

**INTERVIEW WITH DORA FREILICH**

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**Transcending Trauma Project  
Council for Relationships  
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## INTERVIEW WITH DORA FREILICH

**INT:** Today is June 5, 1996, and I'm doing an interview for the Transcending Trauma Project. I'm interviewing a Holocaust survivor. Could you identify yourself, who you are?

**DORA:** Okay.

**INT:** And your date of birth and where you were born.

**DORA:** My name is Dora Freilich. Should I give my maiden name too? My maiden name was Golobovich, an easy name to spell. I was born the twelfth in December 25, 1926, in Pruzhany. It's a small town not far from Bialystok, which is a more known town. Pruzhany nobody really knows that well.

**INT:** In what country?

**DORA:** Poland. I was born in Poland.

**INT:** How long have you been married and whom are you married to?

**DORA:** I am married to Bernard Freilich. We are married fifty years. February 2, 1950, I think, or something like that.

**INT:** How many years of education do you have?

**DORA:** I have seven classes of Polish school, which takes in like here like I would say twelve classes. Like high school and before what is it? What do you go before, to grade school and then junior high and then high. That would be like...together. (pauses)

**INT:** So did you finish the high school education?

**DORA:** The high school education and then one more year when the Russians came in, I was in school too. (Long pause on tape) Polish school, what was equal probably here what our education there as twelfth. It means like high school too. But this education we have in Polish language. We took a little bit of English, but very little. You could take English or French, just a little bit, and seven grades were equally like here with high school. We had a good education. That's where it stopped. That's where the war started. We were ready to go into what by us was called Gymnasium, like a university but the war started just before, so this is where we stopped our education.

My education consisted of taking Hebrew and Jewish -- Yiddish. We had a Hebrew teacher which came to our house and taught me and my sister, and also there used to come an old woman, and she used to teach us Yiddish, writing and reading. It was mostly from a book, that was a letter book, letters to a husband to a wife, a wife to a husband, children to parents. This is how you were taught reading and writing, and so I was very happy that my mother was very for teaching. She was-one thing she always used to say [referring to education]: "Nothing can be taken away from you. Everything can be taken away from you, but not what you have." I am

very happy that...I loved school. I enjoyed school a lot. I mean you don't have any other things. You don't have any radio or television. This is your main activity is school. You like it, you learn, you have gymnastics, you play, you sing and this is it.

**INT:** If the war hadn't interrupted your education, you had goals for further education?

**DORA:** Yeah. We were already...you had to take an exam and we were already...my sister who was two years older than me, she already had taken one class in university, what we called in Poland, Gymnasium, and I was ready to go. Because I was like a year and a half younger than her, so I was next. What they're talking now -- about uniforms -- and once a year we wore uniforms and we were clean and we looked good, and there was no other way. I mean this was it. You dressed in a navy pleated skirt and a navy top or white blouse, or you had a black and-it was like a button down dress, like a-a-a, what they call here-

**INT:** A shirtwaist?

**DORA:** Like a coat dress. A coat dress with white-with a white collar and what do you call it...on the white, on the long sleeve like a white...[cuff?] This was washed every day. You had to look real nice. And we did. We looked real nice. If there was a parade or anything, the school marched, and everybody looked...nobody knew if you were rich or you were poor. We all looked alike and it was really never did occur to us to be any other way. It's nice and good and that's it.

**INT:** Did you work at all before the war as well as after the war when you came here?

**DORA:** No, I did not work before the war. The war caught me when I was not even...I was going on thirteen or twelve. I would have been thirteen in December. The war started before, so I did not do any work. You want to know what our family [did]? My father had a bakery. We had the biggest bakery in our town, and we were-we were quite well-to-do. Our children were taken care very well. We always had a maid in the house because my mother worked with my father in the store and she was busy a whole day, so we had a, what they call here a nanny. It was more than a nanny. She cleaned and she cooked and she took care on us and she washed and she ironed.

She did everything. In fact she used to, when my mother didn't see, she used to light the candles. Then my mother saw, she said: "You're not allowed to do it," I mean, "You're not Jewish. Only a Jewish person can light the candles Friday." She said: "When I saw across the street the lady already did it, so you're late from work. I wanted to show that our candles are lit too." This is what she used to do. When she went back to...and she got married, she stayed with her husband maybe six months and she said: "I cannot leave my children. I have to go back to them until they are ready to go into university." And she did come back. She was with us eighteen years. So this is a-how our youth was beautiful as a rule, which I always not argue, but we discuss with my husband. He has seen more anti-Semitism than I have seen. My friends were all Gentile girls. I went to a Polish school.

**INT:** It was a public school.

**DORA:** A public school, yeah, but Polish. There were-there were other schools. When we came-we came originally, we came through Europe, and my daughter was born in Brooklyn and three and a half years later my son was born. So of course I was busy with them, and then my husband said that he is still young and he wants to go into business and I was really against-very much against it. Not knowing the whole thing; that you have to be with your children, but I just felt that my kids need me, and that I wanted to be with them. But my husband says, now he's young, he can go into business and do something. Later on, when you get older, you make decisions-you don't make that fast decisions, and he decided to move to Philadelphia where we had a brother who came six months after we came and he got him a business here. And then I was very, very unhappy when we bought the store. In fact one time he went and he looked at a store and he gave a deposit and we came to look at it and it was not a good neighborhood at all. And I said: "I'm not going." I lived in a very nice little Jewish neighborhood where all the woman used to help me out. I used to go shopping and they used to sit with the baby in the carriage. It was like home, and I needed this. I needed this very much. I needed that little bit of people that were offering me a little love, and I needed it very much.

**INT:** And you liked New York?

**DORA:** It was in Brooklyn. **I didn't-I did not like Brooklyn, where I lived I liked cause retired people, and I was very new to all this, and I was young. I was twenty years old and I gave birth to my first child and my birth, I don't want to tell you unless you want to know about it. I mean not birth, birth but the things that happened that left me forever with, you know...**I came to my aunt and um, my uncle. My uncle was my mother's brother. My mother's oldest brother. And we came to their house.

**INT:** In the United States.

**DORA:** In the United States. Now I, many, many years already, we are now fifty years here almost, I realize how it is to come to a house where there is young children and we take over their room and I understand it now, but at that time I couldn't understand. I saw that there is so much going on and the boy had cried and the girl had cried and I had looked like I cried and we never had anything to eat and that although they were very wealthy people, it seemed like we turned their world upside down, and I said to Bernie: "We just have to leave that place. I mean I-I cannot be here." My uncle had never, never asked me what happened, and I have pictures of him and he knows-we sent him every year my mother used to take photographs, you know, because not-nobody had cameras. You went to take a picture and you sent it from Yomtov or for Rosh Hashana.

**INT:** They had been here how much longer before?

**DORA:** Oh, they've been many, many years, so like I would say maybe-

**INT:** Before the war?

**DORA:** Before the war, yeah. And um, so now I come to realize that maybe he wanted to spare me and not ask me, but I don't think my uncle had that much...that he would spare me. That he just did not know. People as a rule did not know what was going on there, and to come and tell

them, it was like upsetting to them and they didn't want to be upset. And I understand it now. Now I'm perfectly aware that this is the way it has to be, until suddenly when the whole thing, when people starting realizing what happened, started reading about it, that's when they started kind of understanding and taking care on it. But at that time when I came in 1949, nobody knew so, you know, six million who don't-you can't even realize. Six million. Well, how many is it? How much is it? So he did not ask me, never asked me. I was not mad. I just felt very, I don't know. I just felt that he's not interested in me.

**INT:** Not caring?

**DORA:** Not caring and the sooner he'll see me going from there, the better it's going to be. Their marriage was not a good marriage. He worked very late. He left the house five in the morning and came eleven o'clock at night. It was-it was not a good marriage.

**INT:** It was stressful for them having you come stay with them?

**DORA:** Yeah, it was the whole thing that I understand now was very stressful. My cousin, which was my uncle's son who's now-he's a judge. He's a Supreme Court Justice, and he would give his life away if I could erase that time. I said: "You don't have to. It is a time that we both know we went through and that's how it has to be." He loved me a lot. He cared for me, but he didn't know what to do. When I started having pains of, you know, with the baby, I didn't know what-what it has to be like, and I was in the bathroom and I said to him: "Melvin, I don't feel good." And he was thirteen years old and I was twenty, so he said: "Well, what is it not good? What are you-throwing up?" I said: "No, I have pains." I said: "Go call Aunt Frieda."

We had an aunt that was much younger than my aunt and she just had children like four years old and three years old, and I went-I used to go over to her every time and speak with her a little bit. I could find more myself in her home than in their home, so I said: "Call Aunt Frieda and see what we can do for ourselves." So he went and he called Aunt Frieda and he said: "Dora doesn't feel good." She says: "Call an ambulance and tell her to go to the hospital where the doctor belongs." And they came and they took me to the hospital and I came and there was a big room that they put a lot of young girls. Later on there were like separated in smaller rooms, but while they were waiting for their doctors and their time until they were ready. I didn't know that those rules. I didn't know what was going on. I just felt like I had to go to the bathroom. And she said that she'll let me a few times.

She said: "You can't go any more." So I said -- because I don't know how to say exactly, so I figured I always thought that I'm-that I'm treated because I don't know how to say things the right way what is bothering me or whatever. And so she put around the bed like a-like maybe like a crib-what do you call what you put around the bed that you could not-that you shouldn't be able to go down, and I waited until she left, the nurse, and I went down anyway. And I went to the bathroom. And then at night my labor's going at two o'clock in the morning, and I was taken to a regular room and there were five girls in that room and by morning I'll tell you, the door did not close for one minute. They started bringing in flowers. The calls were coming through and everybody was calling neighbors, friends, parents from all over. Some were with the first baby

and some were with the second already. And I was laying there. I was just laying there. That's all, like if I wouldn't be there it would be the same thing and laying there is the same thing.

**INT:** Wasn't it scary to go through this all alone?

**DORA:** It was not only scary, it was so-

**BERNARD:** Depressing.

**DORA:** Depressing. It was very depressing. I was looking like-and they were looking at me like what is she doing? She's probably unmarried mother and with a child and finally between themselves they found one (conversation between Bernard and Dora)...

**INT:** And you not knowing the language-you needed more time to learn English?

**DORA:** Needed more time, so one that spoke a little bit Yiddish, she came over and she like wanted to know who am I that I'm laying there all by myself and I told her and she said: "Do you have a husband?" I said: "Yes" and I said, "He's gonna be here when he's gonna finish work. He cannot go away. He just got the job and it's..." So she told the other girls and they decided that from all the flowers that were standing all over, they brought on my table so it should look the same, and like their parents came in, their friends came in, and the room was full, and you know everybody is so happy, the first child, the second child. It's a nice occasion.

For me it was hard. It was just horrible. I remember a nurse came over, she was a black woman and she like grabbed me and she hugged me and she said, like they say: "Baby, times will be better for you. Now it's hard on you. I know it's very hard on you." And she asked me the same thing, if I have a husband, so otherwise this has probably been here like a popular thing. I mean birth without a husband. By us, where I come from, G-d forbid. G-d forbid it should happen that you should have a child and not be married. You know, I know of one family that their daughter had a child. They threw her out, actually, and sat shiva after her. It's cruel. It's very cruel, but this is-this is the right thing. I mean you have no right to go around and get pregnant. You're not married. Well, this is the old times.

**INT:** Well, these are still some of the values when you came to America.

**DORA:** Right. Right. Right. At times those values were here too. Now there is no values. Now there's nothing here. It's just a-a-a...so then he was going home and that same evening when I went to the hospital we were supposed to look at an apartment in a place where my friends lived...were all Holocaust survivors. We tried to live together and this is why people are concentrated in different places. Everybody tried to be near their own, and this is how we made ghettos, but those ghettos were not made because we didn't want to be near somebody else. We just wanted to be together, because each and every one of us had the same-same thing. We-we wanted to be together. We wanted to be with our children together and learn together how to raise them and learn together how to cook and all they speak about something that only we could understand about that, nobody else.

**INT:** And for many survivors, they lost parents and siblings.

**DORA:** Everything.

**INT:** And so to come to a neighborhood-

**DORA:** They lost everybody, everybody.

**INT:** ...with other survivors, it made sense?

**DORA:** That's what we did. And the children, our children, only wanted to be with them too, because they felt like they-they also felt something. I cannot say that a child would feel, maybe they could play with other children too, but because we spent so much time with them there, so they liked-they liked to be and we were together. We used to go to the park together. We used to sit in front of the house together. This was-this was our entertainment.

**INT:** Could you tell me about your children, their ages and marital status and education? What do they do and grandchildren.

**DORA:** My daughter, who was born in 1949, May 19, 1949-

**BERNARD:** Elaine...

**DORA:** I told her already about it. And it was a lovely child. A very pretty girl, and what can I tell you? We have lots and lots of "nachas" from her. She's now already, she's forty-seven and she always through school, she was a very good student. Always good. Always wanted to be a teacher since she was a year old. She always wanted to be a teacher. And then, she was very good in school. When she was in high school, we actually had to go and ask the principal to stop-to stop her from changing her from one class to the other, because she would put her like in one year to tenth, eleventh and twelfth and I said that something is wrong. And I said, when we came and we made- pauses)

**INT:** She was very smart.

**DORA:** Yes. And we made an appointment with the teacher, and then this was a woman teacher. I don't remember her name. In Northeast High School. And we told her that we are really- "I love it and I appreciate it, and I'm-I mean I'm so glad that she's so good, but I just don't want her-I want her in the class where she belongs, with all her friends, the neighborhood friends, and they go all together. Otherwise you change already friends, and she was a tall girl, the kind that could not find herself a place. And she had the girl here and they all went to the same classroom, so they were friends." And she looked at us and she said: "You don't know what an honor it is." I said: "I do know, because I went to school myself too, and I know what it is an honor. I was a big student too." I said: "But I don't want it with her. I want her to be the best in the class that she is rather than to go up and up and then fall in with those other kids coming that are good kids. I mean other kids are good kids, not only mine. A lot of kids are good."

And when she was graduating from... you know, little things happen that remain with your forever and ever. At that time we already had moved to Philadelphia. She went here-I registered her when we came, first grade. That's where she went. And all through the first grade till what, till seventh are you there and then junior high? She did fantastic. She was really a very good student. And then she went to high school and I had no problem with her in high school, just stopping the principal from shifting her around from one class to the other, and then came graduation. I mean it's very fast, but it didn't go that fast. There's a lot of things that happened in between, and then we were sitting in high school, in Northeast High School, at the graduation. The graduation was outside. And she had many, many awards and there was sitting a couple near us.

We were known already in the neighborhood where we had a store and we were "greener" [greenhorns], and "greeners" are not supposed to have stores. I mean, how come? We have an education. We have now...this is how it goes. This is like they say "a besunderer meiseh." And every time they called her out, you know, for the award, she got up and she went to take it, and the husband said to the wife: "Isn't that the people that have the shoe store, the refugees?" The wife said: "Yeah." Then the second time and the third and then I turned around, I said: "Yeah. I am Mrs. Freilich and this is my husband Mr. Freilich. You are customers of ours. Yeah, I am the refugee. And this is my daughter." He said: "Well, I didn't mean it." I said: "I didn't mean it any other way either. I meant it only to tell you that 'I'm here and I'm shepping all the nachas and she's a very good student and she deserves it.'" And she got-she got, I think, five scholarships -- paid up scholarship.

But I did not want her to go away. I wanted her to be here. I don't know why. To me it was like people will think that she doesn't have a good home. I mean who goes away? A girl of eighteen leaves the house? I had so many -- we lived here already -- I had so many rooms. What do I need it for? I go away in the morning with my husband to work and-and she has the whole house and I have a maid and she has to do nothing, and-and why does she have to go away?

**INT:** So why do you think it was so hard for you to let her go?

**DORA:** I don't know, because that was the only thing that I had that I could hold, that it was mine. That was mine. And I begged her and she cried and we cried and she cried and finally I said: "You know what, let's put it this way. I'm gonna..." She said: "I don't like the bedroom." So I said: "I'll buy you a new bedroom set." "I don't like the..." She had a new car; we bought her a new car. We got a new bedroom set, everything. She says: "After Temple, I'm going away. I said: "all right." She has meanwhile four years. She made it in three. She made it in three and she applied to the University of Pennsylvania and she got a scholarship of twelve hundred dollars and that's when she moved out of the house. At the time I learned already, you know, a little bit how life goes on. I was in the store and I saw what's going on. I was reading papers. I was reading books. I was not one that, you know, stood there and cooked. I didn't do that a lot. I rather wanted to see what's going on and I saw what's going on. They let the children go. I'll tell you one thing. If not would not be the rule rather than the...I would keep children home and there is always a time to go away.



**INT:** Until they get married?

**DORA:** Maybe not till they got married. Eighteen is nothing. It's a child. It's a child between four walls here and four walls in a school. The world is a jungle outside. It's-you have to be prepared for it. She told me stories ten years later what she-

**INT:** So you were fearful for her safety, her welfare?

**DORA:** Yes. Yes. I was very fearful. She was all that I had got that belonged to me, and I, for her. **I should not know where she is or she is somewhere-I could make as comfortable as I could make it the best, but I cannot work**, so I wanted her near me. And a special child wants to be independent so we have to let go, and I let her go. My son already had it easier because she broke in all the rules. She made all the ways so he had it easier.

**INT:** So Elaine's married and you have a grandchild?

**DORA:** Elaine married. Elaine married a Gentile boy which was a very big tragedy in our house and I just couldn't believe it that she would do anything like this to us. She knew, I wouldn't say very much, but she knew a lot about...I would tell them little things. I would not-I did not feel that I had to tell them everything. I just told them as much as they could understand **this year, when they were that year and that's it.**

**INT:** Do you mean about your background, the Holocaust?

**DORA:** About my background, yes. They felt themselves, you know, that there is something different in our family than in other families, and from this she gathered, you know, that she would never come and tell us and that she was afraid, but maybe it's too much for me, maybe, you know, it will bring up that, but she knew only that I'm writing a lot. And she said: "Mommy, can I read it someday?" I said: "I'll tell you what. I'm writing in Polish and I'm writing in Yiddish, so both languages you don't know."

**INT:** How do you use writing? How is it helping you?

**DORA:** It helped me a lot. I had written one-I don't know if it's a poem, it's a story, whatever it is. Maybe one time I'll prepare it for you and you'll read it. But I had put together in Birkenau and in Auschwitz, I had it put together in Polish and the minute-when I woke up and I started going to work, I repeated it every day. The letter was to G-d. I didn't have nobody else to write to. And I wrote to him and I was very mad. I was very mad. Our family was not very, very religious but I know my family worked. When you work you cannot be that very religious. But our holidays and we had, you know, "milchig" [dairy] and "fleishig" [meat]. I mean it was a Jewish family. We knew about the holidays. We celebrated them with all the children. I just couldn't think that G-d could do something like this to us, and why.

**INT:** You were angry at Him.

**DORA:** I was very angry. I was absolutely very, very angry. I was angry. I wouldn't trust Him anymore. I-I just thought that if He did-I just didn't want to be alive. I just wanted to die, that's

all. So my old writing, my old poem and my whole whatever I had written was to Him. It was to Him, and I just told Him the way I feel and what could one have to live anyway? I don't find it-I can't live. I don't need to live and what I was-I didn't try for myself even. I really did not try, but somehow, as they say, if I tell you that the doctor-Doctor -I don't remember his name, the one with the other name, Mengele, that Mengele had saved my life. I was very, very sick. Very sick.

**INT:** In Auschwitz?

**DORA:** In Auschwitz. I had malaria. I could not stay in the barrack because they came and they took you out and they took you right away for examination, so I used to go out but not go to work. I used to sit in the toilet. I used to be very hot. I had a high temperature, and then I had also a lot to do with my skin from the lice and everything. I had typhus. I had everything, and I decided enough is enough. I had lost at the time already all my sisters, all my cousins, all my girlfriends and my sister's girlfriends. There was nobody, nobody left. There was maybe from a town that we came in and at that time they let in a lot of young people. I'm not talking the older ones that they took away, but the young people they let in. They must have killed everybody before and that was like a fresh, healthy transport of kids, so they took us all in and that was too much already for me. I could not take this anymore. And then...like some really wanted to live. They would do anything to live and to tell the story later on. I never even went that before. My mind did not work this way at all. So I realized- (pause)

**INT:** You hadn't- [until this moment consider suicide?] (end of tape 1, side 1)

**DORA:** (mechanical problem in the very beginning of this tape) The truck left and took all the people in the hospital to be exterminated. So I am cold and I went. And I sat down there very early in the morning, maybe twelve o'clock in the morning when they took us out, and Dr. Mengele came. He had a bicycle, a-a motorcycle.

**INT:** How did you know it was him?

**DORA:** We saw him a lot. He used to come and we used to run and we used to, like the barracks...were you in Auschwitz? No. Okay. The barracks were on the sides and then there was like lifted...like grass or mud or whatever and there was made like a-a street. It was not a street but they called it the "Lager Strasser." "Lager" is a concentration camp and "Strasser" is "Way." So that's what we used to come up. Every barrack let out its girls. They had to do count and everybody had to be there and if somebody wasn't there, we would stay a whole night and wait for her, whatever. Everything had to be just so.

The orchestra at the gates used to play and the people, the players used to sit in white suits and play-play all kinds of different instruments. The best players in the world, and here, you know, from the outside it looked like there was something, a concert, going on inside, and then we standing in line and every-everyone, every barrack goes out separately and has their own people. A German woman comes with us or two, and two Germans with two dogs. This is how we walked out, about two hundred girls together. And the orchestra played and they tell us to sing and we have to sing and they whole thing is just-it's-it's mind boggling.

And you go out to work. Your work is hard and if it rains, if it snows, this is it. It's like when they're playing here in a rain, the ball game, I always say, this is "meshuga" [crazy]. This is "takeh meshuga" to play a ball game in the rain. I had to, but they don't have to. And from work, whoever was killed you had to bring back to the concentration camps otherwise if we walked out two hundred girls, they had to bring two hundred girls. So we had, like they put in like on-on boards and we had to carry them, and I was a tall girl...always rested on my shoulder. No matter how many went they were shorter. They never reached-I used to reach it and I used to hold them on my shoulders. At one time they brought in I think fourteen girls that were dead. That was the time when they killed my sister, and I was carrying her back to the camp.

**INT:** She died?

**DORA:** She died. They had brought soup, and they used to lift the soup on top where the camp is, and you used to have to run down with the soup and she was picked to run down to the soup and other girls, and it opened up. It was hot soup in a very-I don't know what word, what you call it, such a pretty thing. It looks like a big garbage can but locked up. I think the soldiers get soup in that manner to, and it opened up and hot soup just flew out of the... Just to punish them, they got such a beating, they hit them so much because the fact that our-our part did not get any-we didn't have any soup. They spilled it. So they kept on hitting them and hitting them and they killed them. This was eleven girls, and we brought them all home.

**INT:** It happened to her? How do you know?

**DORA:** I was with her. I was there. And we brought them, and even the Germans were punished for bringing so many dead girls. They told them that this is not the thing to do, otherwise-that we'd still have to work. Killing them out at the job, like transport are not coming in now as heavy as before, so they need all the young help that we can. All right, so he told them, that they didn't do nothing to him. They just told him that it's too much and after this, that was, I think, the same week that I went with the transport.

**INT:** So what were your feelings?

**DORA:** My feelings were that I am wasting away. I'm not gonna make it. And if I can't-if I can't do it myself...I was a coward not to go and do it on the-on the electrical barbed wire fence. I couldn't. I was a coward. And I thought that if he'll see the way I look, and I looked horrible. I maybe weighed fifty pounds and I was tall and maybe he would take me away, but when he came over, Dr. Mengele, when he came over, he looked at me and he said: "What's wrong with you?" in German. I said that I had malaria and I also had very bad legs and-so he looked at me and he took me here by my coat and he opened the door and threw me into the hospital. So I wound up laying on the bottom bed-it's not a bed but the bottom of the-it was like made out of bricks. I laid down maybe for three days. I didn't know if I'm alive or I'm dead. I had a fever maybe of a hundred and seven. And then after this, you know, like I opened my eyes and I started remembering what was happening. Where am I?

**INT:** No one was there to help you?

**DORA:** No one that I knew. No one. And I opened up my eyes and I realized that I am in a hospital, because in the barracks you don't do things like this. I mean, you don't lay in bed and you-you don't get soup, although nothing but at least you got a little bit of care. And I just put up my head and I was reaching, I just wanted to get acquainted to see what's going on. This is what is your biggest scare comes. You kind of think, oh no, maybe I'll try again. Maybe-maybe...it was maybe not my time to go, and I put up my head and I saw a girl and she looked very familiar to me and I stop her and I say to her: "Are you from Pruzhany? And she says: "Yeah." And she said to me: "You are from Pruzhany too. I know you." But she did not go to school with me together. She went to a Hebrew school. She's my sister-in-law now. We married the two brothers. So I said: "What are you doing here? What am I doing here? I mean, what are we all doing here?" She said that she was in a camp. See, when they had a group of girls they used to take out that looked the best, **that were not died.**

**INT:** To work?

**DORA:** To work. They took them out to other camps to work them hard and get rid of them. And she went out to a camp that you worked-they worked them that long until they fell and they brought them dead to the crematoriums and they threw the dead and the half-alive and the alive and that's how she came there to the crematorium and she realized that she was still alive, laying there under the... Little by little she went down from the truck, and the crematoriums were just across from Birkenau, like we could sit in the windows and see the trains coming in with the people, with the children. And then she came in to Birkenau and she told me. I said: "You mean to tell me that you came out from there and they did not kill [you]. This was Budi. Budi was like a part of Birkenau where they took you, they kept you like maybe two, three weeks, they made you work very hard, and then in the end the dogs and they killed you. The dogs ate you or they beat you up or they...and then we stayed like together. We tried to help each other.

**INT:** So this was like a turning point for you?

**DORA:** A turning point. Yeah, it was a turning point in my life because she-she got discouraged about her family. She tells me one story which has taken a lot from me to realize that I am not doing the right thing, that maybe I should try more. She had four brothers that were younger than her. And she was one girl. And her father was also there in concentration camp, and somebody told him that they need young boys. They boys were all like thirteen, eleven, fourteen but they were still, you know, healthy boys. That they're gonna give them better work and they're gonna give like a children's program for them. And he talked his boys into going, feeling that maybe, you know, they'll have better to eat something. That was not the truth. The truth was that they wanted them out and they killed them right away. So her father always remained with this. Her father was still alive. He's now, you know, in one of these homes. He has Alzheimer's. He doesn't know what's going on. But they have a-a longevity in their genes. They live long, and he could not forgive himself all these years that he had sent his four boys to be killed, you know, instead of holding them with him. It's a lot of...and I remained with her.

**INT:** So you found a will to survive.

**DORA:** Somebody. You know, it gave me a little...I said: "We cannot all give in like this. We have to fight back a little." Fighting, you know, was the only way is by staying alive. That's the only thing we could do. There was not any other fighting that we could have done, because there were prisoners, I mean us, that had better jobs, that worked in offices here and there, that they could live, and they caught them and they brought them back. They killed them. They hung them. They used to **schlep** them all through the concentration camp and we had to stay and look at this. We had to stay and look at them, how they hang them and how they-what they do. So there was no way of running away with a number on you and it was no way. It was all around. The Polish people were worse than them. It was just no good. So you had to only try and survive where you are. Try to get maybe a better place to work and try not to get hit, you know. And they brought you up to places where they hit you, you know, like when they took you out to the bathroom. Now you hope to get hit there, because you stood and you stood and you have to go, and they give you by sign, like you are the fifteenth and you have to wait and you have to go so you make, so you got beat up. And they made you then pick it up with your hands and bring it in there. It was very humiliating. It was very- (pauses)

**INT:** Degrading.

**DORA:** Degrading. They took away from you the whole-the whole to be alive, you know, they made you like-like you're not a human being and that hurts an awful lot. It hurts, because everyone was a child that was a precious child at home, that's learning and full and taken care, you know. But this, never. Never. Never. Never. Never could be. I mean a war -- concentration camps there were, but not killing people constantly. Killing and burning them? It was very difficult. Something that, you know, your mind get so adjusted to it that you can only hear at night, nobody will do it but she'll hear, you know, like from there was a big pile, like they...I don't know how to say it in English. In Polish it's like when the-when the wood is very dry it like plops, drops, you know when-

**INT:** Crackles?

**DORA:** Crackles, yeah. Nobody would hear it but us.

**INT:** When you hear something and smell and it triggers memories?

**DORA:** This is-this is something that is unbelievable. I can smell it from miles away. I used to walk out of stores when we were near a car, this always used to bring to me those smells and those smells were always in my dreams. My dreams I was always running and I always smelled the smells that I will never run away from it. It will always be in my dreams.

**INT:** So recurring dreams?

**DORA:** Constantly. I don't think they will ever go away. They will never go away. It's just, you know, you don't talk about it. You try not to talk about it that much, but if you sit in a company with people, you can talk about anything. About weddings, about different things, and it will come down and this is like conversation. It's like-this is it. This is our life.

**INT:** You started saying that when you were in the camps and you were seeing all the horrible atrocities, you shut down, got numb.

**DORA:** Numb.

**INT:** Can you talk some more about where you were in your mind?

**DORA:** As I told you, I will prepare that letter that I had written to G-d and I had hung on for- this was this. Like: "If You're listening and if You know what I'm writing, You gotta help me; if not I have nothing left to do here." I had nobody. All my friends, we are piled up on one bed or whatever you call it, you know, and we were there about fourteen girls. My cousins, my friends, my sister's friends, and nobody was left around, they all just died one after the other. And they took them out and they piled them up in front of the barrack, and then they-they used to bring a big-a horse with a wagon or they used to bring a truck. Pile them up and take them to be burned. That was right across from our barrack, and you could see it. We saw, later on.

**INT:** Ashes, smoke.

**DORA:** Constantly. The sky was always red. The sky was never blue in those places. And that's why-you see, right now you could not make me go to Poland anymore. I cannot think of going in there anymore. I think I would die, because of all the things that they had done there, that it's really just a preserve that people could see, but not the truth. It is not the truth. What you see there is not the way it was there.

**INT:** A shell of what it was, or an image.

**DORA:** There was-it was so wet there. It was so much filth there, that I don't know what they do to it. Now it's dry and grass is growing and, you know, and where was it all? We used to walk up to here and you got your outfit, whatever you got, you got it for the whole season. They didn't change it for you. And then came a time when the lice-it was just unbelievable.

**INT:** There was dirt and mud.

**DORA:** They were sticking in the walls, so we took off everything that we had, and they-we had a-a something to tie it together. I think the tied it together with a belt and they threw it into a big cooking barrel, whatever, that was boiling with hot water, and then they took it out and they just tossed it out, it should squeeze. And then they gave it to you. So when you started untying it, a sleeve fell off, your shoes broke in half, so you were left with like one sleeve, and this was winter, and winter in Poland is like last year's winter. This is the winters we had there. So it was really-it was very, very hard to go on. Very hard to go on. Maybe men as a rule, maybe they tried. Men-men got along between themselves better than girls, than women did. I don't know what makes it but this is how it works. Men used to help out a little bit if they knew, you know. They used to come in as electricians or working on the camp in different capacities. They used to throw in a piece of bread or something. Girls never shared anything with each other. It was like dog eats dog. It was hard. There was nothing.

**INT:** That was your experience.

**DORA:** Yeah, there was nothing.

**INT:** Were there other women, maybe, whose families tried to save them?

**DORA:** Maybe others did, but I did not experience this that I got anything; that somebody would give me something. I didn't. I lived solely on the things that I got from the camp. Some girls started, you know, like they used to save their-they sold a piece of bread for two-for two bowls; for two bowls of soup. Then they-they-they took the soup and they sold it for a piece of salami. You know, they maneuvered here and there. I never did that. I never, never did it, and my father always used to say...my father used to call us his princesses -- me and my sister. We were only a year-and-a-half apart and they dressed us alike. I just had the pictures out for my friend that was here from Australia and I have some pictures that my mother used to send to her brothers. And I'm going to show them to you. I think I have it on top. (Long pause on tape-walks away)

**INT:** I can wait.

**DORA:** [After looking at pictures, Dora resumes interview talking about her daughter and son-in-law, Jim.] ...and my daughter (interference on tape) and they were going out. She went to the University of Pennsylvania and then she was across the street in a rooming house, and it was her birthday because I remember me and my husband...**room, and I thought, oy, oy, oy. This is no good that she got...so I have to be in style. I have to do what everybody else is doing. And this is what I-I, you know, I was only concerned (tape goes off here). If you would like to see, if she wants us to see. I said,** She said: "There is only one problem." I say: "What is the problem?" She said: "He's not Jewish," she told me. I said: "You better don't tell it to Daddy; and I'll tell you right now, that to us it's something that I would not accept. And you go with Daddy more than me, so lay off, as they say."

**INT:** You asked her to do that?

**DORA:** Yeah. And, well, she didn't say anything. She left and she was very angry. And then she called again a couple of weeks later and she said that she wants-he wants to see us. And I said: "We don't want to see him." In the meantime, we went to the rabbi. And you know, friends, our closest friends we told the story. And from the very, very first ones. And, you know, everybody tried to help us, you know, with work and this and that and then they go away and you're left with the same thing again and you have to decide for yourself. And we went to the rabbi. We belonged-we always belonged to a synagogue.

**INT:** A Conservative synagogue?

**DORA:** Conservative. Somehow, in my-I knew that there was a G-d from there. I just wanted-I wanted to punish Him, and I said: "If I'm not gonna go to synagogue, that's the way I'm gonna punish Him." And then I figured out that this is not the right way, that I must have somebody that I look up to, that I know it's there and taking care of me. I don't know what it is, but this is the way I live. And we went to our rabbi and we told him the story and our rabbi is a very good friend of ours. He likes us because we always belonged to a synagogue and, you know, we-we

like to donate to the synagogue money and everything. And every synagogue is always short of money and we know about it so we always try to do our best by it. The kids went to Hebrew school there and we go there for service. When we worked we could not go as much, but now we really, we go Friday and Saturday to services. We like it.

**INT:** In this area, the northeast?

**DORA:** Yeah, the OCJC, which is on Algon. It's not far. And the synagogue can give you entertainment and everything for the whole week, every week, three hundred...fifty-two weeks of the year. They have all kinds of different things and we enjoy it. And we went to the rabbi and we told him the story and he said: "Look, we will try to talk her out of it." I said: "We tried already. We won't do it." He said: "Try once more and if you can't..." I said: "I can't even talk to her. I can't even take a look at her. I don't know what to say to her."

He said: "Try to tell her how you feel the best you can and how much it hurts us; that we have nothing against the boy. We don't know him. He might be the best, the nicest boy, the kindest person in the world, but to us, after a war like this, you know, I want to keep it close with our people." And she said she wants to bring him over. I saw that we cannot get out of this, and she brought him over one evening. And if he tried or not, he was very nice. He was very nice. He was very knowledgeable. He spoke very nicely and he was a really nice person. And he said that he wants to marry Elaine. I said: "Look, I am not the cleverest person in the world." I am only -I was then...she was twenty-one, so I was forty. I said: "And I've seen already on television, I've seen groups that comes out for mixed marriages. It never works. I see marriages here don't work at all. Marriages that are married by parties of the same faith, and it's very, very difficult."

"You don't see it in the beginning. You are in love, but then come children and you want it raised one way, and she wants it raised the other way, and it just doesn't work out." He said that he wants to convert completely, without any questions. He wants to be a Jew. Even if he's not gonna marry Elaine, he's gonna become a Jew, because he likes this part of the religion. It's very...to him it's something that he really appreciated; that he's not finding in his [religion]. Well, to make the story short, it happened. He was very nice. He converted with every little thing. Rabbi Weinrotsky helped him and he started...he wrote a paper, A Jew by Choice; very nice paper. He helped in the school where the converts come in. He taught them yet before they even got married, and I still think he's going the right way. He was not a run around. He was not a man that, you know, that comes out from a very big home and eats everything in one minute. He was a man, a working man, that could not find a place for himself with his family. I don't think that he kept that religion that much. It was something that he could not...he liked to help people. He was out all day in countries like...when he came here to Philadelphia, I think he came from Haiti or something.

**INT:** He must have been in the Peace Corps.

**DORA:** Yeah, the Peace Corps, yeah. And he started reading books and he started learning Hebrew, and he knew already more than I knew. If I had to ask him something he says: "Whom did I ask?" So I said: "Look, I want you to be happy and I'll make you a wedding like the best I can." And we did. We made her a beautiful, beautiful wedding. A beautiful wedding. We had



over three hundred people. And we came to the wedding, and I had ordered everything the best. We had it in OCJC, and I had ordered tablecloths which I'll always remember. I ordered long tablecloths, and we had about thirty or thirty-one tables. I don't remember. And I came in because in the part outside we had a smorgasbord, and then we came in before the people came in to the room and I come in and I see the tables don't have long tablecloths but, you know, they have short tablecloths. And I stand there and I look and I call over the guy that takes care on it and I said to him, you know, I ordered long tablecloths. And he says to the other guy that serves the liquor and wine. He knows us very well. He knows us from the synagogue also. His wife comes in with both girls to the store. He comes over to me. His name is Mr. Beck, and he says: "Listen, I'm gonna tell you something. Even if we had another tablecloth, we have thirty-two tables. You think we can take this off and put long tablecloths on? Forget it. I want you to walk out of this room and pretend that you hadn't seen anything. You just won't even know if it was long or short of in-between. Just go and have a good time. Listen to me. I have been at weddings like this many times." And she had the most beautiful wedding, and everything went beautifully. Really beautiful.

**INT:** They both work as schoolteachers?

**DORA:** Yeah, schoolteachers, yes. She loved it. Her school and her children were everything to her.

**INT:** So tell me a little bit about your grandson.

**DORA:** My grandson was born...he's twenty, so what is it, 1996, so it would be '86, no '76. Right. He was everything that we wanted. He was cute, he was adorable, he was clever. He was what every grandmother wants. And he was just a wonderful child. And then she right away, when he was three years old, she already was getting her job back so she used to bring him to us and we used to take him to Schechter's [daycare] and he used to cry and it was terrible what was going on. So I said to her: "You know what? I cannot take it. I don't take him. I'll take him to the store." And he used to say: "Bubby, take me to the store. I'll be so good you won't believe it." And he used to be good. She says: "Mom, he has to learn. He'll soon have to start school. They all cry. They all carry on, but they go away to school. That's it."

**INT:** He's now a student at the University of Pennsylvania?

**DORA:** That's Joshua, yeah. That's her son, and she had made a career of her school, as you probably know a little bit. She loves her children in the school. She works very hard. She works too hard. And I remember she had a boy that she used to go out with when we were-when she was very young. And then as she got married, his mother came into the store and she said to me: "What is Elaine doing now?" That was many years later. I said: "Elaine is a teacher." She says: "Is that all she chose to do with her brain?" I said: "What is your son doing?" She said: "My son is a doctor." I said: "Really," I said, "Well I think a teacher has to give of herself more. A doctor, as you see, you bring in somebody, you have to take off the right leg; he takes off the left. A teacher...my daughter loves teaching." She says: "You know, we always talked about her at dinnertime, what kind of papers she delivers in high school, in junior high. How she sits. How she takes care on a class with the teacher, and my son always used to tell me, we have never seen

anybody like this. She-she doesn't need to become a teacher. She is a teacher." So I said: "Yes, your son is gonna be good in being a doctor, and my daughter is gonna be good in being a teacher."

**INT:** Tell me about your son.

**DORA:** My son is forty-three. So he was born in New York. (end of tape 1, side 2) Life was better yet, and then at that time we are already getting ready, you know, he was three years old and Elaine was six and we were getting ready to move to Philadelphia. My husband had bought a store, and we came here and we had an apartment above the store, and he did not understand what are we doing here. He thought that we're gonna go at night back home to Brooklyn.

**INT:** And your son's name?

**DORA:** Harold. And when my husband used to go to buy shoes sometimes, he used to say to me: "Ma, 'et's go." He couldn't say an L. He couldn't say an L. He couldn't say a lot of...he said, 'et's go home." I said: "Tattele, this is your place now. This is where we're gonna live." He said: "I don't like it." I said: "Well, I am not so crazy about it either, but this is where we have to make a living. You'll go to school." Anyway, we could not have him in a school, in a private school. He just would not be there. He just wanted to go where "Aya" goes. "Aya" was the sister; he wants to go with "Aya" to the same school. She used to take him along sometimes with her, and we registered him in Akiba; we registered him in a different school. He just would not be there. He cried a whole day. And then we realized -- me and my husband: "What do I need him to cry a whole day and pay for it yet," so I kept him in the house. He used to go down to the store. He used to play, and he was only three and a half years old and I figured he's not ready yet.

**INT:** For pre-school?

**DORA:** That's right. He was not ready for it. You know, we had across store...do you know across the street of our store was on Castor Avenue...across the street from the store was like a Toddle House. You know, they used to sell hamburgers and he loved their hamburgers. He said: "Why can't you make it like this." You know, all that fat and everything and he used to take pickles and home fries. And he loved those fries, and that's the only thing he ate anyways, three times a day. So I gave him money and there was an old lady which was a waitress there. A very old lady. And she liked him. She used to put him in the corner even in a place full of people, and he used to put ketchup on the pickles, and she used to give him all the potatoes, hash brown -- not the french fries but the...hash browns, right. They had these and he used to sit and eat and they used to say: "Harold, what are you sitting? It's almost four o'clock. Five we have to eat dinner." He said: "I'm gonna stay till dinner." And dinner he sat and he ate again. He loved it. He loved it.

So I felt that he was happy and we decided, he's gonna go to store when it's gonna be his time, that's all. And we registered him when he was six and he also-he was very good but not like Elaine. Elaine was-Elaine did not have to work too much. She had everything there that needed to be done. A teacher once wrote: "You did not write about what I asked to write, but you wrote

it so beautiful that I have to give you an A. I don't know what to do with it." But she did not learn the lesson. "You did not-you did not practice. You did not read that book. But you're writing about anything-about something completely different and," um, but she said, "but I have to give you an A because it's so beautifully written." And he worked hard and he was good.

**INT:** Where did he go to school?

**DORA:** He went to-on Harrack (?)-what was the name of the-I always forget about this.

**INT:** Tell me where he went to college.

**DORA:** To college he went-he went in Muhlenberg. He was very good. He was good in college and he got a lot of awards, and he then applied to law school. He wanted very much to go to Georgetown, but at that time, you know, it was the time for the Afro-American. I don't want to say nothing. They let them in everywhere and he-the white kids had a hard time getting in. And every day he ran from the store back home to see if the mail came and the big envelope was good and the small one was bad. I said: "What's the difference? Listen to me," I said, "if you come out and you want to learn and you want to be good, you can be in a school that has no name at all, but if you have brains it doesn't matter. The school is nothing. Although here, they go, you know, the Ivy League and this and this, but you can come out from an Ivy League knowing nothing when, you know, it's the world that teaches you everything." And he got accepted to Duke, and he liked it. So with him again, we bought him a new car and we sent him away to North Carolina. And he was there four years. He graduated very nice. But he never came home anymore to live. He came home, you know, on visits, but he stayed.

**INT:** So where did he go to practice and for his career?

**DORA:** He practiced law during vacation time in Washington. He had nice jobs there, and he remained in Washington. But when he started law and, you know, first you start law when with moot courts and defending and he came the first time, when he came for vacation in Thanksgiving, he said to me and my husband, he said: "I really don't know if I want to be a lawyer." And we said: "Well, what is the problem?" He said: "Look, I see you have to defend somebody that I feel deep in my heart that that guy is guilty. I cannot." He's a very straight guy. He's a very good person; good natured. He's a good son. He's a good boy. He's a good friend. And he said: "I cannot defend him knowing that I-what I know that he is guilty." I didn't know what to say. So I say: "Well wait." So my husband says: "There is other law that you can do." And sure enough, he has changed, and he's doing very well, kinahara. He was for a time on his own with a partner, but it dissolved and he's working now for a big firm. And he has two children.

**INT:** He's married?

**DORA:** He's married. He has married a girl that he met in Duke. She's also a lawyer and they have two children. Benny's going to be bar mitzvahed this November, the second of November, which is going to be their sixteenth wedding anniversary, and Emily is going to be eight this month, and they live in Washington. And this is not a five minute thing. It took a long time but thank G-d they were straight kids. I have not-I did not have any problem with drugs. It never

came into my house. I don't say that maybe they tried it, you know, with kids and etcetera, etcetera, but I never had any problems with them. I think a lot of their upbringing was to make us happy, not to make us ashamed and not to make us mad. I think this-I feel, at least my kids did it.

**INT:** They were good children.

**DORA:** They were good children. They were good children. They tried to achieve in school the best that they can, partly for us and partly for them. They wanted to do good because my husband used to tell them, you know, stories how he was already in higher schooling and in their town, in their part of the country in Poland, there was unfortunately, there was a lot of anti-Semitism, and they would-I did not-

**INT:** You didn't experience it.

**DORA:** I did not experience it. I went to a Polish school, I had Polish friends, but it was different. It was a smaller town and, of course, the news and everything does not come. No televisions. No radios. But we did not have it, maybe because we were girls, we didn't fight for...boys-boys it always comes out fighting. They go and fight. They go here, they go there. It's always something, something. Girls are different. I remember my girlfriend used to sit Saturday night and wait until a star came out in the sky that I should be able to go and play. I could not go before. As I told you, we are not religious but we are observant Jews and I love it and I never hid it. I always was very proud of it and I am proud of it now. I am a-I love Judaism. I know-I read about it and I learned about it. I know Hebrew very good. I know Yiddish very good. And I like it. I like it very much.

**INT:** Any organizations you belong to or any Holocaust related activities?

**DORA:** Well, we belong-we had an organization the Jewish Holocaust Survivors, which is our melting pot. We are-I think we achieved a lot. We had built and equipped a few hospitals in Israel that was all from our doing, and we also had the monument which we were the first city in the United States that we put up the monument on Sixteen and the Parkway. We had very nice get-togethers with all organizations and, you know, we had JHS and we get together to buy bonds. Every evening we spent for something that it had to do with tzedakah. You know, we always give. Now we-we participate in the March of the Living. We give some money. Not all of it, but as much as we can, to give money so it should be for the kids that want to go and cannot go.

Last Saturday -- no, two Saturdays ago -- we had a luncheon in our shul and we had three youngsters speaking about their impressions and whatever. They went on the March of the Living, and one boy said that Joshua, that our Joshua, talked to him and told him what an experience [it was]. Those three kids presented that it was just unbelievable. I couldn't sit. It was like I was sitting there. They were there writing. One was without notes altogether. He was just bar mitzvah now at synagogue three years ago. He's now sixteen-seventeen years old and there's another boy and a girl from Washington Heights. Unbelievable. And then I-when they finished I, you know, I raised my hand, I said, I must say something, because I have spoken in the synagogue many, many times, and in many other places. And I said: "Your presentation was so

sensitive and so good and you observed everything and you know exactly. I mean you went like children and you came grown-up people.”

That’s exactly what they said they did. And he said, you know, that Joshua talked to me. I said: “Are you sorry or angry?” He says: “No, if my father gives me money,” looks at his father, “I would go again.” And so our organization gives some money for this too, which we are very-we always had a scholarship fund that was after somebody that passed away a long, long time ago, from the first deaths, and we made in his name a scholarship fund, so yesterday-for a kid that needs it most. And now that we don’t have already any kids in school, not the second generation, the third is the parents can give them. So we give it to all the students from-from Hillel or we have from Gratz. The money is always needed so we give it to them. And this has been really for us a very...first of all, you know, we are together, and this is for us very important. And a lot of Americans have come to that organization. A lot that are married with American people. They enjoy it too. They enjoy it very much. And, you know, you talk about your things and we have concerts and we have dances.

**INT:** So it’s supportive and social.

**DORA:** Very supportive. We lost a lot of people. This is what, you know, we are-we are not like regular families where one family is older. We are like approximately all in one age so if we start dying, we die periodically. We lost a lot of people. It’s a shame. But we still try to hold it up as much as we can. We enjoy it very much. Other organization-the only other place that we belong is the synagogue and, you know, we do a few things with the synagogue. And this is about all.

**INT:** How do you understand your children, particularly Elaine’s involvement?

**DORA:** I am-well, I’ll tell you, I’ll tell you the truth and I told her too. I said, Elaine, she is very involved in it and I, for one, should say that she should not do it? It would be, you know, I would be a hypocrite, because I say to her: “I hope you’re not doing it for me, because I would rather that you spend the time with us. I mean, your Daddy and I are getting older. Daddy is seventy or seventy-one years old and I’m getting older. I’ll be seventy in December and, you know, I need you now more than any other time. I need just to twice a week here, you know, to see you.”

**INT:** Just to visit with her.

**DORA:** Right, yeah.

**INT:** Because she lives a very active life?

**DORA:** Very active life. **She says, Ma, what I started, I thought-**I said: “I am happy what you are doing, but you know what it-it goes on to one thing, that I don’t see you and it becomes that I don’t spend time with you.” Well, I hope she understood what I meant and she would like slow down a little bit, because I want to be with her more than she could give us time. Harold is in Washington. She always said: “Harold has it easier.” I said: “Look, probably you would have been in another town, maybe I wouldn’t have wanted so much from you, but you are here so, you know...”

We got a new car. You know, there's so many buttons there. I had to go and see my friend from Australia; we had to go to a bat mitzvah, his granddaughter's. And we had to drive. I clipped this out. I cut it out. I said: "We are not driving there in the morning and then at night...you don't know all the buttons yet and, you know, you get stuck sometimes." So we decided to go to Trenton with the car then take transportation and I told it to my friend in New York and he said: "Wouldn't it be too much?" I said: "Well, I'm trying to make it easier already. I'm gonna drive only halfway, take the train and come to New York, take a taxi and come to your place." So he kind of, you know, he said: "Maybe it's too much for us." And we came from the synagogue, we were eating lunch, and I said to my husband: "You know what? I think that it's too hard for us. That it's just too hard for us to go, and I don't want you to drive back."

The-the affair finishes at...that was the week that I feel and I had such a swollen leg and you had to walk there steps to go down from the train, the elevator, and I said: "You know what? I don't think we're gonna go." So I picked up the phone and I called his daughter and I said: "Look, I wanted very much to see you. I know your parents are gonna come there, but it just is not working out." She said: "I understand." They had maybe three hundred people and her father told me it was held by his son-in-law, her husband, who is a rabbi.

So there were maybe three hundred rabbis(?) and everybody presented them in a different way and it was very nice and very religious and-and it was a luncheon and a dancing and everything. He said: "But I'll tell you the truth, you wouldn't sit out five hours listening to them talk. In a way I was happy that you didn't come." And so they came here so we really had a very nice time here with them, and they enjoyed it and they stayed here three days. So because-he's the only guy that I went to school together that we actually know each other. So it's-when, you know, when people say this Philadelphia-New York it's nothing because there are so many that went to school together, but with us, it's like a thing to cherish, through school together, and he told me a very sweet story. I must tell you this.

He has three daughters, because he named two daughters after his mother, one, and after his father, one, because his wife is from Italy. She's a Jewish girl from Italy, but her parents were still living, and then when the third daughter was born, he named her Leah. So they thought, you know, it's maybe a cousin, an aunt, something, that is very dear to him. So he started telling me about a girl that he loved in school. I think seventh grade. So we were all like, I don't know, we were sixteen years old, fifteen years old, and he said, when the war broke out he wanted to go away, he wanted to be a Partisan, to go away. He knew that something bad is gonna happen. He was a very bright boy. So he came to his father and he told him. But his father said: "You go with my blessing but don't go to your Mom. Don't say goodbye to Mom because Mom wouldn't let you go. This was the thing. You are an older child and you're living with smaller children, now when I need you the most."

So he did it. So he went to the girl's house. He was going out with her a little bit, you know, like holding hands. There was no other thing which we did. And he wanted her to come with him, and her parents didn't let her. She was...and she had a little boy of five or six years old. So, you know, he missed her so much that many times when they wouldn't let him in to join and he had to have a piece of-a revolver or something that he could join a group of Partisans. They wouldn't let him join if he didn't have any machinery or something. So many ways, many months, you

know, he laid around hungry in the woods. So he figured I'm gonna go back and I'm gonna go to Leah. I'm gonna be with her. And he named his daughter Leah, and he never told anybody what he did. He told me this five years ago. I said: "You know, it's very cute. It's kind of very, you know....."

**INT:** So after the war he decided to settle in Australia?

**DORA:** He met a man-he met a man in the Partisans that he had two brothers in Australia from before the war, and they were very rich people, and he knows-he knew that when they'll come out they'll have nobody. He said: "You know what? If we make it, let's go there." And they went there. They had a nice life, you know. Australia's very big, not populated. It's less anti-Semitic over there. They are retired and...the kids are all different places. He sent the boy to become a doctor, he became a Rabbi. He became a Lubavitcher. One daughter married a guy also that he converted. She has two big daughters. Then this girl that had-she has three girls. This is the oldest one. And Leah is not married. So, um-

**INT:** How would you describe your economic status, your lifestyle after the war up until the present?

**DORA:** After the war we were so hungry that I was-I cannot begin to tell you. We just did not know from day to day what we're gonna-if we're gonna eat or not. After the war, I decided to go home. That was in 1945. When they were taking us to the trains to go-to the open trains to go to Auschwitz, which we didn't know where we were going, my father was forty years old, and everybody in the car that was there said: "Why should you go? Jump out. Do something. You are young. You are healthy." And they started talking him in, and, you know, it was not too hard to persuade somebody when you was-what's happening. Nobody came back. They heard only bad stories. So he jumped out from the train. And he told us before he jumped-I really, up till this day, I cannot figure out. The window was this big and my father was a tall guy, and he wasn't thin, and he said: "If we survive, we'll meet home." So after I survived Auschwitz and a few of more of these camps, I said that I want to go home. And I tried.

So we were eight girls and we went home. By hook or crook, whatever you made it. Walking, on a train, car, whichever. I came there and I didn't find anything. Everything was broken up. Everything was bombed out; the houses, the bakery, everything. So I went to one guy that used to work for us. He was like the guy that used to go to the oven to put in the bread. That was a special guy. And he lived with us in our place because he was doing it every night. And I came to him and he like looks at me and said: "What are you doing here? Where are you coming from?" And I told him. So he fell on his knees, he said: "My G-d, the kids didn't know how to put butter on their bagels. Where are they all?" I said: "Was my father here?" He said: "No." "Never?" He said: "No." So I told him why I came. So he said to me: "One thing promise me, that you're going to go away from here. Your mother has two brothers in the United States and I have the address and I'm gonna give you the address and you go away from here. I don't want you here. There's a lot of anti-Semitism here. They brought it in more than the Germans." The houses that were left were all taken up by, you know, by the goyim, like we call them.

**INT:** By the Poles.

**DORA:** “By the Poles, yes. And what I hear what’s going on and everything, I don’t want you to be here.” And at that time they made—there was a thing made that everybody that lived in Poland from 1939, who was a citizen of Poland, can now live—because that was under Russia already. Poland was sliced into pieces, so can leave Russia and go to Poland, and this is how we—you know, we registered and when the time came we all went on the train and we went to Poland. We went to Lodz. That was the biggest center where everybody went through. You left your name, you left all over. You went from place to place looking if there is somebody there.

**INT:** What were the circumstances before your father jumped the train? Did he talk to you? What did he say to you?

**DORA:** He talked to us. He gave us—he gave us some money. He gave us some gold money which we never saw in our life. He gave it to us like in a little kerchief, and my sister put it in her pocket and he said use it only wisely. I didn’t know what I’m gonna use it for; how am I going to use it.

**INT:** You had no idea where you were being transported to?

**DORA:** We approximately knew that it’s bad, that it’s bad, but we had taken along all the things for our little brother who was eleven, and for the baby, who was two years old. So we took along like what mother left, little things, so we took this along that we should—we’re gonna meet with them, we’re gonna be with them, so we’ll have the things. We never saw them. They were all killed already before we came and we had just us, me and my sister. My cousins—

**INT:** Your mother and your brothers were killed?

**DORA:** Yeah, before. They went with a—there was three—there was four outings, four going away from our town. We went on the last one, on the fourth one, because we had had a place where to hide. My father had made a place to hide with a lot of people going to every day. There was not enough food there. There was food maybe for a week for a family, but there was not enough ventilation, not enough anything. I mean it wasn’t prepared. And they came, the dogs, and the dogs smelled it and they took us out of there and there was still one day to go on the wagons and that’s when we went. It was me, my sister and my father. My, um, none of my uncles because they were much older than my father, and my cousins. A lot of my cousins, and they all did not survive. Only I had two cousins that survived and they lived in Israel. They are already gone. And this is—I am actually the sole survivor of the whole family. That’s it.

**INT:** So what do you think your father’s motivations were and what were you thinking?

**DORA:** My father, when the war started and the baby was born in 1941, they were bombing our city. The planes were so low that you could touch them with your hands, and the baby was crying and everybody started hollering that they hear the baby crying. You know, people talk.

**INT:** While you were hiding, or on the train?



**DORA:** No, we were in our-no, we were still in our home. That's before even we went to the ghetto. And they're hearing the baby's cries. So my father said: "Let's all go into the house and whatever will happen, will happen." They went; they did not bomb the town this night. They bombed another place. They went again, they went here; they went there. And then they said that's what it started. It's not the reason that they took us out, but we thought that we're gonna be the only city. Everybody thought they're gonna be the only city left where they're gonna survive, because, they are what they call "mutzlicha Yiden." [Can't find word 'mutzlicha.] They are Jews that work, they need their work and they were gonna survive. And then they said that they caught two boys that came from the woods, and they wanted some ammunition. They need it to kill a German general or somebody that was with the Judenrat. You know what the Judenrat is. And he saw them. They were dressed in Russian uniforms, and he said: "What are they doing here?" And he said: "I don't know. I don't know them."

Well, they started looking at their passports and he saw that they are Jewish and they said -- this is when they decided that they're gonna liquidate the camp. It wasn't that. It was anyway they would do it a week later or two weeks later, but that, we get, like a little bit we are helping them out and here he is keeping us here because we are good Jews, we are working for them, you know, and we did work for them, you know. The shoemakers and the other, whatever, whatever they worked, they were working for them, but he said that we are working also for...we are giving away stuff and money and food to the Partisans. And then in the morning there were already papers that we have to pack up and then they're going to liquidate us, and this is it. They liquidated the town in four days. And they took us straight to Auschwitz-to Birkenau. To Birkenau. Separated everybody.

It was late at night and the lights were from all sides. You didn't know if you're coming or going. You jumped out from the train-this I have another thing that I have written about - the rides-the ride in the trains and the coming to Auschwitz. And they started separating, left and right, right and left. People started running, mothers, daughters, children crying. It was unbelievable and unbearable. Unbelievable. And we as young children, we did not know what it is all about. Nobody knew. Even the older people didn't know. After a while you started realizing that there is right and left, that it might be death and-and life. But what they picked had to go. They didn't let you-if a mother wanted to run to a daughter, she got shot right away. They both got shot and both dead at whatever, how long you're gonna live. It was-it was very, very-it was-it's-it's hard for me even now to-to-to put it in words what was going on there. And that's why, you know, for many years, the-the survivors did not talk about it.

It was-you know, you came to a new country. You had to make a living right away. Children, people, women were pregnant. You know, it started-life started, and you could not go on. Nobody wanted to listen. Nobody wanted to listen to it. It was something, they thought that we are-that we are just "meshuga" [crazy] or something. I-when I had my baby and I was going with her, you know, like "shpatzering" [walking around] with the carriage, and I met a few other girls that were American girls, and I spoke to them and one said to me: "I'm having a-a party this evening." They used to sell the, um, I forgot. I always remember that name. You know, like canisters where we keep food but it was, um, it has a special name. She said: "Come in too. I invited all the girls. Come in." So I said: "Good." I made dinner fast. I put the baby to sleep and I tell my husband that I'm going. It's only three houses away. And we came in and, you know, she

introduced me and I was so happy. And then came her husband and he was in the kitchen probably eating something with a drink, and then when the lady came to demonstrate it, you know, Tupperware. Tupperware.

**INT:** Okay.

**DORA:** And he came in and he opened the door and said: “Well, let me see the refugee.” So I said: “I am.” He says: “Well, you don’t look too bad.” I was young. I was twenty-two years old. But I knew what he meant.

**INT:** What do you think that he meant?

**DORA:** I don’t know. I was just numb.

**INT:** You looked different and you had an accent?

**DORA:** I had an accent. (End of tape 2, side 1) Whatever he could have said, he could have said it differently too. Or he didn’t have to say anything, you know. If you don’t have nothing nice to say, you don’t say anything.

**INT:** So American Jews were suspicious?

**DORA:** American Jews, yeah. They were not bad. They—they did not like us, but they did not show it in front of your face. They only heard that we are taking away their jobs, like in the store they used to come in and say: “My son is a college graduate, and he’s delivering milk, and you, how long are you here, refugee?” So my husband used to say: “Five years, six years. More, we were five years in Brooklyn. Seven years.” So she says: “And you are here only seven years and you already have a big store like this?” So my husband used to say: “If I would go to college, I would probably be president now. If your son couldn’t make it, it’s just one of those things. Not everybody can do everything.”

**INT:** So you worked very hard for everything?

**DORA:** It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter. For everything we worked hard, but it doesn’t matter. This is how it goes. The upper echelon always takes, you know, revenge and this is how the world operates. Even in concentration camp. The one that were already a month there were already the big shots. When another transport came in, you already—you had already to sell the...not me, I never indulged in it. You already had to sell a-a cigarette. You already knew what to take for the cigarette. And they did it. You know, to save a portion of bread for something. They did it. You’re already above them. That’s how it goes. Now when we came to a city and we had to learn English and my husband went to school right away. I didn’t go because I had the baby right away, so I used to read. I learned English in Germany. I had a teacher. But it was a different kind of an English, you know. I spoke very slowly and I spoke more like in England, with that accent. And when I came here, I thought: “My G-d, she taught me something different!” You know, I did not speak like here, in a hurry and everything. “Get out of here,” I didn’t know these words. I didn’t understand.

After a while I sorted it out. I spoke but I-I was ashamed I shouldn't say the wrong thing. So I had a neighbor and she always used to say to me: "Don't be ashamed. Just speak. They're not going to laugh at you." And they didn't. They really didn't. And they let me speak, and I knew that I know, and I just had to learn the-the speed of it and get into it. It took a little while and I spoke, but there was always...I was always not the right citizen. I was not the right person. I would rather, if I would maybe go around with a bag and beg for money and bread, they would-they would accept me better. I went-we lived in a house-we didn't live in a house, I had an apartment that I lived on the first floor. It was very hard on us. I had to "schlep" up the carriage and everything. So a friend of mine that lived on the next street called me up and she said: "You know what? Where I live, the guy that lost his wife that owns the building, he is willing to rent the apartment. It has a big apartment."

So I took Elaine and I put her-she was nine months old or maybe ten. I don't know. I put her in the carriage and I went there and I came in and knocked on his door and I said: "I heard that you have an apartment." He says he doesn't want a baby. She was sleeping in a little carriage and you didn't have to worry. You left them-you let them outside sleeping. We started talking. I spoke a little bit in Yiddish, a little bit in English. I spoke better English than him. He was already forty-five years there. He came from England. And he says: "Where are you from?" And I said: "From Pruzhany." He says: "I am too." I say: "You are? Well, where were you before?" He says: "I was in England and then I came here and I'm already forty years here."

And he tells me about his family. I said: "I know them." So he looks at me and he says: "All right, I'll give you the apartment." And he lets me move in. This was like a blessing from G-d. It was on the ground floor. I had two bedrooms, a big kitchen, a living room and a little room that he took for himself. Just a little room. Everything was for us and for Elaine. For Elaine it was everything. He bought her clothes. He-he took pictures of her. When she started walking he took her along. He had a nephew, a doctor. He used to take her to the office there and she used to sit with him and read the Jewish paper. She didn't know how, but when people came to the office he actually made business. They used to come and see that little girl from...they didn't think that she was born here. The little girl from Europe that speaks-that speaks Yiddish, so whenever you saw a crowd in a park or somewhere, I knew that he is with her there, and she talked Yiddish and she told a story, and they were all listening to her. Every day. When my husband came from work and I said Elaine is not home yet, she's with Mr. Nitzberg, he knew exactly where to go. To the park. That's where she was sitting with him.

**INT:** So he was like a grandfather?

**DORA:** More. He was just to us like a father. He wouldn't let us pay for the electricity. He wouldn't let us pay for telephone. He took maybe half what he would have taken from another one, and we had-he painted right away and I bought a new bedroom set and he said that we should go to the movies, we should go to the theater. He will play with her. And she was a good child, very good, and a beautiful girl and he loved her. And his children were so happy. They were, you know, children like in their sixties and, you know, a father, it was hanging over their head. Now I took him and he was with me with company and he put in a big television, what was then the biggest, seventeen or something. And I had all this company and he watched television,

and I cooked and he ate with us. It was like-they-they...I took him into the best thing or something like this.

So he said in his will, he said that if we decide-if we decide to buy the house -- it was a three story, a nice house -- we will get it three thousand-two thousand dollars less. Like it was running then maybe "ich vais," [I'm not sure] ten thousand. It would-which was very nice. And his kids only-he had a daughter, I think in Baltimore. She only wanted to see what is going on. The father is not calling her five times a day. And then she came and we were eating dinner. She says: "Now I understand why he tells so many stories about you." And she didn't know what to do for us. She was really very appreciative and, "with us he was like a guy by himself. He went to shul. He ate dinner. He was sitting with his friends outside. Like this he was lonely. His wife passed away and he really, he was to us the best that I can say."

**INT:** So you lived there.

**DORA:** We lived there. When we left there Elaine was six years. So we lived there six-five years. I took her, she was nine months, a year. We lived there six years.

**INT:** So you moved from there to Philadelphia?

**DORA:** I moved myself. I moved myself. Before my husband came I already moved. I moved with the carriage and then I came and I waited for him at the station and he got scared. He said: "What are you doing here?" I said: "I moved, and I wanted you to come to the right apartment where I am now." He said: "Where did we move?" I said: "On Georgia Avenue, where my friend Mira lives." And he said: "How did you move?"

**INT:** In Brooklyn?

**DORA:** In Brooklyn. And he said: "How did you get the apartment?" I said: "You wouldn't believe it. He's from Pruzhany and I know his family and he remembers my family, the older ones, and it's just absolutely marvelous. And to live on the ground floor, not to go up steps. I could take in the carriage to the hallway." It was nice. It was more residential. It was not this big, you know, building size, seven, eight stories high. It was only three, nice-so he really gave a...he gave us the first-the first nice break where he really, you know, near us he was everything and we with him were everything. That was [lucky].

**INT:** It must have been very difficult to leave there.

**DORA:** He got sick. He-I think it was a stroke. He fell in that bathroom and he started crying, and I called his son, and I told him that Daddy is sick. He closed the bathroom door and my husband was at work and I don't know how to open it. And I already had at that time two children. And he came and they took him to the hospital and that was it. They never came back.

**INT:** He never came home.

**DORA:** Never came home. Never came home. And we all cried because he really gave us such a-a warm welcome. He didn't care, refugees, he just gave us everything that he could. He only

waited when there was a birthday. He couldn't wait. He bought her twice a year. Twice birthdays. He bought her the most beautiful things. And he loved us all and we loved him. It was like near a father, near a grandfather. And he was with us six years. He had six beautiful years, beautiful years, and then, you know, time comes and you go. So at that time my husband started looking already. He wanted to go into business and his brother, he should rest in peace, had found for him the store and he went and he looked at it and, you know, this Northeast was nothing there. It was all-it was all free places. It was not built up.

**INT:** Very different than New York.

**DORA:** All fields and everything. It was all built up to Bells Corner and the rest was all fields and now it's so built up, in the last forty years. And we went to the store and we-we buckled up [?] and you knew that you had to make a living. The landlord of the store, the owner, was a guy from Scotland or from Ireland. And he was a very good-hearted fellow. He didn't even have a store. He had like a little shack, you know. And we came to write with him like a contract and I came with both my children and he said to my husband: "Will you be able to feed those children? I'm worried that you should only be able to feed them." He said: "Look, I come from a family that always worked in shoes. We had a shoe store and we always tried to make a living." And he said: "The neighborhood is now building up and there's a lot of stores opening up on the Avenue and I just want you to make a living for those children." And he said: "I'll try," and he stayed there till he retired. He used to come and like they say in Yiddish, "shep nachas" [get pleasure]. He used to sit down on the last chair and when it was busy in the store it was for him the best thing. He didn't want to-he didn't want to sell the building. He came to us to sell the building when Castor Avenue was starting to fall apart already.

**INT:** You were ready to retire.

**DORA:** Yeah. And then he was not living then anymore. He passed away. So his wife used to take care. Anita. She was getting sick. So the children came and they said they wanted to sell it. I said: "I'm not interested now. We have another couple of years to finish and that's all. I don't need the building anymore." And I never wanted to go into rents and this. I didn't want them to wake me up at night and-and the light is out, and the gas is out and this. I didn't want any of that stuff. So, because I remember years and years ago came to us a young builder that he had built up the whole Northeast and he wanted to-he needed fifty thousand dollars. At that time it was a lot of money. So I said: "I want to take in my friend. He said: "Listen, you're too young for this thing. You don't need any friend. If I want to take you, you are very lucky."

So I looked at him. I said: "I don't think so." He built up the whole Northeast. I'm not sorry, because with him, whoever he had for a partner they just did not-it did not work out. We had a store that was going good. We did good business. We worked hard. We never stole. We never robbed. We never killed nobody. We worked in our store. That was our business. We made a living. We raised the children. We put away some money, and we tried to live a normal life. We tried to go out a little. We go...in the winter we go to Florida, and this is our-this is our entertainment.

**INT:** Can you go back to before the war and tell me more about your family. What was the town like? What was life like in your family and who was in your family, parents and siblings?

**DORA:** We-my father and my mother and me and my sister -- we were very close to each other. We were like eighteen months apart. Then we had a brother thirteen years old, and in 1941, my mother gave birth to a little baby. They're all little babies. So we had four children. My father was a very nice guy. He called us the princesses. The [Polish word]. In Polish it's princesses, because we always get dressed [up]. He used to get-my mother used to hire a girl. I remember she worked there. She didn't have any parents, and she was a seamstress. So she used to move in with us and we had a sewing machine and we had a lot of materials and she used to sew for us everything, from dresses and sweaters and coats. Then my sister already needed a bra and we all looked in, we wanted to see what the bra looked like. And she made bras for her. And everything she used to sew; pajamas and nightgowns and everything. She used to live with us like for six months and make everything ready, then used to come a guy that used to make shoes for us, for the whole year. Shoes for the winter and shoes for the summer and sandals and everything, so we were always-we were always well taken care. There was a-there was enough money. The store was doing good.

**INT:** What kind of business did your father have?

**DORA:** We had a bakery. We had a very big bakery that we delivered bread to an army that stood-the Polish army that stood outside our town, maybe I don't know, a thousand people that to me it never even registered. A thousand people. It must be a seven street school. And we had a very nice life. It was a quiet life. What we had is a very educated town. We had a town where we had three synagogues. We had two Polish high schools. We had a Polish university. We had a Hebrew high school and a Hebrew university. We had a Yiddish high school. That was a very...he had-

**INT:** How large was the Jewish community?

**DORA:** It wasn't that large of a Jewish community, maybe ten thousand people, but we had-it was a very cultural. We had a lot of organizations which none of us belonged to and it was like the Shomer. It was the-the Betar. The boys belonged mostly.

**INT:** What part of Poland?

**DORA:** It's the-it's East Poland. We were not far on the border with Russia, so when the war started, Russia took it over, so we were under the Russians for a couple of years. In 1943, in 1942 yet, Germany broke the pact. They were going and doing so good, so they attacked the Russians and the war started and they took us over, but we still had from 1939 and '40 and '41, we still had like two and a half years that it wasn't good, but it was nothing what it was later on. We still had-we still lived in our homes. There was not much food to eat, but we still could get something to eat, and you wouldn't be afraid for your life. Your life was still secure and it-they knew. People came from the other side, from the German side, and they told stories and nobody believed it. Like I thought so-

**INT:** Did your parents communicate them to you? How did you hear the stories?

**DORA:** We knew that there is a war. We knew-we had a cousin of ours that lived in Lodz, and the one that I told you, she was studying in England. And she was going out with a boy, and this boy must have been then twenty or twenty-one years. I mean he was already-he worked and he-he struggled through and he was opening up in the-when Poland was still there, he opened up, like his father helped him to open up a little manufacturing factory that made stockings. There was no pantyhose then. Stockings. Socks. All those kinds...underwear for men and women. And, of course, when the war started they took it all away and when the Russians come, they bombed it out. There was nothing to it. So he somehow smuggled through, and he came into our house. He had the address and everything. And he told us stories that we were sitting and listening, because he got crazy probably. He said they hang people in the streets, they go into a house and they just shoot at random everybody out. They take the children and they throw them against the walls, and the brains are splattered all over. So everybody thought when he-when he slept in our house, he wanted to go farther. He didn't want to stay with us. He wanted to go to Russia, but little by little, he had to go slow. And he told all the stories so everybody thought he's crazy.

**INT:** No one believed him.

**DORA:** No. Nobody believed it. Nobody believed it. And if they would have believed it maybe, if he would have portrayed something differently and-and maybe people would do something. Maybe like, you know, like my husband always tells me, they were the two oldest brothers. There were six children, and they wanted to go away, but his father said to them: "What are you gonna do? Now you're gonna leave me with a family of four small children, now that I can have some help from you." So they took off the...and they stayed home. And this was with every family like this. I mean a family was to you everything. Now what is my life if I don't have a family? It's such a big deal to live. I mean, no. I want my family with me. So nobody -- I mean, we knew that it's bad -- but nobody believed it. Nobody believed. And that something like this can happen in that century.

**INT:** There had been generations, both in Poland and Germany.

**DORA:** Yes, yes. To believe, because they remembered, they remembered the German war years ago, and they said, the Germans were good then. You know, they brought, you know, a lot of food and they were good to the people. That who would believe anything like this? Nobody. So, you know, you listened to him, and of course other people came, other families, and they told the same stories. We said: "My G-d, they must be crazy from what they saw there." And then they were not crazy. They were telling the truth, and they were begging everybody they should organize themselves and go away.

**INT:** So it sounds like your parents provided a comfortable life.

**DORA:** Very comfortable.

**INT:** You were observant but not strictly Orthodox.

**DORA:** No, no.

**INT:** Religious?

**DORA:** Learned. Learned. Education in our house was everything that you-we played the piano. Learned, I mean. My brother, I think he was thirteen years old, I think he played something. I didn't know the name of it but I think it was the cello or something. Me and my sister, we played the piano. And everything for us was provided. We had a nice family. We were well known. We were good neighbors, good people, and my father had four brothers and four sisters and my mother had...all the brothers were here in Cuba already.

**INT:** What kind of background was your family?

**DORA:** My mother-my father used to tell us that his father used to always go in Russia, he used to deal in pork. He used to sell, and he was doing very well. He always told us when the children were born he said now you are...the boys were all named after the grandfather, so we had a lot of "Velvels" in our family, "Zev," like here. So we had in our family, in my three cousins' families, they were all named that name. And then the girls were named, like my sister's name was "Fradyl" - like "Freida" or "Frayda," whatever. She was named after the Bubba. Then I came already. I was like the grandmother. We all named after-we all knew who we are named because we all have the same name. And we had a lot of cousins and, you know, we were going out a little bit already with boys, but I can't even compare to what's going-to what I see here. I mean with us going out was going to a movie, and then if he-if he had money to buy you a-a, you know, a soft drink or an ice cream, it was "whoo wow," you already had a real date.

**INT:** What about your parents' marriage? What was it like?

**DORA:** It was a very good marriage.

**INT:** Did they argue? How did they make decisions?

**DORA:** You know, my mother worked with my father in the store, so I think most of the decisions were made there. You know, I remember one thing. When my father used to come home, my mother used to say: "Oh, she was no good. She was fighting with me." He said, my father used to say: "Don't touch them. They are little children. What do you want from them? Let them play. Let them play." He was always, you know, he was always defending us. So she used to say: If you would stay with them one day, then you would know." He says: "You go to the store, anyway Anna is with them." She says: "But they're fighting and they..." So he said: "Let them fight. Little kids have to fight."

My parents had a very good marriage. What I saw, as I had been with them. You know, my mother worked. My father worked. And we got used to it. We knew what it is and we accepted this, and that's it. And everything was provided for us and for the summer we used to go away in camps and it was Jewish camps. And we were there, you know, away from the heat and that when my father used to bring there, used to deliver there rolls and so he used to come every morning he used to come just to see us. So we saw him. It was like seven or eight kilometers



away. And it was-it was a happy marriage. It was a very happy and good life and I, for one, cannot-I cannot complain at all about my life.

**INT:** How affectionate were they? Did they show emotion?

**DORA:** Well, to tell you the truth, you did not show as much emotions there. You know, it was not in style really. It's here in style more. The goodness and everything was by showing you that you are taken care properly, that you eat on time. That you have a maid and she takes care. That you don't have to do, you know, you can do your homework. You have your Hebrew teacher. You have your Yiddish teacher. You go to school. Your clothes is nice and clean. This was the thing to show that we are here for you anytime that you need us.

**INT:** So they didn't necessarily verbalize or show a lot of physical affection?

**DORA:** Not a lot of physical. It's not-it was not in style to do this. It was not in style. My father used to kiss us, the girls, but it was not in style, you know, like here, I think, they show more physical affection than it was there. There's more kissing here.

**INT:** If you could describe a family philosophy or attitude that you learned from your parents that helped sustain you through difficult times and separations. Are there values or philosophies that you learned from them?

**DORA:** The only thing if I would look back, I try to keep the same philosophy in my family. I praise my kids when they are good. I have absolutely nothing bad to say about them. I mean, there are things but not-not that they...they were good children as I told you, but partly because they knew that we are different parents than...what we went through, they knew. They listened to our nights. They were unbearable. We had dreams and everything, and they used to listen. I knew they know about it, but as I said, we only let them know as much as they could understand. We never-we never burdened them with more information than they could really hear. And that, I think, was the right thing. We didn't know at that time if we are doing the right thing or the wrong thing, I mean, who would know? Now-

**INT:** So you were protective of them?

**DORA:** Right. We were protective of them. That they should not-we wanted them to behave. We saw that America is a wonderful country. A wonderful...you know, when the war started, I think, in Korea or was it when they started burning the flag, was it already Vietnam, I used to sit and cry for myself, what are they doing? What are they doing here? Now they are destroying it all together, the country, but I used to sit and cry, because none of them went out to another country to see what's going on and what the world-what they can do in the world. So I was really...my daughter always used to say, we have a constitution. I said, Elaine-

**INT:** Free speech?

**DORA:** Polish-Poland also had a constitution, you know. They take and they tear it apart and nothing...She says, but we have a constitution here. She was very upset when we had the Six Day War. She felt for Israel very much. I took her with me to Israel when she was fifteen years old. It

was in those times when she was from one class to the other, in one year, three times they skipped her, and she was very unhappy. I knew that she's unhappy, so this year I took her away with me. I took her to Israel with me, and it was just me and her. And we came then and we went to this principal, I told you. And we told her: "No more skipping. Not a dot. I want her to stay in her class, the year that she needs, then she'll go to the next and then to the next. She has many years to live and she has to try every class separately."

**INT:** It sounds like the family was very important to you, growing up.

**DORA:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Family was everything. This was our first thing that was ours, that belonged to us. Nothing else belonged to us. We were-when we came here, we were strangers, and I knew that everybody looked at us. I knew that they did not like us. This is-this is hereditary, you know. Even if they did like us a little bit, you know that they don't show it to you and they don't like when you come, visitors come. They don't like when family comes. They just-and here comes a crowd like this, and our people excelled in a lot of things, and this what made them very...now, the younger generation understands better than the older generation. The older generation was jealous. I understand it. They worked in the sweatshops. Not that we did not work. We worked very hard, each and every one. Not only my family, all of them. Everybody worked, but we were a more learned group of people that came, when they came before the, you know, before the first war, they ran away. We actually were taken out and brought here. I mean that was the worst. They ran away from Russia. They didn't want to go to the army. It was very hard, and I think we were-our coming, our aliyah as they say, was the best people in the world. I think that we have not talked a thing. We were so obedient. We tried our best for our kids.

**INT:** To assimilate. To fit in.

**DORA:** To fit in. And our motto was just for the children. Just learn. Your education is very important, and this is one thing I remember. I said: "My Mommy used to say to me, that they can take everything away from you,"-- because, you know, in the summer when the teacher came, you wanted to run away; you wanted to play. She said: "No, you sit. You have an hour with the Hebrew teacher and an hour with the Yiddish teacher." I said: "I want to go to the bathroom," -- all those kind of things children do at eight and nine and ten years old. We don't want to do it, but we did it. And I said this to the children: "Your education is the most important thing, and here you have-you can go where you want. It's a country where you can achieve if you want to. They give you all the possibilities in the world." It's the best country in the world. It's just we are making nothing out of it, and this what hurts me a lot. It hurts me. I would write a letter to anybody that wants to listen, what they are doing to each other and what's going to come out here. It's such a-it's such a, you know, they take a- (pauses)

**INT:** You mean violence, what?

**DORA:** Violence. Very violent, and, you know, there's such things where...and even the government, from the highest one to the lowest, they all steal and they call each other names. They bring up-all right, I don't say that Clinton is a-is an angel, but who wants to know what he did twenty years ago? I don't want to know even. I think he's a young man. I think he's a good

president. Whatever he did, he did the best he could and he will do better for you. Now he comes, I always look at him, at Dole, maybe when he holds-his head like this. If you put a German uniform on him, he looks just like a Nazi. The eyes and everything, and every sentence that he says, he mixes in Clinton. What are you-what are you-why do you have to do it? You campaign for yourself. Tell about yourself and that's all. Leave everybody else out. But they don't do it here. It's sad. It's very sad. I'm very much against this, but look, they can't do a thing. They get people in power, but I-I suffer from it a lot.

**INT:** So you worry for this generation, the next generation.

**DORA:** I worry. (End of tape 2, side 2) So what I have in mind is to really preserve myself and try to survive. It was not-that's what I told you last time. I really had no desire and I didn't do nothing about it. You know, like some other people really tried with the thought of it that they're gonna survive and they're gonna tell the whole story. It never dawned on me that I'm gonna do it and it really didn't matter to me if I lived or I didn't live. And this was what I had in my head like made up. It's not in a poem but I was-wherever I went to, work or sleep, I was just saying this one thing. I did not blame anybody but G-d. I just was sickly, insane and mad at G-d. I don't know why. I thought that He is doing it all and He should do things like this that was really not fair. So it really didn't matter to me one way or the other if I survived or I didn't survive. I just went on like everybody else and this is what I'm saying. I said it in my head. I said it in my head in Jewish. I put it together when I came to the United States. Can I read it for you?

**INT:** Was this your letter to G-d that you referred to, that you were so angry, mad, that you didn't want to live?

**DORA:** It didn't matter to me one way the other. That would be like on December 1st, 1944. I mean I had it in my head in Yiddish and in Polish. I repeated it to myself. When I knew a little bit of English I tried to put it together.

A Letter to G-d.

Today, G-d I need to talk with You, whether I am in debt to You for my life, or perhaps are You in debt to me. First make clear to me, G-d, give me an accounting for things as they are. Why are the best going to death and lesser persons committed to get breath of life? Why didn't the world come apart and sink into nothingness at the unbelievable horror and monstrosity of this mad Holocaust thrust upon millions of Your chosen ones? Where were You? Where was Your compassion, G-d, Your mercy, Your graciousness to Your people who were annihilated on the spot? When the children struggled against the fires, when the children were gassed, when they screamed at being thrown from their mother's arms, when they stood naked, unbelief in their staring, frightened eyes. They attend a little body dropped in freezing cold and drenching rain, waiting for certain death. Why did not the world burn and consume itself in the bloody laments of the doomed people? Why? Why did the world suddenly become dead to the anguish and bloodshed of so many millions? Why were Your benevolent ears closed to the death struggle of Your people? Oh Lord, did You not hear eyes and lips beg for mercy? The lips that prayed for shreds of hope. Lips that could barely frame the words to the presence of pain, just a prayer. Fearful heart and they all call Your name. But You, Lord, were silent. One shudders thinking that

they knew their certain end, yet they prayed. They called upon You. Where, oh where, were You, G-d? Above there in heaven, high above, far from the brutal sordid world, that screams from the crackling of the flames, the gasp and gagging in the throat of the little ones. Did those sounds and sighs not reach You, Almighty, all-seeing G-d? Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec. Your symbol of mercy, and You, Lord, were silent. The gush and flow of blood was like the outpouring of a lush year of harvest. When gassed, they piled them in heaps and mounds on the floor of the extermination chambers. Children so innocent so to perish. No thank You, G-d, of the world that you stole my life. But please, G-d, give me my accounting for myself, why G-d, why?

This was like my litany to G-d. Walked with and said it in all kinds of languages that I...and then when I knew a little bit of English, I translated it from Polish into English, and as you can see, my desire to live was not at all there. I did not want the world to know what it was. I didn't think I will ever make it for the world, and I didn't have no desire. But I survived.

**INT:** What do you think helped you survive? What can you say about that?

**DORA:** It is very hard to say. Everybody says, how did you survive? It is not health, it is not-it is just one of these things. I really don't know. I don't know what helped me to survive. I just survived and that's all there is to it. And here I am.

**INT:** So you questioned your faith in G-d, his word and what happened?

**DORA:** Yeah, I wasn't, you can see, in that thing that I had written, I blamed it all on Him. I thought that He's the ruler of the world, that He...that's what I learned home. I was small and that's all I heard. And why would He do something like this to us, to little children, to infants, to whatever I saw? It was just unbelievable to me, and I blamed Him for everything that happened. I don't know, up till now, I'm almost an old lady and I believe in G-d. This would help me to come back to survive maybe and to begin a new life, to raise a family. I believe in G-d. We go to synagogue. We are not, um, how do you say it? I believe in G-d, and everybody asked me: "How can you do it? How can you believe in G-d after what you saw?" But I think that you have to believe in something that is there greater than us. Maybe after we all perish from this world and a hundred years later they'll find out what happened. What was it and why it happened. Right now I don't think anybody knows why there is different questions and answers, but somehow they really don't know why it happened.

**INT:** How did it change, your faith and belief in G-d?

**DORA:** In fact, I think I believe in G-d because I must believe in something that is higher and stronger than anybody else; otherwise you cannot exist. I cannot exist any other way. I believe in G-d. Why he did it, I don't question it. For years I tried to push it away. I mean, I didn't want to talk about it. Nobody wanted to listen to it, and everything that we told or said-

**INT:** You mean what?

**DORA:** People, American people, family that I came to in America, and up till this day, I struggle with questions. Maybe they didn't want to hurt me, to ask what happened there. (pauses)

**INT:** You struggle with keeping your feelings, thoughts, stories, memories?

**DORA:** Yes. A lot of things it don't even try to tell, because they look so ugly and so awful that nobody will believe it. I myself am doubting if that is true, but I know it was true. I believe it. I read different books, always on the same subject. My husband hollers at me, but somehow, I don't know why, when I go, I always get a book about the Holocaust. It's something that happened to me and I want to see what other people have to say about it, how they survived, what they did after, how did they raise families, and how they go on in the world. I think the only thing that helped me is that I was very young, and I bounced back, and this is, I think, the only- the only thing that helped me is youth. I was not even twenty, and...I was nineteen. I was eighteen and something, and this when you survive and you're young and you're with a crowd of people.

You go together to find out and they say there is a chance that people write down their names and everybody passes through the towns and people have found their brothers and sisters and parents, and so this becomes like a involvement that you go through, although deep in my heart I knew that this is not the same with me, but I pretended that maybe. I knew that my father jumped out from the train when we were going there and that he is not alive, because I went back to my hometown and I have asked around. Nobody saw him, so I know that he got killed right away when he jumped. My mother and my little brother and my little baby sister who was two years old, they went with a transport before and I know that they are not there. My sister was with me and she got killed in Auschwitz, so I know that she is not alive either, so I really don't have-I don't have where to look because I know nobody's there. But I married in 1946.

**INT:** How important was that to you?

**DORA:** Very important. It was...

**INT:** What did it mean?

**DORA:** Like a-it was my-it was my best friend. You have friends but they are-they are friends. But this, I felt, is my best friend in the world. He was everything that I possessed. I knew that he thinks only of my well-being. He protects me and the same went for me too. So, of course I don't say that marriage and life is just one big song and dance. No it isn't. But you have to live and give in and things, and make things the best, because what's going on today I don't like at all. I don't like what the world stands for. I don't like the way people get divorced every second and minute. It's- a marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition, and believe me, they have it good here and they break up families with children. Who suffers the most are the children.

**INT:** Who prepared you for marriage?

**DORA:** I don't know. It's like you needed somebody to belong to, and you needed somebody to belong to you, and at that time, I don't think that I remember anybody getting divorced. Maybe if they did, maybe-

**INT:** Were there unhappy marriages?

**DORA:** Probably, but you went on. You did not dissolve it, because there was nowhere to go. Women as a rule did not have so much education as here, and although they- were in a lot of different [situations] - they learned trades and-and all kinds of things -- but there was no question of getting divorce. I mean, my G-d, it was terrible. The whole family would maybe kill themselves and you went on and this is what I did. I never thought about divorce. It never came to that point, but there were unhappy things that happen in everybody's life that you feel bad and etc., etc. And then they decided to go to Israel, but I had a cousin in Israel, and that was in 1947, 48, and he said that I should not come. Things in Israel are very chaotic and he said: "You have your mother's two brothers and I think that you should try to go to America."

And against all odds and everything, I did write to my uncle and I told him the story and he sent me a ticket to go to America because I was pregnant with my daughter and they wouldn't let me go on the ship because I was in my seventh month and then they are afraid that the baby's gonna be born and it won't have no country. To me all that seemed so stupid, and we came to the United States and my daughter was born here. We came in 1949 in March, March the seventh, and my daughter was born in May 9.

**INT:** Do you see survivors quickly marrying each other, rebuilding their lives, as a way of mourning for people that have gone? Do you think they're even finished mourning?

**DORA:** No. No. Never. It is always with us, but what we try -- and we didn't start out to do it -- but somehow we try to keep together, like to have an organization where we come together and we're still very proud of the organization. It becomes like our extended family. We invite each other to our affairs, to our children's bat mitzvahs and bar mitzvahs, to the weddings, and now the time came when it's now 1996, and the age and everything is against us. We are getting older and a lot of our members are dying off. Within this week we had three members who died from our group. I had a tough week. I was telling my daughter, my daughter and she said: "What do you mean? You don't think about it." But we do think about it. There's not such a thing that you don't think about it. We think about it, so you lose every member is like a shtick gold, a piece of gold. But you can't do nothing about it and you go on again. When my daughter was born, it was the first thing that I had of my own. This was it. And I just could marvel at her for hours. To me it did not-the outside world did not matter anymore. My husband said that she spoke at two months, because that's all I did. I kept on talking to her, being with her and being with her constantly. Although she says now she went from cradle to college, it was they all did everything for themselves. Everything. Okay. But I-I really, I was the happiest when she was born. It was all mine. But, you know, you have to see what's going on in the world. My husband was working. We lived in Brooklyn, and he was young and he wanted to go into business. So-

**INT:** How did you choose him?

**DORA:** My husband?

**INT:** Yes. What were you looking for and did you have any doubts about being married?

**DORA:** I don't think that I was then; no, I didn't have any doubts. You had to-if you live already, you had to make a commitment; otherwise life has to go on. Being by myself would not

do anything, so we were two girls from our town and we met the two brothers. My brother-in-law passed away two years ago. We went out with them. They were bright boys. They were making a nice living. They were-they opened a little shoemaker place that they were making shoes and-and somehow we saw that they are very-they're nice, they went through the same thing that we went through in different camps, of course.

**INT:** What did that mean? That was important, to marry a survivor?

**DORA:** It's very important. Very, very important. I just recently...we go now to Florida for three months, and I have a friend of mine that comes from Canada, and he married a Canadian girl so somehow we were sitting and talking and I say to him: "Tell me, is it a difference of marrying a girl that was not in the camps?" He says: "Yeah." I said: "What is the difference." He said: "You don't have constantly to talk about the camps. If I start, and she knows that it's not good for me, that, you know, I get very upset, she doesn't let me talk about it." Were we, as two survivors, we won't stop each other. I mean with this...and this is really -- I can believe that this is true, -- because it's fifty years after the liberation. I mean, we have talked about it. No matter-no matter what we talk about, this is the last thing that we finish off with. It's always about the concentration camp. And he explained to me that she would not let him talk about this. And I think this is-if I would know before, maybe I would also look, but you wanted to be with somebody that went through the same thing and-

**INT:** So there was comfort and compassion?

**DORA:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And as we have seen through the years, most of us are married to each other, you know, from different...but all of them that went-of course there is I would say maybe, I don't know if there is five percent people that are married to, how do you call them? Non-survivors. But, you know, they make non-survivors come to the organization. They made them, otherwise they did not take them away to their-they came rather to us, and the find the comfort what we are doing. We have built a beautiful monument and we have a cemetery for ourselves. We built a beautiful monument there. I mean a beautiful...we don't have where to say kaddish, you know, to come, so we decided that we're going to build and put our names, the names of our parents and the children and whoever we want, and when you come there you feel like you-this is where it is. I mean you look up and you see the name of your father, of your mother, of your sisters and brothers, and we come there.

We have our get-togethers, what we girls, and you feel that this is the place. Maybe they are not buried there, but at least it's close, because none of us know where they are. Their ashes are thrown all over the land, all over the universe. But this brings us together and makes us feel that this is the place. That we did the right thing. That some have gone to Israel. Some have gone to Poland and they brought some ashes, they brought some earth. And this is all buried there. So it gives you the-the feeling, you know, like this is death. You should come. And many times I just go with my husband there just for a while. We look at the...and we say a prayer. You don't have to go with the whole congregation or with everybody. You just go for peace of mind, and it's very satisfying. Very satisfying.

**INT:** So with your choice of spouse, you were looking for someone who was hard working, secure?

**DORA:** Secure. You wanted to get married. You wanted not to be alone.

**INT:** That was true for both of you?

**DORA:** Yeah. Yeah. Well my husband said that too. [Turns to speak to Bernard] Okay. So anyway, so this is what it is. You wanted-

**INT:** What did he say? You started saying something about your husband.

**DORA:** Oh, yeah. My husband said that he didn't want to get married because he was too young. He thought he was too young, and he wanted his brother to get married. His brother was four years older than him, and he married my girlfriend. That's how we became sister-in-laws. And then he said: "All right, I'm gonna get married." He says he never regretted it. He thought about it very often and we joke about it, that he didn't want to get married. He thought that he was too young. He was twenty-three and I was-I was not twenty. I was nineteen.

**INT:** And you were ready?

**DORA:** I was ready for anything. I mean I didn't have no other alternative. I didn't know where to start. To me it was where do I go, what do I do? It was a very awful...you know, every year when we got liberated I can see myself, you know, many times it would have been better if I was dead. I don't know where to start. I don't know what to do. It's an awful feeling.

**INT:** Can you describe this?

**DORA:** Yeah. I had even-I had even written something about it. I don't know. I didn't look at those papers in such a long time, but when we got liberated, I found myself in a-in a hospital somewhere.

**INT:** Recuperating?

**DORA:** Recuperating. And I heard a voice, like we will help you, we will get you to get well. And I thought to myself, what are they going to do? What is it gonna be? Are they gonna take us all together? Are we gonna...but first we-the girls also they're gonna leave all together. We'll never get away from each other. We'll-we'll do everything together. We'll work. We'll-we'll get a house. This was how we thought we're gonna-we're gonna be. We're gonna be always together.

**INT:** This is the young women who all survived?

**DORA:** Right. Right. We're gonna be together, and then of course, life is a different thing, and you don't stay together and when I was in that hospital, I constantly heard that voice, you know, and it was trying to cheer us up and trying to...it was American. And they were trying to give us our health back and they said they're gonna help us, and I said to myself, how are they going to



help us? What are they going to do for us? They cannot bring back our parents. They cannot bring back anybody that we lost. What are they going to do? They're going to get together the ashes? How are they going to make us...but life goes on. Nothing stops, and you got out of the hospital and everybody started thinking what are they going to do. And a lot of people said they're going to go back home and although-

**INT:** For what purpose?

**DORA:** The purpose to look for your own family. Different...we were only girls, and different girls had different ideas, maybe somebody survived. We all had the same idea, maybe somebody survived, maybe they're gonna go home and live in the same house and build it up and...but everybody thought of going home, but the going was awful. It was just...it took us two months until we came home. We were liberated in Germany and after we recuperated a little we started going, and it was awful. It took us two months to get home. By foot, by-by train. They threw us off the trains. It was a horrible scene. We went with Russian trains. The Russians had taken everything out from the houses, from the factories. They unscrewed and took everything out, and they were taking it home, so we landed places on the-on the train, but then they threw us off the train.

It was a very hard thing to go home. Very hard. But finally we made it home, and there was nothing left. Everything was bombed out. Everything was...it was just...and I think I told you already I went to a friend-to a guy that worked for my father who had a bakery, and when he saw me he was just-he was just flabbergasted. They didn't know what happened. He said: "Where are you coming from?" I said: "I just don't know what to say." He says: "You know what? I want you to go away from here because I don't want you to be here." And he actually like put words in my mouth that the anti-Semitism is very great. The houses were all robbed. Everything was taken away and, you know, between the Gentile people they took it all away. And he said, he listened what they are speaking about and for me it's gonna be the best thing to go away. He says: "Your mother has two brothers in America. Find out where they are and go there." And so all the girls that we came to my hometown, we saw that we must go because the Russians were very-very much against us. They did not believe us that we survived the war. They said that we rather helped the Germans and they called us all kinds of dirty names. They also took us every night for-every girl separately, how do you call it-if you want to know how you survived and-

**INT:** Interrogated?

**DORA:** Interrogate, yes. And you told your whole story and they didn't believe you anyways. So I had a friend of mine that I went to school together, and he worked for the NKVD, which is the Russian secret service. And he came then and he said: "You know what? I think you should all go away from here, because I think they have in mind to send you away to Russia. That you are very suspicious people and that we are probably going to overturn Russia, whatever, because the documents came today from Moscow, after all your interviewing and everything." At that time, if you were born in Poland and lived in Poland in 1939, you had a right to leave Russia and go to Poland, and my hometown was in Russia.

**INT:** After the war.

**DORA:** After the war, yeah. So we got together and got together some money. We sold something what we had which we didn't have nothing. And we went on the train. The train...they could take everything that you...if somebody had like a cow or a horse, they could take everything that you wanted with you that belonged to you, of course. And you went on the train and we went to Poland.

**INT:** On the other side.

**DORA:** On the other side. We went and we came to Lodz, a big town in Poland. Very industrial town. And that's where I met my husband. And a lot of people came there and stayed there because there was the centers where you could write down your names, and they had names of everybody and everybody looked if they could find somebody. People did find, you know, some people that ran away to the forests, some people that lived with Gentile people on the other side. And we stayed there and had a horrible time. We had nothing to eat. We had no place where to live.

**INT:** So the DP camp that was set up to help survivors were mostly in Germany.

**DORA:** Yeah. That was where.

**INT:** And you made your way there?

**DORA:** Yeah. We made our way there and we came to Germany. We lived in Feldafing. It was one of the biggest-it was not far from Munich, and that was already after we-we came in 1946. (End of tape 3, side 1) I guess we met in 1945 and I would say about seven months, six months. I mean no time for long romances and in fact when I came back to Feldaping -- which is the DP camp -- my cousin was there and all his friends said: "Why did you get married? Why couldn't you come here and marry a guy from your own town?" I said: "I don't know. I didn't know if anybody's alive." And so the story goes. My cousin was very impressed with my husband. He liked him a lot and that's all that mattered to me, because I did the same thing, and we had no place where to live, so my cousin made, you know, room for my husband, and I went to live with the girls, with my friends. They had a room, about ten, fifteen girls and I fit in there until there was-until there was a little room that later on was given to us, and we were registered there, in Feldaping.

And my husband and my brother-in-law opened up again a little shop and that's what helped them, you know, to make a little bit of a living. And here we are. We were-we were thinking of going to Israel and then we put our names on the list to go to America, which if we waited until this, we would wait till today. But at that time went through the-the plan was the Marshall Plan or something that somehow about four hundred thousand of Jews can come in to America, and we were among those and we came to America. So I was married and pregnant. That's what we always didn't want to do. We wanted to come to a country and start out together with us, where you both worked, you know, something, but it never comes out the way you want out, so we came here and in March...I came the eighth of March and my husband came the-he went by boat,

I think the twelfth or the fourteenth, I think the fourteenth, St. Patrick's Day. What is St. Patrick's, the fifteenth, fifteenth of February or something?

**INT:** March?

**DORA:** March, right, yeah. And we came here. It wasn't easy. It was not easy at all, but then I wasn't used to any easiness. Anything was better than the concentration camp. He got a job right away. We got a room upstairs on the fifth floor. It was just-I thought it was great.

**INT:** So you could adapt, adjust to wherever you could.

**DORA:** Easy. No problem at all. I mean everything was just better than what I had. Anything was better than what we had, so adjusting to it was not... Actually you lived two different worlds. One was with you constantly but you sort of -- unless you did something to yourself -- if you want to get rid of yourself; but this I didn't have no courage to do it. But then when you go on and you see other people doing this thing, they're getting married, they have children, they work, then you get pulled in into that atmosphere, and our survivors, people that survived, at that time had a great-they just wanted to live, to bring...this is the older ones. We were like the youngest one of the group of people that were already married; they come and they survived, and they wanted to bring a family and replace the ones that they had lost. And together with them, you know, we went into that same, what kind of word can I use for it? That you have to bring a generation and show Hitler that he did not accomplish what he went out to do; that we are going to bring a generation and the Jewish people are going to live again.

**INT:** Did you have fears about having children? Again, you emphasized the importance of having children.

**DORA:** Yeah. Children were important, that this is what's gonna...after we go, they're going to be here, bringing children to replace the ones that we all lost. Life was hard, very hard, but comparing to what we went through, it was all-it was gold. And when I looked around and I saw then already, you know, the behavior of American children, I used to look at them and say to myself: "My G-d, they have such a beautiful country, such a beautiful land." To me a President and the flag and everything was-I could just take it in my arms and kiss it forever, and it was hurting me when I saw...at that time the --

**INT:** So freedom has been taken for granted?

**DORA:** Freedom is something taken for granted, yes. And I think, up till this day that they just don't know what's going on in the world. You don't like it; just go somewhere else. That's all. It's easy. Nobody is keeping you here. Nobody is holding you hostage here. You don't like this country; just go. But no, they want to make problems in this country. Well now, what is it, 1996? It's horrible. It is just horrible. I am afraid of what's going on here. I am very afraid. There is no respect. It just-everybody knows how to rule, but nobody gives good ideas and they don't respect. You don't have any respect in this country, and that starts from home. If you don't have any respect for parents, if you don't have any respect for a neighbor, if you don't have respect for a president. If you chose him, this is our president, and we have to look up to him like he is our

G-d. I don't care whatever, the four years. You don't want him; you're not going to vote for him anymore, but I feel that everything that they are saying about him, I don't like it.

**INT:** He's another human being.

**DORA:** Fine. Okay.

**INT:** He has failures.

**DORA:** Yes, yes, yes.

**INT:** Limitations.

**DORA:** Everybody has it. We all have failures. We all are not the same. We all have our good side and bad and I don't think that they -- now, I think now is the worst time for him. I mean he's going through such that if I would be in his place, with his wife, I'd say: "Here you are. Here is your [country]; you go and you rule yourself"-- because I think he is a good president. You cannot bring the country, make it all good for everybody, but I think he's trying. And I'm just afraid of the times now. There is so much anti-Semitism all around, and I know what happens. It is in a second the rug is pulled out from under you and you are, in a minute you are nothing.

**INT:** How does your experiences compare now to before the war?

**DORA:** There is more anti-Semitism here than I ever experienced back home. I've never seen this, you know. I think that the media, I think the television and everything, it's too much freedom. Anything that's too much is no good. Too much food is no good. Too much sleep is no good. It's too much freedom. There's got to be a part of somewhere, you can talk about anything but you cannot cut up your country, your president, your elected people. They are here for you to rule at their time. When their time will be through, you will chose somebody else, you know, everybody will chose somebody else to their liking, and that's all. But there's no use cutting up the one that is now ruling.

**INT:** So you feel lack of responsibility with the criticism?

**DORA:** Lack or respect. No respect. No respect for elderly, no respect for neighbors, no respect for anybody, and I'm very afraid of it. I come from a country where it was a very anti-Semitic country, although I, as a child, did not experience it. We lived in a small town, not small-I mean it was a town; it was a nice sized town. But I did not experience any anti-Semitism. I went to Polish school. I learned-my friends were Polish children and I did not experience anything like this until-until Hitler came in.

**INT:** And then after the war you faced it again.

**DORA:** After the war I faced it again.

**INT:** In Poland?

**DORA:** In Poland and during the war I don't have to tell you. I mean there is enough said about it, but still, you know, you start respect from home. This is where you start. Here, children rather will go away from home to school. They don't want to stay home. There is something, some kind of-I don't know. My children did it too, I mean I know in a way I was glad that I am blending in with everybody else, but when my daughter told me that she wants to go away for college, I was devastated. I thought everybody's going to talk about me. I mean, what is she doing? I said: "You have such a big house and nobody's there." And I have a girl that worked for me, you know, just to be there when my kids come from school. I didn't want them to come to an empty house. I wanted her to be there, so she played the piano with them, she danced with them, you know, she did things with them.

**INT:** So you took this as rejection that you weren't a good enough mother?

**DORA:** This is the way I-I thought of myself: Why would she want to go away? I mean, she has everything that she needs, that she wants. Of course, I have maybe not been with her that much because I was a working parent, but she knew always where to get me. I could always talk to her because it was our business. It was not like a job where I'd sit from nine till five, that she cannot get to me. And I took it like a punishment. I was ashamed. I was afraid. I said: "What are people going to talk about us?" But later on, when I learned that everybody is doing it, that it's the right thing to do, the children have to go, they have to taste the outside world. When my son was ready to go to college, my daughter said, that she had to make the way and after this, already when he wanted to go to college, I didn't say "no." I even tried to tell him that he should go away. So they both went away.

**INT:** It sounds like from an early age you fostered independence. They had to in many ways take on responsibilities because you and your husband worked.

**DORA:** Absolutely. Yes. Yes. Yes, they did. They were absolutely great kids. They were very good in school, and they did their work. I never had to stand over them to do their homework. They knew that they have to do it.

**INT:** So their expectations about chores, responsibilities?

**DORA:** To tell you the truth, I did not put on them too many chores. I figured at that time that I-I that something is missing in their lives, like me being with them all the time, and to-to do something about, you know, I-I bought her beautiful clothes. I bought her pocketbooks. I bought her these, you know, like it made me feel better, because I knew that I did not spend maybe too much time with her. She was a good girl. But, you know, like every child is, they have their "meshugasen," you know, but as a rule, they... Now I hear, you know, here and there, that they knew that there is something different about us, about the parents, and they tried to be good children, be good in school, to satisfy us, that we should not have more anxiety and more, you know...they tried to be good, and they were good. They were good kids.

**INT:** Did this work?

**DORA:** Yeah. Yeah. And later on, she was telling me stories like, you know, in school kids can be very cruel to each other, and when she was already in high school, I think I told you this

already before. She was very good and everything, and one girl asked her: "Why do your parents speak with an accent?" So she says: "Because they were not born here." She says: "Where were they born?" She [Elaine] says: "In France." And she says: "Really? So do you speak French?" And she says: "Of course, and we have a nanny what speaks French too. And we go to visit France every year where we were born, where my parents were born, and we speak French." She says: "Oh my G-d, you are lucky, and you have a nanny that speaks French too?" A whole story. She didn't tell me this until she was probably fifteen years old. I said: "Well why did you say France?" She said: "At that time there were a lot of jokes going on about Poland, you know, stupid jokes like, you know, a Pole cannot put in a bulb. He puts in-he ties his shoe, he puts up his leg but he ties the shoe on the floor, the other leg. Otherwise if you have to tie the shoe, you put the leg up. You know, all kinds of stupid jokes. So...elephant jokes." So she says: "I just wanted them to know that we belong to-that we are born in France." I said: "Well why France?" She said: "Because France has such glamour, and you know France has everything." And they were really, you know, they believed me and they were jealous. She said: "Well, that's it. I got them now!"

**INT:** How did you deal with the war and your experience with the children? Did you believe that they should know something about your experiences and how they would be affected if they knew more about your experiences?

**DORA:** Yes. Yes. I thought that they have to know, but now knowing anything how to deal with it, we ourselves made a resolution that we're not going to tell them too much. We thought the children are growing up, you know, television and this and that, and we are not going to put over them a burden like this. So as they were growing up, and when we were still in Brooklyn, when we lived in Brooklyn, my son said that, he said: "Mom, can we go and visit our grandmother?" I said: "We don't have a grandmother." So he said: "Are we gonna ever have one?"

So, you know, you have to explain why you don't have a grandmother and what happened. So you just say, you know: "You don't have a grandmother. You don't have a grandfather. And there was a war and some bad people killed them." As much as they can understand and not to bring on them any, you know, fear or anything like it. Maybe sometimes, you know, you say a word too much, but as a rule, we did not sit down and tell them the whole story about it. When they got a little bit older, especially Elaine, she started reading books and she knew more of what was happening. And little by little, they did not-they did not ask us. They felt like if they ask us, maybe it is too much for us to talk about it, or maybe, you know, it puts us in a bad mood.

So we were like one big family that-with all the other, you know, newcomers, and we used to take our children together. We used to go out for the summer and stay, you know, near Atlantic City for the summer. It was always us together with the children. It's like, you know, you made it-you made sure that you go out with friends and there should be friends for the children too, and when it came and when we had now the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation, and Elaine was the speaker there, she made sure that she had told the whole story. I mean now she's very-she is-she does a lot of things. She's going away soon to Israel, and she had really had a speech where the mayor himself, he was just standing and looking at her. And we had all the kids. We had maybe fifteen or sixteen hundred people. It was just amazing. And this is what she said. She said that these were her cousins for all the years and all the people that she sees here she knows them

because she's been constantly with us together. Like I schlepped them to New York to all "yizkors." Like they belonged there. And I don't know if they liked it or not, but I didn't ask them.

**INT:** Maybe they didn't always understand.

**DORA:** I don't think they understood in the beginning what it is, but I did not have where to leave them. I thought they have to go with us. Or, you know, like Bar Mitzvahs or Bat Mitzvahs, when it started, they were invited. Later on they got a little bit...they said: "Oh, what am I going to do there?" You know, the Bar Mitzvahs are not the same like today. It was a Bar Mitzvah. Okay, you want to go, you come; you don't want to come, you stay home. They always came along. But I think that we did not tell them more than they could take at a certain age, which was, I think, the right thing to do, because I have read once a book -- not once, many times -- where a father and a mother had told the children so much about it, that they were two girls, and they like-they couldn't exist in the world anymore. They-they-they felt like everything they-they did or said was something wrong, because their parents expected so much of them more. And this girl once left her home and she went out and she acted like a Gentile girl.

She wanted to see what's going on in the world, if there is really something that her parents are telling them, you know, that all Gentiles are anti-Semites. It's not true. They're not. There are nice people. They-there are some very good people. And some are not. But this is how the world is made. And she said that she-she went out. She was a month away from home, to mingle with people and to see how people react, how people live, so she wanted to find out on her own what's going on in the world. And I thought they overdid it on her, and you cannot undo it later on, unless, you know, the kid has a lot of stamina and a lot of-to do it herself. So what we did, I think, was the right thing. It-it came out later on that it was the right thing. You cannot overburden them, but you have to tell them the truth, but only at that time what they understand, not more than they understand at the age. And this is what we did. It was a funny thing. My husband always told them that he walked to school three miles. It was true, you know. You walked or you hung on not to a truck, but a wagon. So my son, my son said in a very nice Father's Day card. I must bring it to you to show it to you. He told him how he walked in snow. This is exactly what he is doing. (Shows card to interviewer)

**INT:** Oh, that's wonderful.

**DORA:** (laughter) I don't know where he took it. They made a-the actual three feet of snow that walked him to school. I thought it was so cute, although I don't like-I don't like cards like this. I don't go for that, but I like more-

**INT:** So you could imagine Bernie saying, and what I had to go through to get to school?

**DORA:** Right. Right. And he-he walked far and always in snow, I mean, this is what you expected. You did not ride any buses. You didn't have any cars and you walked, that's all.

**INT:** So on some level to have children learn to not-to not talk about their feelings or disappointments.

**DORA:** Which? My children? I mean children of the survivors? I think and I think I think right, that they knew that we went through bad times and they wanted, in a way, you know, to save the parents and bring them good news. Do good in school. Do good in school. Behave themselves. And this is what most of the kids did because as we look through, you know, and this is fifty years -- our kids are forty-seven, forty-eight, forty-six -- they all, the majority of them were good in school. Of course there are some not. They accomplished well. They are in good positions. They are well-to-do children. I don't mean well-to-do in a [financial sense], but they became good citizens, appreciative of things and etc., etc. Okay, they have their faults; there is no question about it.

**INT:** So you seem to make a relationship to account for children of survivors' ability to adjust and adapt well to how they were parented.

**DORA:** I think so. I think so. I think so. The children are raised a certain, different way. Different way. Although I find a lot-a lot of children of, you know, not survivors, that are raised the same way, but I think our children are achievers because-because of us. Not that we pushed them so much, but it was their way of showing to us their gratitude of being-of doing well, and I think in the fifty years it proved, you know, that they were doing good. They are good children and-

**INT:** Are there cases of other survivors that had problems with their children?

**DORA:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah. There were.

**INT:** How do you make sense of maybe not doing well in their education, career.

**DORA:** Well, a lot of children run into problems, you know, with drugs and things like this. We have cases like this too, where children that went away, that did not finish school, that, you know, left college, left high school and didn't do good. But this is what it is. This is the time, the home is only a beginning. Then starts school. Once they go away to school, it's like they are soaked into something entirely different. At school they find friends, they find people, and it's up to the friends a lot. It's up to the friends and times were not good. And now it's worse yet. I mean, whatever it is now, it was much worse then. It's much worse now than what it was then, you know, with the drugs and everything. So it is hard to raise children, but as a rule, our children, I can say, I would say ninety percent, maybe eighty-five percent were good.

**INT:** Do you think it would make a difference what survivors transmitted to their children? Is there any relationship in terms of what was communicated and values and what was important in rebuilding your life versus other feelings?

**DORA:** I think of...they knew that we are like the beginning of a generation. Later on, when they grew up, they all knew our past. We told them about their grandparents, we told them about their aunts and uncles and how they died. They were learning. They were reading books about it. That was where they learned. They were reading in school Anne Frank's story, and then the ones that were more interested read other things and they were really the first generation of children that grew out of us, so they-they had heard of our stories back home, and it was a different world. It was-it was a world of learning and goodness and...in the families, I mean in the family, as



[unclear] for parents, for grandparents, all those things that we don't have now anymore. And this, I think, that it starts at home. It's a very big plus in a family.

**INT:** How do you think your children view you and look at your war experiences? What do you want them to know?

**DORA:** What I want them to say about us? Yeah. I hope they are satisfied with their life. They know that we have tried our best under the circumstances. We really did. It was for us a very limited time in the beginning, with the language and everything. It was hard when you don't know the language. You suffer yourself a lot, yet you don't want to bring it on the children too, so you like stand on both sides of the fence. You know, you want to-you want to pretend that you know. Not pretend, but you want to know better and you want to show them you know. As a rule that there is a lot...if you don't know the language good, it's like-it's a shame. It's like if you speak with an accent, later on it became like very, you know, to talk with an accent was, "where are you from? Your accent is Russian. Your accent is Polish." It became like a great thing. But the accent never goes away. It's always there, but you know, the young ones, like I mean the young ones -- the youngest that survived -- they caught on the best to the language. You do it in the first five years before. Later on, you know, you do better, but you try. You go to school.

My husband went to school. He finished high school but I didn't-I didn't have the time. I was home with the children. I read a lot and I was listening to the television and I am very good myself in languages. I love it, and that's what I think...I read a lot, I write a lot and I think they were proud of us. My daughter said it. In her speech she said she marvels at the-at the strength that we had displayed showing that, you know, coming from a world of such darkness and being able to catch on again and, you know, hold on to life and to bring life into the world. She said she doesn't know if they would be able to do the same thing. I think that American children, and they should never, G-d Almighty, they should never have to go through anything like this, but because you come from a place where there was no war on the grounds here in America -- there should never be any war -- you presume that this is G-d's doing and that it's always going to be like this. I hope it is. So did we think like this. We always thought, I mean, why-why there would be war? What war? But it comes.

**INT:** What has been some of your philosophies or approaches of child rearing, discipline, work, having fun as you look back on how you raised your children?

**DORA:** Well, we told them about the way we were raised [at] home. First they laugh and then they make fun of it. You know, for instance, in school we wore uniforms, and I think it was so much better, because at a certain time I remember my daughter went to high school, it was Butchie's [Gucci's ?] bag and Vicki's too and blouse and this and that and "shmattas." You know, children are children and they want to look like everybody else, and I simply said: "We wore uniforms. It was marvelous." (End of tape 3, side 2) And they'd come out from school, you know, I look at them and I'd think they are dressed. Not in school. I hate it. They wear all colors. They-they...everything is below the belly button. I mean this is no way of doing business in a school. When you are dressed differently, you prepare yourself differently.

And our schools were very strict. I mean, our schools, you had to come prepared for a lesson. You just didn't walk in with your books and if you didn't know your lesson the same class for seven years. And-and then when we saw a teacher, on the way to school or from school, the boys used to take off their hats; we used to bow. This they rolled on the floor when I told them. They thought it was something like old England or whatever. I said: "No. I think it was a lot of respect and that you bowed." And they rolled on the floor when I told this to them.

**INT:** What do you think some of your attitudes were about having fun, vacations, relaxing? Were these things that you did that came easily or was it hard for both you and your husband to spend time together?

**DORA:** No, no. We went on vacations together. Yeah. We went on vacations together. Not when they were older already. They did it on their own. But while they were under my jurisdiction, we went. We usually...I stayed with the children in a bungalow or it was in the mountains or here on Neshaminy, you know, where we have those big department stores. That wasn't there. It was all orchards and fields and people had their little bungalows. We used to come together with a little stream of water. The children played together. They made up a show. By the end of the season they had a show for the parents and it was very nice. Up to this day, they still-right away they run to each other when we meet, you know, and they still talk about it and they take pictures together. I think it's left with them, a lot of this. And as far as I can see, our children are okay. I can think of only ten or fifteen percent of the children that they didn't do good, which was not the parents' fault. They didn't do good because, you know, there is all kinds of different children and when you get attached to a...the crowd is very important. Your friends and this is very important. But that was the same way back home too, you know. If you had good friends that were family oriented and everything, this is what you got.

**INT:** How do you think you handled making decisions about your children, with your husband, with your children? How did you react to their problems?

**DORA:** Well, maybe we took it a little bit more into our own hands, you know, because this is the way we saw things done home. We tried to let go a little, as you see it's going on here, but still, this was something that belonged to us and it's very hard to part with it, you know.

**INT:** Meaning the children?

**DORA:** The children, yes. The children. And you don't have any other family and that came through their growing up so many times, you know, the questions and the explanations where they are and why and if a young child says: "Will we ever have a grandmother?" You know, it breaks your heart when you'd say: "This one went and this one went, and we have nowhere to go. We don't-don't we ever have anyplace to go." My son used to ask this all the time: "Don't we have anyplace to go? This one went to an aunt and this one went to his grandparents. Don't we have anything like this?" He used to say: "Anything like this?" I said: "No we don't."

**INT:** So it may have felt not as normal as other families?

**DORA:** Yes. That's right. It's-you had to be everything, so you explained to them and, you know, it wasn't just explaining and you're satisfied with it. You still want to have it, but as they

grew older they understood more and they had to be satisfied with what they had. And in many families in our...I saw the same. Like for instance my friends, our best friends, the father of my best friend, he survived, and he brought them from Lodz to America and my children took him for a grandfather. It was like, you know, this was our grandfather, and that's how they treated him and this is the way he was. When he died, we lived here maybe for-I would say for maybe fifteen or eighteen years, but that was "Zayde." And my Elaine wrote a beautiful thing about Zayde, you know, thanking them for letting them share Zayde with her and her brother, and being there, you know, and telling stories. Like when Zayde started watching television, the beginning, you know, but then when he saw, like a bare body or some-you know -- he was still a man -- so Elaine was standing there, he said: "Gay avek, maidele, gay avek." [Go away, young girl, go away.] He used to say in Yiddish: "Gay avek, maidele."

So she looked and there was, you know, and she said: "Look at this. Zayde also wants to see things on television." And it was funny to them. They always told the story. And then, of course, they used to get together and tell stories about us and each other and the parents and laugh and this and that. That maybe we were overprotective of them. We did not feel it at that time that we were overprotective. We probably were. We probably were, but-

**INT:** Do you hear that from your children?

**DORA:** Yeah. They'd say: "Well, why can Marian do it? Yeah, why does Marian?" I say: "I don't care what Marian parents think. I care what I think. And you have to obey our [rules.] But we weren't... maybe because they were good children. We weren't strict. We were strict in ways but I did not have to fight with them a lot because they were really...that's what I can tell about my family already; that they were good children. I didn't have no problems with them in school. I did not have any problems. You know, Elaine displayed a lot of knowledge right away. She was a good child and she performed good in school and, you know, she came into the store. She worked in the store a little bit.

My son worked in the store. I mean, they knew that they have to give something, and then my son said... he was then already in college. He was in Muhlenberg, and he had to come Saturday and Sunday and work. Saturday. Friday night and Saturday to work in the store. So I used to give him, you know, I used to wash his clothes. Make it all ready for him. I used to fill up his car and give him money, and then he decided that he doesn't want to come anymore, so my husband said: "Okay. So I'll just pay for your tuition and for your room, and all the other things, the luxuries that you want to have, you have to do it on your own."

And he went to work in a factory there. So I don't know. A factory that he had to carry on his shoulders, like I think it was a factory of rugs. And he's very tall and thin so, you know, after a night-and it was at night-after a night, it rubbed off his shoulders and he came, he couldn't fall asleep. He didn't have time when to study, so he called me in the middle of the week and he says: "Mom, I have to talk to you. You think Daddy's gonna take me back?" I said: "Well why would you want to come? He said: "I can't work there. It's too hard. My shoulders are rubbed off and..." I said: "You know what? I'm gonna ask Daddy and then you talk to him, 'cause he's in the store." We were always in the store.

So I told my husband this story and he went over to the phone and he talked to him and he said: "All right, you want to come back? I'll take you back, but I just wanted you to see..." Two weeks like passed by. He worked a whole week. He made probably twenty dollars and his shoulders were all rubbed off. It was bleeding. But we took him back. You know, I said: "Don't holler. It will make him..." I'm always the one, the peacemaker. We also taught him that you have to be responsible for yourself. One time he and a boy went, they were maybe eight or ten years old, and a drugstore opened up on the corner here, and they went and they stole. Probably that's what you say, they stole, pencils and I think crayons. And Elaine said that's she going to tell us and he was hiding every time when we came from work, he was already in bed sleeping.

I said: "What's going on here?" And then, you know, we found out. Then he got together all the crayons and the pencils, and my husband took my son and he says: "You're going to go in and you're going to explain that you took them, and you're going to apologize, and we're going to pay for it." He says: "No, I'll do anything but just don't make me do that." My husband said: "That's what you're gonna do exactly." And there was the boy on this street, at least, and he did it with him. So he had to go too. I think this was the worst thing that we did to him. He said, he's gonna do anything, anything, but not to go there. He said: "That's what you're gonna do because you have to do it. You stole them. It happened, but you have to apologize to the people in the store," and he did. I don't think that he ever, ever took anything else. So, you know, things like that happen. I mean that were not made out of gold. They had their-their things, but as a rule they were not bad children. They were, I think because of us, they did not-they wanted to bring us joy. They wanted to bring that we should be happy.

**INT:** What did it mean that you described yourself as a peacemaker between your husband and your kids when there were conflicts or anger or disagreements? What role did you play?

**DORA:** Well, I felt...my husband's a little hot-headed. I am the one that is quieter, so working with a husband with a husband in a store together and-and especially with women, he's not an easy person. Especially with Jewish women, it's a little harder yet. So I was always the one that made peace. I said; "Look, this is how it has to be." So now, you know, when I come to the beauty parlor or where they see...they say, because of you we always came in. You know, because they used to bring me pictures of their children and grandchildren and I had to look. I had to read for them letters that they got from Russia and from Poland and from Israel I read letters for them. I wrote letters back. They were just-they were just in love with me because I did it.

**INT:** You had a real good ability with languages and writing.

**DORA:** With languages, yeah. I love languages. I love languages. So I always...in a store, you know, there's a lot of conflict. People are used to going to big department stores, keeping it a week, a month, bringing it back, schlep here, but in a small store you cannot allow yourself things like this, you know. It's small and you just make a living. So a woman calls and she says she bought a pair of shoes and they are small on her. She wants to exchange them. Okay, so come back. But she said it's already a month. She was sick, but when she mentioned the name of

the shoe, we carried that shoe in many styles because it was a shoe that was made for older people. This is what we carried, you know, for older people, for special things like this.

So I said to her: "Come back and we'll exchange for you for the size." She comes back. We look at the sole of the shoe. It's clean. Inside, the shoe is worn out, you know, where we have the number on the side of the shoe and the size. It's worn out. It's like-they say, "outzghiftzed." "You know, like it's...and we can't figure out what she did. So I say to her: "What is it? The shoe, the sole is clean, everything is clean, but inside it's like you wore it." She says: "Yes, I wore it. I put on my husband's sock over it." I said: "For Heaven's sake, there is wearing and *wearing*. You can put on a shoe and try it out, but you wore it a month in the house." She says: "Yeah." I said: "I cannot take it back."

So, you know, my husband used to get hot under his collar, but then, you know, he figured like this. You can't return a-a...it wouldn't come easy but you know how it is. You want to keep a customer so you try. So you'll return it, you'll keep her and that's it. So this is what had to be done. So I had to be the one. I was like the peacemaker. The same thing went in the house too with the children. You know, it's like if he came and I told him something about...so he right away says, Elaine used to say, "pshestang." "Pshestang" means stop it. Don't, Daddy. Pshestang. Pshestang. She spoke Polish. But this is how men are. They are more-I think every woman is a little bit of a peacemaker in the house and in the...and when you're in business you have to be all of this. It's hard. Were your parents in business?

**INT:** No. How did you balance your needs and the needs of your children and family and then with the business? When it came to taking care of yourself, was that hard to do? Did you sacrifice at times your needs?

**DORA:** Yeah. Yeah. I-see. My whole life, I'm not a good taking care on myself. I don't take care of myself. That's my problem. I go to the doctor when the sickness is over already, that she shouldn't-I used to have a woman doctor, so she used to say: "Well, what is [wrong?]" I said: "Well, last week I was really sick." She said: "Why didn't you come last week?" I said: "I didn't want you to know that I'm sick." So this is the way I am. I am not a "kvetcher" [complainer]. I know now, for instance, that we are older, that we are all full of arthritis. We have problems with our heart and this, but you cannot kvetch all day. You have to get up and thank G-d that are up and go on with the day and do the best that you can. That's all. This is life. That's all. You can't change it. And eventually now it's a hard time for us. It's a very hard time because not financially but a hard time that we are losing a lot of our friends now and this kind of gets us, the fear sets in and that's it.

**INT:** Do you experience any regrets or disappointments about what you could have done with your life had the war not happened, goals or hopes not realized?

**DORA:** Well, I'll tell you. I was so young that I did not have any ideas yet what my life was going to be there. I mean everything that would have been would have been provided by my parents, because I told you we'd been very well-to-do a family and our children were very well taken care. We went, we learned, we had a Hebrew teacher, we had a Yiddish teacher. Education was a prime thing in our family. It was something that, you know, you had to come home, you

did your homework, then came the teacher, the Hebrew teacher, then came the Yiddish teacher. You didn't want to, you cried, you run away. Like every-like everybody's doing. It is the same thing. But then you came, you sat down and you did it. And my mother always said, they can take everything away from you, but what you have in your head, always will remain with you. So really we were well taken care, but I've never thought beyond that. I mean, you don't think nothing when you're sixteen or fifteen or seventeen. You don't make any plans. You don't know what to do. And then came the war and it cut everything-it made plans for you already. You didn't make any plans.

**INT:** Do you think you had choices to go back to school or work, other than in family business?

**DORA:** No. No. There were no choices anymore. I had no trade, I had no-there were not-come here [meaning unclear.] You had to know the language right away. What could you do? The only thing you could do is make clean houses. And I came right away and I had a baby. So here I am. We had to do the best. I was satisfied whatever my husband made. In fact, when he told you that's he's going to ask for a raise I said: "Don't, they're gonna fire you." "I'm okay. I'm doing fine." And when he asked his boss, his boss said: "Well, you know, you don't speak English good." So he says: "Well you're not paying me for my speaking English. You're paying me for what I'm doing, and what I'm doing, I know how to do it."

So he gave him a raise and he worked there, and he worked for seven years in an orthopedic place. And then we bought the store here in Philadelphia and we came and we did the best we could. The first few years were very bad, you know. We spent all our money what we saved up, a couple of thousand dollars. We also borrowed some money from friends, and we had to put together. The children were uprooted, which is hard too, you know. They didn't like it here, especially my son. And my daughter too. She went to first grade. You know, it was a time when I had spent all my time with them and suddenly, here I am. I'm...but they got used to it. I registered her in first grade. She was six and my son was three and a half. And he wouldn't go to school for no money in the world. We registered him to a, I think it was then the-I don't remember. It wasn't-

**INT:** A pre-school? A nursery?

**DORA:** Something like this. He would not do a thing. He would cry. When everybody laid down he was standing up and when they were standing up he was laying down. Very stubborn, like his father. And then I said: "What's the use? We are home." We had an apartment above the store which was a great house for us. So I figured, what am I going to punish him? He's three and a half years old. He cries. He wants to be home and he's going to go to school where Aya goes. Elaine, he couldn't say Elaine, so he called her Aya. Then he's going to go to school. So we kept him home and he stayed with us in the store a little bit and then across the street was like a little Toddle House, and he loved to eat there.

He was such a bad eater. Every mother would tell you: "Oh, my children, they don't eat." But we had a doctor on the corner and he said: "You give him whatever he wants." I said: "He wants one thing. He eats two things. He eats a hamburger and he eats a hot dog. So give it to him." He said: "How many times a day? Three? Four? Whatever he wants." And, you know, he was right. I

could not make him eat anything, and he was thin and skinny and across the street in the Toddle House, he loved their hamburgers and their hash brown potatoes, and the woman that worked there -- there were two or three, but the older one, she was an old woman -- she gave him a full platter of hash brown potatoes and a hamburger, a lot of pickles with a lot of ketchup on it. (Dora asks someone to pick up the phone) And he loved it. They used to sit there maybe for an hour. That was a relief. And when he learned to eat is when he went to college. He saw everybody eating bread, so he ate bread.

**INT:** How did you deal with your children's adolescence, their independence or dating? Did that change for you as they grew up or grew older?

**DORA:** Yes. My son was ready to get married at eleven (?). He had so many girlfriends that he said he needs a car. I said: "What are you going to do with a car?" He said, he has so many girlfriends. So my husband said to him: "Take the bus. How many girlfriends do you have at one time? Six? Seven? Put them on the bus. That will go with them." And he needed a car. My daughter was-she had to be on time. This is what my only regret, that I was so afraid of that.

**INT:** You were afraid for them?

**DORA:** For them. For them. My head used to spin. I used to see all kinds of different things. Even now, they learned already, they don't tell me when they are flying; they don't tell me when they are going. They come when they come. I would imagine all kinds of different things. So I remember when she went to her first birthday, from the one that you go to the prom. Then she was going out with him, and he was a nice kid from the neighborhood, not far. I'm running to the window looking if she's there. And that was the same stuff all over. And it was after twelve o'clock. My husband was sleeping already. He didn't know if I'm there or not. And she was not home. And I was already thinking all kinds of things. And then suddenly at five of one or five after one she came.

So she was going up the porch, I couldn't control myself and just opened the door and I smacked her in front of the boy. Well, I couldn't live this down for a very, very [long time]. I said: "Why didn't you call? Here's a dime or a nickel." "Mom, I'm not a baby," and this and that. "But all right; but you know how I am, how I feel about it and everything." "We were in the movies, there was not a phone." I said: "There is always something around that you can call. If you know the way I feel you should call." Okay, so it wasn't too bad. When they graduated they went away; they rented a mini-bus, five or six girls, and they went to a trip across the United States. A "meshugas" [crazy thing].

At that time I didn't know how-how it is, but I saw that other girls are going too, I did the same thing. I let her go. When she came, she didn't tell me all the things that happened on the way. She told me-she told me between three, four, five years later. They were in a storm, at a hurricane, in the eye of the storm where they thought they're all going to go away because that park what they were parking the car, the mini-bus and that they were eating, that's where the eye of the storm went by, and everybody was on their knees praying. But it went and changed

directions at that minute and went away from the whatever, that or whatever. I mean a lot of things that happened.

Well, I guess, this is what has to happen, but when you tell it right away it's very scary. Later on you don't take it already to that extreme, but maybe it happened again. Maybe again something. And, you know, you live through the same thing like every mother, you know. You worry about your children, but you cannot keep them chained to your chair, so you let them-so you let them do and then Elaine went to college and she went to Temple because we wouldn't let her go away. I told you this. I thought it's a shame to live out and whatever. So she made Temple in three years and she got a fellowship to go to University of Pennsylvania. And she made it in two years.

**INT:** Were you as protective as your son, or is it in different ways girls are treated-

**DORA:** I think I was more protective of Elaine. Yeah. I was more protective of Elaine. I don't know why, but somehow I felt that the boys can take care of himself better, so I was more protective of her. And she felt it and she knew it. Up to this day, you know, it's like I am more secure with him, and now that she's doing all the things, you know, that she's driving so much and she's flying so much, I'm not very happy with it at all. We were Sunday together for, you know, for Father's Day, and then they came Monday, you know, they had such a cute thing. They bought us a telephone for the car, so the telephone...I thought a telephone's a telephone. You pick it up and you...but everything is so complicated. "Oy vey is meir!" You charge it, and you-you push and you here and you that. We had to write down what to do first. I said: "Who the hell needs it?" I'm very against all these things, you know. I think the world is going a little too fast. That's what I-I think the computerized world is too fast and it's happening, so many things are happening too fast, that, you know, you don't have time to warm up to something and then it's already... that cybernet with all that kind of junk. I-I'm afraid of these things. I am really, actually afraid.

So we were talking a lot about computers and Josh was explaining to me. I said: "Would it be possible to take away the computer? Now what would happen, for instance, if you take away the computer now?" He said: "That can never happen. It's like you cannot take away the car now. Can you take away the car? What would you do, walk?" So we actually spent an hour talking about it, and he is very good with the computer so he was explaining, you know, that without the...the computer is a machine actually. You have to do the things for the machine. So I said: "Well why do they buy so much software and, you know, it cost so much money and everything?" He says: "You don't really have to, but people are like children, you know. It's like who has the better one, who has the nicer one? It's like a car. It's like a home. It's like everything else. But you cannot take it away anymore." I feel bad for the people that call out (?) at fifty-five, fifty-seven. You know, they're too old to start a new life with the new things, and too old to learn and you cannot find a job anymore. The mergers and everything. I feel bad about it. He says: "There are always-there are more jobs." That's what he explained to me, there is more jobs being done, are coming out of this computer thing, than before. I don't think myself that this is the true story, but that's what he says it is. You cannot take away the computer anymore. It's impossible. You must go with the speed of the storm.



**INT:** The new generation raised on computers.

**DORA:** Right, if a child is born now. Right? They probably look at us and say: "Look at this. How could they get along without it? I-I can get along without it."

**INT:** What do you see as successes of your life and how you achieved them?

**DORA:** Well, I wouldn't say the successes. I think I went about life very seriously. I have made up my mind if I survive -- which I didn't want to. I did not want to survive. I felt it's too much for me. I cannot be by myself. I don't know how to start life. I don't know how to go on. But once I survived and I got married, I took it all very serious. We worked. I raised a family. We were good parents. We gave of ourselves as much as we could, and maybe if we would have not been in business, maybe it would be more, but maybe it was just enough as much as we did. Maybe it's not good to be too much together. The kids have to learn on their own a lot of things. And the successes? I don't think it's successes. I think it's just normal life, and that's all. You just have to see and watch the children. When you are in a business you have to watch and do the best that you can.

**INT:** You're very proud of your children.

**DORA:** I'm very proud of my children.

**INT:** This has to do with you?

**DORA:** Yes. I'm proud of my children, but I don't say that I am behind this all, that I did it. No. They did it on their own. We helped and we told them stories the way we grew up, the truth, and which were stories, you know, nice things in families. We value very much, you know, family life. I think it's very important. We go to synagogue. I don't want nobody to become so that...but I think, you know, as they say: "If you pray together, you stay together." I think, you know, nothing bad comes out of it. It comes out if anything some good, you know. Synagogue doesn't teach you any bad things. It gives you a lot of life. You meet friends, nice friends and etc., etc. It's-it's good.

**INT:** So it sounds like you see an important role of faith and Jewish tradition in the family.

**DORA:** Yes, yes, yes. Yes.

**INT:** And in your own family, this played a role.

**DORA:** (end of tape 4, side 1-brief problem again with tape) [Referring to when daughter wanted to marry a non-Jew.] When she told us about it we were devastated. Absolutely devastated. And we tried to talk her out of it. We tried different ways, and then we went to our Rabbi. And we made an appointment. We spoke to him and told him the story so he said he wants to talk to her and to him and I don't know. I don't even remember if they went to speak. I said: "Rabbi, there is no use. I can tell that she is not going to be talked out of it or whatever."

And then a friend of hers who she's close with them very much -- that's my friend's son -- and I said: "Benny, what do you say?" He says: "You know, he's a very nice guy. Meet him." I said: "I just don't know what to say. We can't." And he says: "Meet him and you'll see." Well, it went by, I think, a couple of months or more, and I said: "I'm not against the guy. I mean, I have nothing against him." But I felt that she shouldn't have done this to us. But, you know, it happened.

**INT:** The choice she made-she didn't see it as doing something to you.

**DORA:** No. She was-I don't think she was...she met this guy who was very understanding, who's a very nice fellow, who is family-orientated, who has a lot of respect for us. At that time they were going to synagogue. He loved the synagogue. That's the only thing that I really-that when they moved away they belonged to another synagogue, which was now sold to a...and they joined our synagogue back, and I really wanted them to be more synagogue [involved], you know, to go more to synagogue. I don't mean every day or etc., but the holidays they come, but, you know, it's or you go or it like evaporates.

**INT:** That's what you worried about.

**DORA:** If I feel if he knows so much, he knew so much of Judaism. He knows. He still does. And that if she would have gone to the synagogue, you know, on a daily basis like maybe Friday, Saturday, they don't have the time. It's true. They don't have the time. But I think if you want very much you would find the time. And this is one thing where I am really hurting. I wanted Josh to be more in the synagogue, I, you know, something like this. He is right now between things. He's Jewish but he's not. I mean he's both things.

**INT:** It doesn't mean the same to Elaine, her husband and grandson as religion does to you?

**DORA:** They give him a lot of freedom, you know, to make up his mind, to choose his professions, to go to school. He now's taking...the University of Pennsylvania. He's very bright, but a lot of things that I would probably do different if he would be my son. Before I couldn't do much, but being born here and etc., etc., I would probably do a lot of things different. But they give him a lot of freedom, and he stayed this summer-he's staying in a rooming house where he's gonna live. He works, and he likes it very much. The reason is that he has all his friends there and he's working in the library and he's trying to get a job in a book store, which they promised him, and he seems very happy.

So I guess... look, the main thing is that he should be happy about it. They trust him. He's getting along fine. He's a very good-hearted boy. He's like his father. Very, very good boy. Knowledge he has galore. Like he explained to me about these computers, you know, we spent so much time talking about it and he explained to me about the computers and everything. He writes beautiful poems. He writes everything. He wants to be a poet but I don't know, it's not a thing that brings in a lot of money or whatever. I don't want to mix in in this. I think he can do a lot of other things, but here you got to like-love what you do, right? So this is what he's gonna do. He's gonna love it.

**INT:** What's the difference in attitude instead of making a living and supporting a family, ideally liking what you do and enjoying it.

**DORA:** Yes. We did not have that freedom to do those things. We had to make a living right away, so you didn't have to love what you're doing. You had to like it a little bit, not even a little bit. You had to make a living. You had to bring a few dollars by the end of the week, because - that was the only source of living, and of course, when you are born here, you choose a profession and you have to like it. And that's the difference.

**INT:** In terms of confronting the Holocaust, you said that you read quite a bit. What do you think of all the material about the Holocaust now, such as films such as Schindler's List. What do you want your children, grandchildren, other Jews and Gentiles in the world to know about what happened?

**DORA:** Everything. I want them to know everything! When they are going now away to Poland and to Israel, I think it's the thing to do. I think I told you. I don't know if I told you last time. There were three people in our synagogue that went and I thought it was fabulous. Those children came back with so much knowledge, with so much sensitivity, and they told and I just could not keep myself. When they finished I went up and I said: "I am just so thankful that you are interested in it and that you went." When the first boy stood up -- and the boy was bar mitzvah in our school. His parents come to our shul and his grandfather, his grandmother -- he told the whole story. I thought, what are the other two going to do? I mean, he told everything by heart, beautiful. What he felt, what he went through, what he saw, what he thinks.

Then the other one came up, and this is the kid that he said that Joshua, that our Joshua, you know, encouraged him to go and that they had the poem that they read about it, the Stones of Treblinka, and he told a story where they found a bone, a human bone, and they buried it, and he made a poem. It was just-it was just amazing. Amazing. And then when the girl stood up, and she is in Washington High School, and she is working on a -- she's going to put something in the paper about what -- she told her feelings that she had, because somebody that went with them is a friend of mine that explained them, that saw all the writings on the fences and everything about the Jews.

It was nothing good. It was the same as it was probably before or worse. And she said how she felt about it, how that anti-Semitism was right in their eyes. When they walked from Auschwitz to Birkenau-you were never there, okay. When they walked, they all wore the same jacket. They were holding candles in their hands and flags and it was like a silent-like a...moving, like a silent thing and, you know, people were standing. Gentile people were standing because there is constantly houses, houses and fields, and like it didn't make anything on them, you know. "Like how could they not know," she says, "when they live near Auschwitz, across the street from Auschwitz, how could they not know what they are doing there?"

They-they came with such stories, so sensitive and so true, that I am very-I am, you know, whatever money... Our organization just gave five hundred dollars; Elaine picked it up -- in fact, to all but covers the money that are being given to children to help them out to go on this trip, because it's expensive, so they help out as much as they can. So instead of buying or giving

now...we used to give it as, you know, when children graduated and we give a scholarship fund or somebody that passed away very, very long ago. But now there is no children already that need this, so we give the money, like five hundred or a thousand dollars, whatever we have, we give it towards this. I think it's very good, important, that the children should go and see it and bring their own visions of it. Very important. As far as all the shows on television, everything, they can never bring the real truth what it was there, but there is more and more, you know, you see survivors talking and it's important. It's very, very important. I don't think that everybody's anti-Semitic. I think that a lot of people want to know what's going on, and they are trying to know what's going on. Of course we cannot change the world. We can only show them what it was, and see that it shouldn't happen again. That's what it is.

**INT:** What does it mean for you to talk to groups, going to synagogues, doing presentations?

**DORA:** I don't do it now. I can't. I did it. I did it for a long time, but I cannot do it anymore. I get very upset and I get over-excited and I feel that I'm not doing the right job that I have to do, so I abstain from it now. The only thing when I speak is maybe in our synagogue on Yomtov, you know, on Yom Kippur. But I don't go to shuls, to schools, anymore and like some of my friends are doing, and I can't do it anymore. That's why I said I don't know if I'm going to do this thing with you, but my husband said do it. "You'll see. She is so nice. She is so sweet. Do it." So I figured, this is not for the same thing. This is for something else. So I said, all right. I'm going to give you my time, so you did already with Elaine?

**INT:** Yes. Elaine and Jim.

**DORA:** So what do you need now, Josh?

**INT:** And I need to get to Josh, but he's hard to get to.

**DORA:** Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay. He does have now a little bit of time because he's waiting for the other job if it's gonna open up.

**INT:** So maybe I can reach him.

**DORA:** Maybe you can contact him sometimes and talk to him. (Phone rings)

**INT:** How does the Holocaust affect your political views? How you vote? How you see the wars, the difficulties in Europe, Bosnia, Israel?

**DORA:** I'm very much afraid of wars. As Americans would say: "Everything is gonna be all right." I hope. But I feel what can happen, because I was also a protected child, a happy child and a good home as a child. We went and we came and we had vacations. We had everything, and suddenly it happened and this is this, and you cannot bring it back anymore, so I-I think that you have to negotiate. You have to make the best not to-because another piece of land, another this, it's not important. It's really not important what you have. But I don't know how we can satisfy the whole world, to bring that message that war doesn't do nothing. It doesn't do anything. I don't know how we're going to ever bring that message.

**INT:** You think it could happen again?

**DORA:** I'm afraid. I'm afraid. And I'm very afraid. I hope there are people that are working on this, and that they know that it can happen. There is a lot of anti-Semitism all over the world. It's like, you know, with the burning now of the churches. What is it? You know, sometimes I don't know what to say anymore. It's like the beginning of something. All right, one church, two. But this is like every day they're burning another church. Why? I mean I respect everybody's religion and everybody's upbringing. As long as he is a good person, I don't care what people listen to. I believe in what I think is right. They don't teach me to be anti-Semitic. They don't teach me to be bad.

So I think the same one can-you belong somewhere else, you find somewhere. As long as you're a good neighbor, a good person, I don't mind. That's all. I don't care what they believe in and I don't think that they care what I believe. If I come from synagogue, my neighbor-she's happy, you know, she's so happy that we're going to synagogue. Her son is a priest, and he is in Maryland somewhere, and when it was the Vietnam War, my son was a conscientious objector, and he was also an only son that could carry the name, so he was like...but he wrote him a beautiful letter as a priest, why he shouldn't be drafted into the war. And he knows a lot about, you know...he was in Israel. He speaks a little Hebrew. He's just a very good person, and you can be a good person. You can be friends and everything. It's just a matter of way of behaving and learning. That's all. That's all that it matters. You can be a good person, and there is so much to do in the world. There is so many hungry people. There is so much sicknesses that you can help out in every endeavor, so I don't know why we hate each other. Why do we hate each other? Why is it? I don't know. I hope there is a good world for our children.

**INT:** I'd like to spend some time summarizing and looking back in your life. What have been some of the happiest moments since the war as well as the most difficult moments?

**DORA:** Well, again, it brings back the memories. It's-my children have been my most exciting and happy things. You know, I-I figure, not saying already that I'm replenishing the Jewish population, you know, this too, that he did not succeed to kill us all out. They have brought me a lot of "nachas" [joy] and the grandchildren, and thank G-d we work very hard. I always say to my daughter: "We never stole. We didn't kill nobody. We worked, because this is what I remember back home. We worked. We worked." We were a-we did one week better, one week-but that's what the world is all about. And I wish that some American people would feel the same way, you know, and see how it is in the other countries. It's just a wild world outside, a dangerous world outside, and I want it to be good. Not for us, already, for the children. I want the children to have a peaceful world, a safe world. Do you think about all this, that it's a-I mean you as a young parent of two children, do you think that the world is a dangerous place or- ?

**INT:** I certainly worry about my children's safety and welfare.

**DORA:** Yeah. But, I mean, you were born in America. As an American, you think that something can happen here? You know a lot about the Holocaust. Did your parents tell you about the Holocaust?

**INT:** I think I carry more anxiety, worry about their safety than other people my age that live with the Holocaust.

**DORA:** Right. Right. Are your parents still alive?

**INT:** Yes. Mm-hm.

**DORA:** Good.

**INT:** I read an article recently written by a child of survivors, and I agree with this and I'm wondering what you think. He says that the most important event in his life occurred before he was born.

**DORA:** I guess so. Yeah. It's, you know, we-we made this to be good times. We tried. We did not hide from the world. We jumped right in there with everybody else, but I think that like they say, the "aliyahs," [immigrants/immigration] you know, like the Russians are now coming, we were a very good element of people that came. Unfortunately, it was the war that brought us here. We right away jumped into work. Work was our main thing. I mean there was nothing else if you-if you just got a job, you worked at it. If you opened a business, you worked at it. You worked night and day to make it a success and to raise your children. That's it. You paid-I paid the bills before they came in. I was so happy when the bills come and, you know, and we have electricity and we have a television, we have this.

All these things are, you know, these are things that make you so comfortable, where maybe some-a lot of people take it for granted that it has to be like this, but it is not. A lot of countries are without electricity, without-without water, without food, actually hungry; hungry children and hungry people living under very poor conditions. But here you live like, you know, it's wonderful. But you got to appreciate what you have. That's all. It's a beautiful world. A beautiful world. I just hope that it's going to be a secure world for the children, for everybody. I always think about this, maybe because, you know, I'm a survivor and I know what can happen in a minute, so I am always worried about...especially now, you know, I am very worried.

**INT:** About United States, Israel?

**DORA:** About the United States and Israel. United States is like the-the policeman of the whole world, and I hope she can do the things, you know, and-and bring peace. But there is a lot of fear that's going on inside of the United States. You know, like with the president now. I don't think he has a chance anymore. So much garbage they brought up now. Today something else. Every day something...I would have voted for him anyway and I hope he goes in. I don't like Dole. I just don't like...you know what I picture him? If they put a German uniform on him, I think he looks like a German Nazi, so I-I-I really like Clinton. He's young. I think Dole's too old for a president. Seventy-three years old. He's too old. He's been in the Senate for so many years. Let's bring in somebody that is younger.

**INT:** What about the elections and a new president in Israel?

**DORA:** Well, I was not very upset that Netanyahu won. Again, the same thing. He's young. I think that Peres is giving away too much territory before he would achieve any peace. Now here today I read in the paper, Netanyahu made already his cabinet. He's not giving back anything more. He's keeping the Golan Heights. He's gonna make peace, he said, with our neighbors but a different peace. So he has probably something else in mind. I'm sure that he doesn't want a war. He knows what war does and I think Peres wanted only that he should go down in history that he was the one that made peace in Israel because he was slicing away slice after slice after slice, and they were doing nothing in return for it.

**INT:** I guess I felt differently after Rabin's death. I was very upset by that event and how as you had said that much rhetoric became irresponsible criticisms of him.

**DORA:** Well, Rabin was more of a figure to me than Peres was. Peres was like a "nochshlepper" already. Rabin-he dreamed about it. He was the whole doer of the peace. I mean, to him, I don't think there is so much tradition. I think in him that there is so much tradition in Israel but I knew, you know, they always say that we have fourteen Jews and fifteen different organizations we belong to. But I was not too upset when Netanyahu won. He's young. He has good ideas. He's going to put together the Knesset and everything and he's not going to give away land for peace. If you want to live in, otherwise, he said there is not going to be a Palestinian state. I don't know how he's going to do this, but I have-I believe that he's gonna do something. So I think young people have young ideas. So older people, you know, it evaporates. You already-you used to want and you don't want to face nothing else. You don't want to do anything different. Even the doctor -- I like a younger doctor. You know he's young. He learns different things. He knows different things. It's important.

**INT:** Reflecting on your family background, how do you think it's influenced you in how you lived your life since the war, your marriage and other family relationships?

**DORA:** Well, I am now, like I would say, I'm satisfied that I lived through it. I'm happy. I raised a family. Again, it comes down to the same thing; the children have not brought us any grief. They have been good to us. We worked hard, but we made a nice living. We didn't splash-plush (?) here and there. We lived a normal life and we tried to be good friends and good neighbors and a good relationship whatever we had, cousins or whatever, and that was it. I mean, I'm satisfied with the life that we have lived. I hope my children will have the same life and be happy about it. You have to work at it. Any little thing that you undertake you have to work a little. It does not do for itself. Marriage, a work, a business, whatever you do. You plant a garden. Whatever you do. You gotta work a little. Everybody has different opinions and everybody has different ideas, and you have to listen and agree because this is what life is all about. Nobody knows everything. Nobody. And nobody knows what to do everything. You learn from each other. It's important.

**INT:** And looking back, you're able to cope with memories, losses and rebuild your life.

**DORA:** Well, it's-it's not easy. It is not easy. You have more time. I am going to dream that my husband wakes me up three times a night. I scream and I cry and I forget; but sometimes I remember. I'm constantly selling. I'm selling shoes, I'm selling things, I'm going. I'm constantly

doing. Like I said to him this morning, I don't know, did we go out? No, we didn't. Yesterday, I said: "I had a dream and I forgot all about it. I don't know what I was...I remember when I woke up I was happy about the dream. I don't know what it was. I was happy what happened. I don't know what it was but I woke up like happy, thank G-d it's a dream. It's not the truth." So it probably was something horrible, because I was happy that the dream ended. Our lives are never going to be the same, you know. I think we-we did the best that we could. Everyone did the best that they could. For some it came harder. For some it came easier. It depends on the person and I never demanded anything just because I was a survivor. I didn't think-I thought in the beginning, I thought they're just gonna carry us in their hands-they wouldn't know what to do for us.

I was disappointed when nobody paid any attention to us, but then I saw a world, a new world that has a lot of good things to offer, a lot of bad things that are happening. I saw families that had a lot of grief with children. I saw families where children were born, you know, sick and other things. People dying. People being out of work. All these things that happen in society. But I don't think that life has dealt us a very bad...I would say that we-we as survivors, we do the best we could and we survive and I appreciate it, that I came to this country. This country is just a heaven. I just hope that every American should appreciate it as we do. It's very important. You must love the country that you are in and if you don't like it then go away from it. That's all. If you don't know how to do anything, don't criticize it. Don't criticize. When I see burning of flags, when I see that they-that you can do with it...I mean, even the rules that they have here. You can do anything that you want to the flag. This is the glory of the country. You know, when I see this flag in the wind, like my heart...you know, I cry, because I think this belongs to this country. A president belongs to this country. It's like a father of a family. If you don't respect him, then it's no good. I love respect. I give respect and I-and I want respect.

**INT:** When it comes to trying to make sense out of life, of hardships, difficulties, many things predictable and there's other things make no sense, and they randomly happen. How do you sort it out? When bad things happen and when good things happen?

**DORA:** It's like the worst thing happened to the good people, like the book of Rabbi Kushner. Look, life is everything, a little bit of everything. Nobody knows what gonna happen. You think, you hope for the best. You try the best and again, you know, it's-it's...I think that G-d has a hand in everything. I don't know why, but I believe in Him. I don't know why and people ask me, how can I believe in Him. How? I said, I must believe in something. I cannot live any other way. I feel some people have a little bit more of luck, if that's what it is. I know we worked through our lives and when you are a good person and a nice person, and you know that you do what comes to you. You pay your bills, you are nice with your neighbors, you're nice with your kids; you have friends. Although little things that happen in between, but as a rule you live a clean, nice life, things come easier to you.

You know, you have nothing to hide from your children, so you already there give like an example of your life, you know. You have nothing to hide. I didn't steal, I wasn't in a prison. I saw what was happening but, yes, I am greatly in love with the world and the beauty of it and everything. You know, it's a greatness again in you, and-and so otherwise I don't think we could live through, we could go on with our life. I love to live and I love to write and this is a big plus in my life. I love-(end of tape 4, side 2) But I'm not a great optimist what I see now. My husband



calls me a pessimist, but I don't think I am really. I say always we are already on the way out. I just want for the children a good world, a quiet world, that they could live their lives, you know, be happy. I guess I'm afraid.

**INT:** Are you less trusting, more suspicious?

**DORA:** It's always with you. You know what can happen. You know how it is, and when I told my Elaine things, when...she says: "Ma, nothing can happen here. We have a constitution." I said: "Mammele, you know what? Poland also had a constitution. Every country has a constitution. But if something happens, this is just a piece of paper. You can read it and you can read it." "Even now," I said, "the constitution is too old for this country. A lot of things have to be improved, but good people have to do it." I'm afraid what's going on between people. There is so much hatred. I don't know why. I mean, for instance, now.

**INT:** Like intolerance?

**DORA:** Right. If they don't have any respect for each other. Dole has never started a speech without embarrassing Clinton. Clinton has not done this. And I always think to myself: "Why do you have to do it? Talk about the things that you're gonna do. See what you can do. Why do you have to embarrass him every time?" It hurts me when he does it. It hurts me what they do to the First Lady. I mean, she doesn't deserve it, and she has a daughter and the daughter has to listen to all the things, and I think it affects the child. It will affect her forever these things. No matter how they're gonna explain to her, she's going to think of these things. So you have to have a little bit, you know, in your heart, a little bit of love, not to do it. She's an only child and she will always remain with this. I mean, there is always, in every election, but I don't there has ever been such dirty elections like now. I mean, the First Lady has never been put through to what she is put through. I don't know.

**INT:** It may have to do with a woman who is well-educated and well-spoken. Is there a different set of rules for men and women?

**DORA:** Yeah, I think there is. There is. That's what it is. Like somebody said that she is not an elected person. She's just a plain person. But she's an educated girl. She's a lawyer. She knows what's going on. Said that she rules the country. It's not true. She doesn't rule the country, and all the things that she did before? I don't want to know about it. It's not my business to know what she did twenty years ago. I don't care what you did. I want to see what you're doing for the country. Everybody-if you shake anybody, there is skeletons in their closet. And how do I know that she's telling the truth? Well, whatever her name is. I don't care. And...so it hurts me. I feel very bad for Chelsea. I really feel bad for her, because she's always going to remain with those things that she has heard about her parents, her mother, and it never goes away, you know, and you feel bad, and look what she can do. I just want him to win and show them that all the dirty things that they threw at him didn't help. That we all believe in him anyway.

**INT:** Do you describe yourself as a worrier? Do you find yourself at all prone to feelings of depression and if so, if you're sad and depressed and is it mostly associated with your war experiences?

**DORA:** Well, it has a touch of it, of course. It has a touch of the...but then again, like my daughter says: "You watch too much of CNN." I love to know what's going on in the world. It's very important to me. I have to read the paper every day. I watch certain things on television. I'm not a television watcher. I mean I'm not going to sit there and watch a stupid show. Not the ones that are, you know, the talk shows for sure not. In the morning whatever they have, I only watch a good show if there is one; if it's a movie. And I watch, you know, there was the President's speech. I like to watch CNN, what's going on, and I worry about the world. I worry about it because it affects a lot of people. It's going to affect our children and everybody, so all of this together makes me a worrier, but I wouldn't say that the war did not affect me. Of course it did.

I'm not a whole person, like anybody should be what was born here. I have-I-I would have done maybe something differently but because I am a survivor, I didn't push myself. I rather let people pick me out, you know, like for speaking engagements and things like this. Not a pusher. But, you know, if they ask me...there is a-a group of friends that I know; Americans, they are. And she said to me, last year I think she said to me, I want -- we play for four or five weeks we play cards. And then we have somebody come in to speak to us about different things. You know, we have a speaker about a disease or a heart problem or this and that.

"I want you to come and speak to us about your experiences during the war." And I said: "Look, I'll tell you the truth. I am not doing it; I'm not doing it anymore and I don't want to be your entertainer for the evening. If you really want me to come and I should speak about it, ask your friends if they want it. You ask me because you know me, but you don't know if your friends want me. My story is not a pretty one, and it's not that I'm gonna sing for you or I'm gonna dance for you, because it's going to be a sad evening, no matter we listen to it. So ask your friends if they want me to come or not. I'll do it, if they really..." And they all said they want. So I went. I think they appreciate what I told them. I said to them right away, the story's not a pretty one. "I just want you to understand that I am telling you the truth. I am not doing it anymore for schools and-and-and synagogues and other organizations. But she asked me and you said you are all interested. You want to hear." And I came and I told it to them. They thanked me. They kissed me. They asked: "How did you do it?" I said: "Here I am. I did it. This is it. And do I like America? Look, I love it. And would I like to be in any other country now? No. I would like to be here."

**INT:** So you're saying that you'll exert yourself or take risks for something that you hesitated in doing for yourself?

**DORA:** Yes. I-I'm a very respectful person. Like they say: "If you don't have nothing good to say, don't say anything." I will not, you know, I am not one to come and make fun or say things. I'm not the one that goes around with a... I listen a lot, because we don't have a lot of listeners. We have a lot of talkers, not listeners. I'm a very good friend. So is my father. We are very good friends of people, of our friends. G-d forbid you need something or to take or here or there. Like in Florida; there is not many cars, but we have a car. But G-d forbid we are not there to cater for them, for the people that we know. They never ask us, you know, I rather would be the one that asks, but by the first time, you know, when we got to know each other, when we were going away, they had surprised us with such a beautiful evening, you know, like they made like a little

whatever, small dinner and everybody was there and they thanked us and they gave us a bouquet of flowers. Not because we did it so good, but because we thought of them.

Like I could take a list...I used to go to the bakery, so I used to take a list and bring for everybody from the bakery. A challah, rolls; the trays with the challah. Without trays. With this and that. And it was already known. Everybody knew that I'm going Friday to the bakery and that I'll bring it for them. And they appreciated it and I liked it, you know. I helped them out a little bit. If I went and I needed a little bit of shopping, I would ask: "Do you need anything? I'm going. But I did not do the shopping for them, and they never asked me to do the shopping. It was this kind of a relationship, because they knew, you know, I didn't come to be the shopper for them. They knew that G-d forbid if something happens I will be there to help them out.

**INT:** In some ways you looked to each other for support?

**DORA:** Right. Yes. Yes. And they're people from Florida, they're people from Canada.

**INT:** All survivors.

**DORA:** All survivors. No, there are a few that are not survivors, but they have mixed in with us and they wanted always to be with us. And our friends there are mostly survivors, and we come there and we come year after year and, you know, a lot of them moved away. They got places and they moved there; they made their home there. But we stay in touch and it's been good times and, you know, and we come there and we spend a nice time. The weather is good, it's not good, but at least, you know, we are outside and we have nice times. You have to make it. You don't sit for nobody, that somebody should do it for you. We go out together. We try to use the car if we need to ride, and we try to get together with a bus if we...you know, one cares for the other one.

**INT:** Do you let yourself now relax to be content or happy? Do you let yourself enjoy yourself?

**DORA:** This is our problem. We don't do it. We always think we don't deserve it. But I-I think we do it already. I think we do it. I don't know if some would think something, you know, that it goes into your head. I think we do it. We live a nice life. We don't want for anything. I mean we are not...everything is okay. If we go away to Florida is all right. We belong to a good swim club which we enjoy very much. We go there Saturday and Sunday. We have a whole bunch of friends there, and when the weather is nice, we are there every day. Every day. And we know each other and we bring our lunches and we eat together. We play cards. We go into the swimming pool, and we spend a beautiful summer here. And all these things you have to do, you have to work at it. And you have to be a good friends and etc.

I don't really, like [when] they say gossip things. I don't go for that stuff. If I know something, if somebody confides in me, I keep it to myself. I don't even tell things to my husband. Somebody says to me things, and I know how important it is for her to say it to me because she knows that I will not bring it anyplace else, that she just wanted to get it off her [chest]. It's something that's a second marriage somebody trusts you, a second marriage and this and that, and she feels that she wants to say it and she knows that when she'll say it to me it's going to be with me. And it

got off her chest, you know. I'm trying to be a -- I'm always a good friend, and we have good friends. We remain with good friends, and this is what we do. We have now-

**INT:** And who do you go to?

**DORA:** Well, they are there for me too. They are there for me too. We are going to have now a bar mitzvah, my son's son is going to be bar mitzvah November the second. The only thing we would have gone more places but, you know, when you get older it's not that easy. It's not easy to travel, and I would go to Israel but, you know, the times are not so good there so it will wait. We'll see what happens when he starts doing things, Netanyahu. We'll see what's going to happen then. Maybe we will go to Israel. Maybe for Yomtov, I don't know. I would love to go once more to Israel, and otherwise, you know, I lost my cousins. My husband lost his brother and, you know, those are things-

**INT:** Can you talk a little bit more about that relationship.

**DORA:** Yeah. Yeah. And my daughter says: "What are you so afraid now?" I said: "When you lose here and there you get..." So she told it to my son because when he call, I say: "Yeah, but you don't see me for long periods of time so you think I didn't change, you know. I-I am not the same Mom that used to be, you know." We cannot do a lot of things. You know how it is. Old age creeps up on you. Thank G-d, you know, we are *sickly* but not *sick* sick, so thank G-d for this. A lot of people, you know, have sicknesses that are...but we, thank G-d, we don't have them.

My husband has a lot of troubles with his stomach. He always had a nervous stomach. Now he developed a lot of pain in his leg and so do I, but we don't-we don't sit and grouch about it. We do the things that have to be done, maybe not to such an extent, but we try. We walk a little. We go to a movie. We-we play cards twice a week, and the rest-I want to enjoy an evening home cause we have now, as I told you, we had a few friends that passed away and we went to the houses to the shiva. Yesterday I said: "Oh, I'm enjoying that evening home." I want to be home an evening, you know. I enjoy it. I like to watch a show and do my ironing, my things, that's why everything is out here, and this is our life.

I always say: "I want to go before my husband, because I don't want to be one minute without him." Or it should have been like they like they say they do in Alaska or in other countries. They go up a mountain and they stay there until they die. It's a wonderful thing, you know. You lived a life together for so long, you become so attached to each other after the children get married. It's like, you know, it's like I cannot begin to tell you. It's like when he goes away with the car, I will tell you the truth, I run to the window and see if he's here already. The attachment is so great that sometimes I think it's too much, but this is what happens.

And he says: "You want another car?" I say: "What do I need a car for? Where am I going to go? Right around the corner with the car? I go with you and sometimes it's frightening, but this is how it is." I-I am with him, and it don't bother me. I mean, there are people, you know, I meet people in the market, people that were my customers, that she's running away from her husband. I say: "Where are you going? He's sitting there and you run and make a... (?) talking to some

friends.” So I would never feel this way. I could spend a whole evening with him, evening after evening. It doesn’t bother me, and we do things together.

We shop together and he buys me those bargains and he has those coupons and he makes a big fuss about it, because, you know, the coupons is...you come to the teller, so you have the wrong coupon with the wrong thing, the wrong amount and it’s always not right. So I say to him: “Let’s look before we go.” So we went yesterday, and we went to the, what is it? Not the Pathmark is there, what is there on Cottman Avenue? What is that store? So he picked up the paper from the weekend. It was lying there and he took something, like we took twelve cans of Pepsi-or Coca Cola, it was \$1.99, but this was last week. So I said: “I don’t want it. I don’t want it for \$2.99.” Big deal. But, you know, it was such a-because it was a \$1.99, I don’t want it for \$2.99. (Laughter) Like a big deal. But that’s how you feel.

**INT:** Do you think your frugality comes from your experiences?

**DORA:** I-I guess so. We are very reluctant to throw out things. I’m very -- especially food, I will try, from everything I will make something, you know, not to throw. I mean, that doesn’t mean that I don’t throw out things, but I’m always very reluctant to throw out food, because I knew how hungry I was; for how many days and nights I walked around hungry, and hunger is such a thing that could drive you bananas. When you are hungry, you are ready to tear apart anything to eat something, to get your satisfaction. I also-I’m not a big-I’m not a spender. I don’t have to impress somebody. Thank G-d I was born with a nature, and that was giving, you know, when everybody was coming here and some were doing better and they were buying houses and a bigger one and lamps and hanging and...it never bothered me, you know. It never bothered me what anybody put in.

When my son was being bar mitzvah, we didn’t have a dining room set. He said: “Ma, we don’t even have a dining room set.” He was so, you know, about those things. I said: “We’ll buy it after the bar mitzvah. I don’t have the money right now for everything.” He said: “Well where are you going to sit all the people?” I said: “We have a table downstairs. We have a luncheon in the synagogue. The people are going to come there.” You know, it doesn’t have to be right now. When I need something, it can be a day later or two; it doesn’t bother me. Thank G-d I am not wanting for anything. We have enough. Our health should only be good. I have enough of everything, and this is how I have been when we didn’t have even enough.

I think it’s because I grew up in a family where we had enough of everything, so I never felt the sorry. I feel those people that didn’t have it -- which is no shame -- it’s like they say to me, a friend of mine that lived not far from us comes from a very poor family. He just lost his wife so we were-we went over to his house, you know, again what was sitting shiva and we’re talking a little bit and he showed me some pictures, and that was his sister [who] was my girlfriend. He said: “One thing I can tell you,” he says to my husband. “Whoever did not know me or my family is not from my town. They had to know me, because we had a big bakery in the middle of the town and our children, everything, if they don’t know me, then they are not Pruzhaner. Everybody has to know me.”

And this, I feel -- which I never bring up -- it just happens that my father made a good living and we were raised very nicely and we had an abundance of everything but our education was a priority in our house. We had to learn. The piano must have been played, and this is how we grew up, so I had it before, but, of course, you want to have it here too, but whatever I have is enough for me. I don't-I don't need more than I have. I have enough. So my nature, I thank G-d, is a very good nature in that respect.

**INT:** How about any final comments and summarizing the impact of the Holocaust on my generation and future generations? Or your daughter's involvement and her interest in figuring out what happened.

**DORA:** Well, I am-I am happy that people are doing it. I'm happy that my daughter is doing it. I am not happy that she's taking away a lot of time, which I would want her to spend with me more. But if she wants to do it, and I'm not going to let her, then I'm a hypocrite, so she wants to do it. She's working very, very hard. Very hard. I mean she-she travels a lot and she's on the road by herself, you know, and you think about those things at those times. And as far as the Holocaust, I think we have to learn from it day by day, and I'm so glad that they have these trips now of the March of the Living. This was one of the best things that they had to do, because I see the children that are going there knowing a little bit, and come out "menschen", you know. They are like different people, and this is what makes me very happy. Not happy, I mean, to show them the things, but they can take it better than I. I wouldn't go there if you gave me anything. I don't think that I would have come back. I cannot. I feel that my-my nerves, my whole thing, would not let me go, but kids like this that go there -- and I don't know if you saw that book that, when Joshua went they printed a book in Israel: Reflections. You know that I take that book when I have time and I read it over and over again. It's, you know, what children, different children from different states, and I read it.

**INT:** Their insights and impressions?

**DORA:** Their impressions of what they saw. A lot of pictures. A lot of their poems. A lot of their...and I am very happy about it, because I see they are-they are strong, "kinahara", they know what was going on. They are seeing it first-hand. They have their own way of expressing themselves, and this, I think, is wonderful. Wonderful. I would sponsor a child to go there and-with that-and bring that knowledge back. I think the children come out of there like grown up people, and this is what I think that we keep, I mean, I saw a few of them in the synagogue too, but those three I will never forget. Never. So I think it's doing something good and I think that's what we need. As far as the Holocaust happening again, it doesn't have to be called the Holocaust. It can happen. It can happen, because as a rule, we don't love each other. Not only do we don't love each other because we are Gentile and Jew, we just don't love each other. That's all. We are-I don't know why it is. I don't know, yet sometimes you see, you know, groups of people that are working towards it, and this is what we have to do. If we-if we are not going to learn to love each other and to be good to each other, I think we'll die like this. It's not going to be good. We have to go on and teach the children to be good citizens, to be good people and that's it. That's what I feel.

**INT:** I appreciate your time and the special lessons that I've learned from you and that you're able to talk about your survival and your experiences. There isn't anything more important to tell us?

**DORA:** I'm glad that I could help you and I hope that I did. I hope my husband, and I hope you get a hold of Josh. So I think you would have like an illustration of a whole family of not the best of survivors, but, you know, in the middle. People that survived and have still the strength and the willingness to build a family, to work on it and etc., etc.

**INT:** I would have liked to speak to your son in Washington.

**DORA:** So he's away from this all. You know, I had a friend of mine that she married an American soldier, and she lived in Michigan City, Indiana. She knew, like what's taken away from all this, from all of us, and she lived a different life. She lived a life of an American girl. And when her husband passed away, "nishtu gedacht," [it shouldn't happen; G-d forbid!] you know, I met her. I always was in touch with her. But all those things that we went through, the girls, that we lived together and we went together and we kept together and our families celebrated together, our children's bar mitzvahs, bas mitzvahs, weddings and etc., she didn't have this. You know, she got to it like a sponge, like a...she started...in Florida, she started sipping it all up like and she said: "I missed a lot. I would have loved to be."

I said: "Maybe you're better off. You didn't have to go through that everything, hearing the words: 'you're a refugee and go, who needs you here and etc.' -- because there were a lot of those things too." There the family embraced her and took her in, you know. He had sisters and parents and they were very wealthy people and she didn't want for anything and she had two daughters and lived in a beautiful house. I said: "This is an act of G-d. I don't know how to say it." But she married him and he took her away and she lived a normal-a more normal life than we did, because she never talked about it.

So this is what it is and that's why I asked this guy what did it mean being married to a person that did not survive with it. He says: "In a lot of things it comes in handy because you don't dwell on it that much. If she sees me talking about it, she stops me. Enough is enough. I don't want you to be overexcited like we had a hard day today." They had a restaurant in-in Canada, in Montreal, and when he came, you know, he's also a very sensitive guy, so he started talking about it. She said: "Not today. We had a hard day. Let's not talk about it." But, you know, me and my husband, if we start talking about it, who's going to stay stop it? Nobody is going to say stop it, so we go on and go on, and then I dream a whole night about it. This is it. Do you have any other people that you need to see?

**INT:** Yes. (pause) Is there anything else you'd like to say?

**DORA:** No, I mean, do you have other people that you want to interview?

**INT:** Yes, other survivors that have families I think we are still interviewing.

**DORA:** Well, if we don't drag it out anymore, we finished on a good note. So you see that I'm still a normal person.

**INT:** Thank you very much.

**DORA:** But sometimes I don't think so, but I am-and I'm still a normal person. (end of tape)

After interview, I asked the survivor how come she did not describe when she arrived in Auschwitz in January 1943 that she was given a number on her left arm. She showed me her left arm with a small triangle (part of a Jewish star) 33960.

She said from the earliest age when her daughter Elaine asked about the tattoo on her arm or other young children, she told them that it was her phone number while she worked at the shoe store. It seemed easier to say that to protect them from the explanation of her experiences. She now says she tells children that bad people did this to her during the war when she arrived at the concentration camp.