https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

[GERMAN] Who was with you?

The kapos. This was the camp police.

[GERMAN]

When you say gekauft, how did you buy?

We changed it. Mrs. [INAUDIBLE] brought it, you know?

Then this is from the stock that was bought from what people brought?

Right, and people who worked to sort out that stock used to--

Steal it.

--steal it and threat, you know and change it for bread. Anyway.

[GERMAN]

The kapos, the camp police. They were also inmates. They were political prisoners

But they had more power.

Yes. And there were Jews among those too.

When you say under threat, what was done under threat? The bowing was done under threat?

Yes. If we were caught with it, they used to stick the pullover-- I mean, they were somewhere here--

Yes.

--and in their coat, they were hit badly. [GERMAN]

What is anstellen?

To collect for appell, for-- to be counted, you know? [GERMAN]

They were hanged in camp?

Yes, in front of us. And we had to stand in the front row because we worked in the factory so we could see this straight.

To show you at the factory.

Yes. When did this happen? Do you remember approximately?

I have brought here newspaper cuttings where it's written about it too.

After the war.

And there might be a date. Yes. after the war.

And were there Jewish girls?

Yes.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Were there German girls?

No, Hungarian-- Greek and Hungarians, some Hungarians would have been. Yes, I think mostly one Polish girl I think well there were three girls

Were hanged?

Yes. [GERMAN] '45. That's when the transport was. [GERMAN] Soon after, you see? [GERMAN]

Let's see. The hanging was on the 18th of January?

No, no, the transport. But that was soon after the hanging.

Oh, which transport was it?

Where we evacuated from Auschwitz when the Russians came. That was the heading for this part.

I see.

18th of January, '45. [GERMAN] Because we had to work to the last minute. [GERMAN] Survival-- instinct of survival. [GERMAN] That is where we eventually landed.

Oh, you don't have to write that. I mean, that's the spelling of that, we know.

Yes. [GERMAN]

What is a [GERMAN]?

Where you usually have crops, in the--

A barn.

That's right. [GERMAN]

But all 10 of them?

Yes, and more. [GERMAN]

And I have got newspaper articles about that.

Are they much later or at the time?

Afterwards.

You don't have them here?

Yes, I have that all here.

Would it be possible to get photo copies of that?

Yes. Very interesting-- they had put-- the Nazis had already undermined our camp--

In Ravensbrück?

--in Ravensbrück.

So how long were you in Ravensbrück altogether? You moved from 15th of January. And you were freed on

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection
the 29th of April.

Yes, that's right. That's it. That's when I was there.

So you were there?

Only because I couldn't-- those who could work, they were sent away still further, but only those who couldn't work were left there. And I read here one of these articles that said that they had undermined it. And some of the inmates who were also too sick to be sent away crawled on hands and knees and cut those ammunition-- what you call it, this, the--

Explosives.

--explosives. And that is why we are alive today.

And how many sick people were left in Ravensbrück, just too weak to walk?

I don't know. There were different blocks. But we heard how around us, we were blown up.

And you were 19 and 1/2 then?

Must have been.

And when you were freed-- you were going to tell me, first, how you-- what were your skills for survival, by what means you helped yourself to survive.

The one thing was always to be in the background, never to do anything to be different.

To be noticed.

Yes, even not to work too hard, that they would take more notice of you or to vanish in that way.

You did that on purpose.

Yes.

What made you decide on that policy?

Well, we found that was the safest. Even there, there were some pretty girls, you see. And those kapos

The kapos, were they men or women?

Women. Those were women. They were in charge of the block where we lived. There was-- you see those, they were all a bit perverse.

Lesbians?

Yes. And they took a couple of our girls who were good-looking, and let them live with them, and gave them good food, and good clothing. But I mean, we didn't want anything of that. So we just stayed in the background all the time.

And were you together with a group of friends--

Were we, yes.

[INAUDIBLE]

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

How many else survived?

We even teamed up with others that hadn't been in our group but with some of our background.

And the 350, the 15 that survived, they survived till after the war?

Oh, no, no. We were separated on this transport. I was all on my own then?

Oh, you didn't have anybody else left from [? Wiesen? ?]

Not in Ravensbrück. I did meet up with a few afterwards in Berlin again.

I see. So were there any other ways by which you helped yourself to survive? Or that was it? How did you cope with the cold, for instance?

Well, I was also-- we were also working, at one stage, to sort out the clothing. And we were also able to clothe ourselves a bit better. We could leave the old stuff there and get something better. And I always took a bit of a chance in pinching something and selling it for bread.

And I had two good things happening to me. I was very keen, obviously, on keeping fairly clean. And I found a paste, a toothpaste, a tube of toothpaste. And when I tried to squeeze something, it was empty. But it was a bit-- and when I tried to squeeze something out, nothing came out.

And I tried to open it from the back to get something out. And there were 100 American dollars in it. And I gave this to somebody in the factory. I knew there were people having connections with the people who worked out of the camp, you see. And through that, I gave this to this one Polish Jewish man.

This was one note? Or different?

No, hundred-- a whole bunch--

Of a hundred notes?

--hundred notes.

How many, do you know?

I don't know. It was a bunch of money. I mean, you had to keep this terribly secret. Yes, of course. I gave this to this man. And he promised me to give me bread whenever he hid any spare. And that lasted for months. And every day, I went to ask him. Sometimes, I got only once a week or twice a week a piece. But still, it helped.

And what did he do with the money?

He gave it to the people, I suppose, who went out of the camp.

To work outside?

Outside.

What did they work at?

They were in factory.

In another factory?

In this factory, supervising capacity.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

I see, like the Germans?

Oh, yes, the Germans. There was a connection with the outside world through these Germans. And then another time, I found a diamond ring in a pair of shoes that was given to us or that I took. And I couldn't get my foot into it. And when I looked, there was a diamond rings wrapped up in paper. And I gave this also-- I gave this to another place with dental surgery. There was a little setup. There was a dentist and a dental nurse. And somebody took--

Who did they attend? Who's teeth were?

These were also inmates.

But whose teeth did they fix?

Mostly to the SS people, but also to us people when there was something urgent, like a tooth had to be pulled out. They did that. They didn't pull teeth. But if there was really something bad, they did it there too. And I give it to them. And they always cooked food every day. And I could come every day for a hot soup there. And what was the help?

And that helped me when I had typhoid. I had typhoid. I was very sick in there, in the Revier, where not many people came out. And I was so sick. And you don't feel like eating. And when you get that soup, you feel even less. But because I wanted to survive, I closed my nose with my fingers not to have the taste and I poured it down my throat because I knew if I wasn't going to eat it, that that would be the end.

And I could hardly walk. But this person from the dentistry place told me, she had heard there's going to be a selection tomorrow. And she said, you must get out of here. And I said, I can't walk. She said, you have to. You've got to have somebody to help you walk out of here, which I did.

And that was another chance to survive. And we had to stand for hours. And everything was going round right in front of my eyes. I was always dizzy, I remember. Then I always had a friend who carried me along. We helped each other. And so I had a few narrow escapes.

And did your friend survive too?

Some friends. I mean, we were in a group. I was quite close to one girl, she survived. But we were separated. And we did meet again afterwards. And then we weren't such good friends anymore. It's strange. But what was the other thing? There was one more thing. Oh, yes, so when I came out of that, really, I was looking terrible. I was skin and bones. And I had a terrible skin disease, which a lot of people had from the lice.

Well, what were they doing in 1943 or '44 that you had that? Is it another part?

No, in the earlier part, I think. Yes, because afterwards, we were better looked down. It was an earlier part, scabies, you know, a terrible skin infection. And I had that from top to toes. And we had to line up. And the SS doctor looked at us. And he looked at me. And he said, you look pretty bad.

And I smiled at him. And I said, oh, I'm much better already. And he said, well, I'll give you another chance. Now, if I had cried, he would have said, that way. They were somehow susceptible, perhaps, to a bit of courage or whatever it was. And I was very strong and healthy. And then fate or whatever you can call this, luck, I don't know, is how I survived.

And what happened then-- oh, you were going to tell me about this Trawniki--

Yes.

--how you found out about your parents.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Oh, I did know the connection that I got this address. I think I must have met this person in Berlin when I came out. I know there were two things just now how it comes. I remember now. I had always hoped that my parents would survive. But when I was in the camp myself, I knew there wasn't a chance for anybody over 35-40. So I didn't have much hope. But one day there was a transport from Trawniki. And I talked to these people. And they said the whole camp was shut down.

And how did you know that then? They wrote to you before they left for Trawniki?

Yes. They said-- or they must have sent me a letter from there. Or they said, we are going to Trawniki before they were sent away. I knew that they were there.

Was that a labor camp?

A concentration camp, a very new camp, I'm sure. And so I knew that my parents were not alive. And as I came out afterwards in Berlin, all the people went through. Somebody said they had been in Trawniki. And they had somebody else. And they gave me the address. I should write to that person because that person had a daughter who came out of that camp. And I wrote that person there. I've got the letter.

You've got the letter. Would you like to read us that letter then?

Well, that's the meanest letter. I've always put all these things away. It's very, very sad.

Well, think of it that you help the history that this will not occur again.

Yes, I know. Well, I had it yesterday. I read it yesterday. So that's OK. Would you like a cool thing, something to drink?

No, let's do this first because I want to have plenty of time.

Yeah, OK. That was the 5th of January, '47. That's just before I emigrated. [GERMAN] Fraulein [? Behrens ?]

And now, it was written in Weimar?

Yeah. [GERMAN]

She was a Christian.

Yes. [GERMAN] I never asked any more. [GERMAN] Because she was married to a German. In the end, they still killed the daughter.

The daughter was half-- was a quarter Jewish?

She was quarter Jewish, yes. That's right-- half-Jewish. Half-Jewish. Her husband must have been German and the--

No, she said--

The woman was German and the father was-- this woman who writes it, she must have been--

She was German and her husband was half-Jewish. So the daughter was quarter.

Yes, that's right. And they still-- after they let her go from there, she still was [GERMAN] because she was married to a non-Jew or something. [GERMAN]

I only thanked her for the letter and that was it. I didn't want anymore. I didn't even need to have this because it wasn't easy to.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

What was her name?

Fraulein Pinkus Baden, Pinkus-- [INAUDIBLE]. [INAUDIBLE] [? Pinkus. ?] [INAUDIBLE] [? Pinkus. ?] [INAUDIBLE] [? Pinkus, ?] I suppose. I see. The one must be her name and the other her married name because she was divorced.

I see.

Weimar. Here, the-- there's the sender, even. I can't read it.

Herbstrasse.

Herbstrasse.

21 on the street. And I can't read this.

Yes, yes. I'm sure she is not alive. She must have been old already then.

Yes. No, but for the historical record now.

Yes, yes.

So that's how you found out that your parents had--

That's right.

--perished?

Yes, so I added those things together.

Yes. Now, what happened to you when Ravensbrück was freed by the Russians? Were your toes healed?

No. It's the halves of feet that eventually were taken off. And it was all full of pus. And it was that wide open. And they just put bandages on it and to draw out the pus, the dead cells. And they had nurses there and doctors.

And what, prisoners?

No, the Russians.

Oh, the Russians. Oh, the Russians.

Came in there. There was a commandant in charge who was seeing that everything went off in good order. And they looked after us and gave us good food. During that time, a lot more of the people died because they couldn't take the food. They got even more sick.

And we all got sick at first. It was all too rich for us because we had been starving the last week-- and even new water. But they looked after us very well. They entertained us with their troops. They came and sang for us and played music for us, the Russians. And they were good to us.

And this was in Ravensbrück itself?

In Ravensbrück. They made it like a hospital. They made it into a hospital.

And how long were you there after liberation?

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Until I could sort of walk fairly well.

How long was that? I must have been there two months, I would say.

Till the end of June?

Yeah, it would have been-- yes.

And then what happened?

And then I made my way to Berlin. There were some trains going. And I don't know were there any trains. I don't think there were trains. But we managed to get lifts with truck drivers.

In what sort, Russian trucks?

I suppose Russian or even German. That was the only real transport we had at that stage. And I know I was-- one night, I was put up with some German people, who were trying to be very nice to me.

How did you feel? You were born in Germany. How did you feel at that time?

Well, I thought they were all Nazis. You know, I hated them. Well, because in the end, they were all bad to us, really.

Well, how did you feel about-- you stayed just one night, or?

Yes. Ah, well.

They were forced to take you or they took you voluntarily?

I think voluntarily. I think I must have been given the name by somebody that they were fairly decent people. There were some people who were quite decent also. And eventually, I ended up in Berlin.

Where?

In this-- again, we had these Jewish places, which was a synagogue or-- I don't know the name. I know only Kleine Hamburger Strasse. I knew there were a few Jewish buildings, that there was a hospital and a synagogue. And that was--

But you were back where you'd been before your deportation?

I don't think it was the same place. But it was something very similar. They made it a [GERMAN], they called it, where everybody's name was taken down in particular.

So that relatives could find?

That's right. And that was in the Aufbau publicated. And my uncle in South Africa saw it.

But Aufbau is an American newspaper?

Yeah. It was circulated in America.

I see.

In South Africa, my uncle read it, my name.

Were you the only survivor of his family?

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

Yes, yes, yes. And another cousin, actually, who had been in Holland, my cousin. But he had also been taken to Auschwitz towards the end.

From Holland?

Also from Holland. He had also survived. That was an uncle. Nine sisters and brothers my uncle had. There was one more aunt surviving because she was married to a German man. And they intended to take her to a camp. But when they had given her a day to come, they started bombing Dresden, where she lived.

And the husband, who was a German, had to also work in a working labor camp, in a labor camp. And he stuck to her. He didn't get divorced from her. He was very decent. So they survived as well. That's all.

Did they have children?

Yes, they had a son. They've died by now, they both were aging.

Yes, but did their child--

Now, that son was from the first marriage of that German aunt, so he was completely German. He even got a [INAUDIBLE].

One, I believe.

Yeah, yeah. He was trained. He was young.

But they didn't have children from your aunt's side?

No. She didn't, no.

But you don't remember the exact location of that camp-- of that [GERMAN] in Berlin?

In Berlin. But that's very common. I mean, everybody would know if you told them, yes.

They would know it. Yes. And how long were you there for?

I was there, I don't know, not very long, two weeks perhaps? And also, they tried to bandage my feet there. They didn't heal my feet.

And they wouldn't heal you?

They didn't close it. It wasn't going to close. And there, I met up with this one friend, the one girl who survived that I had known. But she was quite a bit older. And she had been there before me. She had carried on walking when I was stuck in Ravensbrück in the hospital wing.

And where had they been taken?

She was taken to many places, to-- I forget now the names of the camp where she was. And when she was eventually freed, then the Russian soldiers made no difference if they're Jews or Germans.

Really? What did they do?

But they didn't think they did a bad thing. Some of them thought these women wanted it just as much as they did.

Oh, I see.

So they raped the women there.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

I didn't understand what you meant, yeah.

Some women had to go to a hospital afterwards for treatment. They just wouldn't make a difference.

But weren't these women so starved? They still appealed to them?

By that time, they had already been living in houses that the Nazis and the Germans had vacated. And they had eaten. They didn't look that bad. Their hair had been-- we had our hair grown by that time. When we worked in the factory, the hair was growing. And we looked much better all the time.

Oh, I see.

Yes.

I see.

Later on, they let all the--

So these extra concentration camp inmates were raped as well?

Yes.

But there were no consequences, no pregnancies?

And if there were, they would take the-- would give them an operation to the hospitals at that stage because it was so common.

I see.

Anyway, that friend of mine, she was already now before me in Berlin. And she had heard on the way that Auschwitz, everything had gone up into the air in Auschwitz, Ravensbrück. She knew I had stayed behind.

And she thought you were dead?

And she had gone. And she thought I was dead. And then a few days later, some more people came. And she said, where you come from? And I said, we come from Ravensbrück.

And she was the one whose name you've given here?

[? Margarete ?] [? Schmidt, ?] yes. So they said, we come from Ravensbrück. And she said, but I thought there was nobody left. And she says, well, yes. She said, I had a friend by the name of Lotte Behrens then. Oh, she's on the way. She's coming. So she was very happy. And she said, I must wait for her. And she waited for me. And there was also the brother of my boyfriend also there and a few other friends.

Who was this man?

Rudy Roberts-- Alfred and his brother is Rudy. And so happy reunion with a few more girls who had come back. And then this girl was-- my friend was from Oberschlesien, Silesia, from Katowice, Gleiwitz. And she said, I can't go back there. The Poles are there. And she said, she would come back with me to my hometown, which was the Russian zone at that stage. So she looked after me. She cared for me. And I couldn't go--

And you went back to your home?

My hometown, yes.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

And lived in your house?

Looked at my house. And there was a--

You got it back?

--Russian commandant in charge. And his secretary was Jewish, a Mr. [? Shternberg. ?] And he was very, very nice to us.

He was a Russian, Shtern --

And he was a Polish-- a Russian Jew or-- yes, I think he was Russian or Polish Jew.

And he gave you your house back?

Yes. The commandant actually-- the mayor, actually, gave us the house back. The mayor was a communist. All the communists were in charge then. And the Russians were in charge of them, holding them.

And was your furniture there too anymore?

No. Well, there was furniture there--

But not yours?

--not ours. A Nazi had bought that house for little money. And he still lived there with his mother.

While you were living, while you were there?

When I came back. So the mayor said, you just tell us what you want to do. And we will do it. You want the whole house or you want half, one flat? So we said, we would like one flat, the one upstairs, the sunny side. All right. Do you mind if the other man is still living downstairs with his mother until he finds something else? We said, no, we don't mind.

And then he said, now, if you want furniture, there's a whole factory full of furniture that we took away from the Nazis. You go and choose what you like. So my friend did all that for me. She chose. She was much more fanatic than I was.

What do you mean fanatic?

She hated every German much more than I did because she lost her husband and she lost a sister with two little children. And she hated much more than I did. I was timid. I was brought up under this regime. And I wasn't--

You didn't know anything else?

That's right. So I was so used to be depressed, you see? And then she was 15 years older than I. She was a grown-up, normal person already. And so she had a different reaction than I.

She was 35. She had had no children herself? No. They had only been married a short while. So she did all this. I was lying in bed. I went to the hospital then. They couldn't-- they sent me, eventually, to another place, Halle, to a hospital, where they gave me another operation, which meant they took a bit more of the bone off so it could heal better. But it never really healed well.

Is it healed now?

Oh, yes.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection
And eventually, we got busy with our immigration and we learned a bit of English.

You and your friend?

My friend and I. We ate well. And everything was rationed, but we got as many cards, rationing cards as we wanted from the mayor. And so we sort of got back to health.

And where did you want to immigrate to?

To Central Africa to my brother, who had been there before the war.

Oh, he didn't go to Johannesburg?

No he still stayed in Zambia, in Northern Rhodesia.

But your Uncle Alfred was in Johannesburg?

Uncle was in Johannesburg. But the boys didn't get a permit to come to South Africa. They closed the borders.

Ah, so then they could only go to Zambia.

They could only go to Zambia, yes.

That was Rhodesia.

Yes, Northern Rhodesia. So then my uncle told my brother that I was alive. And then I wrote letters through the Red Cross. And I sent them letters. And then if we wanted to get out, we had to go away from Gardelegen and go to Berlin.

Why was that?

There were the people who would work at our immigration. We couldn't do in the Russians zone nothing. We had to go away with nobody knowing that we left. The Russians didn't like anybody to go over the border.

Oh, I see. You left your house then. And we left everything behiind but a suitcase. And the truck driver, he put the cases somewhere under the goods. And we sat in the front. And he said, this is my sisters.

How did you arrange that?

People arranged it for us.

What sort of people-- Jewish people, German people?

I think, well, I don't even remember who did it-- German. It would have been German people. There was one other Jewish woman. She was a secretary for the Russian commandant. She had also been in the camp, very intelligent woman. And she was a friend of ours. I don't know if she helped us there.

Tell me, before we get on to that--

Yes.

--I'd like to ask, once you moved back into your house, I mean, what were your relations with your former neighbors and the people you'd]BOTH TALKING]

We didn't see, yes. Well, that's when this teacher came back to me, the teacher I told you about, who talked about the Jews in bad terms and said--

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Before the war?

Before. He came back. I was lying in bed and he came. Oh, I'm so happy you're back here. And oh, you were always my star pupil and all that. So I said, look, I don't want anything to do with you. Do me a favor, if you just go out, and I don't look at you anymore.

You said that to him?

I said that to him.

And what was his reaction?

Oh, but you were always such a good pupil. And I was never really a bad Nazi and all that. They crawled back to me. And then there was a neighbor across the road who had been quite decent to us, really. And he also came.

And he wanted a certificate that he had been friends. And I did-- he wanted me to sign that he was never a Nazi. I said, I can't sign that because I knew more they all had to join the party. But I did give them a letter that he had been decent and that he had given my father some food, I know, in the evening. So I did that. For whoever deserved it, we did.

Did you make any friends? I mean, what was it like when there?

There was another neighbor who was always very decent to us. And they were bakers. And they gave us bread through the back window. And they were friends of ours. And they were good to us, old people. And old woman is still alive. She's over 90. And she's still writing with my friend in England. So there were very few people.

And you said they gave you bread-- this was before the war, the Nazi era?

Yes, yes, yes. Now, I must say, there was another thing happened. We must have-- might have-- somebody must have heard of that name Gardelegen because there was a whole train of inmates from some concentration camp burned up out of that little town.

What do you mean, where?

At the end of the war, there was a train full of camps-- inmates from the camp. And they blew them up outside of our little town. That was when I wasn't there. That's what I heard.

Before you came?

Burned alive people-- survivors-- survivors were burned?

Yes, blown up. But a few of those came out of that. And they were still in that town. They have a whole cemetery there with people who had, the last minute, been killed there.

When you say-- oh, this was during the war or after?

At the end, it must have-- no, just before the end of the war.

And who had blown them up?

The Nazis still.

No, but from the town or from elsewhere?

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection
I don't know. Not from-- must have been some Nazis from the town, perhaps, or from somewhere. But it just happened to happen outside.

It happened outside Gardelegen. I see.

And from that, a few survivors had come to Gardelegen and stayed there. And we were friends with those also. A few people who had come through the town from other camps got stuck there. And we were friends with those. But I must mention one more thing.

Where is that on the map?

[AUDIO OUT] great satisfaction is when we came to our house, in the entrance hall, we had sort of marble. And there was a Magen David in there--

In marble?

--inlaid in marble. And as this man had bought the house, and we were still living upstairs before we had to leave it, he painted over it, over that Magen David. And that's how it was left. And when we came back, the first thing I said, [INAUDIBLE]-- he came crawling to us. How are you? We are so pleased you're back.

I said, look, I don't want to talk to you. All I want to ask you is to take that off again. I want to see that Magen David again. So the mother was sitting on her knees scrubbing away to make that come out. That was a little bit of satisfaction that we got.

Did you have a tattoo number?

Yes, I had a number, yes.

Oh, there it is, you had a number. Cause that scar from --[INAUDIBLE].

Yes. I didn't want it removed for the first few years. But eventually, you see, with my feet, when I then emigrated to my brother, then I went to South Africa, to Johannesburg. And there was a very nice Jewish doctor who operated first on one foot. And so if it was a success, he took a bit more of the bone off to get a bit more padding. And it was a success.

And I went back to Northern Rhodesia. And then half a year later, I went back for the other foot. And when he did that, he looked at the number. And he said, you want me to take your number out at the same time? I said, no, I want to keep that. So I kept the number until I eventually got married and had children.

You married in Lusaka?

Yes. My husband was a friend of my brother, who was working in the business together with him.

Your husband is still alive?

Yes, yeah.

He was a German Jew and the brother too?

Yes, he had also come out just before the war like my brother. And they were--

Where was your husband born?

In Berlin. So I said no. But afterwards, nobody knew what this number was about in Lusaka.

But you were the only concentration camp survivor?

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Yes, yes. We came out there with that.

Really? That's unusual.

Nobody came there into the middle of the bush, you know, except there was some relative.

Oh, OK.

And when I say, they asked me, what's that? And I said, that's my telephone number. They believed it. And I made a point of telling them what it was. But there was a time when I said, now, it's enough. If the people don't know by now what it is, I don't care to tell them any more about it. And when we went on a holiday with the children, already three children, I went to this doctor. And I said, could you take the number off for me now? And he said, yes, I'll do that. And he took it off.

But why did it leave such a big scar?

You've got to take a big piece of skin, otherwise, it won't heal. [AUDIO OUT]

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media.
It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.