March, April, May, June, five months and he never said anything. So, I said to myself, "Okay, I'll make him talk." I can't go on, you know, I just come out and ask him, "Well, are we serious? I-Is -- I mean, are you interested in me or what?" So, I said to myself, "Okay, that gives me a chance to go back to visit my mother." Okay? And that wa -- no, the ma -- ma -- I'm sorry, my mother was here, the rest of the family, right. I said, "Okay, I'm going to go to Cuba." And that's what I did. So, we were dating for f-five months, he said nothing, so I told him, "I'm going back to Cuba and -- and I'll decide if I'm -- you know, I'll think about if I'm coming back or not coming back, I'm --" this, that. So, I went back to Cuba and he started writing letters. Every day I would get a letter from him and telephone calls and this and that and this and that. And then, in the meantime, I -- I was teaching in the -- in

the Hebrew school in Cuba, Judaism. And Labor day, my husband surprised me and came to visit me, to Cuba, and -- you know, in those days we had no jets. I-It -- He had to fly four and a half hours -- five hours to get to Cuba from the u -- from New York. But he came and he met the rest of the family.

Q: This is in the early 60's?

A: Yup, this was -- This was in, yeah, 1960. No, no, I'm sorry, 1959, no, 1959, because we got married in 1960. 1959, and then he came again Christmas -- Christmas weekend, you know, the same year, and he proposed. And so, we got married --civilly married in Cuba that is. And within three weeks, I was able to come into the United States as a resident, cause I married an American.

Q: You didn't go back because you had to, did you?

A: No, I didn't go back. I remained --

Q: Okay. To Cuba?

A: Oh, no, no, no, I just went for a visit. And then -- but he, you know, a-a-after I married him, whatyoumacallit, legally, I become, automatically a resident of the United States, so I came in as a resident, within three weeks and then we got religiously married in April. April 10th of 1960.

Q: I want to ask you something about your relationship with your husband, when you were courting. Did you speak to him about the -- your experiences, or did you speak to anyone about your experiences during the Nazi regime?

A: You know, it seems like all the survivors have the same problem. After the war, when -- you know, when we came to Cuba, and my mother wanted to tell her sisters, as to what she went through during the war, you know, the Holocaust experience. The first thing they said to her, "Don't talk about it. It is past, it's finished with. You are free. Forget it." Now, you cannot forget it. You cannot just push it away. But -- Although they meant well, it wasn't right. And so the minute they said, "Don't talk about it, it's finished with, now you're free, you're here, everything will be all right. That's it." So we never spoke about it. And when I was, you know, dating my husband or when I was with whomever I was, I f -- I didn't want, A, to talk about it, because it's very painful. Every time I would start talking, I would start crying. It's only recently that I don't cry as much and I think I ran out of -- of -- of tears. But, that makes me sick. Like, for example, you take this interview. It'll take me a week or 10 days for me to get back to be normal. That means, I won't sleep nights. That means, it's constantly even more so. Although I live with this experience every day, by talking about it, it -- it intensifies and intensifies my whole system, my mind, my body, everything like, gets sick. So, we didn't talk about it.

Q: When did you first begin to talk about it?

A: I think maybe fif -- 10 years ago, 15 years ago, maybe.

Q: Before the interview with the Holocaust Museum?

A: No, I think during that time, yeah. I would say I would start talking about it -- was truly telling the story? That was the first time I would sit and tell the story. In between, I would tell my children, here and there a little bit. Cause when they were small, I didn't

want to upset them. I didn't want them to be afraid of this world by thinking, "Oh, that's what happened to my mother. Might happen to me, too." So, I didn't want them to live with that worry on their minds, so I kept quiet. But, occasionally, things would happen so very quickly, I would say something, you know? And that was that, you know, but they - I never really sat down to tell them the story until I was interviewed by the -- by the museum.

Q: Did you have -- I'll -- We'll go back to marriage. We'll -- We'll never forget about marriage. So that'll be easy, well, that'll be the next tape, but do you have -- you mentioned -- made reference to dreams or nightmares or -- about what sorts of things do you dream?

A: Well, you know, for many, many years after the war, I was always dreams. I used to dream a lot about my father and just wake up screaming like -- I saw him as how he disappeared, you know? I -- I -- I used to dream about the bombing. I -- I used to -- to dream about suddenly finding myself alone, you know, nobody's there but me, I'm alone. I-I-I mean, you know, a lot of these things. But then, it wasn't already dreams, it's reality, every day, see? Every day, there is something that reminds me of my past. So, although I don't have as many dreams as I used to have, I am constantly reminded by different things that I come across.

Q: Tell me what kind of things.

A: Well, the story with my cat who was killed while walking behind me. And so I always, when I see a -- a Persian cat, i-it bothers me, you know, i-it really -- tears come to

my eyes, because I always keep thinking, was that bullet meant for me, or was it truly meant for my cat? And then, why should a cat be killed? He did nothing. I -- So, I -- I would just walk and -- and -- and -- and I'll say to myself, "Oh, he looks just like my cat, my kitty." A-A-And then, I'll hear a -- a German Shepherd bark and that'll -- it's like suddenly I find myself -- I have to hide. Hey, but why am I hiding? I am in a free country. But that's the feeling I get. I-I-I see a fellow walking with that -- with that hat, that cap, a little raise up front like the German soldiers -- not the ger -- the SS would wear and I -- and I'll say, "Ooh, is he one of them?" I mean, i-it's really crazy, but that's -- that's what this war did to you. A -- A -- A barn, I -- I'll walk by, I mean, you know, on the island, the houses and they have like little barns in the back and there goes the memory to when we were hiding and then we had to jump from -- fro -- from the attic of that barn and -- and run away because the Germans will -- while the Germans were breaking the door to get in to get us. And w-we jumped down and we ran away. A-And it's, hey --

Q: Do you ever think of that little dog that kept you warm under the house?

A: Oh, yeah. That little dog. The reason why I -- I think of him a lot is the fact that he was so good. Can you imagine a dog would not bark when he sees me climbing in, you know? And I would lie down and he would lie on my legs to keep me warm, because I had no blanket. I told you, remember I was walking with knee-highs? I had nothing to cover myself with. An-And the lady didn't know that I slept under her house with her

dog. And this dog just was so smart. I would just climb in and lie down and he would right away lie down on my legs and keep me warm.

Q: Have you had pets since?

A: No, no.

Q: Do you think this -- there's a reason for that?

A: Yeah, there is a reason, yeah. See, I only had one doll in my life and that was the doll that my bro -- my father bought for me before the war. I had a beautiful doll, a big one. My father took me to this store that sold only dolls. And he said to me, "You pick." And I was so little, but I picked this doll from the shelf and the doll was bigger than I was. I couldn't even carry the doll home, my sister had to carry it for me and the doll would sit on the rocking chair in the living room. And this is the doll I took with me when we went to the ghetto, when we had to leave home. And of course, you know, after -- after the pogrom, I never saw my doll again. After that, I never had a doll again, that was finished. Because I think that with the war, my childhood went, okay? I-I think that the Holocaust killed my childhood, but did not kill my spirit and did not kill, you know, the rest of my life. I -- I'm still alive an-and going strong. A-And then after what happened to my cat, I never wanted one. I always think about my cat, but I never wanted one. And when I had my little boy, my youngest son, a neighbor of mine had a -- a Siamese cat and the Siamese cat gave birth to little Siamese kittens and she said, "Frima, you should have one for your child. And I'm giving it to you for nothing and you know how expensive they are and you know how good they are, [indecipherable]." "Okay," I said, "Fine." So I got

one for my -- for my son. But, every so often, when I used to sit down and the cat would jump into my lap and I would, you know, caress him and I -- I would think about my -- my Persian cat a-and then I gave it away and I -- and I really, you know, I don't want any -- any more, cause it's -- it was a horrible experience, and -- and I used, you know, to dream about my cat and always used to scream and i-it was really bad, it was very a -- for a -- to a child it was terrible, you know, terrible shock, a-a-and -- and -- and the fact that - - that I let him die without even turning around looking at him or picking him up or --

Q: So having -- Part of what has happened through your whole experience, is hiding your feelings?

A: Sure. It was always -- no one should know you are Jewish. It's like you have some kind of a disease. I mean, to go as far as to know, at the age of six, that if I should turn around an-an-and -- and talk to my cat or pick up my cat or caress my cat or whatever, that the Germans will know I'm Jewish. I -- I mean, that takes an awful lot of -- out of you of -- of saying, what am I, am I not human? I mean, who am I? What am I? Am I -- Am I a -- some kind of a disease to the world?

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles, on November 23rd, 1998. This is tape number three, side A. Now we did get briefly into marriage.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: You were married in 1960, and then -- in a civil ceremony, and when you came back to America --

A: No, ninet -- no, civil ceremony, 1959, okay? Then, three weeks later, we came to the United States and we set a date for April the 10th, 1960, to be married. And, at that time, my mother was here already. My sister was in Cuba and she did not make it to the wedding, but my brother was here, my aunts and my uncles and everybody was at the wedding and it was just very lovely. Was just the immediate family. Course, we couldn't afford a wedding -- my mother, that is, couldn't afford a wedding.

Q: Do you remember the rabbi?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: But he was --

A: 39 years ago and -- and I didn't even get married in my neighborhood, I got married in my husband's neighborhood, which was Lower East Side, okay? Clinton Plaza, which is -- does not exist any longer. But, it wa --

Q: And you moved with him somewhere.

A: Oh well, we moved to Brooklyn, yeah.

Q: Brooklyn.

A: We moved to Brooklyn.

Q: Where you lived for a long time?

A: Oh yes, we lived in Brooklyn for about 30 some odd years.

Q: What section?

A: Flatbush, yeah.

Q: And your children, you have?

A: My children -- I have three children. I have -- My daughter's the oldest, Linda and then I have Myron, he is the middle child and then I have Avi, who's the little one. And they were all born in Brooklyn -- oh no, with the exception -- my boys were born in Brooklyn. My daughter was born in Beth Israel, in New York. And then we moved to -- to Windmere.

Q: I want to ask you, before we -- because this getting married brings up the subject of -- of where you get married, which brings up the subject of identity as a religious Jew.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Has this been a part -- an important part of your experience, or --

A: An important part of survival.

Q: In what way?

A: Well, you see, by believing that God will help you and that there's someone watching over you, that was a -- a tremendous help for a child to survive. Because, although I was -- you know, I had no mother with me, I had no one, I was alone, I knew God will help me. And I did my praying every night, as you know that my mother left me the hundred rubles, and after the second lady, the one who shaved my head because I was infested with lice, because here and there, I didn't have a shower or a bath or anything like that and I slept with mice crawling over me. I -- I bought a cross for the hundred rubles. Now, I knew that the reason why I need the cross is in case I'm stopped by someone and they will accuse me of being a Jew, I can prove I'm not, cause I wanted to live. But, I also knew that Christianity is not me. I'm a Jew and I have my own prayers and I have to say those prayers and I have to talk to God and he will help me. And that's exactly what I did. Every night, when I climbed in, you know, in -- one, two o'clock in the morning when I climbed in to my -- my -- my doggy, to sleep with, I would take off my cross and in Hebrew I would say my prayers, those prayers that my mother taught me when I was a little girl.

Q: Do you remember one of the prayers now?

A: Well, the prayers, it is called, Creat schma. It's a prayer before you go to sleep, okay? So, I would say Creat schma. And then in the morning, when I would get up and -- and shake off the hay, because we slept -- the dog and I slept on the hay, okay? And I shake off the hay and -- and got myself, you know, straightened out, I should -- shouldn't look like I c-come hiding from someplace, put my scarf on. I would say, Moday ani. Moday

ani is a Jew -- is a Hebrew prayer where I thank you God for -- that I'm -- that I got up, that I survived another day, that I'm here. And then after that, I would put the cross on again. Now, I knew the reason why I was wearing a cross, not because I was giving away my belief, but because, if I'm a Christian, I can survive. I will not be killed. Where, if I'm a Jew, I haven't got a chance.

Q: And today, are you active in a spiritual, religious community?

A: Yeah. I am a religious Jew. I remained religious all through the Holocaust, after the Holocaust, the way I am now. And I -- I truly feel, and that is my -- my very deep belief that there was and there is someone above me who guided me to do all these things that I did to survive. I was only five years old and I acted as if I was someone of 50. And I was six year old, I did things like a six year old person. So, there's got to be s -- a power over me, making me do things. Giving me that -- that -- that intelligence. I mean, I -- I -- I look at my grandchild, five years old and I say, "Oh my God, Oh my God. Please God," and I always pray to God, "May -- May no child know of -- of -- of such horrors." But they could never survive, because they never think the way I thought. Now, did I think because I was a genius? No, it's because there's something that I can not explain. But I feel it. So, with the sad life and the hard life and the disappointments in life, I always feel that I'm rewarded by God. I really do. And I always thank God for everything. After the meals, I thank God. When I light my candles, I thank God. Whatever there is, I always pray, but when I pray, I really pray with my heart. And I -- And I -- And I remember wh-when I was that little girl, that five, six year old girl and -- and I was all alone, I never

felt alone. I always felt that there's someone watching over me. A-A-And this is something that's -- I think it's extremely important to a child. Not to feel alone. Yeah, I was frightened, but I always knew that there's a salvation, you know? Because I was praying, because I was talking and -- and, you know, to God. And -- And this is -- That's a wonderful way of surviving.

Q: It's -- It's is -- It is to some and -- and then to others, their response has been totally different.

A: Unfortunately, yes. And you can not blame those people, no. Cause they went -- the horrors were -- are absolutely -- you can't understand the horrors. I-I-I-It -- Your mind just can not absorb or understand that such a thing exists, and -- and -- and someth -- and one human does it to another and -- and the victim did nothing. Simply because he is a Jew? So what does it mean? It -- Because a Jew? What is it, no good? What are we -- are we -- am I diseased? A-Am I -- Di-Did I kill someone? Why such hatred? Why such hostility? Crime. I mean, so much. Y-You probably heard it, that when we were standing ar -- I mean, I don't know if you want to hear it, when we were standing on line to be killed, the first pogrom, a-and we were in like maybe two or three people ahead of us, we were all in line, you know, with our underwear only, waiting to be killed. We had those killing squads. There was a mother holding a little baby, right? And this German walks over to her, a-and wants to take the baby away from her. She wouldn't let him. And there was a whole struggle going on and I'm standing there in shock. I didn't know wha -- a -- a -- a -- I didn't believe my own eyes, I-I mean -- so, you're talking about a five year old

kid standing there and watching that -- this German is trying to take the baby away from the mother and the mother wouldn't let. So he pulls the baby towards him and she pulls the baby towards her, right? There's how. Finally, he got the baby out of her arms, pi-picks up his -- his -- his leg, yeah, with those boots up there and breaks the baby's back and gives it back to the ba -- to the mother. Are these atrocities? Who can forget this?

Q: Does this make you bitter and angry over other things in your life, I mean. Are you angry at --

A: I'm angry at the world, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: The religious Christians?

A: I-I -- I don't know if I'm exactly picking out religious, non-religious. I'm just angry at the world, simply because the world didn't even try to save some children. There's a million and a half children slaughtered for nothing and nobody tried to help them. That's what I'm angry about. Has nothing to do with religion or not religion. Just as a human being, how could you not try to do something? Maybe -- M-Maybe they -- they couldn't saved everyone, but some? And do you remember that there was that ship, Saint Louis, that had 900 -- 850 or 900 German Jews from the high society, you are talking the wealthy people, they're educated people, doctors and dentists and engineers and you name it. And the United States didn't want to let them in. A handful of people, 900 people they didn't want to let them in and then, when they went to Cuba, Cuba said, "Hey, the United States is not letting them in, why should I bother?" They are a little, small country. They didn't let them in, either. And --

Q: Where were you [indecipherable]

A: I was in Europe?

Q: You were in Europe when this happened?

A: Yeah, yeah. This was -- This must have been in 1940 when the ship came around. And nobody wanted that ship with the 900 Jews. So, you see why I'm angry?

Q: Oh --

A: It's the world. It's not just particular people. And nobody -- And they went back to Germany.

Q: Do you remember who was president when you first came here?

A: Well, during the war, Frankwi -- Franklin Roosevelt was president during World War Two.

Q: Do you remember impressions about him? Family impressions?

A: Well, let me tell you the following. I'm -- After the war -- after the war, I -- remember I told you my house was always open, people used to come and go and have a cup of tea and have soup. I was then eight years old, nine years old. I -- I would hear how the older -- you know, the older survivors would talk. And then I first realized what they were talking about. They were saying that what happened to the president of the United States. That the United States did nothing. That Roosevelt obviously didn't care much about Jews. So, that's the only thing that I began to understand. That there was such a thing as a president and the president just didn't care about the Jews.

Q: So, you did -- you were aware that survivors then, only talked to each other about the experience. You did hear other surviv -- older survivors talking, and that was the only time it was every discussed?

A: That's it. That's is. They were talking, saying that nobody was there to help the Jews. There was nobody except God, and that was that.

Q: There's a list of different things that happened in -- in the world history, but especially in the -- in the American history, that I'd like to read to you to see if any of these things you connected with your experience and with that experience and -- and if you didn't, we'll just move on, you know, but I -- I think the --

A: Are you talking about now or when I was 10 years old? What are we talking -- I mean, talking about how I felt --

Q: Well, I'll --

A: Yeah, go ahead, read it.

Q: This is one example, the Japanese concentration camps that happened in America. You might have been not here, or [indecipherable]

A: I heard of them, but there is no comparisons. No comparisons whatsoever. The concentration camps that the Germans built, nobody builds concentration camps like they do. And the atrocities that they committed, no one that I know of today, does what they did then. Now, concentration camp might have different meanings, see? The concentration camps of the Chinese people here, that the one you're talking about?

Q: Yeah, Japanese camps.

A: Japanese, oh, okay, was a camp where the people, because of the war with Japan, the government wanted to make sure that these people do not commit terrorism and therefore, it was a camp for people to concentrate. But there were no killings, there were no atrocities. There were no starvation. There were no beatings. There were no ripping apart human -- person apart. Or pulling his a -- eyes out or pulling his teeth out or ripping him to pieces w-while he's alive and burning him to death. So, how can we compare a United States camp, which is a camp just to make sure that these people do not commit terrorism, compared to a concentration camp -- a German concentration camp where there -- the idea was to annihilate people. To get rid of them as quickly as possible and to do a lot of -- what do we call it, experiments. Do you know that they -- they used the skin to make lampshades? And -- And some other things?

Q: So, I want to ask you, Frima, cause I'm trying to focus on -- on -- on your -- your particular experience and that is -- so, in your life, are there things, like in your job that you do right now, or that in the work that you've had or in your attitudes toward people, or homeless or -- that relate, that are inspired by that experience? I hate to use the word inspired, but -- but are -- are you motivated still today in constructive ways?

A: Very much so.

Q: Could you tell me a little bit about what you're doing today that -- or --

A: You see, somehow my -- my sad life and my experience, all this still left me with a very good heart. And -- And it just doesn't matter to me if I'm dealing with a person from any nationality. I-It just doesn't matter. It's just the fact that I want to help and it's the

right thing to do. It's to help another human being, cause we all belong to God and we all his children and we should help each other. And so, as hard as my life was -- but there were some of those good Gentile people that helped me. So, I-I never thought otherwise, this how I'm supposed to be and this is how every person should be. And -- And you probably heard or maybe I didn't mention to you, that when we came back, you know, after the war, after liberation, we came back home an-and remember I told you there was a Gentile man that, when I was alone and I was starved and I needed food, I -- I went to him and I told him I was hungry, so he offered me a glass of milk, a piece of black bread and a piece of pork. And I, as a Jew, in whose house we had no pork, I had the milk, I had the bread, but I wouldn't touch the pork. And I never told him why, cause I'm not supposed to tell him. I just eat what he gave me and I thanked him and I loved him for it. Also, the first pogrom, when we ran away, we met in his house, you know, we are supposed to an-and we did, we met in his house an-and he let us stay overnight in his cellar and I remember the rats were running all over us, but we stayed at night there. Now, when we came back -- after liberation we came back home, we were notified by his wife that the Russian government wants to put him in jail because he was -- he was an informant and -- yeah, he was an informant and we don't really know what happened, what he did, because we were in Romania, right? So, we don't know what happened here. But I remember that he was good to us and his wife said, "If you child will go to court and tell them how he treated you and your family, they will let him go, he won't have to go to jail." Well, I did. My mother took me to court and I remember it was a

round room. And in the middle there was a chair and I climbed on the chair and I stood and told them that this man saved my life, because I was starved and he gave me food to eat. And the night that we had no place where to go, we came to him and he let us -- and they let him free. So, you see, when somebody does good for you, you learn something from it and you try to do the same.

Q: And you still have kosher household -- kitchen?

A: Yeah, yup. It's still a kosher home and my children follow me in the same footsteps.

Q: So your children also married Jewish?

A: Yes, they all married to Jewish boys, Jewish girls and -- and that's how they bring up their children and that -- that's a blessing for me.

Q: Can you see them?

A: Yes.

Q: You see them often?

A: Absolutely, we see them and we talk to each other. And it's wonderful to have grandchildren and I feel especially blessed, you know, that when Hitler thought he'll get rid of me, look, I brought up two generations. And I was a step ahead of my enemy, all the time, see? And that is something that I feel that I-I couldn't have done it on my own. And I had no -- no one to tell me what to do, right? Except God was telling me what to do and that's what I did, and here I am.

Q: And -- And I -- I get the feeling you also have non-Jewish friends.

A: Oh yeah, oh sure I do. What --

Q: And your work now?

A: -- why not?

Q: Well yeah, why not?

A: They all wonderful. You see, I look at people, not at their beliefs or their color or their race. I look at people. There are good people and there are bad people and I love to work with a lot of different people. And I love -- I have neighbors, all kinds of neighbors. I have a Yugoslavian neighbor, an Italian neighbor, a Jewish neighbor, another Italian neighbor and I love them. And we get along so well. And why not? That's how it has to be. Maybe if -- if we would only try to be good to each other, the world will be a better world to live in and then we wouldn't let these things happen, these atrocities and some of them are happening today in the other countries, yugos -- what was it? In -- In -- In --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Europe there someplace. It's horrible.

Q: So, where do you work today?

A: I work in a mental health clinic. Mostly we deal with children and some adults. People who are depressed, people who have problems with their children, hyperactive children. But I like my job. I like it very much, cause I love to look at the children and I always say, "I hope they never go through horrors like we did in Europe." I always pray for these children. And I love it. I like to work. I like to be with young people. The thought of retiring scares me. Well --

Q: Well, when -- when you -- when we part today, after this interview, are you going to have someone to talk to about any extra experiences that you thought in your mind, that came to you? Would you talk to your husband or any of your children or any of your friend survivors?

A: To talk to them about today? Well the rest of the month --

Q: Well, about whatever comes up afterwards. You said often, you said maybe for a week or 10 days --

A: Oh.

Q: -- you would be thinking about things.

A: Oh yeah, I'll be -- I don't know. Maybe. You know, the children ha -- are busy with their own lives. Friends are busy with their own lives. The husband comes home, he -- he -- he -- he has so many responsibilities at work. The only way that I will handle my frustration and my sadness and then, you know, and everything else that this would leave me with, is I will just start writing and maybe someday, I would like to publish a book. And -- And -- And that's what I'm going to do. I -- I do want to leave a book out there for the children. For elementary school children, for high school children, so they can see that there is strength and when you have belief, that helps and you can do -- you -- you ca -- you can do a lot of things when you have to. You also have to believe in your parents and you have to believe in God. I -- I -- And -- And you can do, you know, things which, later on you will ask, "How did I do it?" But -- But you'll do it and you will survive.

Q: Well, you certainly are a great inspiration, yeah.

A: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Q: I think there's -- there's --

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: -- there's so much more.

A: A lot, a lot. A lot more. So --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is the final side, B, of tape three, Frima Laub and we're about to complete the interview, due to time constrictions, but I did want to ask about your mother. You mentioned on the 1990 interview, that your mother suffered from the day she died. And I wondered if you -- this triggers back to the -- her experience in the Holocaust, or did you mean physical suffering, or --

A: Well, my mother really never got over the Holocaust. Sh-She just never was able to recuperate. A, a-as you know, as a mother, she -- she lost her husband. She was a very young widow. Then she went through all this and she was the one who had to make all the plans for our escape. She did all this, you know, the plans. You know, you -- you probably know that we were also in jail for awhile, okay. I mean, she made all these -- these plans of how to escape and where to run and what to say and where to -- where to go, because we were children. I was a little nothing and my dau -- my sister was 10 years older than I was, so she was still a child. So, my mother had to use all this. Then, the first pogrom, I-I -- I told you, when -- when the Germans were taking off the jewelry,

whatever the -- the women or the men wo-wore, jewelry, rings, i-if you didn't take it off by yourself quick enough and they wanted the ring, they would rip it off with your finger. And -- And if -- And if you didn't take off your earrings fast enough, they would rip off, you know, the ear or the loop -- or the loop where -- which -- which you were -- with -- with that earring. And my mother wasn't fast enough, so -- so one -- one SS hit her with a -- with a rifle -- with the end of the rifle, he hit her so hard over the he -- over the ear, that she fell down. And -- And she was always deaf on this ear. She couldn't -- My mother never recuperated. And she always used to say, because -- I mean -- and I'm saying I think since -- when she arrived, when I arrived in Cuba, she wanted to tell her sisters what she went through and they said to her, "Don't talk about it." She felt very -- like very explosive inside, where she wanted to talk about it, but -- but the sisters said, "Don't talk about it."

Q: So she had no one to talk to?

A: Never talked to. But, to me she would -- every -- well, I was the one who was the closest to her and I was with her all the time and she would always say, "The world should know, Frima. The world should know." You know, like this. And we would never talk, like -- there were a lot of questions I wanted to ask my mother, you know, as I grew older, but then I didn't want to upset her, because I knew how much she was suffering with -- with everything that -- everything that she went through and she -- in her own way, she went through a lot.

Q: Is she passed on now?

A: Oh, my mother passed on in -- she died in 1980. No, I'm -- excuse me, that's my mother-in-law died in 1980 and my brother died in 1980. My mother died in 1993.

Q: So she outlived her son?

A: Yeah. He died --

Q: '93, she lived a long time.

A: In 1993, she was 87.

Q: Yeah, she lived a long time.

A: And my brother died very young. He was 56. Yeah.

Q: But do you think she had no one to talk to about the Holocaust?

A: Not really, no. Not really. Unfortunately, not really. And you see, in those days, they -
- they were not interviewing yet, you know, like -- so --

Q: It wasn't popular to talk about it.

A: R -- Thank you. Okay, so she really never got a chance to tell her side of the story. But she used to tell me, "Frima, make sure the world knows. Make sure the world knows."

Like she also never went into details, but she, "Make sure." Like, in Yiddish, the world should know, -- Voos meels anan ibigania -- what we went through. Cause she didn't speak too much English, so in Yiddish she would say, "What we went through, the world should know." And that's that. She would -- She certainly --

Q: So she died to this -- speaking Yiddish?

A: Oh yeah, she died speaking Yiddish, she died speaking Russian. Yeah, she spoke Russian and she spoke Yiddish. And she was younger, she spoke Ukrainian, she spoke

Polish. My mother spoke a lot of languages. My father spoke many languages, too, that's why he was an interpreter to the Germans. He spoke about six, seven languages.

Q: [indecipherable] I want to thank you so much.

A: You're very welcome.

Q: And I -- I know I'll see you again, so --

A: Please God. Anytime.

Q: We'll be waiting for this book.

A: Yeah. I -- I hope you can han -- give me a hand on that.

Q: I hope we could.

A: If you do, I'll -- I'll be very grateful --

Q: Grateful to you.

A: -- and I'll be honored with your -- with your company.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview

Interview with Frima Laub
June 3, 1999

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Question: This is tape one, side A, of a second audio follow up interview with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles, on June third, 1999, for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible.

Answer: Yeah. Well, for on the last interview -- interview that we had a few months ago, it took me about almost two weeks to recuperate. I -- you know, I got -- I'm very upset. It leaves me very upset, and I do dream about, you know, certain happenings in those -- in those days, in those years. And -- But now, I guess, a few months later, I'm ready to talk again.

Q: This time may be easier, because we're not going to have to go through all the -- the childhood experience --

A: Right.

Q: -- but the -- your experience since that time. One of the things that we're very interested in is, when you dream, what do you dream about? What part of the experience keeps coming back?

A: The different -- you know, different happenings. It's where -- I'll dream that there's a knock on the door. I-- I'll dream that s -- you know, s -- the dogs are following me. You know, the German Shepherds. So, it's really different things. I -- I -- I'll dream that I'm -- you know, I'm -- I'm walking in the street and -- and -- and, you know, how frightened I -- I am. It's just different -- different things that happen. Of course, with each dream, I get up, I'm very upset. Or many times I'll just wake up, you know, after I have the dream, or if I ha -- if I'm screaming or I'm crying or something, I just wake up.

Q: And this 10 days, does that -- since our -- our first interview, did you -- did you wake up every night with dreams, or --

A: Well, not every night. I was upset every day. It's like -- i-it's in front of you all the time, because when I talk about it, I relive those days, that time, you know. So it's like -- Well, actually, I live with it every day, even if I don't talk about it. As I walk the streets, if I hear a German Shepherd bark, right away it goes back to what happened to me in the past. Something very funny, if I see a-an army officer or someone who wears, you know, the hats that -- that the officer wear, and it's high up front, they remind me very much of the Gestapo hats, and this upsets me. Then, since we live not too far from the airport -- I told you that last time, many times, I don't know what, but suddenly there's that noise, and that noise reminds me, after the war, for about one year, maybe a little longer, the Germans used to come in like 30 - 40 planes, to bomb the city where I lived. And so, as they were coming, there was the tremendous noise. And at the airport here, I can hear it too, and I don't know, I don't understand why this -- you know, why this noise comes from the airport. And I get very upset, because I open the door and I will look up to the sky, like thinking that a plane's coming in to bomb the city, God forbid. Oh my God, that's terrible.

Q: Now, what town were you in, the first year after liberation?

A: Well, after liberation, we were, at that time in occupied Romania, okay? Okay? We were in occupied Romania, but then, after the liberation, we went back to the Ukraine and this is where we stayed. This is where my home was, once upon a time.

Q: I remember in our first tape, you discussed how your mother never got over the Holocaust.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And there seemed to be a sense of incompleteness --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- in you, not -- not being able to talk with your mother about her experiences during the Holocaust. Could you talk a little bit about your relationship with your mother and if you ever were able to discuss the Holocaust with her?

A: No. We were never able to talk about the Holocaust. She would talk about it, and you know, not much. It -- I think what happened is, remember I mentioned to you that when we came to Cuba, after -- after the war, after we left Germany, and we went to Cuba because my mother had one of her sisters living there. Actually, we were supposed to come into the United States, but because there was a delay and my mother somewhere heard that there's going to be a World War Three, and she became panicky, she wanted to get out of Europe. So she wrote to her sister and her sister quickly made out the papers, and we came to Cuba. When we came to Cuba, my aunts from the United States, also came to Cuba, to greet us when we arrived, which was wonderful, and was a beautiful, sunny day. It really was gorgeous. And my mother wanted to tell them about our experience, about her experience and -- and everything that we went through, and all they said is, "Don't talk about it. It's finished with, it's -- it's gone, it's passe. Now you're in a free country, you're with your family, you have nothing to fear, and we don't tal -- you don't tal -- you don't -- you shouldn't be talking about it because there's nothing to talk about, finished." So, I guess, after that, she was sort of, you know, she wouldn't talk

about it much. But occasionally, I would hear her say, remember, you know, "Remember Frima, remember?" I do. I do remember very much. So we never really sat and spoke about it. It's like she remembered her life and I remembered my life. And -- A-And -- And also, I remember distinctly that -- i-in those days -- I mean, you're talking about what, 40 years ago, or 50 years ago? It was something that if we did -- if she said, "Remember this?" And I said, "Yes," I would start crying right away. So, it was something that you just couldn't talk about it. Besides, it was always in my mind you're not supposed to talk about it, because it's already past. So, we didn't really discuss it, we didn't really talk about it.

Q: Why do you think your relatives didn't want to hear -- was there a deeper reason, or did they have fear?

A: No, I-I-I-I think -- I mean, my aunts were loving, loving aunts, and I had a loving family. I think they just didn't want my mother to get upset every time she talks about it. Cause there was a lot to be upset about. I mean, we lost a big family, including my father, a grandmother, a -- aunts, uncles, cousins. We lost a lot of people, so I -- I think that this must have been the reason why they said, "Let's not talk about it. You're in the free country now, you understand? It's finished, it's gone and you're safe with us. That's it." And I'm no -- a -- a -- I really don't know if it would have been better talking about it, or was it better not to talk about it? I don't know. All I know is, whenever I used to think about it, I would cry. So --

Q: Well, being an objective observer of the situation, and not knowing your aunts, with all respect to your family, it sounds like a very selfish decision. A -- A self protect -- that they were protecting themselves from hearing the horrors of what -- of what happened. What do you think about that?

A: That -- Well, i-it, you know, everything is possible. I never really asked them why, you know. But, as I said, because I know that they cared a lot about us, maybe they didn't want to hear the horrors, and the true of the matter is, there were a lot of horrors. I mean, frightening things. It's just like I was afraid to tell my children when they were little, because I didn't want them to think that this is what's going to happen to them. So, I didn't tell my children anything. I-In fact, my kids, you know, when you're used to -- to a mother with an accent, they just thought, you know, this is -- it's normal, and -- and then, you know, later on in life, when they did hear about the Holocaust, and every so often I would tell them a little bit, because I felt that when they were teenagers already, they wouldn't be so afraid. I mean, this is just -- unfor -- an unfortunate happening that happened. Happened to the mother, happened to the grandmother, and happened to the ga -- to -- to their great-grandmothers. So -- I did, but -- I did, you know, occasionally tell them here and there a little bit, but the -- really, the horrors, the horrors? No, I didn't tell them.

Q: How did they find out about the Holocaust?

A: Well, you know, as they were growing older, they heard about it, and then I would occasionally tell them, "Listen, I was in Europe and there was a war and this is what

happened,” -- you know, happened here and there, but I didn’t really go into details. You know, really them -- the frightening, the horrible things, I never told them. You know, I was, you know --

Q: What do you think they would learn out of listening to one of the -- the last tape that we made, that --cause you -- I sent you copies, correct?

A: Mm-hm, yeah, thank you, yes [indecipherable]

Q: What do you think they would --

A: Well, you know, what they learn is that A, you have to learn to respect all kinds of nationalities, all kinds of people, and that you really have to keep your eyes open against different types of groups, those hate groups, which I think the United States sort of ignores. We ignore, and we have them right here, in the United States, in this beautiful, free country, we giving everyone freedom, including the terrorist, the criminals. And all these groups, we ignoring them. But little by little, they are just getting bigger and bigger, and we don’t know what the future will bring, how they will react. Because that’s how it started in Germany, with Hitler. He was a nobody, and then he suddenly became a somebody. So, it’s -- it’s something that I think they would just learn to keep their eyes open and -- and pay more attention to -- to what’s going on around them.

Q: But personally, don’t you think they would be affected, knowing what their mother went through as a child, now that they all have children, correct?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Don’t you think beyond the universal --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- that they would be very affected personally?

A: I -- I -- I hope, I hope that they are not, because it's definitely very difficult to bring up children, with -- with a frightening feeling, and that's -- was my feeling. While bringing up my children, it's like I was always afraid, God forbid, it can happen again, it can happen again, something can happen. And it's -- it's not a healthy situation, that -- that is not. It's very frightening. Not that I don't think about it now. I -- I never stop thinking, I always think about it, and it's always in back of my mind, and now that I have grandchildren, God bless them, all I keep praying is, "Please God, let it never happen again." Oh, anyplace, unfortunately. But it's -- You see, what's happening now in -- in -- in -- in Serbia, right? In Croatia, or whatever. It's horrible. It should never happen. But it's nothing compared to Holocaust. See, when people say, because there's mass murder over there, it's a Holocaust, no. It is completely different. The Holocaust -- The Hitler times were completely different from any times in history. And what he did to a nation, the Jewish nation, is beyond explanation, beyond comprehension, beyond understanding. A-A-A-And where in the world can a human being, so-called, even come with such ideas, to systematically finish off six million people, besides five million of other kind of people, right? Different nationalities. So -- And the world let him do it. Everyone just sat back and, well it's not our business, right? We are in America, so whatever's happening in Europe, yeah, it's their -- their problem.

Q: I wanted to kind of draw into a return to your personal life and your feeling about children, because I know that you're thinking about doing a book.

A: Mm.

Q: And I'd like to ask you about that. Why do you think you have such a need to do a book?

A: Well, simply because I think that children will be able to learn an awful lot from my experience. Since I was such a little girl and I had a -- I think it was quite an imagination, to be able to survive, alone, without a mother, without any family, thinking and always being a step ahead of my enemy. That, I think, would give the children who will get to read the book, you know, the strength, perhaps intelligence too, that hopefully they are never in trouble, but if they are, they can think that they can do certain things to survive, and not panic and think, well, you know, there's nothing they can do. Yes, they can do, because if they learn, a -- they can remember. And by remembering, you -- you know, you react differently. Like when you don't know anything, you don't know. Today I look at -- at children five years old, or five and a half, or six, and I say to myself, "Oh my God, at their age, I already was hiding." I knew that no one is supposed to know that I am a Jew. Yet, I knew, that in order to fool others, they should think that I'm not Jewish, I wore a big cross, okay? I had to hide and I had no place where to sleep, so the lady that throws me out of her house, I sleep under her house. And she doesn't even know. See how I was thinking to survive, ha -- what to do. That she's not supposed to know, because if she would know, she would -- certainly wouldn't let me sleep under her house,

because she was afraid. But yet -- But yet, I did it, cause I wanted to live, and I wanted to survive. I also knew that -- you know, that I should never walk on the same street twice.

People should not suspect that maybe I'm a Jew. And a Jew is being killed, so --

Q: This is a little beyond the point, but I -- I still wonder, even after our first interview, how you ate.

A: Oh.

Q: How you fed yourself, and how you kept your clothes to look something less than a bum.

A: Well, you know, the clothes that I have -- that I was wearing, wasn't even mine, because I don't know if I told you or I told the museum, is this was when we were taken to be killed. And so we were completely undressed, except for the panties -- underwear. But, when we got to the slaughterhouse, where they did the killing, the mass killing, a- and my mother spoke to this SS person, asking him if they kill Ukrainians, too. And she gave him the whole story, that she was on her way with her two girls, to this town, which -- which was not too far from where the killing wa -- was going on, to see her husband, who was in jail. And he believed her, and then he put us inside the slaughterhouse, we should wait until he brings in a translator, a Ukrainian translator. And then, after he told the translator to take us back to the city, we needed clothing, we were naked. So, he took my sister, told my sister to go outside, and they had mountains, hills of clothing, from everybody else. And so she picked whatever she thought would fit me, herself and my mother. And so, this is what I was wearing, which was a pair of boots, short boots. And I

had knee highs, a little sir -- short skirt, a sweater and a little jacket and a scarf. This was my clothing. And I remained with this clothing until the end of the war, which was from '41, that's right, okay? '41, so when we were -- the second time in the ghetto, of course my mother washed it, you know, and cleaned it, okay? But, after I was on my own, the six months, I never took it off. I slept this way, and I wore it during the day, cause I had nothing else to wear. You have -- I had no place to take a shower or a bath. So that's how it was. Unfortunately, if you remember I told you, that although I stayed with the lady for two weeks, I was infested with lice. And that is because the only time that I got a bath is when my mother brought me in two weeks before. So that day, sh -- that evening, she gave me a bath. But then, the other two weeks that I stayed with her, she didn't give me a bath. So, I became infested with lice. And so, when she ask me to leave her house, I walked out, and I went to our friend's, which we used to visit every so often. We bought our house from them, and I remembered where my mother u -- my mother, my father, when we used to go visiting them, and I would walk the same way, they were on the other end of the city, I -- you know, I don't remember exactly how long it took me to walk. But I walked, and I -- you know, I -- I went to her and she realized that I was s -- I was infested. So, in the winter -- it was already in the winter was very, very cold, she took me into her barn, undressed me, took my clothes and hung it outside, so everything can sort of freeze. And she shaved my head, and -- and she gave me a bath and she put cream over my head, because I had, you know, rashes. I had blood, abs -- just blood already, dripping down my -- my head, because it was so itchy. And I stayed with her for

a week, and then she said I have to go. So, how did I survive? Well, I used to go every so often to our neighbors, Gentile neighbors, cause there were no Jews already, in the city. So I would go to them, and they would give me bread, maybe potato soup, a glass of milk. Sometimes they'll give me fruits. Now, this kept me going. So, I didn't go every day to them, you know, I couldn't be seen going to the same place all the time, because then they'll be always someone who will detect, and feel, you know, that this must be a Jewish kid. So I -- I -- this was always in my mind, I have to be very, very careful, and I was. So whatever they gave me, I made sure that I just save enough to have until I go again next week, or you know, or two weeks later. So, that's how I a -- and I -- I -- I always tried to go to different neighbors, and one shouldn't know if, you know, that I went to this one or that one. That's how I survived. Oh God.

Q: You mean, you were that young, and they -- they didn't wonder where -- where you stayed? They didn't ever ask?

A: Never asked, no.

Q: Do you think they knew?

A: Well, they knew that I am somewheres, right, but you see, they just, I imagine, didn't ask, because there was nothing they could do about it. They would not ask me to stay with them, because they were also afraid. So, if I came and I just -- could you give me -- you know, could you give me something to eat, do you have something? In fact, if I remember correctly, I don't remember even walking in into the house, but rather, staying outside in the back and they would bring something out to me. Do you understand? So, i-

i-it was -- I -- I -- I think it was quite frightening for them, you know, worrisome for them to -- to deal with something like this, because you know, they could not completely ignore me, and they could not completely reject that I -- if I'm asking for food, so they gave me the food, which was -- that was very nice. If not for them, where would I be going to eat? I couldn't go to strangers. But if you -- I don't know if I mentioned that last time, one day, it's been awhile and I had no food, and here I'm walking, you know, on one of the avenues, and there's a restaurant and it has a very big window, a glass window, and people are sitting and eating and I'm so hungry. I -- I imagine -- I -- I -- it must have been I didn't have enough food, really, left. So I'm standing at that window and I'm -- I'm looking in and I see there's people sitting, there's one seat available, by the counter. So, I walked in, and I just went over and I sat down. And I'm sitting down next to a gentleman, a -- I don't know him. A-And the young lady, the waitress, came over and asked me what I wanted. Well, you know, I always remember that I'm not supposed to eat things that are not kosher. So, I asked her for potato soup. So, potato soup has nothing, it's just water and potatoes, and carrots maybe, maybe. And so, she was -- she thought that I was together with this man. So, of course, she served me, she brought me th-the -- the potato soup, and I finished eating it, and she came over and she said, "You -- You're paying? Are you paying?" And I said, "I don't have any money." Which I didn't, because the hundred rubles that my mother left me, I -- I bought myself a cross, so I can fool everyone. So -- And I started crying. So, the gentleman just took the bill from her, and he said nothing. I think he may -- maybe he realized that, you know, or

maybe he just thought I was an orphan, or maybe he just thought -- well, he couldn't even know -- he -- he couldn't really know that I was Jewish, because I had that big cross, and I made sure that everybody sees it, okay? And then, I don't look Jewish either. So, he must have thought, you know, this kid is just an orphan from somewhere, whatever, and -- and he just said, "It's okay, it's okay," and I was crying, and I just walked out crying. But at least I had the soup, and I had the potato -- I mean, the potato soup, which was -- I don't know how long it lasted me, but that's how I managed. But, you see, so children can learn.

Q: You were six?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: I know today, that if we saw someone who was six or seven walking alone, we would go about them. I'm wondering, were there lots of other orphans around? Were -- Were you the only one, or --

A: Well, I -- I saw myself only walking around. I didn't see other kids. I mean, you know, maybe they were on different streets, but as -- again, as I told you before, at that time, the city didn't have already, any Jews, because they had already a second pogrom. That means they finished off the rest of the Jews that they did not kill in '41. See, we had -- There was a pogrom in for -- in '41, and then in '42, a second one. So, at that time already, maybe there was, you know, hiding here and there, but I haven't seen anyone, so -- that I know or -- or suspect, or anything like that. I mean, I wasn't in touch with anyone. I just live in my own world.

Q: I -- I want to go to the present world for a minute, because before we started, you mentioned a movie that you had seen recently.

A: Yeah.

Q: I'd love to hear what you thought, and tell me what movie it was.

A: Yeah. Well, the movie was "Life is Beautiful." You know, it's -- it's amazing the way that Mr. what's his name, th-the actor and director [indecipherable] put it together. He truly was a comedian. I mean, it's -- yeah, you know, if you take a -- every survivor will have a different story, because there were so many happenings. Now, what he did, was -- was truly a -- an exceptional thing, to hide a child in the concentration camp. Now, it is -- if it's true, it's truly an amazing thing, that he was able to pull it off, sort of, you know? I did most of the time, I cried, yeah, mostly.

Q: Did you identify with the man or the boy?

A: The boy, you know, the boy. It's, you know, hiding him, but -- except you see, the difference between the boy and myself is that I was alone. See, he had his father, he had that security, that protection from his father. Although he knew that there is -- that there were dangerous times and he's in a dangerous place, but yet he had his father there. I had no one. I was alone. And I had to think of how to save myself, of how to survive. And I think that -- that's it's something. When I think about it now, I-I just don't understand how I did it.

Q: In -- Any particular scenes in the movie that really touched you the most?

A: You know, the idea is that he's in concentration camp, and at any minute, somebody might, you know, there's the -- he's hiding, and they might kill him. You know, you always want everyone to survive. I wouldn't want to see anyone killed. I've seen already enough horror, so even the movie, to me it's like I was sitting and saying, "Oh, I hope he survives, I hope." I didn't know what was coming, but I was hoping, of course, that he survives, and -- which he did, and I was very happy at that, and at the end he meets the -- you know, he finds his mother, and that's -- that was really very nice. That's something like my -- my happening, you know? When I saw my mother, that was very nice. And my question was, "Why did you leave me?" Y-You know, during that time, I never cried. Can imagine? I was alone for six months, and I never cried? And then when I -- when I saw my mother, a --

End of Tape Four, Side A

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of tape one, side B, Frima Laub.

A: And so, you know, all this time, I knew I'm not supposed to cry, I'm not supposed to complain, I'm not supposed to do all these things. And so, when I finally, you know, got together with my mother, and she sees me wearing the cross, she says, "My child, what is this?" And I says, "I wanted to live." And then -- No, she took it off and she gave it to the priest of the town. And then I said to her, I'm look at her, I says, "Mama, why did you leave me?" Well, she explained to me -- I da -- well, when she left me with the lady, she said to me, "I got to go," she said, "but I can't take you right now, because it's very

cold.” And -- And I -- I understood, except I certainly didn’t want my mother to leave me. So my excuse was, I says, “Mom, I have a headache.” And she said, “The lady will give you an aspirin, you’ll feel better.” And she said, “But -- But in springtime,” she said, “I’ll send someone to pick you up and bring you to me, where I’m going to be.” And that was that, and she walked out. She gave me a kiss and she walked out.

Q: Do you feel like she made a mistake?

A: No. Mm-mm.

Q: If it had been your child --

A: Oh, please.

Q: -- would you have done that?

A: No, probably not. But then, those were different times, and as you can see, six years -- at the age of six years then, is nothing compared today. Not even a 16 year old. I’m looking at our beautiful generation of young Americans. They -- They -- They wouldn’t even know how -- what to do. This is why that book is very important, because they are - - it’s -- it’s -- it’s a real happening to a six year old girl. When I think about it now, I say I must have been 60 then. To think the way I thought, to plan the way I planned. I-I-I mean, remember I told you, one evening -- I used to come back very late, cause I wanted to make sure that everyone is asleep in the lady’s house, and ev -- in the neighborhood, so nobody sees me crawling into -- you know, to the doghouse. And one evening, the wom -- and I all -- it was never earlier than -- than 12 - one o’clock in the morning, cause I wanted to make sure that everybody is asleep. And when I got there, I saw how the

lights were on in her house, so, I wouldn't dare climbing into -- to the doghouse under her house. So, the house next to her was bombed out from -- from shells, and I decided to sleep then -- there. Now, what happened is, it was completely bombed out, but there were four half walls, okay? Rubbles inside. I crawl we -- went in there, I lied down. I just, you know, sort of he-held onto myself, and in order to stay warm, I blew the -- my -- my -- my -- my breathing. I -- I blew in my air into the sweater that I was wearing, so I can stay warm through the night, cause that was winter. And the winters in Europe are brutal. And -- And that's how I -- you know, of course I didn't sleep through the night, that's a different story, but that's how I kept myself warm. I had no blankets, I had nothing. I was just lying on the rubbles.

Q: Where would you be during that late supper night? I mean, between six and midnight, where would you see --

A: Walking the streets. I never stopped walking the streets. Remember, I used to start at dawn, when it started -- when it became a little bit light, I would crawl out from under the house, shake off the -- the hay that -- that the dog was sleeping on, and so I was sleeping with the dog, remember? And I would shake everything off, and put on my scarf, and I -- I did my praying and I put on the cross, and I walked out nobody should see me, and I started walking the streets. That's how I used to do, until 12 - one o'clock in the morning, when everybody was asleep in the area. I wanted to make sure nobody sees me.

Q: Do you think that, as I see you now, as a very spirited person, do you think that that experience gave you patience, perseverance, daring, planning, any of the above?

A: Well, you know what really gave me strength? And that is I always felt there's someone watching over me. I mean, that God is watching over me. And I felt that -- that I'll be okay. I-I sort of never felt alone. I felt there's someone watching over me and I'll be okay. And so, by praying, that's how I felt. I pray, somebody listens to me and will take care of me. And -- And this is how I just kept going. And I felt very -- I felt stro -- I felt -- I never thought, you know, that I'll get killed, because I already escaped two killings, so I didn't think that it can happen to me again. But whether -- I just have to make sure that I'm not caught, and that the six months or seven months -- it's six months, actually, will go by, and soon there'll be spring, and sa -- my mother said she'll send someone to pick me up, and that's how I felt it will be. So, it's very good thinking.

Q: Very good thinking, and a lot of faith.

A: Yes.

Q: And that's a --

A: Yes.

Q: -- another thing I wanted to ask you, I --

A: Yes.

Q: -- I think I -- we -- we discussed your being a -- a religious Jew.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And the role of prayer in helping you to survive the Holocaust. Well, what about the years after the Holocaust? Do you still pray every day? Do you pray for different things now?

A: Yeah. Not only do I pray for different things, but every Friday night, when I kindle the lights, I will stand by them and I will talk to God. I pray for peace on earth, I pray for peace in Israel. I pray for -- for health, and I pray for happiness, and I pray for so many things. I just stand there and I pray. But most of all, I do -- I really very much concentrate on everything that I pray and I'm asking God please this and this and this and that, is for peace, God, for peace. And I hope we'll have peace. But right now, there's so many things going on in the world, where's the peace? I don't have peace. I never live in peace.

Q: What part of the world disturbs you right now?

A: The whole world. It doe --

Q: What struggle, specifically?

A: I mean, wherever I hear killings, it bothers me. It just -- It just it -- it's eating me that 50 years later, the world still didn't learn anything? Why -- Why are these things happening? I-I mean, there's no reason for it. But yet, the pe-people are doing it, and the rest of the world doesn't seem to do much about it. So, it doesn't matter if it's in Uganda, that there is killing, in India there is killing and in -- in Croatia they are killing. I just -- These killings just bother me.

Q: That brings up something that the museum is very interested in -- in knowing about and I think last time, I remember, you gave so much of your young experience in the interview, that by the time we got to the more post-war experience, y-you were very tired, and so I want to revisit some of those questions that I meant to ask you then.

A: Okay.

Q: And one of the things which I remember upset you very much, was when I ask you your response to Japanese concentration camps. Now, I'm not trying to compare these things to the Holocaust, I'm trying to get your response, and there's a list here, which I'll just let you look, of events that happened in the United States, here, and if you want to just choose the ones that you remember especially, and how they affected you.

A: Well, if we'll go to the Japanese concentration camps, are you talking the ones that we had in the United States?

Q: Yes.

A: During the war? Remember?

Q: I --

A: Was it during the war?

Q: I thought it was after the war.

A: We were -- you know, was after -- well, after the war, no it -- it couldn't have been.

We're talking concentration camps in the United States. Was that the time that the United States was at war with Japan? Are these the concentration camps we are talking about, or are we talking about --

Q: Yes. In the United States.

A: In the United States.

Q: These are -- These are Japanese-Americans.

A: Okay, right, but -- but in those days, and I think today it probably would be the same, there are people who are so devoted to their original question, that although they are in

the United States, they might, in some way, you know, react in a terrorist way. So, in those days, these camps, I think the government did the right thing, okay? Now, these concentration camps, you cannot compare to Hitler's concentration camps.

Q: No, we're not doing that --

A: Okay.

Q: I -- I'm just trying to --

A: This was strictly --

Q: -- trying to see how your experience --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- affected you around other big, political issues.

A: Okay, this was a political issue.

Q: Because not everyone felt that way.

A: Okay, absolutely.

Q: A lot of people felt that they were being imprisoned, just because of their race.

A: No. They were imprisoned because United States was at war with that country, who attacked the United States. Therefore, they were careful to make sure that they don't get -
- of course, they don't know who is a terrorist, who isn't and who has in mind to harm the United States. So they wanted to make sure. And they just -- what they did is, they didn't -- it's not a concentration camp the way Europe had, but rather an area where they kept all the people that they might, you know, th-that they suspected maybe will do something harmful.

Q: Did you -- sorry, did you --

A: Yeah, go ahead.

Q: -- let's just emphasize the events --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: -- when you were already in the United States.

A: United States.

Q: You came in 1957?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: So, do you remember anything about the Civil Rights movement going on?

A: Yes, I -- I think it was -- it was a good movement. I think that we came a long way. I think it was the right thing. Unfortunately, you know, the minorities had to go through a lot. But, they came a long way, and I think this movement was good. The Vietnam war, unfortunately, I think was a disaster. And that did bother me a lot. It bothered me because the truth of the matter is, we had no business to be there, especially losing so many of our young people. S -- Also, the fact that France was there before, and they left it, why did we take it over? It's none of our business, okay? And -- And -- And the truth of the matter is, to send our boys is, if we would have been -- if that country would have attacked us, that's a different story. But here, that was a waste. And let's see, which other one of we have here?

Q: Kent State.

A: The Kent State. Well, that was because of the Vietnam war, right? Because these kids didn't want to stand for it, and I don't blame them. That -- That war bothered me a lot. It still does to this day, when I go and I see that wall. That is, to me --

Q: Which wall are you discussing?

A: Where they have the Vietnam -- the names of the Vietnam boys.

Q: What upset you about it?

A: Well, the fact that they lost their life, and -- and i-it's not protecting their country. It wasn't a war that we were, you know, like -- like -- like the Japanese. The Japanese attacked us, so we had to retaliate, okay? We had to defend ourselves. But the Vietnam war had nothing to do with us, really. So, that was an unfortunate move from the government, God bless them anyway. Okay, the Feminist movement, it's okay. The assassination of all these big people, yes, bothered me very much. John F. Kennedy, Evers, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy. That was very unfortunate, and that was something that I feel maybe it could have been prevented. I am not sure.

Q: Which thing?

A: Robert Kennedy. He was killed by -- by someone from the Middle East. And I -- I -- I think that what is happening that we feel that we have so much freedom in this country, and it's democracy, we don't have to worry about terrorists, or killings, but we do. We have a lot of assassins running around this country, and all -- they have freedom also. So, unfortunately, we lost some very good people, some beautiful people, and I'm sorry about that.

Q: Who was president when you first came?

A: It was Eisenhower, you're right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Q: Do you remember anything distinctly different -- of course it was different from Cuba, or --

A: Well, you have to realize that I came from Cuba, and in Cuba we had at that time, a -- a dictator, okay? And -- And I really didn't know much about politics. All I knew is, you know, that -- that, you know, that I have to work and I have to get an education and that's that. That takes care on that. I -- I really didn't know much about politics. And life was very nice and very peaceful in Cuba. So I -- I really don't know much, as to, you know, wh-what -- what he did right, or what he did wrong. Reagan's visit to the gravesites of German soldiers, that disturbed me, yes, that disturbed me very much. But --

Q: Tell me about that, a little bit.

A: Well, first of all, to give such an honor, that an American president should go to the German soldiers who were at war, not only, you know with Russia and Poland and the Ukraine and the other countries, but they were really also at war, sort of, with the United States, and to give them the honor of having an American president, that -- that -- that didn't makes much sense to me. I [indecipherable]

Q: Did -- Did you discuss with other Jewish people how they felt about that, at that time?

A: They all felt the same way. Even not -- E-Even -- Even not the survivors, I mean just American, you know, Jewish American people. They -- They were all definitely against it. They said that they -- those soldiers do not deserve the respect of the American

president. But then, you know, President Roosevelt wasn't exactly perfect for -- for the people -- for the Jews during World War Two, either. He was a great president for this wonderful country, but he didn't do much for us, remember? I mean, not even when he was told what was going on, and he was asked to bomb the concentration camps, or the -- the trains going to the concentration camps, and he said, [inaudible] that's what he said, they hadn -- didn't have enough bombs or they can't do it. I -- I mean, I don't remember exactly, but i-i-it was some kind of ridiculous excuse. It just -- thoughtlessness I guess. Poor politics, and perhaps not a great feeling for hum-humanity, I don't know.

Q: Well, that's why I was asking you, when your relatives, your aunts, who love you very much personally, didn't want you to talk about it, I'm wondering if this attitude existed even on the part of the government. They know what's happening, but at the same time, they're not there.

A: A very good possibility, but I don't really know.

Q: There was a lot of denial going on.

A: Oh, oh, yes. I'm sure.

Q: I'm even told by American Jews.

A: Mm-hm. Yeah, yes, it was.

Q: Have you ever heard anybody talk about that?

A: No, not -- not -- not really. You know, like -- I mean, we all felt that President Roosevelt did not do much for -- you know, for the Holocaust. He didn't do much, he sort of ignored it. And well, today I guess they are a little bit different, right? They are

trying to prevent killings in different countries today. I don't know if they'll be successful or not, but with us, they didn't even let that ship of 900 Jewish -- German Jews, le -- they -- they wouldn't let into this country. And then, of course, everybody else closed their doors to that ship and they had to turn that ship back to -- to Germany. Now, hey, today, look at it. Today we'll let everyone in, including prisoners from Cuba, including terrorists. Everybody is welcome. We don't check them. With AIDS, without AIDS, whatever. So, now maybe, perhaps we're doing already, too much now, and in those days we did very little, or hardly anything. So, for tha -- for the survivors it is painful, yeah.

Q: What kind of --

A: I -- I feel that the world really ignored me.

Q: What kind of job do you think that Clinton is doing right now? Is he too liberal?

A: Regarding?

Q: Is he too liberal? Well, I guess we were discussing immigrants.

A: Well, to a certain extent, I think he might be a little bit liberal. I -- I feel that this country deserves to have, you know, nice people, good people, responsible people. Not just anybody should come into a country like this. And that's exactly what we are doing. Look what's going on. We have terrorists, we have the neo-Nazis, who have the freedom of organizing themselves, training themselves, right here in the United States. Now, does it make sense? Do you know, as a survivor, how I feel? That's why I always am afraid while bringing up my children, it's always behind my ba -- in back of my head.

Q: What -- What did you think then, bringing up the subject of neo-Nazis, about Littleton, Colorado?

A: Well, well --

Q: Happening on Hitler's birthday. What -- What did you think when you first saw that [indecipherable]

A: You know what ca -- what the first thing y-you start thinking is? That we're ignoring them. We are giving them the freedom and later on might be too late, we'll pay a price.

Q: Ignoring who?

A: The group. The neo-Nazis.. And this, after 50 years, or sic -- 55 years, that they still admire a butcher like Hitler. Do you understand? And that is not from the children alone. These children, or these young people, they hear about it in their homes, from their parents, okay? So, obviously, there are still followers. There are still those that feel that the people in this world are not good enough for them. And what do you think wa -- why are they training?

Q: What do you mean, training?

A: Well, they're training how to kill. They have arms, okay? So, what do you think they are going to do with those arms? Let's see in 15 years, 20 -- 15 - 20 years from now, or maybe even earlier. What do you think they're going to do? It's not a hobby. They have a purpose. It's just we are not paying that much attention to them, cause we are giving them freedom. And sometimes too much freedom for criminals, you know what happens. We pay, later on, a price. Now, the bombing of -- of -- of the Twin Towers, there's an

example. We're letting in terrorists to this country. We're giving them freedom, we're giving them ho -- a home, we giving them everything, and look what we get in return.

Q: But I -- It's kind of hard to judge who -- who is and who is not.

A: For what?

Q: A terrorist. Y-Y-You don't know until it happens.

A: That i -- That -- That is correct, but no, no, no, no, the United States, I'm sure, has enough of intelligence to know -- the ones that are terrorists, did things before, maybe in a different country, not exactly in the United States. So, we are not really checking out the people that are coming into this country, unfortunately, okay?

Q: What about the kids? What about the people who live here, th -- they -- they are citizens --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- there are a lot of citizens, I understand --

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm --

Q: -- who are --

A: -- right, right.

Q: -- arming themselves and what -- what could the government do about that?

A: What could the government do about that? Well, first of all, I think we have -- there's too much freedom in getting arms in this country. If you have the money, you can get it, and that's number one, so right away, they should stop this, okay? And number two, even the citizens here, the ones that go out to get arms, the government should know what for

and -- and give them a certain -- even -- and they have to be checked up. I think that those people that apply for arms should be checked out first, and then given a certain period of -- and then, you know, you have to keep an eye on certain people also. It's -- I-It's not easy, but we don't seem to be doing anything about it. It's really -- there are -- the arms here are free for all. Any kid, any youngster, any terrorist, any anybody can just go in and get -- you know, get a gun or get a rifle or whatever. And, you know, it should be a little bit stricter. It's true, it's a democratic country, and it's, I think to me, it's the most -- the greatest country in the world, but it's also frightening for me, even though I live in a democratic, free, beautiful country, why am I always afraid, why am I always worried? Because I see what's going on and it's -- shouldn't be that way. What can the government do? They can do. They just see -- sort of ignore it.

Q: And I wanted to ask you about Israel as a state. You must especially have been aware of this.

A: Oh yeah. Yeah, I've been aware of all these three wars, yeah. Well, what about Eichmann? Well, there's a lot of these butchers that got away and were never caught. They lied to this country and they came into this country and they lived in this country, some of them. Of course, most of them probably died by now. But yet, they live a very good life here, after butchering millions of people, okay? So that's because our country is so wonderful, they just let them in and they made up stories, right? And we let them in, we never checked out on them, and that was that. As far as the wars in Israel, it's very sad

that a little country like this, with a handful of people, especially in those days, had to fight so many armies, from all different fronts, and yet I look at it as a miracle.

Q: What -- What's the miracle?

A: The miracle that they always beat the -- their neighbors. And they won most of these wars, even though -- even that war in -- in '73, that Yom Kippur, when they were attacked. It turned around and -- but of course, they won the war, but never peace. That's different things and that's very, very sad. As far as today, I feel that nobody should mix in, into their politics and the people of the state of Israel should decide, you know, which president is good for them, prime minister, or what they should do with their neighbors, how to find peace. And there's no one in this world that wants peace more than they do, because there isn't a family that hasn't lost a child, a husband, an uncle, a -- a -- a sister, a brother. I mean, they are constantly losing people, and really --

Q: Are you discussing Jews in Israel?

A: Huh? Yeah, I'm discussing the -- yeah, and I'm discussing that nobody should force them to do anything, because nobody really knows their situation better than they do themselves. And as long as they don't ask for help, then the United States should not mix in. They should leave them alone and they -- and they shouldn't be peace -- a land for peace, they should be peace for peace. There's no such thing as land for peace.

Q: As what?

A: Land, land. Like the president says, "Give them -- Give the Arabs more land, and there'll be peace." No, no, no, no. It has to be peace for peace. That means the Arabs

have to want peace, so there's going to be peace. You can give them land, no matter how much land you'll give them. But they obviously don't want peace [indecipherable]

Q: You think they want war?

A: No, what I think is they want Israel to move out of the Middle East. That's what I think, because Israel is the only democratic country there. Everybody else is the same religion, the same background. So they just don't want Israel there. What they don't want -- what they don't want to remember is that Israel was there since beginning of time, and they'll remain there. So nobody in this world should mix in and tell the Israeli government what to do, but let them and the people decide what to do. And when it comes to peace, nobody wants it more than the Israel -- the Israelis.

Q: Let's go to the next. We're moving on to tape two.

End of Tape Four, Side B

Beginning Tape Five, Side A

Q: This is tape two, side A, of a second audio follow up with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles, on June third, 1999, for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible.

A: We'll just add to, you know, the Israel's situation, as far as peace is concerned. You see, I feel that the Arab countries, if they would only stop teaching the young children in school about Israel being their enemy and the hatred that they have for the Israelis, or the Jewish people in general, or the state of Israel, I think that there would be peace very quickly, because I imagine and I feel that the young people don't want wars either. But, if they in -- they are taught since they're very little, that that -- you know, the hostility towards Israel, so how can they grow up wanting peace? How can there be peace if they hate their next door neighbor? They don't want to tolerate a next door neighbor. So, it -- it bothers me that we are -- that the young generation of the Arab world i-is -- is already growing up with hatred, and -- and -- and -- and hostility against the neighbor. And maybe, hopefully, I would like to see someday that they should change their books, and the way they teach those youngsters.

Q: Do you think that Jewish kids are being taught --

A: No, no.

Q: -- differently?

A: Ma -- Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. See, hatred won't get you anywheres.

Q: I understand that.

A: Okay.

Q: But do you th -- you -- are you saying that it's a one way street, and Israel, that -- th-
that Jews --

A: Unfortunately, unfortunately, if somebody would like to go to Israel and pick up the
books that the children learn from, okay, and a -- how they're taught about their next
door neighbor, and then go to the Arab countries, and look at their textbooks, you will
see the difference. And --

Q: You've seen both of them?

A: I've -- People have told me about it, okay? So, there is a difference, and -- and this is
why I feel very strongly, that as long as the children are taught hatred towards another
nation, they ca -- there can never be peace. Because, you know, that's -- they grow up
with -- always feeling that their next door neighbor is whatever, you know, and I don't
want to deal with him, and -- so, when the president, you know, when President Clinton
thinks that, give them land, you can give them anything you want. If they hate you, they
will hate you no matter what. If they don't want you there, it doesn't matter what you
give them, unless you give them the whole country, period. And that's something that -- I
don't see peace in the future, unless there's a change in politics.

Q: Do you think that -- Let's say the book that you wrote about your experience, were
distributed in Israel. How do you think it would affect children, first of all, Jewish
children?

A: Well --

Q: Do you think they know about the Holocaust?

A: Well, I think they know, and I certainly hope they do, and they should. And I feel that we, in -- in this country, and perhaps all over the world, we waited also a little bit too long, you know, to teach our children, in their schools, about the Holocaust. I really don't know why it took them so long. Maybe because we were all in denial. I mean, it's possible. Like, I -- I didn't talk to my children, you know, about it. Maybe this is what all the parents did, they were all afraid, not to scare their children about it. But, I-I think the books are very important, because I think that now, in the 21st century, I think they heard quite a bit about it, and -- and -- and -- and them -- they're probably going to be a lot of books, and it's like every survivor has a story, every survivor could write a book, because his experience were different, his horrors that he went through were different. And the children can learn from that. I mean, they will learn frightening things, but on the other hand they will also learn as to how to -- to survive and -- and -- and how to handle situations and how to try to make this world a better world -- place to live.

Q: But there aren't that many books, I don't think, about children in the Holocaust.

A: No, no. There must be some, but not really --

Q: I wanted to ask you about the children that you have worked with in a mental hospital.

Is that what you currently do?

A: No. I work now in a mental health clinic. Well, you know, the children that come there have different problems. It's mental health problems and it's not because of the

Holocaust. It's unfortunate, because these children don't have a father, and some of them are in foster homes. I-I-It's very sad. And they all -- breaks my heart, really. It's -- It breaks my heart when I see those children, this one's in a foster home, this one doesn't have a father, this one is being abused by the father, this one's being abused by the mother. It's -- It's -- It's just very painful and I really wish that somehow in -- in this United States, the minorities, the ones that -- that don't have fathers, that they would have a family life. There's no family life, and I think this is what affects the children. And you see, they are really lost souls. They are frightened, they are -- they -- they -- they don't know what to do, they don't know how to cope with life. So, if they would read my book, I think they would get well, to realize that at this station -- you know, at -- at this age, I was able to do things which they never think of doing.

Q: Have you ever thought about, before you write the book, going to schools, and talking to them?

A: I never did. And I tell you the reason. Because I would probably start crying. I still cry. I-I mean, it's just I -- I start talking, I'm reliving situations and -- and -- and I know I just wouldn't be a very good speaker. I would just have to stop in the middle and -- and that's not exactly what a speaker should do. As strong as I was, you know, I'm different, a little bit different now. I really live in the past a little bit, or a lot.

Q: Thinking about when you say you live in the past. What's an example of what you mean?

A: Well, you see, the past never really left me, or maybe I didn't leave -- leave the past. That means, everything that -- in my daily living, are constantly memories of what happened. There isn't a day that goes by where I don't -- wat -- see something that reminds me of what happened to me 50 years ago, 55 years ago. For example, certain homes look like a barn. You know, like they're very tall and -- and those windows, or whatever. Well, if I pass one of those, that reminds me when I was only five and a half and we were hiding in our barn. You know, we were hiding from the Germans. And then, you know what happened. This neighbor of ours would bring us, once a day she would bring us food. And then one day somebody must have seen her do it, and they called the -- the SS, and they followed her while she was walking, bringing us food, and she started yelling to us, "Save yourselves, save yourselves," and we were, you know, o -- i-in -- in the attic of the barn, and so my mother and sister, in the back, you know, everything is wooden, you know, panels, broke two wooden panels, and we jumped like two stories down and we ran and we escaped. So, when I look at this barn, it reminds me as to what happened 55 years ago. If I see a German Shepherd, that really kills me.

Q: How about you --

A: My stomach --

Q: I'm sorry.

A: -- jumps. Yes?

Q: No, I was just thinking of -- of German, and I just wondered about, have you ever had any German friends in America?

A: No. Mm-mm.

Q: Never will?

A: No. In fact, I never will, and when I hear that language, it -- my stomach jumps. I sweat. I can't -- the language, just the language, upsets me so. So no, I don't think I could ever -- and I'm very broadminded, really, but a-a-and I know that today's generation had absolutely nothing to do, you know, with the past generation, yet and all, I couldn't talk because it would bring back memories. Just by looking and saying, well that person comes from the country that took away my loved ones. So, I'd rather not -- not have any connection.

Q: Not even German Jews?

A: Well, that is a little different, cause the German Jews had nothing to do with the Holocaust. Unfortunately, they were so -- they felt so secure in Germany before World War Two, that unfortunate, they were hit just as bad with the Holocaust, as the European Jew. Same thing happened to them. So, you know, it's two different things. Talking to someone whose grandparents we-were involved in -- in my -- in my life, and talking about a German Jew, who went through almost the same as the European Jew. So it's two different things, you know?

Q: Do you, or have you been able to, from the beginning, or at any point in your marriage, been able to talk with your husband about your experience?

A: Mostly he -- Believe it or not, he talks mostly, about his experience. You know, he -- he was born in Germany, and -- and at the age of nine, my mother-in-law, you know, in

thir -- that was in '39, she realized that it's going to -- it -- the situation is very bad, and the sooner they get out of Germany, the better off they are. And my father-in-law was already, at that time in labor camp. So the only -- the only way for my mother-in-law to get her husband out of the labor camp, is to get a visa and get out of the country. So, she went through quite a bit, traveling all over the united s -- all over Germany, to try and get a visa, to get out of the country, and finally they got a visa to go to Shanghai. And so he has quite an experience himself, you know, specially the Kristallnacht. So, he usually talks about it, and I listen.

Q: You lived in Shanghai for how long?

A: Nine years. He lived --

Q: So, he speaks Chinese?

A: No. They -- Because, you see, they were in a ghetto. So they used German, they spoke German. Perhaps they spoke a little Chinese, you know, when they went out to do their shopping, you know, in the market.

Q: It was a ghetto set up especially for --

A: Yes, it was a ghetto, just exactly for the German Jews and the European Jews. All the Jews that -- that came to Shanghai. They all lived in -- in a -- in -- in a ghetto.

Q: What years was he there?

A: From '39 to '47.

Q: I have interviewed a survivor --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- who lived in --

A: Shanghai?

Q: Shanghai, and Kobe, Japan.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: So maybe when I meet your husband tonight, we'll talk about it. But, do you mean, when you met each other, you knew that he was a survivor, too?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: And did you never discuss what happened to you?

A: No.

Q: Never? Y -- Does he --

A: As I said, occasionally, I will tell him some -- some kind of an experience that happened to me, if it relates to something else. But, no --

Q: Why?

A: -- we don't really -- I don't really know. Would you believe that? I don't really know.

Q: I just wonder if the -- the nightmares that happen, after discussing it with someone like me, who you never knew, might be changed a little bit, if you shared it with your immediate family.

A: You know, I think that maybe the reason why I would -- and actually, when I -- I only tell strangers when I'm asked.

Q: Oh, sure, sure.

A: You understand? Yeah. So I think th -- I -- I think that the reason why it's easier for me to talk with a stranger about the Holocaust, is because I want the world to know. And the reason, I think, why I do not discuss it with my family, I mean, you know, really sitting down and talk about it, although my children did watch the tape, is because A, I know my husband went through his share of experiences, like starvation, you know. So, he went through his own, and I just don't think he needs any more from my side, do you understand? Knowing from my side. I-I think maybe that's the reason.

Q: You're protecting him?

A: In a certain way, I think so. I think that -- that must be the reason. This is why I can sit with you and I can talk and tell you my life, where I just don't get to do that -- my husband or anybody else in the family.

Q: I mentioned -- I mean, you mentioned that your children wa-watched the tape.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Did your husband watch, too?

A: No.

Q: So, were you with your children when they watched?

A: No.

Q: Did they get back to you immediately, or --

A: They said nothing. Isn't it amazing? They do not discuss it.

Q: Do you think that's to protect you, or themselves?

A: I don't know. I really don't know. It -- It's very interesting. You know, I -- I never really asked them, and -- and they never really sit down and -- and say, "Well, how do you feel as to what happened?" Or, you know, "How do you cope with what happened?" I guess they see me that I'm coping with it, and they see me that I'm -- I'm strong, the way I was, you know, the way I'm portrayed on the -- on -- on the -- on the tape, you know, so -- in the tape, actually. So, I don't know. I-It's -- It's a good point.

Q: Families in general, I guess, don't discuss very deep things, often.

A: Probably not. Yes, prob --

Q: Except maybe at funerals, I -- I think sometimes.

A: Oh, that's sad. Yeah.

Q: I'm going back a little further, just so we can move on --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- to your time in Paris.

A: Yeah.

Q: There were some gaps in the experience. When you talked about being involved, you were helping Moroccan Jewish refugees.

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: I wonder how you became involved with the work. Do you remember?

A: Well, it -- i -- how very simple. I -- I did not go to school, cause we were there temporarily. We really didn't know how long we are going to stay, so it was a question, maybe a month or two, it wind up to be six months, that's a different story, but in the

meantime, I did not go to school. And my house was always a house where my mother always did for the needy. She always did things for people. So, I guess, to me that was very natural. If I'm not going to school, I have the time to help others. And that's what you do, you -- you know, they need clothing, you -- you get together clothing from other people, you put it in the valise, and wicl -- and food, you go to bakeries, you -- you [indecipherable] need -- in Jewish it's shnorer, you know that means you -- you get together s -- food and whatever they need. Just pack it up and you take it to those people and you give it to them.

Q: But I got the impression this was an organized --

A: No, it was my own --

Q: -- relief effort.

A: No.

Q: Your own, you -- the only --

A: My very own thinking, my very own doing.

Q: Do you remember how -- what -- when you saw them needy, or --

A: Oh, I -- Well, first of all, we -- we her -- we heard about those people. That's how I got to know where they live. I-I don't exactly remember the area in Paris, but it must have been outside of Paris, because it was like, on a hill. And -- And -- And there was maybe, in that one big room, I don't know, maybe 30 people, maybe 40 people, a lot of them. And the smell was horrible, because there were no sanitary facilities. And a lot of children and [indecipherable]. But I did my share. Every week, that's what I used to do.

And then I used to babysit for, you know, they had young couples, whose wives either just gave birth and -- and had no help, so I would go and I'll help them out, you know. I be like a mother's helper, free of charge. I never -- I never accept any money. That was something that we have to do, to help others.

Q: Now, do you -- do you take after your mother in your adult life in America? Have you been involved in relief efforts, or what kind of things have you been involved in?

A: Well, you know, we always involved in the children's schools. Then we always involved in organizations that help children all over the world. So, in my own way, you know. Certain organizations you have to raise money. Certain organization, you gi -- send in money. Certain organizations a -- are ask you for clothing, you give them clothing, you gi -- you know, whatever, you know, whatever you can help out with.

Q: And you mentioned these two organizations as -- as their post-war agencies that helped you somehow. Do you recall how -- how they helped you and when.

A: Oh yes. Sure, of course. Well, the HIAS, in -- in Germany, they used to give us clothing. I mean, when we got there, we had nothing, you know, there's -- was still the same -- the same clothing that we had from -- you know, from -- from the -- the pogroms. So, they would give us clothing, and -- and food. That's that. I mean, that was very good. And, you know, we had a school, so we went -- I went to school. They did a lot and so did the Joint. They more or less the s -- on the same level, you know, they each one do their share. So --

Q: Do you remember being amazed at being helped?

A: Amazed at being helped? Well, I guess I took it for granted that that's how it's supposed to be, right? I mean, if I need something, they were there to give it to me, so, as a child it was appreciated, definitely. It was certainly appreciated, everything, until, you know, when I -- when I became an adult, I first realized how much effort these organizations put in, how -- how much of hard work, to get clothing, to get food, medicine, you know, necessary things for people who were in need. Now, of course, I appreciate that even more and I understand all the other organizations that are -- you know, trying to do the same for other people all over the world.

Q: It just occurred to me, you have a very convincing aspect to yourself, engaging, that you -- perhaps we're all born with a particular kind of nature. That little girl, I'm thinking about, that you were. But do you think that the skills, the survival skills you learned there, still are with you today, as far as the way you live your life, the way you --

A: Absolutely.

Q: -- help other people get what they want?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Could you tell us about that?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Your adult -- How you think your adult was affected by that little child?

A: Well, my adult life is very much connected to my little girl life, because I don't think I was ever a little girl, a child. I -- I feel, and as I -- you know, as I grew older, is that things that I did as a six year old, or a five and a half year old girl, was not of a little girl,

was of a na -- a grown up person. And that is something that gives me the -- the strength today, and the understanding of life today, of how to handle it. And I always say, if I was able to handle it then, I certainly can handle anything today. So, yeah, my -- the way I was when I was little, during those horrible days, is -- is a tremendous sort of backbone.

Q: But you haven't done any public speaking about it?

A: Nope. No, I told you. I think I'm very weak when it comes to that. See, as strong as I am, and I think I'm a very strong person, it's still something that I would -- you know, I feel I would probably constantly break down and -- and that would show my wi -- weakness. And maybe -- maybe this is what's stopping me from -- from speaking, and this is why I -- I really feel that in a book I can really, really express my thoughts, my -- my feelings.

Q: Do you keep a journal, or have you written about your feelings?

A: Not so much about my feelings as to, you know, my experience, but not, you know the expression, my feelings, of how you really feel, but whether the story, and not so much your feelings. This is the only thing that's left from my father, and as you know, I was six years old when he was killed, and so I've been without a father since then. And I didn't want to leave him, and I begged him he should go with me, but he said, "No, you have to go with your mother, and I'll come later." But obviously it was too late. He -- If he tried to escape, he probably was caught by the Germans, by the Gestapo. So, this is the only thing that's left of my father, that's the tie that he wore on his wedding day. Can you imagine how many years this is? Look at what --

Q: And your mother kept it?

A: Well, no, no, you see, we -- we found it with some of our pictures by our next door neighbors. We didn't -- We were not able to keep anything. When we left our home, we could only take the necessities. We were not allowed to take anything else. But then when we left home, neighbors went in and each one helped themselves with whatever there was. And -- And -- And some things they gave us back, so there was some pictures and -- and this tie. They gave them back, so I-I want to show you, I ha -- we have a picture, on the wall, that's --

Q: Did your mother keep that tie?

A: Yeah, yeah, so --

Q: It's beautifully woven.

A: Yeah, isn't it something? A-And look, you see how worn it is? You know how many years he wore it? I mean, I-I -- I -- It was, let's see, how many years was it? Were they married when -- when my brother was over 18, my si -- let's see, my brother must have been 18, so they must have been married 20 years. 20 years, and today is -- 20 years was in the 40's, so this is like 70 years old.

Q: Wow.

A: Okay?

Q: What else do you want to show me?

A: I wanted you to see the -- the wedding pictures, so you'll see the tie.

Q: Oh.

A: There's a picture hanging there. Now I have heart palpitations.

Q: Do you really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you want to stop?

A: No. See --

Q: We're looking at a picture.

A: Yeah, we are looking at a picture. These were actually two separate pictures. It was one picture of my mother, and another picture of my father. The picture of my father is the day of their wedding, and the tie that he is wearing at their wedding, on their wedding day, is the tie that I am holding in my hand now, which is about 70 - 75 years later, that -- no, that's how old the tie is, and you can see it's -- it's ripped and torn, but it's still something to hold onto. And so, what I did is, my mother's picture was very t-torn and -- and -- and -- and scratched and everything else, I gave this, the two pictures to a photographer, and he put them together. Now, this picture is later on in life when -- when my mother was already a mother, she had my brother at that time. So, my father looks so much younger here, because he was, you know, they were young when they got married, but since it's put together -- but to me, it's a very -- it's the only picture that I have of the two of them, cause all the other pictures were just, you know, lost, or burned or whatever, I don't know whatever happened to them.

Q: Are they both from the same country?

A: Yeah, yeah. They were both from -- from the Ukraine, and they were both from the same town and my father was terribly handsome, and one of my granddaughters, when I look at her, her eyes, I always see my father. And, as I mentioned before, I-I -- I do carry a certain, I-I guess anger, cause my father swore to me that when I -- the evening that we were supposed to escape from the ghetto, I wanted him to come with me --

End of Tape Five, Side A

Beginning Tape Five, Side B

A: See, would you -- would you --

Q: This is tape two, side B, Frima Laub continued.

A: You want to put it now, or want me to hold it? Would you ever think that someone in their 60, would still cry, because --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- because my father disappointed me. I wanted him to go with me to escape from the ghetto, and we could not escape together, I mean, the whole family together, so we really had to separate. So I wanted to --

Q: Why did you have to separate?

A: Because a ghetto is something that is surrounded by barbed wire, with electrical wires on top, with Germans and German shepherds watching you. And that means, in order to escape, if they see too many people, then they suspect that you are planning to do something, and they'll kill you on the spot. So, we had to do it, in order to escape, as individually, where they will not suspect or think you might be doing something or trying

to escape. So, I -- I wanted my father to go with me, and then -- and then my mother would go on her own, then my sister would go on her own, so, you know, they -- they -- nobody will suspect that we are -- not even the people that we lived with, you know, nobody's supposed to know. But he said, "No, you go with Mama." And I said, "But I don't want to go, Papa." And he said, "I swear, we should live to see your brother." Cause, as you know, my brother was studying in Kiev, he was not with us during the war times -- war, you know, period. He said, "We should live to see your brother, I promise I will -- I will escape, I will go. But you go with Mama first, and then I'll go, after." Well - - And -- And the way we escaped is, my mother and I, we went to a -- a secluded area of the ghetto, and we climbed out from under the -- the barbed wires. I mean, you really -- we really had to be very, very low, not to trigger the electrical wiring.

Q: Was there anyone else with you?

A: No. My mother, myself, nobody's supposed to know that we escaping, don't you understand --

Q: And your sister, where is she?

A: No. She stayed with my father. Then, awhile later, she did the same thing, see?

Q: Alone?

A: Alone, right. Well, she was already at that time, let's see, she was 16. I was six, she was 16. And then -- then we made up where we going to meet, we were going to meet in one of our friend's houses, Gentile -- Gentile friends that we had. And so, my mother and I, we got there, and then about an hour later, also, my sister got there. And we sat and

waited for my father, and he never showed up. And that was the last time I saw my father, is when I insisted that he should come with me, and he said he ke -- "You go off with Mama, and I'll -- I'll come later." Well, he never made it. And then, after the war, you know, when we came back, we were all asking if somebody saw my father. And some of the neighbors said they saw him walking in the middle of the street with two SS men, and that was that. And -- And -- And nobody ever saw him again.

Q: I want to stay with this moment, being angry with him --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- for that, because it -- if I were writing your story, I could see how you could grow up feeling abandoned by your father, but also by your mother, who left you. And I wonder if you could even think for a minute. Has this situation repeated itself in your adult life?

A: Yeah.

Q: Could you tell me about it?

A: Well, in my adult life, I -- I always felt that I have to face the world alone, that I cannot count on anyone, not even my children. That I must do it on my own. And many times, I was thinking I have a very good title for my book. Always alone, and a step ahead of my enemy. But I always -- that's true, I always feel alone, like I -- I -- I -- I always feel I can't count on anyone. I don't have a shoulder to cry on, I must cry alone, I must do things alone, I must build alone, plan alone, everything alone. But I also feel that, because I had to do these things alone when I was little, I certainly can do them

alone now. That doesn't mean that it -- I don't get depressed. I do. But then I get back on my feet again and I just keep going, cause I know just like I knew then, I cannot stop. I cannot stop in the middle of the street, I must keep on walking and walking. And you know something else? Today, I cannot stay at home. I get up in the morning, and I can't wait to get out of the house. And I want to work and I'm very busy at work, and I'm very happy at work. It's very stressful job, but that's a different story, a-and sometimes it's heartbreaking when you see those children with problems. And then when I leave work, I don't go home, I'm always busy in the street, doing things. And I always wonder if that is the part of my past, where that's what I did in the morning. I got up, right? I -- I prayed, I shook off the hay, I put my scarf on, my cross on and out I went for the whole day and then came back at night, when everybody was already sleeping. I think that's part of my past. And that's what I do today, I can't stay home. Always on the go, always moving, like a Gypsy.

Q: Wow.

A: Yeah. And I always said, I always feel alone, and that -- that is -- you know, I just never thought about it until you brought it up right just now. Yeah. Very much a connection with my past.

Q: Even though you've chosen, you've made the decision, haven't you, not to share this with your husband?

A: Maybe a -- Maybe I feel that he could never understand. Because, you see, when I was alone, I made my own decisions. And -- A-A-And I -- I felt sure about the decisions. See,

I -- I never doubt it. I had to do something, I just went ahead and I did it. It -- It's not that I was thinking or shivering, or -- or being afraid. I-I -- I knew one thing, there's no two ways about it. This is what I have to do, this is what I have to do. And I told you -- I think I told you, that once during the times that I was walking the streets, I walked twice on the same block, and I heard two boys saying to each other, "Sh -- Maybe she's Jewish." Maybe -- Maybe she's Jewish? I never walked that street again. Now, nobody told me that, I decided. So, in my life now -- if at the age of six, I was able to make decisions and think -- I think it was an intelligent thinking, then I certainly can do it now. So I said, although sometimes I -- sometimes I feel depressed because I feel I am alone, cause I can't count on anyone, because I cannot depend on anyone, because I-I -- I can't lean on anyone. When I look back, I did it then, and I say, I can do it now, too. And that's how I keep going, ooh, yeah, yeah.

Q: But you seem like you would be such a good friend and such a good wife and companion. So, you seem to be able to give it, but maybe receiving is more difficult. Do you think those other people really would like to be giving?

A: I am -- I am a -- a giver, but again, I -- I am a giver, obviously because I saw my mother give, okay? Cause how else did I learn? I mean, from whom, you know? So, I am a giver and I enjoy giving and I do have lots of love, for everybody. Lots of love for humanity. But, you say receiving? Yes, I would like someone to -- to listen to my life. I mean, you know, someone close in my life, to listen to my life. But then it's just not materializing, so I just let it go.

Q: You want someone to ask you, like you said --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- it's easier to talk to a stranger, because --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- I come in and I ask you.

A: Ask you, right. So you ask me and I give you -- you know, I can give you --

Q: I imagine your -- your children and your husband have no idea you would like for them to ask you.

A: Maybe they don't, and maybe they just are busy with their own lives. You know, their lives are so busy, with their families and their children, that really, parents come in secondary. And that -- that is -- that is a fact. And my question is, would I want it different? I do want that their wives and their children come first. Yeah, it would be nice if they would come someday and say, "Ma, tell us, you know, what you went through when you were a little girl. Tell us about your life." And if they are not doing it, then obviously they don't have the necessity. And if they don't have the necessity, why would I want to add more responsibilities and thoughts than what they have today? Tho, let him be happy, and I'll be happy. But the only problem is, remember I keep saying? I never feel free. I'm always thinking of, I hope nothing happens, I hope nothing happens. And, will it ever go away? I don't know. Now, I think even more, because I have my grandchildren, and I do want my grandchildren to live in a beautiful world, with peace and -- and enjoy, because the world is beautiful, and there are so many beautiful people.

It just that there is also a lot not such beautiful people, who might just harm you. And it's always in back of my mind. So, all I do is, I do a lot of praying. Remember, I told you I pray for peace on earth, which I think is very important and peace in Israel, and oh --

Q: But personally, we're -- we're -- we're talking about you, personally, right now, do you -- do you ever pray that someone might -- someone close to you, as you say, might -- might ask you?

A: Well it would be nice, I would like that very much. Yeah, I would, you see, so if they would ask me, I would tell them. Cause I think they can learn a lot from my -- you know, from my experience, but on the other hand, maybe -- maybe they would be upset, or maybe it would frighten them. Maybe it's -- won't be so good for them, you know, e- every person is an individualist, and -- and -- and can take things differently.

Q: Wouldn't it be interesting if, on the other hand, your -- your companion, your husband, had been all these years wondering, what is it that I have not done, that Frima wants? What is it? All these years, that he has no idea.

A: No, he probably does not, cause he lives in a different world, he lives in a world of his own. So he just doesn't think that others have necessities, and he's just, you know, he just has his own world. And sometimes I think we're in two different worlds, but listen, we can't have everything, so I don't expect everything from everybody.

Q: Well, you take care [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, that's me, right. That's me, and I take care and I give without expecting anything in return. Although s -- I -- it would be nice, it would make me very happy if --

if there would be such a thing as Frima, here is my shoulder. That would feel very good, because I never had anyone giving me a shoulder, or -- you know, or being there for me, or helping me, you know, to cope. I -- I had to learn on my own, how to do it, so I had a lesson. Unfortunately that lesson was when I was a little girl. That's what I learned.

Q: Well, you know, I think what you're describing is a -- a feeling that a lot of artists have, of the idea that -- that you want to write, maybe a key to open a door of support for you to write the book.

A: Yeah, I -- I think so. I mean, I -- I feel that beside, that this will give me a chance, really, maybe, to get it off my chest, beside I -- I -- I also feel that besides getting it off my chest, is also feeling that I can help others, you understand? I can transmit my strength. I can transmit my knowledge, my experience, so they can be more careful in the future and nothing should happen to them, you know? Or, if things are bad, they know what to do, they'll -- they'll just, you know, think, hey, she did it, I can do it. And that would make me happy, knowing that I'm helping other people, especially the younger people, you know, to -- you know, to learn and to get the strength. It's very important to have strength, and believe. I think prayer is a fantastic thing, it really is. It can really make you very strong, and -- a-and very, you know, knowledgeable. I mean, to do things. Cause when you feel that -- that somebody is there for you, you can move mountains.

Q: So even though you don't necessarily feel the reciprocal support from your immediate inner circle, do you feel that from a higher being?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Do you -- Do you allow yourself to receive that support?

A: Yup. Well, I -- I don't mind getting support. It's good to know that you can lean on someone. It makes things just a little bit easier. Regardless if that someone can help you or not, it -- it's -- you know, it's good to feel you're sharing something with someone. But again, when I look back to my childhood, I didn't get much then, so if I don't get much now, it's okay. I can survive, regardless.

Q: But you talk about prayer, prayer is really putting out a petition. What about the part of prayer which is receiving support of -- a support from a higher being?

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Evidently, you can do that?

A: Yeah, yeah, because when you believe in what you're praying, you have to believe, first of all, you have to believe. If you believe in what you're praying, then this is where you get strength from, and this is where, you know, you are -- you are at peace with whatever you do, because you know -- you feel you did it right.

Q: And have you been a member of survivor organizations or any group of survivors?

A: Well, I -- you know, I always am connected with them. Personally involved, I'm not. Again, I can't --

Q: Why -- Why can't you?

A: Because it brings back memories, and when they talk about it, it brings back memories. So I think in my own way, I -- I just cannot cope with the past, you know what

I'm saying? I live in the past, but yet, I get up -- very upset and so I -- I'm not involved, but I'm connected.

Q: In -- In -- Through your synagogue, or --

A: Well, as I said, I -- In -- When I say connected, whatever they run, you know, for -- for the Holocaust, let's say memorial or Holocaust Remembrance Day or something, I mean, we go. That does not mean that I don't get upse -- I'm not upset for a whole week at least, you know, because I went and I listened and I -- and I saw the survivors and I listened to other survivors, it does upset me very much. And so I -- Personally, I am not -- you know, not involved personally, just --

Q: Do you feel like then, that you can't be open to their stories, because it would be too painful?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Mm-hm. And you know that?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Have you ever felt that people who were not Holocaust survivors, could understand?

A: They can't. It's absolutely impossible.

Q: Was there anyone in your family who you could talk with? You never talk much about your sister.

A: We never talk about the Holocaust either. She's in Israel right now, but we never spoke about the Holocaust either.

Q: She lives in Israel?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you, I assume, have visited Israel?

A: No.

Q: Never?

A: Never.

Q: Is the fate of Israel, though, interest -- of interest to you?

A: Very much so.

Q: And how long does your sister live there?

A: Oh, about five, six years. About five or six years.

Q: She moved from [indecipherable]

A: From -- From the United States, yeah.

Q: From near you?

A: Mm-hm. Oh, well, we didn't live exactly nearby. She used to live in Staten Island, then they moved to Israel.

Q: Did you see her on holidays?

A: Oh, when they were liv -- were -- lived here, yeah sure, we did. But now, you know, things ha --

Q: So you were close in a way?

A: We were -- We could not be very close, because there was a 10 year difference. But besides the 10 years difference is also the generation, see? So, when you're talking 10 years, she could never understand her little sister and I could never understand her world, cause she lived in a different world, so the two of us really lived in two separate worlds. The only thing that we had in common is the Holocaust. And we never discussed it and we never spoke about it, and that was that.

Q: You know, we are all so different from the inside and the outside. When I see you pick me up at the train and I see that bright hat with flowers, and you know --

A: Colorful.

Q: -- such a -- a great hostess and stuff. Do you think anyone knows some of the things you've shared today, about in-inside?

A: Nope.

Q: How you feel?

A: Nope.

Q: How serious you are?

A: Serious in what respect? As -- My feelings?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I don't --

Q: Well, you live with a lot of the pain of the past.

A: Oh yeah, yeah. I live with a lot of pain.

Q: Does that not give you --

A: And disappointment, yeah.

Q: -- physical ailments?

A: Well, it probably does, but then, there's nothing we can do about it. We just have to keep on going.

Q: Of all the things that you've mentioned to me, it seems that your job is the -- is the place where you feel most that you can reach out --

A: Mm-hm.

Q: -- and understand.

A: That's correct.

Q: Do you feel your experiences have made you a -- a more -- a person who can empathize with the people in pain?

A: With pain? Probably, yeah, probably. I -- I -- I think that, you know, every unfortunate experience can connect you to somebody else, with his pain, cause you're sharing -- there's a pain, and you can understand, you can sort of feel it, even it's a different experience, but it's a painful one. So, that's correct, yeah. You know, you sound like a psychiatrist.

Q: Well, I'm not [indecipherable] psychiatrist --

A: Oh, that's [indecipherable]

Q: -- I mean, well therapist, I mean. I sometimes play therapist for my friends.

A: Yeah, yeah, you need -- they need that, too.

Q: But I think it's interesting what makes some of us identify more with people in pain.

A: That's correct, yes we do. But then also, it's the person's nature.

Q: It's also our nature.

A: Yeah, it's also our nature.

Q: Regardless of whether --

A: That's right. Some people might go through experiences, and yet not be able to connect themselves to somebody else's pain, you know what I'm saying? They just feel theirs, that's it. They don't feel anybody else's. But then, other people feel other people's pain. Now, I feel very much pain when -- when I hear killings, when innocent people are killed. Even here, somebody is pushed on the tr -- into the tracks. Or this mother with the four boys that are walking on the -- on the -- on the tracks, and these things give me pain, and -- and -- and s -- pain, a -- I mean, really pain, physical pain. It's like as if I would know them or they would be part of me, or belong to me. That's the pain I get. And it takes me awhile to get them out of my mind, cause I always think about them. And every time I think, I will sigh. And I remember I used to work with a Black girl in my -- in my job that I had, and we were working in the business -- business office of the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, and every time she would hear me sigh -- sigh, and why would I sigh? Because every time if I thought of someone who just got killed, or -- or someone who just got stabbed, or someone something happened to, innocent people, that hurts me very much. I would sigh and she would say, "Frima, you cannot do that, because with every sigh, you are aging five years. So think about it," she said, "before you know it, you'll be full of wrinkles. Stop," she said, "stop sighing. Think about yourself." I says, "I'll try."

Well, I can't do it. I still sigh. But she -- that's what she used to tell me, every time, she says, "You are sighing again? That's five years older."

Q: So, most of your friends are not survivors, then?

A: Not most, no, not most. Some. Some are survivors.

Q: And with those you don't discuss?

A: No, nope. As I said, we don't really sit down and talk about experiences, but if we're together and we're discussing some kind of a situation in -- so someone will say, "Ah, well I did this and this in '41, and I did this and this in '42," and that's it. Only what's pertaining to our conversation, or the situation. That's it. We don't really sit and talk about it.

Q: Have you been to the Memorial Museum?

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: I know you have, but did you go with your family?

A: I went with my husband.

Q: Did you all have a discussion after going?

A: Well, usually we were discussing why we would stop and -- and look at certain pictures, and we would discuss the horrors. And then of course I start crying, so that's the end of the discussion.

Q: And how did he respond when you cried?

A: Nothing. I guess, you know, they feel you have to cry sometimes, if that makes you feel better --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Not exactly, doesn't make me feel better, but I --

Q: No arm on the shoulder?

A: No, no.

Q: Maybe he wanted to cry, too.

A: Maybe, but -- but again, that's probably how -- how people feel. If you are crying, you need that cry, and maybe by crying, you'll feel better. The mat -- matter of fact is, you don't feel better, but you can't help it. It just comes on because it really hits you inside. You are looking at something that -- that you lived with, or similarly, you know, it's -- it's -- it's a connection, so -- but that's what it is, that's what it is. So hey, we can't stop on -- on ceremonies, we haven't got the time.

Q: Do you think that if the museum was giving i -- a special exhibit on child survivors, and you were asked to participate in a group --

A: Yeah, I would go.

Q: You would?

A: Yeah.

Q: How would that be different?

A: Again, it would be because I feel that I'm giving something that's important.

Q: I think they are doing that, by the way. I think they are having an exhibit in the future on --

A: On the children?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I would come down.

Q: Yeah. And I've interviewed -- since I met you, I went -- I -- I met you in November, and then I went to -- I was in California in January, to visit my uncle, but also interviewed a child survivor.

A: How old was that child? Must have been older. I think I'm one of the youngest survivors in this world, I think.

Q: Yeah, I think you must be.

A: I think, cause it star -- the war -- World War Two started, by us, when I was five years old.

Q: Yeah, she was 60-something --

A: So --

Q: -- and very active in Civil Rights, and very -- speaking every week, speaking every week, and I told her I would love for her to meet you and for you to meet her.

A: Yeah, well.

Q: Cause I thought the two of you could give each other so much.

A: Support.

Q: Literally.

A: That's right.

Q: I -- I think our lives are changed when we meet -- under the right circumstances, when we meet the right --

A: Was she also in the ghetto, or she was in concentration camp?

Q: She was -- She ended up in Denmark.

A: Oh, okay, from a ghetto --

Q: Yes.

A: -- or concentration camp? From a ghetto.

Q: Concentration camp.

A: Well, she was --

Q: Concentration camp.

A: Oh yeah? She was lucky. See, I always look at --

Q: She wasn't lucky.

A: Well, she survived. That's what I call lucky.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Do you understand?

Q: Okay.

A: None of us were lucky lucky.

Q: No.

A: But we survived, and that is already a little luck, right? So we live with pain for the rest of our lives, because we lost an awful lot. We gave a lot of our loved ones away, for no reason. Just like that, poof. So --

End of Tape Five Side B

Beginning Tape Six, Side A

Q: This is tape three, side A, of a second audio follow up interview with Frima Laub, conducted by Ginger Miles, on June third, 1999, for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible.

A: Yeah, you know, when you mentioned about the -- the lady that -- that lost her mother in the concentration camp, I want you to know that all my life, I feel that I was very, very lucky I was not in the concentration camps. I mean, as much as my life was difficult and I saw lots of horrors, and -- and went through a lot of hunger, and everything else, but the fact that I was not in the concentration camps, I always say I'm lucky, and I really look up to those people from concentration camp that -- that survived, which is truly a -- an unbelievable miracle. Besides that I think I'm a miracle with me, too. But, yeah --

Q: Well, I -- I get so amazed that people -- it was a miracle to get out, but then, to come over here, and everyone that I have interviewed has -- is materially secure. And that has always sort of amazed me.

A: Yeah. Well, you know, I say that all these, you know, survivors, we came from ashes, and we build a castle. See, we all came with nothing. We had nothing, and we came with -- with so much miser-misery, and -- and with so much fright. I'm afraid to start all over again, but yet, we had the strength to do it, and all we were thinking is how to improve the world, how to make things better for our children. And -- And we started building and building from nothing, from ashes. So, I wish that other people, you know, who are really

down, and -- and -- and don't have much, they should look to -- look up to the survivors and say, look at them. They came from -- from -- really from hell, and look at them. They have a home, they make sure the children go for an education. They -- They live nicely, you know? They -- Their lives are -- I mean, not all are millionaires, but most of them accomplished something. And the accomplishment is, they don't -- they -- they don't have to beg, because they all make a living somehow. And their children are all educated. In fact, I got to tell you this, when I lived in Brooklyn, there were 13 religious families, that's it. I mean, in that area, 13 religious families, Holocaust survivors, all of us, all 13 families. Now, out of these 13 Holocaust survivor's families, many of us never went to school. Of course, I went to school, cause I was the -- you know, I was a baby when I -- when I -- when World War Two started. But, they were already older, so when they came to the United States, they didn't have the time to go to school. They had to make a living, they had to survive here. But out of these 13 Holocaust surviving families, we gave to the world, nine doctors. Nine doctors, that's without counting lawyers, accountant, engineer, dentist. Nine doctors. That means some of the families had two doctors in the families.

Q: What is it about the Jewish culture --

A: Well, well --

Q: -- is it faith, is it intelligence, is it --

A: -- no, it's the drive A, we -- those that survived, had a drive, plus a little luck, okay? So we survived. Then, once we survive, we always feel that we have to improve, make things better. And so the drive of accomplishment is important. So these parents, even if

they -- they did not have an education and they came from concentration camps, but they came here and they started working and saving and working and saving. And so when they had their children, oh, now's my chance. My children must get an education. And these kids went to -- you know, went through all the schooling and everything else, and are professionals. It's -- It's the drive, and it's the fact that we want the world to be a better place to live. We want to be -- you know, bring pride to the world, and -- an-and I wish that, you know, people would look at it and say, if they can do it, I can do it. And without even going through hell. If these people went through hell and came out from ashes and build a castle, I can do it, too. I live in a beautiful country, I have a beautiful job. All I have to do is a little struggling, a little saving. You know? I mean, all those things go hand in hand. They can do it, too. Especially, I think the young generation should look at it. See? And -- And -- And I want you to know that every family, from the Holocaust survivors, they take pride in their ch -- kids, because it's like a double accomplishment. It's, I didn't go to school, but look at my child, he's a professional. That means they feel like it's almost as if they did it, too, you know? And they didn't have the opportunity to do it. Ah, you always keep thinking -- ah, when I was young, I wanted to be in -- in the research world.

Q: Yourself?

A: Yeah. But I had no one to support me, so instead, at the age of 13, I was supporting my mother. I went out and I had the full da -- a full time job, and I went to school at night.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, and I went to school at night. That -- I -- It hurts me. That bothers me, that nobody in the family said, you know, "What would you like to be, and where would you like to go from here?" And I knew I had a very good mind. I -- I was always a very good student, I was always an A student. And you know, my mother took great pride in me, and I really tried, and I wa -- I never disappointed her. And yet, you know, I -- I couldn't continue with -- with sa --

Q: How far did you go in school?

A: No, well, no, I -- I -- I finished high school, and -- and then I came to the United States.

Q: Now that's something I was curious about there. There seemed to be such a almost idyllic life in some ways that you described it, in Cuba. I guess, compared to the Holocaust, it was, and you were with family. But, can you think back of some underlying dissatisfactions that you had in Cuba?

A: Oh well, oh well, there is always underlying dissatisfaction. A lot of it, I think, was due that I was -- I was angry the fact that I couldn't be what I wanted to be, and that I wasn't -- I was not given the opportunity to be. Like, for example, here -- and today we have all kinds of grants, and -- and -- and you can, you know, get a scholarship. In those years there was no such thing. So, privately, I couldn't go anyplace, because we didn't have the money, and my mother was a widow, and we had nothing. And nobody in the

family even thought of -- of saying, well, you know, we'll get together and perhaps support you and -- and -- and --

Q: Well, let me ask you now, Frima.

A: Yeah.

Q: Let's say that you got a scholarship --

A: Oh, I would love to.

Q: -- for next semester.

A: I would run.

Q: What would you study?

A: Yeah, I would love to be in the -- in the --

Q: College?

A: No, I would love to be in research. I still like to be in research.

Q: What kind of research?

A: See, I would love to find out something that can save human beings. Like cancer, like diabetes. I cou -- Any, anything, but mostly I think it would be diabetes and cancer. I think these are two dreadful diseases, which really need a lot of research. And I would really sit 24 hours a day, for that. And I think I would -- I would -- I would probably find peace in it.

Q: What would happen if you decided to take your money now and go to school?

A: Oh well, now. Now, maybe my husband would think I'm nuts. He would really take me to a psychiatrist, and say, at this stage in your life -- but I-I don't feel my age. And I

feel I -- I have a lot of common sense. And I -- I am always willing to try things and I am always willing to -- to discover things and look for things. It amazes me, I mean, how much we can find, if we look.

Q: How about even just a class in something, like even if you took a class to start writing your book, with this in mind?

A: Oh, there is such a thing? I-I never looked --

Q: Yes.

A: -- into that. Yeah? In writing there is such a thing? Because we do have in -- in this area, we have adult education, or continued education, whatever you call it. Well, every so often I do take, you know, different types of courses, nothing -- nothing, you know, constructive, really. It's just pleasure, something that just is good for my mind. But, I'll look into it.

Q: So --

A: I don't know if I'll ever become a writer, listen, I'm counting on you.

Q: Well --

A: I can give you the material.

Q: I will help in any way I can.

A: Thank you.

Q: I -- I would wish you great success.

A: Thank you, I know.

Q: And I --

A: I know.

Q: I wondered if there's anything else that you -- you had to say. I know that you shared with me earlier that you've been diagnosed with diabetes. Is that a new thing?

A: Yeah, two years ago, yeah. And yet, I don't know of anyone in my family having it. At least, my mother. Or maybe my father had it and he didn't know and I didn't know. And so -- And I was never overweight, so when this hit me, I didn't believe it. When the doctor told me I had diabetes, I did not believe him, I said, it must be somebody else's blood results, not mine. And then, of course, you know, he took another blood test and the results were --

Q: And you -- do you take insulin, and --

A: Not sh -- Well, right now, I'm going to one of the biggest I -- I -- I am told, one of the finest clinics, it's called Joslin Diab-Diabetes Clinic, in Manhattan -- Diabetes C-Center, actually. It's supposed to be one of the best in the United States, or perhaps in the world. Well, they're trying different types of medication, so every two weeks I'm on a different type of medication. It's -- So far, it hasn't worked. The doctor told me there's another medication that just came out on -- on the mar -- in -- you know, in the market, maybe we'll try that. But, as you know, I have a tremendous drive in my life. I'm very -- you know, my mind is just, you have to keep going and you'll be okay, just hang in there. And I'm hanging in there. And hopefully, perhaps they'll be able to, you know, find a medication for me, and if not, well, if that what it takes, I'll take the insulin. As long --

Q: But you haven't started that yet?

A: No, no. We just sort of tested it for two weeks. It didn't do much. It just didn't do much for me. But again, you know, sometimes you have to increase the dose.

Q: And you watch your eating?

A: Oh yeah, yeah, but it has nothing to do with my eating.

Q: No?

A: Look at this, I'm -- I'm lil -- you know, I'm so skinny, I lost so much weight.

Q: No, but I mean, my aunt had diabetes and she -- she -- she couldn't eat sugar.

A: Oh yeah, oh of cour -- that's -- that's passe. You don't eat -- I don't eat sugar.

Q: So when you offer me a cake, you're not thinking of eating it yourself?

A: No, never touch it.

Q: Oh.

A: I don't touch it. I don't touch anything that has sugar, although most of the things have a little bit.

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay? So that you cannot help, but like cake is out of the question and anything that's sweet.

Q: No wine.

A: Don't drink wine, I don't eat watermelon, I don't eat a lot of fruits that have -- that are sugar. I don't touch, well, any of this junk food that might have -- or any junk food, you know, I'm very careful [indecipherable] I -- I -- I can't really eat junk food, because right now my -- my glucose is out of control, really, so I'm trying to be extremely careful. I'm

trying to eat as much protein as I can. But then, I have high cholesterol, so that protein is not very good for the high cholesterol. But, you know what? Okay, and I also have high blood pressure, so I have the three highs. I am flying high. But, nothing stops me. I feel okay, and I just do what I have to do. I continue with my life. Yeah, I feel that I-I have to do a lot of things, because time is going by very fast. And I feel like, you know, I got to accomplish more, more, more than what I've accomplished until now. Cause it's like, you know, 60 plus. I'm almost there, and then --

Q: Almost where?

A: Well, almost you know, anything can happen some -- to someone that's in the 60's, or it could happen in the 70's, or could happen in the 80's. But I feel that I should accomplish more right now, while -- you know, while I still -- my mind is sharp and w -- I'm -- I still have my feelings and my marbles and my determination and my explanation, my devotion. All this I would like to put on paper. How about that?

Q: That sounds wonderful.

A: That sounds good to you, right?

Q: A great idea to me.

A: Yeah, okay. So, okay, you know, survivors survive.

Q: Say that again.

A: Yeah. Survivors will always survive. You know that.

Q: Thank you so much.

A: It was a pleasure talking to you.

End of Tape Six, Side A

Conclusion of Interview