SYLVIA GREEN

INTERVIEWED BY

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JANUARY 11, 1996 & APRIL 22, 1999

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN KENTUCKY

KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST

MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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Question: This is Arwen Donahue, I am here with Mrs. Sylvia Green on January 11, 1996, at her home in Winchester, Kentucky. This is a U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum interview. This is side A of tape number one. Okay, Mrs. Green, will you please tell me your name as it was at birth and your date of birth and the place where you were born?

Answer: My name is, was, Sylvia Farber. I was born in Karlsruhe am Rhine, April 14, 1924.

Q: And Karlsruhe am Rhine was in Germany?

A: In Baden, yeah.

Q: And will you tell me something your parents and let's start with your father,[1] what was his family background?

A: He was one of seven children and they were married in 1919, they were married in Poland and then they moved to Germany right away, and they lived in Stuttgart and my brother[2] was born in 1920 in Stuttgart. And I don't know when they moved to Karlsruhe, I was born in Karlsruhe in '24, so between '20 and '24 they moved, I don't know the exact date.

Q: And your father's, your father's family, were they middle-class, or?

A: Yeah, my dad's, what I have been told, I didn't know too many of them except the ones

[1] Josef Färber, born Feb. 14, 1888
[2] Bernhard Färber (Bernard Farber)

whom were living in Germany, some stayed in Poland. He was the baby and when my dad was born, his oldest brother already had children the age of my father and they were in the United States. And some of them moved to Karlsruhe, some of them, his sister lived in Nuremberg and she would come and visit. And they had a dairy store, dairy, eggs and butter and my dad, that was my dad's job in Karlsruhe. It was lucky, my mother always said I was the lucky child because the day I was born my dad got that job. He was the manager of the dairy department in a wholesale grocery store, and he had this job until he was deported to Poland in 1938. And on the same day my brother came home with a horse shoe and that's supposed to be luck also.

Q: So your father was born where?

A: In Dukla, in Poland, and I've never been there, I don't know.

Q: And he moved to Germany in?

A: Well, in 1919 when they married.

Q: Did they marry before they had come to Germany?

A: Yeah, 1919, they married in Chrzanow where my mother was from and I think it was a match, probably, arranged.

Q: What was your mother's family background?

A: They were very poor, there were ten children and my grandfather had a tailor shop,

tailoring shop, and there hardly was any food on the table and my mother[3] was the second oldest girl, the first one was a boy. So my mother had to raise all the younger children so she never had a childhood. She said she never played with children. They had a cradle made out of wood and she would look out the window and children were on the sidewalk playing hopscotch and she participated then, she was in an apartment upstairs and many times the cradle was turned upside down because she got so excited, but she never had time to really play with children, raising the rest of the family. My grandfather, I only saw him once or twice in my life. To me, he was a big man with a long beard, Orthodox, and my mother said that he never held any of the children on his lap, but the grandchildren he did. That one time we went to visit, I was on his lap and I braided his beard and my mother just stood there, she didn't believe that he let me do that.

Q: Was your family very religious?

A: Yeah, they were Orthodox, but modern Orthodox. My dad was clean-shaven and my mother did not wear a wig, they were modern Orthodox, but very observing, Sabbath and all the holidays. When my dad worked, well the name was Pfankuch, he never had a vacation all his life because he didn't work on any Jewish holidays and we got a lot of holidays, so this was taken off as vacation. So my mother used to take us places or, also, we children, obvious, every summer you had to get out of the city, like otherwise you would die it seems like. The New Yorkers do that too, don't they?

[3] Cerka (Cilly) Posner Färber, born Oct. 20, 1887

Q: Mmm-hmm.

A: And, well, it was camps we used to go to and also I was very athletic and on weekends we used to train and then I also belonged to the Mizrachi, which is a orthodox Zionist organization. And I think I was about five or six when I joined, and we had camps for about two weeks and then we had conclaves.

Q: And you had one sibling, is that right?

A: Two, my brother who is four years older and myself. My mother always said she only wanted two children, she raised such a large family before that that's all she wanted and that's all she had was two children.

Q: When was your brother born?

A: June, wait a minute, June the 2nd because my son was born June the 4th, June 2, 1920, he was born in Stuttgart.

Q: Were you close with him?

A: As children we were close in a way, but boys were raised entirely different than girls. A girl just had to smile and look pretty, that's all that mattered, and my brother had to be educated, so he didn't have a childhood. My dad wanted him to be a rabbi, is that all right the way I'm holding that now? My dad wanted him to be a rabbi, my mother wanted him to be a college professor, so he was educated for both. So I was schooled, we had school, you went to school from eight till 12 and you went back in the afternoon from two till four, or from eight till one and three till five. Whenever he got out of school, he had to go to Hebrew

school, every day. So he didn't have much of a childhood either. And it was really interesting, after we met again after the war, he was married and I was married and so we talked about our parents and about our childhood, and the interesting part was the way I talked about our parents was not the same way he talked about his parents, which were our parents, you know. So he told me, he said, "I was so jealous of you." And I said, "Why?" I said, "I was so jealous of you, you were so brilliant." And he said, "I had to be. I had to study all the time, I had no childhood and you had friends." He didn't have any friends. "You always had friends, you always were playing or going places, doing things." And it was really interesting, we were jealous of each other. But it worked out well, I mean we got it out of our system and we didn't carry any grudges.

Q: So your parents didn't, weren't particularly interested in your education?

A: I was not a dumbbell, I didn't have to work very hard and I brought home A's and B's, without any sweat. And he had to bring home A's, B's were not good enough. And, well, that's what I said, all you had to do was smile and you had to associate with the people they approved of. And you couldn't go with children they didn't approve—especially my mother. My dad was a hard-working man.

Q: You mentioned that you had a lot of friends?

A: Yes, I always had a lot of friends.

Q: Were they friends from school, or from?

A: Well, at the beginning I had Gentile friends, but then when Hitler came to power, they

got sparse, less and less friends. And it's really interesting you asking that, I still remember Fritz Öler, we were raised together and I loved Fritz as much as I liked my brother, loved my brother Bernard. And then when Hitler came to power, he disappeared. If we passed on the street, he wouldn't see me. If I passed on the street when it was dark, at that time we used to go out in the evening, at the beginning, later on we didn't go out too much in the evenings, he would look, stare at you like no recognition, but then he would take his hand and wave at you in the back, so he wouldn't been seen. So but that really hurt, because in a way I knew that the reason for it because I was a Jew, but it's very hard for children to accept. You, you take it personally. Because I would cry, I came home and I saw some of the girls I used to play with and they run away. "Why doesn't she like me any more? I haven't done anything to her." That's hard. And they probably went home and talked to their parents, also, how bad they felt, you know.

Q: Do you remember, were those the first incidents that made you realize that you were somehow different than these other children?

A: When we were kicked out of school.

Q: When was that?

A: I think it was the beginning of the fifth grade because I was supposed to have gone to the gymnasium also, like my brother did, but there were articles in the paper that they building a new school for handicapped children in Frankfurt am Main and this was a very dilapidated school, I mean nowadays it'd be condemned, and that's the school they gave us.

Q: What year would that have been?

A: Let me just think, I was born in '24, I started school in '30, it might have been '35, oh, the dates are getting dimmer, they really are. I mean, what happened you remember, but to remember the exact date, because I started at such a young age and so many things happened until '45, and nothing was good really. So, but what they didn't know, we got a much better education than we did in public school because they wouldn't let Jewish college professors teach, so we got the college professors to teach us. So we benefited from it, we really did.

Q: How far did you have to travel to go to school every day?

A: I didn't have to travel, it was within walking distance, in the radius of so many miles, they had a school close by and we weren't bussed at that time.

Q: Was your family afraid when Hitler came to power?

A: Well, I saw Hitler many times, I was a nosy child and whenever he came, I would not go down to see him in my neighborhood because everybody knew I was a Jew, I would go blocks and blocks out of my way and, where they didn't know me, and I was standing in the front row, I was just fascinated by him, it was just like he hypnotized people. You know, I usually talk with my hands! It's hard. I'm sorry. Well, I would always be in the front row, many blocks away from where I lived, and I was there in the front row with everybody everybody else, and everybody yelling, "Heil Hitler!" Here, he always came in a convertible and, naturally, he would hold his hand on the belt, I can close my eyes and see him, "Heil Hitler, Heil Hitler," and people just went crazy screaming, you know. And they all were

running and I was right there with them. And he wouldn't let them get too close and then he just would take his hands, slowly, and everybody would go back. It's just like you were hypnotized, you know? So this was '33, but really, '32, already it started. There were Communist parties, Nazi parties, Socialist parties, and they always scheduled marches about the same time and there always, somehow there was a shooting going on, and they yelling and they used to hit each other. And my mother always used to grab my hand and, "Let's go upstairs, let's go upstairs." "No, I want to see what goes on!" In '32, you know, I was eight years old, I was nosy.

Q: What did you think when you were watching these, these speeches and Hitler?

A: I don't know, I really don't, I just was fascinated by that whole thing, it was just like everybody was hypnotized. And his speeches weren't, he didn't say anything, he said three, four words, and then yell, everybody yelled, "Heil Hitler, Heil Hitler." I don't know, as a child, the one thing I remember, he's… always when he came to Karlsruhe, it was a pretty good sized town at that time, the size of Louisville, he would stay in the Hotel Germania, and every time I passed that hotel, I was going to stay there someday.

Q: So you admired him a little bit?

A: I don't know, you kind of fascinated until, you know, then I didn't admire him anymore. I mean, what came afterwards, my mother always said, "It can't get any worse. It can't get any worse." Like when they deported my dad to Poland in '38.

Q: Would you tell me a little more about that?

A: One night we were home, Mother wasn't feeling well and she already was in bed, and the doorbell rang, they always were very noisy and always yelling and always rushing, and they always rushed, you know, and they were yelling, "Open that door! Open that door!" And they kicked the door. So my dad went to the door and they came in and they said, "Empty your pockets." And my dad said, "Why? I haven't done anything." He was at work that day, he came home from work. "Well, just empty your pockets. And you do as we tell you and the sooner you do it, the sooner you'll be home." And they took my dad away, they pocket all his belongings and his favorite watch, I don't remember who gave him that watch, it was a gold watch, it was a pocket watch, that was the style at that time.

Q: Where you there?

A: Yes, I was there, I was there.

Q: And your mother?

A: My mother was there and that night my father came home from Würzburg, it was a teacher's college,[4] and we had a whistle, and I don't remember it now, that when we whistled downstairs we knew it was one or the other. I mean, my parents knew, my mother knew, middle in the night we heard that whistle, and it was my brother came home, that was in '38. So after they deported my dad to the Polish border, they had some kind of agreement that if any Jew in Germany was not in Poland for the last ten years, that they are going to

[4] Sylvia's brother Bernard was attending college in Würzburg. It was he who returned home, not her father.

make them *staatenlos*[5], that you didn't belong anywheres, you had no country. And Germany did not want to get stuck… your back hurts? It's okay. Germany did not want to get stuck with the people without a country, so that's why they pushed them to the border and the Polacks were shooting and the Germans were shooting and somehow they came to an agreement. Now, I was not there, this was told to me afterwards by my dad that, then they finally let them there, let them in. So then after '38, this was October, in November they had Crystal Night.

Q: Before we talk about Crystal Night, could you just tell me a little bit about how your mother and you and your brother dealt with the, the absence of your father immediately after he was deported. How did you find out where he had gone and…

A: You know, I don't remember that…

Q: …did you expect him to come back?

A: No, I didn't expect him to come back, because they called a meeting to all the wives of Polish citizens and my mother was sick in bed, I think this was sometime in '39, that was already after Crystal Night, and we were told to be at the police station, that there is gonna be a meeting and we have to be there, if we not gonna be there, then they were gonna arrest us. So my mother was sick and she sent me. So I went there and when they called my mother's name, I stood up and apologized that my mother couldn't be here, but I'm here and I will give her the message, whatever the meeting is about. He yelled at me to come forward, he

[5] Stateless (German)

yelled so hard and I was a child, you know I was 15 years old and we were children at 15, not, not the children, 15 seemed like they're very grown up, but we were not, we were children. I was shaking from head to toe, he gave me a pencil to sign my mother's name, that we had to leave Germany by August '39, or we were gonna be arrested. Well, I couldn't hold the pencil, my hand was just shaking, so he took his gun out and put it to my temple. And I really don't remember whether I signed the name or I put the X mark—he was satisfied, so maybe I signed the name, I don't remember what I did, he seemed to be satisfied. And we left, we left in August of '39, the beginning of August and they followed us, September, beginning of September, the Second World War started. That's when they came, invaded Poland.

Q: So after your father was deported…

A: Yeah.

Q: …you, you weren't really sure where he had gone?

A: Yes, we knew that he, he, that they had deported him to Poland. And my mother had a sister in Krakow and we were pretty sure that's where he was headed.

Q: And what happened in those months before that, before you left when you weren't with your father? Did you have any word, or what did you and your mother. . .

A: I don't remember how my mother found out, I couldn't tell you that, there was so much going on with me, also. Like, the Jewish Welfare Office was trying to get one child out of every Jewish family and I was designated to go to England, they found foster homes. And,

but then, they were gonna round up the young men and my mother made me go to the Jewish Welfare Office and she told me to really make a scene and cry that I don't want to go to England, I want to go with my mother and, evidently, they bought it and I really was scared, you know, I was crying, I was scared. Also, so, then they sent my brother instead.

Q: Is that what your mother wanted?

A: That's what my mother wanted. Because they were not, they were not doing anything to the girls but they were already taking the young men to Dachau, so she wanted him out the country.

Q: What do you remember about Kristallnacht?

A: Crystal Night, it was wild. We didn't go out and, excuse me, got the hair right on your eye, I'm looking at you, okay. They banged at the door and my mother yelled, "We don't have any men here in the house. You deported my husband." And my brother hid in the apartment, I don't know, I think in a closet or something, bathroom. And we didn't open the door. And we screamed and they screamed, and then they went away. Several times they came that night, then later on we found out they burned the synagogues, they burned the Torahs, they took the rabbi and set his beard on fire and this was afterwards. I didn't, we did not go out, we were too scared to go out. This was November, '38. It was horrible, it really, it was horrible when they took my father away, but they just went crazy, they really did. We lived on Main Street and there was so much yelling going on. I stood behind a curtain just to see something and then they broke all the glass in the Jewish stores and there were quite a

few Jewish stores on Main Street. They went berzerk.

Q: Did your mother have any plans to leave Karlsruhe at that time?

A: Well, you need an affidavit to come to the United States and my aunt Mina[6], the one I came to the United States with, had a brother-in-law in Lexington, Kentucky. And after we were in Poland, we lived in the same apartment house my aunt lived in and we talked, if somebody was going to survive that, to get in touch with Leon Urbach and there was a street, but I didn't remember it when I wrote to them, and that's how we were gonna be reunited. So, what was the question you asked?

Q: I asked if your mother had plans to leave Karlsruhe.

A: Yeah, yeah, Urbach sent us an affidavit, but it was already too late, because Hitler went into Austria, that was in '38. And the Austrian quota, you see, there was a quota, German citizen, Polish citizen, Austrian citizen, you had to wait, you got a number, so they raised the Austrian quota for the Jews get out of Austria, so we couldn't get out, if maybe another six months we could have made it, but I guess it wasn't meant to be.

Q: And you didn't have any contact with your father at all until. . .

A: Until we met again, we were reunited in Krakow, we had to leave in '39, August '39, and we were reunited with my dad and they rented a small apartment and. . .

Q: Let's go back to just after you had found out that you were, you and your mother, you had signed a form and you knew that you were to be leaving…

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: …Germany. What did you do, how long did it take for you to be deported, what happened?

A: I worked in the Jewish Welfare Office, I was like a gopher, you know, taking papers, there were Jewish offices in different. . .

[end of side one of tape 1 of 3]

Beginning of side B, Tape One

A: Can you understand it? I talk with a very heavy accent.

Q: Yes.

A: You can understand?

Q: Yes, it's fine. This is tape one, side B of an interview with Mrs. Sylvia Green. And Mrs. Green, if you would just repeat from the beginning, the question about what you did after you had signed that affidavit.

A: I worked in the Jewish Welfare Office and, like gopher, you know, taking papers, they had offices in different parts of town. And also, when the switchboard operator went to lunch, I would take over for a very short time, and that was one job I hated. I was a nervous wreck, always thought I was going to connect the wrong people. So, I don't know, that's just about all I remember what happened, I don't know how else I passed the time.

Q: How long did it take until you actually had to leave Germany because of that paper that

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[6] Mina Posner Urbach

was signed?

A: There was, well, we had to leave, I think they gave you a few months to get ready. And well, my brother, he, we had like an overseas trunk and, and he packed everything, and it was shipped to Poland and the bedroom was shipped to Poland. We didn't get it. So, we left by August, beginning of August, you just had to leave.

Q: Were you on a train?

A: Yes, yes. We stopped by, we stopped off in Berlin, my brother went to England the same night my mother and I caught a train to Poland, but we stopped off in Berlin. My mother wanted me to talk to the American Consulate and she thought I could do better, you know, to talk to 'em, that maybe we could get out and come to America. I didn't even get to see the Consulate in Berlin. I just talked to the secretary or somebody at the front desk, maybe some other people had the same idea, too.

Q: How long did the trip take?

A: I know it was a overnight trip, but I don't know exactly. It's very hard to remember everything, it was such a long period of time. Like I told you when I talked over the telephone to you, I started right from the beginning with him, it was '33 until '45, that's 12 years, that's a long time.

Q: Did you know where you were headed?

A: Poland, yes, we were headed to Krakow.

Q: By choice?

A: Well, we had to leave Germany, yeah, but by choice, excuse me. After we crossed the border, it was our choice to go to Krakow because my aunt lived in Krakow. If we had somebody in Warsaw, maybe we would have gone to Warsaw, but we didn't know anybody. My mother was born in a little town near Krakow.

Q: So she, you mentioned that she thought that was where your father would be.

A: Yeah, yeah. And I don't remember whether she knew or she thought he would be there because my aunts, my aunt lived in Krakow.

Q: Was that your father's sister?

A: No, my mother's sister.

Q: Do you remember what happened when you arrived?

A: Yeah. We went on a vacation, my aunt Mina was on a vacation, vacation in Jordanow, it was a vacation place, and we went there for a whole week. I even got a picture of that. And my dad came or he was there, also. And it was great, I just thought "Well now, everything is going to go get back to normal," and since they rented an apartment, that everything is going to be okay now, we were together and my brother was in England, so, but we were wrong, we really were wrong.

Q: Do you remember meeting with your father again, being reunited?

A: Well, not exactly. I don't know whether, on the picture, he was in Jordanow with us, so I don't know whether he was on vacation with my aunt or he came to Jordanow, it was not very far from Krakow, it was a vacation place.

Q: Where did you live in Krakow?

A: First we lived with my aunt, can't remember the name of that street, but as soon as they start bombing Krakow, we were in the basement and the house across the street got bombed. In middle in the night, we just took sheets and dumped stuff in there, clothes and whatever, and we walked all the way to Sebastiana [ph], number nine, that was a place where we rent an apartment afterwards, I don't remember the first address.

Q: So it was the… you and your mother and your father.

A: My father, all three of us. And then we were not the only ones, because my aunt lived in that apartment, and then some other sisters came from the country. And at the beginning, we all stayed at my aunt's place. And the children slept on the floor, and the adults used the beds. And my mother wouldn't let me sleep on the floor, she thought I was too good to sleep on the floor, and I was just dying to sleep on the floor with the other kids. Seems like such a silly thing to remember, you know? But I guess it must have made an impression on me at that time.

Q: What did you do with your days?

A: Well, this was '39, September, '39, in 1940, just a few months, then we had to sweep the streets, we had to wear armbands, that was in 1940. We had to, even if it rained, we had to sweep the streets. We had to clean barracks, we scrubbed the barracks on our knees, we carried railroad tracks, all in 1940, but we still lived in the apartment. We had to meet in the mornings. And my trouble was, I was very tall, I was five-eight, and they would line us up,

the tallest in the middle and then the shorter ones and shorter ones, and I really got the heavy load. And they were not very kind to us when we cleaned the barracks, I mean they would yell and scream, or kick, or scare us they were gonna shoot us, but in the evening, after we went back, my mother always had a hot meal for us and I can hear my mama say, "It's not gonna get any worse, it's not gonna get any worse." And all during the war, I can hear her say, "It's not gonna get any worse," but it did.

Q: So you were working with other children?

A: With other children, yeah. There was 40, I was 16.

Q: Did your mother or father work?

A: No, no, they didn't work. I don't know whether they didn't ask them to work, I don't know. I have no idea.

Q: And did you have any sort of education, even informal, during that time?

A: No.

Q: How many hours a day did you have to work this way?

A: I don't know, from morning till it got dark? But that hot meal sure tasted good, it really did.

Q: Did you have weekends free?

A: I don't remember, I don't think so, I don't remember. Do you know, came to a point you were like a zombie, you only did what you supposed to do, more later on even. And you didn't question it, you just did it. Worst thing really happened to me was, my parents and

my aunt always said, "Sylvia, if Germans are around, never speak German. You don't want them to know that you German." So I spoke Polish, naturally with an accent. And there was a German, we were carrying railroad tracks and loading them on trucks, so I did not know and I was talking German to another German Jew, he came up and he said, "You speak with a *Badenzer*," Baden, it's like the state of Baden, like Kentucky, you know? But then the accent, "You speak exactly like I do," and he was the meanest thing, he would scream, he always sit on top of the truck and yell at us. And we never did anything right, and always had the gun, was going to shoot, and he said, "Where are you from?" And I had to tell him, I said, "Karlsruhe am Rhine." "I'm from Karlsruhe am Rhine. You come on and you sit on the truck," and he gave me his lunch, and he made everybody watch. I couldn't swallow, I could, I mean my throat closed up, you know? And he was yelling at me, "You eat. You eat." I don't know whether he wanted me to have his lunch or he did it out of meanness or maybe he thought he was helping me, I don't know. But I sure couldn't swallow, it just got, got stuck in my throat.

Q: Did you have to march a long way?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah. You marched there, you had a meeting point and you marched, and you marched home that night. And you had to wear your armband. And I don't understand, some people say they, they wore a armband with a yellow star which said *Juden* there. We had the blue star, a white armband, in Krakow. That's what I remember.

Q: Do you remember, were you able to make any friends, or was there just no time?

A: Well, we really couldn't talk too much because we were watched so closely. You made friends and you didn't make friends. One day you had friends, the next day they were gone. I was fortunate that I was with my aunt constantly and we talked a lot. And especially at night, you know, after we got together, we talked a lot. But you couldn't have friends because. . .

Q: Did you find any ways to have fun?

A: Huh? Fun? Yeah, you know how I had fun? To aggravate the Germans. That was our fun. We would laugh so hard where we felt like crying. And they could not understand and then we, we would tell jokes, and we would laugh, really we didn't feel like laughing, but we did laugh, and that just about killed them. "My God, you should be crying there, what are you laughing?" You know. But if they got closer to you, you really shut up and you didn't look at 'em, you turned your head.

Q: Did you ever see them hit any, anybody?

A: Oh, yes, yes. Some hit people, I saw 'em kill people, I saw 'em kill babies and… for no reason. Really sometimes you wonder how they could live with themselves, I don't know. I think a lot of them were drunk, I really do. I did not realize that until I saw "Schindler's List," then I saw there, I mean they were drinking, I knew Goeth[7], now I'm getting ahead of myself already. But they must have been drunk because they were yelling, yelling, yelling,

[7] Amon Goeth (1908-46), SS Officer, commanded the concentration camp at Plaszow from February 1943 to September 1944.

my God.

Q: So you kept on working like this, until…

A: Like that, day after day, whatever they asked me to do, I did. And then '41 was the ghetto. We were notified we had to leave. So like in "Schindler's List," we grabbed a bedsheet again, we dumped everything in there, and a suitcase, and you walked. And like I told you on the phone, when I saw that "Schindler's List," I was looking for myself in there because it was so real, it, to me it was a documentary, it was not just a movie. I was looking for my relatives, I was looking for my parents, I was looking for myself. And that was no picnic, five, six people in a little apartment where you barely had room even to sleep on the floor.

Q: Was it just your family or. . .

A: My family and my relatives, and then that got smaller all the time. I mean, one day, well, I'm getting ahead again, it's… Well, we did the same thing there, we would march to work outside the ghetto and did the same thing, we shoveled snow, we washed the streets, and the same yelling. There were different faces of… watching us, but it seemed like they were all the same.

Q: So you were doing the same. . .

A: The same thing until '42, we got the job, my aunt got the job in Kabelwerk work and we marched from the ghetto to Kabelwerk every morning, it's—was a cable factory, and there were different departments there. I had to cover cables, I was in charge of ten machines and

my aunt, they made, what did she do? Oh, I can't think of that word, you plug it in, you know what I'm talking about, a cord you plug in, those what do you call them?

Q: Extension cord?

A: Huh?

Q: Extension cord?

A: Yeah, something like that, but you plug it in in outlets like, what's it called?

Q: Plug?

A: Plug, okay, well she put those together, my aunt, it was a different department she worked in. And from morning we marched with a O.D. man [ph], it was a Jewish police and then we went back again. And then, I think it was towards end of '42, then we were concentrated in Plaszow, Patkusz [ph] Plaszow, the concentration camp, and we went to work to Kabelwerk from Plaszow. And I only saw my parents twice.

Q: Before, would you tell me about Plaszow, will you describe your living quarters to me, I know you said you, you were in very cramped conditions, was, was it cold?

A: Well, it was always cold. And I don't know what I looked like, there was no mirror, you know, but I looked at my aunt and I knew what I looked like: a skeleton. We were always cold, all we wore were prison garb and it was in the wintertime, naturally you were cold and Poland is cold. And then you had to stand *appell*, they would count you and count you, they wanted to make sure that a half a person wasn't missing or something, sometimes it was for hours just of meanness, till they got bored with it. The quarters, they were barracks, and

with wooden slats and you just, there were a bottom one, I think they were like a bunk, like a bunk, you couldn't call it bed.

Q: This is in Plaszow?

A: In Plaszow. Patkush Plaszow.

Q: What about in the ghetto?

A: In the ghetto was apartments, still apartments, but overcrowded. Because the ghetto, at one time, people lived there, before the ghetto, they were homes, you know. I mean, apartments.

Q: And you, you, did you manage to get enough to eat during that time that you were in the ghetto?

A: Probably I did, I don't know, we got a meal in Kabelwerk, the interesting thing was that the first time, I always ate kosher and when I started working in Kabelwerk, they served us meals and it was the same meal the Gentile workers got, so that wasn't that bad because it had a lot of vegetables in there, I don't remember about meat now, maybe it did. And I wouldn't eat, I came home and I barely dragged and my dad said, "What's the matter?" We were still in the ghetto at that time, "What's the matter?" I said, "Dad, I can't eat it, they serving *trayf*." So it must have had meat in there also. And he said, "You have to eat. You have to have strength to survive this. You have to eat." So the next day, I ate and I couldn't keep it down, I was throwing it all up, I came home and I dragged again. I told my dad, I said, "I can't keep it down." He said, "You have to eat. You have to force yourself." And

the third day, I was glad to get it. So from that on I started eating *trayf* and was lucky enough to get it, you know, at that time.

Q: Were your parents working at Kabelwerk?

A: No, no. Just my aunt and I and I was promised that I, if I would work in Kabelwerk, that my aunt, my parents would be safe in the ghetto. But naturally, it was broken promises. So the liquidation of the ghetto was March the 13, 1943. And my father got killed in the hospital, *Spital*. What happened was, every so often in the ghetto, they were rounding up people to send them to concentration camps and he, they rounded him up on the street in the ghetto and he jumped out the window and he fell, he was going to run away and hide somewheres in the ghetto, and he fell, he broke his leg. So this was a makeshift hospital, and they had some Jewish doctors who practiced, I mean they were doctors before the war, and he was in traction and his leg was in traction, it was the last time I saw him. And he was shot in the hospital. Because my cousin saw him, he was in the clean-up crew, and he saw him laying there on the sidewalk and there were pictures of my mother and of me and my brother around him. But I didn't know until I saw "Schindler's List" that they gave them poison, the nurses gave them poison, I did not know that. And I was thankful. Did you see, they were grateful, the patients were grateful to get it. They were even smiling because you heard them downstairs already yelling and screaming, and by the time they came up, they start shooting and they didn't even notice that they were already dead. And I don't know what happened to my mother, I thought my mother might have ended up in one of the concentration camps,

but she might have been shot in the ghetto because they were just shooting left and right.

Q: Were you with her up until that day, up until the day of deportation?

A: No, no, no. I was in the Kabelwerk at that time, I mean I was working in Kabelwerk, And after the liquidation of the ghetto, then they built barracks in Kabelwerk and we were there, we were not walking to Plaszow any more. We were concentrated where the factory was.

Q: That was. . .

A: That was till about September, this was, I think May, March, '43 until I think, September '43, we were concentrated in the factory where we worked. And that wasn't that bad, the only upsetting thing I still remember is, they supposed to have somebody come from Switzerland, a Red Cross representative come from Switzerland and we had to clean the barracks and we all got a care package, which we had to open but not touch. So when the representative from Switzerland came, he looked around, the barracks were clean and we all talked to him on the side how bad it is, you know. And he was not very sympathetic, he said, "The barracks are clean. Look at the nice care package. What are you complaining? People are getting killed, there is a war going on, you got it good here." So we told him, we said, "We will have to return those, we can't even touch it. The order was to open it up, but not to touch it." And they took those care packages away, but it was so upsetting to us that he didn't believe us, the representative from the Red Cross.

Q: Before the ghetto was liquidated and you left, do you remember the last time you saw

your mother?

A: The last time, it might have been maybe a month before. My aunt knew the O.D. man [ph], the one used to march us from one place to another, and he had to be in the ghetto. And my aunt asked him, whether he would take me along. So I marched with him and he was yelling at me just because there were Germans around, you know, even going from one place to another, "Now you walk straight." You know. And it might have been about a month before, I went to the hospital—I went first and saw my mother and my mother told me my dad was in the hospital. So I went to the hospital and I only had a very short time, I don't remember exactly, maybe a whole hour or a half an hour, I don't remember that. And my dad said he was so happy to see me, he was just smiling and he had his leg in traction. So he said, "I want you to meet my doctor, he is such a nice man." I said, "Dad, I have to go, I have to go." They just gave me so much time, and I says, "I got to go," and we hugged and I kissed him and I was walking out and the doctor just walked in. And my dad said, "This is my daughter I have told you about." [phone rings in background] I was dad's little girl always. And…

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2

Q: This is tape two, side A of an interview with Mrs. Sylvia Green. And, Mrs. Green, I'm going to ask you to repeat the story that you were telling about your last visit with your father in the hospital in the Krakow Ghetto.

A: Ghetto, yeah. Do you want me to hold it or you hold it? The last visit, I went into the ghetto, an O.D. man had to go to the ghetto and he was a good friend of my aunt's and so my aunt asked him to take me along so I could see my parents. And so we marched and he was yelling at me, I knew he was just doing it, you know, for the other Germans around, the ones who would walk, and as we entered the ghetto, I went to my mother's place first and then she told me that my father was in the hospital and I went to see my dad and he was so happy to see me because I always was daddy's little girl and we talked for awhile and he had his leg in traction and he told me what happened, how he broke the leg, that he jumped out the window because they were rounding them up to send them to gas chambers. And, well, we talked for awhile and then I said, "Dad, I have to go." Well, I called him Papa, we called the father Papa. I have to go because so and so, the O.D. man, I can't remember his name now, I have to go back with him. And he said, "Oh, I wanted you to meet my doctor so badly." And I started walking out and the doctor walked in and my dad smiled, "This is her, this is Sylvia, I have told you so much about it." And the doctor said, "I'm so glad to meet you, he's talking about you all the time." And we exchanged pleasantries, I don't know exactly what and my dad and I, we hugged and we kissed and I walked out and I met the O.D. man

and this was the last time, might have been maybe a month or a few weeks before the liquidation of the ghetto and I'm really happy I had a chance to go there to see my parents.

Q: And your mother, do you remember?

A: I don't know what happened to my mother, I saw in the paper that the Red Cross has a new list, they found it somewhere, some in Russia which they kept under cover for years and years and I went to the Red Cross here in Winchester and she asked some background information and I gave it to her and she said, "Maybe you'll be lucky that you can find out what happened to your mother." And then my aunt's husband and my aunt's daughter, and they haven't found out. I got a, she couldn't find out anything and then I also got a letter from Baltimore they could not trace what happened to my mother. I always thought she ended up maybe in Auschwitz or Treblinka or somewheres, but after I saw "Schindler's List" I saw they were shooting like crazy. I mean, it's not what your looks was, they was just shouting and shouting and shooting, going crazy, so I don't know whether she was shot in the ghetto or what happened to her, I don't know.

Q: Do you remember the last time you saw her or close to the last?

A: That was the last time, when I saw my dad, that was the last time, about a month or two weeks before the liquidation of the ghetto. The ghetto was. . .

Q: She was there, too?

A: Yes. Yeah, I went to her place first and she told me my dad was in the hospital, I was looking for him. You know, when I went there I thought I was going to see both of them.

So that was the last time. And that was ‘43 and my mother was born in ‘87, that would make her 54 years old. And you know my dad never even had a cold, I don’t remember my dad, he only missed work one time I recall, he had an abscess on his chest and my brother cleaned it out and it got infected, my dad thought he was dying, he never was sick, he didn’t know how to handle it, you know. He went to bed. He never was sick and got killed and he only was 53 years old, a nice looking man.

Q: You had mentioned the O.D., the—those are the Jewish police.

A: The Jewish policemen, kapo, O.D., Jewish policemen. Some of them were pretty mean, also, they thought they would get a better treatment when they mistreated us, some were pretty rough.

Q: Did you ever get beaten yourself by Germans, or?

A: No. I got beaten one time, 25, by—that was in Plaszow, Patkush-Plaszow, that concentration camp, it was in a barrack and it was the one who was in charge of the barrack, and I got 25 paddles. There was a bad odor in that neighborhood where I was on the double decker wooden thing where we were laying. And somebody had their period or something and they put some, it wasn’t pads, it was something, and pushed it over where I was sleeping and she said it was mine, it didn’t happen to be mine, I got 25 paddles. But that was, I think was the only time. My aunt always told me, “Don’t walk erect, make yourself shorter,” you know, that you wouldn’t stand out, and I always knew wherever I went, I just walked like that. So some, some, some girls got raped and I was pretty fortunate, but I wasn’t much to

look at because all those years already took its toll at a very young age and I was still in the developing age, you know, when the war broke out.

Q: Do you remember the deportations that happened before the ghetto was liquidated?

A: No, I was not in the ghetto when it was liquidated, so I don't know anything, it's just what I heard, it all was hearsay. And my cousin was in the clean up crew and he saw my father there and he told me that.

Q: You mentioned that, as you were working at Kabelwerk. . .

A: Kabelwerk, yeah.

Q: You were in charge of ten machines?

A: Ten machines, yes.

Q: And were you supervising other workers?

A: No, no. I was in charge of all ten machines and there was another person, another ten machines and then in the back of you there were ten machines and they had to be in operation at all times. If not, the thing was, it was a very fine but strong thread, but if something went wrong and it skipped a stitch, you had to cut it open and, and do it again, I mean you really had to watch it so it would be evenly covered. And there for awhile, I just worked daytimes, but then, you worked one week, 12 hours daytime and the following week, 12 hours nighttime. And they did this on purpose because you never could sleep. I mean there was no way to get adjusted from one to another. So, well, we were sent back to Patkush Plaszow, September, '43.

Q: When you say sent back, you meant you had been there before?

A: Yeah. I was in Plaszow, I was in Plaszow, and we walked from Plaszow to Kabelwerk from Plaszow, and then they concentrated us in Kabelwerk for a short time. And then, but by the time we were sent back to Plaszow, we did not work in Kabelwerk any more. This was September, '43. And when I got there, well, we had to work in the concentration camp, we had to open graves, pull out gold teeth and the people who were in charge of this place were prisoners, German prisoners and they were completely out of control. I mean they were murderers, they were in prison because they were murderers from way before the war and they let them out to, to oversee us. And the guy's name, Hermann [ph], oh wow, he was crazy, he really was crazy. I saw Goeth many times and as soon as we heard he was walking in the camp, I was running away because we knew he was target shooting, he didn't care what you looked like, he was just target shooting, he wanted to see how close he could shoot or how far he could shoot. And Schindler was with him many times and they were drinking buddies. And I really don't think Schindler, well, he saved a lot of Jews and like they say, who saves one life, saves the world, but I can guarantee you this man did not start out to save the Jews. He started out to, to fill his pockets and somehow I think towards the end, he found out that it's a losing war they're fighting so he changed his mind. But, thank God he did because he saved a lot of Jews. But this was terrible, I mean in Plaszow, whether we had to go outside and load railroad tracks again or in, if we worked inside, then we had to dig, I mean open the graves and pull out the gold teeth or we carried barracks, they were always

building barracks and we had to, to carry that stuff. And really my legs are my weakest, my, my health problem, are my legs. You can't work like a dog, like a man, and not come out scarred. So we were there until, oh, I didn't tell you about my cousin, Janek Haubenstock. When we came back in September '43, people were telling me about my cousin, Janek. He and a little boy were walking in the concentration camp and, evidently, Goeth was walking towards him and my little cousin Janek had a habit, he drove his mother crazy, when he was upset he would whistle. He didn't even know he did this. And somebody told me that he was whistling, that, it was a Russian song or a French anthem, I don't know, I wasn't there, and they arrested him right there, in '43, and they built a gallow to hang him, all night long, and the next day they brought him out to hang him, they made his father sit in the front row, my uncle, Henek Haubenstock, and the rope broke. So he sent somebody for a new rope and my poor little cousin, must have been just scared to death, and he was crawling up to Goeth's foot and kissing his boot. And they said that he was just hissing, Goeth took the gun out and shot him right there. My uncle saw it and he had a complete stroke, never came back from it because when I went up there, I went to see him in Plaszow, in that concentration camp where it all happened, he was just a vegetable.

Q: How old was your cousin?

A: He was younger than I and I really don't know exactly, maybe four or five years younger, this was in '43, I was 19, he might have been 15, 14 or 15, I don't know exactly.

Q: Had you known him?

A: I did not know them very well because I was born and raised in Germany and I was not in Poland, I think maybe about a couple of times. My mother went to visit, but she didn't take us children. Somehow you take children more now than you used to, it seems like it.

Q: What kept you going?

A: Well, this is interesting question. I don't know, really, what kept me going, the only thing, my aunt and I we talked all the time, and other people, too. Somebody had, had to survive to tell the world, we did not know that the world knew about it. We thought everybody was just ignorant about it, you know, they did not know. And I don't know, don't ask me whether, people say you must have been very healthy. I wasn't any healthier than the ones who died next to me because I had typhus, for two weeks I don't remember anything. I was so sick and we had to stand *appell* and they would drag me out, which I did not know, and they stood me up, holding me up. The only thing I can think of is, my time was not up. Somebody still had some purpose and also, I don't know, maybe it was a strong will to live, to tell the world. But my world crumbled pretty quick after I came to the United States, when I found out the world did know and didn't do a thing about it. And maybe it was lucky I didn't know because I am pretty sure I would have given up, my aunt would have given up. My aunt was just like my mother, we were just constantly together, really, by yourself you could not survive, you had to have somebody to care for—your back's hurting now? You okay? You had to have somebody to care for, and she did. The ration of bread we got, she wanted to share with me, her portion. "I'm really not very hungry, Sylvia, why

don't you take this? I just couldn't eat it." I said, "Mina, I don't want it." I said, "You just want me to have it because you know I am so hungry." "No, no, no, honest, I just can't eat another bite. I'm just not hungry." That was my aunt. God bless her.

Q: Did you have faith at the time?

A: I didn't have much religion all during the war and after the war, oh God, I was bitter. I blamed God, what happened and why. And I've still got a lot of why's, thank God I got over the bitterness. The bitterness doesn't work, it eats you up alive and it, it doesn't harm the people you hate. It, I couldn't even talk German after the war, a complete blank. I blocked it out. And my brother told me, "Sylvia," he said, "the German language is beautiful." I said, "The German language? I connect it with Hitler, it's not beautiful, it's terrible." And then to meet people who had anything to do with Germany or German descent, I had to run away. And this kind man helped, he was so kind, because I just wanted to shut the door and that's it, not think about it and when I got married, and even after, I was an atheist, I didn't believe in anything, I really didn't. And so after I got married, I still did not talk about it to anybody. It was like I was ashamed of it, like some of it was my fault, you know. And I knew it wasn't, but somehow I just couldn't talk about it and then it was a small town with not many Jewish people, I already had one monkey on my head to be a Jew in a small town, and, but the door would not stay shut when I got pregnant. And then it all came back, the nightmares and waking up screaming, not waking up, excuse me, screaming in my dreams. Sobbing wet, Jake would wake me up, and we would come in and we sit for hours and I had

to start talking and this man sat next to me, I don't know whether he listened what I said or what, but his ear was there and that's what I needed. So I was pretty lucky to have a wonderful husband and the children are great, they really are. They're loving, very loving. I said that in the documentary, I did not want to raise them full of hatred. In fact, they didn't know much about the Holocaust till I made that documentary. I want them to, want to raise them healthy, happy and, physically and mentally, and they got problems, I mean everybody's got problems, but the problems are not connected with my past. Because I did set myself a goal that if I fail, then Hitler had won out, and he didn't because they're loving children, they really are big hearts.

Q: Let's go…

A: But, well, September, January, '44, naturally, we had to line up, we had to be counted, and they were telling us we were going to a wonderful place, there's gonna be clean beds and plenty food, you're gonna to work hard, but you're gonna have it good. And my aunt said, "Wow, it sounds like paradise," you know. And then we were crammed into cattle wagon. And Krakow, Auschwitz is not that far from Krakow, but it took such a long time because the train stopped every few feet because the planes were bombing. And before we got into the cattle wagon, they gave us some bread and that was all. And there was a container with water, and one container for the bathroom. And they stopped and gosh, were we pray, praying. Yeah, they jumped out of the, the trains, and they were hiding in ditches, the German, and we were laughing, we really were laughing. There was a little window up

in top, those cattle wagons, the old ones, and we would get on each others' shoulders to lift them up to see so we could get a good laugh because they were so scared. And we yelled, "Bomb us, bomb us, come on." You know, we didn't care, we really didn't care as long as they would have gotten killed. And then we went a little bit longer, to me it seemed like we went the whole week, but we didn't. But you see, time was, didn't seem important at all. It was just running into a day or night till the cattle wagon stopped, they opened the doors and they were yelling, "Out, out, out, out, out!" Kicking and dogs, and we were running. And then we looked and we knew where we were, because we saw the chimneys burning.

Q: You had heard about Auschwitz?

A: Oh, yeah. Everybody heard about Auschwitz. And you could smell the smell of human flesh. So, you know how they kept the records so neat, you know, they had to have orders, they didn't have any orders. We arrived without orders, they didn't know what to do with us. So we were sitting there or standing there between the ovens, near the gate when they opened. And on the other side were the barracks and you sat there for 48 hours and they were running like crazy. They couldn't get any orders, they didn't know whether we end up in the, should end up in the gas chamber or at the camp. And we just sat. And it was cold, it was January. And finally there still were no orders, but then we took, I guess they were afraid to send us to the ovens, if the orders came that we should not been killed, they couldn't bring us back after they once gassed us, you know. So then they told us to go in to showers and we took the shower, naturally there's never enough water. And then we walked

out in the nude, in January in Poland, shivering. And then we got prison garbs and they gave me wooden shoes and they make me wear those shoes, I couldn't walk in the shoes. It seemed like those shoes had a mind of their own. And then they put us in barracks and about, well, you didn't do anything. You just laid there or you stood there and we were there about 12 or 14 days, too many.

[end of side one of tape 2]

Q: This is tape two, side B of an interview with Mrs. Sylvia Green. Did they, did they give you a tattoo when you arrived at Auschwitz?

A: No, no. In Auschwitz, and I found that out later on, that you had to work there before they tattooed your arm. And we didn't work there. We just were there 12, 14 days. And we didn't do anything. One time we got black coffee or whatever it was, it was awful, in the morning, and we had to carry, they were heavy kettles and in the evening you got the water soup. So I remember that very well, it was my turn to go, and some other girls also went and coming back and we were almost to our barrack and those stupid wooden shoes wouldn't stay on my feet and I dropped the kettle and our whole supper was there. And really I was scared that the people are going to kill me, the hungry people, you know, but they didn't. We just all lay down and we licked the floor, whatever fell there.

Q: Did they shave your hair?

A: Already partially, every so often it was shaved, the hair. It was already very short before we went in Auschwitz and then in Auschwitz they shaved it again, and delouse 'em, they

sprayed you, and they deloused you with some kind of powder that they, they, they sprayed you with.

Q: Were you still with your aunt?

A: Yeah. We were liberated together. Let's see, after about 12 or 14 days in Auschwitz, we were shipped back in the cattle wagon to Bergen-Belsen. And when we got to, I think it was still January of '44, because we were pretty much one of the first ones there. When we came to Bergen-Belsen, they had nothing but tents and then there was a big storm one night and it was quiet, there was no shouting and it was very quiet in comparison to Auschwitz, there was so much commotion constantly. It was very quiet and my aunt said, "You know, Sylvia, in comparison to Auschwitz, this is a vacation." But we didn't know that was…it was no gas chambers, but it was a starvation camp. They just starved you to death. So there weren't that many people, but then we had a big storm and it knocked all the tents down and they moved us to barracks. And they were looking for somebody who spoke a lot of languages, so I applied for it. I spoke German fluently, by that time already, I spoke Polish fluently, but couldn't read or write it because when you're young you pick up languages, they said I spoke it with a heavy accent. So I applied for it and I knew about three words of French, or maybe five words, and two words of Russian, so I got the job, not very long, though, but enough that I had a foot in the kitchen. And so I could steal food so my aunt wouldn't be hungry. So there were Jewish people working in the kitchen and some Russian soldiers working in the kitchen, and there were three Frenchmen. They were college students and

they worked with the underground, Gentiles, and they got caught. So they were funny, they were so funny. They all spoke German and wouldn't let the German know that they spoke German. And they would sing, and they would sing the French anthem, and they would laugh and they made us laugh. But the Russian people, we had to stay away from 'em. When when we stole food, we didn't tell on each other, but the Russians told on us when they saw us stealing food. They kept to themselves pretty much, we were afraid of 'em. So, well, I got typhus in the, back in Belsen, and Paul Lepitre, one of the Frenchmen, stole food and sent it to the camp, so by the time I got the food, there wasn't that much food left because she shared it with other people, but evidently it must have helped some. And when I got better after two weeks, I noticed that I didn't have any shoes, I don't know what happened to 'em, my shoes, and I told the girl, I said, "I can't go back to work in the kitchen without shoes." So Paul Lepitre stole some man's boots and sent it to the camp with a friend of mine. And after I went back to the kitchen, those three Frenchmen hoisted me up on their shoulder and they were marching and they were singing La, what is it, *La Marseillaise*, the French anthem. Ach, the German, I'm telling you, they would get so red and yell and we'd say, "You're going to have a stroke, he's going to have a stroke." But no, not such luck. And we were liberated April the 14th …

Q: Before...

A: …of '45. It was really strange, by that time I wasn't working in the kitchen any more, nobody was working anywheres because there was no food and they already knew that they

were in bad shape because the guards were disappearing there and they came back, there was no place for 'em to go. We didn't know that, they were surrounded by the Russians, by the British and by the Americans, and there was no place to run around, so they were digging ditches. And oh, they were angry, I'm telling you, you couldn't even set a foot out, if not, you got shot. So we stayed pretty much indoors and everybody was sick, no energy, no water, no food and then I got dysentery problems again. I went out one night to relieve myself and I felt something cold I was sitting on and I looked, it was a body and I just moved over. I mean, you got, evidently, you got conditioned to that. I mean, just thinking about it, it blows my mind, you know. And I crawled back in. So one night, it was between 14th and 15th, the night, or was early in the morning, we heard a lot of tanks rolling and rolling and rolling, we didn't know what was the matter. And it was morning and somebody came running in, "We are liberated! We are liberated!" And they said, "By the British Army, we are liberated!" Well, I crawled out there and my aunt went out there, too. I said, "What are you talking about?" The German commanders, they were standing in front of the tanks, they tied them down evidently, I don't know. And they, with no medals, they stripped them of all the medals, but I didn't see that. I still saw the Nazis, I said, "What you talking about? Here they are." And then we found out we were liberated, and I stood up, then I start singing the British anthem, God Bless the King, I remembered that from school. And, ah, there was such, so much commotion going on. They were so wonderful. And they gave us care packages, we didn't know how to handle those care packages, we ate everything! And that's

why so many died, on that starvation diet for so many years and then you drank cocoa, I mean the powder, and coffee, you smoked cigarettes, chocolate, all at one time and sardines. They meant well, I mean they didn't mean any harm. But I think that the world learned from that, whenever prisoners come back, they kind of condition them slowly with food.

Q: Let's go back a little bit to before liberation and you had mentioned that, that you had typhus and I remember earlier you had said that you, you, you had to go out to roll call everyday and other people were holding you up.

A: Yeah, I didn't, I don't remember, two weeks I don't remember. I don't remember anything. They told me, you see, the thing about it is, they had to have a certain amount, they had the number there and that number had to satisfy 'em. Well, they dragged me out and somebody called, you said, "One, two, three," you know, you called your own number, so somebody must have called a number for me. If not, they'd be still standing there today. I mean, it had to be like to say 550, it had to be 550. If not, they went back in the barracks and they counted the dead. So they told me that they dragged me out every day and then it came, I mean that's a lot of people that's, you know, lined up. They probably when it came to me, they just held me up.

Q: Do you know if you were in a hospital at that time?

A: No, I was not in a hospital, there was no hospital there. After the war, they made a hospital where Himmler's palace was, in Bergen-Belsen, he had a palace there and they made this into a hospital. The ones who were so sick, they took them there, but by that time,

I was, I wasn't that sick any more.

Q: How did you get better?

A: I don't know, I don't know, the grace of God, I don't know. I told you, my time wasn't up, I guess. I had to have those beautiful babies.

Q: And your aunt, was she working?

A: In the camp, no. I stole food while I was in the kitchen, but then there were times we just laid there. She had typhus before I had it even, my aunt. Everybody had typhus, it's a dysentery, but to get well, it's hard to explain with any antibiotics or anything, because now you hear about typhus, everybody dies. It was like cholera, you know, a long time ago people died, not many survived.

Q: Did you have the sense around that time that, that the end of the war was coming close and that you were going to survive?

A: No. That would be too much thinking, I didn't have the energy. I think I told you that earlier in that interview, you did what you were supposed to do and you did it and hour went into hour into day and night, it… there was no difference. No, I never. The only thing, like sometimes we would sit around and be miserable and then somebody would say, "You know, on Shabbat, Friday night? Boy, my mother set a table fit for a king." "What did she cook?" "Well, there was fish and chicken soup and chicken and roast beef and vegetables and dessert." And somebody would pop up, "That's enough food, I can't eat another bite." You know, really, I'm not kidding, we could taste that food.

Q: Did you have other fantasies?

A: No. Just blank, just a zombie. And I don't think I was the only one, I think everybody was that way. I was so conditioned from the time I was nine years old until the end of the war, that only thing many times you ask yourself, why, why, why? I still ask myself now, why? I said when my time comes, I'm going to have a list that long and I'm, when I get upstairs, I'm going to ask Him maybe, "Why this, why that," you know. But you know what's very upsetting to me? The world didn't learn anything by it, if the world just would have learned something by it. Look that ethnic cleansing now, they're killing babies. So I feel like that whole thing was a waste. At least if people would have learned by it. But they didn't.

Q: Do you remember, at liberation, and you, you suddenly saw, realized that you were liberated…

A: Yeah.

Q: …and you were inspired to sing.

A: Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah, that national, the British, God Save the King. I met a British soldier and I still remembered, whoever lives going to get in touch with the Urbachs in Lexington, Kentucky. So I told him about, I had about two years of English and I didn't do too well, but I still have the letter here, I … I was going to pull it out and show it to you. I wrote to Urbachs in Lexington, Kentucky, but we couldn't mail, I mean there was no mail going between Germany and, and America at that time. And I gave it to that British soldier I

met and he sent this letter to his mother in England and his mother, his parents, forwarded that letter to America, to Urbachs, Lexington, Kentucky. And at that time, Lexington, Kentucky was small, there were about 65,000 people, so everybody knew each other, so it got there just, Leon Urbach, Lexington, Kentucky, United…USA. So my brother was in the American Army, he, Urbach sent him an affidavit from England to come to the United States in 1940 and he was drafted in '41. So he was still serving in the American Army, he was with Intelligence, he spoke seven languages fluently. And the Urbachs got in touch with him. And he came to Bergen-Belsen, and I think I told you that previously, when they came running in, telling me that my brother was out there. And I run out and all in a sudden I just stopped. I thought my dad was there because they look so much alike. So then he took us to Munich, he was stationed in Munich, my brother was stationed in Munich. And he sent an ambulance after us, I think it was around October, '45. When he came to the camp, he brought oranges, food, and ah, we, we just had a party. And my brother said, "I just brought it for you and Aunt Mina." I said, "I can't eat that by myself, not sharing it, what you talking about?" He didn't understand. You know, you're hungry together, you party together! So it was good food, it really was. And he rented an apartment in Munich.

Q: When you saw him and he arrived at Bergen-Belsen and you thought it was your father…

A: It was scary, that's why I, I couldn't talk, I just stood there like paralyzed, even had a mustache like my dad at that time.

Q: Did you have a feeling of, of, of sadness or of joy?

A: I had no feeling, I just looked, I knew my dad was killed and I thought my dad was standing there. It wasn't sadness, I just couldn't understand it, you know. They look so much alike, almost like twins. And then I was very happy. Yeah, we just grabbed and we hugged and… He went through his own hell, because he went in my place to England and all during the war, that was on his mind. He told me, he said, "I'm so happy that you are alive, I don't know how I would have managed to, to live, to know that you got killed and I'm alive."

Q: Had you thought about him much through those years?

A: Yeah, my mother would talk, "I wonder how Bernard is getting along," you know, but that's, we didn't know. "I hope he's doing okay." But we knew at that time he was in England, we didn't know he came to America. But we felt like he was safe.

Q: So you went to Munich?

A: We went to Munich and he could have, he was discharged about, we came in June, he was discharged about two or three months before and he could have come to the United States, so he signed up as a civilian for another six months because he wanted us, he wanted for us to get out of Germany. He was afraid that we weren't pushy enough probably, you know. And so he stayed and he took care of all the papers and we got out about June. We arrived in New York.

Q: Would you say you were still feeling numb about everything that had happened?

A: Well, you come to a strange country, you're scared. People you didn't know, all right, the Urbachs were related to my aunt, but they were no relations to me. No, I wasn't feeling numb then. I was angry, I was full of hatred, I think I brought this up before.

Q: I'm sorry, how long had you been in Munich?

A: From October, '45, until June, '46.

Q: And what did you do while you were there?

A: Go crazy, go wild. Eat, drink, bleach your hair blond, peroxide my hair. We didn't know whether to walk on our head, we didn't know whether to walk on our feet. I mean all that freedom, all in a sudden, listen, that's, that's overpowering. And my brother brought a lot of food home from, oh, what do you call that, the mess hall or something, is that called mess hall? I think. Brought a lot of food and all his friends brought food. I guess they felt so sorry for us, you know.

Q: And you didn't have to do any work?

A: No, no, no. He took care of us. Well, the strangest thing, he got that apartment for us and he just told the Germans to get out. And they were crying and they were crying, "That's our apartment, how we, we've been living here." And he was not very sympathetic, he told them they had to get out and some of his friends, also. We got the apartment, so while we already lived in, in that apartment, they came ringing the doorbell, "We want to move back, this is our apartment." So I was angry, I said, "What are you talking about? I'd like to see my parents, too, what did you do to them?" I wasn't… we weren't very sympathetic.

Q: And they just left?

A: Yeah, they left. And then they came back two or three days later on. Looking back now, I, I mean, it was theirs, you know, but look what they did to us. I mean, the one they killed, you couldn't bring those back, could you? And this was only material things. But I told you I was angry, it was just all bundled up, you know, and all in a sudden it just had to explode. But Munich was great, it really was. We went to museums and we went to concerts, we went to the opera. He came in, because…

Q: So when you were in Munich, you, you, you were angry, but you were also having fun?

A: Oh, I was having fun. And I'm not the only one, I mean everybody had fun. Somebody said, "Oh, you…" I used to be a blond as a child, kind of golden blond. "Oh, you got brown eyes. Blond hair and brown eyes is unusual, how about bleaching?" So they used peroxide. And I came to the United States as a blond. And then there was a museum, it was kind of a meeting place of the survivors, and once in awhile you can meet some which you knew. I mean, you met people all the time, so you couldn't remember everybody, you know? But sometimes you run across somebody, and "Oh, you are here, you are here." You know, "You survived it." And we grabbed and we hugged and we were wild.

Q: You made new friends?

A: In Munich, no, not really. I mean, people I was together, then I was with my brother a lot, my aunt was with us constantly, you see, my aunt was my best friend, there was nothing I couldn't tell her. And she knew exactly how I felt about things. She was my best friend,

she was my psychiatrist, and I helped her. But my brother was very good to us, he really took us places and his American soldiers, his friends, were very nice. You know, we did make some friends, Brechner[8], he came back to Munich after the war and he opened a store they had before the war. And he got us some material and we had some raincoats made. At that time a lot of things were custom-made, you just couldn't go in a store, maybe house dresses they would sell in a store, but not like you go and you can buy suits and all that. Those things were custom made a long time ago.

End of Tape 2.

[8] Salo ("Sid") Brechner

Tape 3

Q: This is tape three, side A of an interview with Mrs. Sylvia Green. Mrs. Green, you were just talking about your, your stay in Munich and you spent almost a year there, and…

A: Well, not quite a year. From October until June.

Q: From October until June, so a little over a half a year.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. And, and during this time, did you reflect much on what had happened to you before, in the…?

A: No, not too much. I had a lot of living to do, because I didn't live before. That's, everybody felt that way. We ate too much, we drank too much, we just felt like a, a bird coming out the cage. It's very overpowering, all, all that freedom. You were not told what to do, you could walk, you could go to bed when you wanted, you had nice beds and sheets. I mean, things you take for granted.

Q: Did you think much about the future, about what you would do?

A: Well, I knew that we were coming to the United States, this we knew because my brother filled forms out all the time, you know, and then we had to go, for examinations and you had to get passports. And finally, the day came when we left Germany and I think we were, we came over on the ship, Marine Perch, and, from Bremerhaven. And I think we were on water about 11 days because they had to stop, there were some mines, and they didn't tell us they had mines in the water until they deactivated it. They didn't tell us about it, we would

have been scared to death. But I would say there were about 800 passengers, maybe with the crew also, it was a very small ship. And it was not equipped, it was not a luxury liner. We had one little room, but from the 800 people, there might have been about 40, 50 who didn't get sick. Most of them got sick, seasick. And my aunt was seasick. They, the younger people they put in the bunk beds, and it was a great big room. And the, the food was served buffet and, but my aunt, she was over 40 and she had, I think it was a semi-private room. They just gave it to her, after, up to a certain age. And they ate at a table, they were served and my poor aunt was in bed all the trip. I went down every day to see her and I want to bring her some food and she said, "Get out of here. I can't look at that food!" So, we had a good time, we entertained ourselves, the 45, 50, and it was just amazing to us, when we got to New York, all in a sudden those people start pouring out the ship, you know, you haven't seen them, "How did you get on? I didn't see you." But so many were sick. Then we had to wait, that you had relatives or somebody had to pick you up at the pier. They wouldn't just let you go loose. And my aunt and I, we waited and waited and my cousin in New York supposed to pick me up. I did not know those cousins except one cousin, he was in Karlsruhe and he was just like my brother. At that time, first cousins were like brothers and sisters, very close. And he's supposed to pick me up and he just didn't show up and my aunt and I, we were the last ones. And, oh God, were we scared, I start crying and all in a sudden a woman came up to me and she said, "You're Sylvia Farber, aren't you? From Karlsruhe?" I said, "Yes." And she said, "I don't know, do you remember Berndt Weissman?" I said,

"Yeah, I went to school with him, the, the Jewish school." He had a speech defect and the children were not very kind to him and children can be cruel. So she said, "Well, I really didn't have you on my list, but I looked at the list and I saw Sylvia Farber and I wanted to greet you, so I switched with somebody and I want to say, welcome to America and thank you for being so nice to my son, Berndt." And that kind of felt good that people remembered you, you know. And he was such a nice boy but the kids just didn't give him a chance, he was very intelligent, his father was a doctor, I don't know what happened to him, lost contact. So while we were talking, my cousin came with other cousins. The other cousins, but I didn't know the other cousins, they were waiting for that one cousin, he had to sign for us. And he came and he looked like a Farber, he looked like my dad, he looked like my brother and we just start hugging and kissing, you know. It seemed like the Farber, the looks go through the family, it's amazing.

Q: Was your brother with you?

A: No, my brother didn't come until September. You see, he signed up six more months to make sure to get us out. And I really loved New York, I wanted to stay there, but my brother wouldn't let us. My brother said, "Listen, we're going to make a home in Lexington, Kentucky, it's a beautiful little town. And that way we can be together, we don't have parents." And I listened to him and I stayed in Lexington. Do you know where he ended up? New Jersey. He got his undergraduate degree from University Kentucky, he got his Master's degree from Chicago, University of Chicago, he was working on his Ph.D. in, at

Columbia University. And he stayed there. Then when he got married, they moved to New Jersey.

Q: This relative of yours in Lexington, will you describe how he was…

A: They really were not related to me. They were related, the one, Leon Urbach was my aunt Mina's brother-in-law. My aunt Mina's husband Alec and Leon Urbach were brothers. And I was related to my aunt Mina through my mother. You see, so they really were not related, but they were wonderful, they were, really were wonderful.

Q: And so your brother had been living with Leon Urbach?

A: Yes.

Q: I see.

A: When he came in '40, he lived with Leon Urbach, then he went to Louisville and they grabbed him right away in '41 for the Army. So they really were wonderful people and they treated me better than the daughter, the daughter said. Because I was older than their daughter, five and a half years, and I could stay out longer on a date. And she resented that. She said, "They love you more than they love me." They really were great people. But we didn't stay very long. My brother came in September and we rented an apartment and we lived on my brother's Army pay, ninety dollars a month, forty-five dollars rent. Water bill was cheap, two dollars, electric bill and we made it, can you imagine? And we only had hamburger on Sundays. But we wanted to be independent, Urbachs didn't want us to leave, but we wanted to get started. So my brother start teaching languages, he, he was working on

his undergraduate degree and he was tutoring in French and German and sometimes he didn't go to bed until two, three o'clock in the morning because he had to do his own homework. And he caught the flu, he couldn't get over it and the doctor said something has to give, you need sleep. So I went to work for eighteen dollars a week, but that was money.

Q: Did you speak English?

A: By that time, a little bit, Urbachs, you see, we came in June and I went to work, I think it was Christmas or right after Christmas. And they were nice enough to give me a job, it was Wolf Wile's, they were Jewish people. And I think they gave me a job, they felt sorry for me and then I was a novelty.

Q: This was in the paper?

A: Yeah. That's me, a young Sylvia Farber.

Q: And you have blond hair.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And there's your aunt. . .

A: Do you know it stayed blond until practically. . .

Q: . . .on the left.

A: Yeah, that's my aunt.

Q: The headline says, Polish. . .

A: Polish refugees, there were students, they kind of messed it up a little bit, they didn't get it straight, some of it.

Q: Will you read the entire headline?

A: Yeah. This was 9/27/46, and it was the *Lexington Leader*: "Polish Refugee, Ex-Prisoners Now at Henry Clay High School." We just sat through English classes, American Government classes. And then some of the students gave up their study hour to help us learn how to read, I thought it was very nice of them. And then also, when I was working, I audited some classes at the University Kentucky from eight till nine in the morning. And Joe Wile's niece who went to University Kentucky, picked me up and took me to work so I would be there by nine o'clock. And they were very nice because I should, supposed to have been there at ten minutes to nine, but I talked to him and then he said that's alright.

Q: Were you interested, very interested in getting an education?

A: It was not the education as much, what I wanted, I wanted to learn how to speak English, it's very hard to think in German and then have to translate everything, it's not easy. I mean, were you ever in a foreign country where you walked around with a dictionary? And my problem was that I always would put the buggy before the horse somehow, the sentence construction was very difficult. And English is a very hard language, and the spelling, my God, there's so many words they sound alike. Now, I wish I would have gone on to get an education, I really, but the education at that time wasn't that important.

Q: What were you doing in your job?

A: I started out as wrapping packages and, but that April, I just felt like, you're stupid, you can do better than that, you know. So I start sneaking out and waiting on customers and the

customers loved it because I was a survivor which they never met another one and that publicity, I mean everybody knew about me. So I remember Joe Wile said to me, "What are you doing on the floor?" I said, "I'm not stupid, I can do better than that, just wrap packages." And, well, normally a clerk couldn't have said that, but then, I didn't have the clothes I was supposed to wear, supposed to wear dark clothes, navy blue or gray or black. I didn't have it, he told me, "You wear what you got." So he really made, made allowances for me. In fact, people must have talked about this—a Holocaust survivor—and another department store, Martin, the buyer, I don't remember, I don't think she came in to Wolf Wile's, she must have waited outdoors or something, she came up to me and she said, "I really would like for you to work for Martin's. How much money do you get at Wolf Wile's?" And I said, "Eighteen dollars a week." She said, "We can do better than that, we can pay you twenty-five dollars." So, I said, "Let me think about it." So I went to Joe Wile, I thought that was the right thing to do because he gave me the chance. The factories where I applied in Lexington wouldn't hire me because I couldn't speak English fluently. Now, you could sue 'em because you discriminated, but at that time you didn't know about suing people. So I told him, I said, "Listen, they approached me at Martin's and they would pay me twenty-five dollars a week." He said, "Well, if Martin's can pay you twenty-five, I can give you twenty-five." I did feel guilty because the people I worked with, some been working there ten, 20 years and didn't make more than twenty-five or twenty-seven dollars, but I told him, I said, "You know, we need the money." He said, "I know." So people in

Lexington were very nice, very decent.

Q: When did you meet your husband?

A: Jake?

(Unknown person): You know, I think you better wind this up, three hours is enough.

A: Open through his cousin. We met his cousin, we lived on McDowell Road, Chevy Chase area, I don't know whether you know that area there, okay. And Martha Steinburg and she said, "I know a young man I would like for you to meet." And I was going with that Hungarian fellow, I was telling you I met on the boat, from Budapest. And he proposed before we got off the boat, he wanted to get married, but my aunt said, "No way, he is scared, he doesn't want to be alone to get into a country not knowing anybody." So we corresponded, and we talked on the telephone sometimes. So I was telling Martha, I said, "Well, I'm dating a fellow in New York." But we had an understanding that we could date other people also, since we were that far apart. And she said, "I really would like to." My aunt said, "Well, you have nothing to lose." So they fixed up a date, they fixed up a date, Martha and Jake, for eight o'clock a certain day. It was eight-twenty, eight-thirty, quarter to nine, no Jake Green. I got undressed, I put my slack suit back on, I was madder than a hornet. I wasn't used to be stood up. Doorbell rings there, "I'm Jake Green." And I said, he said, "If you don't want to go out with me, I will understand." I said, "What happened?" He said, "I got lost." Well, where we lived, it was like McDowell Road and then there was a circle and the next road, Irvine, there was a circle and he drove around in circles in the dark

and he went downtown to a gas station and they gave him directions and this really made sense, it's really hard because many times we drive by now where I used to live to see the changes in the apartment house, and it's very easy to get lost. It's like a cul-de-sac, you know, it's a circle. So that's how I met my husband and we went out dancing and I don't know, the evening passed by so fast and I ask him now, I said, "How could you understand me, I couldn't even understand myself." He said, "It was very easy." I learned a little Jewish, Yiddish and he knew a little Yiddish and some German and some English, we had a marvelous time and we both like to dance. And we dated about a year and a half and we got married January the 16th, 1949, which is going to be 47 years, a long time. My brother said, "It won't last." I said, "Why?" He had nothing against Jake, he just said, "Nobody could live with you any longer ten days to three weeks."

Q: Why did he say that?

A: Huh?

Q: Why did he say that?

A: You know how brothers and sister… he meant well, but he was so strict with me. Now you wouldn't even listen to a brother, but at that time you did. And I just listened to him. When I had a date, even before Jake, they had to come inside the house, they had to talk to him, he had to look them over whether they were good enough for his sister. But I wasn't a child, I already was 23, 22, 23 years old, but he just took it on himself like he was my father. Like I told him, "You're stricter on me like Dad would be." But then, after we got engaged

and everything was all right, he said, "Oh well, it's not so bad. I'm not losing a sister, I gained a bathroom." You know, one bathroom in an apartment, two bedrooms. And I had a problem after the war, I took an awful lot of baths, we didn't have a shower, I just felt dirty, three, four times a day, but everything turned out all right. They were kind of worried about me because all that time, you know, you had lice in the camps and you were itching and it was terrible. And you were dirty all the time. And even if they gave you water, on purpose, they would give you soap but never let you wash off the soap, they just dumped the water off, they got their kicks that way, I guess. So I did have a problem, so he probably was happy, he gained a bathroom.

Q: Okay, we have a tape, a, a photograph here of yourself with your family before the war and will you just describe the people from left to right and say something about them?

A: Well, this was taken in a garden, that's a botanic garden and I remember when that was taken, except my brother had this blown up and at that time you didn't have color picture, he, he had it tinted, the pictures were just black and white. And I kind of feel bad, this was a blue dress and he had it tinted green. Because I got the picture and I thanked him so much for it, I said, "Bernard," I said, "The dress was blue." He said, "No, it was green." I said, "No, it was blue." And he kind of felt bad about it, but I really shouldn't have told him that.

Q: So this on the left…

A: This is my mother, this is, well her name was Cerka**,** which is a Polish name, and then she, and they would call her Cilly, and then after she came to Germany, she couldn't be

called Cilly because it's, she would spell it C-I-L-L-Y, it would be 'Silly,' you know. And she was a big woman and, like I told you, I was Daddy's little girl and I always said, "I look like a Farber, I am a Farber." Look, I'm the image of my mother.

Q: You're almost as tall as she is.

A: Yeah. Mother told me she grew very late in life, about 17. They used to call her shrimp because she didn't grow, very slow, she got her period very late then she start growing. And she ended up about five six or five six and a half.

Q: And you…

A: And this is, I always was called '*Klein* Sylvia'[9] because from all my cousins, I was the youngest. And I remember the dress, it was a very pretty dress and they called that *holsom* [ph], I don't know, what do you call this in English?

Q: The bodice, I believe, the bodice.

A: Yeah, and that was all made and this, this is work because you have to pull the threads out and then finish it.

Q: How old were you there?

A: I think I was about, in 1933, I think I was maybe about nine. And my mother said I was skinny. Being heavy was stylish because many times when we walked down the street and we would see a chubby girl passing by, she would say, "Isn't she beautiful." And then she'd look at me, "humph." I don't, I am not skinny.

Q: You look thin.

A: Huh?

Q: You look thin.

A: Ahhh, no.

Q: Very healthy.

A: Yeah, I was healthy, I was a healthy child. Next to me is my brother in his bar mitzvah suit. This was custom made and he had short pants and long pants, but the short pants weren't real short, they come about, just up to the knees, a little above. And he's wearing his gymnasium cap and every year they would change the band, different colors. And this is my handsome dad. And I think this picture must have been taken about '33 because in '36 my mother went to Poland and she had some modern suits. I just go by the style, this was in '36, she had some made in Poland and she brought 'em back in '36, and they were double breasted suits, so this. . .

Q: This is a single breasted suit.

A: This is a single breasted suit, but…

Q: And he's. . .

A: He's wearing a vest.

Q: He's wearing a vest and a tie, and…

A: But not only that, I don't see the spats, maybe he wore spats in the wintertime. I

[9] Little Sylvia (German)

remember his spats and at times he would carry a cane, just for the fun of it. It was the style, I guess. He has a very kind face. Do you notice this?

Q: Yes.

A: A nice smile. He had black eyes, and my brother inherited [doorbell rings] his black eyes and mine are dark, but not as dark as theirs. Mine, my mother's eyes got a little mingled in there in mine. He smoked cigarettes also.

Q: Do you have any closing comments you'd like to make today?

A: I didn't think about that. My life certainly has been interesting. It, I divided it up. This was then and raising the children I really enjoyed. I didn't work outdoors, they were my whole life, my children, but I wanted to, I enjoyed it. And, well, they're wonderful, we love them dearly, they love us dearly, but they got their own life. And… it was a good life. And altogether, the only thing, I thought well, everybody has to go through some kind of hell and I always thought, well, I been through it early in life and the rest of the life, I got smooth sailing. But I guess it wasn't enough because then this came up, with my husband's illness. But we're holding together. The… certain things I would love to do, I would love to travel. I used to travel by myself because Jake wanted to work and he really could have gone with, but, with me, but in that respect, he was a small-town boy and he really didn't want to. But I went to New York, I went to visit my brother, I went to Israel in '85 by myself, and that was a highlight of my life because I always wanted to go to Israel when I was a member of the Mizrachi, I was… at that time, I was going to Palestine and at the time I was five or six, and

I was going to build it up single handed, I really was a Zionist. And I always said, someday, someday I was gonna go. In '85, I said, "Well, you feel pretty good now and that someday has to be now because you don't know what's ahead of you." And I went for two weeks.

Interview with Sylvia Green
April 22, 1999

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection. This is an interview with Mrs. Sylvia Green, conducted at her home in Winchester, Kentucky, on April the 22nd, 1999. This… I'm Arwen Donahue, conducting the interview, and this is a follow up interview to an interview that was conducted with Mrs. Green in, in January of 1996. This is tape number one, side A. Okay, we're picking up a little bit, on where we left off, the last time that we, that we sat together and, and did an interview, and… and you told me about, about your war time experiences, and some about afterwards, as well. And, and what I… where I thought we would start is at the time of liberation, when you were at Bergen-Belsen, and the, it's April of 1945, and the…

Answer: April the 15th.

Q: April the 15th, 1945.

A: I haven't forgotten, yeah. I can't forget that date.

Q: Of course you've never forgotten.

A: After my birthday.

Q: Yeah, the day after your birthday.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the British troops came in and you... and you talked about... about what it was like to see them, and how you... how you remembered the... the anthem, and you sang.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I, I wondered if you could just talk some more about that moment, and, and that… those first couple of days…

A: At that moment…

Q: …right after the…

A: Well, that moment, when the tanks, they were driving in, and the British were driving the tanks, and somebody said, "We liberated, we liberated." But they had the German officers standing up tied to the front. I said, "What you talking about?" I didn't even see the British. All I saw is that, "There are the Germans, don't you see 'em?" Then somebody said, "No medals, look." And I stood up, and it is amazing that I had the energy to stand up, before… because we had no food. We couldn't even venture out the barracks, because if they saw somebody venturing out, you just took your life into your hand. They were digging ditches, they were going to blow up the camp. And, really all… we all were in a semi-conscious state. And I remember I crawled out, I did not walk out. I

crawled on all four. And somehow, I had the energy, I don't know where it came from, I stood up, and I sang God… well, the British anthem, "God Save the King." I learned that in school. So, they were wonderful. I think the first thing they did, they took us to delousing. This camp was just completely diseased. It was typhus and lice and any kind of disease you want was found in there. And so many piled up that's all… the, the, the ones that died. And so they took us to delousing, and they gave us clean clothes. And delousing usually was, with the German, too, you left your… you went in through one door, you, you, you walked in the nude in the shower, and then, after you came out, and they sprayed you. So then they gave us a box of food. And it was like a ration. And I remember I ate everything in sight. I did not know what instant coffee was, and powdered milk, and sardines and cigarettes, and chocolate. That whole thing was consumed in the, in the few minutes.

Q: Did you get sick?

A: I already was sick, I already had dysentery. I had diarrhea, everybody did. It is amazing that it somehow blew over, because so many died, with all that rich food, and your stomach conditioned to nothing, emptiness, you know. So, I don't know, I survived.

Q: What did the British do with the perpetrators? You mentioned they were tied up, were…

A: They were tied up. I don't know what they did with them afterwards. They burned this camp we were in, and...

Q: The British did?

A: The British. That's that diseased camp, and they gave us the German barracks. We were moved right away, this was the first thing. But they felt so bad. I mean, they meant well when they brought us boxes and food, and our eyes popped, you know. But they did not realize what it was going to happen to people. But they learned from this mistake, because whenever they have prisoners now, United State prisoners, they don't give them all that food, they just gave it to them gradually, and reconditioned them gradually.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. How was your Aunt Mina at that time? Was she still sick? You mentioned she had typhus.

A: Well, she was, yeah, she had… she had typhus before I had typhus and I got it afterwards. When she had typhus, I still worked in the kitchen and I stole food, and I sent it in with a friend, through the barbed wires, because when I worked, I was not in the same camp, it was divided. So she was probably in a semi-conscious state too, because we had nothing there.

Q: How long did you stay in Bergen-Belsen altogether?

A: I was in Bergen-Belsen… I was transported to Bergen-Belsen from Auschwitz in January 1944.

Q: '44 or '45? '44?

A: '44. I was one of the first ones.

Q: Okay, right. Okay, and then after the war ended, how long did you stay in Bergen… I

mean, after liberation.

A: In Bergen-Belsen, after the liberation, my brother came. My brother was in the American Army, and I wrote the English letter, and I gave it to a British soldier which I got acquainted with. And he sent the letter to England, with his own letter. And his mother sent it to Urbachs in Lexington, Kentucky. I didn't remember the street, but I remembered the name, because my mother drilled it into us. Whenever, whoever survives, get in touch with Leon Urbach, and there was a, a street also, which I didn't remember, Lexington, Kentucky.

Q: How long…

A: So my brother was in France. They, they called him. He was in the American Army. They called my brother in France, and, and he came to Bergen-Belsen, let's see, April? Don't remember exactly the month. But we left Bergen-Belsen in October '45. He sent, oh gosh, an ambulance, an American ambulance after us, and a registered nurse, because he didn't know how we were gonna travel, and he was worried about that.

Q: So, April 15th through October, you're in…

A: I'm in Bergen-Belsen.

Q: …you're in Bergen-Belsen, and what was…

A: But my brother already was visiting us there.

Q: Did he spend a long time there with you? Or there was…

A: A few days.

Q: Okay.

A: He spent a few days and he brought food, my God. We had a feast. And then he had to go back and he couldn't come back with the ambulance, so he sent that ambulance, and registered nurse, and he took us to Munich, and he rented an apartment for us. He didn't rent it, he evacuated some Germans, told them to get out.

Q: Well, before we go to that, would you tell me a little bit more about what those months in Bergen-Belsen were like for you? Were you mainly just recovering your health, and… and resting, or what… what were you doing during those months?

A: Do you know, that's a good question, what I did those months. We just went wild. And that's why they really didn't just open the… the concentration camp gates and say, "Go." Because, probably we wouldn't have been responsible what… what we would have done. That friend of mine, we got acquainted with some British soldiers, who were standing guard on the gate, and he let us ride the bike around the camp on the outside and I returned it. And then one morning, Halina[10] and I, we walked to see how far we can walk. Not to get away, just… and we passed some vegetable gardens and we destroyed some of it, some we stole, and then we came to a cherry orchard. I don't know whether I told you about that in the other one.

Q: No, I don't think so.

A: And there was a step ladder leaning against the trunk, and I climbed up, and all in a

sudden the German came out, and oh, was he cussing me out, that Hitler should have killed all of us. That was a cherry orchard, I don't know how many trees, full of trees. I had no bag, all I could do was throw down what I could hold in my hand. Halina was down and picking them up. So how much can you carry? He took the stepladder away, and I got stuck up on top. So, luckily, a Jeep, with British soldiers were driving by, and I yelled at them and told them … I spoke a little English, I had about two years in school, and I told them what happened. Oh, he got so angry. He was cussing the German out, but the German didn't understand English, so I translated everything for them, and he told him to get that ladder, and no buts about it. And they waited till I had the ladder and I came down and they said, "My God, how much could you carry in two hands?" you know. And they drove away. And that German really got me. He might have been about maybe 60 - 65, and he said, "Hitler knew what he was doing. He should have killed you all. Look what you doing to us," you know. I got so mad, I took both hands and put it around his neck, and **Halina** said, "Do it, do it, do it." And I pressed and I pressed and he was getting kind of pale, and my hand, I had to let go, I couldn't do it. So I didn't kill him.

Q: Was that before the British… that was after…

A: No, after, that was after the British, because I was…

Q: Oh, you were…

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[10] Halina Ringel [ph]

A: …up on the tree.

Q: …stuck in the tree. Where was…

A: I couldn't have jumped, I would have broken my neck, it was way up high.

Q: What did the… where was the British soldier, what did they do?

A: They left, they left. Because he's, he knew I was safe and we had the few cherries, and they left, and after they left, that's when the German start cussing us out, and we should have been dead and Hitler knew what he was doing. So that's all we needed. But I'm very thankful I didn't do it, because I wouldn't want to carry that with me the rest of my life.

Q: But you were… were you feeling angry before that? I mean you, you described kind of being numb.

A: Very angry. Numb, angry, just everything combined. Listen, I was with that monster 12 years, how can you not be angry? Just thinking about it now, I get angry.

Q: Did you… were you feeling happy at all? Did you have a sense of… of feeling free? That, that you were really liberated, or was that kind of …

A: Yeah, yeah, it was a little too much. We just wanted to live, that's what we wanted to do. And the best thing was getting out of Bergen-Belsen. And then I was in Munich and my brother in American Army, had some lovely friends. And everybody brought us food and they bought us clothes, and we really had a wonderful time in Munich. I went to the opera, my aunt and I, we went to the opera, and concerts, and shows. And… it's okay.

Q: Do… can you tell me a little bit more about your relationship with your Aunt Mina, who you were so close with?

A: My Aunt Mina was my mother, really. I, I lost my mother while I was still a child, and I was with my Aunt Mina, I worshipped the ground she walked on, to a point that I modeled myself after her. My mother was a lovely lady, but I never knew… I thought she was stuck up. And then, after my brother married, and I was married, and we had children, I told my brother, we sat down and we talked about the parents and I don't think we had the same parents even. He remembered things I… which were not important to me. And I said, "You know Mom was stuck up. She had one friend. She knew other people, but just one friend." He said, "What you talking about? She was so shy. She's," he said, "What she used to do is that…" and he was my mother's boy and I was my dad's little girl. So we were divided family. She said, "She would snub people first, because she was afraid that they were going to snub her." I didn't know that. But Mina was so outgoing and so loving, and... and Mina just could give, give, give. When we were in the camp, she gave me her bread portion. She tells me she was too full, she couldn't eat it. And I didn't want to take it and then finally she pushed it on me. But that's very giving person.

Q: Was she your mother's younger sister?

A: Yeah, but not the youngest. In my mother's family, there were about ten children.

Q: How much younger than your… how, how, how much older than Mina… than you

was Mina?

A: Mina was born in, Mina was born in 1900.

Q: Okay.

A: And I was born in ‘24.

Q: So she… yeah.

A: She was just…

Q: 24 years.

A: for… yes.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: She could have been my mother.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I had a third mother, too. I’m a lucky person. My foster parents. They were my parents, and they were wonderful.

Q: Back in… in the immediate… the time immediately following the war, how did you learn about what had happened, or… to your father and did you ever…

A: I knew that, right away, what happened to my dad. My dad was in a ghetto when they liquidated the ghetto. I only saw my parents from 1942 to ‘43, liquidation of the ghetto, only twice. And the last time I saw my dad was in that makeshift hospital, with a broken leg. And how he broke his leg, they were rounding up some people in the ghetto. Every so often they just picked up people and they… they’d send them, probably, to Auschwitz,

or Treblinka, somewheres. Well, they locked them in a room till they had the whole truck full, and my dad jumped out the window. And that's how he broke his leg, and he was in a makeshift hospital. And when they liquidated the ghetto, March the 13th, 1943, my first cousin, he was still alive at that time, was in the clean up crew, where they cleaned up the bodies, loaded it on trucks, and he told me that my dad was laying on the sidewalk, in the nude. Not just my dad, all the ones they killed. And looking back at that, I… I screamed, I cried. I didn't cry that they killed him, they took his pajamas off. This was the ultimate, the worst thing could happen, I mean, didn't even leave the pajamas on. It's so… seems so degrading to me. So that's how… I don't know what happened to my mother, I don't. I always thought she probably was sent to Auschwitz or somewhere's gas chamber, I don't know. But then, when I saw "Schindler's List," that's… they killed a lot of people in the ghetto.

Q: Did your… how did you find out from your cousin? Did… was you cousin in, in, with… when you, with you…

A: Plaszow.

Q: …in Plaszow?

A: No, I … when I went up to Plaszow, he was in Plaszow.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Then they sent him somewheres. I mean, it's… it's mind boggling, you know? Just shipped from one place to another.

Q: So you knew really, right after your father…

A: I … I knew that, as soon as we went to Plaszow, which was in September. That's when I found out.

Q: Mm-hm. After… so, after the war, when you were in Munich, did you try to find out what had happened to your mother?

A: Well, the Red Cross, we found out that they had some papers on them… some dates, so I went to the Red Cross in Winchester, and they never could find out what happened. They were talking about that the Russian released some papers, way after the war, maybe four or five years ago. And I gave them all the dates, and everything I knew about them, you know, where they were, and they couldn't find out. And I still got the letter from the Red Cross here. And a letter from the Red Cross in Baltimore. They also said they never could find out.

Q: When you think… if we focus just on that time, immediately after the war, when you were in… in Munich, and… and what your… what your concerns were, and what your hopes were, at that time you weren't searching for your, for what happened to your mother, or were you, you hadn't gotten to that point yet?

A: Where could I search? Where could I search? Where would you go?

Q: Did you think about going back to your hometown, to talk to anyone?

A: Hometown, Karlsruhe? What was my hometown, Karlsruhe? I left Karlsruhe… we had to leave Karlsruhe in '39, this was '45. And how many different camps, and ghetto,

and… and factories I was in. There was nothing to go back to Karlsruhe for, he killed them all.

Q: Had you had any, any other relatives in Karlsruhe?

A: Not… not any more.

Q: Did you… did you feel at all like Karlsruhe was your home, or was that… all of that erased by… by what happened during the war?

A: No, no, no. They had a Holocaust reunion in Karlsruhe, 50 years after Crystal Day. I did not know anything about, because I was the only survivor in this part of the country. And some people I knew in New York, they went, and I met one of them at one of the weddings I went to. And she said, "Would you have gone? I feel bad. I should have notified you, but I didn't think." I said, "No, I would not have gone. I don't want to go there." My brother went back. My brother was with Borden's export and import, and he was in Europe a lot, so he was close by, and we had a friend, Fritz Öler. Before Hitler, he was our friend, then he didn't know us, you know. So he wrote **Fritzle** a letter, and Fritz wrote him back and he said, "I want you to come home with me, and we going to have dinner together, you meet my wife, you meet my children." And Bernard said wait a minute. He wrote him, "I don't want to go to your home. Let's just meet at the neutral place, in the park, or the depot, just somewheres." Because, too many hard feelings there. And they met, and Fritzle was happy, Bernard, he… Bernard wanted to make his peace with Karlsruhe. So Fritzle was talking and Bernard was talking, and Fritzle said that his

parents were still alive. Bernard jumped up, and walked away, didn't say good-bye or anything. He came back to the United States, Sarah my sister-in-law told me, he walked into his home, went to the telephone, calling me, "There is no justice, there is no justice." Fritz Öler**…** Fritz was like a brother, really. We were raised together, and my mother and Frau Öler were close friends. And then, when Hitler came to power, her husband became a big wheel in the SS. And I was scared of the man. I don't know, I… how can you be that close, and then all in a sudden looking at you like, "I'm going to come at you and kill you?" And I got the picture of… well, that's, the picture wouldn't help you, and I got… here. It's right in the front. Oh-oh. That's Fritzle. That's me.

Q: Uh-huh. Was he as close with… with your brother as he was with you?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: We were a family. I had… really, that's what I said. I was about two or three here, and I was always tall for my age, I might have been three. And I… I probably didn't even know the difference between Fritzle and Bernard, you know.

Q: Did your brother… how did you, how did these pictures survive? Did your brother have…

A: No, no, some of it were my brother's, but you see, we, we left Poland a month before the war. My dad was deported to Poland in… see the dates. October, '38, and we had to leave Karlsruhe by August, '39. So we had the pictures. So, in Poland, my Aunt Mina

had a very good friend, we thought. She gave her silver to her, fur coat, her china, her linen. And the linen, everything was hand monogrammed, even sheets were hand-monogrammed, everything. And my aunt gave her everything and her pictures and my pictures. So my Aunt Mina had the maid before the war, so after the war was over with, Mina wrote to Yulche [ph], the maid, to go to the people and tell them that she was alive and then that Mina was going to call her or talk to her, how to ship that… her stuff here to the United States. So when Yulche went there, the woman opened the door and she… and Yulche said that Mina was alive, and she said, "Oh, that poor woman is still alive?" She said, "Well, you write her that right after she left all that stuff with me, the German came and took everything away. I do have the pictures." So, we were so thankful for those pictures, because the other stuff was material things, you can live without it, but the pictures, Mina… we really were happy. And a lot of those pictures are my Aunt Mina's. Have you ever seen a picture of her?

Q: I don't think so.

A: Here. Look, I play. That's me, here. Oh, let's see, where is my Aunt Mina? [indecipherable]. That's my Uncle Alec, Mina's husband.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It's Leon Urbach, the people who sponsored us. That's Leon's brother.

Q: What happened to him? What happened…

A: Who?

Q: …to Alec.

A: Alec, Uncle Alec, and Silvusha, Sylvia Frederica, they were taken away in ‘42.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We… we came home… There’s Mina. Oh, she was sharp. And that was the little girl, here’s Mina.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: There’s the family, Uncle Alec, Mina, and Silvusha. Her name is Sylvia Frederica.

Q: Sylvia Frederica is Mina’s daughter?

A: Yeah.

Q: And she… she and Alec…

A: Alec were taken from the ghetto.

Q: …were taken from the ghetto.

A: In ‘42.

Q: Oh, my goodness. Yeah, I see.

A: That’s her. Those are my mother’s three sister. That’s Mina, that’s **Lola**, and that’s **Gustie**. And those are my cousins. That’s **Sharon**, she got killed. That’s **Silvusha**, Sylvia. And that’s my cousin Janek, the one Goeth shot in Plaszow, think I told you that.

Q: Oh yes, you did tell…

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you have all of these photographs labeled on the back for your… for your

children?

A: I don't know. **Sandy** pretty much knows who they are, pretty much. Maybe I… that's what I should do. I don't know, some of them I think are, some of them are not.

Q: Yeah, I see, uh-huh. Well, was this… how did this album… was this album in your brother's hands, or how did it come to you? Have you had… kept it all of these years?

A: I kept the pictures, I just did this… I think I did it not too long ago, before… oh, maybe a year ago, I put it all together.

Q: Well, let's go back… you can put the album down, but let's, let's go back to Munich, and tell me how you, how you felt about being in Germany, at all, and…

A: Munich, I didn't even think where I was, I was free, I was wild, and just go, go, go, go.

Q: Were you… did you have hopes or dreams of what would come next…

A: No.

Q: …what things that you want to do?

A: No, no, I didn't. People say, hadn't you thought about going back to school? I said, "No, I wanted to live." That, that, that's the only thing, I mean 12 years out of your life, I didn't have a teenage life. I been…

Q: Did you date people in Munich?

A: Yeah, but not single dates. I mean, all my... brother's friends, American soldiers, they took us just all the time. And then I got a lot of company from Bergen-Belsen, people

came to visit me, people I was in the camp with, they came to visit.

Q: What was the atmosphere in Munich like? Were there a lot of refugees, a lot of...

A: Oh, there were a lot of refugees, and there was a museum where the refugees met.

End of Tape Four, Side A

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

Q: You all met at... at a museum, the refugees?

A: Yeah, that's... yeah, yeah, that's all some...

Q: And... And...

A: And, but the atmosphere, the Germans... I got my period again, which I didn't have. I always thought they put something in our food, but Stuart told me, and Bernard also said no. I needed everything to survive, that's why we didn't have our period. And I was flooding, and then finally Mina got scared and Bernard got the German doctor, and he did not know I was a survivor. And he start talking about the Jews and how horrible, what they doing in Munich. We were loud. We really were loud. I mean, you locked up... look, even an animal, you let an animal out, they gonna go wild, you know, you cooped up. We were loud. We didn't bother anybody, but we were laughing loud, whatever we did, talking loud. And I spoke German to him, with a Badenzer [ph] accent and he thought I was Bernard's girlfriend. And, so finally he gave some medicine and I told him to get out, and I told him who I was. He didn't care. So that was after the war.

Q: Did you get the, the impression in general that, that the Germans just didn't know

what happened, or that they knew what happened and they didn't care?

A: No, they knew, they didn't care, and it's convenient not to know. Don't tell me the little towns near Bergen-Belsen, the people didn't know what happened? What about Auschwitz? We had to walk a mile, they never let you out on the… in the main depot and it was always at night, wherever we went. They never let you out in the main depot during the day, it was always at night. As soon as we got out, that… the, the cattle wagon, we knew we were where, because far away, we saw the chimneys burning. Now you telling me that… that the… they didn't know? They knew, they just didn't want to know.

Q: You knew you were going to be leaving for America at some point, is that right?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: How did you feel about that?

A: Scared. It was scary. I mean, people I didn't know, and you don't know how you're going to be treated, you don't know. But I just was a very lucky girl. Because they took me in right away, they took to me. And Dolly, their daughter, said, "It's unfair, I have a curfew on a date. Sylvia can go and she can stay out." She was jealous of me, you know. But then, she didn't realize I was older. But they were, they were wonderful to the day they died. I loved them dearly. And I still miss them, like Mother's Day, I always called them. At that time, towards the end, they lived in Florida. From Lexington, moved to Louisville, from Louisville, in a condominium in Florida. And then, they had two

condominiums, next to each other, so there was somebody always could watch over them, when they were older. And then they went into a small apartment, and they both said, "You know, we now where we started from." In a small apartment when they first were married. But Mother's Day, birthdays, I always called them. And Leon was so hard of hearing and I just miss it. Rose always answered the telephone, and she would yell, "Leon, Leon," you know. Took awhile for him to hear, but I miss that. And I always told them, I said, "My God, you took such a chance, taking a stranger in." And they brought my brother from England, too, in 1940, and Bernard was drafted in '41.

Q: Did your aunt, your Aunt Mina come with you to…

A: Lexington.

Q: Lexington.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: We lived… well, it was my Aunt Mina's brother and sister-in-law, but I was not related to them.

Q: Going back a little to your, to your journey, or to right before your journey to the U.S., what, what were your ideas about the United States? What did you expect to experience?

A: I didn't even think of the experience. I met a lot of young people. My Aunt Mina was seasick from the second day. They, I don't know, they were… after you were after 40, they got a cabin, and we had bunkbeds, we were a whole lot in one room. And I met a lot

of people, and we had a good time on the boat, so we had to entertain ourselves, because this was not a luxury line, Marine Perch was just a ship. And there was one little room. But we had fun. Like, I met a fellow on the boat, he drank a whole bottle of ketchup. Just showing off, and laughing, you know, it's… I didn't think that far, till we got to New York and somebody had to pick you up. It took us 11 days to come over, because they had some mines, and all in a sudden we just stopped, but they didn't tell us why. And then they finally deactivated it, and then they told us what happen. We could have been blown up.

Q: You mentioned that you met… in the first interview, you told something about the journey and you mentioned that you met a Hungarian, a young Hungarian man who had proposed…

A: Yeah, that's the one.

Q: …marriage to you.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: He's the one who drank the ketchup?

A: He drank the ketchup. I thought that was great. Stupid now, you know. He, he was kind of wild, too. We all were.

Q: Did you want to marry him?

A: No. I wasn't ready for marriage. It would have been the biggest mistake in the world. My aunt, right away, I was telling her. She said, "You know why? He's afraid to go to a

strange country, to be alone." That probably was the reason. But we did spend a lot of time together on the, on the ship.

Q: Did you see… do you remember approaching the harbor in New York? Did you see the Statue of Liberty?

A: Yes, I remember the Statue of Liberty. I had the camera, and it was a good camera, my, my brother got it for me. Akvakarat [ph]. I don't think they make them any more now, it was a German camera. And I looked and oh, I saw the Statue of Liberty. When I had it developed, it was nothing but water, I was too far away. You couldn't see the statue, it just water.

Q: Do you remember how you felt seeing it?

A: Yes, I got goose bumps. So… excuse me.

Q: Sure. Okay, you were saying about the, the… seeing the Statue of Liberty. Did you feel the…

A: Yeah, I… I got chills, I really did. It's… then, as you dock, somebody had to pick you up. If the sponsors couldn't do it, then they had to send somebody. You had to be claimed. And Mina and I, and we waited and we waited and we waited, and nobody came. And I start crying. But the nicest thing happened also. A woman came up and she said, "You Sylvia Farber?" And I said yes, I looked at her, she said, "I'm Berndt Weissman's mother, you went to school," we went to Jewish school together. And she said, "I didn't have you on my list, but I looked at the list and I saw Sylvia Farber." And

she said, "I just want to thank you so much, you were so nice to my **Bernd."** He had a speech defect. And people, children can be so cruel, they didn't want to have anything to do with a… with people who are a little bit different. He was brilliant, and I remember I liked **Bernd**. And when he spoke to me, his speech wasn't as bad, because he got used to me, you know, and, and he knew I liked him. So, she thanked me. She said, "I saw your name, and I wanted to thank you personally, and then also wish you well." She said, "We been in New York," her husband was a doctor… doctor while in Karlsruhe. So that was kind of nice.

Q: It must have been…

A: It… it's a good feeling.

Q: …a nice way to be greeted…

A: Yes, yes.

Q: …to, to a new country, to have something like that.

A: So, we were the last ones getting off the boat. We were claimed. It's almost like having a claim check, you know? It was my cousin, who looks exactly like my dad and my, my brother. The Farber is very predominant, know most of them are gone now. But he came, I knew him from Karlsruhe, so they did claim me.

Q: So he, he… did he escape before the war started?

A: Benjamin used to live in Karlsruhe and then they moved to Holland.

Q: Sorry, what was his full name?

A: Benjamin Farber.

Q: Okay.

A: And they moved to Holland. I don't think he was in a camp. I really… he's still alive in New York, once in awhile I talk to him. I don't know, he might have come to the United States before, I think. I am not sure. There's so much in there, you know. It goes round and round.

Q: So he picked you up, and did you… where did you go?

A: And some cousins, I met some cousins, first cousins. And I, I went home with them, we stayed the whole week. And they treated us like royalty. We saw Broadway show, it was just too bad we couldn't understand it too much. But then, on my honeymoon, I went back to see it, like Mr. Roberts, Annie Get Your Gun. Then, I already understood a lot better. And they took us to fabulous restaurants, and the food, my God, it was wonderful. So, my… I really would have loved to stay in New York. I loved the hustle and the bustle, at that time, not any more now. And my brother wouldn't let me. He said, "We going to Lexington, Kentucky, what's left of our family, and we going to stay there, and we going to be close together." So I stayed in Lexington then Winchester, he lived in New Jersey. He deserted me then.

Q: So you stayed in New York for just a week before you left?

A: A week, a week, my aunt and I, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. And did you, how did you get to Lexington from, from New York?

A: By train.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: George Washington.

Q: Do you remember the journey? Do you remember traveling?

A: Yes, yes, I remember it very well, because it was after the war, there were no seats on the train, people stood up. And the ladies' rest room, they had a couch there. And we had the nerve, Mina and I, we lay down on the couch. It was for somebody who got sick. But we were so exhausted, we fell asleep on the couch, and nobody woke us up, till we… till the night was over with.

Q: And you didn't speak English at that point, or just a little?

A: Very little, very. I had two years of English in school. But the…

Q: Did Mina speak English?

A: No, Mina didn't speak any English. Mina spoke German fluently, and Polish, but not English. But she learned, and Leon was so proud of her. After they moved, and we wrote letters to him, every so often when we talked, "She wrote a masterpiece." Do you know he corrected every letter I wrote him? And not to be mean or anything, just to learn. And the last letter he corrected, there was no correction, he wrote, "It was perfect." And oh wow, I was in seventh heaven. My friends said, "This is ridiculous. I wouldn't write to him. This is not very nice." I said, "You don't understand him, he's trying to teach me."

Q: Do you remember seeing… you're on the train, you're traveling between New York and Lexington, do you remember looking at the landscape out of the window, or see… approaching…

A: There were… There was a mob on the train. People sat on their suitcases. It was just right after the war. Soldiers coming back. I don't even think we were near a window, couldn't even get near a window, had… would have to climb over people.

Q: What about arriving in, in Lexington? Can you talk about your first impressions of the… well, where did the train arrive?

A: You know, that's getting kind… Lexington Depot. They had the depot in Main Street. It's very dim, I don't remember that much. I was so scared. We both were scared, Mina and I, we talked about that. But Urbach picked, picked us up at the, the train station.

Q: How did you feel about meeting them, did you… was it…

A: Scared.

Q: Mm-hm. So it didn't click right away, or…

A: Well, they were wonderful right away. We had our own room, and she was very thoughtful. She… right away, she start teaching, after a few days, you know. They send… they paid for picture show, we saw every new picture show, just to sit through, to get used to the English language. Then she went to Henry Clay High School in Lexington, and, so we could attend…

Q: She… Mina, you mean?

A: No.

Q: You…

A: Rose Urbach, yeah.

Q: Rose, oh, okay.

A: And we went there for a few hours every day, we'd sit through English classes, American government classes. She arranged all that. They did not have night classes at the University Kentucky at that time.

Q: Were you going for a high school diploma at Henry Clay?

A: No, no, just to get the feel of the language, it's… the sound is so different, you know, it… do you speak languages? Any foreign languages? But the, the sound is different, and the sentence construction in German and English, is just the opposite. When I first came, and I thought in German and had to translate it into English, it seemed like I always put the cart before the horse, it seems like it. It just always lost something in the translation, or it was wrong.

Q: What language did you speak to the Urbachs with?

A: Well, she start teaching right away, like she said, "Sylvia, we going to set the table. This is a plate, this is a napkin. Fork, spoon and knife." And then she would add something to it all the time.

Q: She would always speak to you in English?

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. Did she…

A: Leon spoke a little bit of German. He'd always, "Yah, yah, yah."

Q: Tell me about what you thought of Lexington. What did you… what did it see… what kind of town was it? What…

A: I loved Lexington. It was a small town. In '46, it had 65,000 people, and now it's bulging out in the seams, isn't it? People were very friendly. And then, Mina and I, we were a novelty. I went... had to go to work in December, and I applied in factories, but they wouldn't take me, because I didn't speak English. Times have changed. If it be now, your language has nothing to do with it. But Dolly Urbach, that's Rose's daughter, she had a friend**,** Phyllis Strauss, and her uncle and her mother were owners of Wolf Wile's, downtown Lexington. I got a job there, in, wrapping packages, it was December '46. And I wasn't very happy, because I felt like it was demeaning. I said, "You're not that stupid." Talked to myself. "You can do better than that." So I always sneaked out, and tried to wait on customers, and Joe said, "Come on, Sylvia." He was very kind, he knew my past. And that's why he gave me the job, also. And so, by April I was on the floor, waiting on customers. And the first year, I had the most sale for the year, and the second year the most sale. People were curious, so they waited for me. They…

Q: They knew something about your, your background?

A: Well, it was in the paper. Refugees, survivors, you know. I was the on… we were the only ones in Lexington.

Q: Did people come in and, and ask you about what had happened to you?

A: No, not really. They just wanted to see me, like I was a novelty, and no, they didn't ask. And I would not, not have been ready to talk what happened to me. It took years and years before I was able to talk. I didn't talk about it until '83.

Q: Were the customers… what, what kind of things were you selling there?

A: It was a ladies' department store. It was more exclusive, and children's clothing and china. It was like a department store.

Q: Did you feel any… a sense of antisemitism from anyone in, in town, in Lexington, when you arrived?

A: No. This is really strange. I found it more in Winchester than I did in Lexington. When I first married Jake, and they didn't even know about my past, because I had problems enough. My children were different. So I, I didn't think… I didn't want to load that on them, being a survivor, also. And this wasn't made public until '83, till I make a documentary, with Dr. Otis Singletary, he was the moderator, and three survivors and two liberators. So that was on television, then they found out. I don't know, Winchester… I changed my mind. I really don't know whether it was that much antisemitism, as it was ignorance, and also, they didn't like strangers. They wanted Winchester to stay a little town. They didn't like strangers, because I have talked to people who came, and they were not Jews, and they had the same feeling, that they were not treated right. And I said, "I always thought they were anti-Semitic." But there were a

lot of rich farmers here, who did not want industry, they tried to keep it out… keep them out, till they couldn't keep them out any more.

Q: So, you didn't hear anything, any comment, comments about the Jews when you…

A: In Lexington, no, no.

Q: In Lexington, or in the… and did you, do you, did you have the sense that people knew what had happened during the war in Europe, what had happened to the Jews?

A: We just never talked about it. I don't know, maybe I thought it would go away. I just wasn't ready. I wasn't even ready in '83, if not Marilyn Moosnick. She said, "You owe it, to do that." And I told her, I said, about the documentary, I said, "I don't know, I might cry." She said, "Well, it's not going to be on live, anyway." And the reason for it was, that in '81, there was a history teacher at Tate's Creek High School, who said the Holocaust never happened, it was a war. So this, well, they were trying to do it in '81, and I wouldn't do it. And then, Dr. David Widstein approached me, and I said, "David, I can't do it, I might cry." He said, "No, you couldn't cry with Dr. Singletary there," you know. And so he dropped it. But then Marilyn took it in hand, and she used a lot of psychology on me, I guess.

Q: I'd like to talk more about that in a little while, but I… stick with the chronology more and, and talk about right when you arrived in Lexington and, and some of those experiences. Where did you, where did the Urbachs live, what neighborhood was that, or what was their address?

A: They lived Fontaine Road, Chevy Chase area. They lived on Irvine Road, and my brother was discharged from the Army in ‘86, September ’86 **[fn: 46]**. He could have been discharged six months before, but he signed up as a civilian with the American Army, so he wanted to make sure that Mina and I would be out of Germany. He was afraid that we didn’t have enough pull or push or what. So then he was discharged in September of ‘46, and we got an apartment. So we weren’t that long with the Urbachs**.** We came in June. July, August, September, about three months. They didn’t want us to leave. They didn’t think we were ready, but we wanted to be on our own. And we managed, believe it or not, on 90 dollars a month. That was my brother’s Army pay. And then, he would give private lesson, he spoke seven languages fluently, so he would give private lessons. And then he caught the flu and he couldn’t get over it, and sometimes he didn’t get two or three hours of sleep at night. And he was very sick with that flu, and the doctor said, “Something has to give. You have to take better care of you.” And that’s when Mina and I, we went to work.

Q: Did Mina work at the same place?

A: No, no. My Aunt Mina got acquainted with people who had a photo shop, sold cameras and tripods and bulbs and everything. And she developed pictures. And she was very good at it, and she was a wonderful worker and they liked her so much, that my Aunt Mina was sick with cancer for four years off and on, she would go back to work. And even if she didn’t work, he paid her to the end, till she died. But she was a… a very

dedicated worker. They went to England for a vacation and Mina ran the store. Very loyal.

Q: Did you… did you develop ties with the Jewish community in Lexington in those early days in the… did the Urbachs take you to synagogue with them?

A: Yeah, the temple.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The temple. I wasn't too happy, but the… I was an atheist anyway. I come from a Orthodox home, but after the war I was an… an atheist. I blamed God for everything. And I did go to the temple with them, but somehow I didn't feel that comfortable, because I was used to seeing the men wearing **yarmulkes,** skullcaps, and at the temple, at that time, the Rabbi **Lewis**, he was ultra, ultra, ultra Reformed, that if you wore a hat, you took it off before you went inside. So, but I went, it was all right.

Q: Was this Adath Israel, or... what was the temple?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Rabbi Adland. But he... he seems like he is more religious. And I really do think the Reform is leaning towards... more to the Conservative, because they're having Bar Mitzvahs now, which they used to not to have.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. You mentioned in the first interview, I'm just going back a little bit to something that you mentioned, that, that in the early years of the war, when you were

in Plaszow...

A: Yeah.

Q: You, you had been keeping kosher up until then, and then you couldn't keep kosher any more.

A: No, it was at Kabelwerk.

Q: Right, okay, Kabelwerk…

A: It was at Kabelwerk, yeah, yeah.

Q: Right, okay. And then did you…

A: Well, what happened was, I worked, and at that time we... we got the pretty good soup, usually it was just one...

Q: Yeah.

A: ...but it wasn't just cooked for us, because there were a lot Gentile working there too, in that factory. So, we got the same soup, but I wouldn't go and get it, because it was not kosher. So I went home and I dragged. And my dad said, "Didn't they give you anything to eat?" I said... we used to call him Papa, my dad. "Papa, it's not kosher, I couldn't eat it." He said, "You have to eat it. It's a sin, it's almost like committing suicide. You have to eat to keep yourself alive." So, the second day, I ate, but it wouldn't stay down, it came up quicker than I ate it. And so I came home and I dragged even worse. He said, "What happened?" I told him. He said, "You going to be all right. Tomorrow it's going to stay down and you'll be fine." And it did.

Q: After the war ended, you... you mentioned that you were angry at God…

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you... did you get to a point where you thought...

A: I didn't.

Q:... of changing your diet again, back towards being kosher?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: We were not kosher in Lexington. We were lucky to buy a pound of hamburger a week. Ate a lot of potatoes. So, no, even... the only reason I start keeping kosher is because Jake's father wouldn't eat at my place. And Jake even asked me, I mean, he knew about how I felt. And he said, "You want to keep kosher or not, that's up to you." I said, "Well," I said, "almost have to keep kosher, if not, your dad couldn't eat in our house, and that'd be awful, you know." So I start keeping kosher, and I knew all about it, because I was raised that way. And then when you first start out, you just divide your dishes. It, it was simple.

Q: Did you form – you, you mentioned that you were... that you were dating a little bit, before you met Jake?

A: Yeah, but way before, when I first came, it wasn't single dates that much. People didn't single date that much, it was group. And, like a group, I was running around with a group from the university, they have an organization, Hillel there. It's connected... I don't

think it's just a temple, I think it's just the Jewish children on the campus. And I went to parties, but it was mostly groups. But I met a lot and some were nicer than others, and I don't know whether I told you in the other one, I wore hand-me-downs, and it is not very pleasant...

End of Tape Four, Side B

Beginning Tape Five, Side A

Q: This is tape number two, side A, of an interview with Sylvia Green. You were just talking about being at a Hillel dance.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And you were going to tell something about that.

A: Well, I think I told you about the hand-me-downs, you know...

Q: You just mentioned it, yeah.

A: Yeah, so I wore a hand-me-down, and the girl who gave it to me, her name was Shirley, I will not mention the last name. She doesn't live here, she lives somewheres else now. And out the blue sky, all happy, talking, dancing, and then the whole group, we were to... having a Coke, or whatever it was, and she said, "Oh, you see Sylvia's dress?" And they all looked, "Yes, what?" "Don't you remember I bought it last year, and I really didn't like it, and I gave it to Sylvia." Now, how do you think a young girl feels? I wanted the... the ground to open up and swallow me up, you know?

Q: Mm, like you…

A: So one of the guys, I... I know his name was Abie Guller [ph], because I met him in Munich, he was in American Army, and my brother knew him from Lexington. He said, "Shirley, I remember that dress when you wore it last year. It sure looked like hell on you, but Sylvia looks beautiful." I want to hug and kiss him, which I didn't, you know. So, that was not very pleasant. Now, some other... there's another girl, that Strauss, I told

you Phyllis. I audited some classes at the University Kentucky, I think it was two or three times in the morning, from eight till nine. I supposed to be at work at ten minutes to nine, because I had to take the mail around to different departments. But I talked to Joe Wile, my boss, he said, “That’s all right.” Well, Phyllis would pick me up before eight o’clock, take me to class, was waiting... she was going university at that time, too... was waiting for me, and took me to work. And I told her that not long ago, about three years ago, she lives in Boca Raton, Florida now. But Jake passed away, she donated to the synagogue. My brother passed away, she donated to the synagogue. I said, “You know, you were something.” I said, “You picked me up,” she said, “Sylvia, I don’t remember.” So she said, “So it was not that big a deal.” She said, “If I would have had classes, it’d be a different story. Evidently, I didn’t have classes, so I was glad to do it.” So, not everybody is bad, not everybody is good, you know. All kinds of people in this world.

Q: Mm-hm. Did you interact at all with non-Jews in the community? With Gentiles in Lexington?

A: Girls, yes. I went out to lunch when I worked at Wolf Wile’s, and they ate out every day, but I couldn’t afford it. I only could eat out once a week, because the money I made and my... my aunt and my brother, we all pooled together. And they figured out I could eat out once a week. So I went with them, ate out. But I went, and I had the sandwich with me, and I went to restaurants with them, and they let me eat my sandwich and had a glass of water. I don’t know whether I drank coffee at that time, or not, or milk, and paid

for that. But they didn't object, the restaurants. They knew. Yeah, I met some nice people. Dating, no, not much.

Q: How long had you been in Lexington before you met Jake?

A: I met Jake in '47. I think it was September '47. His cousin lived a half a block from us, **Martha Steinberg**. And Mina, my aunt Mina and Martha got very close. And naturally then, I was close. And she always said, "I have a cousin, a first cousin." Jake and Martha were more like brothers and sisters, because when Jake's mother died, Jake went to live with Martha and her parents, so he could say special prayers in the synagogue. It's called **kaddish** and you need ten men, at that time. Now women count, too. And so, they felt more like brothers and sisters. And I told her, I said, "Well, I'm going with that fellow in New York." And she was just after me and after me, so George and I had an understanding that we were going to date other people, since we were that far apart, to learn about the American way. And, so the first night we went out, he took me dancing, we had a marvelous time. I always said, "How could you understand me?" We spoke... spoke some German, some little Yiddish, sounds like German, he understood Yiddish. And then English. He said he understood me very well. So, it was September '47, and we married January the 16th, '49.

Q: Did he... did he ask you about your experiences during the war, or did you talk to him about it?

A: I don't think that... I don't remember, but I don't think I talked... we talked about it

when we dated. I don't think so. But after we were married, we wanted children pretty soon, because he was 34, I was 24, and when I got pregnant with **Jerry**, that was when the nightmares started. And he would come with dry, clean pajamas and a towel, and he sponged me off with a washcloth. He changed the sheets, it just went through. The nightmare was the German came to take my baby away and kill it, because I saw many babies killed and they did not use bullets, they just threw them against the wall, because they couldn't waste bullets. So, that's when we talked, usually after I got... he got me all dried off and everything, we would sit on the couch in the living room, and many nights we never went back to sleep, and he didn't either. And all the time I lived with that man, he never complained. He didn't let me sleep, because it was even later on at times, I needed to talk. His ear was always there. One time I told him, I said, "I don't know whether you're listening, but your ear is there." I just needed the ear, you know. No, he was... he was a good soul, he really was. I was fortunate.

Q: Tell me something about your wedding. What was that... Where did you get married?

A: I'm already... We got married in Laurel, we were without a rabbi, and my brother Bernard paid for the wedding. We had a sit-down dinner, just immediate family. And he paid 300 dollars, and was kosher. And the rabbi performed, it was my brother's friend, and he hired a cantor. And I got married in a suit. I could have bought... I only could get a wedding dress or a suit, and I was very practical and I got the suit, which I wore years afterwards. I've got pictures, I got wedding pictures, I show you later on. You see, **Jake**

was a large family. There were... there were four children, and their wives, and his nieces and nephews. And Urbachs, Rose and Leon, and Grandma, Rose's mother, and my Aunt Mina, so it was... was a crowd. But he paid for it.

Q: Had Jake been in this area for a long time, his family?

A: Jake was born here in Winchester. They had the business downtown. When he was born, Pop, his father, already was in business. It was a small Mom and Pop store, with everything in there. And he was raised on top of tobacco cotton. They had those like bales, you know, rolled up. That's where... where... where they raised him, right on top of the... the tobacco cotton. It's a miracle he didn't fall off.

Q: And did Jake carry on in that business then? Was he working in the family business?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. His sister was also. What happened was, he graduated from University Kentucky, in '36, and he couldn't get a job. So he just fell in there, and then he was too lazy to get out. So, he just stayed in there. He always said, "We never going to be rich. You're going to have a roof over your head, you're going to have food on the table." And that's what we had.

Q: What was the name of the store?

A: The Hub Store. Hub. H-u-b.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The Hub Store. Joe Green.

Q: Here in…

A: On Main…

Q: Here in Winchester.

A: Yeah, on Main Street.

Q: You mentioned in the first interview, that when you arrived in the United States, it was a hard time in the beginning, because you realized that people knew what had happened in Europe, and that they didn't do anything about it. Can you... can you explain...

A: Yes, what I probably was trying to say is, we in the camps talked about somebody had to stay alive, to tell the world what was going on in Europe. We thought the world didn't know. But when I came to the United States, and I found out that they knew, Roosevelt knew. That that ship came with the Jewish people and they wouldn't let it in, and they sent it back, they got all killed. This was very upsetting. But then, in another way, I'm not a psychiatrist, but maybe I understand a little more now. I'm older, maybe. That maybe it was good we did not know that the world knew, because if we would have known, I think we would have given up. This is my opinion now. What do you think, that's a possibility, isn't it?

Q: Mm-hm. Do you remember how you found out that... that Roosevelt knew that... that...

A: Well, I found all that out in the United States, after I came in '46. I don't know exactly where I found out. Might have found out from Urbachs, or people, you know.

Q: Were you... did you feel anger at the American people?

A: Yes, yes. I was angry. Not at the American people as much as Roosevelt.

Q: So it was more on the political level...

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q:... not on the just common.

A: And there was a very important rabbi who went to Washington to tell Roosevelt about what was going on. And at that time, **Bernard Baruch** was advisor to Roosevelt. I don't know what they talked about, I, I just wonder sometimes. But one person cannot do anything.

Q: Did you feel… so you didn't feel that the American people bore any kind of responsibility?

A: No, it's... most of the time, the way I see things now, the people have nothing to do with it, it's the head of the government. The average person wants exactly the same thing. You want the family, you want your children, you want a roof over your head. You want to be able to have enough money to send them to college, so they make something out of themself. That's what the average citizen wants. And all along in history, it was always the heads of the government who started the problems. Maybe if they would start fighting each other, maybe this would stop. That's wishful thinking, right? Silly? Is that silly?

Q: No, it's funny to imagine a fistfight between Clinton and **Milosevic** or something.

A: It's not... huh? It wouldn't be fistfights, believe me. It'd be more.

Q: So, did you feel angry, back then, when... after you arrived in the States? You said you felt angry while you were in Germany.

A: I was angry, I was angry, I was angry for 12 years. I was angry. We had a large family and it was so wonderful, cousins were like brothers and sisters. You know, you didn't have anybody. Like, when my son was Bar Mitzvah, Jake had a large family that came from all over. I had nobody. My aunt already had cancer, she was in a wheelchair, and she didn't want to come to the synagogue. We were going to hire somebody and she said if she can't walk on her own two feet, she didn't want to go. So I called Urbachs, I said, "You have to come." And they came. I said, "I have to have somebody on my side." Because it makes you feel pretty much alone.

Q: I'm sorry, would you say again what event that was? I missed it…

A: My son's Bar Mitzvah. My brother was out the country. My sister-in-law had two little kids, so she couldn't come, because Bernard was out the country. So, but they came, Urbachs came. They were there for me.

Q: Can you talk more about the time that you were pregnant and you started to have these nightmares and it was like the floodgates were opening. What were your feelings about... did other feel-feelings, memories come back to you? Was it... Did it change the way that you...

A: No, it was always when I was pregnant, it was all the time the same.

Q: Okay.

A: They were trying to catch me, they were going to take my baby away.

Q: Did having... having the baby change that?

A: Yeah, it got better. I mean, they weren't constant, the nightmare, they only were once in awhile and then later on, with Sandy, it got less and less.

Q: When was your son born?

A: My son was born June, 1950, and Sandy was born December '54.

Q: And your son's name?

A: **Jerry**. **Jerry Walden Green**. And my daughter's name was **Sandra Ann Green Zuckerman.**

Q: **Zuckerman** now.

A: **Zuckerman** now, yeah.

Q: Can you tell me something about... about each of them? Tell me something about your son, first.

A: Never gave us any trouble. We didn't agree on everything, you know, but I don't know, if I look at the children now, I don't think I could raise them now. I mean they... they're such different children. He was one of the good guys, he didn't experiment with drugs, he didn't smoke. He…studies were very important, he wanted to make good grades to get out of Winchester. And that was, I think, our doing. We wanted him out of here. There wasn't much for him to do. He took, he got a degree in Political Science, and History. Undergraduate degree. And then he was turned against it. There was somebody

working in Frankfort, who made appointments with him to come, he could help him and he would go there two, three times and the man wasn't there. So he got very upset over that. And then he met a girl at **IU**, and they were dating for awhile, and then they decided he was going into social work. And he went to Indianapolis. He got an undergraduate degree from IU, he went to Indianapolis and got the Masters in social work. And first he worked for the Catholic service in Indianapolis, but now he's been with the Methodist Hospital now, for about 18 or 19 years, or maybe getting closer to 20. But he said he had to get out of Kentucky because social workers were underpaid, that he makes a lot more money.

Q: And he's married?

A: He is married. They married in '75. She's a occupational therapist, and they adopted three Korean children at different times. **Jenna** is 13, and **Cara**, she's beautiful, the middle one, and **Cara** is 11. And **Lindsey** is going to be seven. And that's the one who has cerebral palsy. But she doesn't know she's handicapped. She's very bright, she gets speech lessons. And it's so much easier to understand her now, over the telephone. The trouble was... Jerry explained it to me, because she kept her mouth too wide open, and she was drooling all the time, and they teach her now to close her mouth, not that wide open. And she drools less, that way you can understand her. About three years ago, she was in a body cast for six weeks. And all the bedrooms in this house are upstairs, so they brought the, her mattress down and she was in the rec room for six weeks. They had to

carry her around. She got spoiled, but she never complained. But if she called you, she wanted you there. And the teachers say she is very bright. She just going to finish the first grade. And she makes pretty good grades. Eventually she will need some more surgery. They had to operate on her, if not, the hip would have gone out. You see, the knee hit the other knee. So now, the other knee is doing the same thing, but the pediatrician or... or the... the... the surgeon keep... keep a track on it. It has to be a certain degree before they want to operate. If not, the other hip would go out.

Q: So tell me something about your daughter now.

A: My daughter? Oh gosh. I don't think I could have made it without her. She's such a warm person and she worries about me a lot. Like when I was sick, I told you I had the flu, she called three times a day. And we almost talk almost every day. And if I get out of here, I'll move to Chattanooga.

Q: It sounds as if she's helped you just by being sympathetic and understanding what your experiences have been.

A: Yeah, that... the camps, no I mean, even now, I mean, I lost Jake. I never could have done it without her. Both children were wonderful. They came and they stayed. Jerry stayed eight days, he had to go back to work. And Sandy stayed ten days, and she had to go... she just works, teaches, at the community college, part time, because with Jay, I told you, her husband is so busy. And many times he has to get up middle in the night, and has to go in if the people can't work out the problems, then they call the boss, and he has

to go in. And the irony is, he didn't want to go into medicine, because his father is a pediatrician and years ago, when his children were sick, everybody else's children were sick, and Larry's mother used to call him, come on home, Larry is sick, or Janet was sick, the daughter. And he said, "Give them an aspirin, I'll be there in, in ten, 15 minutes," and sometimes it was hours and hours. So he just didn't want to become a doctor, but now with the doctors it's different, they cover for each other. I mean, I see it in the hospital here, they... is your back bothering you?

Q: It's okay.

A: Let me sit there for awhile, and you won't feel... that be softer.

Q: No, no, it's fine, really I'm fine.

A: So, now with the computer, he's called out at night. The doctors only go when they on call that night. Isn't life funny? It's ironic.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. She's got how many...

A: One son.

Q: One son.

A: 15, who thinks he's 25. Last time she came, I said, "Sandy, you didn't bring my grandson." He always was so agreeable, "Yes, **Bubby,** yes, **Bubby."** Now I say black, he says white. So I said, "You didn't bring my grandson." She said, "Well, that's the way it's going to be till 21, get used to it." If I live that long.

Q: When… did you talk to your kids about your experiences during the Holocaust?

A: No.

Q: Did they ask you?

A: No. Sandy says it came out a little bit. She said, “We knew more than you think.” I never talked to them about. They were Jews in the little... little town. And, like I told you about Jerry, Sandy was the same. Grades was important get out of here, and they both did. Now, when I complain, Sandy will say, “Mommy, you pushed us out.” I said, “Well, there was nothing for you to do here,” you know. Sandy was the only Jewish child in the school system, the only Jewish child in high school, and she had a stupid teacher, homeroom teacher, who... it was before Christmas, said one morning, “I was driving up and down Boone Avenue, all the houses were decorated for Christmas beautifully, except Sandy’s house. Let’s take up a collection.” How do you think she felt? She came home and she cried, you know. Stupid teacher, he knew why. He thought he was funny. I don’t know. He was crazy, anyway. And then she was… well, if they would have had valedictorian, she was the valedictorian, she got the junior cup. All A’s, from the first grade on. And the minister’s son came up to her, “I would love to date you, but my father would kill me.” So she came home and she cried, and I laughed, and I said to her, “Well, I wouldn’t be so happy about it either,” you know. What you going to say?

Q: How did you... what did... how did you convey Jewish culture to them, or a sense of... of heritage and history?

A: They are not as Orthodox... well, I'm not Orthodox, but not observant like I am. We took them to the synagogue, we took them to Sunday school, we took them to Hebrew school, and that was about the best we could do.

Q: When did you...

A: And I observed, I kept kosher. Friday night the candles were lit. Every holiday was a holiday. Passover, we always had college students. We never were less than 14, sometimes 20 people, sometimes 11 people. So what else could I have done? I mean, you come to a point that they have to do it themselves. And I thought they had enough background. Sandy later belonged to a Conservative synagogue, but they only go on High Holidays and I think a lot... the rabbi has a lot to do with it. They had the rabbi, that's why they joined it, he was wonderful. He was great with young people. They... they went all the time, but this one, he's such a bore. The first time I went down there, and they were walking around... I don't know, have you ever... were you ever at services, Jewish services, when they walk around with the Torah, and you kiss the Torah? He was walking around, he didn't carry a Torah, and he was shaking hands, and I had my hand out. And I said, "Rabbi, I'm Sandy's daughter,"... I mean, mother, "Sandy is my daughter." And he said, "Oh." And then I went... Oh, I went a lot last year. And I even would go more, but I won't drive, and I have to fly, and Sandy's been paying for the flight for me to get there, and so I want to kind of slow down on that. She's going to have a son going to college soon. So, whenever... everywhere I am, I go to Saturday morning

services, because I always say I'm a reborn Jew, I was Bat Mitzvah 11 years ago, because women couldn't participate when I was a child. So we went to the synagogue, he should know me, nothing. Not, "Oh, it's good you're visiting again," or something. How about stopping a minute?

End of Tape Five, Side A

Beginning Tape Five, Side B

A: How is it going, all right?

Q: Yeah. This is tape two, side B, of an interview with Sylvia Green. You were just talking about your synagogue and... and I wondered when you started to be religious again, and when you joined a synagogue, and what synagogue you joined?

A: No, no. We joined the synagogue as soon as we were married, Ohavay Zion. Jake's father was one of the founders of that synagogue. So, as soon as we got married, there was no question about it. We have been members for 50 years.

Q: Uh-huh, that's the Conservative synagogue in Lexington?

A: That's the Conservative synagogue on Alumni Drive, but that used to be on Maxwell Street, where Joe Bologna is in, the pizza place.

Q: Okay. How did it feel, did you start to recover a sense of faith, or feeling…

A: It's…

Q: …or were you still an atheist, just going to synagogue, or how did that… what was happening?

A: Do you know Jake... I don't know how it happened, when it happened, it was so gradual, but it happened a lot more since I can participate. And when I was Bat Mitzvah, there were two other young girls. I'm the only old woman who was Bat Mitzvah, and I don't know whether I did it as much out of religion, as I was… I think I was jealous of my brother, as a child. All that attention and all the gifts. And here, I knew every speech, I knew his Torah reading, I knew his **Haftorah** reading, I knew his speech by heart, as well as he did. And they made such a big deal over him. So, I don't know, in my speech 11 years ago, I said, "You probably are asking why I'm doing this now. I raised my children in a kosher home, in the Jewish religion, to the best I could. I don't know whether that has anything to do with the religion, I am Bat Mitzvah, or it was jealousy. I had to prove to myself I could do it." That was my speech. And I said, "I doed it." But, it was a lucky thing, because it helped me a lot in... after Jake died. The people are wonderful, they... I'm almost the oldest one there, and they're all young couples, so I'm a grandmother. And then, after Jake died, they came for a whole week here, just saying prayers. And you only need ten people to say prayers. Now women count, too, men and women. Sometimes we had up to 30 here, because they wanted to come. And if I don't go on a Saturday, I miss it. I go every Saturday, even we had the little bit of snow, and they got mad at me after I walked in. "I thought you wouldn't be here, maybe you shouldn't be out." I said, "Well, it's supposed to have melted by the time I drove home." But I miss it, and I feel like this is my family. And in fact, I think I told you, last Saturday, they

called me up to say a special prayer, before you read the Torah, or was it between you read the Torah, and I cried, I couldn't help it. And, so the one who read the **Torah raf**, he said, "What's the matter, Sylvia?" And I said, "I feel so alone." Yeah, they were wishing me a happy birthday and clapping, and in Hebrew, congratulations, you know. And so, I don't know, I just looked around, there was no... I mean, there were people there, but I was alone. And I told the **Torahfa**, he said, "What are you talking about? We are your family." That was sweet. And it helped.

Q: Mm-hm, that's good. That's good.

A: But then I was still teary eyed, because that Monday I spoke in Louisville. I told you, it takes me forever to get back to normal. So, I'm just the happiest when people leave me alone and I go about my volunteering, or… or just not think about it, I do the best.

Q: Did your… I'm jumping around a little bit, but I remembered another question about your kids. Did they ever ask you about their grandparents, what… I mean did they try to find out what had happened to their…

A: Well, my grandmother died. There were ten living children, my grandmother died on my mother's side when she was 47 years old. Every year there was a child, stillborn. I had a very active grandfather. Or… stillborn, miscarriage, and only the strong survived and ten survived and she died. I'm named after her. Sarah was her name. My Bible name is Sarah. So they knew about that, and my mother's… my dad's mother, she died… let's see, there was, the war broke out in '39, she died around that time. The war already broke

out, but it was at the beginning and thank God, the way she died, it was Passover, and she choked on a piece of matzo, and the whole thing was not even a split second. She must have been a hundred. And can you imagine how frightened she would have been in the cattle wagon? So this was really a blessing. So my children did not have a grandmother, because Jake's mother died when he was nine, and my parents got killed. So that's why I am a Bubby. 'Bubby' is 'Grandmother' in eastern Europe. So, when Sandy was pregnant with Jay, she asked me whether it be all right, she never had a Bubby, whether Jay can call me Bubby. The other grandmother did not want to be called Bubby, she wanted to be called Grandmama. I said, "That's fine, if he doesn't call me… if your baby, my grandchild doesn't call me anything worse, Bubby is fine." So I'm still Bubby. But he tells me if he talks about his Bubby to his friends, I'm his grandmother, not Bubby.

Q: So your, your own children really didn't try to find out…

A: No, it isn't that… no, no, it…

Q: So the information…

A: They were busy. They were busy, they, they, they always had the working time, the schoolwork, and then, and Sandy was a girl scout, they took piano lessons. And Jerry was a boy scout, he took piano lessons, he was on the Little League and they were busy. And it was good for them, and then both went to work. Jerry went to work at Kroger's when he was 16, sacking groceries. One time I walk in, Jerry was washing the floor. I said, "Jerry," somebody dropped a watermelon. I said, "How come you don't do this at

home?" He said, "I don't get paid. Here I get paid." He worked for Kroger's when he went away to college. Now, he never worked during a week, in high school, just on weekends, because the manager ask him, "I need somebody during the week," and he said, "Mr. **Hazelwick,** I want to work, but this would defeat the purpose. I want to save money so I can go to college. If I don't make the grades, then I wouldn't be accepted." And he liked his honesty, and he hired him. So when Jerry came home Christmas, and during the summer he worked at Kroger's till he graduated from college, and he saved enough money up to buy his own car. And Sandy worked at IGA as a checker, and she worked from the time she was 16. And she worked the graveyard shift, till 12 o'clock, Jake was waiting for her. If that be now, I wouldn't let her work the graveyard shift. Be too dangerous.

Q: Did you move to Winchester right after you got married?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: In 1949?

A: 1949. Papa let us live in the house. There were two little houses, so he let us live in the house, so it already was painted, and we just moved in. And then he gave us the house.

Q: This house?

A: No, no. This house we bought. It was a very small house and we… it was a one-bedroom house, and then, when I was pregnant with Sandy, we added on another

bedroom, and another bathroom, but then we outgrew it again, because I had to separate the kids, so we bought this house. We been living here since… we bought the house in ‘65. I think we moved in ‘66, because we had it all fixed up before we moved in. Painted and repairs and everything.

Q: Has… well, let me go back to something else. When you, after you got… before you got married, you were working.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you stay… did you continue working after you married?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: He didn’t want me to marry... Joe Wile wanted me to marry. I was going to quit before Christmas, because I wanted to get ready for the wedding and all that, and he ask me to stay till after Christmas. So I stayed till after Christmas, and then they had the sale, and he ask me to stay one more day and then every time I went in there, he wanted me to come back and work. And I said, “No,” I said, “We had an agreement, Jake and I, that I wouldn’t work.” I was the good *Hausfrau*.

Q: Did… was that fine with you?

A: It was all right with me. I needed peace and quiet anyway. And then Jake was from the old school. Listen, we go way back. It was before your time.

Q: When did you become a citizen?

A: ‘52... 1952.

Q: Was that an important event for you?

A: That was a very important event, because I never was a citizen of any country. I was born and raised in Germany, but my father was a Polish citizen, and they would… your nationality was what your father’s nationality was. So, in Germany, I was a Polack. Then, after we lived in Poland, I was a German. So I never had a country to call my own, and this was a very happy moment. I could have done it earlier, I could have done it in three years, but Jake thought it was better, because Jerry already was a little older. And I did good, I… I passed, I had no problems. At that time, I still had a good memory.

Q: Did you feel like an American?

A: I felt like an American, but I was very upset with the judge. There were a lot of Germans who married American soldiers, they became citizens. There was a girl from Poland, the American fellow she married, he said he owned a newspaper in the United States, and then when she came here, she found out he was a newspaper boy, delivered papers. And, well, they called you up there, and you sat in front, facing the... oh, I’m sorry... facing the people, you know, I told you I talk with my hands.

Q: Yeah.

A: Facing the people, and all in a sudden, he said, “I notice here, you were incarcerated. What were you incarcerated for?” And that’s all it took. I start crying and screaming.

Jake said you could hear me in the back row. The only crime I ever committed was I was born to Jewish parents.

Q: Did you tell him that?

A: That's what I told him. The amazing part was he just... you know, was mind-boggling to me. And there were German *fräuleins* there... I mean *frau* marrying Americans, and he talked so nice to them, you know. That really... Judge Ford, he's dead, may he rest in peace! No, this was very upsetting to me.

Q: What did he say in response to that?

A: "I'm sorry."

Q: Oh.

A: Nobody heard him. I did. I don't know, we have a friend here, a lawyer, and he was one of my witnesses, and another friend, a neighbor, **Margaret Walden**, she was one of my witnesses, too. Mike said he just wanted to kind of show off, you know. But I screamed, I really did. And that was the only crime I committed.

Q: Did you feel safe in this country?

A: Yeah. I felt very safe, yes.

Q: And did you feel at home in Kentucky?

A: Well, that was the only state I knew, I mean, I would go to New York, where my brother was, or New Jersey, to visit, but I only lived in Kentucky. I lived in Lexington till I married, and then I came here, and I always lived in Winchester. I been to Israel just

one time. In ‘85, that was the only time I left the country. And I’m glad I did, because now I don’t think I could take the trip.

Q: What did… did you, when you would visit New York, for example, did you, did you meet people who had stereotypes about Kentucky, and what... and ask you, “Why do you live there, are there any Jews there,” or anything like that?

A: No, no, the funny part was, I had a silk blouse, that was the style, and written Sylvia all over, handwritten on it. I think I’ll show you a picture later on, I think I got enlargement there. And I was visiting my cousin for two weeks every summer, till I got married. And well, one week they could take off, the other week they couldn’t take off, so I waited for them when they came home from work. And I wore that blouse, and a guy passed by and he looked, “Hi Sylvia, how are you?” I says, “Do I know you? I never met you.” “Oh, yes, you know me.” You know. Then he start kind of laughing, then I look down, and I saw it. And so I laughed, I said, “Oh, you tricked me, I forgot I wore the blouse with my name on there.” He said, “You’re not a New Yorker**.**” I said, “No, I’m from Kentucky.” And he said, “I noticed the different accent.” Oh, that is funny, isn’t it? Oh gosh.

Q: That’s the only time that you came up against a stereotype of, of… about Kentucky, or...

A: Well, no, no, I… why, do people have?

Q: Yeah, like…

A: They don't respect people from Kentucky, or what?

Q: Well, they might think…

A: We're hicks.

Q: …it's just a place where there are hillbillies, and what, you know…

A: Oh, about that, listen. I had a cousin, he's gone now, cousin Harry, and that's the ones I stayed with when I first came to the United State, and spent one week in New York. About a couple months after we were settled, I think we still lived with Urbachs, so it was about a couple months, he came to visit. He came because he was worried. He heard that in Kentucky people don't wear shoes, and they don't have many Jews, and he wanted to see it with his own eyes, and… and to take me back to New York. I thought it was very thoughtful, and very sweet, just the cousin who I met, you know. So, he fell in love with Kentucky, but he wouldn't move to Kentucky, but he thought it was such a quiet life. When 65,000 people were in Lexington. And, he wouldn't give up New York, so…

Q: You've seen Lexington change a lot over the years, I imagine.

A: Oh my God, yes.

Q: Can you kind of describe how, how that's… how you've seen it change?

A: Well, I've seen the change… I think I told you, I don't know, I just got my license, driver's license when I was 68. This is… in May it's going to be seven years. And if not my friends here. He took me out for three months, every day. So, I remember when I came to Lexington, people drove cars, but there were not many cars. And if you were

driving, they would stop, "Go on, go on." Now, since I drive myself, they… they try to beat you to the stop light. It's a lot of change in... it's kind of overgrown, I think. Look what's going on in Anita Madden's… that shopping center she has, the mall. I don't know, I mean, it's just overgrown. Whenever they have a new shopping mall, people move out from a different place, and move there. I, I just wonder, how many shopping malls do you need?

Q: It never… it seems like…

A: How many restaurants?

Q: …never enough.

A: Never enough is right.

Q: Do you remember when you first voted?

A: Oh, yes. As soon as I became a citizen. And I was very nervous. I think in that old tape, I think, as I recall, I spoke about that Monday, a week ago. When we had to report to the police station, that we had to leave the country, and my mother was sick and she sent me instead, and as he called my mother's name and I told him my mother was sick, the policeman, he yelled at me to come forward, but he yelled so loud that I was shaking from head to toe. And then he took the… and I couldn't hold the pencil or pen, whatever it was, in my hand, and I dropped it. And I don't know, he seemed to be satisfied, maybe I put the 'X' down there, I don't know. Ever since then, any kind of legal, took a long time to overcome. Because I remember when I needed a Social Security number, it took

me three hours to get enough nerve to go in there. And Rose said, "No, you have to do it yourself." She wanted me to do things for myself, it's so much easier to let somebody else do the things, but she wanted me to learn to be independent. Took three hours. So the first time I voted, just… you have to sign your name and it was going pretty shaky. It took years. Doesn't bother me any more now, but I don't know, I don't think I ever missed an occasion, not to vote.

Q: Did you learn about Kentucky history, or… was it in, of interest to you to…

A: [Indecipherable] a lot, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: …to feel part of that, that history, or that you were…

A: I am not part of that history, I am part of the history way up there. You know what I'm talking about, Germany, Poland, ghetto, concentration camps. But I like Kentucky, and I was happy in Kentucky. And I will have to leave Kentucky. There'll be a time I won't be able take care of myself, then I have to leave.

Q: And you'll, you're thinking you would go to Chattanooga…

A: Chattanooga, yes definitely.

Q: …where your daughter is.

A: It's not… the children are nice, Jerry and Marcia, they're nice kids, but it's different. A daughter is a daughter all, all your life, a son is a son till he takes a wife. She's a nice girl, she's good for him. But she has more ties with her family. But her mother died just two weeks before Jake died. And the father has had cancer now for six, seven years, and

it's lung cancer. And he's doing okay. He went back to Czechoslovakia for two weeks. He takes chemotherapy for three weeks and radiation for three weeks, and he's still here, it's amazing.

Q: Will you tell me about when… you, you mentioned a little earlier about how there was something that happened in 1981, where a teacher had said that, that there was no Holocaust…

A: Yeah.

Q: …and that that caused a reaction here.

A: A history, yes.

Q: And, and caused that documentary…

A: Among the Jewish... not in Winchester, in Lexington, among the Jewish people.

Q: Tell me about that, what happened and, and your involvement, and, and the documentary.

A: Well, my involvement, it was no involvement, they just got in touch with me and David, I don't know whether he already talked to Dr. Otis Singletary to moderate something, I don't know. He called…

Q: This is David who? David…

A: **David**, Dr. **Wedstein**. He teaches at medical school. And I said I couldn't do it. He called me long distance, he wanted me to speak, like on television, to have a television program. And I said, "I just can't do it," never talked before, you know, and then

television, my God. I never been on television before. So I told him, I said, "I don't know, even now I don't know when I talk about, I cry." I, I never know, there's… not that I can say I'm not going to cry, it just comes automatically. So, he said at that time, he said, "No, you can't cry, after all, Dr. Otis Singletary, you know." Like you can't cry. Then they came back to me in '83, and it was Marilyn Moosnick. And she said right away, "It's not going to be on live, it's going to be taped." So we all taped the half an hour and the program's name was, "And I Was There." And it was shown all over Kentucky.

Q: All over Kentucky. On public television?

A: I think it was Channel 18. And then, what is it, KET broadcasted it maybe a couple years later on, or a year later on.

Q: Did… did you get the sense up until then, that people in general around you in Kentucky, among the non-Jewish population, didn't know about the Holocaust, what had happened, in this, in this state?

A: I don't know, I didn't… we never talked about that, they all just felt bad for me. At that time I walked two miles every day and people stopped me, and there was a man one time, "Oh, I feel so sorry for you…for you." And I said, "Please don't feel sorry for me. I'm proud what I've done with my life, and that's the past." I said, "I feel good what I have done with my life. So don't, I don't want anybody to feel sorry for me." He

apologized, he said, "That's not what I meant, what I meant, what you had to go through as a child."

Q: Was that the first time? I… you mentioned that before that, you had talked to Jake about your experiences. Had you talked to anybody else before?

A: No, just Mina and I, we talked. Mina died in '64, but Mina and I, we talked, still.

Q: So, did that change things for you, starting to relate to people in a… in a different way? Or did people relate to you differently afterwards, apart from…

A: Yeah, I think so. Especially after the documentary. And then **Betty Radliff** had the news magazine, and that was my whole life story, with pictures in there. And I think she, she done a good job. I just didn't go out for two days, I didn't want to face anybody.

Q: What was this magazine?

A: It was a insert to the *Winchester Sun*. I can show it to you later. I just didn't want to go out, I didn't want to face anybody, I didn't want to talk about it, and then you had to go out. So I went out, after about a couple days. It's…

Q: And did people start asking you questions, or say…

A: Yeah, then, then, yeah, yeah. I think somehow, I don't know, they accepted me more somehow. I really think maybe they felt sorry for me. I don't know. Right now, where I am here in Winchester, I'm part of Winchester, all in a sudden. The first 25 years, I did not feel like I was part of it. And really, after Jake retired in '83, I wanted to get out of here. And he didn't, he loved it here, he was born here, he was raised here. And I don't

know whether I told you about the Klu Klux Klan [sic]? Year ago, that was before my time…

End of Tape Five, Side B

Beginning Tape Six, Side A

Q: This is tape number three, side A, of an interview with silver… Sylvia Green.

A: They were marching, and Jake was right on Main Street, and one of the Klu Klux Klan run out, came into the store, "Joe, sell me a handkerchief." At that time they had those neck… neckerchiefs, red and… like the cowboys wore. That's what they sold for handkerchiefs. "I'm sweating like a horse." It was ten cents. He came to a Jewish store to buy. He was sweating like a horse. That poor guy didn't even know what he was marching for, probably.

Q: Did he know that it was a Jewish store?

A: Sure, everybody knew that it was a Jewish store. Papa was there for a long time.

Q: The Klu Klux... Ku Klux Klan didn't give you or Jake or his family any trouble?

A: No, that's what I'm talking about. He came to a Jewish store to... to... to buy a handkerchief. I don't think he knew why he was marching. He just belonged as a member, probably didn't know why. So, Jake told me that, I thought that was pretty funny.

Q: It makes you wonder, doesn't it?

A: Huh?

Q: It makes you wonder.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, that's the way Hitler started. He started with the poor. Start giving them black leather pants and jackets and motorcycles. He started with the poor,

and that made them feel important, he gave them jobs. That's the way he started that whole thing.

Q: You mentioned that you took a trip to Israel?

A: Yeah. In '85, May '85. I always… as a child, I was a member of the Mizrachi, which is a Zionist organization, and I always wanted to go to Palestine as a child, and build up Palestine single-handed. I was very enthusiastic. I also was going... I was a member of the **Hakoah**. **Hakoah** in Hebrew, it's The Strong Ones. It was a sports club, and I was going to the Olympics. I mean, I had planned, my future was planned out, except Hitler cut it short. So I always wanted to go, and I always told Jake, "I need to go, I need to go." But then, I couldn't go, children in college, so after they got married, I told Jake, I said, "I want to go to Israel. You go with me?" Well, he wouldn't even fly. And I said, "Jake, I have to go by myself." I said, "I feel pretty good. If I wait longer, I won't be able to go." And I went on the tour, with a group from Florida, and oh, it was wonderful. I came out not the same person. It's amazing.

Q: Tell me more about it.

A: Well, just everything. I mean, how brilliant! You take the desert, where nothing grows and that irrigation, I was just fascinated with everything. And then, one Shabbat, one Saturday, I spent with a cousin, my first cousin. She left Germany from Breslau in '36, and she stopped by in Karlsruhe, and we took her to the train station, and she went to Israel, and she became a Hadassah nurse. And I spent a whole Saturday with her, and had

dinner with, and met her children, and her grandchildren. And then her sisters came, which I haven't seen in years and years. So that was memorable. We had a lot of talking to do. And then I have a cousin who survived the Holocaust, who came to Munich, and he lived with us in Munich. I met his wife and his children, they came to the hotel and spent the day with me. But we flew in on a Friday, and then, well the airport is in Tel Aviv, and we took a bus to Jerusalem, that's where our tour started. So when we came to the hotel… boy, my neck is bothering me now…

Q: Oh…

A: We went, we went…

Q: Oh, do you want to stop…

A: No, it's okay. We went to the hotel and they weren't ready for us. So, then we start driving around Jerusalem, and I just didn't believe it, that I actually was there, you know. But then some things were upsetting. After Jerusalem, then we went to Tel Aviv, and to Haifa, different places. And when we went into the department store, you had to open your purse. This was upsetting. They had to check whether you had any guns, you know. It was upsetting.

Q: How long did you stay?

A: Two weeks. And I came back and my brother picked me up. My sister-in-law gave him a 65… 65th birthday party, a surprise party. So we worked that out, his birthday was in June, and I came back, probably around beginning of June, maybe. And she was

cooking, she invited 30, 35 people, and she was cooking, and cooking, and cooking, and corned beef, she wanted to cook it herself, do everything herself. She could have ordered that. And Sarah said, "You should have been here, you would have died laughing." He said, "My gosh, what are you cooking that much?" And she said, "Your sister Sylvia's coming back from Israel." She cooked for over 35 people, he had no idea what… what cooking is, you know?

Q: What an appetite.

A: Huh?

Q: What an appetite…

A: Appetite for what?

Q: …she must have.

A: Oh, he knew I was a big eater, but he had no, I mean that he had no idea, you know. So, well I got there, and I slept around the clock. This was Friday. He came, oh, about six o'clock. It didn't take very long for me to go through custom, I must look honest, because as I got my suitcases and before I had to open it up, he looked at me, and he said, "Do you have anything to declare?" So I told him what I had to declare, he said, "Go on." I mean, I didn't buy anything for business, I bought little gifts for everybody. And I was honest about it. And so when I came out, my brother was running in. He said, "You're already through? I can't believe it," you know. I said, "Well, I look honest." So when I got there, oh, about an hour later on, I went to sleep and I slept around the clock. Woke

up Saturday morning, I said, “Sarah,” my sister-in-law, I said, “Boy, I feel so rested, I feel wonderful.” She said, “Good, you can go shopping with me, I want to buy…” her daughter had a birthday and she got her own apartment. “I want to buy her some lamps.” I said, “Good.” We looked at the lamps, and I fell asleep again. I said, “I can’t keep my eyes open.” I’m sorry. She’s gone, too. She died in ‘89. That’s my brother’s wife. We were very close. I don’t know. They all gone.

Q: You… were you very close with your brother after the war ended?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Was that… will you say something about your relationship after the war? I mean, you, you were…

A: My relationship after the war was maybe closer than the average. The only trouble I had with him after the war, when I was single, he was so strict, every boy had to come into the apartment, he had to meet them, he had to interrogate them, whether they good enough for his sister. And Jake took me to Cincinnati, to a ball game, and he was going to take me out. There used to be, up on a hill, it was in Kentucky, I can’t remember the name of the restaurant, it burned down, it was more of a nightclub. And I told my Aunt Mina we going to be late, but we were even later, because he wanted me to meet his brother and his sister-in-law, and we all went out to dinner, they went with us. So, he threw a fit. And in ‘48, I was 24. He threw a fit, “And you let her go, and you let her go.” And my Aunt Mina said, “She’s not a child. She knows how to behave. She knows what

to do, what not to do." "You just don't know what goes on," he told Mina. He had a date, which he took to Atlantic City for a weekend, that was all right, wasn't it? But not his sister. So this was the only object… objection I had to him.

Q: Do you think he was so protective of you because of what had happened during the war?

A: I think so. The thing about it was, after we met again, he said, "I am so happy, you have no idea. I couldn't have gone on living if you would have gotten killed." Because he took my place, by going to England.

Q: Did you ever feel angry about that?

A: No. No I never did. He… even my aunt and I were talk… he never could have survived it, he was a scholar. He wasn't strong. All Bernard knew, Bernard never had a childhood. He was studying, and they tore him apart, because my dad wanted him to be a rabbi, my mother wanted him to be a college professor. He had to bring home all A's. So poor Bernard just studied all the time. He never could have made it. He couldn't have made it in any of the camps. So, no, I wasn't angry about that, I… in fact, after we survived, Mina and I talked a lot about that, how lucky, because he would have been one of the first ones. And we were lucky that they sent him instead, the Jewish Welfare Office. He did not go with the *kindertransport*, but they send him somewheres else. Probably with the older children, he was four years older.

Q: What did he do, as a profession?

A: As a profession, he did not become a rabbi, he did not become a college professor. He worked for Borden's in export and imports, and he traveled for them. And, but he did moonlight… he has a beautiful voice, cantorial voice. When I came back, when I buried him in Paramus, New Jersey, and I told you I locked myself in the house for two days and two nights and cried, I played the tape over and over, I must have over ten times, and I said, "You going crazy, you better quit. If not, you're going to wear out the tape and you're not going to have any tape." So, he had a strong, beautiful voice, and he did moonlight sometimes. Like on Passover, he would go in New York, oh what was that place? It was a hotel and they served food and ceremony… Grossinger. You heard of Grossinger, did you? No?

Q: I'm not sure.

A: It's not there any more, but it was there at one… usually well-to-do people went down there, and they spent the whole week and you didn't have to make Passover. You know, our Passover is a week. So my sister-in-law loved it, because it was a lot less work for her. And he used to conduct services, and then the seder he conducted. He loved to do that, but not as a profession.

Q: When did he die?

A: Oh, he just died four days before Thanksgiving.

Q: Oh, this last year, in 1998.

A: ‘98, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And I’m so happy I was there to see him two months before. And his mind was gone. So when his daughter, Sharon, picked me up at the airport, I said, “Could we stop by?” It was about eight o’clock. She said, “Sure.” So we stopped by, and the kids bought him a Lazy Boy, and he was asleep, and I walked in, and he was hard of hearing, too, and he couldn’t… the hearing aids, he lost them and lost them and then they didn’t help any, anyway. So I whispered in his ear, “Bernard, Bernard, you lazy boy, wake up. Your sister Sylvia is here.” About three or four time, I repeated that, and all in a sudden, you should have seen his face. Before, he was pale, flushed, his eyes, there was recognition, and a smile from ear to ear. And Sharon said, “You know something? I haven’t seen Daddy smile like that since Mama died.” But that was the only recognition, then I was “Hey you,” or “I want to do this, I want to do that.” And when Sharon… before we went to the airport, I… this time I stayed two days, because it just wore me out, just fly in and fly out Sunday. So I, I flew in Thursday, and I was just… because before, I stayed with him all day, and she picked me up just to go to bed at her house. She said, “It’s getting too hard for you, and you just stay a half a day,” but I stayed all day Friday, I stayed all day Saturday, and before we went to the airport, I said, “Do you think you could, we could stop by?” She said, “Sure. We can leave about an hour earlier, and you can stay with him.” So, when I walked in, he said… the day before, we thought he was going to die.

Walked in there, "I want to get dressed." I said, "Okay, you going to get dressed." I took some clothes and I matched up things. He looked sharp, he really did. And I was going to shave him, but his electric shaver didn't work, and I wouldn't use a straight razor, he was a severe diabetic. But I combed his hair, I washed his face. He said, "I want to eat in the dining room." He hasn't eaten in the dining room, I don't remember when. I took him to the dining room in a wheelchair, and sat down next to him. And they wouldn't give him any bread any more, because he would wad it up, put it in his mouth, and he'd choke. So he saw the bread and he pointed, and his face lit up. So I broke it up in a million little pieces. And then he ate, and I kissed him good-bye. It didn't bother him that I left, he didn't know. But I'm just happy I saw him two months before, and this… to recognize him, that he recognized me, this is something I cherish. But he left three beautiful girls. Nice son-in-laws. Good girls. One is going to make *Aliyah*, she's moving to Israel.

Q: Were you ever frustrated with him that he left Kentucky after bringing you here, after…

A: Yeah, I laughed about it. No, that's become home, you know. He left here, graduated, undergraduate degree from University Kentucky, so he was with us. And then he went to Chicago, and he worked on his Master's in Chicago. And I went to visit him in '48. My parents had some friends who survived, who lived in Chicago, and I stayed with them for two weeks. And then he went to Columbia University. And he had enough credit for everything, but he didn't finish his thesis, he got involved with a girl and got engaged,

and it was a mess. But thank God he saw it ahead of time, that he called the engagement off. It wouldn't have worked.

Q: I'm… okay, I wanted to ask you about Germany and Germans. After the war you... you were, of course, very angry at the…

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: …at the Germans. Has that changed over time?

A: Yeah, it's… I finally let go of it. Took a long time, it was a gradual thing. And anybody had any connection with Germany or even probably 20 generation way back in Germany, I wouldn't have anything to do with it. And even the language, I don't speak German. Maybe I could, I don't know, I just don't do it. I think I build a mental block, and even my brother Bernard used to say, Germany was there before Hitler, but when Hitler came to power, I only was nine years old, so to me, the German language was Hitler. So, but that's gone now, I think.

Q: Did you ever have the desire to visit Germany again?

A: No, I don't have any desire.

Q: Or Poland?

A: The other… no, mm-mm. I don't have that happy memories about Poland, either. And then the Polish Gentiles were very anti-Semitic. They collaborated with the Germans. They were very happy to collaborate with the Germans. So, no, there are other places I would like to go. I would like to go back to Israel, but I don't know if… I've got some

problems with my legs. Maybe if I win the lottery and I could fly first-class, then I would go.

Q: You were saying a little bit earlier about… off tape, about a woman who you met at the Kroger…

A: Oh, at the… yeah, the Kroger's.

Q: Will you tell, will you tell about that on, on tape?

A: Well, I have known her. She's been here as long as I have, over 50 years. She was from Germany, and maybe a hundred miles away from my hometown, she was… she's, was from Mannheim. And some relatives of Jake wanted me to meet her, they thought that she was such a lovely lady, and she probably was, but I didn't want to meet her, because with the German connection. And for years I didn't meet her. If I saw her, I would run across the street, just not to have to see her. So then, finally, we did meet and we talked some, and I always said, "She seems nice enough, she couldn't be my best friend." And I don't know whether I would want her as my best friend, because then it's German again, you know. But I was at Kroger's, oh it was, I don't know, November, December, and we were talking about something and it came up, the past, and she starts sobbing and she start crying, and automatically, I cradled her in my arms. I couldn't believe it, I mean, that was such a automatic gesture, you know. I just couldn't believe it. So when I came home, I called Sandy. I said, "You won't believe it. I was comforting **Lilo Thomps… Thompson**." She said, "Mom, you've come a long ways." I said, "Yes, I

have." But I did tell her also, I said, "Listen, we were born at the wrong time, at the wrong place." Now, I couldn't have felt that way a few years back, and it's true.

Q: So your bitter, your bitterness has…

A: It's, it's gone…

Q: Has the…

A: …well, it's kind-of subsided, thank God. Like I said, that I've, I feel like there's a load off my shoulders, you know, like you carry the world on your shoulders. Thank God it's not there any more.

Q: What… can you identify things that happened in your life that made that change, that made the bitterness go away?

A: I don't know, I really don't know. It's… the few years I have left, I like to live them out, not with hatred, and it's even hard enough just to be alone now. Living isn't easy. So, I don't know when it left me, I just hope it stays away.

Q: I don't think we mentioned on the tape… that when Jake passed away, that was… will you say when that was?

A: It was January the ninth, '97, and we both have a living will, but I… I wanted him back, so I called 911, and they start working on him. And I called the children, they told me to call the children. They found a very slight pulse. So I called Jerry, then I called Sandy, Sandy said, "Hang up, I call right back and leave the line open." So I did, so she heard everything what went on. So, I was so fortunate that night, because my doctor, Dr.

Pika was on call that night, and she was called in, and she stayed with me. And Sandy called a friend to stay in the hospital with me. And so Dr. **Pika** told that friend, **Ava Tyler**, "Miss **Tyler**," she didn't know **Ava**, "I like to ask a favor of you, would you please spend the night with Mrs. Green? I don't want her alone." So, I'm very fortunate to have a caring doctor like she is. And she's only about 32-33 years old, with two children. She had those while she already was, was in practice. So, she prepared me so, because they were working at, with Jake at the hospital, in emergency room. And she would come back and forth, to see how I was. And after about a half an hour, she said, "Miss Green, you don't want him back. If he would come back now, he'd be brain-dead and you wouldn't want him, he wouldn't want it." I think he already was gone when she came in telling me that.

Q: And I, I'm… I know that you went, recently… we were talking about this a little bit off tape, too, that you went recently to Louisville, to talk, to do a public talk.

A: For the first time…

Q: For the first time.

A: Yeah, and it was in the Jewish Community Center. And the only reason I did it was because my foster brother asked me. Otherwise, I wouldn't have done it.

Q: This is Stuart…

A: Stuart…

Q: …Urbach.

A: Dr. Stuart Urbach, yeah.

Q: Can you tell me about what that experience was like?

A: Well, nerve-racking, that's all I can say. I didn't sleep. I might have slept about five hours in three nights. And I don't know. When I got up there, I mentioned, first I mentioned my name and then I told them that I never spoke in public, that I have given interviews in the comfort of my own home, but I told them I was very nervous. And well, I did it.

Q: And how many people were in the audience?

A: Well, that was strange, because when I walked in, we were a little late, and Leah was kinda on edge. I said, "You thought I'd be a no-show, huh?"

Q: You're talking about Leah… Leah Dickstein.

A: Like I talked to you on the telephone, Dr., Dr. Dickstein, yeah. So she said, "No, I just want to show you where you stand and which side you get on the stage, and I'm going to get on the other one, I will introduce you." And I looked around, I said, "Leah," I said, "there are over a thousand people here." She said, "That can't be, because it only holds 250." I swear it looked like over a thousand. But then I got the letter from the Federation and they said there were 450 people, that there were chairs all around, then the lobby, a lot of people were there.

Q: This was held in the Jewish Federation of Louisville, is that right?

A: What?

Q: Jewish…

A: No, the Community Center.

Q: Community Center.

A: It's the Jewish Community Center. But the, the Jewish Federation is in charge of it. And Leah, she… Dr. Dickstein organized the whole thing.

Q: Was this the first event of its kind in, in Louisville?

A: No. I don't know. She said it was a wonderful attendance, and she said there were a lot of Gentiles and a lot of children. And the children are important, because they never heard of it, they didn't know anything about it. So that's the ones we have to teach. We have a **Yom Shoah** day in Lexington. Sometimes you have more people than other times. So I don't know, they had one here, I think Tuesday, and I don't know, I didn't ask… find out how many people there were.

Q: Has it gotten any easier for you to speak about your experiences, over time?

A: It still, it still upsets me. You can see it does. Sometimes I wish it'd just go away. But the only way it's going to go away, when I go away. That's the only way.

Q: Do you have any sense of relief, or maybe even that it's necessary to talk? Do you have a feeling that it's, that there's anything good that comes out of it?

A: Well, people should know, but…

End of Tape Six, Side A

Beginning Tape Six, Side B

Q: Tape three, side B, of an interview with Sylvia Green. I'm sorry, go ahead.

A: I, I just said, maybe I'm selfish, it just still gets me upset, and I don't like to be upset. I would like to live my life out in peace. And see it… the past, I feel like I've lived more than two lives. And really, the life right now is not easy, either. Looking back, if Jake would have lived, we would have been married 50 years in January. And I always thought that… well, everybody goes through some kind of hell in life. You're not promised a rose garden, and I always felt like, well, you've gone through your hell at a very young age, and everything was smooth, everything was fine. We had no problems here, the marriage was good, the children were wonderful, and then, then it hit again.

Q: What hit again? I'm sorry.

A: Well, Jake passed away, it hit me again. I just thought maybe I will have smooth sailing the rest of my life, but there's no guarantee.

Q: Do you have ideas of, of what you want now, for the rest of your life? Goals?

A: Goals. I hope and pray, and I pray all the time, I hope when my time comes, it be quick. I hope I'll be able to take care of myself and don't have to be a burden to my children. This bothers me. And that's my goal. Otherwise, what kind of goal? I mean, I enjoy working in the hospital, I got good relationship with the people I work in, and know everybody there.

Q: You mentioned that you volunteer one, one day a week there?

A: Yeah, eight and a half hours. I get there by… well, I used to at eight o'clock, but

then, there's so much traffic on Boone Avenue when school is in session, if I try to get out here ten to eight, to be in the hospital at eight, I can sit 20 minutes and can't even get out my driveway. So it's worthwhile for me to get up a half an hour earlier and leave here about 7:30. But then, we have other things. We have bake sales, we have book sales. And in the morning, I… what I do is like a gopher. Anything they ask, we, we do. And then, the afternoon, I go to the gift shop, because in the morning it's a lot of running around. And my legs don't take it as well, so when I get in the gift shop, then it's more relaxing, except when we have Beanie Babies, then it's not very relaxing. There's… people still go wild over the Beanie Babies.

Q: What's the name of the hospital?

A: Clark Regional Medical Center.

Q: Here in Winchester?

A: Here in Winchester, yes.

Q: And what do you do the other days of the week?

A: Well, take somebody else's place. Like somebody goes out of town, like I was out of town Monday, so somebody fills in what I do. So, if they go out of town, then I fill in what they do. And then, the only bad thing is that I don't drive at night, because we really got a lot going on in the synagogue, but it's always at night. And I have that horror getting stuck on Interstate 64, with a flat tire, or the car stops. So, I do have a car phone, I… I don't know, it just… it'd be scary. So I don't go after dark. I do in town, I drive.

I'm a member of AARP, and we meet in the evening.

Q: Do you have anything else that you'd like to say?

A: No, no. I'm glad it's over with.

Q: Thank you so much.

A: I enjoyed seeing you again, but that…

Q: I certainly enjoyed seeing you. I thank you so much for doing this.

A: And I wish you well.

Q: Thank you.

End of Tape Six, Side B

Conclusion of Interview