

I'm here today with Mrs. Ruth Salamon. My name is Dr. Henri Lustiger Thaler, and we are recording Mrs. Salamon's testimony today. This is a joint project with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Amud Aish Memorial Museum in Brooklyn. So Mrs. Solomon, let's-- if I could just have your place of birth and the country and your date of birth.

My name is Ruth Salamon. I was born in Kusnice, Czechoslovakia. And as for date, the Hungarian in '39 came, and they name it Kovácsrét. Yeah.

So let's start with some of your early memories, cherished memories in your hometown, and speak to me about your family and just friends and relatives.

I have four sisters, my parents. And till '39-- '38 we went in the Czech school, and everything was normal. In '39-- '38 September, the Czech-- it start, the war from Czechoslovakia with Germany. They took over the Sudeten. And it was a war.

And then it was a few months was the Ukrainian. After that they came, the Hungarian. And we went in the school, and they teach us Hungarian and Russian, Ukrainian. And it was still the Hungarian came was a normal life.

Tell me about that life. Tell me about that life.

The life? My father was making monument matzeivah.

Uh-uh.

Yeah, we have the-- [NON-ENGLISH] it's called. We have the-- how you should call? We had the own where they took the stones.

Ah, the quarry.

Yeah. And this was everything was from stone. The matzeivah You know?

So you father--

Yeah.

Your father, that was his business.

That was his business. Yeah, we had two people, what they do the hard work. And my father make-- draws the letters. [INAUDIBLE] It was OK. And then start the hard life after '39. They took the men to labor camps. They call it munkaszolgalat in Hungarian.

Yes.

And the boys they took to-- from 16 till 20 to [INAUDIBLE]. Because the youngsters, they should go, they teach them how to behave in Hungarian. It wasn't easy.

But before the Hungarian takeover, tell me a little bit about when it was in Czechoslovakia, what your education was. Did you go to a Bais Ya'akov?

No, it wasn't a Bais Ya'akov. I went in the public school, public school. In the afternoon, I went in the Jewish-- it's called a cheder. Even for the girls, they call cheder. And we learned like to read, to write in the Yiddish. We should be-- and I came from a very Hasidisch house. My father was very Hasidich.

And which Hasidic?

Munkács.

Munkács.

Munkács. He was born in Munkács. My grandfather was Munkács. The whole generation was Munkács. Yeah. And I lost my mother early, early. She died in '36. She was very young. An appendix. That's all it was. It was hard. We still have our grandmother.

And how old were you then in '36? You were--

I was nine.

9 years old. It must have been very, very difficult.

Yeah, it was very difficult. And so what shall I tell you? The Hungarian was very hard already for the Jewish people. They took the men in the camps. The children, the wives stay with children. It wasn't a lot [INAUDIBLE] to live.

Mrs. Salamon, and I'm very interested in this, in this period you're speaking about, but if we can just go back a little bit, and just if you could just tell me-- you lost your mother at such a young age.

Yeah.

And if you just told me some-- a memory of your mother that is a very cherished memory.

I don't remember a lot from my mother's memories. I don't remember. It's-- you know, I have an older sister, and she-- she was my second mother. She was very good to us. She keep the housekeeping, everything. And we was happy like children. We play, and we go. We didn't have toys like here. If we have a ball or something else, it was enough for us.

It was free. Everything we have, a lot of mountains, rivers. So in the summer we didn't know from a camp or something. We was free. We didn't have to close the doors at night, nothing.

Excuse me. It sounds like a very nice, nice, peaceful town. That's your memory as a child.

Very peaceful, very peaceful.

Very Jewish. Very Jewish.

Very Jewish. We didn't have problems with the goyim. We didn't have problem. We lived together, and they came to work with us, and they went to Shabbos. Everybody has a Shabbos goy. They came. They make in the morning a fire. How you call it? An oven. How you call it?

A wood oven.

A wood oven. Everybody. Everybody has someone. Every Shabbos they came. They make fire, and they came back. Because not everybody had ovens. We have just-- we have ovens. also just you have one room. You are heating one room. Because it cost a lot of money, the wood.

Of course. Do you remember your grandparents on either side of your family?

No, I remember my grandmother from my mother's side, and my grandfather from the father's side. The grandfather went to Auschwitz. He was 85 year old, my grandfather. He was a shokhet, Munkács shokhet, my grandfather. His father was, and his grandfather. All were shoktim. From their generation. And they were very Hasidisch. And father's side was very Hasidisch. Even my mother's side, they all [NON-ENGLISH] Yeah, yeah.

And it was happy. We were together with cousins. We lived a nice life, you know? It's not a rich life. Everybody has the same, and everybody was happy. That's it. If they make a wedding, then they came. Usually we have two big rooms. So the [INAUDIBLE] was in my house still the chuppah always. A rabbi, if he come, then he stay in our house.

And the wedding was very simple. We kids, we know that we shouldn't touch nothing when we are going to a wedding. They told us, don't touch nothing. No cake, nothing. And it was a musician and they danced till in the morning. And it was a happy, happy wedding. That's it.

So was the entire town more or less Munkács or?

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. It was til Satmar. It was this. My father was born there, and he was a very, very high Munkács [? Hasid. ?] Yeah.

Did the Munkács rebbe ever come to visit the town?

No, no, no, no. No, he was too big to come to visit. Just he used to go there for a holiday.

Your father would go to Munkács.

Munkács for a Simachas Torah for a the thing. He used to go there to his father.

Did you have any brothers?

No, no.

And the oldest sister survived?

No, the oldest and the youngest didn't survive.

Uh-huh.

Yeah. Then we had one, I was in concentration camp. And the other one came in-- if you hear with the Bergen-Belsen Satmar group went there, and from there they went to Switzerland.

Yes, yes, yes.

And my sister was there in this camp. Yeah.

The Kastner family.

The Kastner family, yeah, yeah.

So it sounds like a very-- until the war, it sounds like a very idyllic, quiet, very heimisch environment.

Yeah. Nobody has a lot. Everybody knows everybody. And with the Christians, we are friendly. We didn't know nothing. Some boy used to say

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

"Jews, go to the Palestine." They used to say. All the teachers, they were very nice people. They had the company with the Jewish people, with the Jewish people. The teachers, even the Christians, they came from out of town, and they was friends with the Jewish people.

That was very nice. Yom Tovim in your town must have been a really--

Oh, [INAUDIBLE].

Can you give me a memory of one of those-- like a Yom Kippur [INAUDIBLE].

[INAUDIBLE] used to come about [INAUDIBLE]. Since I was a kid, since I remember, he used to stay in our house, to eat and to sleep in our house. And the people used to come to the Tisch, you know. After the meal, they used to come in to dance. You know, the [INAUDIBLE]. For years Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, he used to come to us since I remember, since I was a kid, till the last Yom Kippur was.

Beautiful.

Yeah, it was nice. A nice small town. Just it was very friendly. Yeah.

Beautiful.

Yeah.

And from your time in the cheder, is there a teacher that really impressed you and that you felt--

No, the teacher-- we was together with the boys.

Uh-huh.

Just another table.

I see.

We went together at the same time as the boys. Yeah, they learned us to write, to read, and the history, the Jewish history they learned us. And it was OK. It was OK. Sometimes we can skip and let us-- the parents should know that we went to play or something also happened

We went a lot of time to woman. The girls, to a lady. To a lady. We were growing older a little, then we went with a lady. Yeah. In the morning and afternoon. Yeah. And that's what-- we want to learn. And it's not that they pushed us. We wanted to learn.

In the Czech school and my sister, everybody was the top student always. Yeah. I remember a teacher used to say it's such a waste time for this girl that they are not going to the higher school. Yeah, they wouldn't let us. No, too frum.

And it wasn't-- you didn't have a chance, so you have to travel to the higher schools.

Right.

Yeah. So we learned more until the eighth grade. Than today they learn in high school. Yeah, we learned. We have to know. If not, your teacher used to beat you. They have their hand, and they beat you with a stick if you didn't know. Yeah, they beat you up.

In the Czech, the girls, they didn't. When we went in the Russian school, they came a teacher was always-- right he drinks a lot. He came. Then for nothing he used to beat us. For nothing. He was a-- how you call it? A schiker.

A drunk.

Drunk. He was drunk. Always drunk.

So in the public school, you went through several different-- you went through the Hungarian.

First the Czech, and then Hungary, and Hungarian and Russian together.

Right.

Together, yeah. We knew already a little Russian, because it was a map, a big map, and it was written in Russian. So we learned already to read. It wasn't easy. It wasn't easy. And we just--

But you became multilingual very quickly.

Yeah, yeah.

So what is your first memory? And we're going back to some of the things you said a little earlier. What was your first memory that things were changing for a young girl? I guess you were about 11 or 12 years old when the war started.

Yeah. It was--

What did you feel? What those people were-- your parents, your father was worried?

He was worried that, yeah.

You felt his worry?

Yeah, everybody was worried, because we saw already the antisemitism started. The Hungarian, they came already, the police. They were really brutal. So we used to call them-- they have feathers here. If something, the feather came in. You know, because the Hungarian police, they have on the head such a feather. Like from a hen, the things.

And they were brutal. They were very brutal. They once came-- for us was working a man for years. And he didn't know from the parents nothing. And he got a letter. And my father went-- he knew where he is, to give him the letter. A letter.

And the police saw, and they took him in, and they beat him up. What letter it is? He gave the letter. He beat him up and the other man for nothing. For nothing. My father was very scared from them. Very scared. He was a quiet man. He didn't want to have nothing to do with them. You know? It was scary.

So your first indication was this event.

Yeah.

And you thought that something had changed.

Yeah, yeah.

Did you feel other things in terms of neighbors?

No, no. With the neighbors, we had Jewish neighbor and we had with the Christians. No, no. We were friendly. They was crying when they took us out, a lot of people, the neighbors. The neighbors, yeah. Yeah.

So then explain to me what occurred after that? You said they were crying when they took us out. Tell me. Tell me the other things that occurred prior to being taken out. Were taken to a ghetto?

Yeah.

Eventually? But just explain to me as much as you can remember, just the conversation that you had with your father, with your sisters about what we're doing, what's going on.

My father was-- believed Mashiach is coming. He used to-- I remember he was sitting, and he said, maybe

it's like [INAUDIBLE]. Mashiach [INAUDIBLE] Mashiach [INAUDIBLE] You know? Always when they say Mashiach [? coming, ?] it remind me of my father. Then-- he didn't come then. What shall I tell you? Always it's Mashiach [INAUDIBLE]. The people are saying Mashiach [INAUDIBLE], I always said he didn't come. My father believed so in Mashiach that-- unbelievable. He was a very frum man. Very frum.

So and then they took us in. A day after Pesach, they took us in the shul. We stayed in our house. We didn't go to the ghetto first. They took us because we lived across the street from the shul. We stay. And they stay. For a few towns, they took in the people in the shul, in the neighborhood. They make it very fast. And then they took us in the ghetto.

And the ghetto was in your town?

No, it was Munkács. Munkács.

The ghetto was in Munkács.

Yeah, the ghetto was in Munkács Yeah.

That was a big ghetto.

Yeah, yeah. Munkács was a big ghetto. And it was already hunger in Munkács. We wasn't hungry because we have there uncles and grandfathers. They send potatoes for us, and something. Something, you know? And we wasn't big eaters.

I remember we have bread, and it was already-- We got-- it was spoiled already. And we cut out. And a boy came, and he said, I take this home. Today, he is a multimillionaire, this guy. A multimillionaire. And his father used to say, 20 pengos to give for a bread? It's a lot of money, you know?

In the wagon where we were, he gave everybody the money we should eat the [INAUDIBLE]. You know, because he was afraid that they will see that he has a lot of money. This I remember. And we was in wagon. They took us in a wagon, maybe 80 people or more. A lot from the family.

From Kusnice to Munkács.

Munkács. From Munkács to Auschwitz.

So tell me a little bit more about Munkács. What are your memories?

In Munkács, it was already hunger, hunger. Not very-- we was a small family. I was there with my sister and my father. And they make us a shed outside. So we slept on the outside. We didn't have a barrack. Some people had, and we didn't. And we slept there three people. Like outside it was cold. And just we was waiting that the Russian is coming, you know?

They had one transport. Then they said-- we will go. We hided. We want to go because the Russian already here, and they will come any minute. So the Russian didn't come, and we went to Auschwitz.

And do you recall how long you were in the Munkács ghetto?

About five, six weeks.

Five, six weeks.

Yeah. They make it very fast for us. For the Hungarian Jews, they make it very fast. They clean up the things. In four weeks, five weeks, the whole-- then they used to say Auschwitz, the crematorium was burning 28-- 24 hours. Day and night, day and night. Yeah.

So from Munkács to Auschwitz, you were taken there by train.

Yeah. In the wagon.

Wagon.

Yeah, wagon. 85 people, and we went three days, I think. No water. The kids was crying. No bathroom. It was terrible. We survived in there. I remember when we went in the morning, and one man, he knew already that-- he said, look. Here is supposed to be another station. And we said, yeah. I look in the window, because I [INAUDIBLE]. And in the small window, I said, Bobowa. Bobov. And later he said, kinderlach, that's it. That's it. We're going to Poland. But we knew already what in Poland was. So that was it. And when we came to--

You said you knew already what Poland was.

Where they're killing. They're killing.

You had heard that.

Not to burning. We thought from beginning that we are going in a farm. They tell a farm. So everybody thought a farm. But he knew right away. We didn't know that. He knew what was going on in Poland, because he came back already. Yeah. And he knew that Poland is no good.

We didn't know. We didn't know. We knew that it's tsurus in Poland, what is going on, that it's a crematorium or an Auschwitz. We didn't know that. But as far as in the home, in '40, '41 was still weddings. You know, when the Poland was already killing in Poland, by us was still weddings. Yeah, it happened. That's it.

So you spent three days in a cattle car to Auschwitz?

Yeah.

And when you reached Birkenau?

Yeah, when we came and they opened the wagon, and they said, [NON-ENGLISH] Leave everything and get the kids. Get the kids for the older people. We didn't understand what they meant, because they talk and they ran away. You know, they came to clean up already. And they-- and we didn't know. So they took us. And we was happy that people, the elder people they took that they wouldn't work. They took us to work. That's what we were thinking from the beginning.

They took us to a bath. They shaved us, and they gave you a dress. A gray dress. One dress. And then we came. They put us in a barrack. It wasn't so-- why they did-- just not so long. [INAUDIBLE] A bed. They put us, seven or eight people on one side, and on the other side. And from beginning, you know, you didn't-- you didn't know what's happened to you. We didn't recognize the people, just the voices. Because they was shaved. Everybody was shaved. And the dress, the uniform.

So you were separated from your sisters?

No, with one sister. The other sisters wasn't there. My father, from my father. With my sister I went through the whole this. And two sisters, they went in the crematorium. And then they started to talk. We came in the block, who was there already in Auschwitz, they used to-- why did you come? Why you didn't run away?

We didn't hear from Auschwitz. We didn't know nothing, you know? And they said that from the beginning you will hear that the father is burning the daughter, or that the son is burning the mother. You will cry, and later on you will be so strong, like we are now. You wouldn't cry. You stop crying already. You know, you got used to this.

So this is interesting. So who told you this?

The block-- they was already there a year or two, from Slovakia or from Poland. They was already there. And they lived -- They built Auschwitz. They built the barracks. And they didn't build-- they show us where the dogs would bite them. Because if they didn't work enough, then they took the dogs.

And a lot of people died there, they told us. It wasn't the crematorium then when they came. They didn't worry. They killed them. Yeah, and they knew already. They were higher than we. They have already a position maybe to watch us with this.

So they were the Blockalteste.

The Blockaltestes. Yeah. Yeah

They shared their horrible experience, and--

They knew already everything.

Shared their horrible experience.

They suffered more than we suffered. Because they saw that it was in light they killed the people. And they were much more. And they already didn't care. They knew. They said always, we know that they are not going out from here. We will die here, because we know too much. They always used to say, we know, and we see too much. They wouldn't let us out. Yeah.

When they told you this, what was your feeling at the time when they told you this? It must have been a feeling of--

I tell you, we believed them. Some people didn't believe till the last minute. We believed them. But because we see already. You know, we hear that we were in Auschwitz. We hear in the night. They yell. They yelling. They crying, you know? And they were talking between them. They were talking right to the children. They're so innocent in what they think. They knew what was going on. And believed. Because they was in up, and we was down in the bed.

And we believed them. Not everybody. No, no. The real Hungarian didn't believe. We believed more better. And it was terrible. Terrible. You know? They took us at 5 o'clock, and early in the morning. It was dark. They took us Appell, Zahlappell for hours. Hours. You know, it was dark, And you have the one dress. And it was cold. Poland is colder than here. Well, usually.

And it was cold, and it was you have to stay and watch the Zahlappel. They came in the morning, then gave us some breakfast. We stayed there.

How many hours do you remain for the Appell?

Stayed hours. These are twice a day. Twice a day. And once my sister-- she was older than I am, and she had an ear infection. She was very sick, you know. The ear was swollen. And we stayed in Appell, and she fainted. And I yell, and the Lageralteste give me a punch, and she said to me [INAUDIBLE]. You don't see that he is coming?

So they put her in the middle, and we was 5 in a row. They put her in, and they wait till he went away. They put her in the barrack. So this was for me that I got so scared that he is coming and he will take her away right away. I never met-- thank God the [? blockowa ?] that she helped me that I should be quiet, because he is coming. And he came. If he saw somebody didn't look like that-- out. And they took them into the crematorium. This we knew.

And your sister, it took a while for her to recover?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.



Appells, you say twice a day. That must have been extremely difficult for her.

Very, very difficult. And we was with the sister from the day we came we was together. We knew that if one died, the other died. All the time till the last minute, we knew if one is dying, then the other. Yeah. And we shared everything. You know, we shared the bread with everything. One wouldn't take from the other one more a piece. We together.

That's a remarkable experience that you had with your sister. It's a remarkable experience.

This is unbelievable. When we go-- later on, when we went to the death camp. You know, where they kill the [INAUDIBLE] you know, who couldn't go, they killed right away on the street. And we went together three weeks, hand by hand. Because we knew if they shot one, they will shoot the other.

Not once was that my sister used to say, you go, I can't anymore. I can. I was sitting, they should kill me, too. No. The opposite. I was there, and I can't go anymore. Let's you go. And we didn't. We knew that we have to be together. It was unbelievable. yeah

Well, that's very moving. That's very, very moving. You held hands together so that you would die together, or live together.

That was, we knew that we're together. They knew we always when we have the food together, everything together. It was-- when we went from Auschwitz--

Before we leave Auschwitz, I just want to say, without the closeness, so here in a world that is-- it's a death world. It's a world of death, and such darkness, and such despair, what was that light that held you and your sister together? Was it-- what was it? It was sisters?

She was my sister, my mother, my best friend.

Uh-huh.

Best friend. We didn't move with each other. Yeah. No, this was-- we didn't know if someone stayed-- that they're-- when I was so close to death, I was very sick. And my sister used to come and look, see if I am breathing still. And I used to say, you should be strong, that someone should stay from the family at least. And she used to cry.

And sometimes I said to her, you know, I feel I'm now dying. She used to kiss me, that I am now-- I feel I'm now dying. I was so sick already. It was terrible. We didn't have 8 and 1/2 months water. Water to wash.

They bring with a horse and wagon every day a little water. So you have to have something for the food. You didn't know if you should wash this, or you should drink, or you should wash the hand with this, with this little water. That water. And we was full with lice.

Oh, when we came home from work, we put out the dress and clean up. And who didn't do that, the lice eat them up. They didn't-- they didn't-- they gave up. They gave up. And we didn't-- we want to live. We want to live. We didn't give up this.

When you were going through this horrible, horrible time with your sister, did you reflect on your home and did do things just to make you a little bit more-- feel more normal, to speak about your life in Czechoslovakia?

In Poland, in concentration camp?

Yeah. Was that part of your conversation, just to bring you back?

No. In concentration was one thing. We should have enough food, and we should have enough bread to

leave-- to eat and to leave that we don't eat anymore on the table. This was every time. Every time. [INAUDIBLE] from the home, and we was talking it, because we was a family there from the same town. Just that everybody was talking just from food.

And when I come home, and I will do that, and I will do this, and we will have bread, you didn't imagine that you can have bread, enough to leave on the table. Till today if someone throw out food, I would keep it and freeze it there a few days. I wouldn't throw out. And the bread, I wouldn't throw out the bread either. I keep it. I toast it. And when I throw it out, it always came [Ito me what -- that we didn't have. Always.

And I see the kids, my daughter. What you don't see doesn't hurt. You know, they throw I shouldn't see. Because they throw out food. We didn't. Today, you know, on the table and I see by my brother or somebody else, if they do have food on the table, you didn't touch it. No, they throw it out. I couldn't understand. You know, I said for my daughter a lot of time. I said, "why you throw out food? Nobody touch it." "Mommy, it was on the plate."

So your whole life was just the food. Nothing else.

Well, you were in a state of starvation.

Yeah.

You were in a state of advanced starvation.

Advanced starvation. We got a coffee. Black coffee the morning. Coffee. This was a black thing. Nothing. And then in the night, they gave us soup. Some with potato. Some was an empty soup. It was a soup. And then they gave us a small piece of bread. From beginning, they gave more. And every time less and less.

This bread, we measure it with a straw. Should be the same. Everybody should have the same. Because you didn't have like two, [? three ?] with the straw. And the bread you keep for lunch. Because you eat supper. Until lunch, breakfast you couldn't. Because if somebody eat it at once, then the whole day they was hungry. You have to put a little bit now and a little to save for later.

That was the whole thing. And I have to tell you something. We was talking. We was telling. We didn't have paper. We didn't have what was [INAUDIBLE]. Bathroom. Bathroom. It wasn't a bathroom. Just what we used. We can't. Imagine. We can't remember. We asked. Talk already the friends what we used. We don't know.

We wasn't normal people. They didn't keep us like normal people. We were just a piece of-- a piece of a person. I don't know what to tell you. It was-- we went a lot of through. And we slept-- from Auschwitz we went up to Stutthof. Stutthof--

Before we leave Auschwitz, I just want to stay for just a little, little longer. If you don't mind. So in this world, in Auschwitz, when you and your sister were so close and looking at life and looking at death together, every day looking together at life, looking together at death--

Yes.

--did you find yourself praying sometimes?

Prayed?

Did you pray? Or was the starvation so overwhelming?

We didn't pray. We still prayed. You know, when we went to sleep we prayed. Because we got used to it. We got used to it from the home. And I remember the first time when we came up Auschwitz, and they gave something like salami. Something this. And we was looking to eat or not. We came from a frum family. And we had there an elderly cousin. And she said, kinderlach, we came here, and we have to eat whatever they

gave us. This I remember.

And I don't know. I can't say that we pray. Like they used to say in the block, when I will go home, I will do this, and I will do. It's not that I make a mistake. If I'm not going home, then I go in crematorium. Then I must think she really has a sense of humor. I have made a mistake.

It wasn't a lie. They came to say my cousin, first cousin died. She died. In a week, I will die. Because I was so weak already. I will die. A person, he died. Another cousin died. You didn't cry because you knew you will meet them there. Yeah. A person was nothing. Nothing.

You should have [? pity. ?] The pieces-- we went on the death march three weeks.

When you left Auschwitz.

Auschwitz, we went to Stutthof.

And you went to Stutthof.

Stutthof.

On a cattle car or on a death march?

We went first with a cattle-- no, Stutthof we went there, and then we went with a boat. Yeah. Two boats. One boat they torpedoed. Yeah. They-- the people died on this boat. We came to a small town. And over there from Stutthof, they took us over, the SS. Black people. And we thought, no, that's it. They will kill us.

We stayed there a while, just to the-- it was August-- August, September. They took to work in from a farm. Just to take the soldiers wasn't there. . we should help for them, for Germany to take from the farm the pieces. Then we left. We went to another place. We came there. We lived in the Zelt. How you call it? The tent.

Yeah, you lived in a tent.

In a tent. We lived there. A small tent. 10 people. Five on this side, five on this side. It was a short. You came there. We have a little straw on both sides. We came there, and we have to sit down right away. You can't stand up, because it was short. And it's raining. From then on, we start to work in just the ditch there. How you call it? The Schutzengrabens.

It was a meter, meter and a half big and so wide. We dig this all the time there. And wherever we went, we dig.

Trenches? Trenches for soldiers? Or was this harvest?

This not-- this is against the enemies.

OK, so it;s trenches.

Trenches?

Right.

Trenches. We did this all the time.

Uh-huh.

I was once so sick. And it was this rain and snow and wind and cold. I have temperature. And I couldn't work. And my daughter, you have to with a shovel. You have to work. My sister went to the SS and tell him

that he should let me sit, not to work. You know, to bend down. And he start to watch me the whole day, how I work.

I thought, that's it. You know, I was sick. And if you didn't work, if you were sick, they put you in a block. They didn't give you food. The Totenblock, they call it. The dead block. Because if you are not working, then you don't get food.

Hmm.

This was once. And it's unbelievable how many times it was. We came home. You know, what you have? That was another thing we did. We came home late afternoon. We got food and we laid down. Again, they wake us up early to go to work. I think at 7 o'clock, we went to work till 5 o'clock. Once it was bad weather. And I have a doctor. She likes me. Once in a while, when it's a bad weather, she let me stay. You know, the SS.

So I went there, and she let me stay. And it was Yom Kippur. And my sister went to work. All of a sudden, the SS came. Everybody out to go to work. So we went to work. I never forget that.

And we work [INAUDIBLE]. You know the grass? We cut the grass. And we put the burnt grass because it was the border, that when the enemy came, they shouldn't see that it's a border. We put it high. And it was windy, and it was so cold. And my sister was happy that I am-- I stay home.

All of a sudden when we came home, we met. We met. She was so sick that I went to work. She was happy that I am not working, that I'm home. And once we used the [INAUDIBLE]. Another place, the same grass. We work with the shovel. We throw it for one, and then for another in the high.

And an SS came. And we said that he is coming. Every SS has a name by us. You know, one didn't have an eye. We call him the eye. The other one has one, too. He is coming. He has a stick so big, a thin stick. And he start to hurt me. And he was hitting till the blood is coming forth.

We didn't know from what. But why I had been put there, I couldn't pick up already the shovel. I should pick up and to throw there, not to neighbor, the next door neighbor. That's what we went through, such things. I want something to tell you, that we went. I was in a Lager. A woman had something, a soup. Somebody gave her something to warm up, soup. A day before, our sister died. And she was busy with the soup, and she spilled the soup.

And she said, we are so lucky. Yesterday, Sarah died. And today the soup spilled. And we was looking her, she is crazy. She said the same thing, that Sarah died yesterday, the sister, and the soup, the same-- the soup spilled. You understand what I mean? The same thing. Sarah died and the soup, the soup spilled. The people, the people was nothing. No.

So every effort made to make you feel not human.

Not human, no.

Every effort made.

They make it not human. Not human.

So what-- but your sister and you remained human to each other, to each other.

We remained, yeah. We are a few from the same town. We keep together. Because you have to go five. And you went to march. And you went to work five in a line. And we from the same neighborhood, we were there from the town. And another one. We keep together, we should stay together.

So it helped. I mean, because really, between you and your sister in such a horrible situation, the resiliency that you both showed to stay together, and to die together, if need be.

Yeah, yeah.

And so you're also saying that when there are other people, that also made you stronger, when you were able to share with people from your town, other people.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We keep it. And we were hoping. Sometime we said when we will go home. You didn't see a chance. You didn't see a chance. I remember I--

But you kept up the dream.

Yeah.

You kept up the dream, the hope.

The dream was-- the dream--

That you could go home.

Yeah, the dream was-- I remember an SS-- he wasn't so bad. He was telling once for a moment he was there. He said, for you is the same thing. If you will-- if it's the war, then you will work. If we win, there'll be-- if we didn't win, we will kill you. Anyway, you will die. Because you are not going out. That he gave us.

It was once a Rosh Hashanah. Not Rosh Hashanah. It was still from beginning Tish B'av. They gave us a-- this was Stutthof. The best. Stutthof was the best compared to every place, because we have water. We had water, and we can wash ourself. You know, it was-- this was good.

Since Stutthof, we didn't have water, warm water. Nothing. We didn't have water. In Stutthof, we have warm water, and we have a barrack, and a nice [? compare ?] water.

And nobody ate. They gave a bitter, bitter beet to eat. Nobody eat it. It was somebody. It's Yom Kippur. Tish B'av still was a little religious, you know. We didn't eat. And people saw that we didn't eat, because we have there no plates they gave out. And everybody put it on the floor.

And he came, and he saw that we didn't eat. He put us in this. In Zahlappell, to stay in the line. And he took the hot food, spill on us. And then he put, we should go up in the room. And it was-- I don't know. People were talking, and I was sleeping. I was still-- and he start-- because I was in front, he start to beat me up.

And another woman said she was laughing. She was sleeping. And he started to hit this woman, because she said that I was sleeping. He can do whatever he wants. He beat her up. Unbelievable. Unbelievable. Some pe-- some concentration camps were OK. They have a barracks. They have some warm water. You know? Or they have heating. Some people have that they work in factories.

We were all the time outside. Outside. We wasn't in the big camps. In the small camps we were. And it was bad. It was very bad. Winter. Yeah.

So in Stutthof, you were working digging trenches?

No.

No?

In Stutthof, we didn't do nothing.

Ah-huh.

Then we left Stutthof. We went on a farm over there for a few weeks to work there. I got sick there, and

then I went and went-- they make from a Zelt, from a tent a hospital. She didn't have an aspirin to give you. Just the hospital. So over there, I was sick. And I stood there two weeks.

Later, and over there just one person died. They buried her. It is. And compared to the other ones, Stutthof was-- we didn't do nothing to sit outside in the sun, in the rain. And compared to others, it was normal. Yeah.

When we came to other, we were in the Zelt, tent. And we didn't have water. We didn't have the food. The food was the same every time, the same soup. That's all. From beginning, sometime they gave us a little jam. You know, this small jam. Later, every time less and less and less. Yeah.

Just the people didn't die. A lot of people didn't die. Just started to die by the Todesmarsch. The death march. if you couldn't go, they kill you. They kill. You know? Over there, in the camp, and you was working, you knew, they see you're working, and that's all.

So where did the death march begin for you? From which camp?

I cannot remember this camp. We was there a long time in the winter. And I cannot remember. I remember Auschwitz, Stutthof, Friedendorf, and Praust. And this name I cannot remember. I was thinking for months. For months, and I don't know where.

From there they gave us-- they gave us a bread. For everybody a bread. We left. We start to go. And some people, when they are hungry, they eat at once. And the third day already, the people was looking if somebody hide the bread. We eat just a slice bread each day with my sister.

We didn't know what was going on. We saved it. And if the people saw you, they were so violent, hungry. If you ate, they took out from the mouth from you. You know? You have to hide it when you eat.

We was three weeks, Winter. It was bitter cold. I remember the January 16, because my father's birthday was that, when we start to move. We start the walk and walk. The first thing we saw something, everybody [? lost it. ?] We saw some foot there on the floor. We took out-- it was a woman, a dead woman. We saw just the finger.

Then we got scared. When we saw first woman, you know, dead. The snow was-- she was covering with the snow. Then we was already scared. We saw it's not good. And we went three days, and we came in a farm. Every time in a farm. And over there, the farm, the cows, the people, it was terrible. They gave us a potato.

And where did you sleep in this farm? In the barn?

In the farm? In the barns. In the barns. Nothing to eat. It was terrible. A lot of people died there. They didn't wake up because it was tired and cold in a farm all the time.

It must have been freezing.

You should know how the people are dying. They're freezing. It's a very, very light-- you feel the freeze-- you talk and the freeze-- the feet are freezing. And you talk and talk, and you fall down. That's it. The whole-- the whole body is frozen. The whole body. That's what we went to.

I remember we went, and I couldn't go already. I said to my sister, I can't walk. My feet are freezing. Another cousin, and they took us and we ran. They ran with me. So luckily, we came not-- later, we came of a place, also a farm. It was the farm. The cows, the thing, they didn't know what to do with us. No food.

And they didn't give us food. I don't-- I remember just the Pellkartoffel they used to tell us. And when they gave us, it was so cold it was frozen already. And this was a few times, a few times till we came to-- when we came up another place froze.

Over there, when we came, they took away the people. Just a few people stayed there. And we came.

Hungry, nothing. And they said they are giving some bread. I ran out barefoot. I didn't-- and everybody was taking bread. I got a small piece of bread. I don't know how I got that. And I came to my sister and I said, I got a piece of bread. Nobody should hear.

We ate it. We were so happy a piece of bread we ate. In, there over there we start work. Just over there it was terrible. The people were dying. Every day is came a carriage. Like a carriage. They put the dead people on this side. And on this side, every day you see friends or you knew the people. Over there was already the dead.

What kind of work were you doing in Praust?

The same thing.

Same thing.

The same thing. We never do nothing. Just the outside. Summer and winter. When it's hot and when it's cold, we did in this. I hear my cousins, like what she has. She has a warm place and she has food. We didn't. We didn't have this. Yeah. The food was-- over there, when it was the end, they gave us also soup, a coffee, and a small piece of bread. That was your usual day.

We're going to take a short break right now.

Yeah.

And we'll start again in a few moments.

OK.

OK.

OK.

We're back again for our second segment with Mrs. Solomon. And Mrs. Solomon, when we ended the first segment, you were in the Praust concentration camp near Danzig. And perhaps we can continue from there.

When we came to Praust, it was a-- it was terrible. In the night when we came on, the people was running. The people was hungry. It was snowing. And we ran. So they said they're giving food, they're giving bread. I get-- I was barefoot, and I had my feet in the ice. You know, the food. And the blood was flowing. I didn't care. I was running. And I just I should get some. I got a piece of bread, and I keep it for my-- I came home, and we was very happy. We eat the bread.

And then later, two, three days, it's settled down. They took us to work. The same thing. The same with the shovel.

Building trenches.

Build the trenches. That we was doing. And not far from there was an airport. With air. Some people went there to work, and some people were at the trench to work. And we worked there. Over there people were dying. It was already the last. Every day, every day people were dying. And some friends, some relatives.

We didn't cry, because we knew that we will meet there. In a few weeks, or in a week, or in a few days. The life wasn't already hopeful. So we were there quite a while. A few months. A few months. Then one day they told us, if we will see people running, we should run. We should leave everything.

I was already so weak, I couldn't run. My sister took me with another friend, a cousin. And we ran. And then they bombed the things the place where we were-- the Lager, the barrack. They bombed the things. When we came back from there, you should see. It was a head a hand, the feet. These people who couldn't run,

they stayed there. It was unbelievable. This is--

And after that, a few days it was quiet. And then we heard that they ran away, the Germans. And they took with them a few Jewish people. They was Lageralteste, [? blockowa. ?] You know, they were healthier women. And they went, and we stay alone.

Two days, and then all of a sudden Russian soldier came. Everybody ran to the Russian. It was very Russian. It was from the war. And my sister took me to the window, I should go. Because I couldn't walk. And then she was there. Everybody. And she came back, and I was crying. I But since I can't stand, and I couldn't walk to my bed. I was so-- I have to walk maybe three, four steps. I couldn't. I couldn't.

And the Russian behaved very nice to us. They didn't give us a lot of food. First of all, they took us, and they shave us, and bathed. And they gave us to wear a pyjama. Men's underwear or a shirt, whatever they have clean. And they put us in a clean bed.

We couldn't believe it. You know, we were in a clean bed. And it's unbelievable, the feeling. And they gave us food. They watch. They didn't give us a lot of food. Most of the people were sick. Everybody. They took rooms, and they make hospitals from them, and a lot of Jewish doctors was there and nurses.

Russian Jewish.

Russian Jewish. Yeah, they came. And so we stayed there in the hospital. Before they came--

Your sister as well was in the hospital also.

First, I was sick. Then the sister was sick, and I could already walk. And they say they are giving rice. Some place they cook rice. And I went with a-- I have some thing. I took a full-- let's say a bottle of some-- a pot. A pot full with rice. And I couldn't carry it. Till I came home, I throw out a little, a little. I just have a little bit because I couldn't-- it's for my sister.

Then my sister got well, and I got again. So we stayed there. And then we came home. We stayed there in the hospital. And after that, we came home.

So the hospital was near Danzig?

It wasn't a hospital. They make from rooms a hospital. They were-- the doctors were watching us, what we are eating and what we-- it's not-- they bring a truck with food, with meat, meat conserve. And they realized that we took a few. They came to us, and they said, don't eat that. Give it back. And give it. They thought we are not giving back. You couldn't hide it just under the mattress.

And they said, give it. We will warm up and we will give it to you. Don't eat it because you will die, if you eat cold meat. So then that was-- it was nice from them, that watching us. The things.

And it's not like I said, but it take time till we went through-- what we went through everything. And it's-- that was-- and when we came home--

So you went back. So you were back to Kusnice.

I went back to Kusnice, and I didn't have where to go in. We didn't have our house. The Russian-- it was a big house. The Russian put there the houses. They took out the windows the doors, everything. It's nothing. It's not livable. We have there a cousin. She's the only one that she find a husband. They came together, the husband. The husband was already there because he was earlier came home.

So we were there a few days. Still we can stay there. We have an uncle in another-- another cousin in another city. We went there for a few days. We didn't have to eat. They gave up-- make a kitchen, and they gave us food. And still you don't have-- you don't have what to do with yourself. Where we will live, what we were doing.



So from your family members, it was yourself--

And my sister.

--and your sister.

Yeah.

That was it.

That was it. The uncles, that aunts, the cousins, everybody died, died. Auschwitz. Yeah. And we knew a sister later on, that a sister lives. We didn't know where, when. And then someone sent a telegram, because it was connected. Everybody who knew they're alive, the letters in the paper. So my sister and I, we didn't see each other 14 years with the other sister. She was 10 year in the Swiss. We didn't see. When I saw her, I would never recognize her. I was a teenager. And now I'm married with a child.

So in all these years, she was in Switzerland?

Yeah.

In all these years, there was no contact?

Yeah.

You thought-- you thought she had died?

No, we knew that she is alive. After a year, we knew that she is alive. We knew.

I see.

If she knew that two sisters, that someone sent her a telegram, that two sisters through the Red Cross, two sisters are alive, and she didn't know which sisters. Because other two sisters and I later on-- so we didn't-- she married. She married a doctor. She went to Chicago.

And when I came to America, then we see each other the first week. Otherwise. And--

So you were back then in Kusnice. And so tell me, how long did you stay and how did you make your life there?

Kusnice I couldn't. I didn't stay. I didn't have-- you didn't have where to stay.

Right.

I didn't have. We went to Czechoslovakia. From Czechoslovakia and the Sudeten. Over there was already a normal life. You know, we work. I went to work. And you have already money. You a little-- you make business with cigarettes. Then was cigarettes the main thing. So we used to go to Slova-- I used to go to Slovakia and to buy cigarettes, and to sell it.

So little by little was normal life. The people live normal. They have a normal house, a normal apartment, normal work. You can have work. And we live. We lived there. It is-- it was hard. It was very hard. You are independent. You have to know that you-- I was more-- my sister was more afraid. I was more outgoing.

You know, my sister, she wouldn't go to make business. I used to go, because she didn't. She got engaged then to a cousin. And I went Czechosl-- I find an apartment, and then she came.

Czechoslovakia, I was young. I was young then. It was a normal life, the normal life that you have there.

Just till you came home. Until you came home with a man's shoe with one dress. A dress, you can call it a dress. You didn't have nothing. And you couldn't expect for nobody. But nobody has nothing.

And your entire family was gone. The security of the family was gone.

We used to go to the train to wait. The people are coming. And every time we heard that he is not alive, and this is not alive. You know, we came home just to cry. But we was hoping maybe the younger people were alive, No, it was very painful, very painful to hear this uncle. An uncle that was in the 40s, 39 year old and a nice businessman. Nobody. Nobody came home. Not one uncle came home.

And then they'd start, how was your work in concentration? We was talking. And they used to say, my-- theirs compared to mine was OK. Because we went a lot through, a lot. When the people were dying, they put them in the room. In the room that they don't get food. You see they die. Because you can't-- without food, you can't live that much. A week the most.

And it was was-- I can't explain to you. I can't. When my sister died, it was my worst thing in life. And when she died, a piece of me died.

So your sister died many years later.

She died in '54. And she left five children and a kid from a few months.

Was she living in Brooklyn?

No, in Israel. I was then in Israel also.

OK, but we haven't got there. OK. So you went there after--

Czechoslovakia.

--after Czechoslovakia you went to Israel.

Yeah.

I see.

I went there in Israel. And I lived in Israel about nine years. And then I came to America.

Mm-hmm.

And when my sister died, I took two children. I was pregnant. So one stayed by me almost five years, 4 and 1/2. The other went away because my brother-in-law said you can't keep them. Took two small children and you are waiting yours.

So just then he went to America. When he went, he took the children. And I was always sorry why I let them go. Just like I haven't a choice. They were by me almost five years, and I gave it away. Gave it back for father. And I was always sorry why I didn't fight not to give her away.

But people told me, you have to give it away, because it's his. He has the choice. And I decided then I'll come to America. Yeah.

What did your sister die from, may I ask?

Cancer. She wasn't sick. She was sick maybe four weeks, five of this. They said kidney. They didn't even know. They didn't know from what she died. When she died, they want an--

Autopsy.

Autopsy. And they didn't let. And a whole yeshiva stay a whole night to watch sitting. I was so sick. I wasn't at the funeral. The doctor didn't let me to go. He was-- because I was very sick. I was pregnant, and unbelievable. I used to run every day twice in the hospital. I was there since she got sick, from Pesach till she was [INAUDIBLE]. After [INAUDIBLE]. I don't know the date.

And she was-- well, they didn't expect that they have to operate that Tuesday. And she died two days before. This was-- but everything what I have they took away from me. Yeah. Yeah. I remember when she used to say in hospital, when will I be able to pay you back what you-- I said, I didn't do you nothing. Oh, you did rather for me. We was close. That's it.

It sounds like a very, very beautiful, beautiful relationship that you had with your sister.

Yeah.

So meaningful, so beautiful.

I have to tell you, with the other sister we didn't have the relationship. So she lives already far. She married. I got married. I have my life. She has her life. We didn't have in common. We didn't have in common what with the other one we have. She went. I was about 15 or 16 year. She lived a different life, and I live a different life.

And now we are close. She has two kids. She passed away 8 years. And she has two kids, doctors. And they came sometimes to visit me. And that's it. That's it. Now I have still here two cousins from one side and two cousins from the other side. They're alive. One has Alzheimer's. The other one is also-- they're not well. They're not well, not one. And they're in 90s. Yeah.

So from this really such a difficult story, but also such a beautiful story of your sister and yourself. And I just want to comment on it. I'm very moved by how you brought both of yourselves into life. You held on to each other in the midst of this storm, this absolute horrible, horrible storm.

And I with the kids, also I feel to them closer than the kids. I love my daughter's kid. They're married. They have grandchildren already. I feel close to them, very close. Even it was time when it was very bad, when he married, and he didn't let me. She didn't want that I should go to the kids, I should see the kids. It was very different.

The wife of your brother-in-law.

The stepmother. Yeah, she didn't. And she tried to push away the kids from me. And didn't help her. Didn't help. Because they knew that I loved them, and I loved their mother. And it was very, very difficult. If I went to a wedding and she said for the kids, you shouldn't go to your aunt. You shouldn't go. And the kids, they was afraid for her. They was afraid she was beating them. Yeah. Yeah.

So from all this, Mrs. Salamon, as a frum woman, how do you-- how do you explain all of this? How do you explain the-- in the midst of all that, this great love, that you and your sister were able to-- you were like angels to each other.

We keep each other. We knew. We knew. We didn't talk about it. Just we knew that if one died, the other one. And it wasn't such a big thing to die. I remember when we eat the last piece of bread, and it was already the end, we couldn't already walk, and my sister said to me, you know, you go and I stay here already. Let them kill me.

Then I sit down, and I said, OK. Let them kill us. No, she stand up. We are going. You are not staying. I don't want that they should kill you. It was-- we went in the night, and we couldn't-- really we couldn't. The people, they were killing us. And they said, another five miles, another three mile, another five mile.

And we keep going. And when we came up the place, it wasn't a place. It wasn't a place where you should

sit down. Nothing till you got a piece, I remember. And on the bed, and sit down-- a place where to sit down in the night till will find the places for us. And we were hungry. And people are dying, a lot of people. When we came up the place, a lot of people died because they didn't have already the strength to go.

It's unbelievable. Unbelievable what I went through. And I fight. And we fight for the life. You know? We want to live. Sometime we gave up. When you gave up, it's not worth it. And we was near the death a few times. A few times. In that last minute already, when the Russian came, we was already.

They took pictures, I remember, from me. And they write down. I don't know if I was 30 kilo.

And your sister was also--

Also.

--not far from 30 kilos.

Not far, no. Not far. Yeah.

A great strength to live. And--

The people who want to live, they fight. You know? And someone, they weren't, and they were in bed, and they didn't go to-- to work is already the last minute. It was already all kind. And just you gave up. You gave up. You didn't want to live. It wasn't a big thing.

Mm-mm.

It wasn't a big thing. You gave up. They didn't give you food, and that's it.

I noticed an interesting thing you mentioned when you were at Stutthof and in Praust when you were working on the trenches. And then when you came and you mentioned the word home, when you came back home. And of course home is the barrack.

Yeah.

And the home is where your sister was.

Yeah.

So your sister was-- your sister was the home.

The home.

Wherever your sister was, was the home.

The home. I went to the--

I've never heard barracks referred to as "home."

When we came in-- when she married-- so I went there for-- she lives in Yerushalim, and I live in Netanya. But over there with work wasn't-- for a young girl wasn't a place there to live. You know, the work was very--

So I found myself work in Israel. Israel, Netanya. And she-- the holidays were the thing I always went for Shabbat. And it wasn't easy. You have to go there to Yerushalim. If you go Friday afternoon, you didn't have a place in the bus. You have to stand up, to stay two hours. Yeah.

If you have a place on the floor to sit down, then OK. If not, then you have to stay the whole the time. It

wasn't like today. There was a line to go to-- from one place to the other was-- yeah. Yeah.

Are there-- we're going to have a look at some pictures, some older photographs. Is there something you'd like to say as we are ending this part of your interview? Is there something?

I was thinking what else I can tell you from the things.

Well, maybe it's just a reflection? A reflection that you've gone through such an amazing thing. Yet I have to say that just listening to your story, what saved both you and your sister was the love that you had for each other, the love that you had for each other.

If I would be alone, I wouldn't. And if I am such at a camp, wouldn't stay alive. And I don't know if she would.

From what I'm hearing, I would agree with you.

Yeah, we knew that we have to survive. And just the surviving was also to come home nobody. You don't have what to eat. I remember, I went to a-- with my friend went later to our neighbor, to a [? goyte. ?] She gave us a lunch. And she said, I don't have nothing from that. I didn't take nothing. And where you are looking around, you recognize the chairs. You recognize that every piece of it, you recognize this is yours or your neighbors. "I didn't took nothing. Nobody took nothing." Just empty. The house was empty. Yeah.

Difficult. Very difficult to see that.

Yeah, yeah. And everyone--

A whole world rearranged. Like a whole world, loving belongings now are sitting in someone else's house.

Yeah, and not just the-- the father, the mother, the grandfather, everybody was-- they save, they save. And every-- it was empty. You could take with you just what you can carry when you went to the ghetto. What you can carry, that you take with you. Everything was there. That's it.

So what we're going to do, then, Mrs. Solomon, is we're going to stop again, and we're going to look at the photographs.

Yeah, I don't have a lot. This picture.

No, I understand. I understand. So we'll speak about them. We'll speak about them.

Yeah, OK.

OK, so we'll--

OK, we're back now with Mrs. Salamon. And we're going to be our third segment, and we're going to be looking at some very precious family photos. So Mrs. Salamon, who is this gentleman here?

That's my father. He was here in the late 40s. 45, 47 years old. His father was Shulem Joseph. He was a shokhet in Munkács. He was 85 years, and he perished in Auschwitz. He lived, and my father lost their brother Haskell, a brother Meyer, a sister, Haya Sarah, a sister, Blima. And a few uncles. I don't know their names.

That is my father's family. Here all the family, the brother, the sisters, they all-- with the kids, they perished in Auschwitz.

And your father was murdered in Auschwitz.

My father was also murdered in Auschwitz. We came together in the same wagon. And they took him away.

From beginning, we thought that he went there to work. And after a few days, we knew already that he perished in Auschwitz.

How did you know that specifically?

They told us. The [? blockowas ?] who was there, they told us that the people who went left, who went on the left side, they went straight to the crematorium. Yeah.

OK. It's a beautiful picture.

That's my husband's family. This is the father, the mother, two brothers. One is Emil and the other is Bermat. That's my husband as a young man. That's his brother Isidore. That's the sister, Dvora. A brother, Joseph. A sister, she passed away in San Antonio, Juli. This brother passed at Auschwitz, and this brother passed away in Israel. [? Natso. ?] Yeah.

And what town was this in?

Beregszász.

Beregszász.

They came from Beregszász.

Was that very far from your hometown?

No. With a car, let's say an hour. Yeah, just we went with a train, it took longer. Just a car is an hour.

Beautiful family photograph.

There's myself this after we came home. I was 18 years old.

This is a picture of you in Czechoslovakia, when you came back to Czechoslovakia.

We came back to Czechoslovakia. I don't even remember if we make it in Czechoslovakia or we make it in hometown. I don't remember. Yes. Cause I was -- this is because they cut my hair after the thing.

So this was about a month or two after liberation?

I think so, yeah. After the liberation a month or two. I don't remember where they make it. Yeah.

It's a very, very intense photograph.

Yeah.

It's a very intense photograph.

Yeah. That is maybe the great grandchildren will remember that I was in concentration camp. I said for my great grandchildren, they are too young to understand. Just if they will tell you that it wasn't a concentration camp or they killed the Jews, they should say they remember that my grandmother said it was. She was there. It was a true thing. And they remember what I tell them. Yeah, they want us to know something from concentration, just the parent tell them that they will know when they are 10, 12-year-old. Then they will tell them the story. They are too young to know.

They will also when they get a little older than 10, they will appreciate this interview. They will appreciate this interview, Mrs. Solomon.

That's my sister Helen. We went together. We were in concentration camp, and we keep each other alive. If

not she, I wouldn't be alive. If not I, she wouldn't be alive.

So this is Helen.

Helen.

And this is you.

Me, yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

That's such a joyous picture of both of you, having lost your entire family. And here you are after the war, still together. Still together.

Yeah, yeah.

Beautiful picture.

You want to make this also?

Yeah, yeah. Sure. This is you.

That's me and my nephew, my first nephew and my niece.

These are Helen's children.

Yeah, these are Helen's children. This was made in Czechoslovakia. Varnsdorf. Yeah.

It's such a beautiful photograph to see after hearing your story.

yeah

It's such a beautiful photograph to see.

Yeah.

Almost imaginable in the context of your story, that you would be there after such a life.

This I'm showing the kids.

That'll be beautiful.

Maybe this, the big one.

This one?

Yeah.

OK.

That's my sister, Helen. It was made in Czechoslovakia, Varnsdorf. She got married, yeah.

Beautiful.

Yeah.

[? Color ?] photo. It's very regal.

Yeah.

It's very regal [? color ?] photo. Beautiful. Yeah, she looks like a beautiful statue.

She was a beautiful woman, and sense of humor. She was very beautiful. And this a picture when she got married, the husband.

Uh-huh. I'll just take a few of the older pictures before we go here.

That's my sister with her husband on the wedding day.

So this is Helen.

Helen.

And this wedding was in Czechoslovakia.

In Czechoslovakia, yeah. I made the whole wedding, prepare everything of the wedding. She didn't have no one. Just me. That's also my sister Helen. She was already a mother from three children when she made the picture. This was made in Israel.

Also the same thing. I don't know. That's also my sister Helen. This is a few months after-- after we came home from concentration camp.

Mm-hmm.

She had short hair.

Mm-hmm.

That's my sister Esther. She was the oldest sister, and she was my mother. When my mother passed away, she was everything to us.

What happened to her?

She was in concentration camp, in Auschwitz.

And she was murdered in Auschwitz.

She was murdered in Auschwitz. This is my sister Eva. She was in Bergen-Belsen. From Bergen-Belsen to Switzerland. We didn't see each other after the war about 13, 15 years. Yeah.

So she was on-- this sister was on the Kastner train.

Yeah, yeah.

So she was then in Budapest. Correct?

Yeah.

And from Budapest she got onto the train.

From Budapest. Yeah, yeah.



And she went on to Switzerland.

Yeah. And she married to American. The husband was a doctor. And she lived in Boston and in Chicago. She-- this is my sister Eva on her wedding day in Switzerland.

Nice picture.

Yeah.

Is she still alive today? Is she still alive today?

No, no. No, she's already eight years.

Mm-hmm. And here's a very beautiful photograph that brings us a little bit more into the present time.

This is--

Just want to say who all these people are?

This is my husband, my son, my son-in-law, my daughter, and me, the wedding day. I have to-- my son also. Yeah, I have to do this also.

Of course. Here. Just explain everybody is here.

Yeah.

Oh, the same? It's the same people, yes.

That's my husband, my son, his bride. Her name is Esther. And myself. That's it.

Beautiful picture of a wonderful simcha.

Yeah. That's it.

OK. I think we're drawing to a--

That's it now.

--near to the end.

I didn't see the pictures for, years you know? I see it. What can I say?

Well, is there last-- some last words you would like to say?

I just-- that if someone said that it wasn't a concentration camp, those people I would kill. That is what I would say. Because what we went through, what we lost, it's unbelievable. In the picture, this is everything. I left this for my grandchildren and for my great grandchildren, they should remember that we was a big family once, and a nice family. What else can I say?

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And I hope someone will remember me, that they will see the picture, that this was my bubbe my grand

bubbe 92 years old. And I thank God that I'm OK, and I can go with my feet, and my mind is still working, and I can play with the great grandchildren. My nachas.

Thank you.

Thank you.