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INTERVIEW WITH GENIA KLAPHOLTZ

TRANSCENDING TRAUMA PROJECT
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INTERVIEW WITH GENIA KLAPHOLTZ

INTERVIEWER: First I'm going to ask you just who you are, your name.

GENIA KLAPHOLTZ: My name is Genia Klapholtz. I was born in Wisnicz, Poland. This is a small town close to Cracow. It is between Tarnov and Cracow.

INT: And the year that you were born?

GENIA: December 6, 1912.

INT: And I won't tell anybody.

GENIA: No. I hope not! When I will be gone, I don't care, let everybody know my age. But right now, I don't know why, but...

INT: So maybe you could tell us a little bit about your family, your ancestors.

GENIA: About my family. I will start with my grandparents, because my great-grandparents I don't remember, and I will describe the place where my grandparents lived. Actually, I don't know if I was ever in this place, or I remember from having it told to me. I am going back many, many years ago in the 1800s, to Poland, where I was born. In a small town, like I said.

The house was nothing modern, this was where my grandparents lived. No running water, no toilet inside, and I think that at that time, nobody had this comfort what we have now. Inside the building, no switch to turn on the light. The house had three bedrooms, a kitchen, and in front facing the road a very, very large room. In the kitchen was standing a large stove for cooking and heating. Because at that time we used wood and coal to heat and to cook. In front large room was a tavern; a tavern is an inn. In one corner were shelves from the floor to the ceiling filled with merchandise to sell. I think that my grandparents were the only Jews in this village, and at that time, it was the time where it was the poorest and the, well, they rented out field, and probably my grandparents inherited this from my great-grandparents. I think so, I'm not sure, I just make up my own thinking.

To the right side of this house was an elementary school. To the left side of the house was a very large tree with Red Delicious apples. This tree, I think that I remember because we used to go in the summertime and my mother used to say... You see? This tree, we used to play under this tree, and this shade. And we used to eat the Red Delicious apple. In the back of the house was a beautiful garden always planted with vegetables. They couldn't go to the Pathmark and buy carrots and beets and potatoes. They had to grow to have them. This old-fashioned house belonged to my grandparents, to the parents of my mother, Rebecca and Nesanel Klapholtz. This was the names of my grandparents. In English you could say, in Jewish actually, we say Rivka and Nesanel.

My grandparents were very happily married. I think at that time we didn't know about divorce, we didn't know about to fight. They were very religious people. My grandfather went always to sit and to learn some Mishnayos or something else in the Bible, and my grandmother was busy with the house, with the children. There were a lot of children. And so they didn't have time to fight.

They had four daughters and two sons. Meier was the oldest son and Abraham Isaac was the second son, and then was Gitsche -- I am named the same -- Bluma, Chaya, and Yocheved. Yocheved was the youngest, and this was my mother. All the children were born in this small village. They went to school and later helping in housekeeping and in the store. So Meier, the oldest son, married and moved to Czechoslovakia. The second son, Abraham Isaac, married Esther Hudis and reside in Wisnicz. Those are my in-laws. I married my first cousin.

INT: Right. So Meier was your husband.

GENIA: No, Meier was my mother's oldest brother, of whom Yitzchok was my mother's brother.

INT: And your father-in-law.

GENIA: After I married him, so he was my father-in-law. But I always called him the Veter [uncle] fun Yitchok, my uncle. He had five sons, and one daughter, Gitsche, married Israel Fertig and reside in Oswiecim, this is what called now Auschwitz. But at that time there was no crematorium.

INT: It was a village.

GENIA: Yeah, it was a nice city. It was a not a village. They had three daughters and one son. Rosa Abramchik from Israel is one of the daughters. But one survived. Chaya married Isaac Landau. They reside in Novosoncz. They had two daughters and two sons. Netz and Chaim are the two sons. They are still alive. They survived the Holocaust. Bluma married Jacob Heinik. They had two daughters and two sons, reside in Wisnicz. No one survived the Holocaust.

Yocheved, the youngest girl, was very nice, smart, tall. My grandparents were wealthy business people at that time, but now probably they would be considered as poor people. But at that time they had a house, they had two acres of land, and they had a business.

INT: They were comfortable.

GENIA: Yeah. So she married a son of Rabbi Nakov descendant. My father's name was Yehuda Leib Ari Flax. And Flax was more of a Shemesh. I think that my father was the seventh generation from Moraba Shemesh. He wrote a sefer and signed not with his original name, but he signed with Maor BaShemesh. The sun and the light. I still, I have

somebody in New York, she wants to find out where the name Flax came in. Because his original name we find out was Apter. And we are searching how the name Flax came in, because there is a whole story about this name Flax. I hope that sometime, if I will live long enough, we will find out.

And Yocheved and Leibish, we were called Leibish, they were my dear parents, bless their memory. They got married in 1908. In the year 1909 my dear mother had twin girls, Molly and Luba. In 1911 my brother Meier was born. He was also named after a famous rabbi, Meier Matisyuh, what you call "The Meier." In the year 1912, another girl, that's me. My mother didn't wait too long to have the children, one after the other! In 1914, my little sister was born, Tzerl.

My father came from Gesko. Because my mother was the youngest girl, she reside with my grandparents in the village. My father took care of the general merchandise and my mother helped him in the store and in the house. In 1918, after World War I, my parents and grandparents moved to Wisnicz.

INT: How would you say the people in your family grew up? Was it a struggle?

GENIA: It was a struggle because Poland was a poor country. And also, my parents were in business and my mother had to help in the business four days a week, and she had to take care of the children. I don't remember if we had a maid or not, because when I grew up, and I was older, so we used to have somebody come in the house to clean. But it was a big struggle, not only for me, but for a lot more of Jewish people in this town. There were poor people, they did not have what to eat during the week. The children sometime were hungry, and they said, "Mom, can I have a piece of bread?" And Mom said, "I'm sorry, we are out of bread in the house, maybe Daddy will bring home a bread so then you can have it." But the housekeeper always tried to have for Shabbat a chicken and fish and flour to make challah. So when it came Friday night, of course, the children were very happy, because they could be hungry the whole week, but Friday night they knew they will have a feast. There is what to eat.

INT: And everybody came together on Friday night in your household?

GENIA: When we were little, so we were at home, until we grew up. And my mother managed somehow.

INT: What was your mother like?

GENIA: Every daughter would say, "My mother was the best, my mother was the nicest, my mother was the smartest." But if I will say this of my mother, is it the truth? Not what I say, but sometimes, when you come together with my cousin, Blonders, and when we talk about, you always say, "Oy, da Mame, sie darf gewehen ausname." ["Oy, our mama she was always [always had to be] the exception."] You don't understand Jewish? She was different from all the sisters and brothers.

INT: Unique.

GENIA: Yes. She was a brent, fire, and outgoing, she was very religious. Not religious, but fanatic religious, but very tolerant. Very tolerant.

When we grew up, when we were older, so we went away because Wisnicz was a very small town, and there was no future for the boys or for the girls in Wisnicz. So right away the teenagers, eighteen, nineteen, they went to a bigger city. But for the holidays, we all came home to the parents. It was, I don't know, it was different. We knew that we have to come home to the parents. So they always used to come to my mother's house, my cousins, my late husband, his brothers, another cousin, sons, and my mother never objected that they shouldn't come. That boys and girls shouldn't be together, G-d forbid in the same room, or sitting by the same table! It was a sin at that time, by my parents. Of course we were raised by my mother more than by my father. Because my father was in the business and at night, he knew that he stayed in the Beit HaMedresh and he has to learn. This was like to say in the morning Modeh Ani, like to have breakfast, that was what he have to do. And my mother, after she closed the store, we have open only till 1:00 in the morning, so she had the children to take care. So she was the one to raise the children. Therefore my mother always used to say, "We have to educate the girls." Because my father said, "No, the boy has to know. A man has to learn, a man has to know the Torah." And my mother used to say, "When you teach a boy, the boy knows, but when you give education to girls, you give education to a whole family." She had experience from her own. Because the girl is raising the family and she has to know from right or wrong, from good or bad.

INT: And she was educated herself?

GENIA: She was very educated. My mother used to read every week the portion of the week. It was called at home Tzena Urena. I don't know what this mean, but it was a book, I remember, with a red cover, and it was the portion of the week in Jewish. And many, many times, especially in the wintertime, when the evenings were so long, so my mother used to discuss with my father the portion of the week. Sometimes we went already to sleep, sometimes my mother used to say, "The girls don't have to hear, the girls don't have to know." I think when it came to a portion, when Sarah couldn't conceive, and Abraham took Hagar for a wife, the maid, and he had a child with her, so I think that this my mother at that time, didn't want that the children should hear. I think so, I really don't know. Because we really never discussed in the house. We don't know what this meant to talk with my mother about sex. Oh my G-d, this would be the biggest sin!

INT: It wasn't proper.

GENIA: And at that time, of course, it was different life than now. There was no questions. We couldn't ask, "Mom, why is this, why is that?" This is what Mommy said, and this is what has to be done. No "why."

INT: So what would happen? Would anybody, any of the children ever think to do something that Mother said not to do?

GENIA: I was the one! I was the one, I did what my mother didn't agree. When I was I think eleven or maybe twelve, I joined, it was formed actually at that time in Wisnicz, a group called HaShomer HaDati. This was the youth of the Mizrachi Women organization. And it was for the boys, there was Mizrachi, and the girls, was HaShomer HaDati. And all the Jewish -- I don't mean Jewish, everybody was Jewish in Wisnicz -- but all the religious girls were in this organization. Although it was a religious organization, my mother didn't approve. But my sisters always bailed me out, whenever I went to a meeting. Of course this organization was different than now. When I came to America, and I start to join the Mizrachi Women organization, and I saw that only money, money, money, money. But we had two pushkas. We had Keren Kayemet, the JNF, and then Keren HaYisod. The Keren HaYisod don't exist anymore. And we were learning. We were learning the history about Zionism, and I think that my mother didn't agree because we start to learn Chumash, and this was against my mother's belief. She was so religious, that the girls shouldn't learn Chumash. So we didn't.

My other sister didn't belong. My older sister from the twins, she married a husband, he had to be a rabbi, and his outfit, what he came to the wedding, and my sister was very outgoing, a beautiful girl with blonde hair, and he came da kulte wasser schiche zogen [with his hair combed and dressed in finery], because he was wearing black shoes and white socks and under the jacket a white jacket, I don't know, and on top, he was wearing a white kittel, this was a white shirt on top. My father used to wear this on Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, Pesach to the seder. So my father used to wear a white yarmulke and a white kittel.

And of course the seder was not in the dining room, but we had a children's room, where we had a sofa, and there was the table, and the sofa was covered with a white special like a bedspread, and a gorgeous white satin pillow, hand-embroidered with lace around, what my mother used to make. This was special, the pillow case for the seder. They don't know nothing about it now. I had made a pillow for my late husband, and I gave it then to my daughter-in-law, but my son doesn't use it. Because when my husband used to deliver the seder, so I always take this chair and cover it with the white bedspread, and put the white embroidered pillow with the lace, and he was wearing a yarmulke, special white with silver, very nice, but... This was the second generation. The third generation don't experience, and the fourth generation, wouldn't even know about it, because it loses after the time when they don't see.

You see, for example, when we got married, and we had the two sons, we didn't teach them religion. We didn't teach them to do this or that. They saw that Friday I light the candles, my late husband went to the synagogue, he came home, he was singing Shalom Aleichem, and Eishes Chayil, and he made Kiddush. He saw this practice. We didn't have to tell the children, "You have to light the candles. You have to cook Friday for Shabbat." No. They have to see it to know it.

INT: Like you did. You saw it in your family when you grew up.

GENIA: My mother didn't tell us, "You have to make this, you have to wait seven hours from meat to dairy." In America they are waiting three hours, but by us, we didn't eat before seven hours. Because we knew that's what we have to do.

INT: Religion played an important part in your family when you were growing up.

GENIA: Yes. This was the most important thing. My mother didn't care about nothing else.

INT: And your father also?

GENIA: My father also. My father was very religious, but like I said, he just didn't have time to mix with the children. He left us to my mother. He knew that he can depend on my mother, that she will take good care of the children, she will teach them the right thing.

INT: How did your parents solve differences between them?

GENIA: I couldn't answer this exactly because, of course in every marriage there are differences. But my mother used to say to my older sister when she got married, "When you have something that you don't like, don't keep inside, talk. Talk out. If you can't talk to your husband, talk to your best friend, but talk, don't keep, and then between the two friends you will make out what to do." So we children assume that my parents have some differences, especially in the business. My mother was very charitable, and my father, maybe he was charitable, but he was always short in money; when he had to pay for the merchandise, he was always short. And my mother used to give, to give, to give. She said, "We have to give mayseh." This mean charity. And she always find.

We have a rabbi in the city, Wisnicz, he was very poor, because in Wisnicz a rabbi wasn't like a rabbi in Philadelphia, what he get \$50,000 a year. I don't think that he gets some pension, I really don't know. But I know that he was poor. And only the Hasidim from the rabbi donated money. And my mother was very good friends with the rebbetzin. With the rabbi's wife. Nu, Heveret, Hanoch nisht katchipla Shabbas. She used to, we didn't call, we didn't have a telephone, but she came over. When you wanted something, you had to go to one another. There was no other way to communicate. So my mother said, "Dinsche," -- her name was Dinale -- "Habe halbe chicken, was noch avsitn nemta habe Shabbas." I still have a half a chicken for Sunday, so take it for Shabbas. And always she was short. And this was the struggle in the small town in Poland before the war. I'm talking from in the '20s before World War II. Was a big struggle to have to eat. To eat, this was the biggest trouble. Because clothing it wasn't so much trouble. Nobody had a closet with clothes. We had one dress for Shabbat, because G-d forbid, Sunday I couldn't wear this dress what was the Shabbas dress, and we had a couple of dresses to go to school, and I didn't have to go every day in a different dress to school as long it is clean, washed, and ironed. My granddaughter, she needs fourteen pair of pants, and I ask

my son, "Aryeh, what for you buying so many at one time?" "Mom, it is seven days, so she needs every day a different pair of pants." I said, "Don't you wash it out?" And then she has Hebrew school, and she's not going to wear to Hebrew school the same what she wear to the regular school.

INT: It's a different world.

GENIA: So I said, "Aryeh, when you were born, when you were three years of age, you had two pair of shoes, one pair white and one pair brown. And you had two pair pajamas, and I don't know, maybe three shirts. But every night when I gave you a bath, I washed the pajamas, I washed the shirt what you were wearing, and I cleaned the shoes. And I put next to the bed, when you got up in the morning, you had clean shoes, clean socks, clean shirt and clean pants, and nobody know if this is the same as yesterday or from tomorrow. When it was a rainy day, he was wearing the brown shirt. But talk, and they do anyhow what they wanted to do. I stopped to talk. I don't talk.

And the same was in my house. My mother had five children. So she couldn't afford to buy thirty pairs of shoes! Because every child needs. So she bought five pairs of shoes. Everybody has one. When we were young, so I was wearing the dress from my older sister, my younger sister was wearing the dress what I had, and nobody said nothing. I was proud when I came to my friends: "Oh, this is Malka's dress." I was proud to wear my sister's dress. And the same thing was with a coat. Because first of all in Poland, we used to have very, very good material. It wasn't like here, the polyester, but a good wool. So when my older sisters had a new coat, it could live for twenty years. The style was always the same. A coat is a coat. It didn't go out of style. It was a tailored collar, with two pockets and a belt, and...

INT: And people were satisfied and happy with what they had.

GENIA: We were so happy, because we didn't see nothing else, so we didn't have a telephone, because we didn't see. We didn't have television, we didn't know that this even exists, so we didn't need it. First of all, when we were young we went to school. After school we had homework. And when we had homework, we had homework. We had to learn by heart a lot of book reviews, and I still remember a few books.

INT: And that was unusual that the girls were sent out to school, right? That was because of your mother.

GENIA: My mother went to school because the school was right next to the house. So children went to school at that time. This was in 1900 probably. She was born 1887, I think. So it was close to 1900. My father was born 1885. My mother was two years younger. So at that time the children already went to school. And my grandparents were very close with the teachers from the school. With the principal, they used to come lunchtime to the store, they had a glass of beer, it was a different time. Everybody was close, because this was the entertainment. When you come to somebody in the house, you didn't have to make an appointment to come. You didn't have to call, can I come in?

You just knock on the door, and “Oh, good morning, I am here. How are you? What are you doing? Have a glass of tea and a cookie, whatever.” And this is what we were raised like this. Now our eyes see so much, that as much as we have, we don't have enough. I don't mean me. I am out. My life, I had my life already. But my children, my children's children. When comes Chanukah, my head is spinning: What should I buy for my grandchildren for Chanukah? They have everything. There is no such a thing.

INT: What did you get for Chanukah?

GENIA: What I get? A grosch. This is one penny. One penny and a dreidl. And we used to play in dreidl with the penny. Sometimes you win, so everything you had a penny. And we were five children, so my mother had to give five pennies, and five pennies was a lot of money. You could buy for five pennies probably a pound of meat, or bread, we didn't buy because my mother used to bake bread and challah.

INT: How did you children get along?

GENIA: We were a little bit jealous of my brother, because my brother was the favorite baby in the house. My mother used to say: “A son is a Kaddish.” Because a girl at home wouldn't go to the synagogue and say Kaddish. This wasn't allowed. So a son is a Kaddish. But unfortunately now, I keep all the yahrzeit, and I go to the cemetery whenever I set the day of the dead, and I go to the synagogue to say Kaddish. So we were a little jealous.

At that time in Wisnicz, I'm talking about in the 1920s already. So we didn't have oranges like here, we didn't have lemons in the wintertime like here. But there was one store he used to keep fruit in the winter, he imported from I don't know from where, because at that time, I didn't ask from where. We were dumb. We didn't know to ask. That's what we said. We read a book, whatever the writer wrote, this we believed.

INT: And the same with what your parents told you.

GENIA: Yes. When my mother said, “It is Shabbas today.” Okay, it is Shabbas today. If it would be Sunday, but today, my mother would say today is holiday, so is holiday. So for example, we had this Sunday a Rosh Chodesh. Rosh Chodesh, this is the first day of the month. This was a holiday. My mother didn't do any sewing, any heavy working, just to cook and to serve the dinner. But I don't know if you understand Jewish. Do you understand Jewish?

INT: A little bit.

GENIA: We had a doctor, this is a true story. But you have to understand a little bit German to understand this joke. So somebody in the other end from the city was sick. And he didn't have a car to go, and we didn't have a telephone, so somebody went to Dr. Weiselman, and telled that Bavirchem's baby is sick. So he went from his home until the other end of the street and he saw that the women are sitting all dressed nicely, this was

on an afternoon on a Rosh Chodesh, and was sitting outside on the steps. Because in our city the whole street, the houses had outside steps. Rosh Chodesh in the summertime, after dinner, because we had the main meal lunch time, and they were sitting outside. And the doctor said to himself: "What is that all the women are sitting outside today, it's not a holiday." So when he came to the last house, he knew this lady very well. Her name was Esther. So he said: "Frau Esther, sagen sie mir, was ist heute das alle Frauen sitzen?" What is today that all the women are sitting outside? So she said, "Herr Doktor, wie haben heute das Mornag Liche." So he said: "Alle auf einmal?" "Das Mornag Liche" has two interpretations: It is the period, and it is the new moon, the new month. So this was Rosh Chodesh.

INT: So the story was told to each person, and everyone laughed.

GENIA: No, this was my time already, and she came and she said that the doctor asked. This, I just brought up, I don't know why, to tell how the holidays and how the Jewish life was in a small town in Poland.

INT: In your household, did people like to laugh?

GENIA: My father used to say, "As Gitsche lacht, lachen die went mit." This means if I laugh, so the walls are laughing with me. I was always very happy. I never took anything serious. When we went to the ghetto, because first we went to the ghetto, I didn't take serious. When we went to the camps, we went first to the detention camp, where my sister was, nebich, her life was taken away in a very terrible way, but I didn't take serious. I didn't laugh, but I always with a joke. I said to her, "Oh my G-d, we are here to end our lives. Who's going to bury us? Who is going to put a flower on the grave?" So my sister said, "Oy, Gitsche, Gitsche. Who needs to be buried, who needs flowers, who needs Kaddish, who needs to light a candle? You see what is going on. How the people are burned and buried in pits and things, so who needs it?" I said, "I would like to know how it's going to be after." Always something not serious. Even I was talking about the dead without fear.

INT: Did that come from how when you were growing up? You saw things maybe a little differently? How you joined the Mizrachi youth?

GENIA: I think so, because I was in a very happy environment. My very good friend, Hindele, she was a very smart girl, and the only daughter. Her mother used to say, "Hindele, nebich, ot nisht keine Mann." She don't have nobody. She's the only child. And of course she was always so cloudy. Not sad, but not happy. Sometimes I used to say, "Hindele, bist (?)? Hindele you are again cloudy?" This is what I used to call her. The cloudy friend. And she was cloudy maybe because her father wasn't so young. He was a widower. He had some children in Berlin, Germany. And he remarried with her mother and she was born to a young mother and a very old father. And I don't know really. She wasn't a happy girl. And she used to say, her mother, Miriam was her name, used to say, "Gitschele, komm a bisl... Can you come a little to my husband... You come in, so it's getting bright in the house. We talk, we laugh, you always make us laugh." I

think that this also helped me survive the Holocaust, and survive the camps. I think so; I am not sure. Because some people were cloudy and they survived, too. This is no rule. Nobody was smart. It was just a miracle for everybody, whoever survived. Without any effort. You think that I did some effort? No, it just happened that everybody went and I survived. This was the first time that I asked why. Until after the liberation I never, ever asked, this means why. But after the liberation I said, "Why? Why me?"

INT: Did you have any answer?

GENIA: No. Did you ask sometimes G-d? Does He answer you? Yes, I have an answer, but not from G-d. Spiritual. I had no answer. Then I found my husband. We got married. And the answer was that I gave to my husband two sons. And this was the answer why I survived. Maybe my husband could marry somebody else and he would also have some children from the other wife, but I don't want to go in so far. I go in with, I survived to marry my husband and to have some children, to bring another generation to this world.

INT: Did you learn any messages from your family about that?

GENIA: Messages... not especially. We didn't know. We didn't know. We were learning at home just the everyday lifestyle, what we have to do in the morning, to say the prayer, to make a prayer about food, to make a prayer after grace meal, and to say a prayer after we go to bed. And we went to school...

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

INT: So after high school did you continue with your education?

GENIA: After high school I went to Cracow, which my mother wasn't so pleased. Because Cracow we didn't have nobody, and she was afraid maybe I will go a little bit away from the religious road. That I will pick up a road that is not so religious. But, I didn't have any other choice. And I learned corsets. In a school. This is like a vocational school here. But in Cracow it called, "Organisko Pratz." I would translate this: the heat from working. Organisko is actually fire. Fire from working. But this is like a vocational school.

INT: To learn a trade. To learn how to work.

GENIA: Yes. And my father said, "Aber (?) tochter lernt mie nicht gefacht." This means, I don't know how to translate this exactly -- a daughter from a religious home you don't teach a trade. And my mother said, "Leibish, what can we know what life can bring? We have four daughters and we need for each one a dowry." Because at that time a girl couldn't marry if she don't have a dowry. So where we will take so much money? So we have to teach. And she is very talented -- because I was always very talented at

home. When I was a little girl, my mother didn't go to store to buy a doll, like my daughter-in-law buys for her daughter. My granddaughter has probably three dozen dolls. More than a store in Wisnicz have. But she bought one doll for my older sisters, and then I inherited this doll. So I took a piece of shmatta, and I made a dress for the doll, and an apron. You know, we were playing. We were playing together. Friends. We came together, and we were playing, so we had a scissors, and a needle and thread. So my mother used to say, "Gitsche is so talented that for her is very good to learn a trade. She will be good in it." And I am very thankful to my mother that she sent me to this school, because I learned a lot. Not only corset, which later on we made a beautiful living from it. Not the parents, but all the sisters.

We had the most gorgeous store in Psescko, the only corset store in Psescko, and we had one store in Cracow on the Bolscheveskaya street, and we made out very, very nicely. We had the most wonderful customers. And we had a dowry for my older sister, for my younger sister and for me, and we had already money in the bank for the younger sister, the younger for me. She was killed in Szubin. So I really am very thankful to my mother that she was always thinking to give the daughters this what some other mothers in my neighborhood didn't give to the children. And I don't know if she did it because she was smart or she did it because of fear that the girls wouldn't be able to get married, or I really don't know what the reason is. Only thing that I know is that I learned, and all my three sisters learned from me this corsetten business, and we had two beautiful stores, and we were always zlotys, was the Polish money, and after the war was very handy for me, too.

INT: So you all worked together. You had the two stores and you were businesswomen.

GENIA: Yes and I used to go... My one sister was in Psescko, and one sister had a store in Cracow, and I used to go here and there, here and there. And most I was in Cracow for two three weeks, and then I came to Psescko for two, three weeks. And shortly before the war we closed in Cracow because when the Germans came in so, me and my older sister were in Psescko. The other sister was married, and she was in Cracow, and then she came to Wisnicz with the children.

INT: So what year was that when the Germans came there?

GENIA: This was November 1, 1939.

INT: So before that you had your business.

GENIA: Yes. I went to Cracow in 1933. But the middle of 1932, and by the beginning of 1933. In 1933 I opened already a store with my older sister in Psescko. And I was only six months in the school. And I learned very quick.

INT: So you had about five years that you were all in business?

GENIA: A little longer, because in Psescko we were until 1942. Until the Germans confiscated the store. In Cracow we liquidated before.

INT: So you saw what was happening there. You had to leave the store.

GENIA: We knew that the Germans coming in. But we didn't know exactly what is going on, because every place he did in different way. He liquidated Jews in different way. So that we couldn't protect ourselves. We couldn't do nothing. First he liquidated Cracow, so he made there a ghetto. Yes, you want to know a little bit about the Holocaust. I will take in short, because I don't want to make a big shpiel.

If I start to say about the Holocaust, I have to turn my thoughts many, many years ago, or centuries ago, to the time of the Inquisition in Spain. Why do I go back? Because this comes where the Jews came to Germany. And a large group of Jews fled from Spain and settled in Germany. Germany at that time welcomed them and made the Jews feel at home. The Jews loved Germany and very willingly accepted the new way of life. A different life in Germany than in Spain. They had confidence and strong belief that nothing will happen bad to the Jews in Germany. They used to say, when the Zionist organization was formed, and they came to the German Jews for charity, because the German Jews were richer than the Jews all over the world, they used to say, "Wir brauchen kein Palestine. Wir haben Palestine hier." That means we don't need Palestine. We have Palestine here. They were so Germanized.

The awakening from the German dream was very painful. In 1933, when Adolf Hitler, yemach shmo, came to power, he promised to deprive all the Jews from the German territory. He told them that all Jews are betrayers. Disloyal to the country. Demonstrations, terrorism, against the Jews began. Yellow badges were posted on Jewish stores and residences. After annexation, I always have a hard time to pronounce different words -- of Austria and Sudetenland, into German/Polish border, he ordered that all Polish Jews living in Germany to go to the Polish border.

On November 9, 10, 11, 1938, the Jews in Germany experienced violent brutality of the Nazis. This was called the Kristallnacht. I know that everybody knows about the Kristallnacht. This was the night of the broken glass. I don't have to explain too much about it here. And we know that at that night, many synagogues were set on fire, Jewish shops destroyed, thousands of Jews arrested and sent to concentration camps, mainly to Buchenwald. A lot of people know about Buchenwald, because American soldiers, in World War II, when America went to war, so they liberated this concentration camp, Buchenwald. So Buchenwald is very much known.

INT: Did you have any family who were in Germany, or was your family...

GENIA: No. My father had a sister, she was married to David Rotkopf. She had five girls, two were sent in 1936 or 1937, before the Kristallnacht, they were sent with the children's group, by the Haganah, to Israel. But till today, I tried so much to find, because I don't remember the names. You see, at that time, we didn't write to each other. Once for the holidays, maybe, my father wrote a New Year's card to the sister, but now we write to each other, we call each other, we see each other. Is different. At that time,

when somebody left home, when do you see them? Sometimes when they came home to see the parents. So we weren't so close with this family who fled from Poland to Germany.

On September 1, 1939, which was, you asked me before when the War start, the World War II started. A dark cloud covered my city, Wisnicz, Poland. Where I was born and my dear parents, bless their memory, reside until the Nazis took their heilige lives.

When the Germans entered the Polish territories, they confiscate Jewish businesses and industries, like they was used to it. This was their goal to do. This they were told by Hitler that the war is not for war, but the war is to exterminate the Jews, and the Germans should take all the belongings from the Jewish people, and will be distributed among the poor German people. So the Jewish stores were sealed, the synagogue was set on fire, Jews were expelled from their villages and towns. They were forced to move to the cities, then ghettos were formed. The Nazis operate differently in every city to confuse the Jews. Like I said, we didn't know before what was going to be. We didn't know yesterday what's going to be tomorrow. We knew that we had to leave the house. Everything to leave. Just take as much as we can carry, and that's it.

Wisnicz had been a small town with a lot of Yiddishkeit. With Jewish learning. A wonderful yeshiva was in Wisnicz, the Bobover yeshiva, they used to call. Yiddish publication. The Zionist movement was also strong there. And secure for Jews to live there until the Nazi era.

I am just saying one, like start Sunday and finish Friday. I leave out the whole week, because if not, it would take too long. But I want to say something what is still in my mind. My father was a strong believer. Like I said, that's what I was born and raised in a very strong religious home. He trusted G-d. He choosed to remain at home with my mother. He said, "Nothing will happen here. G-d is with us." Next day, my parents called us children together. My father said to us: "Children, I have to command you," -- my father was never as strong to say "command," "you have to do it," or, "you have to go" -- but this time he was very strong. He said: "You **have** to. I feel you children should go and look for refuge. Maybe in Lemberg." This was close to the Soviet border, and then he said that the Germans wouldn't go so far, that maybe they will stop in Poland, they wouldn't go to Russia. "And G-d will keep us here until the war will come to an end. So me and Mama will be home, and you will return home," and we looked at each other's faces. Everyone's was pale. Tears fell. Nobody said a word. Their lips were pressed together because we were not used to this kind of meeting. This was our first experience. To have a meeting that Daddy should be so strong, and to tell us to leave home, and to leave my father and mother at home. And we should hide. It was something very strange to us.

But Daddy continued. He said: "The time will come and the Angel of Death will take my life, let them take on my own bed. Go children, hide wherever you can. You are young and healthy." But nothing can help. Not the years, and not the health. Wherever the finger from the Germans point, they went.

Daddy put his hands over our heads and blessed us and said, "Be strong in your journey." I don't know. How did Daddy know what is going to be? How did he know what is going to happen? At that time we didn't know to ask, but later I asked to myself, and many times I talked with my husband, and I said, "How did my father know all of this? How did he know to tell us what to do?" But we all sat in silence. That's what we were raised. To be silent. Like nailed to the chairs. My young -- I think he was five years of age -- my nephew, did not understand what is going on. He went to Papa, embraced him and kissed him and said, "Zayde, I love you. I will go to the Germans and tell them that my Zayde is a good man. We all love him. Please don't take my Zayde to work." Because the fear of going to work was very high. People who went to work, they took the men, they shaved the beards, they whipped and some came home, and they died from the wounds. So all the men were fearing not to go to work.

After so many years -- you know how many years this is? -- 42, 48 years, I see in my mind's eye, the room and the people whom I loved, who don't exist anymore. They all were tortured and killed by the Nazi murderers, vanished forever. Nobody remained. There is a question to G-d, and I am asking, not one time, many times, I ask G-d: "Dear G-d, when You were deceived by Adam and Eve, You drove them out of paradise." (You know the story with the apple.) "When Noah's generation displeased You, You brought down the flood." (You know about Noah's ark and the flood.) "When Sodom no longer found favor in Your eyes, You made the sky rain down fire and sulfur." (You know, with Abraham who dealt with G-d, there was going to be ten righteous people, if G-d would save Sodom. But I don't have to tell you this story, because it is well-known.) "But this generation of Jews, whom You have allowed to be tortured, butchered, gassed, burnt, what did they do? They prayed before You, they praised Your name? Why did You let Hitler and his people destroy Jewish communities? Why did You let the Nazis take one million innocent children? (Yiddish) -- sinless babies from their cradles and horribly execute them? The only crime was to be Jewish and live in Europe between the year 1933 and 1945."

I don't want to talk anymore from the Holocaust. Because we talked already so much, and instead, I would like to read to you a very interesting story which was told to us on Yom HaShoah, on April, when you have the memorial service in town before the monument of the six million Jews.

INT: Before you do that, is there the part that we talked about that you told me, about the forest?

GENIA: I don't know that you remember.

INT: That was very important to me, and I don't want to lose that.

GENIA: In the war, right when the Germans occupied Wisnicz, so was curfew. We weren't allowed to go out from 2:00 in the afternoon till next day at 8:00 in the morning. So Friday night usually my father was sitting home, and he told us stories, all kinds of

different stories from rabbis, from sometimes the portion of the week. But that Friday night he told us a story, and he said that a rabbi -- I forgot already which rabbi anyhow -- said that a big storm and fire will come to a small town. It will start in the forest and will burn the whole forest and the whole city will be destroyed. But in a corner they saw after everything was destroyed, they saw a little bush just start to grow. And the rabbi said: "You see? From this little bush will come out a whole forest." And this I remembered when I was in Auschwitz, when I was liberated. I thought that I will never get married, I will never bring any generation to this world, because I saw what is happened. So I don't want that my children, and my children's children, will suffer as we Jews suffered in the years from 1939-45. But then I said I remember the heilige Werte from my father. I remember the holy words, what my father said. That from this little bush will grow a forest.

So at that time I decide that I marry my husband. And I gave him two wonderful sons. Because he was married before the war. He had two sons, and he lost his wife and his two children during the war. So I prayed to G-d that I should be fruitful, and that I should be able to give to my husband two sons to replace the two sons who were murdered in young age during the war. And my prayer were answered. When my first boy were born, nobody could understand us and nobody could share with us, because we didn't have with whom to share our happiness, that I lived, I was liberated from fire and water, and I still could be fruitful, and I gave to my husband a wonderful, normal child. I went Friday night to the hospital, and Saturday 6:45 the baby were born. So after the nurse cleaned him and she want me to take the baby in my hand, I said, "I can't take before my husband is going to be here. Because we have to make a special prayer." She looked at me, what am I saying? I said, "When a new generation come to this world, and I take for the first time in my life my own baby, I have to make a prayer, a Shechecheyanu, this means a prayer for the newborn."

I wash my hands, because then came to my mind, that my husband had already two children, so he don't have to make this prayer. This only belongs to me, because he was my first baby. And I made this prayer. And besides the Shechecheyanu I give a very highly thanks to G-d that I survived and that He gave me such a wonderful husband, and now a normal child. I looked at the hands, he had ten fingers, and nails already. I looked at the feet. He had ten toes. I look at his head, and at his face. Normal two ears, and two eyes, they were shining like the stars in the sky. He was the most beautiful baby in the world. Of course for me, because every mother probably say the same thing. Because every mother had the most wonderful baby, and every grandmother has the most beautiful grandchildren.

INT: Did you think about the bush then?

GENIA: Yes. That's what I said. That's when I gave thanks to G-d. I said, "I am this little bush. What I've survived, and from me will come another generation." And I said, "Dear G-d, I want to have another child. I want to have a lot of children. After this first one." Before, I said no. But after this first one was born, and we were so happy, I said to my husband, "We have to grow a forest. We have to have a big family. To replace the

families who we lost.” But unfortunately the situation was that I couldn't have any more children. I got a blood clot on my knee and the doctor said, “Whatever you want? You want a child, or you want your life? If you will get pregnant once more, the blood clot can be to the heart, and at the delivering the baby you will die.” So my husband was very scared. He said, “No. We have two sons, and we will be happy with them.”

INT: Did your faith change after you had your baby?

GENIA: Not too much. Because I still was in the shock. Why did I survive and not my dear ones? I wasn't as religious as my younger sister Tzerl. I mentioned that she was nebuch killed in Szubin. She was such a righteous girl. Every morning before breakfast she used to say a sentence of the Psalm, every day. Why didn't she survive? She was so beautiful, like a fresh rose from the garden. And so religious. I was considered among my sisters, that I am not as religious as they are. My both sisters when they got married, the hair was shaved completely, they were wearing a sheitel. My mother was wearing a sheitel. This was no question. My grandmother was during the week she was wearing a sheitel. In the holidays and Saturday she was wearing this called a churaband and a binde. I don't know if you know what this is, and I don't know if anybody in America would know what this is. This is made like turban from brown satin. In the front was like three scallops from pleated brown satin. And when the scallops ended, so was like a crown made from pearls and rhinestones, not diamonds, but rhinestones. And in my grandmother, when it comes the holidays or Saturday, she looked like a real queen. She was so beautiful, short, fat, that I remember very well, because she was living with us. And we had the respect, I wouldn't say to my grandmother, “Bubbe, you have more time than I have. So you can write to me. I have Hebrew school, and then I have bowling, and then I have baseball, and I don't have time to write.” Because I used to write to my grandson little riddles. So after a few times, I call up, I say, “Benjy, it is time that you should write to Bubbe at least a thank you for the riddles.” So that's what he answered. Would I answer to my Bubbe, “I don't have time?” No! If Bubbe would ask us something, we would jump through the window. If my Bubbe would say, “Jump through the window!” we would do it. We had full respect for older people.

This was the first experience when I came to America and I saw that the women are standing and men are sitting in the bus or in the trolley car. I said, Oh my G-d, in Europe this wasn't. If a woman came in, doesn't matter if an old man, a young man, they stood up and they gave the seats to a woman. The women were very respectful. I don't know if all over Europe, but where I was born and raised. So the men respect very much the women.

INT: And in your family?

GENIA: Here, my G-d. Whoever comes early, they sit down. G-d forbid. My mother wouldn't give us first the soup Friday night. The first soup, what was fat, but my father had to have the goldene yoich, this was called the golden soup. The first soup was for my father. G-d forbid a child would sit down on the chair where my father used to sit. This was my father's chair. This was my father's place.

INT: What would happen to the child if they did that?

GENIA: We didn't! We just didn't. My mother said, "This is Tate's chair."

INT: So they just listened. They didn't test to see what would happen if they didn't listen.

GENIA: No. Probably my mother would say: "Go down. This is Daddy's chair." We all could sit around the table and if somebody came with a friend -- because always somebody comes into us, we never, never ate, especially Friday night by ourselves, because we always have some widows in this neighborhood that didn't have. They were old ladies. They weren't old, believe me. They were maybe forty-five, fifty, and they looked like old. Because they didn't have the hair, they were wearing a sheitel, and they were wearing a kerchief on the head, and they were looking old. So if wasn't place, so the younger sister should go away next to the table, because G-d forbid, she's not going to sit on Daddy's chair. And it was even during a weekday, for example, when Daddy went to Minchah-Maariv, and there was no place at the table, it was the chair empty, if somebody want to sit on the chair, no. This is Daddy's chair.

INT: So everybody knew the rules and respected them.

GENIA: Yes. We was taught this way. Everything was the first thing for Daddy. And here, the first thing is for the baby.

INT: It's very different.

GENIA: And you know, I kept my house also. I also said to my children, "This is for Daddy. This is Daddy's chair." When my husband, let him rest in peace, when he died, my son didn't want to sit on the chair. When the first Pesach came, and we had the seder here, because I always have the seder home, and he said, "Mom, I will sit on this side." I said, "Aryeh, Daddy is no more alive. You taking Daddy's place." And he said to me in the kitchen, he came to the kitchen, and said, "Mom, I will never take Daddy's place. You taking Daddy's place." But he sat down, because I said, "Aryeh, don't make monkey business. Your parents are here, and my cousin used to come for Pesach here," and I went on.

INT: So did he take the place?

GENIA: Yes.

INT: He listened to you.

GENIA: He didn't have any other choice. He wouldn't sit in middle of the table and conduct the services. He had to sit on top, because he had this matzah tasch, put the matzahs in, and all the herbs, the seder plate, was everything in the front.

INT: But he respected you the same way you respected your mother.

GENIA: And you know what? That his children know that this is Daddy's chair. I don't go so often. It's not that far, but I go once in a while. When I go there for dinner, so I ask Elisha where I am sitting. Here Daddy sits, you are going to sit next to Daddy. And here sits Elisha, and here sits Benjy, and here sits Mommy. I don't know if they're doing for respect, they're doing because they know that Daddy's sitting there. I didn't teach them.

INT: They learned it from you and they showed their children.

GENIA: I always used to say to my friends, you can't teach a child religion, or kashrut. The child should see at home. Whatever the child sees at home, he is taking out from the home. If he sees at home that the home is observant on Shabbat, he takes this out. To teach is only history or geography, or psychology, or something else. But religion has to be seen and practiced.

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

INT: How did you feel last week after we talked? Okay?

GENIA: All right. I was too busy. I didn't have time to think about it. I had at night a meeting, and the next day I had a meeting, and with the meetings I'm getting crazy. Because now this week I look at the calendar. What day will I have for me? Maybe after New Year's, January, or February, I will be free.

INT: That's a long time from now.

GENIA: Because it seems to me that the end of November, and December, my calendar's already half filled in. There were already cards, so I was sitting yesterday and I wrote: Who's writing so much on a card for a meeting?

INT: I guess today what I'd like to talk about is exactly what happened to you during the war time. To you and to your family.

GENIA: I think you have to respond to the previous tape, two or three years ago.

INT: But that's different. What you did two or three years ago went to a different place, and they were looking much more at history. And what we're trying to look at are memories about your thoughts and your feelings during that time. So some of it may be similar, but...

GENIA: I think that I told you a little bit about during the war when the Germans came into our town.

INT: Yes. Last week you did. You talked a little bit about that. What I wanted to ask you specifically: Do you remember when you first became aware of the anti-Semitism? Did you experience it?

GENIA: What I remember? I am born in Poland, and Poland is 100% Catholic country, and it is very anti-Semitic. I learned already when I went to school the anti-Semitism. When in our town, some other towns that they had Jewish religion, but in our town, in the elementary school, they didn't learn Hebrew. But the Christian children had, with the priest, religion. So we had to go out. And in the school, Saturday we had to go to school. And we were not excused not to go on Saturday to school. Because they were anti-Semitic. I learned this from the first, when I was very young. But at that time, maybe it didn't matter so much. We know that we are Jews, Jewish children, and they are Christian children. We have our belief, and they have their own, their belief. So it didn't matter as much as now. Now we understand different the anti-Semitism. Because we see what has happened to the Jews, and what happened in Israel, and...

INT: So when did you and your family start to see that it started to change and get worse?

GENIA: The last few years before the war. We had in Poland a lady in the government. Her name was Pristarova. I remember exactly. And she was fighting not to let, to kill the chickens and the beef, the cows in the Jewish way. Because it's not humanitarian, it should be killed their way. And I don't know why the Jewish people don't remember this, that the war against all the Jewish thing to...

INT: Customs, traditions?

GENIA: Yes. They were against. They didn't let... (break in tape) They were against practicing the Jewish laws. But, you know, we were born there and we were raised there, we went to school there, we had business there, we did business. So, we accepted. We accepted that we are Jews and they are Catholics. Then, she came to our town, and she had a speech and it was gathered almost everybody, because such an important person come to speak, and she used to say in Polish, nobody understand, (?) (Polish). This means that the Pole shouldn't go in a Jewish store to buy. So they said: "We don't have any other choice, because they are all the stores, all the businesses are Jewish." She organized like a big store, like here is the Pathmark, let's say. But there was everything there. It was called (?), this is like a market, a supermarket, you know, with everything. So then, the Poles had to go to the Polish stores. And this was short before the war.

INT: So what, in 1938, maybe?

GENIA: In 1938, something, but in the late '38 until they build the store and until they are open. So the business, the Jewish business went a little down. But some still went to the Jewish stores, because it was a very poor city, there were poor people. And they didn't have money, so they always buy on the book. And this new store what opened, the

supermarket, didn't give on the book. Because they were new people, they didn't know the people, they didn't know if they can trust them or not. But the Jewish people they knew already, the customers knew now they don't have, and especially when they came from the villages where they had chickens and cows, and so they brought eggs and butter and cheese to sell. So when they sold, so they had to pay the bills.

Before the war, the anti-Semitism very high.

INT: So when did you and your family start to get scared? When it started to seem different?

GENIA: Like I said, in these years.

INT: So what did you talk about, your family, and think about, was there anything you could...

GENIA: We wasn't educated to have a resistance about. We wasn't, we didn't know, because the government was anti-Semitic. If the government is anti-Semitic, so the people have to do what the father is saying. The children will listen to the father. So we couldn't do too much, because we didn't have a country, we didn't have Israel, we didn't have where to go, and we didn't have a crutch on what to lean, so we had to accept and to live and to suffer. But they didn't kill the Jews at that time. No, before the war, they just tried to discriminate the Jews. Not to go to their stores, not to be friendly, although some neighbors were friendly, because they needed the Jews.

INT: So last time you told me about when your father brought everybody together.

GENIA: This was after the Germans came to our town.

INT: And that's when everything changed.

GENIA: During the war, just, this was in September 1, 1939. Was on a Friday morning. The war didn't even started, but the Germans were already in our town. I don't know from where they came. I remember my mother went out. It was Friday, 6:00 in the morning, because Friday my mother used to get up early in the morning to prepare for Shabbas. And we didn't have the bathroom inside, like we have now. So she went outside. And she saw that the Polish army they are going back. Because we were on the road, there, my house. And she went to the house, and she waked up my father, she said, "Leibish, Leibish, I think there is a retreat. The Polish army, the soldiers are looking where to hide." And my father said, "Ach. What do women see?" But it didn't take long and my father saw the bitter thing that is true.

And right away of course was curfew. We weren't allowed to go out from 2:00 afternoon until 8:00 in the morning, and we had a very big, large jail, the largest jail in Poland. It was, town was on the hillside. So were two hills very opposite each other, and between was a road and houses and things. So on one hill was this jail, and the other hill was the

Prince Lubermerski's mansion. So when the Germans came in, they let out all the prisoners from the jail, and they housed there the soldiers. And sanitary thing wasn't like it is now. You know there was no running water, was no, and so the Jewish boys, mostly they took the men, the men went there, and to clean the bathrooms, and it was just awful. And then they had to kill chickens and to clean it, because it was short before Christmas, and they got a lot of chickens and a lot of things, so they used to go and the girls used to go, too, to open and to clean the chickens to send to pack, to send to Germany for their family. And the worst thing was for the men. They took the men right away to different work.

My father was a very Orthodox Jew. He was wearing a beard and earlocks, you know the peyos, and he went into town like usual in the morning, and a German soldier saw him, he took him by his ear into a barber and shaved off the beard and the earlocks, and Daddy came home, he was with something, covered. So when Daddy came home, Mom asked, "What's the matter? You have a tooth-ache?" Because usually when you have a tooth-ache you put the kerchief over the face. And he took off the kerchief. And this was terrible emotional, because for Orthodox Jews to do something all of a sudden, it... and we were sitting, the children, we didn't know why, why? It hurts very much.

Of course my older sister wasn't home yet, she was living in Cracow, and Cracow wasn't yet so bad. And other sister was in (?), this was also not so bad. My brother was living at that time, he was murdered near (?) it was not far. But later on, everybody came home, because it was all over Judenrein, free of Jews. When they formed the ghettos. So my sisters, my brother, the nephews and the nieces, they didn't want to go to the ghetto, so they went, where to go in? To the parents.

In our city we thought it was going to be saved, because it was a small town, and who knew that the Germans want to exterminate all the Jews? We didn't know. So this was happened, when my father encouraged the children that we should go and hide. I told you last week.

INT: You told me about that day and that meeting, right. So then what did you do after that? Where did you go, what did you do after that?

GENIA: Well, we went. Me and my younger sister went to hide by my school friend's aunt and uncle. We thought that there we are going to be saved, because we spoke a beautiful Polish. And nobody would recognize that we are Jews, Jewish girls. My older sister's husband, my mother, too, to Bochnia in hospital, because they said if he is in hospital, he is going to be saved. We really didn't know what way to go. But unfortunately, they took out all the sick people from hospital and killed them. That's why my brother was killed, too. He was also in hospital. And my other sister was five months pregnant, and she went with the transport, and who knows where? We didn't know where. My mother was hiding in the forest, which I said that the Christian lady met once the mother in the barn, I think I said this last week. And my father, like I said, he didn't want to go from the house. He said, whatever will happen, should happen on his own bed. So he built a bunker, you know, a hiding place, and the neighbors did hear

the pounding of the hammers from the nails. They came in and they said, "What are you building here? What do you make in here?" So my mother said, "We build something in case something happen, we have where to go." And what can I tell you? My father was there, and a neighbor was there, three men, I think, and soon the Germans was looking for Jews when it was already liquidated all the Jews from Wisnicz, so they went to the police, to the German police, and they said that the Jewish people built bunkers, hiding place, and they are hiding. So the soldiers asked them, "Could you show me where?" They said yes. And they showed this place, and another hiding place, and another hiding place.

At that time, it was formed a ghetto in Bochnia. This is not far from Wisnicz. My mother came back to Bochnia. You know that I did not recognize her? She lost maybe fifty pounds. She was so skinny. And the face was so changed for not eating and not sleeping, just what she had a little bit milk in the barn. And being in the woods, and it was cold.

And so the first said that all the Jews who are hiding in the hiding places should come to the police, and then the police will take them to Bochnia, to the ghetto, together with all the other Jews. So, of course, they went. There were seven people growing up, and three children. And they were shot and buried in one pit. I learned this after the war when I came to Wisnicz. So my neighbors told me.

INT: Who were those people?

GENIA: My father. Jewish people, who were hiding in this hiding place.

INT: Who they took out from the bunkers.

GENIA: They took out from the hiding places, and they put them first on the police station, and they were maybe for two days or three days on the police station, and they were told that they will be taken to the ghetto. But they didn't take them to the ghetto. Instead they shot them right in Wisnicz. Then we find out that my other sister's brother-in-law is alive. So he came to Bochnia because he was working someplace in (?), no, in (?), this was a forest where they cut the trees. And he was a young, healthy man, so they took him to work. And somehow, I don't know exactly, they survived and he came to Bochnia and he was with us. So my mother was in Bochnia, my younger sister, my brother-in-law and me. We had one room. And this was a terrible time in the ghetto. Because we weren't allowed to cook. They were crazy. They had such crazy things. One Friday the Jewish police -- because in the ghetto was formed a Jewish police organization, and a Jewish city hall -- and the city hall had to give them every day so many men to go to work. You know some mayor from this ghetto city hall, he said once: "I don't want to give you any Jews. I am giving you myself." And he was killed. He didn't want to deliver the Jewish people. Because he said, "Why should this people be killed from my hand, and I know that I will be killed anyhow?" And he said, "I am not going to deliver nobody to work. You can do with me whatever you want." But most of the, they were called, the police were called Ordnungsdienst, this means the police.

One Friday, I remember, in Bochnia, my mother put something for Shabbas. We didn't have gas stove, we had a wooden stove. There was a chimney, and from the chimney went the smoke. He came in, he said, "Don't you know that you are not allowed to cook!" and he put some water to fire. "If the Gestapo will go through, they will kill all of us!" So my mother said, "Okay, we are going to eat raw, everything raw." This was, you know, every time they had different things. I can't even recall because they did so many different things to kill the Jews and to...

INT: That's okay, that's okay.

GENIA: And then came that Bochnia was also free of Jews. I had a very good friend, Yosek, and it came on an order that all the Jews from the ghetto should go to the place for roll call, and to take whatever you can carry in your hands. So we packed, everybody packed a little bit to take. A nightgown, a piece of bread, whatever, we had for the first couple of days. My friend Yosek said, "Genia, Genia, what for you need to schlep? Don't you see what is going on? Don't you see that we are in agony, that we are going to be killed?" I said, "Yosek, don't you take something, a pajama?" "Where you going to sleep? What you think, they will give you a bed!?" And he didn't take nothing. And we schlepped. What for?

We came to the station. Over there was the roll call. And the SS was standing with the dogs. And with the fingers. This was their way to select. Right or left. Me and my sister walked to the right. My mother, all the elderly people, went to the left. And I want to go with my mother. The SS came and said, "No. You go there, and they go there." And I saw all my loved ones went there to the left. And the dog went over to my mother, and he bited the leg. And the blood was running, and I said, "Kill me! I want to go to help my Mom. The blood is running. I want to take a handkerchief and put around the leg!" He said, "Don't worry, it going to be more blood running." And I was so naive, I didn't know what he meant by that.

We were shipped, the young people were shipped to detention camp. Szubin. This was by (?). And we were told that all the other elderly people who were taken to the forest and they were playing music. Why did they play music? You know why? That the people, the neighbors, shouldn't hear the shots, how they were killed like they going hunting. Now, when I see they are going hunting for Christmas, for the deers, I said, this how my mother was killed, and my aunt, and all my loved ones. And I can't see when they are hunting the deers. We don't know where the bones are, where the ashes are. Graves? There is no graves at all.

We were in Szubin.

INT: Did you know that then? Did you know that they were taken then, when you were in Szubin?

GENIA: No. We didn't know nothing. We didn't have radio, we didn't have papers. We weren't allowed to read. There were papers, probably it was written in the paper, because later, when I was in Yad Vashem, and I saw what is written in the Polish paper. But we weren't allowed to read anything. We weren't allowed to read even a book, nothing.

When we came to Szubin, so everything was taken away from us. So Yosek, my friend said, "You see, Genia? I told you. Why did you schlep the suitcase from here to the train, and from the train there to the detention camp? What for? You don't have anything anyhow."

I was with my younger sister, and there was every day roll calls. Roll calls. And one day, the Gestapo went through the row where my sister was, but she was saved. So when we came back to the barrack -- this was our home, the barracks -- so I said, "Ach, Tzerl, I am so glad that you, and I was so shaky when I saw that the SS was in your row, and you are spared." And she said, "Genia, Genia, what's the difference, today or tomorrow? We all go. You see what is happen. They all are killing us, they are killing us, and nobody is here to save us. There is no mercy from G-d, He is not here to help us." Nobody wanted to know about us. They should come. We only prayed that a bomb should come and to ruin all Poland. It should be destroyed everything. But our prayers weren't answered.

Then the next week my dear sister, she was so beautiful, like a rose in the garden, and so righteous, so smart, and she was chosen to go. And what a bitter, bitter end she had. They took, you were standing in the roll call, and they took out the people from Szubin, and came with a truck, I don't know exactly, somebody said two hundred young boys and girls, somebody said four hundred, we really don't know how much exactly, but a full truck with young boys and girls. And they took the other boys and girls who they picked up from the roll call in Szubin, and they told us later -- at that time we didn't know, but later we find out -- that it was maybe 10 kilometers, like two, three miles from the detention camp, there was a field, and they made a very deep pit, and the boys brought wood, and they made a fire, and they were alive thrown in this fire. Who knows what kind of pain they had! The Poles told later that, "They were crying, they were crying, we don't know why but they were crying." So I said, "What you mean, you don't know why? Don't you have eyes? Didn't you see the flames? Didn't you smell the smell of the burning flesh? The skies saw the smoke. The angels in heaven saw the smoke. And you didn't see the smoke?" No. They were probably dancing and laughing and enjoying that the Jews are killed, because they were always saying: "We want a Poland without Jews. We want a clean Polish country."

Now, I don't know. I metten every Jew who is going to Poland! I could **kill** them! I don't mean the visitors who go to see the problems. But this Jewish people who are settled in Poland. Why?! Why do you have a rabbi in Poland? What for? Don't they remember the Pani Pistorova? Don't they remember how she didn't let to observe any Jewish things? How they were against when the Jews came to pray? When it came Selichos time, you know, before the High Holidays, didn't the boys stand and was laughing and hitting the Jews because they used to go at night? Now in the open. And

now Israel is going to have a pact with Poland. And I am very mad from this. Because this is my generation what we were hurt in Poland. If the Poles would do nothing. They shouldn't help the Jews. But they didn't say anything. A million Jews would be saved in Poland. Because there were a lot of the young people that didn't look like Jews. And the Germans didn't recognize, because the German women looked like the Jewish people in Poland. But the young boys, they learned one German word. "Jude." They didn't know nothing else but Jude and the finger. And if somebody was hiding, or went in a store, "Jude, Jude." This what they learned. If they didn't learn this word Jude, they wouldn't point out who is Jewish. A lot of Jews could have hide, they could go in the street, even.

In Szubin, from my town, there was a man, I forgot his name. He was from (?), but during the war he came to Wisnicz with his wife and children. He want to escape from Auschwitz, and it was the wires, and he want to go through the wires, but an SS man cut him and they put him, he was hanged, how you call this, they put a stick ... and to hang.

INT: A crucifix?

GENIA: No, this wasn't called a crucifix. Well, whatever. He was hanging on this the whole day with his two hands and the high, and the feet in the bottom. And he was crying, "Kill me, kill me, kill me," because he couldn't stand it anymore. The head was bent down, and the hand to hold. And his wife, and we were standing all around, because the whole camp was called for a roll call, and we didn't stay in a straight row, but around. And came from Cracow, big shots, SS men, and they said to us in German: "This is coming to a Jew who don't obey the German law. Who want to escape from our territory." Finally he was shot. We returned to our camp, to our... and we said, "My dear G-d, why do You punish so the Jews? Why don't You let them die in a normal way, like everybody else is dying? Why should we suffer so much?" We ask each other, and that's what is.

And my friend was in the same camp in Szubin, and he used to say, "Genia, Genia, don't be naive. I told you in Bochnia, we all will go sooner or later. **We will go.**" I say, "Will nobody survive, will be no more Jews in the world? Because Hitler goes first to the Czechoslovakia and into Poland, to Romania, to Italy, to France, so he will go to the whole world and nobody will say a word? Nobody will even ask to save one Jew?! That this Jews could tell the world what has happened? How we were killed? How we were destroyed?" No. There was no answer, there was no question to whom to ask. He brainwashed, the Germans brainwashed the Jews, that they should know how to fight back until they came to Warsaw. In Warsaw there was the Resistance, because when they came to Warsaw, whole Poland was taken already, and the people saw what has happened, so there was the Polish resistance. We paid a lot of innocent people was killed there. But at least somebody survived, and somebody had to tell us how this happened and what has happened.

When we were standing in Szubin, the last day, we were in Szubin I think three or four months, so our Lagerfuehrer, the chairman of the camp, said to us -- his name was Zhimik. See? I wouldn't remember, but his name I remember exactly (?) an SS man, like

he is not like the others. He said, "You are my children. Wherever you go, I go with you." That is true. We went to Auschwitz, and he went to Auschwitz, too. But our group, half of the people went right away to the crematorium, but he was with the SS men. He went with us, you know why? That G-d forbid, somebody shouldn't flee from the train. To watch us.

In Auschwitz I was for six weeks this called quarantine, this not to go to work, not to do nothing, to wait until I am getting completely disordered, and then they picked whoever could survive the six weeks, they took to work. Every morning we stood during the six weeks, the whole time, we stood through roll call. We had there a Sheistcommander, because we didn't have a toilet, but it was a building, and a long board, and that's where we went, there. You can imagine, I can't even describe the sanitary situation what was there. Did we have water, did we have paper, did we have underwear? No. We were just like animals. A cow, at least she gets every day fresh straw, not to lay in the wet. But we didn't. I don't know how strong I was that I could live through everything like this. Probably I wasn't human at that time.

INT: What do you mean? You turned off your...

GENIA: If I would be human, I couldn't take it. Probably my brains were washed, that I have to go like when you play in chess, you take a thing, and you put this place, and that place, and you win. That's what we were. We weren't people. They told us to stand here, we stand here. They told us to go there, we went there. They told us to go to sleep, we went to sleep. They told us to get up, we got up. We didn't, our brains didn't work. We were no people. If we were people we couldn't stand this.

INT: So you don't remember having any thoughts when you were there. You were just...

GENIA: Who was thinking?! We weren't thinking about anything. We were thinking only: When is come my day? I was three times already selected to the crematorium. The first day I was selected, my feet got very swollen, because we didn't have shoes to wear, and it was in the afternoon, and the next day I supposed to go with another transport to the crematorium, and I was praying the whole night on this, on my bed. My bed! We were sleeping four girls, as wide as the stable, 30 inches wide, and we were sleeping in one side, not in the back, and not in the front. We all have to sleep on the right side, and when one want to turn, everybody had to turn, because there was no place to sleep on the back or on the floor. So I was (?) and pray that my death should be very quick, that I shouldn't suffer. That when they put gas, I should die, not half alive to shovel into the oven, because so many people half alive were shoveled into the oven because they didn't have probably so much gas to kill them completely. They didn't wait even until they get cold. They put them in a room, in a shower with gas, and whoever died, this all right, whoever was a little alive, they shoveled in the oven. So this is what I was praying, that I should die before they shovel me into the oven. But somehow, I don't know, next day they didn't call me to the crematorium, and I got up and I went to work. I didn't ask

nobody any questions, because every morning we went from Auschwitz to Birkenau. Or from Birkenau to Auschwitz to work.

I was working in an ammunition factory. So six o'clock I got up together with all the other girls, I didn't wait for the commander, and I went to work. So I was saved once. Each time was some miracle happened. I really don't know how, but I call this a miracle. After I was liberated I asked myself, why this miracle happen to me, not to my sister, not to my mother, not to my brother. Why to me? I don't know.

All right. Like they say, parents are not forever with children, because the time comes, parents getting old, they have to die, they have to leave their children. But my sisters, my younger sister, my brother was only one year older than I, maybe a year and a half. So why they could be together with me? They could live as long as I live. They could be here. Why didn't they survive? My nephews, my nieces, I'm going back a few years. My sister when she came from Cracow -- see my mind doesn't work to remember everything -- when she came from Cracow it was formed a ghetto. So she didn't go to ghetto, she came to Wisnicz. And she wasn't a millionaire. She wasn't rich, but she had a lot of things. She gave to a Pole everything she had. Everything from A to Z, that they should save the two children -- she had a boy and a girl. The boy's name was Samuel and the girl's name was Rebecca. Such two sweet children. Like I see them now in the picture. And we thought maybe the two babies can be saved. But when came, it was the roll call in the morning, in Wisnicz, when Wisnicz was Juden... free from Jews, this lady brought her two children to my sister. So they went together with her. Those are the Poles. And now they making a big thing. The righteous non-Jews! I don't know why. I think that they making too much fuss, the "righteous non-Jews." How many righteous non-Jews were? Maybe a handful, or two handfuls, or three handfuls. But most of them were anti-Semitic, and most of them wanted to kill out all of the Jews. Most of the Polish people wanted to have a country without Jews. They didn't help at all.

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

GENIA: ...who were saved? To reciprocate. I reciprocate my, what I, because I'm going in from one...

INT: Okay, so we'll get to that part, too. So you're still back in Auschwitz.

GENIA: Yes. And I was working in the ammunition factory and there was a pulverround. You know, we did make einsuchdicker for bezindbomben. We made the inside for the bombs, so inside was such a round thing. It looks like a spool of cotton, and in this spool of cotton, this was from, made from metal, in this spool of cotton was pulver, powder, and around was something like little doors. And here, like here, I have the dining room, was the room for the powder, and like here, the kitchen, was the room. A long table we were sitting around all the girls, to (?), because we were schmuksdicks, called, we were called ausschmuksdick, you know what means? This mean a piece of

jewel. A jewel. A diamond. You know why? Because if G-d forbid, one girl didn't come to the roll call, so the call that didn't let the people go until this girl will come to the roll call, because one is missing. Susschmuksdick. Where is the Schmucksdick. The piece of diamond disappeared. So we were called each other Schmucksdick. And we tried if this doors from this round spool is opening easy, if it's not opening easy, so we have to give it back.

It was in 1944, I think in November, November, two girls from this powder room took out a little bit powder under the skirts, and they wanted to give to the men that they should destroy the crematoriums. Unfortunately, they were caught by the kapo. You see, the Germans, there were kapos, like here, I would say, this is a foreman, no, how do you say, a foreman?

INT: A foreman.

GENIA: Yeah. They were caught. Of course, if they were caught, so you know. Next day, no, next week, because it was end of November or beginning December. It was before Christmas, yet, and it wasn't a snow yet in Auschwitz. So probably like sometimes like November, 1944, the whole camp was called on a place, and in middle was standing a thing to hang the two girls. And when we were all standing there and it was a route, four SS were going with the two girls, the two girls in chains, and there hang them, and they said: "Today they are going. Tomorrow the next one is going." Like where I was working. "And this is, this we doing to Jewish girls who betraying the German government." Betrayed. Unfortunately, they didn't have time already to kill us, because the Russians start to push them back.

And in January, it was already, the Russians were already in Cracow, and this is very close to Auschwitz. The planes were running, flying over the camp. And we were praying: "Where are the bombs? Where are the bombs that we together with all the German kapos who were there, we all should die together."

INT: You were praying for that.

GENIA: Yes.

INT: By then.

GENIA: Yes, but not even one bomb came to the camp. They want to save it, I don't know, probably for a museum. What is now there.

INT: Did you have any close people in the camp with you?

GENIA: Yeah. Yeah. We were very close. The table where we were sitting, the girls, I don't know where they are, because I don't know. Were two Helens. So I was very close. One was from Warsaw, she came from Majdanek, and the other was from (?) someplace there. And we were talking always, we making plans when we, we were always cooking

and cooking. Just to thought that we cooking. So when we would be liberated we gonna make a big party in our mind. We knew that we are not going to be liberated, but we were talking. We were going to be liberated. We will have a big party. What is going to be in the party? A whole bread on the table, butter, a good cup of coffee, and a lot of talking. This we were so hungry, that our minds was only to have a whole bread, that we could eat as much as we want to. Now, I have so much bread, and I can't eat, and I don't want to eat. I cook.

INT: You were hungry all the time.

GENIA: (laughs bitterly) How couldn't we be hungry, if we didn't have what to eat? We had the soup. Who could eat the soup? But later we got used to it. We had to eat the soup. I remember it was before Chanukah. I don't know. We didn't have no calendar. But the men, because we were working in this ammunition factory on one side, the women, and the other side were men. But once in a while, the men weren't allowed to go through this room where the women are working. But once in a while the men had some messengers to give to the officer so they passed by our room. One man passed by and he said, "Chanukah is coming. Chanukah is coming." Just to himself, by passing by. And we as we working, working we said, "When is Chanukah? When is Chanukah? Next week is Chanukah. Next week is Chanukah." So you know the girls we got together and we were, we didn't have any oil, any candles, but we had the ration of butter. So we put together the butter and we melted and we made from a piece of a shirt a little knot and we burned a Chanukah candle and we said the blessing, and we were singing Chanukah songs, whoever knew the whole song, or a half a song. It was Chanukah and on the top.

It was in 1944 my hair grew back, because when we came to the camp, to Auschwitz, so my hair was taken off completely, and I had the most beautiful red pompadours. So it fell on the ground and I start to cry, "Oh my hair!" I didn't have a mirror to see. So the girl who cut the hair, she said, "Oh, the dummkopf, dummkopf! Why you crying the hair? Something else will come down from your life and then you will cry." And I didn't understand what she meant by this. We were so dumb. When the hair was shaved, the head was shaved off the hair, and we were giving the uniforms and I went out and came in the, to the roll call, and I said, and I was standing next to a girl what we were friends at home, a girl from school, and I said to her: "Bela, who are..." No, I didn't know that this is Bela, but I called to her and I said to her: "Who are you? From where do you come?" And she said, "Genia, this is Bela. Don't you recognize me?" I said, "No. You look like a eighty-year-old woman. With the babushka, without hair, and this long dress until the ankles. Without a bra, without anything so..."

When we want to wash we had a undershirt. So we didn't have water. So the four girls what we were sleeping together, we didn't drink in the morning the tea, we had tea in the morning, the tea was anyhow so bitter. So every time somebody, we like, two girls gave up the tea, and we washed in a little dish, maybe one quart dish, what we had for the soup. And we washed two undershirts. I washed mine and hers. You can imagine what kind of beautiful undershirt this was without soap, without rinsing, just we washed a little bit it shouldn't be. And where did we dry? Under the straw. Because we were sleeping

on straw. So during the night we were sleeping, so we put the undershirt under during the night got dry. Then morning we... And next time somebody else gave up the tea, and somebody other two girls were washing. That's how our cleanness. We were clean. We were very clean. But we tried not to have kretzler, you know, not to have lice, because this was terrible. If we go turenlousen, this mean to disinfect, you see, and every week, every two weeks, Sunday, when we were home from work, disinfectant, disinfectant. If G-d forbid one girl would have lice so, she is finished. So we were trying between each other, we didn't wait for the water in the zauner, in the shower because you know how much water they gave us? We came in, they gave us a little bit water, maybe for not even a minute, maybe a half a minute. We hardly got wet, and a little bit soap, and then the soap was like sand. So it's not real soap. And we thought, and then we had again a little bit water. Maybe not even a minute, just, just that we couldn't even rinse it up. But we were fresh a little bit. And we try...

INT: Did people take care of each other?

GENIA: Yeah. We watched. We watched each other that we should be clean, that G-d forbid if one get the lice, we all getting. So we, we watched as much as possible. We didn't eat, but the food we had to eat. And anyhow, I had typhus in Auschwitz, so for four days I couldn't eat. So I had the pieces of bread laying, so, we shared that.

I had a dream in Auschwitz. My mother came in my dream. And she brought me, we had a dish at home, it was the color baby blue. And she brought me the dish with cholent, you know what is cholent? What you cook Friday for Shabbas. And this was so delicious in my dream I ate this cholent. And you know, I got up next morning and my temperature was gone. I had high temperature by typhus. It was gone. So I said to Bela, I said: "Bela, my mother was here at night. And she took away my temperature. I feel all right. I can eat now." So I start to eat.

There is so many things, what was that I didn't even recall. Because I don't know if I could go through now, if it happened. And I don't know if any American boy or girl would be able to go through this what we went through. The children here are born in luxury. They couldn't stand the cold weather, they couldn't stand the unsanitary thing...

INT: What do you think helped you to stand it?

GENIA: What helped? I probably come from a very strong family. My mother was very strong and probably I was strong. I didn't do nothing to save myself. It just came by miracle. The only thing what I did, when in January, the 18, in 1945, when we came back from work, so the camp was empty. Everybody was evacuated from there. So we were told that we going to deep Germany. We going to be located in nice houses, and it is going to be very good for us. And all the doors were open. We could go in to take some clothes, but how much can you take when you walk in the snow? January the 18 in Poland, it is not Philadelphia. Snow, cold, freezing. So what did I take? I take a bread and a pot of jam. I said the first thing we have to have what to eat. And I took a nightgown and a sweater with long sleeves and a dress with long sleeves. So I put on this

dress with long sleeves and this sweater with long sleeves, and a coat, the coat had on the back with paint, red paint, a cross painted, so they should know, if G-d forbid I will escape, so they will recognize that I am from camp.

But anyhow, after two days we walked and we came to a point where if we supposed to go to the train, so I said to one of my friends, what we went together: "I am not going in a train. I am not going to go through the same procedure what I went through in Auschwitz. My hair are long, I am not going to let cut them, I am not going to go the same thing. I am going to escape. Life or death."

And the trains, this was Saturday night, and the train is supposed to come Sunday morning. And this was on the top, on a big mountain. There was a barn, and the transport who came there went to the barn to sleep. But was so overcrowded that I asked the SS, I said, "Can we go to a private house to sleep during the night?" He said, "Yes." So we were five or six girls together and we went to a house, Oh my G-d. I saw how this on the civil life, they gave us water and soap, and a towel to wash up, and to dry. And we went in beds, two in a bed, with feather pillows, and the feather blankets, and this was a family what they have a bakery. So by twelve o'clock at night, the husband probably knew that he has some girls, he brought home a big sheet with fresh sweet rolls. And you can imagine, when we ate this sweet rolls, and we washed up and we were sleeping in such a beautiful white sheets, and white pillowcases, so I said, "I am not going anymore in a camp. Take a look how people are living. It is still a world, and is still people. It is still everything alive."

But this family didn't let us stay there. She said, "You have to go back to the transport." And we begged her, we begged her, that when we have something, we will remember her all our lives. Let us stay here just a week, because in a week the Russians are going to be here. It didn't take a week. Took three months. And she said, "No, if you are not going right away back to the transport, I am calling the police. I go to the police and the police will come and take you." So we went back.

I don't know where the other girls went. I never saw them again. And I never heard about them. But two girls of us, I said, "Listen. Now is five o'clock in the morning. It is still dark. Let's sit here below this mountain. I not going up the mountain. It is Sunday morning. People go to the church. When the people who go out the church, we will mingle with them, and maybe somebody will take us in. We will be like a housekeeper to help, or something." And we sitting so, so we saw a lady goes by with a something on her head, and she carries a bucket, so I thought, "She has the bucket milk, and she goes somewhere." So I asked her: "Babushka, Babushka, where are you going?" So she said to me: "Genia, I'm going the same way what you going." And this was one lady from Katovitzer, what we were, we knew each other from Auschwitz.

So all of a sudden, you see, it doesn't take long, it started getting day, we see that the clouds are going away, and it is starting getting daytime. And all of a sudden from far away we saw already an SS man. I said, "Listen, we have to run away from here. You see what is there?" So the first house we knocked, and we asked, "Please, can you keep

us over the day in the barn?" We didn't want to go in the house, because we looked not like human beings. So she didn't say anything, and she opened the barn, and we were laying all three of us between the hay. We didn't talk, we didn't breathe. We didn't eat, we didn't drink, we didn't have to go to the bathroom. We were laying the whole day, and we heard the guns, the shoots, the shots, the shots, they were shouting, because a lot of people escaped from the transport. And whoever they find in the woods or whatever, Boom, Boom, Boom, they shot.

On the road, when we was walking from Auschwitz to Radlin, where we supposed to be taken to the train, how many, how many were killed? If somebody couldn't go fast enough, if somebody turned back, Boom, Boom. They didn't, they were so sarcastic. They didn't know what way to hurt this prisoners. We were prisoners of war. What did we do? Did we kill somebody? Did we steal something? Did we do some damage? We didn't do nothing! The only reason was we were Jews, so we were prisoners of war, and that's how we were treated, prisoners of war.

So we were there, and then she called us in at night, the lady from the house, and she said, "I'm sorry, you can't be in the barn because the Germans occupied the house in the barn for the horses." And she asked us what nationality we are. And I was afraid the other two girls, because they were from Katowitz, you know, they don't talk such a Polish like in Cracow. We talk a different Polish. So I was afraid that they should say something and then we gonna be lost. So I said, "We are Jewish." So she said, "Also people." We are not people, but we also people. And somehow she couldn't keep us all three, she didn't have where. But she was a very, very nice lady, a very religious lady. Her father was a sexton in the church, and he was very religious, and a sexton in Poland was wearing a white shirt with lace here, and lace by the sleeves, lace at the neck. You know?

So she said she's going to divide us. She wanted me to stay with her. Somehow I had favor in her eyes. She want me to stay with her. I was a very happy girl. And whatever problems I had, and I was in such a situation, but I was laughing. And make her laughing. I joke. So she said, I will stay with her, and one, she lives now in Los Angeles, Yajja, she was sent to her brother-in-law. He was a teacher and he had small children, so she sent her there as a nanya, to raise the child, and the other, Erna, she want to give to her sister, but Erna didn't want to part with me. She said no, I want to be here. So she stood with, so the two of us stood.

I was afraid for the Germans, if I saw the Germans go in the hallway, I got white and trembling like a leaf. So I said to her name, the name was Marika, I said, "Marika, I know how to sew. Maybe you have something to sew for the children." There were two girls. One was maybe four, the other six, and a boy five, something, this age. "Don't you have something for the children I can make?" "Oh, yeah, I have a sewing machine, and I have a full basket of things to fix." In Poland, when it got a hole, you make a patch. I said, "Oh. I am very good in patching." If I know, if I don't know, I am very good in patching. So finally, the machine was taken to our room, and I said the door can't be closed, because if the German want to open the door, and it is closed, so... what is there?

She would have to open. The door was open. I mean, not open, but not locked. Not locked. And she brought in this basket to patch, and I was sitting from morning to night and patched and patches and patches sheets, sheets even needed to patch. I made a new shirt for Grandpa, you called her father Grandpa, the sexton, because he did need a new this white overshirt for the church. And I said to myself, I don't know. How shall I do? So he brought in the old shirt, and he was sitting with me, and said, "Make it at the neck lace, make it lace at the sleeves and gather here and gather there." I made it, and he said, "Wonderful."

A soldier came in once and said, "Could you shorten my coat?" His coat was too long. It was an alibi to talk. You know, soldiers when they saw a young, probably I was a nice girl, too, so I don't know. So I said, "I'm sorry, this machine doesn't sew heavy things, only fine material." And I start to work on the machine, even I don't need it, maybe ten times on the same row. I go back and forth, back and forth, so that I look on the machine, that I shouldn't look at him. Maybe I would be flushing, or maybe I would have some remark, or something, not to know what to answer, because he start to ask, from where are you, and I said, "Please, don't disturb me, I have to finish. I'm getting paid by the piece. I am a piece worker, so I have to make that many pieces during the day."

And so was a few times the soldiers came in. And what can I tell you? The three months to be there was like three, not three, like thirty years in hell. Because to being the whole day in the morning, night, with the German soldiers, and I had a number on my arm, and this was the worst thing. Because it came the spring, it was February, and it start to be warm, and I couldn't push up my sleeve and I was afraid like, they would see, not only I would be in danger, but the whole family were in danger. I endanger the whole family because if they would find out that she's keeping Jewish girls, the whole family would be shot, the house would be burned. Because this was practicing already.

But she really didn't know what kind of danger she is. Because I think -- I **think**, I never spoke about it -- that there was no Jewish people living in Radlin. It was like, I don't know if this is a village, or this is a city. Maybe it is a small city. Maybe is a village, I don't know. I don't know, but... she probably didn't know what is going on with the Jewish people. She thought that we are refugees from Ribinink. Because in Ribinink was drawing the line between the Germans and the Russian. The Russian, pulled, pushed back the German and in Ribinink was drawn, in the whole city of Ribinink was that leaved the city, and they used to come. So she thought that we are refugees from Ribinink.

INT: So how do you think you thought so fast, that you were able to...

GENIA: I don't know. G-d gave me this power. This wasn't my power. Probably a angel came and told me.

INT: So did you still have faith, then?

GENIA: Yes.

INT: You did.

GENIA: And the husband used to say, “Genia, go to the city hall for cards because we don't have so much food,” and all the refugees getting cards, and so they getting more bread, more butter, more flour, so we will have... So I said to him: “Yusef” -- his name was Yusef -- “Listen. I am not going for cards. I am not going to eat. I will have in the morning a hot coffee and at night a potato with a glass of watered milk.” Milk they had because they had a cow. “And I am not going for a card, and I am not going to eat.” So the whole week, whatever she cooked, she gave us a little bit. She couldn't send up to give to eat something. But Sunday she used to make from raw potatoes like matzah balls, but this was potato balls. With milk. And this was so good, and she gave us a **lot**, because this was cheap. She had ground, so she raised potatoes, and potatoes she had enough, milk she had. She wasn't such a poor person.

It didn't come to his mind that we are Jews and the Jews are supposed to be killed. But he thought that we are refugees from Ribinink. I said, “I can't go to the police because if I will go, they will ask me where did I live, which school did I go, who was your teacher?” I don't have the answers, and I can't make false statements, because this was in the neighborhood, and they knew the streets, they knew the stores, and the schools. So...

INT: So what happened in three months?

GENIA: The three months was hell. I remember one night, it was very bad. The American planes were flying over our house where we were there. So we went into the basement and she prayed. Prayed, prayed. So then she said, “Genia, pray like you know to pray. Mustn't be with the...” They pray with the beads, with the cross, with Jesus on the cross, you know. So she said, “You pray in your way.” Okay. I pray. I pray, “Dear G-d, if something must be happen, let be happen right now, because is no use to suffer so much.” And all of a sudden, a bomb came fell in the barn, so you know, the echo in the flames and thing what were terrible. And she said to me, “Genia, doch,” -- how you say? -- “You know that the Jews killed our G-d, Jesus.” I didn't want to answer nothing, because I was in such a situation that I'm going to discuss to her, I'm going to tell her that at that time the Roman occupied Palestine, and the Jews didn't kill, but I didn't answer nothing. I played dumb. Whenever I was in a situation which wasn't in favor of me, so I played dumb. And this was the best thing. Because I can...

The 28 of March, 1945, the Russian came into Radlin. And it was terrible. And the Russian came in, don't think that they were such tzaddikim. That they did plenty. They robbed. They robbed the stores, they robbed the houses. So he said, when they came to our house, so Marika, Joseph said, “Listen, don't rob us. We keep here two Jewish girls. We save them from the camps.” But I don't know. They didn't understand, maybe, what he said, but anyhow. We were there yet. Yadja came back, the other girl came back what she was hiding by her brother-in-law, and we were there two more days, two more days. I didn't have shoes. My shoes were torn, because I was walking on the snow, so they got rotten. But to being in the house, they all right. She gave me a pair of old shoes,

and she gave each of us, this was the elite German mark, because this was war money, this wasn't good money. But during the war you can buy. And as soon the war is finished, this money was... you can paste the wall with it. So she gave each of us some marks to go to Katovitzer. Katovitzer is a larger city, and there was already a Red Cross organization, and from there, they knew already, we could go for free by train. So we took the money, we bought tickets to go to Katovitzer.

We came to Katovitzer, there to the Red Cross, and they gave us stamps to go, I went to Cracow, one went to Bendin, the other went to Suslevitz, from where they came. And I am sitting in the train, and they recognize that I am Jewish. So they said, "I don't know. From where the Jewish people are coming back to Poland?" They were talking between each other, so. I understood very well Polish at that time. Better than now. But one lady said to me, "Listen. You have somebody in Poland?" I said, "I don't know. I will try and I will search if I will find somebody." So she said, "In Cracow, on the Duker street" -- this is a street -- "there is formed a Jewish committee. When you come to Cracow, go there." In Cracow I was home, because I was living in Cracow for years and I knew every corner. I went to the Jewish Committee, and there I saw that somebody is alive from my city, and the address where he is, and I went there and I didn't have any money. I didn't have **nothing**! I was poor like a church mouse. From where should I have? But somehow, I don't know, I organized some money. Aha. I was sewing.

And somebody took me from our neighborhood village, there was a couple, and they survived. They were in Russia. So there the parents, a daughter and a son, the whole family survived. And they were living in Cracow and they were already in Cracow two or three months before me, so they were already established. And I think that a daughter supposed to get married, I really don't remember exactly. And they took me home if I can make for them some blanket covers, pillowcases, because in Poland, we didn't buy ready, we buy twenty yard material, and make. Sheets and blankets. And I did. That's what I did. Yes. So they gave me a dinner and some money for the work. So... I was working. And I was recommended from one to the other because there weren't too many girls survivors that know how to sew and they were willing to work. Because most of the girls they find some boyfriends and they went on supermarkets, you know, and to buy some material, and to sell, a little business, in business, and I couldn't do it because I was emotional, probably too disturbed to go into deal with the Poles, and to go from one country to another. They used to go to Romania, to Czechoslovakia, because at that time, you could go easier through the border than now.

INT: So do you remember how you were feeling then? Did you still feel numb?

GENIA: No. No. I was already a living person. A living. And when I had already a few zlotys, so I went to Wisnicz, where my parents were, and I went to Psescko, because my father come from Psescko, and we had a corset store in Psescko...

INT: You were searching to see who, if anybody, was there?

GENIA: And I thought, if I could survive Auschwitz, maybe somebody from my family survived. I didn't know that my brother was killed and such terrible thing, because during the war we couldn't find out from each other, but we everything find out after the war. We going to the neighbors. I went to (?) this is where my brother used to live, and I asked the neighbors, "Did you know Meier Flax?" Because my maiden name was Flax. "Oh, yeah, he had a shoe store." "Would you know what happened?" "Oh, yeah, he was taken to the hospital, he was sick and then he was killed." See, that's what I find out later from everyone what was happening and how it was happen.

INT: How did you stand that, how did you...

GENIA: I don't know. I don't know. I have no answers for it. Because if I would be a real human being, probably I wouldn't stand it. Probably I would take my life. But I didn't have courage. If I would have courage I would take my life in Auschwitz. I have two beautiful girlfriends from the school. Genia Kopiter. Oh, she was such a gorgeous, and Blinka Brodman. Oh, they were two gorgeous girls. And they couldn't stand it. They took their life. And I couldn't.

INT: Did you think about you taking your life, too?

GENIA: No, I couldn't. I didn't have this courage. I said, I will wait, I will wait. Maybe the war will come to end. Maybe the war will come to end. We were only praying that the war comes tomorrow to end. But who knew that would take five years? No war took five years, so long.

INT: So each place you went afterwards, you got terrible news. Every, every place you went.

GENIA: Yes. I couldn't find nobody. Nobody was alive. So I settled in Cracow, and in Cracow I start to work. Then it was I think Shavuot, if I don't mistake, I don't remember exactly. Probably, because Pesach I came to Cracow, so this was probably Shavuot. So more Jews came and there was in the Jewish section in Cracow a beautiful synagogue. And somehow the synagogue wasn't ruined. The synagogue was in the same shape, almost. So the Jews went to pray. You know, Jewish people going to pray. There was little boys, the (?), the Poles, they threw stones through the window to the Jews. So I said that time, "Was not enough Jewish blood running in the streets? Now when a few Jews survived and they go to pray to G-d and to give thanks to G-d, so now this little Polish bunksits, we called them, throwing stones?" I said, "I can't stay any more on this bloody ground." And I couldn't. I went to Germany, and from Germany to go to Israel.

INT: Alone. Were you alone?

GENIA: I was alone. Yes. I was alone. But I registered in Cracow. Genia Flax, the daughter of Leib and Yocheved Flax, Wisnicz, (?). And this list, every week, the list from Cracow from this committee went to Bucharest, and to Budapest. And my late husband was at that time in Bucharest. And he went also to look the list. Everybody was

at that time looking the list. Maybe somebody survived. And he saw my name there. So he came to Cracow, because I told the others where I am. But when he came, I was already in Germany. I went because this was after the stones throwing, and I couldn't stay in Poland anymore. And you can imagine. I had ten dollars. I was rich! To have ten, from my work, what I work! So the zlotys I changed for dollars. And in Cracow, when I was a few months in Cracow, because I went to Germany and it was like before the High Holidays, during the summer I was there. So whoever survived from Wisnicz, they all came to mine apartment, and we were all like one family. And we helped each other. We helped a lot.

I had one boy, he bought me a present, a piece of material, and I made myself a beautiful skirt and a...

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

INT: So you were still able, then, when you were there, you were still able to be with people...

GENIA: Yes.

INT: To help each other...

GENIA: Yes, yes, yes.

INT: To connect to each other.

GENIA: Yes, I, I never lost my mood, how you say, the spirit. I was in good spirit even before my death I was in good spirit. I...

INT: Even before what?

GENIA: Even if I thought that I am going in the gas chamber, so I was in a happy spirit. I wasn't crying, but I only prayed that my death shouldn't be suffer, that I should die very quick. And I was singing. And I ate up the whole bread. I said, I want to go to death happy and not hungry. But unfortunately, next morning, I didn't have nothing for breakfast, because I ate up the bread. So I was singing instead to eat.

And in Cracow, after the liberation, when I went all over searching for my family and I didn't find nobody... so I was sewing and one family, Liebish, they were from Germany but they were in Wisnicz, and they knew my parents, so he lended to me a sewing machine, and I became the famous sewer.

When they came, mostly when the boys came from Wisnicz to see me, oh, they have to bring a gift, what will they bring? One brought a piece of material, one brought me a pair

of stocking -- was a big deal, it was nine zlotys, a pair of stockings at that time, and I made a day maybe twenty zlotys, so this was a half a day's work. One brought me something else, you know, and I used to make supper, not dinner, but something, bread and butter and radishes, this what was, bread and butter and radishes, and a coffee, and oh, we were singing, and we were talking. And this was nice.

INT: How was it for you to be alone?

GENIA: I wasn't alone at that time. I wasn't alone and I wasn't lonely, because everybody who came, I have somebody, a friend in Baltimore, he's younger than I am, but when he came to Cracow, and he said my mother and everybody in Wisnicz used to call me Gitsche, so he said, "Oh. Az Gitsche lebt, et mir shon grun nicht feden." This mean: If I'm alive, so he would be all right. Because everybody was poor. The liberated people. Whoever was liberated later, so they were smart, they did some business, they made some money, but this people who liberated before, so we didn't have anything.

INT: So you went to Germany.

GENIA: So I went to Germany. In Germany I went to after war camp, in Einering, this wasn't a camp, that the Germans made, but it was from, for the displaced people. So I went to this camp because I couldn't afford to buy a pot to buy food, and to rent an apartment. And there I met somebody, Yitzhak Lenchitsky, he was from Lodz. A very, very, nice man. He was very religious. He was a shochet, I don't know if you know what this means. Yeah. And he said, "Listen. Why should we live in this camp? Let's go to Ravensburg, and we will have an apartment, and I am a shochet, and we will have..." I said, "No, I don't want to. I wait here until I go to Israel."

I remember Erev Yom Kippur in Einering. A day before Erev Yom Kippur we went to a German family and we bought a chicken, and she gave us for free a little bit lima beans, and a carrot and some other vegetables. I don't remember even, because I didn't pay for it. He paid for it. He killed the chicken and I made kosher, and I salt it with salt, so he came and he said, if I wouldn't mind, he would invite a friend of his for Erev Yom Kippur to the meal, because he don't have nobody. This was in Einering camp. And he's a rabbi from Hungaria, I think. A very religious man, at that time, he has already a beard. I said, "All right, what's the difference? For two, for three, bring four, bring five, as many as you want to." And he brought a gorgeous basket flowers and I made a meal, it was beautiful. I made noodles, and soup, and chicken, I don't know from where I had carrots, but I had it. And I made a carrot thing. It was very nice. So then, when he saw it, he said, "Oy. You cook so good! What for are you here in this camp?"

So finally, finally, I decide, okay. We going in town. We went to Ravensburg, and he was a shochet. He brought home pieces of meat, you know, when he came from the slaughter house, and I cooked, and everybody who came ate. We didn't know, this is mine, this is yours. It was everybody's. One day he said, "You know what? I would like to get married." I said, "Mazel tov, but not with me!" I said, "I am not getting married. I am going to Israel and I will go on a kibbutz, and I will work in a kibbutz. But, I have a

cousin, she is Niederschlesien, I forgot already the name. I will go to Poland and bring for you my cousin,” and that was. I went to Poland, I smuggled through the border my cousin, and Gutsche Schwartz, she was married to Bracha Hollander's uncle, but from home, she was a Schwartz. And another girl. So the four of us came to Ravensburg, and of course, Yitzhak Lenchitsky I introduced to my cousin, and clicked, but he said he don't want to get married before me. I said, “Don't wait for me. I'm not getting married.”

INT: Why did you say that? Why did you not want to get married?

GENIA: Because I didn't want to bring a family to this world. I was very, I didn't show how angry I was inside. What for?

INT: So you were angry, really angry then.

GENIA: But... when my cousin came to Ravensburg, she said to me, “I have a stepson” -- because she was married before the war with somebody had a boy -- “and the stepson survived. And he is in Landsberg,” it is another camp, after war camp. “I would like to go to Landsberg to see, to find him out. Would you like to go with me?” I said, “Okay.” I was always easy to travel. We want go to Landsberg, and there was a dining room, because nobody cooked at home, nobody had money to buy food. This was after the liberation. We are sitting in dining room, they were sitting two girls, their name was also Klapholtz. I said, “Oh, Klapholtz. I have my uncle Klapholtz, I have cousins Klapholtz.” I said, “My mother is from home a Klapholtz.” And then we talk and talk, and she said I knew her parents, they were seven sisters. And they said, “You know what? In this house where I live, there is a Klapholtz from Tarnov.” I said, “Klapholtz from Tarnov? This is my cousin.” So I begged my cousin, what Helen, what she married Lenchitsky, I said, “Listen Helen, I went with you to Landsberg, and I want you to go with me to this family.” Friday night. This was on a Friday, so Friday night you going there, and I asked if there is a Klapholtz here. He said, yes, but he went to the rabbi for Oneg Shabbat. I said, I knew that my husband is, wasn't so religious to go for an Oneg Shabbat to the rabbi, and I knew that he had a older brother, he was **very** religious, but I knew that he was killed. So I said, this is not fair. Hasl is not so frum to go to the rabbi. But anyhow, I said to this gentleman, “Listen. Tell him that Genia Klapholtz, Genia Flax from Wisnicz is here. Is he my cousin, fine. I am there, and I gave the address. And if he is not my cousin, so I am happy that another Jew survived.”

I was waiting the whole night. I couldn't sleep. I was waiting, maybe he will come. Nobody came. Saturday morning nobody came. So then we went to the dining room to eat, because we didn't have at home what to eat. So when we walk in, somebody grabbed me by my hand. I look around, Oh, my G-d. “Haskel, you are alive?” He said, “Yes, I am alive, and I am very happy that you are alive.” Of course, we fell to each other arms, and we start to cry. His family was killed, my family was killed. He took out a pack of chocolate from his packet. He said, “Here, Genia. This is for our, some sweet for our sweet meeting.” I came in to the dining room, and I start to dance and to sing, “I have a cousin, I have a cousin!” And I took the pack of chocolate and I divide everybody a

piece. That's what we were after the liberation. We were everybody like one family. We didn't have nothing for ourselves. Nothing was ours.

INT: So was he the only one from his family?

GENIA: Yes. His wife and two children were killed.

INT: In the camp?

GENIA: In... yeah. And then, of course, we didn't part. And he said, "You are not going back to Ravensburg, you going to Munich," because he had an apartment in Munich. Not for his, but a German woman. And then he told me, I didn't want to go to Munich. I said, "I came with Helen from Ravensburg, and I have to go back to Ravensburg." But my Helen said, "No, Genia, I will know the way to go," and her stepson took her. Because at that time we went, I think that we didn't pay for transportation. No, probably not, because we had free transportation in Germany. And so, we went with each other wherever we wanted to go. And I didn't want to go to Munich. So he said, "Listen. If you go with me to Munich, I will tell you that Max Blonder is alive, and Max Klapholtz is alive, but I don't want to tell you where they are, until we going to be in Munich, and when you promise me that we will go to Max Klapholtz, and then we will go to Max Blonder."

Now who can be happier than I was to find out that I have two more cousins? First cousins. This was my mother's sister's son.

INT: They were his first cousins, too.

GENIA: Yeah. Cause we were one family. Of course, I had to go to Munich. We went to Munich. And next day, we went to Poking. Max Klapholtz had an apartment in Poking. And from Poking, oh, I was happy. Another cousin. We went to Hoff. Hof-andie-Saale. This is in Bayern. And there we met Max Blonder. It's my first cousin. So you can imagine. I can't even describe the happiness. Oh, my G-d, we didn't know what to do with each other! And so I said, "Okay, for Shabbas, everybody comes to Ravensburg." I was at that time in Ravensburg. I had a room by a German woman and I don't know from where -- oh, yeah, from the Committee, this was a Jewish Committee, and I got from there flour, and I got from someplace yeast, and Yitzhak brought meat, and I prepared a Shabbas, that believe me, now we don't have such a wonderful Shabbas! And everybody came for Shabbas to Ravensburg. And Yitzchak were there, and Helen Lenchitzky were there, and Gutsche Schwartz, at that time, but she is married, oh what is her married name? Oh, this is Bracha's aunt by marriage. And another couple came from Hof, and it was such happiness, such liveliness! Although everybody was terribly disturbed emotionally, but nobody showed it. We tried to cope.

INT: So how did you know that each other was disturbed? Did you talk to each other sometimes? Did you...

GENIA: You could see, because we are sitting and telling jokes and then, oh, a deep ...

INT: Pain.

GENIA: Pain came out. Then we start to talk. Where's Rusya, where's Sali, Max Blonder's wife, and the two children, he has a boy and a girl. And we start to tell. We don't have them, we don't have them, and of course, they knew my family. And I am the only one. We, you could read from the face the pain of each other.

INT: But it was not to talk about. You didn't talk with each...

GENIA: We talk very little, very little. We wanted, we avoided, you know why? Because we want to be ourselves, we want to be human being again. We want to bring our life together not to be destroyed completely. And if we would start to talk about our problems during the war, and about the loss of our dear ones, we wouldn't be able to cope with the situation we were in. So...

INT: And to be able to then go on...you needed all your strength to be able to go on.

GENIA: No, we couldn't, no. We didn't forget, but we didn't talk too much. Once in a while we said something. Oh, my mother. Oh, my father. Oh, my sister. You know? But we tried, we avoid talking about the camp. Matter of fact, that once I remember before our wedding, we were together a whole group. And we promised each other that we are not allowed to talk about the war for four weeks. And we gave each other the word, that we are not going to talk for four weeks about the war. We going to talk about our future. Because we saw that we survived, so we have to talk about the future.

So my cousin, Max Blonder, he was the first one that he got married. And then we got married, me and my husband, and then... Max Klapholtz didn't marry in Germany.

INT: So you two decided to get married when you were there in Germany.

GENIA: Yes. We married because when I met, and I find out that, when we met each other with Henry, at that time, I would describe my life, it was like a book with empty pages. Nothing was in my life. But when I met him, he wrote every day a page. So that he filled up the book, and he said to me, "You are alone. I am alone. But we are not going to part anymore. We going to stay together as long G-d will keep us together." And then he said, "I would like to marry you. And I want to spend the rest of my life with you." And we couldn't get married right away, because my husband, he wasn't so frum, but he follow the halacha. And he had to have a signature from three rabbis that he is allowed to remarry, because after the war we knew that his wife is not alive, because he went to Tarnov to look for his wife, and he knew. But according to the Jewish law, you have to have permission from three rabbis that he could remarry. I wasn't married, so I didn't need the permission. So we were waiting.

INT: You wanted to marry him. He wanted to marry you. You wanted to marry him.

GENIA: Yes, yes.

INT: You knew. You didn't want to marry the other man, but you knew you wanted to marry him.

GENIA: No, no, no. Yeah. Because him I liked not from now, I liked him when I was a little girl. I remember once I came to my uncle, his father was Abraham Isaac, Avram Yitzhak, I came down, I was probably twelve or fifteen at that time, and I saw that he is sitting and he is cutting the cuticles and his nails at the hand, and he painting nails white color, not white, natural color. So he had beautiful nails, manicured. I came home, and I said to my sister, to my older sister, "Oh, you know, Hasl (?) ot meine kertn eidl." You know? I liked it. Yes. And we were, our family was very close. When they came to Wisnicz to the parents, because my husband was living in Tarnov. So there were no one time that he shouldn't come to visit my parents and that we shouldn't go to visit them.

INT: So you had that already. You had that bond together.

GENIA: So we were very, very happy that we found each other. He went to Cracow, when he saw that I am alive, from Cracow he went to Germany, and Germany, I already wasn't there in this city where I was, because I was in Einring, from Einring I moved to Ravensburg.

INT: So it was a miracle.

GENIA: Yeah. It's a miracle. And somehow he found me.

INT: You found him!

GENIA: Yeah. We found each other. Yeah.

INT: We've got to stop.

(BREAK)

INT: So I think the last couple of times we talked about, first we talked about your family before the war, and then we talked about what happened to you, some of what happened to you during the Holocaust, and how after liberation, where you lived, and where you went, and how you got together with your husband. How you found each other. (interruption) Because I think the last time, we talked about how you got together with your husband, and you told me that before you found him you were going to go to Israel.

GENIA: Yes, after the liberation I said that I would like to go to Israel. Because after all this horrible thing, and I saw that I am the only survivor from the family, so I said, what shall I do here? I will go to Israel and go on a kibbutz, and work for the rest of my

life. But my good fortune turned different. Instead I met my husband and I changed my completely, my life.

INT: Do you know why you changed, how you changed your mind? Was he planning to come to America?

GENIA: Yes. I don't know exactly, because everything just went, not planned. We didn't plan at all. But when I met my husband, after we got married, we registered to go to Israel or to America. But which papers will come earlier, there we will go. And we came off the Truman's Displaced People's Affidavit. And the papers came before the papers to Israel, so of course in the meantime I got pregnant, and I had a little baby, in Germany, my little son was born in Germany. So we asked at the General Consul of America if we can postpone for a year later because I was afraid to come to a strange country not having any family to help me out, even if I have a hour to take care the baby or so, so I would like, at least in Germany I knew the language and I had two or three friends made during the time we were there.

INT: Other survivors?

GENIA: Yes, yes.

INT: So you were like a community there.

GENIA: Yeah. This was in Hof-an-die-Saale. And it was formed a Jewish community center. And we used to come together and we used to help each other in any way we needed help. And so we got the extension for a year. And my boy was one year old on the ship. Because we came with a ship to the States at that time. We couldn't, I don't know if there was no planes enough, but we came with the warship.

INT: How did you decide to have a child? Was that something that you thought about whether you should or you shouldn't?

GENIA: We didn't plan too much. I was desperately to have two boys, because my husband lost two boys, which he had from the first marriage.

INT: How old were his boys?

GENIA: The older was, I think eight. And five. And I wanted very bad to have... (phone rings) and actually I didn't know, after being in Auschwitz, and I didn't have my period for the whole three years, so I thought that my whole inside the body is destroyed. That I will never be fruitful again, and never be able to have children. But we lived, our lives was like everything a miracle. A miracle can happen, and this miracle happened, that I got pregnant, and I had the boy. He was very happy, because the boy brought in the house so much joy, so much happiness. We didn't think the past, and not on the future either. We just thought day by day. And we looked at this baby how he grows, and he

smiled, and everything was to us, so dear, so precious, and we, it was like, I can't even describe the joy what this baby brought to us.

And we was for a year in Germany until he got a year old, and we came to the United States.

INT: So you were saying your husband had two sons and a wife.

GENIA: Yeah, my husband was married before the war. I was looking yesterday when the year when he was married, but I couldn't make out, because I received a picture from Saul Powlov, from my sister-in-law from before the war, and there is a date in Hebrew, and I couldn't make out exactly what year this is, but some, one of my friends said that he will ask today the rabbi and they will make out the year, because I want to know in English what year this was. Yeah. He was married to a cousin of mine, and we knew each other very well. And I knew the children very well, I knew his wife very well. And we used to come together once in a while, because we had different city.

INT: So were they separated from each other?

GENIA: No!

INT: In the camp.

GENIA: Oh, during the war. Yeah. Sure, no, his wife and the children remained in the city in Tarnov where he was living. And when it was judenrein, when all the Jews supposed to leave, so they usually separated the children from the mother. And he was told that she didn't want to separate the children. She want to go together with the children. So she went with the children. And at that time, this was in beginning the war. So when the Germans came to Poland, they took first the men to work, and of course when they took to work, so we knew that this was the end of the life. So usually the men, a lot of men went in other country to hide. So he went to Rumania, to Czechoslovakia, to Rumania, to Bucharest, and to Hungary, you know, he went from one country to the other, smuggled. But after the war, he came back to Tarnov, and the people told him what is happened. Like we all knew what was happened, we find out sooner or later you find out what was happened with all our dear ones. And he was just as depressed as I was, because he lost everybody and I lost everybody, and when we met, something like somebody would take out from us all this bitterness, and we start to have a very sweet, lovely, happy life.

He, I think I told you this already, when the first time we met, so he brought me a pack of chocolate. He knew that I am a big chocolate eater from always as a little girl. And he says these words I will never forget. I always used to remind him, "Haskel, you remember what you said? Genia, sweet for our sweet meeting." Because we met the first time.

And I tried, all the time, from the beginning on when we were together, not to break down. Because I knew if I will break down, he will break down, and everything will go to the drain. So even I had miserable days, so I kept to myself.

INT: When you say “break down,” do you mean cry?

GENIA: Yes. Yes. Sometime to get disturbed, you know, some to just to have no desire for life. Like I had some friends, she always used to say, “What for do I have to live? What for?” But later on she remarried, she raised a family, and they were very successful and she was very happy. But in the beginning so everybody was very disturbed and... we really didn't know which road to take, on which road to go. This way or that way, which one, we just lived.

INT: So you say you tried not to let him see you come, be down.

GENIA: Never. Never.

INT: Never.

GENIA: Never. I remember when we came to America on February the 28, 1948, it was on a Saturday night, ten o'clock at night. And we didn't have where to go because we didn't have no family. So the HIAS took us to the HIAS. And Sunday morning I met some people there in the HIAS, they were speaking German. And I was always very alert, and I go over and I ask from where they are? And they told me from Munich. And I said, “In Munich? I had there an uncle, my father's sister, but I knew that my aunt died in Munich from the SS,” and so she asked me, “Do you know the name?” I told her. “Oh, my G-d! Lena, their daughter is my best girlfriend!” So right away she goes to the telephone, she calls up my cousin, and I start to talk with her. Of course we never met, because from Poland at that time to Germany we didn't have telephones and we didn't talk over the phone, and the mail didn't go like now, once on a Purim we write a letter to each other, and we never saw each other. But I told her who I am. And she told me that her father is there, they have a (?) from Germany to England, and they were for a while in England, and then they came to the United States. So my uncle came the same Sunday afternoon to the HIAS, and I think that I met him once in Poland, but I was a little girl, I really didn't know if I would recognize, but he came, he said, “Who is?”

And imagine, I was two days in the United States, Tuesday morning I went to work. My uncle brought me an address, and I said, “Uncle, I don't know English, I don't know how to go.” So he put on a piece of paper the address where I have to go, and I go down, and I went to work. It was very hard for me because my husband was so ashamed that... In Europe, the woman don't go to work and the husband stays home. If a girl get married, so the husband has to provide a living for the wife. And especially if she has a child, so not only to provide for her, but a maid to have in the house. And so the whole day he didn't go out with the baby. The baby was in the house. And it was very hard. But I cried when came lunchtime, when everybody eat lunch, and I didn't bring lunch. I didn't know, I didn't have no experience, how it is in America. I never went to work to

somebody. So, I would know what to ask for, and somebody brought me a sandwich and a coffee, and I cried. It was very bitter. But when I came home, I let my husband ask me, "Nu, Genia, how was at work?" I said, "Wonderful! Wonderful! I met very nice people, we spoke German," -- because it was a German factory -- "And we understood each other and was fine." I didn't want to tell him that is bitter, because somebody else on my place next day she wouldn't go to work.

INT: What do you mean?

GENIA: If somebody else would feel how I felt the first day when I went to work, so the next day she wouldn't, if I would be somebody else, I wouldn't go next day to work.

INT: So how do you think you were able to go? What was, what was...

GENIA: I have a very strong mind. And for me is nothing too hard. Of course now I can do this what I used to do when I was younger. But when I was younger I was a devil, they used to say. To run, to go and to work and be happy. I used to say, "be happy-go-lucky." Always dancing, always smiling, always singing, and even it hurts, but...

I remember when my husband passed away -- I mixing one to the other...

INT: That's okay.

GENIA: I went to New York, to a wedding my cousin married off his younger son, this was just a year after. And I didn't want to go to the wedding. But everybody from New York called, "Genia, Genia, you have to come, you have to come, you have to come, the year is over." Because during the year they knew that I am not...

And after the wedding I was standing outside with one of my cousins and a few other people and waiting for the car to come to pick us up. So my cousin asked me, "Nu, Genia, how did you enjoy the wedding?" I said, "Wonderful." But if my hat would have a window for a mirror, so you could see how happy I was.

INT: Oh, how heartbroken you were.

GENIA: Yes. Because this was the first time that I went by myself. So I always say, Nobody know what is inside the body, and outside I don't have to show up. I always try to polish up the outside.

INT: Even after the war, when you were so hurt inside.

GENIA: No, I always let from the tragedy I made a comedy. When we came after six months being in New York, we bought a farm in Vineland, New Jersey. And it was years was very bad. We had a neighbor, Mrs. Feid, she is now in Florida. She used to come to us three times a day, she said, "I don't know. It is so bad, it is so bad, we can't make a living, but the Klapholtzes is always holiday. Whenever you come in, the tablecloth on

the table, and the cake on the table, and the coffee is in the pot.” I bought five pounds of flour we had enough, and the sugar, and I made a cake, and the coffee. Nobody should know what is happen.

I remember when we moved in New York to this was before Pesach. Yeah, maybe four weeks we were in the States. And I stopped working, my husband had a job. He made thirty dollars a week at that time. And believe me, that the thirty dollars didn't go too far. Because two dollars I put away. I said, “You bring home only 28. The two dollars has to be for next week. Maybe you not going to have work.” And for three people, to pay electric and gas and telephone, and whatever you need is not too far. So I didn't have so much where to cook. But when it came, before my husband came home, I took a dish, a little bit oil, and garlic, and onion, and I made a garlic soup. And it was smell so nice. So my neighbor, later on, she said to me: “I don't know. Every day I come home from work” -- because she used to go to work -- “But the Greene” -- they called me the Greene -- “But the Greene smells so good, I don't know what she is cooking? And how she is putting? She must be very rich, that she can have every night such good meals.” So I told her, “Yes. If you would come in, I would give you to taste, my water soup with a piece of bread, you will see how it is taste, and how wonderful roast this is.”

INT: So you could make from nothing into something.

GENIA: Yes. Because it was, I never demand, till today, I don't demand too much from myself. Too much from myself. Whatever I have from myself, I am satisfied. You know how they say “Eyzeh ashir? Who is rich? He who is satisfied with his portion.” And I am satisfied with this not now, but always.

INT: So you learned that as a child. That's something that you always remember.

GENIA: I think so. I think so. I really don't know if this has to be studied, this has to be in the person. When we came to New York, and we went to the apartment from the HIAS. So of course I didn't have any furnitures. A lady sold us a kitchen set she had in the basement for five dollars. Wooden chairs and a wooden table. So we went to a store and I bought a quart of white paint, and I paint the chairs, and I paint the table, and I put a white tablecloth in the kitchen, looked beautiful. And I bought some material, 25 cents a yard. I still remember, and I made the most gorgeous curtains for the kitchen.

(Break)

INT: So we were talking about how you make something from nothing.

GENIA: Yes. I really, this is the right expression. I make something from nothing, from scratch.

INT: Yeah.

GENIA: And the neighbor came in later, and she said, because this was a very old apartment where we moved in, what we couldn't afford, was 18 dollars a month rent, and no heat, but it was before Pesach, like April, so we didn't need heat. It was a coal stove in the kitchen, but I throw out the coal stove, and I cleaned up the floor, and I paint with brown paint, and I create a little like here, and the kitchen was looking... The neighbor came in, she said, "Oy! The Greener. Take a look what she did! She converted the kitchen to a beautiful living kitchen." They heard that we are coming from the woods or somewhere, that we are dumb, we don't know nothing. We came here, not by choice, but by force. We didn't have a country. We didn't have Israel. We didn't have where to go. We didn't have a home. We didn't have anything. We were just like people going out from the jail and didn't know where to go. So we came to the United States, but we were educated people. I exclude myself. I didn't have that much education what my husband had, because, I didn't know what was the reason, that what was. But anyhow, we were all normal people with brains, and we could do a lot during our life.

INT: Do you remember what your feelings were inside then?

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

GENIA: I would never went through this what I went through, just like I would be born and I forgot everything the past. I pushed everything away and we start a new life, a new road. I was only thinking: What shall I make for breakfast today? How shall I put together dinner? Where shall I make a dollar? How can I spend the dollar? What is going to be tomorrow, if I will have. If I went with my little baby in the park, and I saw other children eating chocolate, can I spend ten cents for a pack of chocolate? Will be this enough for tomorrow for bread or milk, or something else what is more important.

INT: Do you think you knew that on purpose that you pushed away everything? Did you decide that you were going to push it away, or do you think it's something that just happened so you...?

GENIA: No, it just happened. I didn't think about. I didn't think. It just happened. Because maybe, I don't know, maybe because I was a very happy child, even as a youngster at home with my parents, I was always very happy. I never longed for something what I can't have it. For me, my mother used to tell me, said, she gave me a piece of reck [fabric], and a needle, and scissors, and I make a doll, I put inside a ball for a head, and I made a little dress, and I played. I mean, as a child. And this were, and other children had beautiful dolls. They had some other toys. For me, any little thing made me happy. I really didn't need too much. And the same...

INT: So you had enough.

GENIA: And the same thing is true now. I buy a little yarn, I make a sweater, and I am happy, it's enough. I don't go to Wanamaker to spend thirty, forty dollars, a hundred

dollars for a sweater. I am happy with this. This every person is a whole world for themselves.

When we came to Vineland -- this was six months being in the country -- so on the farm was very bad. We couldn't make a living from the chickens. The chickens didn't want to support us! So we had to support the chickens. (laughter) So last night, we were talking. So one of the ladies asked me, "Tell me, did you go to school here? How did you learn English?" So I told her that when we were five years in the United States we went to Bridgeton, New Jersey to the court to become citizens. So the judge asked my husband to put down a sentence in English. So he put down, "I am a chicken farmer in Vineland, New Jersey." So the judge asked him, "Where did you learn to write this?" He said, "By the chickens!"

INT: So your husband also had a sense of humor.

GENIA: Oh yeah, oh yeah. And he was also very happy. He liked to sing. His favorite time, it was to sing and to whistle. He could whistle a love song, that whoever listened had to cry. Not to cry for sadness, to cry for joy that he could bring out the tune so beautiful, and this was what I fell in love with him. Because he sang to me the first time, the first night when we met, a Hebrew love song. And I was like paralyzed. Like I couldn't move, I said to myself, "You got me!" (laughter)

INT: Did you tell him that?

GENIA: Yes.

INT: Yeah.

GENIA: Yes. I always, I always, yeah. So we were in Vineland, and like I said, we couldn't make a living. So not only me, but more New Americans, we called us the "New Americans," and Americans called us the Greener. So we all went, the women went to a factory to work, to make a few dollars that we should have on what to live. And to support the chickens, to give the chickens food. Came lunchtime, so mostly we gathered together. We were maybe eight women in this factory where we were. So lunchtime we came to the room where the handwork is, and I was working by hand. And everybody cried, and I was laughing. And I told them jokes.

INT: Why were they crying? Did they say?

GENIA: That they had to go to the factory to work, and they have at home a child, and a husband. You see, European women are different than American woman. European women, special from Poland, we are, we were not used to go to work to a factory. All right, my mother worked with my father in the business. But to go to work in a factory, this was a little bit, under the (?) under the...

INT: Beneath them.

GENIA: Yes. You know.

INT: Because you worked yourself before the war.

GENIA: Yes. And I was always ambitious.

INT: You had your own business.

GENIA: I was always ambitious to do something. And for me, as long I knew that I bring home a check, and I am free to go in the store and I can buy whatever I want to for me, for my husband, for my baby, and my child is dressed nice and fed nice, and kept nice, so this gave me a lot of satisfaction.

To my son's bar mitzvah, he was twelve and a half, so you know, all our crowd, we had the after war crowd. My son was born in Germany, so were many of our friends' children born in Germany. And we were very close in Vineland with everybody. Everybody was our friends. We got together, we didn't have to call, "Can I come in?" We didn't have to call at night, "You are home?" We just came to somebody. We knocked on the door, "Hello, hello, we are here." And right away, the coffee, and the cake on the table, we sat and was talking and enjoyed.

So everybody made a party for the sons, the bar mitzvah. So I said to my husband, "You know what? We are not going to make for our Aryeh a bar mitzvah party. We gonna make just a Kiddush in the synagogue. And you have your brother in Israel which you didn't see him since before the war. Instead, we will send him a ticket that he should come visit with us, and this is going to be the nicest party for us." So that's what was done. My husband sent and he came. Why do I tell you this? Well, then we went out, we had to make for him a party too, because he came home from school, he said, "Mommy! Shloimele had a bar mitzvah party, and Yossele had a bar mitzvah party, and you are not going to make for me?" So I said to my husband, "Henry, we have to put together our heads and we have to do for the child, because he will regret this to the rest of his life that we didn't do for him this what other parents did for his friends."

But why I am telling this? When my brother-in-law, let him rest in peace, came, so everybody who come to America they think that they have a shovel, and a bucket, and they go on the street and they shovel the dollars and they bring home. So was my brother-in-law. He came to America. We weren't rich enough to give him. We struggled enough to send him the tickets and whatever we did. So my boss was very friendly with me. I asked him if my brother-in-law could come to work. And he accept. Of course, it was under the social security number of my husband, because he wasn't allowed to work.

INT: This was in the factory?

GENIA: Yeah, in the factory, yeah. And he was for six months with us, and he made a nice few dollars, because everything what he make, was clear. Taxes my husband paid

from this money, and room and board he had the best what he could have in a hotel; he couldn't have better. So, when the lunchtime we got together, like I mentioned before, and then when he came and he saw what the other girls are talking, oy, how this and this and this, you know, and they let their children home, and the husband is home, and she has to sit in the factory and do work, and she cried. And I was laughing! So when we came home from work, he said to my husband, "Henry, I don't know. I don't understand Genia. All the womens are crying and she is laughing." I said, "It will help me, it would help me, if I know that it would help me in my situation, I would cry, too. But I think because I laugh it helps me to exist."

INT: So talking about that, how do you think that you mourned for all of the people that you lost in...

GENIA: In the beginning I didn't mourned. I am honest. I didn't mourn. Because if I would mourn the losses, what I lost, I wouldn't be here today. I don't know if I would be alive, or dead, but for sure, not as I am. I would be in the psychiatry someplace, or in some home in some institution, if I would be alive. Like I said, I start a new life. You see, when a young girl get married, so she don't remember where she date ten other boys. She put away all the other boys what she had the date, and she start a new life with the new boy, with the husband. And so was me. When I was liberated I had to push away -- of course, I didn't push away in the beginning, because I went all over to Poland and to look because I always said, Oh my dear G-d. I survived Auschwitz, which it was a death camp, everybody knew that there was only one door, to go in, but not to go out. And if I survived there, maybe somebody from my family survived. So I went from city to city in search and search, and asked if I have somebody. And then during this time what I was searching for my family, I find out about my husband. He wasn't my husband at that time, but he was my cousin. And when we met, like I don't like, a star would shine, like the sun would all of the sudden during the night came with a beautiful bright shine. And from this moment on, everything got black. Everything we pushed away, both of us. He never talked. I mean the beginning, about his wife and the children.

INT: So he never talked?

GENIA: In the beginning he didn't talk about his wife and his children. And it bothered me, because I **want** him to talk. I want him to bring out this bitterness, because if you bring it out it's easier to cope. You are married, so I can tell you, that after when we got married, so I... I don't know if I should tell this or not.

INT: Yeah, it's okay.

GENIA: When we had a relationship, so I was afraid, maybe I can't satisfy him as much as Rusia did. This was her name, Rusia. But I was thinking -- G-d forbid I wouldn't tell this to my husband, but I was thinking -- "Oh my G-d, I don't know, maybe I don't have so much sex power, or sex will like his first wife." And this bugged me a lot. Almost every night, so I was like scared even. Then, all of a sudden, I start to talk to him. I said, "Henry, I would like you to tell me about Rusia, and about the children, and how was

your life and thing.” In the beginning he said, “Genia, I would appreciate if you wouldn't bring up this subject. We are happily married and you are my wife, I am your husband, and you lost everybody and I lost everybody, and let's go on with our life like this.”

So for a while we didn't talk. And then, maybe after I was pregnant, so I said, again, I start to talk. And I asked him, I asked him just open, “Haskusch, do I satisfy you? Are you happy with me? Is our life shared like you had the life before the war?” Just like, because I thought to myself, we have to talk! If you keep inside, I would get crazy. I didn't have a sister to whom to talk. To my mother I wouldn't talk, what she would say! “Oy apikiros! Oy!” Who talked like this! But with a sister I could always, we used to talk everything whatever we wanted to share. So I said if I am not going to ask Henry, I will have to the rest of my life in my mind, I don't know if he is satisfied, I don't know if he loved me, I don't know this, I don't know that. So we start to talk. And I said, “Henry, if we are not going to sit down and we are not going to talk before the baby is going to be born, I will be ruined, my whole life. Because I will go around with the mind that I am only a shadow in the kitchen or in dining room. That you are thinking about Rusia, about your children, and I am only to make comfortable the life.” At that time, this was the first time, he hugged me, he start to kiss me, and he said -- (pause, crying) he said, he met many women after the war and during the war, “But you are a real eishes chayil that you can bring out and to talk about things which hurt you and hurts me.” And he felt much better and I felt much better. And I said, this is the healthiest thing in a person. When something is bothering, you have to talk out. If you don't talk out this will bother you for the rest of the life.

If you see, if you would go upstairs, sometime my kitchen is so piled up with papers. What kind of papers? I'm not a bookkeeper. I'm not a secretary. I not in business. What is the papers? Whenever I have something, when I am in stress, or in happiness, I take a pencil and a piece of papers, and I write down, and I write down. And this is a very healthy thing. I find out by myself by writing the feelings relieves the pain.

INT: And it hurts when you do it.

GENIA: Yeah.

INT: But in the long term, you're saying it helps relieve it.

GENIA: Yeah, it helps very much. I find out, I don't know somebody else, because everybody's different, somebody can swallow a bitter pill and somebody can't swallow a sweet pill. But I find out in my situation if I talk, if I unload my burden, I feel better. If I am mad of my girlfriend, so, I don't call her and to say: Listen, you did this and this and you went to the movie you didn't call me, you didn't stop to take me. But I take a paper and a pencil and I write to her a letter whatever I feel, and then I read once, and I read the second time, and I say, “Okay, Genia. One, two, three in the basket.” I read it in the basket. And I unload this what I want to tell her. And I don't want to tell her because she will get mad.

Everybody of us survivors are very sensitive, and so am I very sensitive. You can't tell nothing to somebody from our survivors that they did something wrong, because she did no wrong, I did the wrong. And I think that this is the best therapy, to talk. I told you once, about the tree in front of the house, didn't I?

There was living a widow, just like I am, in a house, and the front of the house was a tree. And every widow has a bitter heart to... So every morning she went out to the tree and unloads her bitterness to the tree. After years the tree took sick, and they came to cut this, because if the tree doesn't produce any more fruit and any more leaves, so they cut down. And she stays by the window and look and look, "Oy, tree, my sweet tree, my old tree." And the two men who cut down the tree, they was staying and looking at each other. And she was wondering what is happened. She goes out and she asks the man, "What is happen? Why you looking at the tree?" So he said, "Because when we cut down the tree, we see that the tree has ulcers." So she said, "Oh, I know. I gave them the ulcers. Because I cried out my heart, so instead I should have the ulcer, I cry to the tree and this is my fault that the tree has ulcers." So.

INT: So you started to tell me about this when I asked you about how you think you were able to mourn, and that you said at the beginning you didn't mourn...

GENIA: I didn't mourn because we start a new life, and I didn't want to go step on blood. I want to step on happy tears, not of bitter tears. How could I have a family if I would always mourn for my parents and my sisters and brothers and nephews and nieces and sister-in-laws and all my family? Of course we mourn just like normal people. I never forget my family. My family is enshrined in my heart and in my head and in my whole body. I talk a lot to my children about my family, I tell them the roots where I come from, because I'm coming from a rabbinical family. My great-great-great-great father, my father was the seventh generation from Meor BaShemesh, he wrote a sefer under the name Meor BaShemesh, this is "The Light and the Sun." I am searching to find if I could find this sefer, I would like to buy, but till now I have no luck. I have to call to somebody else. I have one place here to call because I want to have for my grandchildren to see from where they come.

So always talk to them. I inscribe the names from my older loved ones on the matsevah, what we have on the Holocaust survivor cemetery. I do whatever I can do, but in the same time I go on normal with my life. I don't interfere anything that should be something that we don't go along with my children because of my bitterness.

In the beginning when my husband passed away, so my younger son said to me, "Oh, Mom. You should get married. Because I see that you are so bitter because you lost Daddy." I said, "No, I am not bitter because I lost Daddy. I am bitter because I survived." This is two meanings. To lose or to survive. He said, "I don't understand." I said, "Why don't you understand? If Daddy would be alive, and I would, if Daddy would survive me, so he would be maybe in the same place what I am now."

INT: Did you feel that way after the war, too? Did you feel bitter that you survived?

GENIA: No. No. I tell the honest truth.

INT: Yes.

GENIA: You know why? I was forty-five years younger, and I was pretty healthy, if not I wouldn't be able to live through. I was very strong and very strong in my mind. I was born with my mouth open. My husband used to say to me, "You were born with your mouth open. You have to eat or to talk! Better talk." He was concerned because I was a big nosher. I like sweets. Yeah. And I was born among people and I like people. I used to invite whoever I knew and after the war, before I got married. Right after the liberation when I came to Cracow. To Poland, where I used to live before the war. My sister used to live. Whoever came to Cracow, and they went to the Jewish Committee to read the list who survived from our town, and they saw my name, they came to visit. And when came to visit, everybody Friday night, you gonna be here for dinner. I don't know what I'm gonna make it. Friday night you come for dinner. Whoever came Friday night for dinner. What do I make it? I didn't have money to buy a chicken, I didn't have money to buy thing... but I made something.

INT: You made from nothing!

GENIA: Yeah. I went, Oy! I will tell you, I prepared a dinner!

INT: So you said you didn't ask then, why you... Did you ever ask why you survived to yourself? To G-d, did you ever wonder...

GENIA: No. I knew that I survived because a miracle. Somebody had to survive to tell the world the story about Hitler. And when we were in the camp, I told, you remember what my father said, the story with the bush, that somebody has to survive. So I thought that I survived to tell this story in the whole world. In the meantime, there were many, many more, and they have more ability to tell the story than I have. I was working always very hard, never had time for myself to do what I wanted to do, till today. And I just said, it's a miracle. Because I really didn't do nothing special to survive.

The only thing, by the end of the war, in 1945, on January the 21, I escaped from the transport. We supposed to go to deep Germany, and I couldn't go through any more of these camps, so this was the only thing. Otherwise, I went just how it came.

INT: So what do you think about your faith, your belief in...

GENIA: I am a very strong, I **was**, a very strong believer. I correct myself. Because I was a stronger believer than I was after the war.

INT: After the war something happened to...

GENIA: Yeah. After the war, I tell the truth, never in my life I would go in a streetcar on Shabbat. And the first time, on Saturday when I was in Cracow after the liberation when I was searching for my family, and one of my friends also, we all went to search for somebody. And was Saturday, and we were on the (?), we had to go to the Jewish quarter, and we said, “Come on to the ...” and I said, I looked around, I looked around the train if my mother wouldn't see me if I go in the train. And I went in the first time on Shabbat and I was standing and look around if there is some Jews, if they're going to see me to ride on Shabbat. And then we went, and so he said to me, “You see, Genia? Nothing happen! What is the difference? Take a look what we went through. Did you know that the Shabbat or holiday or Yom Kippur or what when you were in the camp?” So, little by little I lost a little bit the faith to G-d. Because, this was before I got married. Because I said, my father was such a righteous religious man. My mother was the most wonderful Orthodox Yiddishe Mama, my sisters were all so religious, my both sisters were shaved up in their sheitels. And how could G-d take them away, and I was at home not 100 percent religious like my parents would want me to be, but I was 95 I would say? What was the five percent not so? I belonged to the organization...

INT: Right.

GENIA: And this was a terrible sin. Which now it is not a sin, but in that time, in this idea what the old religious people had, so, to go in the same room where boys are! And this was the Mizrachi. The Mizrachi woman organization were very religious and I learned a lot there.

INT: But there was that piece of independence that you had or...

GENIA: Maybe. Maybe. And so I said: My G-d, where were You? Why didn't You save my sister, my younger sister, she was alive buried, burned in a fire. And I said: Why? What did I do more than she did to please You? She prayed to You every day. She lived, she lived with G-d. Everything was: Boruch HaShem, Boruch HaShem, and G-d, and G-d, and G-d and G-d, from morning to night. And I wasn't, and You, You let me survive, and my sister not? This was bugging me. My younger sister hurt me more, her death than anybody else. Because parents are not forever with children. We know that we are born to die. But the older sisters, they went with the transport. But my younger sister was with me, until Szubin. You know, the whole time until 1943. And we went through so much during the few years of war. Separation from this, separation from them, and separation from my father and then from my mother and then from the... So this sister was to me more meaningful her death than all the others.

Then, later in the years came, I became again shomer Shabbas, I became again, because I think that we had a normal life, considering sometime in Vineland, New Jersey, we had a neighbor, she was Italian. But she was a very nice Italian. She helped us out, I mean, not financial, but with different ideas, with thing, with some equipment when we need, and the summertime I want to make a garden, and I didn't know how, because I never did. But I always wanted to do something. I was always creative to make. So she used to come over and to show me how to do, and bring a shovel and thing, and to help me. So

she used to ask me, how, because my English, it is not good now, but you can't imagine, forty years ago how it was. But we, we could manage. We understood each other. How do I have family, from where I come. And I start to talk, to talk to her and I told her some stories. And she was wondering, she said, "Oh my G-d, did you live through? You look to me normal." I said, "I am normal. If I wouldn't be normal I wouldn't be in Vineland on the farm." She was wondering, how could a young girl go through so much and be normal.

INT: And what's the answer to that?

GENIA: The answer? There is no answer. This is, this is life. This is life what you make from life, and how you want to make life. If somebody want to sit in the house and cry from morning till night, let him cry. But I wasn't this. I said, I don't want to sit and look on the four walls, or cry that I have to wash the dishes, wash the floor, and wash the clothes. No. I did it with happiness, because I know that this is mine obligation, I do this for myself. I want to look decent. I have to do it.

INT: It was your obligation to yourself to do that, or your obligation to somebody else?

GENIA: To myself, yes. No. To myself, to myself. When I came from, after the liberation in '45 I came to Cracow. I didn't have what to wear, because when I walked out from Auschwitz, during the walking my shoes got completely ripped, because on the snow for two days when you walk from morning to night in the snow, so on one side the ice went, the snow went in, and the other side shoe with a hole, the water went out.

So I met somebody, a German Jew, Lieblish, I wonder if his daughter's alive. I would like to meet her, and to tell her how I am now, and how I was when she met me the first time. And they took me in in their apartment. And while the other boys came from my town, and when I invite them over Friday night, everybody brought a present. What did they bring you thing? Not a pack of chocolate, not a bottle of wine. They brought me a piece of material, so I have, I remember white panana, a piece of white panana, it was a very beautiful piece material, and one man brought me a piece of gray, it wasn't wool, like cotton something. And one brought a navy blue and a piece of, it wasn't silk, but like. And they had a machine, and I made for myself a gray skirt, and a white blouse, and a navy blue bow tie in the front, and for the rest I made a dress in the front to button. They used to call this in Poland, the student dresses, because the students used to wear dresses like this. And Mr. Lieblish said, "Genia, you look like from the window coming out."

And he gave me the privilege that I could take a shower every morning, because they didn't have gas enough hot water for showers for everybody whoever was in this apartment, because we lived a lot of people in this floor. You know, after the war we lived ten, fifteen people in one apartment. Not one, was many rooms, everybody like two people, three people had one room. And I had the privilege to have every morning a shower, which not everybody had this. And every night I washed my blouse and in the morning I had a iron, I iron the blouse, and I was dressed like a student from college.

INT: So it was always very important to you...

GENIA: Yeah. I took care, very cheap, however I could do. I wasn't such a good seamstress, but I made it, and was good. Whatever didn't fit so good, I had enough flesh on me, so it fills in. (Laughter)

INT: So did you ever, was there a time when you lost your belief in G-d at all?

GENIA: Right after the war, yes. If I went on Shabbat to the streetcar, so that mean that I didn't believe anymore in G-d. I knew. Because I was raised in a very Orthodox home. If I would say that I still at that time believed in G-d, I would say a lie. How could you believe and you see so many wonderful people, so many innocent children, heilige neshamale, what did this children did, and how they were terrible butchered and destroyed. They didn't live to became mothers or fathers, doctors, lawyers, people, like people. They were destroyed. Could you believe in G-d!? I wouldn't be human if I would believe.

INT: Right, right. So were you angry at G-d?

GENIA: I was angry on me, on myself.

INT: Why at yourself?

GENIA: I was **very** angry on myself. Because I never point on somebody else that is somebody else's fault. I just said: G-d, if You are there, what did You do? Did You sleep? Didn't You see how Your children are butchered? Didn't You see how Your children are destroyed? Didn't You have the power to stop them?

INT: But you say you were angry at you.

GENIA: Yes, yes. I talk to G-d, but from my anger, I live, I let out my anger by talking to G-d what He did to us. And maybe this did ease my pain. I talk to Him, but He didn't answer me.

INT: But you say you were angry at yourself. Did you blame yourself for something?

GENIA: I don't know. I wouldn't say that I blame myself, it just came that I was very angry.

INT: You were angry.

GENIA: Not for special reason. Maybe I was angry because I was alone, lonely, didn't have anything, poor, I didn't have money even to go even to a movie.

INT: There was a lot of reasons to be angry.

GENIA: And I was a young girl at home, happy, had enough food, clothing, and surrounding with so much love, with the family. And all of a sudden I am alone, and everybody where I looked, also I knew everybody, but everybody looked to me strange. And this brought in me a lot of anger, inside. I didn't show this to nobody.

I have a friend, he lives in Baltimore, Menashe Shambrod. So when he came to Cracow, and he saw on the list that Genia Klapholtz is alive, he came over, because I was on the third floor, he came over and said, "Oy, Genia, if you are alive, (?) [Yiddish]." You know what this means? So I will be all right. And right after the war...

INT: Did he see your anger? Did you say...

GENIA: No.

INT: Did you say, you didn't show, you didn't show anybody.

GENIA: No. No. G-d forbid. The opposite. When they came, I said, "Listen, you come Friday." Friday night we all came together. So what do you think I made for dinner? I want to see if you have imagination. (laughter) A water soup and a vegetable meat loaf. I had money enough to go to the (?), it is a store, and I bought some cauliflower because it was in the summertime already, and I don't remember some vegetables, and I put some oat bread, and some onions, and I chopped everything, a little bit margarine, and I fried on the oven, because at that time I didn't think if it's fattening, or not fattening. And it was delicious! And we ate, and we sing, and we are all sitting, and we told stories, not sad stories. We were singing all the songs from whatever we knew.

INT: So what do you think happened to the anger?

GENIA: Disappeared after I married. After we got married my life changed completely. I found, I loved my husband always. I was very proud of him. When I was a little girl, I think I told you this story, I don't want to repeat.

INT: The story about how you got together?

GENIA: No, no. When I was a little, maybe seven or eight years old...

INT: Oh, yes.

GENIA: I went to my uncle.

INT: Yes, yes, you did tell the story about meeting him, yes, yes.

GENIA: And I came home and I was so proud, I said, "Oy, (?) [Yiddish]." And then when he was married, so we were very close. You know, when you come from a small

town in Poland, so the family and the people and the neighbors are very close. It is not a distance like here. Like my neighbor want to come in for a few minutes, she has to call me if she can come in. And we didn't know about this. We didn't have a telephone. We couldn't call. We just came! Nobody had to be special dressed when somebody comes in, nobody has to have special make the table because somebody comes in, because we knew we got up in the morning, we have to wash the face and to get dressed, and to come and to clean, and that's what was. It's a different life!

INT: Yeah. And so you say after you got married you think the anger, and a lot of that...

GENIA: Yes. After this, because, again and again the same thing I have to say. I was a happy soul.

INT: And you had somebody to share it with.

GENIA: And I was always dancing around and singing and hugging and everything what we did, and in the morning I cleaned up I make ready, and I went to work, and I came home, and the dinner was on time. And I went to work in Vineland, New Jersey. I had one boy, because the younger boy was born later. And every Thursday night I came home from work in the wintertime, because I worked in the wintertime Friday just till twelve o'clock. But Thursday night I baked challah for Shabbas. Every night my dinner was in time.

I have a friend from Vineland, she lived in Monsey, she lost her husband shortly. She remind me, "Genia, remember when I came to you Thursday night and I wanted to knead the challah because you just came home from work?" She didn't work. "And the baby was crying, and you didn't let me." Finally I let her knead the challah, and she said, she never baked Friday. Why should she bake? She went to the bakery and she bought a challah. Till today, I don't miss to bake challahs for Shabbas. I said, so we have three mitzvot, and one is to make the blessing over the bread. The rest we don't keep it. Is Taharas HaMishpacha, this is the cleanness of family, so we don't. But challah I bake.

INT: You have a lot of energy.

GENIA: More energy than strength. You have the right thing. I have a lot of energy. Because everything what I did, it wasn't the strength or the power of will. I had a very strong willpower, and I had to do. My husband, let him rest in peace, he wasn't so aggressive like some others to make a lot of money. But he....

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

GENIA: So I helped him out in every way I could.

INT: What did he do before the war? What kind of work did your husband do?

GENIA: Oh, he had, when he was a yeshiva boy, you know, he learned. He was, then, by 18 years, so in our town, was a small town, where I was born. It was not future for the youngsters, because there was no factories. You know, it was a small, poor town. He went to Tarnow. And he went to, he stopped learning during the day and he went to work hats, men, men's hats, and I think women's hats. I don't know exactly. But I think so, because we never talked about it, after the war. But I remember from before the war. And at night he used to go to the yeshiva and during the day he worked. And then, when he got older, 20, 21, he was already engaged, and they want to get married, so he went into this factory as a partner. And I think that they remained until the war broke out. Partnership in this hat factory. I think this called the Fenststulpen. This is the raw material they made for the hats. They didn't finish it, but he told me once, because he had once a felt hat, and he was in the rain, so he stood over the steam from a pot of water, and he rinse around, around, that the hair should come out nicely. So I asked him, "How do you know this to do?" So he said, "This was my profession. I did this the whole day."

INT: So then coming to America, and trying to find a new profession...

GENIA: Yeah, he couldn't find in his field. This wasn't probably here this different you know.

INT: So not only was it a strange country, a strange language, but it also was...

GENIA: Everything strange.

INT: Starting new.

GENIA: A new life, like a newborn baby. Just like newborn children. We were, when we came here we were like two newborn children what starting to go in the world. They start to talk, they start to walk, first they start to crawl. And then to walk. And then to dance, and then to run, and then to go by car to buy a pack of cigarette and later they have to run to lose a couple pounds. (laughter) And I always say, "They're running. Why you running? You go with the car to the Pathmark, and bring home the shopping, and then you run to the Pathmark. Why don't you run and bring the shopping by yourself?" But this is America. I couldn't understand this for a while.

INT: Well I'm sure there were a lot of things that were hard to understand about the way things were done here compared to what it was...

GENIA: Yes, yes, yes. Completely, completely. Of course. I don't know how is now in Europe. Sixty years ago America wasn't in such a progress that is now. And maybe now in Poland is also different, because I write sometime, now I don't ask questions, but in the beginning I used to write to the Pole where I was hiding when I escaped from transport. So she told me she has a washing machine. And she has a refrigerator. So now in Poland probably is also different.

INT: Some, a little, a little. So how would you describe your marriage?

GENIA: The most wonderful marriage somebody can have. We had. I mention before that my brother-in-law was here from Israel. And I used to set very nicely my table to dinner every night. The table was that you can make a picture. The napkins I can fold 30 different ways the napkins. So once my brother asked me, "Genia, wie es doch das gelernt? In Wisnicz?" So doch, yeah, where did you learn this, in Wisnicz? Because he knew that Wisnicz was a small town.

One time we sitting, and they were talking the two brothers, you know. And then I went over, and I don't know what came to me, and I hugged my husband and I gave him a kiss, and I said, "Let's have a tea." You know, because I don't like when they go in in a deep conversation about the sadness, so I always try to break up, not to mourn. So he said, "Hasl," in Jewish, because he spoke Jewish, "Hasl, (Yiddish). I envy you with your wife. Because I don't have this happiness with my wife. She's always like a sourpuss. Nothing is good enough for her. Whatever I do is not good, wherever we go is not good, whatever we see, she's not pleased. And I see that Genia, wherever you go, whatever you do, she's happy, she jumps." So I said, "I don't know, I am born this way. This is how my father made me. He probably was very happy at the moment, so the happiness came to me, too."

INT: So how did the two of you decide things, you and your husband? How did you make decisions?

GENIA: Only by talking. Everything by talking. And I believe in talking. I believe that you have, for example. My husband had a lot of cuts, and I was always the scare one. I was afraid to buy something that we wouldn't be able to make some profit on it, or something. So once I remember when we came to Philadelphia, this was in 1961. We came '60, but '61 somebody came in in the store and said he has a five apartment house for sale, \$50,000. And Henry said, okay, he will buy. And I looked at him. Where did he have the money? We didn't have money at that time. We would get a mortgage, the owner who sold, who was selling, want to give for the whole mortgage, just \$5,000 down payment. I said, "Henry, you gonna throw out the \$5,000 and you will be obligated the rest of your life to pay the \$50,000 for the house. You don't want," I said, "I am against. I am afraid. We have two children, so how?" My younger one was at that time six years old. So he start to talk to me every day, every night when we close, so the children went to sleep, and he start to talk, and he start to say, "Listen. You can't be tight with your dollar. If you don't want to spend, you can't make it. If you want to make, you have to spend, and we will make it," and Oy. He talked so long, I said, "Okay, go buy." What can I tell you? If Henry wouldn't be lucky that in, three months later the house was sold, we would be in debt till today.

This man, the same man what sold this house to my husband came in at three months, four months later, I don't recall exactly, there is somebody he want, because this was a corner house. He want to buy this house and build there a gas station. And he said to my husband, when it was sold everything. We didn't make any money, but we didn't lose any

money. He said to me, “Your husband have a lot of guts! How could he buy without money a house to have obligation among people who every day is some other violations in the house, they putting a doll in the toilet and then the water is not running down. There is a fire from the gas, they don't turn off. They making so much problems. But he is so lucky that somebody want to build there a gas station.”

INT: So you talked over, you talked over things.

GENIA: Yeah.

INT: How about if you disagreed?

GENIA: He had a way to persuade me that I should agree. He had a way to talk like not a husband to a wife, but like a good father to a child. Not only a father, but a good father, who know how to talk. My husband to know which nerve to pinch that will hit me. And... Once here already in Philadelphia, it was probably 20 years ago, more than 20 years. The electric company sold some shares. I was never a gambler. Stocks, this wasn't my line, because I was always afraid. I had obligation to meet what we have to meet. The children of today are different. They are spending today what they are going to make next week. Not next week. Next month, maybe next year. I was different. I spend today what I made last month. I always put away a couple dollars to have for tomorrow. And the children today are different.

INT: Well, but they didn't live through, the children of today didn't live through what you lived through.

GENIA: No. They were born and raised in different environment, and different culture, and different everything. So he came home, he was at that time by the Ermans, I think you know, Bracha knows very good the Ermans. And they are very, very wonderful people. She lost her husband, her brother, but she is still alive. And we were there, and she's a very shrewd business lady, Mrs. Erman. So Runia said to Henry, “Henry, the electric company kanne hat keufen shares and they giving like six percent, and the bank was like three percent.” So he came home, “Nu, Genia. Zu loch keufen, couple thousand dollar in these shares?” “Haskush, I said, why should you buy, why should you bother, the children are grown now, and I'm afraid what's gonna be if tomorrow they go bankruptcy, we don't have anything. This is good for people who have more money, so they putting aside \$5,000 or \$10,000.” What can I tell you? He talked to me so much, for a whole week, until I said, “Okay, okay, go and buy.” We went, we bought.

INT: So you were more cautious, and he was more willing to take a risk.

GENIA: Because by him, the dollar wasn't a idol. He said, dollars, the money is important only to have if you need it. Otherwise, what's the difference? Make believe I have ten million dollars in the bank. It would make me happier if I would have nine million dollars? It's the same thing. I have to pay for everything what I have, and I still have a dollar in a pocket I am satisfied. He always used to say this. As long I can pay for

the food, and for all what we need for household, and I still have a dollar in my pocket, I am all right.

INT: So you really saw things the same way, the two of you, as far as what you wanted, the goals that you had.

GENIA: Yes.

INT: What you wanted to have.

GENIA: Because like I said, my husband didn't, not that he didn't care, but he wasn't so anxious for the dollars. The money didn't mean so much for him. He didn't care to be rich, to have something, a mansion, or diamonds, or special new furnitures. If I used to say to him: "Ach, you know what? We could use a new dining room set." "Genia, take a look the chairs, they are wonderful. We sit on them very good." As long it was clean and good, we can sit on it, so what's good. So this... And I learned from him that is enough what I have.

When we came to Vineland, I didn't have money to buy even material to buy a dress. And came summer, it was so hot, so at that time -- this was in 1949, I think, 1949, or 1950, I don't know exactly when -- so we had for the feed for the chickens in cotton bags, printed cotton bags. So once I saw such beautiful bags in the feed dealer, give us a rebate 25 cents for each bag when it is empty. So I saw sometime came a new bag, and sometime an old ones. When it came the new bags, I said to my husband, I'm gonna leave this two bags for 50 cents. I ripped it and washed it, and ironed it, and starch and I made a beautiful sundress. And I said to my husband, "Come on. Let's go to Mr. Adaman, I will show him his feed bag." And he saw, he said, "Oh, my G-d! This can only do the new American. The Greener."

INT: To make something from nothing.

GENIA: So as a bonus, he gave me two new bags, completely new, not used. So I was chutzpadik, I said, "Mr. Adaman, can I have two more the same? I have two windows in the kitchen, and they look so shoddy, and I would like to make curtains for the windows." And he said, "Sure, sure, take it and make and be happy." And I make beautiful curtains with ruffles and with...and washed and starched and ironed. And the children of today, they're buying today curtains and they hang three months on the window, they don't put even in the washing machine, but right away in the garbage, because is too long to look at one thing. It's, it's different. I was different. I don't speak for somebody else, I don't know. But I was different.

INT: But don't you think that a lot of it had to do with what you had been through?

GENIA: I think so. I think so. Yes. Because my wishes, when I was in camp was when, if I will survive this and I will be liberated, I would have a small room, and a whole bread and butter on the table, that I could eat as much as I want to, and a big pot of

coffee. I had yesterday the company. I made for dinner, you know what? Potatoes in beet borscht, soup. Why? And I told them, and it was, don't ask. Because I said when, after the liberation, if we will get together, I will make a dinner. What is going to be? Potatoes, meatballs, and sauce, gravy, and cold borscht. And a lot of talking. And that's what we had last night. We were talking till 11:00 from 5:00. 4:30 they arrived, we start dinner, and then we talk, we talk, we talk, all about the Holocaust, and this is not people survivors, they all American people. But I know them from the Culture Club. But they said, we are also survivors. All the Jews are survivors. Survivors from World War II, survivors from World War I.

INT: So they ask you stories about it?

GENIA: Yeah, I told them. That this is my feast dinner. That this is traditional. Whenever I have company and got together, potatoes, but I didn't make meatballs, because I had dairy, I had last night dairy. So I had baked potato put in the microwave oven, this taste nice, with sour cream and borscht, is nice.

INT: So in Vineland you had a farm.

GENIA: In Vineland we had a chicken farm.

INT: And did that work out for you? Neither of you were farmers, neither of you knew anything about it.

GENIA: It was very easy in America because everything is ready. The chicks we bought a day old, right from the incubator. And we prepared the stove, they showed us their special gas stoves, with the rings around in paper, and the babies were under the heat, under the incubators, and the feed comes ready, and one thing I can tell you. We were for ten years in Vineland, and this was our happiest year in America. The ten years in Vineland, New Jersey. Because we were all new Americans and we all have more or less the same age after war children. The children went together to school. The parents came together and we had parties every Sunday, and we organized a farmers' Verband, this a organization for the farmers. And we used to meet every Sunday and for the children we used to make Chanukah parties and Purim parties, and Tu B'Shvat parties, and every holiday whatever it was. And we used to make toys and we used to make in the summertime, there is a little river in Brookmansville, I forgot already the name from the river, but we anyhow, we used to call this Tel Aviv. Because all the Jewish farmers used to come there after the war, after the summertime the day was so long, and the chickens going to sleep early, we used to cook at home and to bring the food there, and there we ate together. I brought today stuffed cabbage, the other brought something else, and they brought a kugel, and we sat to the table, the children went to the water. It was such a happy life that really people in the city can't imagine.

INT: And you made a family there.

GENIA: Yes. We had friends. Sometimes I look at the pictures and I say, Oh my G-d. How young I was! It's not the same, no?

INT: And they were all survivors?

GENIA: Yeah, all survivors.

INT: So it was like a family.

GENIA: Like, yeah. We didn't call a family. We were friends. Friends. Good friends. But were different friends than now. Now I have also a lot of friends but they are not sincere friends. We were sincere friends. We didn't know about shtikele, you know what this means? About things to say. She said this, she did this, she did that. We didn't gossip. We didn't have time. We didn't know what this mean, gossip. Because we didn't have to gossip, because we had always something to, I remember.

I was in the PTA from the Jewish day school, we organized a Jewish day school in Vineland, New Jersey, because my younger, my older boy was six years old and there was no Jewish day school. And I said, we are not going to send Aryeh to a public school and when they see Jesus and the prayers, we are used this from home, you know, and by us, you know by my mother in the house, I mentioned this last night. We weren't allowed to say the word Jesus. "Yossele." What they called him Yossele Pendrick [?] But "Jesus." Och! G-d forbid! This is a sin! To say this word. So...

INT: So you organized the school yourself.

GENIA: We organized the Jewish day school and I was, and board of the PTA and I had to give a financial report. I was the financial secretary. Always, money, money, money, money. And I gave the report, was one the teacher's wife was there, the Hebrew teacher's wife was there at this meeting. This was by the end of the school year. And she said, "I have many reports, but such a report I never heard." Everybody was laughing when I said. Because I mention we spend the money for this, we got in for this, every individual thing. And the rest, what was left over, (Yiddish) (laughter)

INT: You have to say that in English. You have to say that in English.

GENIA: And the rest what was, so we fixed a hole, where the hole had to be fixed. I didn't know nothing else, what to say, because was left over a few dollars after the report, what I gave, we got in for example, let's say a hundred dollars, and we spent only eighty. So the twenty dollars, we fixed a hole where the hole has to be fixed.

INT: So you were good with money?

GENIA: Yes, always.

INT: So you were always the person...

GENIA: I was good in math. I was good in math. Very good. When we had the store, we had the adding machine, and I could figure out faster if was a (?) for 20 items, 1,2,3, it was figured out. I was very good in math.

INT: So you and your husband were together in the store.

GENIA: And my husband was better with the figures in the head, not even marked down on the paper. When we had the luncheonette, later when we moved from Wynnefield to Broad Street, the luncheon, we had the luncheonette, we used to have take-out orders in the luncheonette mostly. So they came in, and they called in for the order, then they came in, and my husband, \$5.37. Once was a very short man, he said, "Mr. Henry, I want you should put on the adding machine." He put and came out just the same. He said, "Every day, when I come back to the office and I tell them that you never figure on the adding machine, but on the head, and comes out just perfect. How?" So my husband said, "I'm born with an adding machine in my head."

(BREAK)

INT: Let me ask you a little bit about having children. About when you, I know your first son was born before you came here, and then you moved here, and you moved to Vineland, right, and lived in Vineland. How did you decide that, or what did you think about when you thought about having children and bringing them to a strange country and.?

GENIA: I wanted to have children. I think that I mentioned this before. That my husband lost two sons. And I prayed to G-d that I should be able to give my husband two sons. One was born in Germany, and the other was born in Vineland, New Jersey. It was very hard to bring them up because of the financial situation, but we managed. I went to work, we had a chicken farm, my husband was working from the farm, we had a laborer, of course, and he took care my older boy on the farm. My younger boy was born later. And then when they start to go to school, so was easier. We were for ten years in Vineland. In 1960 we came to Philadelphia. In Vineland we had a wonderful life.

INT: I think you told me a little bit about your friends, and all the community that was...

GENIA: Yeah. We all had after war crowd, we called our children the "after war crowd," because they were all more or less the same age. It was different than it is now.

INT: What made you decide to move from there?

GENIA: Because we couldn't make a living. The eggs was cheap, the labor was high, and the food was high. I will tell you short, and you will understand. To produce a dozen of eggs in Vineland, New Jersey, it costs 33 cents. And we sold wholesale 29 cents a dozen. So we couldn't make a living. We had to pay for the chickens, we had to

pay for the feed for the chickens, so we had to move and to look for some at that time, almost I would say 80 percent of the Jewish farmers left Vineland.

INT: So that must have been hard for you to leave someplace you were so happy.

GENIA: But I was used to everything. I was used to any change. I could adjust so easy to every change what we made. We was in New York for six months, we had a store and I went to work. And then we moved to Egg Harbor, and I had just in Egg Harbor for six months partners with my cousin in a farm. And then we moved to Vineland, New Jersey, I adjust. Maybe because I went through so much, and I didn't want to make bitter our life. So I was satisfied with everything. Some women were not satisfied. They were crying. They were bitter. This is not good enough, this is not good enough. But I was different. I always tried that in the house should be happiness that they should be satisfied with everything. Even we didn't have nothing. But we, I tried that my husband shouldn't be bitter that he can't provide for the family what he wanted to.

INT: I'm sure it was hard for him to provide.

GENIA: It was hard for both of us.

INT: In a new land, in a new country.

GENIA: Was hard for both of us. But at that time, you see, now is much easier for the immigrants. But at that time when we came to the States, there was no help like now from the HIAS or from the Joint. It was organized, the HIAS and the Joint, but we didn't know about it. My husband was one of the proud people, and I was also one of the proud people. I didn't know what this mean that somebody should give me something for nothing. You know, that we have to work for it. To deserve it. Not just. So it was very hard for us. It was one time that we didn't have even for bread to buy. But we managed.

INT: How? How did you manage?

GENIA: How?

INT: Who did you talk to, who did you...

GENIA: No. To nobody. To each other.

INT: The two of you.

GENIA: I remember like this. I will never forget. It was a week where I start to work in the factory because we didn't, we couldn't make out on the farm. This was in the beginning when we moved to Vineland. This was in 1951, maybe, I don't remember exactly.

INT: I think you told me about when you went to the factory when you first moved there.

GENIA: And I went to work like, Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. And Friday I supposed to have the check for the shop. And it was Thursday night. We had lunchtime, our main meal. And at night we used to have bread and butter and coffee. That's what we were used from the other side, that in the evening we used to have bread and butter. A pound of bread at that time was 18 cents. And we look in all the pockets, we don't have the 18 cents. We had 15 cents. And we looked here and there. Finally we found three more cents. And my husband went to buy a pound of bread, because across the street where our farm was a bakery. And we had a pound of bread. So we had for supper and for breakfast. And then I came home, I had paid nine dollars at that time for the two days. Because tax and social security, whatever, maybe was 12, but they took out. For nine dollars I shopped in the A & P two full baskets of food. Fifty-five cents was a jar of Maxwell House coffee. Five pounds of sugar was I think... everything was cents. Flour. Everything was so cheap. That for nine dollars, I had a lot of food. And nobody knew if we have money or we don't have money, if we have what to eat, if we don't have what to eat.

INT: You didn't talk about it outside of your house.

GENIA: No. Nobody should know. But later, later, I was pregnant with the other boy, and so my husband said to our, was a very good neighbor, Mr. and Mrs. Bordenstein. And I don't know it was talking something, so my husband told him the story that we finally could have the 18 cents for a pound of bread. So he said to my husband, "Hasl, (Yiddish) Why didn't you tell me? I couldn't give you 20 dollars for a week or two weeks or four weeks, and to have, you have a small child, and if you didn't have for bread, so you didn't come to me and to tell me! Oh." But it was all right. Because eggs we had from the chickens, and at that time we didn't care about cholesterol. So for breakfast we had scrambled eggs and a coffee and was all right.

INT: So the two of you saw it the same way, that it was you two and you were going to handle your own problems together without...

GENIA: Yes. Always. Always. We didn't use nobody's advice. Because what is good for one, is not good for the other. The most important thing what was that we could understand each other. And this I think it was a big help, until the last day what my husband passed away. So you always talked whatever we had. We had problems with our son, my older son. About the school, about college, he didn't want to go, and we were very anxious to give an education, because we believed in education. And we didn't go to nobody for advice. Because nobody can give us advice. My husband always used to say, "You can bring the horse to the water, but you can't make him drink." If he goes with him to school, he takes him to college, he goes in one door and he went out the other door. If he didn't want to go to school, nothing could be done. We were talking to him and explained to him, nothing help. And we, between each other, so we talked. We

talked and we said, Listen. That's what is. He don't want to. He will grow up and he will be all right without.

And the most important thing in life is to talk out whatever it is inside. Nobody can see what is inside the body, because the outside looks different than the inside.

INT: So besides your husband, who did you talk to about what was inside?

GENIA: Nobody. Nobody. Just between each other. Because I never wanted to be a nebbish, you know, that somebody should have pity with me. That somebody should... nobody could help me. I didn't have a sister, I didn't have a brother. I didn't have a mother to whom to turn. So to strange people I'm going to tell my problems? Everybody had a problem at that time. Everybody had different problem. One had this, and one had this, and it wouldn't help anyhow. The only help is to talk over the problem with the person who you trust. And believe in it. And I trust my husband, my husband trusts me. I believe in him and he believed in me. And we careful shared everything.

INT: And did you trust anybody else outside? Did you trust this country that you lived in? Did you trust the community?

GENIA: No. Not with my problems. I trust everything else, but the problems, this was my problem, and I had to carry it on my back.

INT: So what were the major problems that you had?

GENIA: The first before when the children was small, financial. This was a big problem. Because being in a country, to seeing so much good things, and not have the power to earn because of the financial situation, so it is a little problem. And we couldn't make a living here, we couldn't make a living there, we had to move from here, we have to move there, we moved so many times until we settled down, and each time, it was a lot of work and a lot of aggravation. And depressing because we had to do for ourselves everything. Mostly I did, because when my husband was in business, so I did the moving. But whom shall I say? Nobody will come to help me. For example now. I can move with my right hand. I don't tell nobody. Because nobody will come to help me. Only if I need help, I will take in a girl to help me. And the problem is mine. And the same thing was then.

And then, when the children were born, when they were small, so we had a lot of pleasure. We enjoyed them **very** much, every little thing what we saw that the children saw, this was something. First of all, my older son was A student. He brought home report cards from top to bottom A's. Matter of fact, one year he made two grades in one year. And I had such beautiful letters from the teacher, that it's a pleasure to have Aryeh in the class. And we thought that he would be a second Einstein, a genius. But you see sometime the children are small they learn, they want to know, and then when they grow up, they changing. So we had to live with it, with the situation. My younger son wasn't a

A student. He was a little. But my younger son is more successful now, without schooling, than my older son, with schooling.

So we had a lot of problems in our life. It wasn't so easy. We stepped on different roads. But somehow we worked out. I don't know exactly how we did it, but we did it. And nobody knew what is happened.

First of all, like I had a neighbor, Mrs. Feid. She used to say -- I have to say this in Jewish, because in English it doesn't sound like this -- "Bei Mrs. Klapholtz is sprei zoch nicht wenn zu haben mie yahr, und sie sich schmutzen nicht wenn sie nicht du." ["At Mrs. Klapholz's it's tidy even when there isn't a special occasion, not messy like at your place."] Because that mean that I -- I don't know how to explain this in English, it wouldn't sound -- but I'm not a show-off when we have better times, and I don't cry when we have worse times. Every time when she came in, there were tablecloths on the table, and a sponge cake and coffee on the table, we had to eat and to drink, and to laugh and to talk. We laughed a lot, we talked a lot. And jokes we used to tell a lot.

INT: Do you think that helped?

GENIA: Yes. This, I think that because of my strong power in me in -- I don't know how to express this, but this helped us to go through. And my husband was also a very, he was a quiet one. Very quiet, but very learned. And he used to talk us out a lot.

INT: So how about when you got depressed or he got depressed, how did you deal with that?

GENIA: We talked, and we cried. And when I start to cry, that I don't have my sisters, I don't have to whom to say anything, so he used to say, "You have me. And I have you. And you are not the only one. We are all in the same boat. We all lost everybody. We are all the only survivors. And thank G-d that we found each other." And so on, so on, I can't remember exactly the words what was said 20 years ago, but more or less. More than 20 years.

INT: And did you tell your children about the Holocaust? When did you tell them, how did you tell them, and...

GENIA: Mine Aryeh, we used to find always a way to tell him. For example, when he went to the first grade, I think I told you this, when he came home, and he said, "Mommy, how come that so and so has a Bubbe and a Zayde? How come that this other has a aunt and a uncle, and I don't have a Bubbe, and I don't have a Zayde, and I don't have a uncle, and I don't have a aunt?" So we tried to tell them, that there are all different people in the world, that there are bad people and good people. And like he used to watch the "Lone Ranger Rides Again." So he see there were good people and bad people, and they were killing, so at the time when our parents were alive, when we were young children at home, there was a bad man, and we told him little by little about the story from Hitler. And he was very much aware. He knew about...

(BREAK)

When he was, I think, 11 years of age, because in Vineland yet, he read "Mein Kampf" from Adolf Hitler, and -- but he was a quiet one. He didn't want to talk too much about it, to hurt us. But my children were educated a lot about the Holocaust, both of them. The younger was different because, when he were born, we were only five years in Vineland, and we moved to Philadelphia. No, six years, because he was over six when he came here, and he start to go to school here. He was raised in a different environment among children in the city; he went and he had his brother. He didn't think about it like my older son. My older son was on the farm, you know, so there weren't so many children around to play. And he was more with us, and we had more time for him.

INT: And when you were feeling sad or unhappy, would you tell him what you were sad about?

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

GENIA: The rest nice just like any other child in the United States. He went to school very well. If I would show you the pictures what we made when he was the first day in school, and so on and so on, every time nice dressed, and nice combed. Of course, toys he didn't have as much what the children have today, but he was happy with this what he had. He didn't need that much. Who said that a child should have 25 dolls? If he had one car, so he played with the car.

INT: So how do you think you and your husband, having gone through the Holocaust, how do you think that affected the way you raised your children? Being in a different country than you were raised?

GENIA: I don't know, because when we raised the children, when we came here, we didn't think about the past, we didn't think about the future, we were thinking just for the present. We are here, we have a child, we have to raise them. Matter of fact, we made plans that when Aryeh will grow up maybe we will buy a drugstore, and we will have the house on the farm, because we didn't know that it will turn different.

INT: But it was so different than the way you were raised. You know, it was such a different world.

GENIA: But we didn't **think** about the past. We left the past completely away. We picked up the pieces for ourself, and this is just like a boy with a girl getting married. So the girl don't think how she was at home. She thinks how to build a house for themself. So that's what we were thinking. Just the present, day by day, that we, we got married, we have a child, and we hope to have another child, and we hope to make some money to buy some furnitures, some dishes, and linen, whatever we need. And we didn't think.

We didn't talk between each other, steady about the past. Later when the children were growing up, but all right. Whenever we came together, the survivors, we used to meet each other very often. So whatever we start to talk, always had to come out about the time during World War II. It doesn't matter. Whatever we start.

INT: Of course.

GENIA: Till today. Whenever we talk and we talk a little bit longer, when we are together four or five people, and we are sitting talking for three, four hours, so always the last hour has to come out from the camp. Because this is engraved in our mind.

INT: Of course!

GENIA: And we can't erase it.

INT: Of course.

GENIA: Yeah, so.

INT: So how do you think that had an impact on the children, on your children? On the way you raised them? Were you fearful, or nervous if they had problems, that...

GENIA: No, no, I don't think so. I wouldn't see, I think that they were raised like any other normal child. Because they had a normal life. My Aryeh was born in Germany, he was a year old when we came to United States, and what does a child from a year know about? Nothing. And then we moved to Jersey, and he was very happy there. And then we moved to Philadelphia. He went to school. He went to the Akiba, from the Akiba he went to Overbrook Park, then he went to Gratz College, and then he start to go to Drexel, but from Drexel he didn't want to finish it. He finished later after he got married. So he didn't know about bad times. Because we didn't show the children something that we don't have. Of course we didn't give the children this what our children give now their children.

INT: But how about the feelings that had to come up if they were, when there were happy occasions, or when there were problems, the old feelings, the sadness, the...

GENIA: We never, we never showed this to the children. We never talked in the present of the children that my sister was killed, my mother was killed, or something like this. We didn't want to implant in them something that they would dream. Like I dream. And they were raised like normal children in normal family, I think.

INT: Did they ask? Did they ask you about it? Like when your friends came and you talked, and they heard stories.

GENIA: No, no. They were already, they were already in bed. My children were raised to go 7:00 to bed. And my friends never came before 7:00. Always after dinner.

INT: But how about when they were teenagers, and older, and they became more interested, and more aware? Did they ask you?

GENIA: I don't recall if they ask special. My children, I would say he is very sensitive. He didn't want to hurt us. Sometimes, my children didn't know even that my husband was married and he had two children they were killed. My husband said, it is better not to talk about it.

INT: When did they find out?

GENIA: When they find out? I don't know how, and when, I know one thing. That my younger son went to Israel, this was probably in 1966 -- no, 1966 I went. In 1968, maybe. He went to Israel. And he came to visit my cousin, my husband's cousin. And he said to her, "Please, show me the pictures from my Daddy's children." And she said, "Jesse! How do you know? I had a hard time to take out from the album all the children from Daddy and here you come and tell me to show me pictures." When he came back, so we found out this. My cousin wrote to us, that we know. And I don't know how he find out.

INT: Did you ever ask him?

GENIA: No. No.

INT: And did he ever ask?

GENIA: We didn't want to make any conversation what is not pleasant. But later on we were talking. Later on we were talking that Daddy was married and then so the pictures, because I didn't hide anything. And....

INT: So you tried to protect them from knowing about the sadness and about the...

GENIA: Not mine, only me. The same was my husband. He never want to talk about his first marriage and the children in the presence of the children. I think that he didn't even talk with friends about it. I don't know. But sometime you know, not willingly so came out something.

INT: So did you agree with him about that?

GENIA: Yes.

INT: The two of you agreed that you didn't want them to hear that.

GENIA: Yes. Because when a child listen that a brother is killed, as a little baby, it is emotional; he could get disturbed. And we didn't want that his mind should go around. A child has a mind, too, and a child is thinking. And if a child was thinking, "Oh, he was

killed, my brother. Was killed. Maybe I will be killed.” You know, this is... So we were thinking about it is not good to feed the child while they are young with something unpleasant. But now my daughter-in-law has a whole library about the Holocaust. I was there once babysitting. So my grandson brings me and, “Bubbe, you want to read this, from the Holocaust?” I said, “Benjy, I'm not going to read my life.”

INT: Does Benjy know that you were in the Holocaust?

GENIA: Yes. So he said, “Oh, my Mommy has so many books, a whole library from it.” I said, “Okay. Let her read.” But once, this is my older son's. So she said, “I don't want to talk with you, Mom, about the Holocaust, because we don't want to hurt you.” But the younger daughter-in-law, what she just called me, she is very anxious to know my life. And I told her, I don't have to talk to you now. When I'm going to finish, and I will have the tapes, you going to listen to it and you will know, and whatever you don't know, if you want to know something more personal, so I will be willing to talk to you.”

INT: And how about your sons?

GENIA: My son is very busy, and he really don't have time.

INT: I mean, has he in the past, did he ask you about his brothers? Did your sons want to...

GENIA: No. No.

INT: Have you ever told them anything about their... about what happened to them?

GENIA: No. No. No. Never. Never. Never. I don't recall. Maybe we said something, maybe, I don't recall that we made from it an issue. But maybe when he came back from Israel, so I don't recall exactly how it was, but probably we were talking something. Probably.

INT: And how about your exact experiences? You and your husband and the Holocaust. Did your sons ever ask you what happened to you?

GENIA: Not exactly, because they knew. We told them. We told them there was a war when they will grow up, and Aryeh was 12 years already. He read “Mein Kampf” and he knew a lot about the Holocaust.

INT: But specifically to you.

GENIA: And, and, we told him that we lost everybody during the Holocaust, and he is very precious to us, and whatever he is doing, we are pleased with him. And of course we told him, not in one time, we didn't sit down and talk, but when came a holiday or something, so it was very sad for both of us. Especial in the beginning, the first years. That after all, we both come from a large family, and comes holidays are always

memories come back. And we used to tell the children how it was at home. How Pesach a seder looked at home. How my father was dressed in white and the white pillow, and the table and how it was set. Everything. And, but, not set thing.

INT: Did that help you feel better to tell them about your memories, or was that...

GENIA: Yes, yes, because I think that we should share the life from the ancestors. How was at home. If not, they wouldn't know even that they had grandparents. But we didn't tell them that my father was killed, my mother was killed, you know, to make brutal them mind. But how it was. How it was Friday at home, how my father used to go Friday to the steam bath, and for Shabbas how my mother prepared for Shabbas, and how is now, that now is so much easier, and that my mother had everything hard. And things like this. And dishes always what we baked for Pesach, what my mother make for Shavuot, cheesecake, for Rosh Hashanah honey cake, and sponge cake for a sweet year, for Sukkos was strudel and walnut cake and for Chanukah, and every holiday, I used to tell them, "This my mother used to bake and this what I am doing." And for many, many years, I used to make everything the same what my mother used to bake. And the whole week you didn't have chicken soup. But Friday, because my mother used to cook every Friday chicken soup for Shabbas. So my younger son used to call chicken soup, "Mom, do you have Shabbas soup?" He didn't know chicken soup, he know that this is a Shabbas soup.

INT: So how about the dreams? You said you used to have dreams, you used to have dreams and nightmares. Do you still have it?

GENIA: I still have nightmares. I still have nightmares. Yes. This can't go away. Not for me and not nobody. And if somebody will tell you that they don't have nightmares, don't believe them. Because they just will tell you. But I take sleeping pills. Not that I should sleep, because I don't care, I sleep one more or less. But if I take a sleeping pill, I don't dream. And if two, three nights, I see that I can sleep without, so I don't take. And then when I start to dream, the next night, I take right away a sleeping pill.

INT: So does it wake you up when you have the nightmares?

GENIA: It wakes me up, and I, I am like paralyzed, like, like sick the next day. Because I always run in my sleep. I hide, and the Germans are coming. And we have the curtains close the window, and through the window I see that the Germans are coming, and I hide here. And this running in the sleep makes so tired, that when I wake up I'm so tired, that I lay just like a piece of, like this. Without any energy, without any life.

INT: So all those years, when you were working so hard, when you were raising your children, and they were young, and I'm sure you were having these nightmares during the time, how did...

GENIA: At that time didn't affect so much, because I had my husband. And when you have somebody at your side, it's different to cope than to be alone. To whom shall I talk?

To my pictures on the wall? I can look at them. I can tell them a story, but it is not like I tell to my husband. You see, life is different. When the children were small, I was so tired, I lay down to sleep and I don't know, whenever I woke up, I had to get dressed to have ready. I was a very good housekeeper, and I was working with my husband for 25 years together in the store. And we never had any difficulties. Because I gave in a lot.

INT: You did.

GENIA: Yes. I always gave in. Yeah.

INT: Is that how, that's how you dealt with the problems, or differences of opinions?

GENIA: I think so, I think so, yes. I wasn't stubborn, you know. I should say, "No. You don't do this." When my husband said, "We doing this, we going here." "Okay." The only time, the only time what I was stubborn, when he couldn't make a living in Vineland, New Jersey, so my husband went to Baltimore. At that time they said that in Baltimore a lot of our people have groceries. So he wanted to buy a grocery. He went, and we had there a very good friend, Rabbi Hertzberg. And when he bought the grocery he called me up from Rabbi Hertzberg that he bought a grocery, in a colored neighborhood. At that time, I wrote a letter to my husband. To Rabbi Hertzberg, because my husband was there more than a week, you know. So I said that we lived through so much and we never had a store open on Saturday and the holidays. And how we going to raise our children with Saturday open the store, and I don't recall exactly. And he showed this letter to Rabbi Hertzberg, and Rabbi Hertzberg said, "Hasl, go home, and look for something in Jewish sections." And the person what he had to bought the grocery store, gave back the deposit. He was also from our people. But he was for a long time in Baltimore, and he had enough, he didn't want to stay anymore. And my husband told him the truth. He always went with the truth, and I always say, what jam you are, tell the truth. And the whole truth. Because it is not told the whole truth, people don't know how to act, and people don't know how to help. So he said, okay, he give back the deposit. And this was the only time that I was against. Because I was afraid. And then when he went to Philadelphia, when he bought the store on 54th street, he came home and he said, "Genia, I bought a store in a Jewish section." I was very happy. I didn't know what this mean, in a Jewish section, to have open Saturday the store. I was very naive in this respect. Came Friday, Saturday, I see the store is open. I said, "Henry, they are Jewish people! Can't you close Saturday?" So my husband called up the owner what we bought, and he came over on Sunday afternoon, and he asked him can we close the store Saturday, my wife is very unhappy. So he said, "Of course you can close Saturday. You can close Saturday and Monday and Tuesday, whenever you want to." The store was paid already. It wasn't his. So... So that's when we became... But then I couldn't do nothing, because we had moved already to Philadelphia, and among Jews, who knew that...

INT: How did you handle other differences with your husband, like if you disagreed about how you raised the children, about discipline, about...

GENIA: We didn't have too much differences. We both came from the same background, and we both have the same opinion and the same way to raise. We both want to send the children to Jewish day schools. Which they went. So we didn't have any differences. You see, where is a couple when one is from a religious home, the other from not religious home, so they have differences. You see, like my son married a girl, a Jewish girl, but they knew from Jewishness nothing. Only that in Yom Kippur they have to fast. So in the beginning probably they have differences, but they are raising the children like she wanted. Probably he don't have that much power to overcome her wishes to... I mean, he overcome her wishes.

INT: So you're saying you were the, if there was a difference, you would be the one who gave in, but you didn't have too many.

GENIA: We didn't have too many differences because we didn't have no differences at all. First of all, we came from the same family. He was my first cousin. My mother and his father were sisters and brother. And we had a lot in common, and a lot of joy from our grandparents, a lot of things what I didn't know, because I was too young when my grandfather died. So my husband used to tell me stories, and I used to laugh. We really didn't have no differences like any other couple.

INT: How about personality differences, how people have, you know, sometimes, there are just different kinds of personalities, and that takes some kinds of adjusting to each other.

GENIA: We didn't have. The only thing what we had when we got married, I think I told you. In the beginning. So you know. So then it was me. But I was afraid that I will not be good enough for him because he was married before, you know. So I had this, you call a fix idea. What otherwise, we didn't have no difficulties whatsoever. The family was the same. The financial situation we had the same. He knew me very well. He used to tell me, "Genia, wie az mach papichken wen du bist a kleine baby." ["...like your daddy used to do when you were a little baby."] Because he was a lot older than I, and...

INT: So did you agree about how to let the children grow up when it was time for them to be on their own, how they could be?

GENIA: Yes. We talked a lot. And we saw that we don't have any other choice. They are going their own way, and we had to let them go the way they choose. Even if it wasn't our, but we accept the way. If we wouldn't accept, we would lose the children, you see like some. We were thanking G-d that they went with Jewish boys and girls, because this was a time when they grow up, that was a lot of mixed marriages. And the background what we came, it would be for us not so pleasant if my son would marry a non-Jewish girl. Also there are some non-Jewish girls who marry Jewish boys, they are converted and they are very, very good Jews. And I embrace them, and I love them, because they are better Jews than a Jewish-born girl.

INT: And that was very important to you, to continue to be Jewish?

GENIA: At that time, yes. But time changed.

INT: And now?

GENIA: Now, I have to accept whatever they are, however they are. I don't have any choice. I have a lot of aggravation because my grandson don't want to continue Hebrew school. And I spoke with the rabbi that he should have some influence on him, that I will pay for continuation, that he should see to it. Because this synagogue what he goes don't have a high school Hebrew, only the elementary, and he finished. So I said, "Maybe the cantor or somebody else would give him lessons, once a week, or twice a week." So he said, "Why don't you talk with your son he should come Saturday to the synagogue?" I can't persuade my son that he should go Saturday to the synagogue with his boy. My husband went with him to the synagogue every Saturday. But he has his own life, and I thought that this is the rabbi's interest, to keep the children and to teach them a little bit more in Hebrew. But somehow, what can I do? He don't want to go, and my daughter-in-law said, "Mom, you can't demand from your grandchildren too much. Therefore they don't want to come to you, because you demand too much." So, I don't want to lose them, so, I made peace with my mind, and I accept.

I talk, I had a talk with my son. I said, "Listen. Children should know, not only to have one way, they should have education from whatever they come. They are Jews, they should have the Jewish education, and the other education should be wherever they are. They are in the United States, so they have the education from public school and so on. I don't know what's going to be later. But you have to teach them two roads, and when they will grow up, they will choose the road in which they want to go. But first they have to know the road. And if you don't teach them, he would never know to go in the road what you went. He will never know." I talked with my grandson, too. I said, "Listen, Benjy. When you will grow up, you are now a teenager. You will go on a date with a Jewish girl, which I hope you will. And the girl will invite you Friday night to her parents for dinner, and her father will say, 'Benjy, I give you the honor and make Kiddush.' Would you know? Or some other time, a girl will take you home, and the father will give you the honor after the meal, 'Benjy how about you going to lead the after grace meal?' Would you know? Will you know?"

INT: So how does your grandson relate to you when you talk to him that way?

GENIA: Nothing. Nothing. He didn't answer.

INT: So how do you want your grandchildren to view you?

GENIA: I would like that they should continue the Hebrew education. I think that this is very important. I said to my son, "Aryeh, your son would not even be able to say Kaddish." You know, this is the praying after death. He said, "Mom, don't worry about that."

INT: So the traditions are still very important to you.

GENIA: Yes, but now I make peace with my mind, because I tried, I did whatever I could do, and I see I can't do nothing else, so I leave it to them.

INT: And that's the way you have dealt with everything in your life.

GENIA: Yes.

INT: You do as much as you can do, and you accept...

GENIA: And whatever I see that doesn't go farther, this is the road where we have to stop. We stopped, and we have to accept. You see, I think that the rabbis don't do enough for the youngsters in the community. I think so. You see, because until the bar mitzvah he went to the Hebrew school. All right, he knew the maftir. A big deal. He knew whatever he told, and he learned. But this is not enough in mine opinion.

INT: So it's very different from when you were in Europe growing up; the rabbis had a very different role to play with the children.

GENIA: Even in Vineland.

INT: In Vineland, too.

GENIA: Yes. Sure. And special when I spoke with him, and I asked him, and he said, "I will call your son, and I will tell him that you called me." So I said, "Rabbi, can't you do this on your own? Aren't you interested that the youngsters should attend the synagogue, that the youngsters should come Saturday without the father to the synagogue? He is now a bar mitzvah, so he is now a young man already." "I can say a lie. I am a rabbi, I have to say that you called me." I said, "Okay. I give you the permission, you can say." But right away I called up my son, and I told him that I spoke with the rabbi and I wanted, and so, he said, "Mom, you can't do it. Benjy don't want to go. Because none of his friends go to the Hebrew school, and he don't want to be the only one." But he didn't tell me this before. But he said, "We working on it. We working on it." He is good-natured. He don't want to aggravate me, aggravate his wife, or the children. Then when he find out that I am very much interested, so he said, "Mom, Benjy is not going to go to Hebrew school, because none of his friends go to the Hebrew school after the bar mitzvah." They got bar mitzvah and that is. So, we will see, we will see what is gonna be.

INT: So you do as much as you can...

GENIA: And that's it.

INT: So if you look back on your life, what do you think is the most, what do you view or do you see as your success, the best successes that you have, that you're the proudest of?

GENIA: What is the best success that I... I could mention one thing, but I think the understanding of two people. We understood each other that we could cope with this situation what we were in. We could talk freely, we understood the language, what we was talking. And this is very important. Sometime two people come together, and about a little thing, right away, they leave the husband, or they leave the wife, and... but we understood each other. And maybe because we came like from the same father and mother. You know, from the same family. And we didn't have to say to each other, "Oh, my father was a doctor at home, and now I have to work this. Oh, my mother never washed the dishes, and now I have to wash the floor and wash the dishes." I couldn't. I didn't have to say this. He knew my mother very well. He knew all of us, and I knew his family. So therefore, for us, it wasn't so difficult with time. We carried the burden together, and we carried the happiness together.

INT: Do you have any regrets?

GENIA: Yes. I have one regret. That my husband passed away so early, and so quickly. I wasn't prepared for it.

INT: He wasn't sick.

GENIA: No. He wasn't sick. He went to the hospital, just. I can't talk about it, because it's very painful, and... I was the weakling, and he was the strong one, so he died, and I survived. And I ask why this happen, and I don't have a answer, just like I don't have a answer why I survived the Holocaust, so the same thing, I don't have a answer why I survived my husband. I would be more happy if I would die and he would be alive.

INT: Why do you say he was the strong one and you were the weak one?

GENIA: He was never sick.

INT: Oh, so as far as physical.

GENIA: Yeah, he was never sick. He was a very healthy man. He had a practice, and this what bothered him a lot.

INT: So this is...

GENIA: But, like I say, the time came that his years were up. So G-d took him. G-d gave his life, and G-d took his life. He took his life a little bit too early. He could live another ten years. But listen, with whom shall I fight?

INT: With G-d?

GENIA: Can I fight with G-d? If I talk to Him, does He answer me? If I ask Him something, does He tell me what to do?

INT: So were you angry?

GENIA: I don't know. I wasn't angry of nobody. Because was nobody's fault. He took sick, he went to the hospital, and like this. And unprepared, unexpected. And to tell the truth, I didn't know that I'm gonna be for ten years a widow. That I will be able to be by myself for so many years. I count and bless every day what I am alone and how I can do. And I still live in my home, and I still, I think that I live a normal life, and I still entertain, I still work for organizations, I work for the children in Israel, I help out the orphanage in Jerusalem, and I think that I still am normal. Although I thought that I wouldn't be able to be for two weeks by myself. I was so touched to my husband like a child to the father. I used to say to Henry always, when I was survived after the liberation, my life was a book with empty pages, and you filled in the pages with so much love, with so much devotion, that I don't know if somebody else could give me so much love and so much devotion what you're giving to me. He really, he really loved me. We loved both. We both loved each other very much. We were so devoted, we were so, I don't know. Yeah. Was G-d's will. He's going to take me soon, too.

INT: So is that the G-d you believe in? That G-d decides who lives, and when they die?

GENIA: I think so. Has to be somebody who decides. Has to be something who is ruling the whole world. So I am raised that there is a G-d, and G-d is ruling the world, and G-d is ruling the people, and G-d sees whatever, G-d hears what I am talking now. I don't know if is true, but I was raised this way.

INT: And how about the Holocaust. Where was G-d?

GENIA: At that time, I don't know. We weren't people. We really didn't think. We were only thinking to have in the morning a piece of bread and not to go to the gas chamber.

INT: So how about now? How do you, do you have an answer, do you have a belief about that?

GENIA: No, when we talking we used to say, where was G-d when so many innocent children, babies from the cradles were taken out and butchered so terrible? They went with such a horrible death, not a normal death. Where was G-d? Sometime I made a joke, I said, G-d was on vacation. But on a too-long vacation. The vacation took four years, almost five years. He turned back from us, I don't know why. We were good Jews. We praised G-d. We believed in G-d, and why He turned back from us, I don't know, and nobody know, even the rabbis doesn't know. Nobody has a answer for it.

In the Jewish religion, is saying, that you shouldn't ask questions. My mother used to raise us. When came to believing, don't ask questions. It is written like this, and this we have to believe. So I don't ask questions, because there is no answer.

INT: So you can accept that for some questions there's no answers, and that you can...

GENIA: When comes answers about G-d, I don't ask questions. Because nobody knows. Nobody know nothing. We praying now for a miracle that should happen in the Middle East. That Saddam Hussein should turn over on his back and should fall in a grave. If this will happens, I will know that G-d sent a miracle. But... we can't question G-d.

INT: So if you look, if you look back, over your whole life...

GENIA: I wonder if I could go through a second time, my life. Just yesterday I was talking with one of my friends, and I told her that I called my cousin in Israel and I asked if she want to come here. So I said that the youngsters can take more than we now in our age. So my friend said, Yes. And I said to her, "You know, Choni, if I would have to go through now what I went through then, I don't know if I could go through. I don't know if I could, we were living like not human being. Just like, like in a zoo. Like you would be the animals in a zoo. They getting better food than we get. They are better treated than we. I see on television the cats they are getting the food in a crystal glass. I said, you see the cat in America is treated better than we were treated as people in the camps."

INT: So it confuses you to think how you actually coped and survived that.

GENIA: Yes, you know what? When it was snowing last week, in January, and in January, 1945 the kapo -- this is the oldest in the camp -- made an appeal that we all should undress and go out outside, they gonna disinfect the camp, the whole camp, and the clothes. So we was standing, the girls, all around each other, naked like we were born. We had to dance on the ground, if not the feet will get frozen to the snow. Could I do this now?

INT: How did you do it then?

GENIA: I don't know. But I am asking myself, could I do this now? Absolutely not. We did it. Because we weren't human. We were like you take and you thrown out. You chasing out some dogs from the, from the doghouse, and make a gate and they have to be inside. So were we. They chase us out from the block, and we had to stay out there. So we stood, and we warm up, one to each other, whoever who was in the middle, was a little warmer, and the other, what were outside around, was colder. So sometimes we changed. We said, please leave me in the middle and you go in the... so. You know, there are things what I really don't know and I don't understand how I could go through this. We were young. We were strong, and the mind was strong, and the willpower for surviving was so high, that nothing could change our mind that we should break down. I didn't break down. I hold up myself very strongly. But now, I wouldn't do it. And my children couldn't go through, either.

INT: How do you think you coped with the memories over the years?

GENIA: Who said that I have a memory? My memory is gone. (laughter)

INT: No those painful memories, you know, the losses.

GENIA: Like I said, we didn't think after the liberation, we didn't think of the past. We didn't think about anything. We just, we just, our thoughts were to have a dollar to buy bread for today, to buy some clothes, to buy some daily needs. We didn't think what was then, and what was gonna be later.

INT: So when you look at yourself now, from today, and you look back on that, you see that you were able to survive because you dealt with day to day, you dealt with this day, and then you dealt with the next day. You didn't look backwards.

GENIA: No, we couldn't. Because if I would look backwards, if I would look what I went through, I wouldn't be here, sitting on this chair in Philadelphia in 1991. I would be a long time someplace in a psychiatry house or maybe in the cemetery. It doesn't erase from my memory, I still have in my mind and we still talk, and I still write plenty pieces. I always write something what come to my mind that sometimes I would put together...

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

INT: What do you want your grandchildren to know about you? How would you like them to...

GENIA: About their roots.

INT: And how about you as a person? What would you like them to know about you?

GENIA: I am not that far to write about me. I am writing mostly how it was in the house from my parents and from the parents from my husband, as much as I remember. I write, for example, how it was a seder at home. How it was a Shabbat at home. How it was a holiday Shavuot at home. How the home was looking at Shavuot. My mother used to go out and to bring in so much greens and everything. Even the candlestick were around with the greens and with the little flowers. And things like this.

INT: So what would you want them to know about you as a person? How did you cope with your disappointments, with your fears?

GENIA: I really don't know yet what I would like them to know more that they know.

INT: Did you have fears, fears for yourself, or fears for your children?

GENIA: For myself, no. But my children now, I have fears because I wouldn't want they should go to war, they shouldn't lose their lives. See, I have two young sons, and a young grandson, and I went through enough, and I would like that they should live in peace in a nice peace world.

INT: How do you think, though, about what you went through, did that affect the fears that you may have had for your children? When you first came here, and when they were growing up, did you have fears? Do you remember being afraid for them?

GENIA: I don't think so. I don't think so. My -- not only mine, my and my husband's -- mind was so occupied with the daily needs how to provide for the child. At that time we had only one child, that we didn't think how to raise, and how to fear, or to think, because we struggled with ourselves to make a living. And this struggle took away all our minds. See, my husband went to work, I went to work, and we came home, and the baby was in a kindergarten, and then I had to make dinner, and then to give a bath the baby, and to put him to sleep, and to clean the kitchen, prepare for next day. We were so busy, our mind was so occupied. And then while I was cleaning, my husband went to buy something. At that time, we didn't have a Frigidaire like now, and a freezer, but every day we had to buy today for tomorrow, so he used to go to shopping. We didn't have time. Our minds were so occupied with the present, like I mentioned before, that we didn't think nothing. We didn't have time to think.

And when some people came in we were in New York in the beginning, the first few months when we come to the States. So of course, we didn't talk English, so it was very hard for us to have a conversation with the New York people. And... we didn't think that there's going to be another war, that we have to worry about it.

INT: You never were afraid that it could happen again, what happened to you?

GENIA: No. No, it didn't, we didn't think about, didn't even come to our minds.

INT: Over the years, through the years, so you never were afraid that it, that you were in danger, or that your children were in danger?

GENIA: No, we thought that being in America we are safe, and our children are safe. We knew that America is the best country in the world, and the safest country in the world. And of course, we were afraid to go out at night, later on when we knew already what this means, black people, white people, and this and this and this, because at that time, we didn't know so much about to kill, and stab and shoot. It wasn't in the beginning when we came to the States. It was completely different life than it is now.

INT: But I guess I was just thinking about how you grew up feeling safe with your family, where you lived, and you were safe, and then how everything changed and became so horrible. That you were able to come here and be trusting, that you were going to be safe again.

GENIA: We are in a safe country, like I said. If you want to know what America is, with all the struggles, with all, with this black people, go for six months in any other country in Europe, doesn't matter, and you will come back after six months, you will kiss the ground. You will say: America, G-d bless America. This is the best country in the world.

INT: So you were happy that you came to America.

GENIA: Very much so. Of course, if we would go to Israel, I would be just as happy, but it came out that, it meant that I should be here. I believe in fate, so probably meant that I should be here.

INT: So do you think that your children had any fears, because of what you went through, because of the Holocaust was so close, was so real?

GENIA: I don't think so. I don't think so. Because my children were raised in a normal house, normal parents. They didn't know about war, about fear.

INT: They didn't know your nightmares, when you had...

GENIA: No. We didn't share this. Why should they know? It wasn't important. Maybe some mothers share with the children, but I did not. I did not want, when the children are young, that they should know, because young people dream, too, and I didn't want this. I wanted that my children should grow up like normal, every American boy.

INT: So did they wonder sometimes about if you were sad, or if you... upset...

GENIA: They don't wonder, because everybody gets sometimes upset. And they know me already. They know that Mom gets upset. She gets upset today, but tomorrow she's going to be different. My mother's an actress. She can act.

INT: What do you mean, an actress?

GENIA: Today she dies, and tomorrow she goes to a party.

INT: So they know you recover.

GENIA: That's what they are calling me. My younger son says: Friday I called him up I says, "Oy, Jesse, my shoulders again." "And tomorrow you're going to be all right! I know."

INT: They know you.

GENIA: Yes. They don't make a big thing. Because they know this.

INT: But you said earlier that they didn't want to hurt you, they didn't want to bring it up, they didn't want...

GENIA: They didn't want to talk about the Holocaust, no.

INT: They said that to you?

GENIA: My daughter-in-law told me this, my older daughter-in-law, not the younger, the older daughter said, "Mom, we never talk with you about the Holocaust, because we don't want to hurt you. I know it's going to hurt you." I said, "It would not. I would be very pleased if you would ask me, and if you would like to know something." So she said, "We have books, and we read, and we know." But my younger daughter-in-law, she's telling me ten times, "Mom, I don't know nothing about you. I would like to find out something about you." Because she put together a little pamphlet, it's not a book, it's only 70, 80 pages, from her aunt, she was in China and she wrote: "My experience in China. My trip in China," something. So she said, "I would like to do for you the same thing, like I did for my aunt." So I said, "Noah, why should you spend the time, when it's going to be finished, I will have copies of the tape, and you can listen to the tape and then you..."

INT: So did your sons ever tell you that, that they wanted to not hurt you, that they did not want to ask you about things? I know the daughter-in-law, but how about your sons? Did they ever...

GENIA: Never, never. Never, because with my, it was a different, they both was raised by the same family, in the same house, the same parents, but in a different time. My older son was raised in Vineland, New Jersey, where we dedicate a lot of time for him. My younger son was raised in Philadelphia, where we worked seven days a week, and we didn't have that much time to stay with him, to spend with him, and to talk with him. We sent him to school, he went to the Beth Jacob, that's what he knows Hebrew a little bit, and we really, and he didn't know what to ask, because we were normal. We had the store downstairs, and we lived upstairs, and he knew that Mom is going to the store, and be coming up, and we had the supper, like any other normal people. We had just a normal life like any other normal life. Like any other people.

INT: Don't you think it's pretty amazing that you could have had such a normal life after what you went through?

GENIA: Yes. Yes. Yes. I wondered, this is what I wonder. Sometimes I wonder and I said to myself: My dear G-d, I never believed 45 years ago that I will live 45 years later and have a normal life, and be this what I am. Sometimes I am very proud of myself.

INT: You should be!

GENIA: I don't know if I should, but I say to my children, sometimes we talk, and I say to them, "Listen, take a look. I am for ten years by myself. I speak fluently and read and

write four languages, I can communicate with my family in any language. I am the United States free, I can do whatever I want to. How many American people can say this? They speak one language, and that's all.

INT: So, when you think about how proud you are of yourself...

GENIA: I really am proud of myself that I can, that I could accomplish, and this is only in the United States. There is no other country that we could accomplish this what we accomplished here. You can imagine. When I arrived in the United States, the 28th of February, this was Saturday night, ten o'clock. We didn't have nobody, because we came of three months quarter for the displaced people. So the HIAS took us. Tuesday morning, being Sunday, Monday, two days, in the States, not knowing the language, a stranger in a strange country, among strange people, Tuesday morning, eight o'clock, I went to work. So which country could you do this?

INT: How many people could do that? Forget the country.

GENIA: How many people? Because they are lazy. They are looking to be helped. For example, oh, I don't want to talk about it.

INT: But how many people that you know, the survivors, were they able to do what you did?

GENIA: All these people who came in this time, when we came, in 1947, 1948, '49, did the same thing. We came here, we weren't citizens. We had only the first papers. We didn't have even the first papers and I went to work. I was completely not legal. I was legal, because I came as a legal person. And we went to work. Then we became first paper citizens, and after five years we became citizens, the regular citizen papers. And all of us.

INT: So looking back at how much you've accomplished, and how...

GENIA: We accomplished a lot.

INT: It's unbelievable.

GENIA: We accomplished a lot. Take a look. In ten years without income, and thank G-d, I don't need no help from nobody. I don't go to nobody for stamps, for food things, you know, to help. I can live in my house. My house is clear, I have no mortgage on it. Because we didn't pay as much as now it is.

INT: But you must have saved. You must have been very careful.

GENIA: I knew the value of the dollar, not like the children of today. I think I mentioned in one of this interview, that my son had two pair pajamas, two pair of shoes, and two outfits, and he was every day dressed like a prince. And today, they have two

dozen pajamas, and ten dozen of shoes, and when you look at them they are wearing a pair of sloppy sneakers. It's a different!

INT: So when you think of all the things that...

GENIA: When my husband brought home the first 30 dollars, I put away two dollars. I hide it. I said, "Henry, you brought home \$28.00. And we have to live on it." I make more money than my husband because I was more handy. My husband didn't have, I mentioned already this. And I brought home 80 dollars. I put away ten dollars. We didn't make more than 70 dollars, and we have to live on it. We have to pay rent for it, and we have to buy food. Clothing I didn't spend too much. This is one thing. I was always careful with clothing. I was very handy always. I used to make for my little boy outfits that could be from like Saks Fifth Avenue. I knew the value of the dollar. And I knew that we have to save for a rainy day. And this what helped us. But today the children are different. Not only my children. All the youngsters are different. You too, I don't mean to hurt you. Because today's children they're spending today what they're going to make tomorrow. And by us was different. I spent today what I made last week.

INT: Because you knew what a rainy day was. You lived through the rainy days.

GENIA: Yes. We didn't have bread. Like I said to my son, because my son works for the city. Last month I said, "Ari, what going to be? Goode don't have any money to pay out through January. What you going to have?" "We will manage, we will get, stamps of this." I said, "For this you have to work 18 years in the city and to have a family with two houses, with two cars, with two dogs, with ten birds, not to have to even for a month to live on?" That's, the children today are different.

INT: So you can accept that.

GENIA: I have to. Do I have a choice? I can't make them different. They are, my son is now 40, I forgot how old he is. He is born 1946.

INT: Forty-four. So he's 44, almost 45.

GENIA: So he's going to be 44 in February the 8th. So he has his own mind. My younger son, thank G-d, he's doing very well. I don't have to worry. And my daughter-in-law, she knows the value of the dollar. She don't spend like whatever. The buy has to be good, solid things, you know.

INT: So a lot of the values that you have, you see some your children have, some they don't have? But many they do.

GENIA: They do, yes. I could say my older son is just like my husband. Quiet, not a show-off. He wouldn't aggravate his wife. He wouldn't aggravate me. If something they're doing, and they know that I wouldn't be pleased, they don't tell me. I find out later.

INT: So your husband was like that?

GENIA: Yes, my husband was a very quiet man. He was not a show-off. He was always rich because he was satisfied with just what he has. He never had big eyes to look what somebody have. For him was everything was too good. Even I was good for him. (laughter)

INT: So that's really what you share from your family legacy -- both of you were satisfied and happy with what you had.

GENIA: Yes. And the most, we talked a lot. I have this friend, she is so sick in the B'rith Shalom. So I'm telling her: "Call up your daughter. Talk with her. Talk with her, if you're not talking, so this is nothing what you say." "I can't talk to her. She is busy, she don't have time." "Take a paper and pencil. Write to her a letter. Write whatever you have in your heart. Write. Give it out!" She can't. I said, "This is the way when you want to lose up your sadness, write to her. Let her see what you have to her." She's not coming to visit her. She sees her once in three weeks. And she see that my children come so often. And because whenever she's here, somebody's coming. I said, "Listen, it takes two to tango." If I see that I wanted that my two sons and my two sisters-in-law should be close, so what do I do? I make a dinner, and I invite them both, that they should be together.

INT: You don't wait.

GENIA: I don't want to wait until I will die and then, they're not going to be on good terms. I want that they should know that they have a brother, and a nephew, and a niece, that they should be close.

INT: So how about for professional help? Would you think that somebody should get professional help if they have problems?

GENIA: No. I don't need.

INT: No, not just you. A friend, or...

GENIA: I don't need, and I tell you. My younger son was dating a girl in Atlantic City for four years. And after four years he asked her to marry him. She didn't want to. Why, I don't know. But I never go in in details. I knew the girl. She was here. I was sure that they're going to be... For six months he work on her to get married. She didn't want to. He was so depressed he had a nervous breakdown. He came home very late at night. I was asleep. In the morning he came down in the pajamas and he sat down here at the table, and start to cry hysterical. And I said, "Jesse, what has happened! My G-d!" And he told me that he went to Atlantic City and went to her apartment and she was sleeping with another boy. And he had a fight with the boy, and he came home, and he was very heartbroken. And so I said, "Maybe you'll go to a psychiatrist." He went for two

sessions. He came home. "Mom, they didn't help me nothing." I gave him a telephone number from a girl, and the very same week, this was like Monday, Tuesday, Saturday night he had a date with this girl, I called up my son. He came and he took them to the parlor, and he talked with him, and then I talked with him a lot, and I tell you, this boy is like a newborn boy. He start to go out with other boys and with girls, and he made so many friends, and then the friends introduce him to this girl what he married, and he's very happy. Without any professional help. Because it is very important to help somebody when they need to see at home. To see every moment what he is doing. Whatever he wanted to do, I didn't say no. Okay. Fine. Whatever he wanted from me. Because he spent all the money on this girl. When he need financial help, I gave him. So once I said to him, "Listen. Everything has a limit." He said, "Mom, I am now self-employed. I need help from you. If I went to college, wouldn't you pay for me?" I said, "Yes." He said, "This is my college." Okay.

So therefore, I think when somebody has to whom to talk, who understands this problem, is just as important as a professional person. Not that I want to deny some professional help, because not everybody has somebody to listen. A listener is very important. And a listener who understand the problem is important.

INT: So your children had you.

GENIA: Only my younger son. My older son didn't have this problem. He was different.

INT: But how about other unhappinesses, or would they come home and talk to you, your husband...

GENIA: Do you think that I recall every little incident? Probably they had some problems, yeah, especially when they start to go out with girls, and you know, so they had some. And my husband was a very smart man. He knew how to talk with them. But sometimes comes out good and sometimes not. Sometimes they listen, and sometimes they don't listen.

INT: But what you're saying is what's important what they had was a listener. Somebody to listen to them.

GENIA: Yes. It is important to have somebody who listens and **understand** them, what their problem is. For example, if I listen to my son, and I understand what his problem is, I know how to cure. I know what to tell him. I know that he needs a date. When he will have a date he will go out with somebody, so the mind will be taken away from his problem, because he was very much in love with this girl. Because he is going to have another girl. And he will have a good time with this girl. And this is important.

INT: So you had a listener, right? You had a listener.

GENIA: My husband.

INT: And he had a listener.

GENIA: Yes. You see, like my friend. She doesn't have to whom to talk. Her daughter don't want to come to her, and she comes here, she cries, and I said to her, "I'm not going to help you if you're not going to talk with your daughter. The problem is your daughter, and you have to solve the problem with your daughter. With nobody else." But listen. You can't tell somebody to do things what I think is good for me, could be good, and for her, probably is not good. It's never good for two people the same medicine. Maybe, I really don't know. Maybe I am different. Maybe because I don't expect too much, I don't want to, I don't have a desire to have a lot. I'm satisfied with a little bit. Whatever I have, I am very satisfied. I think I'm very rich.

INT: So it's the attitude that you've had.

GENIA: Probably. Probably.

INT: And that attitude, you've had from the time you were a child.

GENIA: Yes. Yes. You see, my parents weren't rich at that time. But we didn't need too much. We were all very happy in the house. Whatever we had, it was a holiday. It was happiness. We had one dress, it was enough. We had a Shabbas dress and a dress for every day.

INT: But there were other families who also didn't have a lot, but their children were not satisfied.

GENIA: Yeah. There are a lot. They are bitter. The whole world owed them something. To me, nobody owe me anything. Because this is not what America can give it to me. What can I give to them?

INT: Were you ever bitter?

GENIA: Probably. Not that I recall at this moment, but I wouldn't say that I was always happy. There were sad days, there were happy days. But I overcame the bitterness that I had. You think that it's so easy coming to a country without anything, and to hide for everybody that we don't have anything? And to try to live normal? It is not so easy. When we were in New York, my Ari was one year old. It was a very, very hot day. The night was so hot. We didn't have air condition. And we didn't have a fan. And he was a very good baby. He slept always. But this was a particular hot night, so he was crying, because he was hot. So my husband went with a paper, and he blowed, like. So the neighbor from upstairs opened the window and she said, "Listen, why the baby crying?" I said, "Because it's very hot." So I didn't know to say in English, I didn't know English at that time. She said, "But I understood what you said, to quiet down the baby." So another neighbor next door to me, and she spoke Polish, she was a Polish lady. She gave her hell. And she told me what she said, "It is hot, the baby can't sleep. What can they

do? The baby cried.” But, what could I do? I'm going to tell I don't have money for a fan? They wouldn't give me a fan to cool off.

Why did I tell you this?

INT: I don't know.

GENIA: This is not in place at all.

INT: Well, you were talking about bitter, and overcoming, and hiding that you didn't have anything.

GENIA: Oh, yeah. The hiding. Because nobody should know what is going on.

INT: That was important to you, to have the world see that you're okay.

GENIA: Like I said, the outside look was different than the inside the body.

INT: So you were able to have the outside look because you had somebody to share what was inside your body, and inside your heart, with.

GENIA: Yes. And I always tried to be happy and to joke around. I didn't take nothing serious.

INT: Do you think you taught your children that, too?

GENIA: Automatically. Not especial to teach them, but I think what they saw in the house. My mother didn't teach us nothing. But we saw the practice in the house, how it was. She didn't teach us: You're not allowed to do this on holidays. You are not allowed to do this. We knew. We saw that we are not doing.

INT: And some of the things you continued to do that you learned, and some of the things you didn't.

GENIA: Not 100 percent. I was not as good Jew as my parents would like me to be. I know, I know this. I regret, but I can't help it. It is 50 years later. I am in the United States. My parents were in Poland in a very religious home, and the town was, and I am not as my parents would like me to be.

INT: Well, your parents wouldn't have liked you to have to go through what you went through, so I think your parents would have been very proud of you.

GENIA: Maybe. You see, my mother was wearing a sheitel, a wig. And she would see me in the hair! It would be a big sin. A girl has to cover when she get married. She has to cover the head.

INT: But don't you think your mother would understand that? Your mother who insisted that you had an education, who was...

GENIA: I don't know. I don't know. Because religion was above everything. My parents were very, very fanatic Orthodox. I don't know if they would accept me as I am. And to tell the truth, I am religious. I have a kosher home. I observe every holiday accordingly. And I don't know what else. I know a lot how to observe the holidays. And my children know too, because. Not that we taught them. They saw the practice in the house. And my husband liked it, too.

Before we got married, I knew that he wasn't so Orthodox like my parents would like him to be, so I said, "Will you be religious Friday night, will you go to services, and make Kiddush, and make a Shabbas meal?" He said, "Why not? If you cook fish, and bake a challah, I will make Kiddush." So I did. And this what my children knew. But Friday was Friday night. Saturday was Saturday. I didn't cook. And they knew what Shabbat is and what holiday is.

INT: So they learned. We have to stop in a minute. I just want to ask you is there anything else that I didn't ask you, or that you didn't tell me, from the Holocaust that had an impact on how you coped and survived?

GENIA: I think that I told already. I think so. I don't know if I have to add something. Then you will take all the tapes together, and you will see that I think that I covered mostly, and if you think that I can remember exactly everything, if I would write down, maybe while I'm writing, so something would come to me.

INT: Well, maybe, with your permission, if I can come back one more time just to do some paper work, some forms that we use for the research, some questions and things. It's not an interview, it's just forms and it's too long to do today, but it's not a whole two hours. And in the meantime, I'll listen, and if I think there's things, I didn't ask you something, or if you think there's something maybe that you still want to tell me...

GENIA: Do you think I remember what I said? (laughter) I have the "Jewish Exponent" I have to read twice to remember what I read!

(END OF INTERVIEW)