United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Guta Weintraub
August 18, 1999
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PREFACE

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Beginning Tape One, Side A

Answer: Okay, mm-hm, my name is Guta Blass Weintraub. I was born in Poland, in the city of Lódz, the second largest city of Poland, and I lived there all the time, until the beginning of the war. My family consisted of four people all together, myself, my brother, my mother, my father. We were a middle class family, maybe slightly upper middle. And life was good. That -- that's all I remember at that time, is little by little it started getting worse. To -- to -- to kind of jump from one to another, okay.

Question: Well, can you tell me the names of your parents and brother?

A: Uh-huh. My parents name is Noah Blass, my father. Then my mother was Bluma Blass. Her maiden name was Goldvasser, and what -- what else?

Q: Your brother's name?

A: Oh, my brother's. My brother's name was Moshe Ben Blass. It's Hebrew names, and they were translated int-into Monyek Blass.

Q: And was he younger or older than you?

A: He was a year and a half younger than I am, and he died unfortunately, in a camp near Auschwitz, a camp for men, Brunow. He was there with my father, and after the war I found out that they both died there. That's about all I heard about them.

Q: Were you a particularly religious family?

A: Comparing to religious -- being religious here, and being religious in Europe was that the -- medium. I mean, just observant Jew, when they came to the States, seemed to be as religious as the Orthodox ones, practically, because we took our religion very seriously, whether we observed to the point where it was fanatic. So, of course, we observed it, but not to the point a Hassidim did. So when we came here, I felt myself being quite religious. And we belonged to a synagogue here, and -- I lived in Charleston, and -- by the way. I moved right after I came to the States, I moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and we made our life over there. And of course we -- the first thing where we did, we belonged to a synagogue, and it was the Orthodox synagogue of -- of Charleston.

Q: But back when you were a child, your family wasn't particularly --

A: Oh well, I -- we were observant, quite observant. We did not do anything that wasn't supposed to, but the -- the difference may be -- the visible difference was that my father wore just regular clothes that everybody is wearing, where the Hassidim, the Orthodox -- ultra Orthodox were wearing their, you know, religious habits, and wha -- whatever. So that was the only -- you -- you could distinguish a extremely religious Jew from just a religious Jew. And of course there were Jewish people who were not observant at all, but they -- everybody knew, and they consider themself being Jewish, but they were not observant as we were.

Q: Can you talk about your relationship with your parents? Were you very close to them?

A: Well, like I said, my life was wonderful when I was growing up. We had a very close relationship, very much so with my mother, and my father. I admired my father a great

deal. He -- he was el -- actually living, during World War Two in Germany. He spoke -- spoke eng -- I mean, G-German very well. And I learned to speak German from him, and -- and -- well, my brother was too small to -- to learn German, but -- and then when the war broke out, of course, I was frightened because I -- everything that was happening was so scary and unfamiliar to me that I -- I really didn't know how to look at it. So I remem -- remember my father always telling me, "Don't worry, the German are -- are not going to hurt anybody. They are intelligent, educated people, and they will not harm anybod-body." The intelligence and education might apply to them, but the fact of the way they behaved like animals, like you know, like -- like -- that remind me actually when -- when there was a hunt -- you know, rabbit hunt, or deer hunt, or whatever it is in the English way, where they let all the dogs run after them, that just remind me of the situation in -- in Germany.

Q: Can you talk about life in the -- and I might be pronouncing this wrong, the wear -- vearts --

A: Yeah, it is a small town.

Q: Ghetto, yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: How long were you there, and -- and what was it like there?

A: Okay, I like to describe the town. This was a small town with quite a large Jewish population. When the war broke out, they were supposed to -- or they were, actually, making a ghetto in -- in Lódz. And of course my -- my father, that was his decision, and

we ga -- went along with it, decided that we would move to the small town, maybe the Germans will not get there as fast as they get first to the large cities, which was really the fact. And also the reason we went to Vearshmeek was because my mother was born in Vearshmeek, and she still had rel-relatives over there, sisters and -- yeah, sisters mainly, and so on. So we moved to Vearshmeek, and in the beginning it sim -- seemed to be okay, but the fact was that -- that our life changed because of not having proper living conditions and quarters and so on. So it was difficult, and of course my father's livelihood ceased to exist, because he couldn't do what he did at home. And at home my father had a factory of military uniforms. In other words, it was Boy Scouts, tha -- I mean that led to it, Boy Scout, prepartor -- preparatory military, and then he also branched out to have sports goods like skiing outfits, and so on. So we were doing well, and I don't think he had accumulated a fortune anywhere, or anything, unless I don't know. But we had to leave everything, and just move there. My father organized for a wagon drawn by two horses, and we took what we could, and the -- just went, and of course we were very lucky, because somehow we were not disturb along the -- the way to -- you know, cause it could have been easily that the Germans would stop us and -- and suspect us of doing something wrong and so on. So we were not stopped, and we went straight to Vearshmeek.

Q: What were the living quarters like there for you?

A: In Vearshmeek?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, we just occu -- well, first of all, the places in Vearshmeek -- it's a small town comparing to -- to the large city, where you have -- we didn't have skyscraper-scrapers, but we had buildings three, four, five story tall, and -- and in -- in Vearshmeek, the majority of the buildings were wooden buildings, short, you know, one story, or whatever it is. So, no water in -- in the house, no bathrooms, and so on, so of course, it was quite a difference. But it would have been all been good if i -- if it had not end the way it ended. And also, it was difficult to make ends meet. When -- during that time in Vearshmeek, I was 14 years old or so, I -- with a friend of mine, we decided to make -- organize a kindergarten, which we did in -- in my apartment. My apartment consisted of a kitchen, and a larger room where the beds were, and table, whatever, just -- but we managed somewhat, and we had a kindergarten, and people were very happy to -- to bring the children, because they were able to do other things, although their businesses and so on did not -- did not -- almost didn't exist. But still, they were glad to have the children away, so I was earning some money. It was not a great deal, but it was enough to -- to buy food, which was the most important thing at that time. [indecipherable]

Q: An-And so you did have enough food. And what was sanitation like i-in the --

A: Sanitation, well, like I said, there were no bathrooms, there were no -- there's no water, but with all this, you get used to it. When the water was brought in, we used our s -- the sanitation was basically almost like before, but the fact was that it was a little harder to obtain it, you know, to -- to work at it, cause water had to be brought in, and -- and they had outies on -- in the backyard and whatever it is. So that's the way -- that's the

only way. If we were left alone in peace, we would have actually adapted to it, but every day they had different regulations, and finally they formed a ghetto, where at this -- to this point, there was no ghetto in the city, and then they made a ghetto. Luck -- lucky enough where we lived. And this area was going to be part of the ghetto, so we didn't have to move. But many other people had to move, and what happened then, they made them move with us. In other words, we had the kitchen, and th -- the bedroom, which was a little bit larger than -- than normally, so we had to share this with another family, it was a family of a mother and daughter, and a husband, and a grandmother, and they all were together with us. And things begin to -- begin to be quite difficult.

Q: You were doing some teaching at the kindergarten?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: You were doing some teaching w -- at the kindergarten?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: What about your own education?

A: I started a w -- I had half a year of high school. I started -- I finished the -- you know, public school, and then I went to a pu -- to a private school. And -- but I always wanted to learn, and I always -- and my parents especially, were very particular, as far as our education is concerned. So I know -- I had a teacher, a -- a group, in group studies where I was taking French. I tried to improve on German, I was taking Latin. I wa -- anything, anything just cause I was so hungry for knowledge. And we also, like I said, we took Hebrew, because my -- my father wanted my brother to -- to learn Hebrew, so we were --

a man was coming for a half an hour, whatever it is, and was teaching us Hebrew, and -- my -- my brother and myself. So -- actually -- and then I was teaching myself a lot of things, cause I was always curious, and so -- so that -- that was my education.

Q: How long did you stay in -- in this ghetto?

A: In this town, we were until 19 -- ninet -- beginning of 19 four -- four -- well, maybe a little -- in 1942, beginning of 1942. And at that time, they evidently wanted to -- to get everybody out, sent the majority of people to -- to concentration camp, and they had two factories over there in Vearshmeek. One was a woodwork factory, which unbelievably belonged to my first cousin. A big plant, you know, I don't know how many acres of land, with wood, and -- and so on. And they have a -- a tremendous hall where they had machinery to cut and polish, and whatever it is. And that woodwork factory was taken over by the Germans to -- and transferred to produce articles and you know, for the war. Like, for example, they manufactured ammunition boxes, stretchers, and stuff like that. So they took it over completely. Of course, my cousin and his family were shot during that time. And of course, I don't know if they had any heirs to -- to claim it or whatever it is, but that was the situation. And of course then, like at the end of -- I may wrong as far as timing is concerned, but it might have been the end of '43, or maybe early beginning of '44, where they dissolved the camp where we were. We were working there, and l-living there, and whatever it is. They arranged a area where we were living, like for example men in one tremendous room, you know, in bunk beds, and women in the other one. So it was like a barrack, mostly. And -- and we also received one meal a day of

cooked -- cooked food, and then the rest of it we had to organize ourselves, so some people who were from the city had brought in money, and they, since they knew the non-Jewish people on the outside, they were elbo -- able to communicate with them, and get -- get them to bring money for -- bring food for money, so for them it was easier. For myself and my family it was harder, but we survived.

Q: How long were you in the village all totaled, before you went to the work camp?

A: Well, we -- we got there the very end of 1939, you know. That -- that would have been because they said they were going to close the ghetto in Lódz in 1940. So we just took off before the closing of the ghetto, because we knew -- or we had an idea that once we are closed in the ghetto, we wouldn't be able to get out. So that's what happened.

Q: I want to go back and ask you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- one other question about your --

A: Sure.

Q: -- family environment. W-Were y -- were your parents, or was the family particularly political in any way, or -- what were your politics?

A: It was -- i-in those days, it was not -- there was no possibility from my point of view, and for what I remember, for any Jewish person to be political We just did what we supposed to do, what we were oud -- allowed to do, and th-there was -- and if there -- we were political, it would have been in the area of -- of Judaism, and speaking of Palestine

at that time, and -- and so on. But other than that, we had no -- not much to say as far as the politics of the country were concerned.

Q: I'm going to jump ahead here, because we're covering some old ground --

A: Fine.

Q: -- and your -- your doing a very wonderful job of --

A: I am? I --

Q: -- cleaning it up [indecipherable]

A: -- that's all I remember.

Q: Yeah.

A: You ask me about it in a year, most probably won't.

Q: One of the things that -- that we wanted to clarify was when you got to -- I'm -- and I'm probably pronouncing --

A: Vearshmeek.

Q: No, mosha -- Moshakow.

A: Yeah? Myoufka. Oh, that was -- okay, first of all I want to make it clear. In -- before they expelled us, before those, you know, how it -- I --

Q: Deported?

A: Yeah, how do you say they -- evacuation, okay. Now, before the ev-evacuation from Vearshmeek, we had -- Vearshmeek was a -- it was like a twin city. It -- one part was Vearshmeek, and the other part was called Starachowice. Starachowice were -- was when -- where they had a sealed factory. I don't know what they did before the war in it, but

evidently things for economy, for a -- you know, whatever it is, from -- for Poland. But when the Germans came in, they transferred that factory it -- into doing I don't know, maybe bullets, maybe this, maybe that, I have no idea. So this is one place, okay. You speaking of Myoufka, it was just a place high up on a -- on a big hill in the city of Starachowice, where they arrange for some reason, which is amazing because I -- I really don't know how they could have done it so fast, unless this area was used for something else -- they had little cabins -- cabins there and la -- in areas, and they put all of us, during the evacuation of Vearshmeek, they put part of us there, and then a part of us in another, similar place where they had barracks built. They evidently had an idea that this is what they were going to do, because they had to work from the beginning to be able to -- to have all this done.

Q: One of the things that we wanted to have you go over was the attack of the guard, a fellow named Shrot.

A: Oh, well that was about the same time when they evacuated us -- us from our -- the place in Polish was named Tartuck. In German, it was called Zagaverker. It all means a f -- a wood -- wood factory, okay? When they expelled us from over there, they put us all -- there was a market, like every small city in Europe, and even the larger cities had marketplaces, and they -- you know, chased us all through the marketplace, put us in rows and so on, and a -- did something the same what they did later on in concentration camp, like making a selection. This one here, this one there, wi -- which meant -- later on we found out, the younger people were left to work in the places that were still available,

and they were producing goods for the German -- for the Germans, and the older ones were moved straight on the trains, and they moved them to Auschwitz and other concentration camps. Okay, well I was among them, and of course, we were lucky somewhat. When they took me and my brother, and -- on one side, they put my parents on the other side, I knew what was happening. I mean, you just -- it was a instinct that told me what was happening. So, when they were running among -- there were hundreds and thousands of people, actually, because there was a great number of people that they send from other cities to our -- to -- to Vearshmeek, because they did it very systematically. Not just come to every city, and try to dig out to -- whatever number of Jews was there. But they concentrated all the Jews from surrounding areas, and villages, and little towns, into one which was little largest -- larger. And then from over there they made the selection and shipped the number of people to -- to a concentration camp, the remaining number they situated in different areas for work. And prior to it, you know, during that selection, I was lucky because somehow -- I-I was very brave when I -- when I was young, I didn't feel like anybody could destroy me. You know, when you -- you are young, you just -- so I grabbed my parents from the lo -- line nearby, and pulled them in front of me, and lucky enough nobody repla -- placed them back in the same place, and we survived for awhile in this camp for -- I think we were there for almost two years.

Q: Can you tell about that attack on the guard? A guard named -- is it Shrot?

A: Shrot, yes.

Q: Can you tell me?

A: Yes, well you see, when we -- when they -- that was after the -- after they evacuated us, after the time we lived already on -- on a ta -- on the Tartuck, where the -- you know, where we work, after that they decided to evacuate us, and put us in concentration camps. So they one day, without any warning, without anything, they -- they arrived wi -- with buses, trucks that were covered with -- with canopy or whatever it is, and they just took us. They didn't even allow us to take anything that we wanted, which is a normal reaction of anyone that wants to take their things with them. W -- and packed us on the wagons, and we had no idea where we were going. So -- back -- what they did, they could not take us right away to the -- to the wagon -- to the trains to be send away, so they temporarily, for two, three days, put -- put us in this little area where they had the barracks built, and left us over there. And wh -- we waited for the train. When we got there, they had a big area which was like a yard, you know, and then the barracks were on the side. And when we got there, the area that was supposed to be the yard had two great, long ditches dug on -- like between, you know, six or so yards between each other. And we couldn't understand what it was, but quickly we -- we find out -- found out what it was, cause they told us right away the man should stand on one side of one ditch, the women on the other side of that ditch. And then this man that I was speaking about shouted who was -- he was actually a -- from Ukraine, and -- and they -- in the beginning of the war the Germans solicited the -- the Ukraines and give them -- you know, to -- to belong -- to do the dirty work, you know, and have sort of identifying clothes like a -- to make -- make us understand that they belong to the German army. Well these people did all the dirty

work, so they were, at that time, going to be the ones that were going to execute what the Germans told them to do. So, when we were standing on both sides, the German here, this Shrot, started speaking in German, and said, “You have one minute to -- to be -- to say your prayers, and you going to be shot.” Just plainly, like that. Naturally, you can just imagine what happens to -- to a person when you hear something like that. We were all like paralyzed. I mean, I -- I couldn’t even move. The only thing was that my brain was working. And when I looked at my mother, I -- and I saw her -- her -- her face was white like a sheet of paper, and her heart was -- you c -- you could see it was, you know, beating so hard I could almost hear it. And I guess prompted me to do something that maybe normally I wouldn’t do. I was so frightened for her and -- and they were the only ones that I had. So I -- when he finished talking, I simply, without even thinking any more, I jumped out, and he was standing us -- oh, in front of me, in front of the -- between the two graves, and I jumped, and I jumped on his back, and grabbed him by his neck, and I-I always had long fingernails, and I -- you know, pressed as hard as I could. I’m sure that I have wounded him in some areas. And I realized that if I -- I -- I didn’t know what else to do, I had no gun or anything. And the only thing I -- I -- at that moment, my instinct told me just to cling on his back li -- on his back like that, that at -- at a point like this, he will not be able to do anything to me. Which proved to be actually correct, because the Germans sta -- or the Ukraines started screaming, “Shoot her, shoot her.” But of course, if they shot me, they would have sh-shot him, too, so tho -- they didn’t do it. In the meantime, as I was lying there -- as I was al -- still clinging to him,

finally we both fell down, and they -- they came and they pulled him away from me. As they pulled him away, I realized that, as far as my life was concerned is -- it was finished. But it took all the situation, and all the development, took so much time, that it was getting dark outsir -- outside already. And then, when they pulled him away, they decided to shoot me. So they came to him, they told him shoot the beast, you know. In German is, sheeza de bestia, means shoot the be -- beast. And he said I -- and I heard it, m-my English was good, and I could understand every word he was saying, and he said, "No, I will not shoot her yet. She must," -- the word was edwastonsin, must perform, or dance, or -- what he meant by it is I -- he wanted me to -- to beg for our life and you know, go crazy and kiss his feet, or whatever he planned. So he said, "She must dance a little before I shoot her." Finally -- and as I fell, I -- I decided I was not going to move no matter what happens, that I'm not going to budge. So they checked me, checked my pulse, checked this, and it was -- stupid idiot couldn't even find a pulse, so they decided that I was dead. And what happened --

Q: Well, had they shot you at that point?

A: Not yet, not yet. But then, one person, who became my sister-in-law later --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

A: But then one person, who became my sister-in-law later, a lady, she started crying, you know, because people didn't know how to react. They didn't know what was good to say, and what was bad to say. So she started crying, "Please help her, she must have just

fainted." And you know, when I heard her say that -- I still remember it to this -- you know, you remember every reaction, every -- what-whatever I felt. And she -- and I said to m-m -- was thinking to myself, "My God, please don't say anything, I don't want them to know that I am alive." And then when they finally pulled me away, they marched all the people into the empty barracks that they had, you know, left, you know, unoccupied. And -- and there were two barracks, and they filled the two barracks, you know, they had bunkbeds over there. The amount of people from our camp was about 300, so it wasn't such a great number. And they put us in the barracks. I was still lying down on the ground, and suddenly the -- it was dark already, and we heard American planes -- or were -- they were Russian planes, actually. They were cruising around and -- and dropping bombs. So we -- we knew about it, and we were quite aware of it. So they didn't do anything, and they had searchlights that they stopped using, because they were afraid that they were going to bomb -- bomb us. And later, when the bombing stopped, they turned on the searchlight, and they were going round and round, which would put lights on me, too, on the area where I was lying down. Anyhow, at that time, I realized, and I got used to the dark, and I saw the barracks, I had no idea that the people were marched into the barracks at that time. But I was thinking, and I se -- and they were on stilts. So I had no other place where I could crawl to hide, and I just thought that if I do that, maybe that will help, and I did that. And as I crawled under the barrack, I heard people walk, and I heard voices, even. And I recognized Polish, and Jewish, and I -- I -- I realized that these were the people that I came with. Because at first I thought maybe they were other Jews

from some other places, and -- and so on. And so anyhow, I still was sitting under the barrack, and -- and I felt every time I was breathing, I felt I -- I was picking the whole barrack on my back, you know. And nothing was happening after, you know, until morning. At dusk in -- I realized -- and I was evidently not far from the little stairs, from the you know, barrack. And I saw people walking down, and I saw they were having, you know, all shoes, and you know, clogs, and this and that, which did not indicate that they were s -- people that came from other places, that they were inmates from the -- from a camp. And as I saw this, I decided I will step out, and -- I couldn't sit there underneath the ba -- the barrack forever. So I stepped out, and as I came out from underneath the barrack, here were stairs, and where I came out of the barrack, there was my father, my mother, my brother, all in tears, and terrified. Because, what happened -- evidently they were communicating at night, and realizing that I -- my body was not in the same place where they shot me. Did I mention about the shooting before? No, I did not, you see, that's what happens when you don't -- don't have a -- a schedule. Anyhow, after they put the people in the barracks, you know, after they marched them there, the guy came over and shot me. And my head was like this. Now you most probably can still see a scar. I can see it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I can see it. It was right here. But you know, so many years, and whatever. So when -- he shot me, and since my face was only halfway exposed, and the other half was -- was, you know, flush to the ground, he -- when he shot me, the bullet grazed my forehead, and

I came from one point, out through the other. So I wasn't hurt greatly, or anything and -- and it didn't even hurt for some reason, I don't know why. Maybe I was too excited. And --

Q: Was this the f -- who was the person who shot you?

A: Shrot.

Q: Shrot?

A: Yes.

Q: And how close a range was he?

A: Well, he was standing over me, that's how close, and -- and he missed it. Because it could have been obvious that when he's going to shoot me, he will shoot me right -- you know, I -- right in my head all -- my temple, and be finished with it, but he did not. Maybe he was scared for his own life because they we -- started bombing.

Q: And was he the only one around at that point?

A: Wh-Who?

Q: Just he and you, you were lying there, and --

A: Y -- no, they -- there were the other -- no, the other ones, the other Ukrainians, that they were packing everybody in the barracks. Now, there might have been a couple other ones with him. I don't know, I'm sure there were, because since I wasn't killed yet, you know, they thought maybe I'll jump up again. So -- and then they all left. But when the bombings stopped, they evidently, like I said, communicated among them, and they realized that my body was missing. So, what they assumed that the Jewish people took

me, and hid me. And the Jewish people when they found out -- they also found out that I wasn't there, because they came and asked them where I am, and I was still under the barrack. So they said they didn't know. So they didn't -- so the Jews thought that the Germans took me, that, you know, I was dead and the Germans took me, and wanted to cover up -- because basically what we later found out, that they did not have a order to shoot all the people. And this is what they wanted to do. Without the order they would have shot all of us, have -- has -- ha -- it wasn't for the incident and the situation that I somewhat created not -- not knowing they would have shot all of us. But since the time lapsed, and it got dark, and the bombing started, they were worrying about their own lives, and therefore, all this stopped. And they didn't want to leave us on the grounds, because with a mass of people like that, you never know what they may do. So they were afraid of a riot, that they wouldn't be able to control us. So they put the people in the barracks. And then -- of course, in the morning when I got out from the -- under the barrack, I was shot. My face -- my face was somewhat bloody, but I scraped off the mo -- most of it, because I was curious what it was, and since I had one free hand to be able to move, so I -- I touched it, and I realized that I wasn't hurt badly, and I -- and I am still alive. So when I c-came out, my parents were all in tears, and shock, and then when they realize -- they all realize that I am alive, their first instinct was to -- to get rid of me somewhat. I mean, not that they wanted to kill me or anything like that, but to hide me. And they decided to hide me under a mattress. It was not a mattress, but it was straw -- to hide me under the straw that -- you know. And the barrack was a long building, on both

side were bunkbeds. And here in the middle was like an alley, you know, all the way down. So they marched me, and they -- they put me under the straw. And -- all it was a few minutes later, or it seemed like a few minutes later, this Shrot came, and he was entering the barrack from wa -- from one end, and walking with a gun in his hand, and screaming, “Wo ist da bestia?” Where is the beast. If you don’t produce her right -- immediately, I’m going to shoot everybody else. So I heard it, and I just knew it was bad, and I didn’t want anything to happen to anybody else, and my parents and my brother. So I stepped out from it, and I knew that was the end of it, and I just simply decided that I am not going to be scared, that I am going to be proud, and I stepped out, and I said in German, “Here I am.” And then he grabbed me. Didn’t shoot me. Evidently he had -- he had orders from the German that was in charge of all the barracks, of all the Jews in Vearshmeek. So he definitely had the orders not to shoot me. And so he grabbed me by my hand, pulled me out and the -- the area -- the camp was wired all around with, I think, electric wires, if I’m not mistaken. And they -- he pulled me out and took me beyond the wires, you know, and pushed me in -- into a cab -- small cabin where they ke -- had wood for fire and coal and so on. Was just a barely -- a place that I barely could -- could fit, because it was loaded with wood and lumber. And here I was, and then when he closed the -- the -- locked the -- the cabin, he started shooting in the air, bang, bang, bang, you know. And the people in con -- in the camp had said okay, this is the end of me because he shot me. Well, that did not happen. A few minutes later, they send over the -- the commander of the whole area, and he came in in his big, shiny boots, and guns, and

everything, and he started speaking to me because he couldn't understand what happened to me. He saw a -- a wound right here, and he cou -- he says, "Wh-What happened to you?" So I says I -- and I tried to kind of minimize the whole thing and make it into something else, that -- not that I jumped him, that I wanted to play -- pray for my safety, and -- and he should leave me. As -- so I kind of did not say anything, I said I don't know. Then he went to the back of my head, because he wanted to see if the bullet came out through there. I had a wound over there, but the -- the wound was from the butt of the rifle, you know, where they hit me before he shot me. So he couldn't understand, and he says, "Well, how did the bullet come?" And he spoke to me German. "How did the bullet come here, and then -- and -- and you are still here?" I -- I still told him that I didn't know. But anyhow, at that point, when he finished talking to me, questioning me and so on, he took me out, and of all the things, he took me near the barracks where they had a first aid station, you know, you know, kind of a improvised -- just anything. And he took me over there and had the people clean out -- clean up the wound, and put iodine, whatever they did, and -- and bandage, and that's all. And then they put me in the barracks, okay? That was one phase. And then while I wa -- I was in the barracks, we -- we were waiting, actually, for the -- for the trains to come. Th-The train -- the tra -- railroad tracks were outside the camp, and we were waiting for the trains to come. Whatever -- what actually happened, since the bombing, some of the tracks were destroyed, and they could not come, so they had to do it the next day. So they came, everybody was gathering around, we ha -- and they thought it was a miracle, you know,

how Jewish people always think of a miracle. I mean, most probably other people, of other religion and so on will -- will kind of associate something like that with a miracle. So he -- everybody was coming to me. I remember distinctly, now that -- a -- a man -- I mean, to me, he looked like a older man, he must have been in his early thir -- 30's, came to me, and by the way he was asking me questions, what happened and so on, I realized that he most probably is a writer. And ch -- not changing the story, but -- but getting finished with this, after the war I found this man, he lived in Israel. I found a book -- no- not I, but my brother-in-law found it, cause he was working in a -- in -- in a library. He found a book written by a guy named Moshe Porrot. And he was the one that wrote about this incident and everything. Of course, he elaborated on it, and -- and stretched it, and wrote every detail of it. And after the war, when -- when I already had children and everything, my oldest son decided that this book, since it was written after the war, that it was supposed to be registered at the Library of Congress, and so on. And we looked for it. We found the names, we found all kind of things, but we did not find the book. Anyhow, but it's still there, somewhere, with my name and whatever it is on it. So --

Q: I'd like to jump ahead a little bit --

A: Sure.

Q: -- because we're still filling in some of the details.

A: [indecipherable] back and forth.

Q: When we haven't even gotten to the --

A: Maybe you will make sense of it.

Q: How was it that -- that your mother in Auschwitz was able to keep her clothing, her -- her shoes, and scarf, and even her hair?

A: How?

Q: How was it that she was able to keep her clothing, and her shoes, and scarf, and garter belt, and even her hair?

A: I didn't say anything about keeping her clothing, we -- in Auschwitz we were given -- all -- whatever we wore, we had to -- they stripped us, yeah. I would like to say that with -- you know, with the beginning of when they took us to Auschwitz, because there is a awful lot to it. But nobody had any -- their own clothing in Auschwitz, they took everything away.

Q: Oh, I thought it -- after your mother had died that you had taken some of her --

A: No, my mother died not in Auschwitz. She died in Ravensbrück. So later, she survived some time in Auschwitz, and then when they transferred us to Auschwitz, she got sick and when we were in viet -- in -- in Ravensbrück, she died over there after a few weeks. She had a stroke, and she died over there. It was cold, it was February, of 19 -- 1945, I think. And she -- she died, but she survived until -- until just about -- I would say about two months or so before they saved us. The Swedes came and took a number of Jewish people and others -- a -- other people from the camp out, and to safety.

Q: How long after you went from Auschwitz to the next place, did your mom --

A: Ravensbrück.

Q: Ravensbrück.

A: Ravensbrück is the name in English, I think.

Q: How long bef -- was it before your mother --

A: When we got there, we got there j -- janu -- no, it was the end of ’44 -- ’44. And then, actually, it was already ’45, January ’45, cause my birthday was then, and they put us -- first of all, we ha -- we were put on a march, and this march was very famous, they called it the Death March. Not only because ou -- of our group, but they were marching people from different camps. I -- I don’t know exactly where they were marching them, but since it was February already -- January, February, I mean, the march actually occur -- occurred in January, okay? So they were marching all these people, and it was snowing, and freezing, and -- and winters in Poland are very bad, as bad almost as in -- in some areas in Russia. So people were starving, and dying, and they were also dying of bullets, and through -- by the time we arrived anyone -- anyone to our destination, there was hardly anybody left. So we were -- I don’t -- my mother and I were walking from Auschwitz on the middle of a big road, everybody -- and through villages or little towns, German towns, but everybody disappeared, and they were hidden in their houses, and we could even see them trying to peek out through the windows, because they evidently had strict orders not to be around. So -- and nobody was able to help us. Some people tried to escape, and -- but the ones who escape were anyhow killed later. So that’s what happened.

Q: And how soon after you left Auschwitz did your mother die?

A: Okay, we -- we went to -- we finally arrived in Ravensbrück, which was also a concentration camp, a big one. At that time, they didn't have all of it -- all the ba -- barracks occupied. It was a tremendous concentration camp. Evidently they send those people to -- to a crematoria in [indecipherable] so on, but they got rid of them, whatever way it was. So when we got there, it wasn't -- it wasn't all occupied, and we were put in some barracks, and that was -- that was already end of -- end of January. Yeah, exactly, yes, that was the end -- end of January. Am I saying anything different?

Q: I -- I was just trying to clarify something that -- that Arwin had wanted to know about, which was ho --

A: Well, I knew it was January when we were transferred, and we were on a platform train, you know, all of us, I don't know how many people they put on a platform, and it was dangerous too, because we could have just fallen off while the train was moving.

Q: Arwin was wondering -- I th -- I'm looking for a place in the -- in the video interview, where I guess, after your mother had died, you had taken --

A: She died in Ravensbrück.

Q: And you had taken her -- some of her clothing and her hair, and I guess Arwin was wondering how she had all those things, the scarf, the garter belt, and her hair.

A: No, no she didn't. She didn't have anything. Maybe you are talking about a spoon, and a comb, and this and that, those things, okay. These things everybody had, because once we were put in a concentration camp, they let us keep a spoon, and a -- and -- and -- and a

comb, and a little piece of soap. These things we had. And the clothing that we had were awkward clothing that were given to us by the Germans after they took our clothes away.

Q: What about her hair? Cause I think you had said that you cut a little piece of her hair.

A: Oh well, that was later, when she passed away. Well, I -- I would like to tell the -- the whole story, because that way it is -- doesn't even have a connection.

Q: N-No that -- we -- it -- it --

A: I cut it o -- I cut it away.

Q: Yeah, it's not nec -- necessary, because you've already told the story in the video.

A: I know, okay, but so why do you need it here?

Q: W -- just -- we were seeking a clarification on some things --

A: Uh-huh, oh, okay.

Q: -- that -- that Arwin had wanted to know about.

A: Oh, I see, she wanted, okay.

Q: That's all.

A: When I came to the -- I -- when they -- when she died, she w -- she had a stroke while we were standing outside on a roll call. And it was freezing, and she had evidently a stroke, and she died. So they made me, and a friend of mine carry her to a barrack where they called it like a -- they -- hospital thing. It was not. They called it revere, which evidently in German it means hospital. So they asked me to take her over there. We took her over there, and put her on a -- on a bunkbed, and she actually was still alive, and -- but they would not let me attend to her. I don't know what I could have done, but they

chased me out. So that evening, we were given -- once a day we were ga -- given food, you know, soup made out of old, unpeeled potatoes, and whatever stuff it was. So when I received that, I took it to -- to this revere, to make sh -- make sure that maybe she would e-eat something. When I got into the place, there were some women that were supposed to be nurses, or whatever it is. And when s -- they saw me -- and they were Jewish, actually -- so one came to me, “Oh, you came to see your mother, your mother died.” It was a terrible shock to me, I cannot even describe it. So I ran -- no, I fainted, actually. At that point when they told me this, I fainted, and the little container with soup and everything spilled. Then when I came to, I went to her, and -- and all I could do is close her eyes, and -- and then they told me I must leave. So you know, I wanted to have something from her. I have the hair here. And --

Q: The necklace is hers?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: The necklace is hers?

A: Yes.

Q: Locket.

A: Yes. So -- what -- the only thing that I took was a pair of shoes that she was wearing. How I saved them I’ll never know, but I had the whole pair of shoes. They took pictures of the shoes over there, don’t they have evidence?

Q: I didn’t see the [indecipherable]

A: You didn't see the pictures, but anyhow, they had -- took a picture of the spoon, the comb, the soap, and a scarf, and the shoes. Okay, I had two shoes, both of them. And I -- later on, when they released -- they saved us, the Swedes came and saved us, I was able to take it out, although I wasn't supposed to because they were afraid of diseases. And you know, we were under quarantine for a month or five weeks, or so. So I ha-had the shoes in a box. I donated one shoe when I went to Israel, and one I still have here. And I wanted to donate it to a museum here, but I didn't want them to throw it on a pile with anything else, but they did not want to, or couldn't accommodate me when I wanted them to -- to place it all individual as a -- as a group, the comb, and the scarf, and the spoon, and the shoes to -- and to put a name on it. It meant a awful lot to me, and it meant almost as much as having a -- a -- a burial place for my mother, a place where -- where there is evidence that she existed. Where -- to this day, actually, I am s -- very sentimental about the idea of having it recorded anywhere. Like for example, unfortunately it's a sad story. I lost my son -- my oldest son was sick and he died like about 12 years ago, and when I put a -- his stone -- when they erected his stone, that tombstone, I also made sure that there'll be evidence of -- of his past, so I wrote down that he was son of survivors, and grandson and -- and uncle of Holocaust victims. And I put my parents name at the end to -- to at least have evidence, and have my parent's name, my brother's name anywhere on -- you know, for people -- people will not know anyhow, but the fact that it is there makes me feel better. I'm going to do the same thing evide -- I already have written my

epitaph, this -- it most probably sounds awful, but this is -- and I wanted also my parents name on it, and evidence that they were Holocaust victims, and so on. So --

Q: You've written it already? Have you written it already?

A: I wrote it already, yes. I wrote it, but -- and I give it to my son-in-law, because my children didn't want to hear of it. It was too disturbing taw -- to them. But I am no -- I -- I'm sure it's going to be that way written, and I also even demanded of my son-in-law that should they not have enough room on the stone, to -- to add -- get an additional stone, and put --

Q: Can -- can you remember what it says?

A: I have it written here.

Q: You have it there?

A: Yeah, but I s -- right there, but it's scribbled.

Q: Could we see it later?

A: Huh?

Q: Would you mind showing it to me later?

A: Yeah. I'll show. I can tell you actually what I wrote. I wrote my name, you know, when time comes, and the date of birth. I don't know when I'm going to die, so they'll have to put it themselves, and -- and I -- I wrote a -- a Holocaust survivor, daughter, granddaughter, and sister of Holocaust victims, and -- and I wrote down, at this resting place together -- I mean, I -- I worded it better. To -- to -- for [indecipherable] get it.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: I scribbled, but I want to, you know, w-w-wait a second. It is morbid, I know it, but this is life. If I -- I don't know when I'm going to die, and I am not looking forward to it, but when I do, I want to make sure that it's written only the way I want it. Okay. I says, Holocaust survivor, devoted wife and mother, and date and whatever. Daughter, sister and granddaughter of Holocaust vics -- victims. And I got the names of my parents, Noah and Bluma, and Moshe Bear Blass. Israel and Luba Blass, which are my grandparents, and sharing this resting place -- what did I say here? For everlasting love and eternal pl -- peace. And on -- well I still did not get it. Actually, what I said here, in honor -- honored and loving memory, or remembrance. Well, I -- I have to finish it.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: Obviously being a Holocaust survivor is -- has much to do with your -- who you are, your identity.

A: Have I what?

Q: Being a Holocaust survivor has a -- much to do with who you are, and your identity, and how you want to be remembered.

A: Well, it -- it evidently is so, because they say your past is -- is dominating, or shaping your presents. So, evidently I would have been somebody else. Maybe not emotionally, or so on, cause I don't think that has changed much, but as -- as a person, I would have been somebody else. I always wanted to become a physician, a doctor and so on, but so -- but i-it did have a influence I -- I would say.

Q: Do you think about the ways that it shaped you, and your p -- and your future [indecipherable]

A: Well, I -- the way did -- yeah -- in a way I'm glad the way it made me, in a way, because -- but then, you cannot, everybody's satisfied with -- with what they are, not thinking what they would be, and -- and if they would be happy, or whatever it is, I don't know that. But it -- I have no complaints about who I am. Of course, I would have liked to be smarter, I would la -- I would have liked to -- to write a -- a -- write my own story properly, and I would like many other things, but I evidently am not -- I'm not made for that.

Q: You said you were happy the way it made you. H-How did it make you?

A: Well, but you see, I -- I do not have any -- I do not have my -- myself the other way, I cannot compare. So, whatever I am now, this evidently I was -- I was -- I am -- I consider myself a good person. I consider myself very emotional and -- and caring, and I -- I love my children, and that means more than -- than you can tell about many people here in this country, unfortunately. So I don't think I would be -- want to be another person. Of course, if I did not have this horrible memory, maybe it would be a little bit different. But it mase -- makes me more humble, and -- and understanding of other people's problems, and -- and for one thing, in all my life, and -- and during the time that I was raising my children, I have never discriminated against anybody's religion. As a matter of fact, I -- I am full of a -- a special respect for people of different religion. And I am also interested about knowing about different religion and so on, and always -- as a matter of fact, they just had on television something about religion, and -- and I read, and I write, and I -- about it. I mean, not write anything that would be of -- for anybody to read, but for myself.

Q: Looking for my pen. There it is.

A: What are you looking for?

Q: So, in -- in some ways do you think that your experience made you a more tolerant person?

A: Well, yes. I -- I am tolerant, because on many occasions there are things that happens to a person during her lifetime, and so on, and somehow, comparing to what was happening to me, I dismiss the presents that it isn't so bad, and always make it look, or

make myself feel better about it, and -- than I normally would feel comparing to -- to the past, like you know -- so --

Q: So you always have that to compare it to, as a reference point.

A: Well, you cannot help it. You cannot help it, because how do you think of anything, or say anything tha -- we do everything by comparison in our life. And how do we know we did good? We know that we did better than the other person, then we did good, okay. But then another person will come and do better than us, so how do you go -- y-you cannot establish unless you compare with everything like that.

Q: How did the experience affect your spirituality? You hear people say, you know, experiencing such a horror made -- made them wonder, you know, how can there be a just God. How did it affect your spirituality?

A: Oh, as far as religion is concerned?

Q: Religion, spirituality.

A: Well, I am still a Jew, and I always will be. I have no intention of changing my religion. I may not be able to be as observant as I should be, and I realize that, but those things somehow don't -- don't mean that much to me. I don't know how much you know about Jewish religion, do you?

Q: Some. A little bit.

A: Some. Well, for example, observant Jew will -- will have a dietary -- observe dietary laws -- not that he will eat anything else. Now, we don't eat pork, we don't eat certain -- like fish without scales, and so on, whatever it is. And we don't eat milk when we eat

meat. Our animals, cattle or -- or -- or chicken, has to be slaughtered in a very merciful way. In other words, to a point where it's almost not -- that they don't feel, you know, the -- the act of killing, in other words. And if a animal is slaughtered not -- we don't use guns to slaughter the animal. It has to be completely painless, and totally sudden. Other than that, the -- the meat is considered un -- unclean to eat, because the animal suffered, and so on. Well, this is as much I understand about it, okay? So -- but I don't eat meat anyhow, so it doesn't make any difference.

Q: Well, I -- I wanted to go back and -- and pick up the story from when the Red Cross came in and you were liberated. Can you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- pick the story up from there?

A: It is such a pity that I cannot speak about everything from the beginning of my -- be -- just before the war started [indecipherable] the time would be so important. Then also, from that point on, until the end, it would have made the most fascinating writing all together, and -- and I am upset about it, because I have it written in -- in parts like this situation with this Shrot. So, unfortunately, maybe someday somebody's going to make su -- sense of all the writings, and the tapes that I will have, and put together something.

Q: You did tell much of the story in the video, leading up to liberation. Could you pick the story up from there, and talk about what happened once you were liberated from the camp?

A: Oh, you want me to, that way? Okay. Well, okay, and now I have to speak of my mother's death at -- at that time, and from then on. Now, with my --

Q: Well you -- you -- I'm sorry, you have talked about your mother's death --

A: Yes, I --

Q: -- in -- in -- in the other interview.

A: -- I know, but I'll have to pick up from that point.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay.

Q: Good.

A: So, when my mother died, a week later, they have send informati -- or told us that we are eligible to be saved, taken out of the camp. They didn't say by whom, and how, they only said that we were going to be rescued, and allowed to be free, all we have to do is come to the office, whatever -- wherever the office was, or wherever it was. That -- and to give our name, and all the information, and when the time comes, to -- we'll be shipped out. Well, I -- I didn't believe it, I really didn't because they did it on so many occasions that way, where they were promising the person that you going to -- you -- you coming on, like for example in the camp where I was in Vearshmeek, at one time they came and they told everybody, is there anybody that's got relatives in Israel? Well, naturally some people did. So they found one la -- they -- the one lady that somehow was not afraid to say it, and they told her, "Pack up all your things, whatever you have, and we will -- we are going to send you to Israel." Well, it was not true, because what they

did, when she came out of the camp, all her things -- and she was a lady that lived in this town, so she had many things with her that she was able to -- to take, and they shot her, and that was all. So of course that -- that memory stayed with me, and I didn't believe anything they -- they were doing. So when I heard this, I said oh yes, sure. But then I was thinking, I says, I lost my parents, lost my brother, I'm by myself, where am I going to go? And I -- I really didn't want to, I had no desire to live, because I was hungry all the time. I was miserable, I had no place to -- to be comfortable for minute, or anything. So it was very, very distressful and painful for me. So I really didn't care to live any more. So I says, well, that's a god -- a good way out, I am just going to go, and let them do whatever they want to with me. And I signed up. And I had two friends from before the war yet, that we happened to be together as school girls, and I made them do the same, because they -- they relied on what I wanted to do. So they came too, and sure enough two days later, they -- three -- three or four large buses, they looked like -- like streetcars, you know, they removed all the junk, or whatever it is, for people to be able to be there, and they put us on there. They came with -- with some provision, food and stuff like that, and they took us in -- they took us to Sweden. We had to go by --

Q: I'm sorry, what was it that you signed up for?

A: To -- to g -- get on the transport to -- they should not kill me, that I -- I'm -- they am -- they going to -- m -- a -- how do you say it, I don't know. That I was going to survive the camp, and they were going to take me out to another country, or to it -- that I am going to

be free. And that was very hard to understand, we just didn't believe it. So, what they did --

Q: This is before libera -- this is before the liberation.

A: Oh yeah, you see, I was liberated when I was in Sweden already. So the Swedish trucks came, and they had food -- canned food, and stuff, whatever they could. And they gave us food, and -- and we were driving -- riding through -- by land, Denmark, and then to Sweden. From Denmark we had to go by -- by boat, I think. Isn't it bal -- Baltic Sea? Anyhow, yes, so then they took us to -- we were in Copenhagen for awhile, on the trains, because they transferred us on trains, after the buses, and we stayed there, and do -- we actually slept there, and they gave us food, because they were afraid of getting diseases. So -- and then from the trains, we were taking on a ship. And the ship took us to a port in Sweden. It was -- forgot the name of it, it was Checkenhaven, that's how you pronounced it in Swedish, it was a port in Sweden where we arrive. From there they took us to a special places, because they expected us, and they paid -- paid for us actually, with coffee, penicillin, and aspirin. Those -- the Germans needed it, so they release I don't know how many people, three, 400 people of different religion, Polish, an-and -- and Jewish, and whatever it is, it did not make any difference at that time, but only the ones that signed up for it. So they -- those were the people that they -- that they we-were saved, and we were under quarantine together, and I was there with my belongings, with my mother's things, and they didn't take it away. And we were there for a month, and they dis -- they distributed us, or send us to different places, where they were going to

accept us to work. Like, I was taken to a hotel in Oopsalla. It's a most historic c -- c -- city in s -- i -- in Sweden, and also the -- the oldest college -- university cities in Europe. So I was there, and I worked there, and then later on I found out about my -- not relatives, but I found out about my friend whom I knew before the war -- not before the war, but actually during the war, before the concentration camp. And he found me, and he wrote a letter, and this is how I came -- and he was in Germany at that time, so from Sweden they allowed me to go to Germany, they pol -- paid my transportation, and from -- no, basically it wasn't that way. They send me to Poland because they could not send me to a foreign country, because they had -- they were sending me to my native country, so they send me to Poland. And in Poland, m-my friend, he was -- he became my husband later on -- knew where I was, and he send somebody to take me to Germany, and this is how we got together, and we got married.

Q: What -- what --

A: Would you like to have something to drink?

Q: Do you want to take a little break?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: I-Is this going to be on it?

Q: No, no, we'll stop it.

A: Going to have to erase a awful lot when --

Q: No, we'll jus --

A: -- what [indecipherable]

Q: Mm-hm. Now, during this period when you were going from Copenhagen to Poland to Germany, was --

A: No, first we went from Copenhagen to Sweden.

Q: Was the war over at this point?

A: Not yet, not yet. The war ended May 10th, and we were -- we left February.

Q: So who was it that was transporting you around?

A: Well, first of all, we were transported by buses, and a very young Swedish man, as a matter of fact, my age at that time, although some were Jewish that volunteered. You know how it is, you know, just like the people that volunteer now to go to Greece, and so on, to go to Turkey. So they volunteered, and they were driving. There was one attendant, and one driver, or maybe both of them and they were changing, you know, places. And they took us to Copenhagen, okay? From over there, we went by train -- no, by sea to Sweden. And from -- from Sweden -- no, we -- I lived in Sweden for about eight, nine months, and then when all this has developed that you could hear from different people, and about different people, it can correspond and so on, and that was the time when my husband wrote a letter to the es -- ac-actually, it wasn't my husband that wrote the letter, it was my brother-in-law that wrote a letter looking for his sister-in-law, and I was n-not even close to being a sister-in-law or anything, but they evidently give priority to people that were related, you know, and looking for them. So the letter came to me from him, and once we established our places, and were able to correspond, then we -- my husband

arranged what I told you before, that I had to come to Poland, from Poland I went to Berlin, because that's where he was. He had to wait because he found his father somewhere, and he had to wait for his father to come to Berlin. So, we all came to Berlin, from Berlin we went to a camp, a -- oh my God, what was it? Buch -- no, I forgot already the name of the camp. Anyhow -- Bergen-Belsen, okay, it was camp of Bergen-Belsen. And of course, the concentration camp was completely flattened, burned and everything. There was no sign of concentration camp. After the war, you know, and th-there was so much typhus and everything. So it was burned down, and I am not sure if that was the only reason that they burned it down, they just wanted to burn the evidence. And -- but nearby, like a couple miles away from the camp, was a camp where the Germans were -- I don't know exactly what it was there bef-before the war, but it did not look like it was especially built for them or anything, there were brick duplexes built, and th-the Germans occupied it, the ones that overseed the concentration camp and so on. So they occupied the camp. Well, after the war, they put -- the Germans left, naturally, and they put all the people from concentration camps, most of them were sick and so on, and he -- they put them into all their apartments and the houses, whatever. And they immediately established -- they were doctors that came there from the States, and -- and from Canada, and they establish, you know, just like a little -- tiny, little complex -- living complex like -- it wasn't big enough to be a village, but it was like a camp, and they assisted the Jews, and there were all kind of newcomers that would come from concentration camps all over. They had no place to go, and they found out that this was the point of gathering on

this -- you know. So they would come over there, and that's where we lived. We lived there for several months, and -- and that's where we got married, too. And when -- after that, we had to go to Stuttgart. In Stuttgart, evidently, we were able to organize transport to [indecipherable] the United States. By then we already -- my husband established where his brother was living, and he was living in -- in Chicago. I discovered purely by accident, through a man that was in the army from Canada -- he lived -- cause when he was telling me that his family was from Vearshmeek, and so on. So I got all excited, and I told him -- and I told him about my family, that my -- my grandmother lived in -- in Toronto. So, through him I found out my relatives, and then I found the aunt, and -- and -- and -- in Charleston. And -- and that's how I came to Charleston. You know, it's so confusing to remember about all these places, when you went, and when you came. Anyhow, this is -- through him, purely by accident, I found out -- I had no information, but I found all this from him, and I was able to get in touch with my relatives in Canada, I visited them later, and then whatever.

Q: Was there any romance between Leon and you in -- in -- before the -- during the war?

A: Yes, yes, yes. Yes, th -- not before the war. That was a funny incident, too. When we lived already where I -- where I told you the place, before they took us to this camp in Vearshmeek, and at that time they were actually concentrating all the people from different towns, no -- small villages and towns, in ve -- in Vearshmeek. And my father borrowed a sewing machine, that was before I -- I had kindergarten. And he decided to -- to sew things. He didn't know how to sew, but he -- he knew how to cut, and prepare the

material, and I knew how to sew. So we did many things for people, like most of them -- people were coming, and they wanted like a one piece suit, and you know, pockets, and this, and my husband-to-be came to our place, and he wanted my father to make a suit with different hidden pockets here, and here, and here, and whatever it is. So my father was doing it for him, and I was the one that was sewing it. And that was the time I met -- met him. He was sitting in our room with -- as big as this here, here, and a couch, and bed, and whatever it is. And -- and I remember when he came, he had money, he saved money. He was -- they were very rich, and we went through a -- a time where my father left everything, and the money was not available, because either it was in a bank, or whatever it was. So whatever he brought with them back to Vearshmeek was not that much to -- but Leon had all this, as a matter of fact, he had it hidden in a shoe -- in a heel of a shoe. And so -- anyhow -- so the reason I am saying it, because he came with a maybe five or 10 pound bag of apples, and he was sitting on the couch, and eating one apple after the other, which struck me funny. And we were not able to buy that, and maybe bought three, four apples for everybody. One -- and so this is how I remember him the first time. And then, when we were in -- you are tired already, huh? And then when we were moved to the camp, he was moved to Myoufka at that time, okay? And I already lived in this camp, and -- but they couldn't establish themself to -- to the point where they were useful to do anything, they didn't do anything, they were just in a camp, living there. So he -- and there was a doctor there that was from my husband's hometown, so they were friends. So they, somehow, somewhat made arrangement, my husband had

diamonds, and money saved, and whatever. So evidently he bribed somebody, and it's awful word to use, isn't it, but it happened. So that they were able to transfer him. So they trans -- transferred him, let's say this is the camp where I was, nearby was a camp which was producing electricity, and they needed people, so my husband and this doctor were transferred here, okay? So we were nearby, and then I was able to see him, and not once, twice, or whatever it is. Then they combined all -- the both camps into one, cause they needed people where we were. So my husband came, and the doctor, and he had a -- a -- he was working, they -- a -- occupied him to be the main person to see to people that got wounded during the work, and so on. So that's how I met my husband, and very casual and so on. But somehow, we knew each other, evidently he thought more of it than I did, because he took, you know, all the pain to find me after the war, you know. And when he found me, and when I -- and when they wrote, I was glad in a way, cause it was the only person that was looking for me. So I -- I came to Poland, and I came to Germany, and then we went to Bergen-Belsen, and we lived there until we were able to go to -- to Hamburg and wait for the ship to come to the -- to America.

Q: And what year were you married?

A: We got married in s -- 50 -- May '55. No, wait a sec, six -- '56. No, w-was it -- was it -- no, sic -- 40. My God, yes, '46, May '46. The war ended in '45, in -- in May, and -- and I meanwhile was in Sweden and came back, and whatever it -- yeah, that's when it was.

Q: When and where -- what year did you find out, or what -- when did you find out and how, about the fate of your father and brother?

A: Well, I found out -- first of all, I was looking, and I couldn't find them. And they were very efficient because we were writing to different Jewish organizations who were occupying themself, and making a point of finding people, and they did not find. But then, later on, I found from the people who were in the same camp and whatever it is, or whatever, bits and pieces of information that he was sick, and that was in Brunow, a camp near Auschwitz. It was a camp for -- for men, and that one person was sure that my brother died, because he saw him in a very bad state, and then my father most probably ti -- dead, too. And if he did not, then the -- the -- at time when they went on this march camp, which was the same time that we went, he might have not survived the camp, either, because I was never able to find him. That was all evidence and information I got.

Q: And you found that out pretty soon after the war ended?

A: More about after they ended, because I got pictures, and -- from people that -- that had bits of pieces of -- from either -- I don't know how they had it, don't ask me how, but they -- they somehow obtained some little pictures here and there. Because we -- we were not able to bring pictures or anything, cause you know, when -- when I arrived in Auschwitz, and they were taking us to -- they said to showers, and this and that, when they stripped our clothes, we -- we thought that they were taking us to crematorium. But of course, it did not happen, it happened different. So when they took us there, I had with me some pictures, and money -- little money, which mean -- meant nothing. And they --

that was the only pictures I had, and the Germans would not let us take anything when they -- when we went in the showers, and we -- we thought we were going to be gassed. And so they told us only to take the soap, and whatever.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

A: -- meant nothing, and they -- that was the only pictures I had, and the Germans would not let us take anything when they -- when we went in the showers, and we -- we thought we were going to be gassed. And so they told us only to take the soap, and whatever it is in. But we came out the other way of the -- of the room, and we didn't have anything. So they -- we were given some clothes, and some didn't fit, and of course in -- in a way we were able to trade it with the people that got too large clothes, to get it smaller, and whatever it is. And the clothes consisted only of -- of overdress, and clogs, and that's all. We didn't have any undergarments or any, and that's -- that's all we were given. So we just really didn't have anything.

Q: Tell me about coming to America, what that was like, and what your impressions were.

A: Yes, I would like to speak about that, because it made -- first of all, a -- I was looking every -- everywhere if I was not going to be oppressed, and -- and brutalized, and -- and hurt, and whatever, just -- I didn't know what to expect. And I was amazed, I was amazed that actually there was kindness that I could notice in people's eyes, and behavior, whatever it is. Of course, I did not need anything, because I was already going to be taken

care, and helped by my relatives that waited for me. Ellis Island -- I think at that time Ellis Island was still in operation, 50 - 55 years ago, don't you think so? So -- so I didn't need any specific help or anything, but -- and when I came to Charleston, I didn't need that either, because my aunt helped us find a little apartment, and we lived very, very limited. I mean, basically poorly on -- comparing to how I lived in Europe before the war, but everything was good because of the fact that we were no oppressed, and -- and discriminated against, and so on. And I was amazed, I couldn't believe it. Then, I mean, I -- f-for example, I went to a doctor, you know, like in the process of -- of living in Charleston, I -- I had to find a doctor for different -- you know, you get -- all of a sudden you get illnesses when you didn't even feel anything before. And I found a doctor who was not Jewish, and I didn't even think anything about it. And he was so kind that -- that when I -- when I think about him to this day, I -- I have to cry, because that's how kind he was to me. So, really, all these things like that, putting together, contributed to -- to -- in a way to my recovery, and believing in human goodness, and so on. So I was very, very happy to see that, and very amazed. I mean, I -- I -- things did not cease to amaze me, as it -- as it came along. Like, for example, why -- I don't know whether I should mention that, but I was not aware in those days of the situation between blacks and whites. Because all I knew is from movies, and I -- I could not find anything basically bad and discriminating, you know, that whites did to blacks. But then, for example, on -- in Charleston you -- it was obvious that blacks were supposed to sit to the back of the bus, and they were announcing, actually, for -- you know, people to vacate to the -- the

front area, and whatever it is. So, it -- it upsets me -- it upset me a lot, but there was nothing I could do. Then another thing that I noticed, for example, black people in -- in Charleston were very kind. I -- I'm not talking about young people -- very young people, because they were either very young people, or kids, so you don't expect of them to behave differently. But people sort of a little bit older, you know, where I walked -- when I walked the streets, or something, I noticed that they were taking off their hat, and they were greeting me. And I couldn't understand why -- why -- why. I came to my aunt once, and I asked her, "Why do people greet me here all the time?" I says, "I don't know them." So she said it was a -- a custom for them to do that. So, I -- I thought it was remarkable, and felt very sorry about it when I, later on, understood what was going on. That's all.

Q: Did you speak English when you first came to America?

A: I have a very good background of Latin, and in German also. And I was able to translate things, but only the reading -- when I was reading it. When people were speaking to me, it all sounded like, you know, jumble bumble, whatever it is. And I had difficulties, but I made my point to learn how to speak. I -- my first book was, "The Good Earth." Can you imagine to try to un -- the reason I picked, "The Good Earth," because I read it in Polish, and therefore I -- if I didn't understand it all, I would j -- kind of make believe that I do, and whatever it is. And that was the first book I read.

Q: What did your husband do for work to support yourself?

A: Yes, well my husband, when we came -- and I told you that my aunt and my uncle were the ones that sponsored us, and they helped us a little bit. And my -- my uncle had a -- a supermarket, but the supermarket was not what -- what you call a supermarket now, it was a grocery store, a large grocery store, and people were picking their own stuff, and then coming to the register, so it was like a supermarket. So, since my husband learned -- my husband was actually a businessman before the war, and he was like about nine years older than I am, so he was already a young man, able to work and -- and sustain himself. And -- and in -- in Charleston, he evidently, since he did not have anything else that he could understand well, he w-was working in the business of grocery. And a year and a half later, he was able to buy a grocery store, a supermarket from a person -- of course, we didn't have any money to buy it, but he was paying for it monthly as -- as it went, and then we had a supermarket that we -- we moved to another part of town, and -- so he was doing this, and then I was helping him. And then later on, he went in the business of wrecking. Wrecking was very prominent in a way that everybody was -- was wrecking. They had houses from before the Civil War, and whatever it is. And they had, in -- in those days they were building houses with old English brick, and those are the original bricks that were sent by ship from England, they were larger. And -- and the wrecking was -- was very lucrative, because they were saving -- after wrecking it, they were cleaning the bricks, and they were reselling them, and they were a big -- it was important, it was a novelty, it was -- it was history. So they saved the brick, and people were able to make lots of money. So then he was working -- of course, he was only supervising them,

and how he knew about it, I'll never know. He was supervising, and e-employing people, and paying them. He wasn't doing the original wrecking by himself. And this is how -- and he did well. We did well, and we were thrifty. Oh yes, there's something else I would like to speak about. When my children were born and of school age, I -- what's that?

Q: A siren.

A: Yeah? It sounded like voices, scared me. Anyhow, when the children beco -- became of school age, since I was very well taken care of as a child and schooled properly -- i-in other words I went to a kin-kindergarten, a private, Jewish owned kindergarten, it's not that a -- a Jewish was -- they did not have any other kin-kindergarten. So I had to go to a -- a Jewish kindergarten. It's not -- I would -- the reason I'm trying to mention it to you, it was not because it was Jewish or not Jewish. But then I was in school, and then -- and schools in Poland were divided, Jewish people, and non-Jewish. So, we went to school Sunday, and the non-Jewish children went to their school on Saturday, so that was the different. And also, when I finished sixth grade, and of course I could have gone to the seventh grade, but since fortunately I was a good student, and I -- I also studied with -- with help, so I was advanced, and I was able to go to high school. And the high school used to call in -- in European, we used to call you gimnasium. Which translates evidently gymnasium here, but -- but that's not what it was. Gimnasium was the higher education, like high school. And so I went to a private high school, and of course I wasn't there long enough, cause the war started, and the Germans occupied our schools, and we were not able to be there any more, because my school was only girls school. So we were not able

to be there, because young soldiers and everything. And there were horrible things that were going on, they were raping, and everything. So we were -- we -- they closed the school. So that was it, but s-schooling for my parents meant awful lot, education and so on. And yeah, e -- speaking of education, my z -- my brother went to a school that was basically Hebrew, but of course, Polish was learned, and just like if he went to a day school where, you know. And so we were really very carefully taken care of, as far as education is concerned. So naturally, when I became a mother, and my children started going to school, I felt like I -- I -- I was thinking the same way, and -- although schools were different, and better, and -- in Charleston, schools were segregated, you know, so you -- it's not that it was better or worse, but -- but they had good schools, so -- but I didn't care about it. My sons went to a military school, like children's military, the -- you know, the grade school. And they were wearing uniforms, and everything, just like -- like regular military, but children. And my daughter went to a -- a s-school, and it was famous, it still is famous. It's called Ashleigh Hall, where it -- it was just for girls, and there were a -- it was a boarding school too, if somebody needed it. So my -- my children were very good ta-taking care of, and all of them, I'm very proud of them.

Q: You have two sons, I --

A: I had -- I had four sons.

Q: Four sons?

A: Yeah.

Q: And their names?

A: Norman. Norman Joseph was my oldest son. Maurice Howard is my second son, he lives in Charleston now. Then I have Richard Ivan, and Stanley Paul, and well, my oldest daughter is Blanche Dorothy, and my youngest daughter is Sherry Lisa Weintraub. They all -- actually, most of them lived here, except for my son now that is practicing dentistry in Charleston.

Q: How did they get to know about your story as a Holocaust survivor?

A: Well, it actually took a long time, because people did not talk. And I had a -- actually, no intention to tell them, because it was too sad, and young children, I didn't want to occupy their minds with this. And -- and -- on the other hand yet too, I thought that it was bad that I was a priva -- prisoner, and that maybe I did something bad, and I did not want to -- to tell the children, cause they wouldn't understand, so I did not. And therefore, I did not. But then, later on, I remember on a couple occasions, when I used to come to pick up my daughter from school, her -- the principal came to me and -- and asked me if I could teach the children French. And I told her, I -- I don't speak French, I speak just a little bit, I have learned a little bit, but that is not enough to teach anybody. And I told her I could maybe as -- instruct them in German, but they did not have German. But anyhow, the point is that they -- that they couldn't make me out what I am, and who I am, and they did not -- could not make a connection at that time, what was the Holocaust, and what the Holocaust did to us. You see, people were completely ig-ignorant. They knew the -- the war was bad, but they -- I -- they did not know how -- how it reduced us to become

prisoners, and not -- nobodies, comparing to what we were before, and so on. So that's the way it was.

Q: So how was it that you -- how did you tell your -- your children?

A: Later on, when people started reading about it, and talking about it, and -- and writing about it. They -- people would come to me, they ask me to -- to do a interview on television, and I did several of them. Then they ask me to write some things. They didn't -- they ask me to do different things, and speak to -- to schools, and -- and educate young schoolchildren, and tell them ideas. And -- and I was able to do that, and I wanted to do it, not only that I was able. And I did my best, and I was pretty busy all the time, and I worked, too. I had my own business that I -- I was a clothes designer, and I opened up my own shop in a shopping center, and I had to support my children later on, when my husband died, and he died in -- in '73, which is a long time ago. So I still was busy, I had articles in the newspaper, and they would interview me, and have me tell them stories, and this is how everything came to light. And later on -- in the small cities, actually people were talking freely about it, better. Where in the big cities, like New York, Chicago, pe -- people did not crawl out from the woodwork until much later. I don't know why. Maybe because there were more people in the larger cities, where in our -- in Charleston, we had maybe five or six family of survivors. So that's the way it is, and now my grandchildren know a lot about it, too. One of my granddaughters wrote a story about me, and they had a little combination of stories in a -- in a book, where in high school, they had to each come out with a story, and -- and it was published in a book. And it was

published only if it was good, and they were giving -- given a grade for it. So my daughter -- my granddaughter did that, and I was very proud of it, proud of the fact that she was interested to know, and so on. And they still do, nowadays too, I have very young grandchildren still, that are interested in, and they make me come to their school, and -- and s -- talk to them. Of course, you have to have a very special approach for children once you are a mother yourself, then you are able to apply it in a way where they will understand it, and it will not be so -- so drastic, and shocking to them. So that's the way I did it.

Q: Why did you decided to send you sons to military school?

A: Well, it was not because of military in a way, but -- but because it was a -- a private school. That was the only private school in -- in Charleston. And of the fact that -- that i- it was a good school, and the only -- they were disciplined in a way, but not that they needed discipline, cause my children were -- were very well behave -- behaved, but they did have some military little things that they were doing. Like, for example, they had a roll call in the morning before they entered classes, they stayed on attention when things were happening, and they were dressed military. So it was -- it was like a boost to their personality, cause they felt like they were somebodies. And -- and this is what I felt that should be instilled upon them, because I, during the war, lost all this. You know, the importance, and the -- the assurance, and -- and whatever. So -- and then it was a private school that -- that I was in favor of, and therefore I did it.

Q: Did you feel patriotic, and did you feel like you were an American?

A: Oh, I am still patriotic. I still feel that way. I -- I felt to -- I'm still getting choked up -- I felt that way, and I feel that way all the time when it comes to -- to different things, like, for example, if you see on television different things that we are doing, or this, like for example, they send people now to -- to Turkey to a -- assist them in saving the people from the ra -- from the earthquake. I feel choked up, and I feel like crying, and I am very proud of it. And then, one day I was, for example, in a s-store, where the clerk was a young Jewish boy, a Russian. Well, I didn't know if he was Jewish, or not Jewish, or whatever it is. And I said something, not connecting, or referring to -- to his English, and -- because it was obviously with a Russian accent, and I can detect it immediately. So it was not the reason for that, but I said something, and he said to me, "This is America." You know, like proudly, see, because they just escaped from the -- from Russia. There is lots of people here from Russia. And when I found out, I says, "Why do you say that?" He says, "Well, I'm happy to be here." And he told me he's going to college already, and so on. And then, in the process of -- of t-talking, he told me he was Jewish, because we were talking. I says, "Well, how -- how are you able to be -- go to college already? Your English is," -- and I didn't want to insult him, "is good, but is it good enough for college?" He says, "Yes. Besides," he says, "I am Jewish, and Jewish people are smart." Because -- you know, because whatever, I don't know, I was proud of what he said. It's not that I necessarily feel that way. I'm proud of myself, and I'm proud of being Jewish, and proud of whatever it is you have to. So -- but this is the -- and it struck me. I says, "My God, isn't that wonderful?" And -- and -- and I always feel that way about the

United States, feel about it to the point where I -- where I can sit and cry because of the way I'm being treated here, and because of wh -- of the way I was able to grow up he -- here, and -- and establish my life, and -- and feel good about it, it's very important.

Q: I'll just change th -- [break] Well let me ask you this; have you, and do you recall experiencing much anti-Semitism in -- in this country?

A: I am very upset with it, I'm very upset with it. I -- as -- personally did not feel it, and if it was some -- somebody anti-Semitic that was in contact with me, or a -- they did not show any evidence tha -- how he felt. But of cou -- of course I am very upset when they still do it. But to be honest, unfortunately, not that it makes me feel better, we are not the only group that -- that they are anti -- you know. There are a -- I see the same thing they feel about Chinese people, about, still, African people, or still Indian people. Whatever it is, they -- they feel that way. So not that it -- I feel better being in a crowd, but I realize that I'm not the only one that is that way. And then I have great belief, and strong appreciation for -- for the Jewish people that establish their life here in America, and what they contributed. Makes me proud. So --

Q: Tell me about the trip that you took to Germany to be a witness. How -- how did this come about?

A: Oh, the first trip was incredible.

Q: What year was that?

A: Hm?

Q: What year was that?

A: ’69. I -- I -- evidently some people that knew me from Vearshmeek, because incredibly enough, most of the people, all the 300 of -- other people that -- that were saved by me -- I mean, I -- that was not my idea that -- that I developed, and realized that, but the people were telling me that I saved them, because most of them live in New York, and -- and in Israel. When I came to Israel once for a visit, there was a gr-group of people that was present when all this happened, and they invited me with a purpose. I didn’t know that, I just thought I was going to visit them, that -- you know, just to -- to remember them, because I was not a -- born in Vearshmeek, I was just a newcomer, but they knew me enough from hearing about me, or little, you know, in touch with -- with me here, and there for a reason. So when I came to visit them, they surprised me to a point where I really was sitting and crying for half an hour. Because they had the little get together, invited everybody who knew me, and when I came in, they s-screamed, “Our hero is here.” And then they made me believe that I was the one that was instrumental in saving them. And then, when I started thinking about it, it really was so, because -- not that I planned it that way, because I didn’t plan it that way. But it happened though, because I -- I kind of messed up their timing, and it was dark, and then the planes were flying, and they couldn’t finish what they wanted to do, and the next day it was already known to the -- to the commander, and he didn’t want that way. He says, “Why should I kill them here, let them go to -- to Auschwitz, let them do whatever they want to.” So, therefore, they -- they did not kill us. So he didn’t want anybody, and besides it, the Germans themself were angry when the people f -- the Ukraine people did things without

their specific instruction. They felt like they are the masters, and they are -- they are the ones to tell them what to do, and whatever it is, so -- what -- what was the --

Q: That your trip to Germany as a -- as a witness.

A: Oh yeah. So anyhow -- I got sidetracked, right? I always do that. Anyhow, where -- when people found out, they started being interested in the Jewish -- people started interest -- be-become interested about the crimes, and -- and you know, and so on. And when they found somebody that was guilty of crimes against the Jewish people, they -- they made a trial, okay? The Germans thems -- themselves wanted to. So, when they found out that I was a very strong witness against this guy, because I had something to show myself for, and I was a witness when they -- from the camp where I was, I told you, in Vearshmeek, and where my husband was already there. And the doctor -- there was outbreak of typhus, and there were seven people who were sick. And the seven people, they just didn't want to cure them and do anything, although they would have survived. They made us put them on stretchers -- you know, the stretchers that we produced, and take them to the cemeter -- cemetery. And on this cemetery, they had a big grave dug, and they made those people kneel down -- there were seven only, seven or eight -- and shoot them. So I was a witness of that, which was absolutely -- I mean he killed s-single-handedly, seven people. And that's enough to be con-convicted if you kill one, right? S -- and then he wanted to kill me, and didn't su-succeed.

Q: This was -- this was the fellow Sch -- Shrot.

A: Shrot. But there was another one that did this killing. You know, that was not the same one, but --

Q: Oh, two -- two men named Shrot?

A: No, no, no. He was the one -- the one that killed the children was another one. But he was brought to trial at the same time with the other one, with Shrot. So I -- I was witness to what he did to me, and I witness to the other things. And, of course, we came -- the German government actually paid for the trip, because I would have never spent money ke -- I didn't have it. And I would have not done it to see that the -- the Germans that -- that did such horrible atrocities -- I was scared. The first time we finally arrived in Hamburg, and we were stepping down, I -- I felt like I was absolutely going to have a heart attack to -- to -- to put my feet on the German soil, to feel -- you know, that they did all this and so on. It was a terrible experience, I -- I didn't want to, but I -- I had to. And I think my husband was with me at that time, too, because I didn't want to go by myself. So it -- it was aw-awful experience.

Q: Were the men themselves there, on trial?

A: He was there, yes, he was there. And he remembered, because I told him that he shot me, which he did, and he intended to shoot everybody else, which he did. And then he told -- told that I jumped him, which was true, and I didn't object to it any more, because it was true. He was there, but they -- the -- he was coming --

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

A: -- this was true, he was there, but they -- the -- he was coming to the trial every day with a suitcase, and documents and everything, like a big businessman. He was not in jail. He was coming on his own, and they didn't do anything to him, because he was jailed in Russia, right after the war, I think. Either he remained in Russia where they -- when -- when they were in Russia, you know, trying to -- to beat the Russians, or he actually escaped Germany, and -- and Poland, because of the fact that he was doing all these awful things, and -- and he went to Russia, or maybe there were -- he did some things for the -- to the -- against the Russian people, and that's why they got him in -- jailed in Russia. So, because of the fact that he was in -- in jail for two years, or something like that, they didn't want -- they didn't do anything to him. In other words, the fact that he killed so many people just didn't meke -- make any difference.

Q: What was that like facing him, so --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: What was that like facing him so many years later?

A: It was terrible, it was disgusting, cause he was dressed beautiful, he was acting like he was a important person. He had his special booth where he was sitting down nec -- nec -- on both sides of him here was a translator, whatever it was, Polish, or -- or whoever was, from another country. And he sat like a very important person over there. And that reminds me, I don't know if you were aware, that was the trial of Demjanjuk. Have you heard of him, that they took to -- to Israel --

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: -- and tried him, because he was the -- the guy that was in a concentration camp, and killing Jews. You her -- you heard of that.

Q: Sure.

A: I was -- I happened to be at the same time in Israel, and I took my -- my special -- special trip to go to Jerusalem to be -- to attend the trial, and I did. And the way -- he was -- he learned a little bit of Hebrew, he came -- when he came out to his special area where he was supposed to sit, you know, to his special booth, he came, and he said shalom to everybody in Hebrew, and he -- and he also was saying [indecipherable] all kind of papers, and documents. And he was answering questions; there were a number of Israeli Holocaust survivors that were witnesses, and were with him, and -- and talked -- spoke against him. Didn't bother him at all. They s -- [phone ringing] Is that my phone?

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- not to -- to the ones that -- that knew them, because I didn't want to brag, but just because you don't know it, am -- I'm saying it.

Q: Well -- well, can we go back to the -- the trial that you are the witness on --

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: -- and -- and tell me what the outcome was of this fellow Shrot.

A: Okay, okay. Well he was not -- he was not given any sentence any more, because that he already, you -- you know, was doing time. And that's all, I don't know what happened to him later. I -- I had no control over it, and all the people that spoke against him, he --

we just didn't have any control. The fact that they did the trial, and went through the -- to the problems of getting people from -- because there were people from Canada, there were people from Australia, there were people from all over, because after the war, all the survivors kind of scattered everywhere. They had n -- knew somebody, that's where they went. Maybe I would have gone to Israel, maybe I would have gone anywhere else, but why -- why go anywhere else when I had relatives here? My aunt -- my mother's sister lived in Charleston, and all my -- her brothers and sisters lived in -- the rest of them in Toronto. So that was the reason, and my husband's brother lives in Chicago, so -- but it was no choice.

Q: What happened to the other fellow who was on trial, the other man who --

A: The other one, you know, he was -- first of all, he became prominent after the war, he wa -- became prominent, he was a mayor of -- of a city. I don't know -- I don't remember which one. And he became prominent, you know, and evidently his past was either hidden, or unknown, or whatever it is, and so I don't know what they did to him. I think they jailed him for some time, because he -- he had obviously killed many, many more people, and there were many witnesses. So that's why they -- they didn't -- they didn't execute him, they didn't kill him like they did Eichmann and the other ones.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: Yes, Becker. B-e-c-k-e-r. Yeah. Of course, I remember, I'll remember it til the day I die. I just hope I don't lose my mind before then, I'm so scared of Alzheimer's disease,

you know, for some reason, I really do -- you notice that I ha -- I was forgetting certain words or names.

Q: I think you're doing just fine.

A: Yeah, mm.

Q: What was his first name?

A: Becker? Hm, now that I don't remember, really. I don't know. Might have been Otto, or some -- I don't remember.

Q: What about scr --

A: William.

Q: William Becker?

A: William Shrot was the other one.

Q: Ah, William Shrot.

A: Yeah. And it's spelled S-h-r-o-t-h or t, only t, Shrot. So an -- it was wil -- Wilhelm, the way he pronounced it.

Q: Can you tell me about your visit back to Lódz in 1988?

A: How do you know that?

Q: You had mentioned it in the video.

A: I did? Oh, that was a -- I was already in -- oh, that was a be -- right after the war, okay, yes. When I came to Poland, because I -- a few years ago I was in Poland, too.

Q: Right, I -- that's what I was referring to, the visit in 1988.

A: Really, I -- you don't have any mention of it here. The Poland was when I came from Sweden to Poland. Okay, th-this -- yo -- which one you want me to tell you?

Q: Well, you can tell me about that as well, but I was referring to the 1988 visit.

A: Oh yes, maybe you're right. That -- that wa -- ya -- then I did mention it, because that -- that was after my son died. And I went -- in '88, okay, I went in '88 to Poland, to different cities, and I was in Sweden also, I made a sentimental journey to Sweden, and -- and yeah, whatever else.

Q: What was that like going back?

A: Okay.

Q: Didn't you go to your childhood home?

A: To -- the first time? From right after the war?

Q: No, in '88.

A: In '88. I was with friends, and I was already well rooted, and well established, and feeling -- feeling American, that -- and I came, and I have seen what I have seen. I -- I did not feel sentimental about the Polish people, because they were denouncing us, and they were destroying us, and they were stealing and taking from us all the time. There was a number of Poles that were assisting Jewish people and helping them, there's no doubt about it. But the greater majority was actually waiting to take it away. G -- I'll tell you a little s -- something that will indicate how it was. After the war, people were -- late -- later after the war, many people would travel to Poland to seek their roots, and find out -- well, there are some people from Israel that went there, and they went to a -- a -- a city

where their parents used to live, grandparents and so on. And of course, they didn't find anybody over there, because they were all gone, and there was a little cemetery where they could maybe identify with, or a remnant of a synagogue or so on. But they were talking with people living in -- in very nice houses, they belong to Jews. Not that it -- the Jews were privileged and had those houses, but jewis -- Jewish people were working hard, and they were a -- a -- improving their lives, and their existence, and everything, and they were very particular about it, so they had better houses, and better places to live in, they lived better. So they were asking this particular family or person that lived in this house, oh, you have a nice house. So they were telling them yes, the Jews had it, now we got it. So the person they wanted was interviewed, and I was asking him how and what and whatever it is, and they were telling them -- which was very, very degrading for -- for me to listen, how they were talking about the Jewish people that were killed, murdered, or whatever it is, and left the house for them, they felt lucky that they had everything, all their belongings, and everything. Now, for example, they -- there was also a incident where they were interviewing children in schools. You want a pillow for your back?

Q: No, that's okay.

A: That would be nice interview, hi -- I don't really -- I -- I don't even care any more. Anyhow, so when they ask children, five year old children, six year old children, do you know what a Jew is? No. You know how they look. So one kid says, "Oh yes, I know, they have big ears, and big noses, and they got big teeth, and they are scary." This is how children were able to describe Jewish people, and it's not li-like that. Of course, in

Europe, Jewish children, I -- I mean Jewish people were branded having big noses Here, you got everybody, Arabs, the -- the Greeks, the -- there -- whatever it is, everybody's got big noses, and it was not especially a trait of Jewish people. So, that's how they described the Jewish people over there. And it was upsetting.

Q: Did you go to your childhood summer home on that trip in 1988, in Lódz?

A: Y -- y -- to my summer home? Yes. It was not my own, it was where we rented. Yes, we went there. There was one lady in Lódz that took me -- her husband was driving, and -- course I was able to pi -- pay them, and I brought things for them, because how I found out about the person is also a whole, big story. But purely by accident, I was writing by the name to the person, and the -- the letter was received by these people of the same name, and whatever it is. And they were not Jewish. I was writing to a Jewish friend that was supposed to live in -- in Lódz, and they received it, and as I started writing to them, I felt obligated to -- so I was writing, I was always putting money in the -- in the letter, because th -- she sounded kind, and nice, and whatever it is, and I knew that they were in -- lived poorly. So then when I came to Lódz, I got in touch with -- with her, and of course I stayed in a hotel, I didn't need anything from them, but they did offer to take me where I wanted to go by car. And since it was like about I would say two hours away from Lódz, they took me over there. And of course, I was -- it was on a [indecipherable]. So, I cannot even describe how I felt. I -- I felt like -- like -- like I could touch everything, and -- and it would be the same, and every -- course, the area -- this was where we used to come for vacation, and father used to come. That -- they took me to the train station,

and I remember coming and waiting for Daddy to come from Lódz, because Daddy used to come for the weekend, you know, like Friday, and then leaving Monday morning, and you know, everything was just -- just like I could touch it. So I lingered quite a little while over there, and she doesn't know -- she didn't know what I was looking at. And I was looking, and I was touching, and I was doing things and -- that's all you can do, there is no way you can possibly recover anything that you have lost, that's all. So it was a very -- a very touching and emotional moment. And of course, it did not look the same because they have rebuilt the areas, it's -- so I did not find the house where I was living, but the train station looked somewhat similar to what -- what I remember. And then when we want -- went to the area, they had it redone, rebuilt, and streets, and everything, I -- basically I didn't recognize it. But it was a incredible time. And then, of course, the way -- in Poland, you wouldn't believe it. Like, for example, I w --

Q: That's okay, I'm just stretching.

A: I -- I looked at streets, you know, the main streets where there was lots of business, where they had lots of stores, and I know fortunately, or unfortunate, or some wartby whatever it is, those buildings and -- and houses, and -- and businesses belonged to Jewish people. So they had signs, for example, dressmaking, or this, hanging on the entrance of the -- of the air -- you know, the -- the areas in Europe had, like for example, this was a big courtyard, and the houses were bi -- th -- were around, and there was a gate here, where you entered, cause that's how most of the houses were, with a -- a -- cl -- enclosed in courtyard for everybody. So, like on -- at the entrance of the -- of the

courtyard, they had different signs saying who is doing business of any kind, like for example shoemaker, this and that, whatever. And then, in the front of the street, they had stores, and the stores were saying, like here, whatever the store was selling, whatever it is. So they still had the same size and everything there, all -- and of course now, restaurants, they still had the Jewish restaurants with the same sign. Like, for example, a Jewish delicacy is, like for example, have you ever heard of gefilte fish?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Did you really?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Huh. Well, okay. I-It w -- Jewish people eat it -- not -- they can eat it any time they want to, but it was a custom that for Saturday -- Friday and Saturday, you made it, because we did not have refrigerations and so on, and it was -- we were able to keep it in a cold place for a couple days to eat, because we were not allowed to -- to cook, or do anything. So we ate that, and we still do, so it's a very popular dish for Jews. So anyhow, what made me laugh is I saw a restaurant, and it says, of course in Polish, "We serve Jewish gefilte fish." Now, that was in Polish, but I'm translating it. And I said, "My God, they didn't even know how to make it." You know, if they were not specifically instructed to do it. And they had businesses, and Jewish people go there. And they -- they -- I went there too, cause I -- I had no way -- no other way to -- to go to eat. I wasn't very fond of -- of them, and bec -- I was hurt. I still had the feeling of -- of the way they treated us, still had the taste of it. So I could not warm up in such a short time toward

them. Of course, now, it's a different generation, and it's different, so I feel differently about it. I feel different, I -- differently about the Germans, okay? Because first of all, the German society is mixed, also, of different groups, of ethnic groups, in different countries, and different thing. If Hitler we -- were to be alive, and if he saw his -- his cities in Germany, he most probably would commit suicide becau -- because he wa -- wanted -- he was striving to destroy everybody that did not belong in Germany, and he wanted a clean Germany, only of typical, ethnic Germans, and no mixtures whatsoever. And like I said, I said oh my God, here I came to -- to Frankfurt, to the airport, and they had groups of Indians from India, okay? Groups of people from different, other countries, from the Middle East, from here, from that, and then in the streets you saw Chinese people, Chinese restaurants and everything, and I looked, and I said, "My God, it feels like I'm in the States." And then I said t -- the same thing that I told you about Hitler, I said, "If Hitler saw this, he would drop dead immediately," you know. So -- so I don't feel -- I cannot say -- I -- I -- I feel something, but I would not say that I feel about every German the same way, because it's a different generation. And the time when I went to Germany -- Germany, if I saw somebody that was my age then, I would know that he was somebody in the German army, somebody that oppressed the Jewish people, and -- and whatever it is, so I would feel very badly. But now it's entirely a different -- different ge- generation, but of course, you still have the anti-Jewish, you know, anti-Semitic groups and so on. Like for example, the group here that was supposed to -- you know -- you

know, go around -- what do you call it? They -- an-anti-Nazi -- anti-Jews -- Jewish group that was supposed to be here last -- last week.

Q: Oh, the Ku Klux Klan?

A: Yeah, yeah, whatever ot -- I thought they were just strictly anti -- Nazis. On a -- they are a -- a combination of Ku Klux Klan, and whatever, okay. And, you know what surprises me? That they came, and they asked for a permit, and the government gave them a permit. Now how could it be? Knowing that these are that kind of people, and who -- why doesn't somebody that belongs here, really, and is -- is a true American, a -- no matter what religion, whatever it is, do things like that to -- to a -- you know, not demonstrate, but to -- to -- to just announce that they are here, that we are here, we are -- and we are Americans, although we are from there, and from where, whatever it is. But why allow them to -- to demonstrate, like they demonstrated already, twice in Chicago, in Skokie, I know. I mean -- and there were fights, and there were disturbances. Why -- why invite something like that? That's what surprises me, that we are too lenient here, and too -- too much allowing. It shouldn't be like that, there should be a strict -- I -- I don't want to put ideas in anybody's head, but there should be c-certain raw -- laws to make sure that things like that are not going to happen.

Q: That there should be laws to prevent the ma-marches?

A: Definitely, definitely. Al -- the -- any -- any ethnic group, and any group could march, fine, but not to be idealistic about something aga -- which is going to -- to be against our -- our American society. Why should they be allowed to -- to be like that, for them to

speak against somebody? If they are not Americans, let them get the hell out of there, that's all. Forgive me for saying [indecipherable]

Q: That's okay. It -- it must be frightening to you --

A: It was frightening to me --

Q: [indecipherable] your experiences.

A: -- but I -- I almost wish, after I heard what was going on, I almost wish that they -- that they were there to demonstrate, because they had several different groups, large groups. You know, Jews are not supposed to actually demonstrate or do anything public on the Sabbath, and that was on Saturday. And they organized a group -- a Jewish group resistance, I don't know in what ways. I don't think th-they had arms, or anything, but -- but it was a -- a -- a contra -- a acting group, and different other groups, you know, that they -- but there were lots of blacks because the Ku Kluck-ux Klan is against the blacks, and -- and this and that. So there were several large groups that were -- would overcome, no matter how -- and they said they were going to have 300 people only, and four only showed up, right? Flor -- four of the Ku Klux Klan showed up, and then they dispersed. So I don't know. But -- so if -- if they would have a -- a awful come down to reality, you know, or because they would realize that there's no place for anything like that to happen, there's no place for them to de -- demonstrate, and they -- you know. But I don't know. Listen, as long as -- as people exist, there is always somebody that will come up with something somewhere.

Q: Can you tell me you -- in that 1988 visit to Poland --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you went to Auschwitz.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me about that? And you were looking for some photographs?

A: Yes, yes. You see, I did speak about it. Yes. I found -- not photograph. Th-The reason I was looking for photographs, okay, when they were taking us to -- in Auschwitz, where they were taking us to -- to the shower, I mentioned to you that I only had photographs and things with me. They took those away from us. Not that they personally came to me and took it away, but I had to leave it. So I had -- I was hoping that they would have the photographs in Auschwitz. And they have set up a whole place, you know, like a whole office in one of the barracks where, you know, where they were keeping the photographs, because they had a tremendous amount of photographs, because everybody was taking photographs to the -- to -- to the -- to the camp with them. That -- that was the only thing that was important for us. So, they found a awful lot of photographs, millions of them, most probably, from people that were brought into Auschwitz. And so they kept it, they put them all in one barrack, or two barracks, and then they -- they segregated the photographs, and placed them if they could into all cities, if it was evidence that it was from this, or another city. And that's where I went. I found my name, Blass, in several other cities. I found -- but I did not find any photographs that I could un -- I -- read, unless they were photographs, but you see, I was a very young gi -- I was still a teenager when the war broke out. So I couldn't know that much, and remember. I remembered

only that hit me -- that hit close to home, and so on. And people that I remember were only sort of relatives, and maybe some friends from school, and so on. So, I did not know very much, but when I saw a name, I could tell. I went to the cemetery -- cemetery in Warsaw, also, at the trip when I was -- that was when I was in Poland, and I made sure th -- and I -- I looked, and I found many names, Weintraub, and I found names Blass, but I do not -- I -- I do not remember of any relative. Course, Weintraub was not my family, it was my husband's family, so he most probably would have been able to distinguish better, but I was not able.

Q: So did you not find the photographs you were looking for?

A: No, no. I was very disappointed. The photographs that I brought in there, I would have found, maybe, if they still were, but maybe I wasn't looking in the -- in the right place, because like I told you, each barrack had upstairs, and downstairs. The first barracks, actually, they were made out of brick, and concrete. Later on, the other barracks were made out of wood. But those, for some reason, I don't know what they were planning to do with it, or those were little brick houses. So, evidently, they planned to have the photographs in there, because they put them right away. But maybe they didn't -- you know, when you have photographs from people that were from different areas, and put in one camp, and how -- you cannot tell which city, whatever it is. So maybe they were not put on -- put away in perspective that I could find them. So, I didn't find anything.

Q: What was that like emotionally, for you to go back to Auschwitz?

A: Emotionally, everything was terrible, terrible. This was not the same emotion as -- as I felt being in -- in this small village where I used to spend my vacation time. This was an entirely different emotion. That was a good feeling, everything was good, like -- like touching things that -- that I touched before, or somebody else, my parents, and my friends, and whatever touched. This was a bad feeling, of -- of what they did, and it just -- everything I looked at was -- was taken by force, and whatever, so it was a very horrible feeling.

Q: Was there some healing there, or some use for it? Was it a useful thing, or do you wish you hadn't done it?

A: No, healing -- there'll be never healing, in my opinion. I never will be healed of it. I just get accustomed to it, that's all. I just get a -- to the point where I can talk about it, where if you got me here at -- 10 or 15 years ago, I wouldn't be able to sit like that and talk to you, but now I -- I want really -- and you can notice it most probably -- I want to get as much as I can out, you know, to talk about it. But I -- I couldn't do it before, so as be -- as far as being used to it, e -- I-I'm never used to it. I'm just accepting that it was that way, not accepting that you don -- y -- I don't know if you understand what I mil -- that this was my past, and this is how it was. Not that's the way it was supposed to be, or whatever it is. So, I am just bearing no special feelings, because I can -- cannot do anything. I cannot change it.

Q: Can you tell me about your tattoo? Did you get that at Auschwitz?

A: Mm-hm, yeah. A14028. My mother was A0 -- I mean 29. I remember when I we-went to do the tattoo. It was on a -- a late summer afternoon. All this transported came at the same time. We were ta -- being tattooed, of course, women separate, and we didn't even know what it was. But then w-we saw that girl was doing something, I told mother, I said, "Let me go first." And at that time we didn't have any understanding of what was to come, yet. I mean, we didn't expect anything -- anything like that, at all. And I was the first one to have that 28, mother had 29. And --

Q: Ho -- do you look at it often?

A: I -- har -- I cannot escape it. Not -- I look at it, and I don't even -- I don't --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

A: I -- har -- I cannot escape it. Not -- I look at it, and I don't even -- I don't look at it with the way you would look at it. You see, I look at it, I'm used to it, it's part of my body, that's all. And I look at it -- now, I have made -- when I was in -- in Florida, I had a friend who was a painter, a artist, and the Holocaust monument in Florida is -- is remarkable, by a very known artist. And it does not -- it -- it shows, for example, a hand of a person like this, a arm, and he is pointing his fingers to the skies like -- like -- not praying, but reaching for the sky. And here is his number, and this is tr -- a tremendous statue, and arm, an-and this is also very big, you know, as tall as this room. And so when I was there, this artist that I know -- knew -- he was a painter, he did for me this -- a portrait of the arm, exactly as it was there, and he ro -- and instead of having another

number, which evidently the artist put either a person's number that he knew, or maybe he was a Holocaust survivor himself, and he put his name, so he put my number on it, and then he wrote down on the -- over the portrait, Guta Blass Weintraub, survivor, and then it was also my mother's name, and the number -- her number on the arm. So I give it to one of my sons, but it could be duplicated, you know, taken a photo of it to d -- to have somebody else have it. I'm very sentimental when it comes to -- to remembering, and doing something in favor of something, and so if --

Q: How was it that your mother was able to keep possession of the locket that you have, throughout all the things she went through?

A: That -- that -- that is not -- this is not from -- from the concentration camp. I had a lock of hair that I took with me, and -- when I took the shoes and everything. Then when I came to -- to this country, I was able to put the hair in a locket. I was not --

Q: Oh, I'm sorry, I thought it was the locket itself.

A: No.

Q: You have your mother's hair in the locket.

A: I -- I would be rich, I would be able to -- to buy a piece of bread for it, if I had gold in there. No, we had nothing.

Q: But you -- you put a lock of your mother's hair in that locket, and you carry it around with you?

A: Yes. I still have a whole bunch put away, because this is destroyed almost, cause I don't even take it off. I use it in the shower, and whatever it -- I just be -- don't take off

this. And here, my -- the hair is already a little clamped up, but you know, I would never throw it away, because in Jewish religion, you're not supposed to throw away anything that was on a body -- n-not a foreign thing, but something that belonged to the body, it was growing on the body. You are not supposed to throw it away, you bury it. Like, for example they do in -- in a hospital when they have -- make autopsies, and everything like that, so they -- they put everything in -- in one bag, what's left over, and they bury it, cause at least they have proper burial. So, I -- I couldn't destroy it and throw it away.

Q: Are there smells, or music, or anything that -- that make you think of your experience during the Holocaust?

A: Definitely. You know, there was one song that they were singing, they were occupying Jewish musicians, you know they had a -- a tremendous amount of talent in concentration camp. People -- singers, and musicians, and you name it. And at that time, I already -- are you familiar with -- with the song, "Beer Barrel Polka?" Yes, da dan dan, da dan dan da da ha a -- I -- I am not a singer. But anyhow, it was very famous at that time, and evidently either it came from the States, and they adopted it over there, or vice-a versa. It was "Beer Ba-Barrel Polka," and it was a very known -- you know, song, music. And it was happy music, you know, jolly, just like having to do -- beer, you know, like -- like it was bursting with happiness. Well, this song, they were -- so they had a Jewish band, they supplied them with to -- instruments, and they had no difficulty supplying wa -- with instruments, because when somebody was playing a instrument, that was one of the most important things that they had, so they took it to concentration camp

with them. So they had plenty of instruments, so they were supplying the -- the orchestra with instruments, they had violins and -- and everything, you know. And they made them play this song when they were taking the -- the people to -- to the ovens, and wherever they were going, whatever they were doing, whatever atrocities were -- were happening at the time, they always played that song. And that made me sick, ter -- it still does, you know. When I came here later -- a few years later, there was a show on television, I don't remember exactly who it was that used to -- th-they were advertising that whoever have -- has a favorite song, or savorite -- favorite story, not song, to write it, and to -- that was a contest for -- for some reason. And I wrote -- I still have it, actually, but I would have to dig, I don't know, hundred days to dig it out, everything. Is -- I wrote a -- a letter to this company that was soliciting for stories, you know, and to d -- it was like something to tell them what -- what was the most important thing that influenced the life, or whatever it is, I don't know, with -- with a connection of a product that they were selling. Anyhow, I wrote a story about the song, and I -- and I told what it was connected with and everything, so they accepted it, but they didn't want to print it. They did not want to print it that I was the winner of a -- of a story like that, because it would be a -- too negative for other ethnic groups, n-namely Germans, or whatever it is, and after all, there is a great population of German people here in America. And they did not do it.

Q: Do you still -- do you have dreams about the Holocaust?

A: Yes, yes, yes. I have terrible dreams, and I wake up pe-perspired, and -- and anxious, and -- and hurt, and for a while I am so disoriented that I don't know where I am, until I finally slowly but surely realize. Yes, that's unfortunate, but I do that.

Q: What are the dreams of?

A: What? Oh, s -- yeah. I have seen things in this small town where I was. They were punishing people for doing certain things, for this and that, like for example, I thought that's a sil -- sa -- simple way -- comparison. Like they will pan -- punish you because you are using too much water, or watering the lawn. But in -- in Germany they had all kind of punishments, too. Non-Jewish people, and Jewish people. As it happened, some non-Jewish people did something, and it was five or six people, and they hung them on the market, the same market ba -- that I was telling you, where -- where they, during the evacuation that they put us on. And we -- and the Jewish people were ordered to come, and -- and -- and watch it. They were forced to watch it. So here is a -- you know, a -- they built a special -- what -- what do you call it, scaffold? Okay, where they -- and they hung the people, and we had to wait until they turned blue, you know, from the pressure of the blood, or whatever it is. And we watched it, it was the most horrible thing you ever, ever saw. Young people -- there was older people, and s -- a couple young people, right in front of us. And they pulled the thing, and that's what it was. So, of course, I have seen later on, in different forms, not exactly hanging. I saw shooting, and this and that. When they took us to this camp in Vearshmeek, you know, and when they took us from the marketplace into the camp, they put men separately and women separately, and then

they were searching us, because they knew that we had valuables, money, because we did not come -- of course, ourselves, we didn't have much, but people that came st -- still straight from their home had things, so they -- and they told people -- us ahead, if they find any money, if they find any jewelry, we'll be shot. And sure enough, they searched us, and they found somebody had some money, which didn't mean anything, you know, paper money. And they found some jewelry, maybe a -- a wedding ring, or this or that, and they shot the people in front of me. We were -- we were standing there, a woman here, and a woman here, and they shot them right here.

Q: And these are the things that you dream about? These are the things that you dream about?

A: Yes. About shooting, about killing, about -- terrible. Yeah, of course, it's -- I -- I dream about things that I never even -- that I have never even seen, that -- that after I realized what I am dreaming about, what it's -- it's supposed to tell me, that it is associated with the Holocaust. So I -- you know, I'm aware of it.

Q: Do you have friends, or keep in touch with fellow Holocaust survivors?

A: Yes, I do. Not many, not here, but I had those, you know, out of the seven -- seven or s -- eight families over there they were survivors. But then I have friends in other cities and countries. Like I told you, friends in Israel, of course, little by little, they are dying because they were not young, I was one of the youngest ones, so they are all either my age, or a little older. So they are not able to survive. How much longer can you survive? And in New York and Chicago, and -- yeah, I had all over, wherever I came, I w -- used

to visit my family in Chicago, and I used to meet survivors, and -- and I'm corresponding, and I had fr -- friend survivors in -- in Toronto, Canada, and so on, yeah. But the only ones that I was able to get in touch with constantly, or -- were the ones in Charleston, but since I live here, it's -- I am not seeking them for some reason, because I don't know them, and just to -- to seek them out for -- for the purpose of talking about it, it's no sense.

Q: You came to Rockfeld 12 years ago?

A: To Auschwitz --

Q: No, to Rockfeld, to live here.

A: To Rockfeld, yes.

Q: Yeah. And -- and can you tell me why it is that you came to Rockfeld?

A: Why I came, because of my children, because of all -- most of my children lived here, and that's why -- actually, all my remaining children lived here, except for my -- all the son that s-stayed behind in Charleston, he didn't want to move. A-And the rest lived here. And the one that lives in Charleston, he was not well, he had diabetes. So he was not able -- it's not like -- anyhow, the children that -- that live here, wanted me to come. My oldest daughter insisted I come here, my other children. That's why I came. And I'm still sorry, because it was like being uprooted. That's --

Q: You miss Charleston?

A: Yes. I just came back from Charleston. I told you, remember, I wa -- we were supposed to have the meeting in June, and I went away. You remember, you originally

made a date with me in June, and you were not able to keep it, and I told you I was going to be out of town.

Q: What do you miss most about Charleston?

A: Everything. Everything. There is nothing that I didn't have in Charleston that I have here, and -- but I had more in Charleston than I have here, so -- I know -- I -- I miss my friends, I miss everything. Knowing Charleston, and going places. Life was completely easier. Yeah, a small town life is con -- really very different from a big town here. Over there, wherever I wanted to go, I had no problem with parking, I didn't have to work streets -- walk streets to find a parking place, and then go back, and -- and so on. Everything was accessible, and ka -- it was entirely different life. It was somewhat still to -- to the way it used to be for me in -- in Europe, except that, like I said, we didn't have cars, and that was probably in whole city of -- of Lódz, there -- there were maybe 25 cars, and not always I would see them on the street that I was walking. And so i --

Q: When did you finally retire from your work?

A: From my work, I retired in -- in '62.

Q: And what was it that you were doing?

A: No, no wait a second, no, it wasn't '62. Sic -- I retired the year I came h -- yeah, which --

Q: The year you came to Rockfeld?

A: No, no, no, I came here 12 years ago, okay, what year was it? 80 -- ’85. Okay, in ’85, I retired ’85. I -- I just closed up my store, that was my retirement, and that’s all -- and decided that I didn’t want to work any more.

Q: And it was a -- a clothing, design store.

A: Design. I was designing clothes. We -- I was making, of course, and my staff, we were making -- like, for example, clothes for a whole party, let’s say a wedding party, bridesmaid’s dresses, and some wedding gowns, to a certain extent. And other things, and whatever.

Q: How long did you have that business?

A: 25 years over there. 20 -- 25 years I worked in there. Of course, I wasn’t -- I wasn’t doing a tremendous business, because when you work with your hands, you cannot accomplish very much, you know? But, I also -- de -- could not -- I could work full time, because I had children, and I had to attend to them, and make sure that they were all right before I was able to sit there. So, like -- I made a living, you know, like th -- ends -- end to end, and -- and whatever. But i-it was satisfying because it was something I liked to do, and -- and I did it, and -- and also the fact that people were grateful, because whatever I did for them, they were gratef -- grateful, and -- and praised me and so on. And that was a boost. So --

Q: What was the name of the business?

A: Gusta Blass designing, alterations and so on. Was -- I have pictures of it.

Q: Well, Mrs. Weintraub, we’ve been going for --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you know, three or four hours here, I think I'll --

A: Please don't forget sending me the tape, okay? I would like that, cause I -- I want this to be some evidence for my children, and information, because I know that sooner or later, they will decide to put the story together and -- and -- and do something.

Q: It's very important for you to -- to carry on your --

A: It's important for me, and it's important for them, too. An-And I know that, but how can they do it if all -- they will not have information and so on. So, this is -- what were these notice -- note -- notices that you ate -- made?

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview