United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
First Person – Anna Grosz
Thursday March 13, 2018
11:00 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.
Remote CART Captioning

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.
This transcript is being provided in rough-draft format.

HOME TEAM CAPTIONS
www.captionfamily.com

>> Bill Benson: Good morning, and welcome to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My name is Bill Benson. I am the host of the museum's public program, First Person. We began our 19th year of the First Person program just yesterday. Thank you for joining us. Our First Person today is Mrs. Anna Grosz, whom you shall meet shortly.
This 2018 season of First Person is made possible by the generosity of the Louis Franklin Smith Foundation, with additional funding from the Arlene and Daniel Fisher Foundation. We are grateful for their sponsorship.
First Person is a series of twice-weekly conversations with survivors of the Holocaust who share with us their firsthand accounts of their experience during the Holocaust. Each of our First Person guests serves as a volunteer here at this museum. Our program will continue through mid-August. The museum's website, at www.ushmm.org, provides information about each of our upcoming First Person guests.
Anna will share with us her "First Person" account of her experience during the Holocaust and as a survivor for about 45 minutes. If time allows we will have an opportunity for you to ask Anna a few questions.
If we do not get to your question today, please join us in our on-line conversation: Never Stop Asking Why. The conversation aims to inspire individuals and new generations to ask the important questions that Holocaust history raises, and what this history means for societies today. To join the Never Stop Asking Why conversation, you can ask your question and tag the Museum on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram using @holocaustmuseum and the hashtag #AskWhy. You can find the hashtag on the back of your program, as well.
Today's program will be livestreamed on the Museum's website. This means people will be joining the program via a link from the museum's website and watching us today from across the country and around the world. A recording of this program will be made available on the Museum's YouTube page. And we invite those who are here in the audience today to also join us on the web for our First Person programs that stream in April as well as our programs in April. Please visit the First Person website, listed on the back of your program, for more details.
What you are about to hear from Anna is one individual's account of the Holocaust. We have

prepared a brief slide presentation to help with her introduction.
Anna Grosz was born into a Jewish family on April 20, 1926, in Racsa, Transylvania, a part of Romania, as Anna Seelfreud. The arrow on this map points to Racsa.
These photos taken in 1919 show Anna's parents, Samuel and Ilona Seelfreund. Samuel owned a vineyard and was a wine merchant, while Ilona cared for Anna and her five sisters.
In 1940 Racsa fell under Hungarian rule. Jewish people in Racsa became subject to antisemitic laws. Under the new laws, Anna's father's vineyard was confiscated and he was conscripted later into the Hungarian Labor Service. Samuel would never return home.
This photo from 1943 shows Anna and her sisters. In order from left to right is Clara, Elizabeth, Margaret, Margaret's daughter Suzanne, Violet, Anna, and Gisela.
In March 1944, Nazi Germany occupied Hungary. Hungarian officials agreed to turn over hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews to the custody of the Germans. Anna, her sisters and her mother were placed into the Satu-Mare ghetto, indicated by the circle on this map, and then deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The black arrows at the top point to Auschwitz-Birkenau.
Nazi authorities selected Anna and three of her sisters for forced labor while they sent her mother and her two other sisters to the gas chambers.
In June 1944 Anna and her remaining three sisters were sent to Stutthof concentration camp indicated here with the red arrow. Later they were transferred to Praust, a subcamp of Stutthof.
In February 1945, the SS evacuated most of the prisoners, including Anna's three sisters, marching them on foot; Soviet troops liberated them around March 11, 1945. Anna was left behind with other injured and sick prisoners because she had previously broken her leg. On March 23, 1945, Soviet troops liberated some 600 prisoners, including Anna. Anna later reunited with her sisters Gisela and Clara and found out her sister Elizabeth had been shot during the forced march.
We close with this photograph of Anna in 1946. Anna would remain in Romania until emigrating to the US in 1964.
Anna, together with her husband Emory Grosz and their two young sons Alex and Andrew, were allowed after much difficulty to leave Romania and begin their new life in the United States. They settled in New York where Emory went to work as a fabric cutter in New York City's Garment District. Anna found work as a seamstress in a clothing factory working with fellow Hungarian-speaking Holocaust survivors and refugees. Anna worked at the same place for the next 27 years driving 2 ½ hours to and from work each day.
After finishing high school their two sons attended university and went on to very successful careers and are now retired. Alex was an attorney at the U.S. Patent Office. Andrew was a geologist with the federal government. Anna has four grandchildren and a six-year old great grandson.
After their retirement Anna and Emory moved to the Washington, DC area in 2003. Anna's husband suffered a stroke in 1999 and Anna cared for him until he passed away in 2009. She also was the caregiver for one of her sisters prior to her death and for her sister's husband.
Anna now volunteers with this Museum's Visitor Services. You will find her at the Visitors Desk on Tuesdays from 10 am until 2 pm. Anna speaks about her Holocaust experience to children at local schools and colleges.
With that I would like you to join me in welcoming our First Person, Anna Grosz.
[Applause]
>> Anna Grosz: Hello.

>> Bill Benson: Thank you so much for joining us and willing to be our first person today. You have so much to share with us. We're going to get started right away.
>> Anna Grosz: Thank you.
>> Bill Benson: You were just 13 when World War II began with Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. Before we turn to all that happened to you and your family during the war and the Holocaust, let's start with you telling us about your family, your community and yourself in the years before the war began.
>> Anna Grosz: We lived in a small town and all together 50 Jewish people. The rest were all Hungarian people. About 1,000. We lived a good life there, because my father was a very hard-working man. And because we were six sisters, and one was married. We had to have some work. And we learned to do that.
So we lived in peace, really. Not living anything, because as I said, my father hard worker. He had a vineyard, and I don't know if you know that it was who made the brandy. Do you know what that is? The brandy? You drink it.
[Laughter]
So I grew up on that one. Brandy. And wine. We used to have 10,000 liters of wine. And prunes and plums. So we were not rich, but not poor.
So couldn't complain about that.
So after we lived a good life. The older people went to bigger cities. High school and college. The younger were in school. When the Hungarians occupied.
>> Bill Benson: Before we go there, let me just ask you a couple more questions if I could. Your father served in the First World War. What do know about His time as a soldier.
>> Anna Grosz: He lived in Hungary after the First World War, came to visit aunt in Romania. Because then became Romania. And he left my mother and then got in love, and he never went back to Hungary.
So he lived in Romania.
>> Bill Benson: And he was a decorated officer in the First World War.
>> Anna Grosz: Yes, he was. And it was a law, at least before, that the Hungarians, which had already proved they would deport us, that people came with decoration. And officer. They were not deported. But by the time we got the papers to prove it, already too late.
>> Bill Benson: One more question about your parents.
>> Anna Grosz: They were taken any, because they were looking for institutes, for every, not even one Jew remained in that town.
So in 1940, the Hungarian occupied Transylvania. And the first thing was that they let us live, but they start to go Jewish people to high school. I was 14 years old. And that was the first terrible thing that happened to me. That I could be moved to high school.
All my sisters, my older sisters, they were in high school. But I remained out education.
And everybody should do anything to get education. Because you don't know how much is that important. And now you have the possibility, not easy for you, to go to college, because it's expensive. In 1964 when we came from Romania to the United States, it was not so expensive, the college, if you have a good average for over 84, you didn't have to pay. Only for the books. You were not that lucky now, because you have to pay for the college, right? But that was 50 years ago.
>> Bill Benson: With the Hungarian occupation in 1940, you would be under Hungarian rule until the Germans came in in March 1944. In that four years, tell us -- Jews could no longer go to high school. You were not able to go to high school. What happened to your parents'

business?
>> Anna Grosz: Well, they did not take the orchard that we had. Only the vineyard.
>> Bill Benson: Just the vineyards.
>> Anna Grosz: Just the vineyards. They remained and my mother cooked for people. And needed some money, and that lasted four years. From 1940-44.
>> Bill Benson: Your family had a little textile store. I believe that was taken away from you as well. Your textile store. You lost that.
>> Anna Grosz: Yes.
>> Bill Benson: You said during that period that the Hungarians consistently were humiliating you. What do you mean by that?
>> Anna Grosz: The military, they went who has a Jewish boyfriend, they should have a -- but I shouldn't say that in our town, it was anti-Semitic, the Hungarian, because they respected my father so much. And our family. We have nothing, problems with them.
In Poland, for example, they showed their anger, but not in our town. The bad Hungarians lived in old Hungary. I don't know if you know that it was Romania, as well as Transylvania and then another Hungarian city. And they hated each other. They hated the Arabs and the Jews.
So the main point since we are here is together with you. You are the young gold people in this world.
What you do from this world, you have to forget about the anti-Semitism or the prejudice, because we are all the same. And look what brings the hate. The sacrifice over hate, because I didn't do anything bad or wrong, or my family. Or the babies.
For nobody. And they killed 6 million Jewish people and how they did that? Incredible thing that not even you would think that this is something that had happened.
Because you were already up there.
>> Bill Benson: Probably not yet.
>> Anna Grosz: You saw the pictures. But I would recommend to read books.
>> Bill Benson: Let me ask you, if you don't mind, a few more questions. At some point, your father was conscripted into the Hungarian Labor Service.
Tell us what you can about what happened to him?
>> Anna Grosz: He was near Budapest. Captain probably because he spoke German and Romanian and Hungarian. He wrote one postcard, and we heard later about him, but not anymore.
>> Bill Benson: Only one postcard.
>> Anna Grosz: One postcard. We sent also from Auschwitz one postcard. Just for the people that.
>> Bill Benson: So you never heard from your father again?
>> Anna Grosz: We heard from him after the war, some people saw him liberated after the war. But we never saw him. You know how many people died after the war? After, because they were sick and nobody cared about them. Not the Russian, not the Germans. They just died from hunger and for not taking care of them.
>> Bill Benson: And that's what happened to your father?
>> Anna Grosz: Probably. Probably.
>> Bill Benson: With your father taken away to do forced labor, how did your family with all the kids your mother had, how did your mother make ends meet? How did she feed her family at that point?

>> Anna Grosz: We were afraid what's going to happen. There was my mother with the six girls, and one near us, she had a 3-year-old girl. When this happened, close, 1944, she was married in another city and came home with the baby.
So we were there, my mother, the six girls, and the granddaughter. No father. So one morning, came from the Hungarian base, and they said that if we have jewelry or valuable things in the house, we should give it all, because we are going -- they are going to take us, our house. They didn't know where or how, but it did happen. Everybody gave what they wanted. I mean money and jewelry. My sisters took a little jewelry, put it in a jar and hide it somewhere.
My mother sent out some clothing for the people who were our friends. Especially Romanians. And so a few things, but nothing. So one morning they came. They took us to the synagogue. In the synagogue was 205 souls. All men and children, because the young men were taken for forced labor before us. So it was not the man example from 19 years old. Say to 35. No man.
So they took us to the synagogue and one day, they brought 5 kilograms, have to be food and clothes in that 5 kilograms.
We left our beautiful house with the flower garden, with the flowers, trees. Everything arranged in the house. We had a beautiful house with eight rooms.
And trees with fruit then. And 100 -- my mother wanted to have the feathers.
>> Bill Benson: When you were forced to leave your home, that was after the Germans came in in March of 1944.
>> Anna Grosz: After four years.
>> Bill Benson: So after four years, the Germans occupied Hungary in 1944.
>> Anna Grosz: But not Romania. Just Hungary.
>> Bill Benson: Right.
>> Anna Grosz: They wanted just to please the Hungarians. They gave them back Transylvania to the Hungarians.
>> Bill Benson: Right. That's when you were forced to leave.
>> Anna Grosz: They could do anything that they wanted to us. Nobody took responsibility. They could do anything. Because their power in their hand. So it did not happen in our town, because as I said before, my family was really respected in that town.
So they took us from the synagogue with horses to the closest city. Satu-Mare, where there was a ghetto.
And many other cities -- I mean small towns -- would get together in the ghetto. And not long after we were in that ghetto, I have to mention something. Hungary was the country the Hungarians -- we have no idea what happens in the world in Europe or somewhere that many country already were deported. And no idea. Because we had only two stations. Budapest and Bucharest. And the news, they don't have to tell you everything in the news, even if you don't want to know.
[Laughter]
So they will not tell anything. So they took us in the ghetto, stayed there a few days. Other people from around the four towns. And that's, after that, they started to take about a thousand people all over. Taken to the train station, put them in box cars. You learned that from me, that word.
[Laughter]
Yes. You know, and transport, they only have one window in the top.

Imagine how the rest of the people felt there. I have 45 minutes here to talk to you about my life, what happened then. But there's nothing 45 years -- felt there. Day and night the children started to cry. I want to go in my little bed to sleep; I want my milk, mother. All the people started to pray. Old people started to curse, why did this happen to us?
No one want to sit down. And from time to time had stopped the train, because in the corner was a big bucket, and there you have to "do your thing." So everybody just day and night to that bucket.
So then they opened back then, they had to empty it. And I remember I only wanted to [Inaudible] myself there once, but I couldn't.
And also they came and asked who has more jewelry or money. Because if you have it, give it to them now, because this will be taken anyway from you.
And they will be shot. We believed it. You're going to be shot. Why shouldn't they shoot us? Why did this all happen? It bothers me terrible. I'm going to die. Why? Because I just don't know. There are bad Jews, but there are other nation, also good and bad people.
So what happens if one people say "I want you to die, and I'm going to kill you?" Just with no reason?
>> Bill Benson: Anna, you were in these terrible conditions that you described in the cattle car for four days, I believe. And the train --
>> Anna Grosz: Four nights and four days. And we arrived at night in Auschwitz. And it was a neon light there and dogs started to bark. People with noises and panic all over. And we, after traveling, I don't think I could think clearly. We just start to call each other's names, because we didn't know where he is.
We were eight of us, and it was -- we couldn't find each other. Poor mother just called us by name, that we should come. Because she couldn't find us there.
And then -- I can start to describe also what happened that night and why we did not know why this happened. Because this is not even in our senses that something would have happened like this.
Imagine that all, not prepared for it. Just happens to you. So when we got off of that train, officer came with a stick in his hand and started to select men in one side, children, boys, on one side. Old people and children on one side. Young people in another side.
So after the end music played. That was the melody. Yeah.
I can describe that, what we felt then or what we should wait for, or why.
So my sister, we were six girls, as I said. Elizabeth, Gisela, Clara. They were selected on one side. My mother, my older sister, she was 25 with her daughter, 3 years old. And my youngest sister, the sixth. She was 14, Violet, in another side.
And I had my friend with me. She wanted to come with me, my neighbor friend. And then her mother didn't let her come with us, so they let her go with her mother. She was 17.
If you didn't want to go with the people chosen for war, later we find out death. Then go with your mother and die. Because all of us were chosen for work, give or taken in a place. And the people, my mother, my older sister, my little Suzanne, and Violet, 14. We never saw them again.
>> Bill Benson: Anna, when did you learn what happened to your mother and sister?
>> Anna Grosz: Really, we find out next day.
So us, the people who were chosen, sit to work. That's what they used this word. They took us in a room, and then one by one, they started to shave our heads. Cut or shave. Whatever. Imagine that, you don't know why it happens to you. I don't think that after the four days

traveling in that train, we really didn't know what happens to us. They could kill us there, because we were crazy from that traveling, you know? And no food.
So they took us in a room they cut out of here. And they gave us a gray -- yes, we have to take off our dresses. They gave us gray dresses with a number on the sleeve here.
Because we were no more -- Hungary was the less country, and there were now people there. So it's a number and the sleeve. Not that we can run away somewhere with no -- number and gray. Later I find out why they have the numbers.
At night they put us -- this affected us with the death. Every death. And they put us in a big -- you could see there were horses there.
And everyone got to sleep, imagine that, after all this traveling.
In the morning we did not recognize each other. How could I recognize my sister, no hair and a gray dress. So shouted her name. And my sister Elizabeth was very depressed. And she lost weight in the train. So she was very sensitive about this.
She was a very intelligent person and see probably thought what happens with us. But we did not know.
So from there, they took us to Auschwitz and put us in there with no -- nothing.
>> Bill Benson: No blanket.
>> Anna Grosz: Nothing. And two times a day they counted us. Only five in a row. For example, select. Selected again. Skinny. Again. Because they wanted to have a bunch of healthy, young people for work.
But people from our town. We stayed there about three or four days. The food was terrible. In one dish, we had to drink, five people.
For the dish, only five or six people. So we thought that -- oh, I left out a very sad thing.
Early in the morning, when we woke up in there -- came [Inaudible] she was already there a year. And she spoke Hungarian also, and we asked where are the other parents.
And she said, you idiots. You crazy people. You got to get here. You are the last ones who are going to be killed. Where are your parents? Look at them in the smoke, in the crematorium.
And we thought that she is -- to be honest, I didn't know what crematorium means.
So, she said that. How could this happen? A thing like this?
So when they disinfected us, at night, they did the same thing with the people, the others. They disinfected us not with disinfectant, but with something else. With gas.
That same night.
But we did not learn that for a long while. I still don't believe that it happened, things like this. And sometimes I see it and my face, and how could it happen, and how it happened with my little niece and my mother. There are feelings that you cannot explain. I don't expect from you to understand it.
From nobody. Because that's something that it's unbelievable.
>> Bill Benson: Knowing that you just couldn't believe what that woman said to you was true, there you were with your four sisters, and you didn't stay there long, because from there you were sent to forced labor.
>> Anna Grosz: Yes. They forced people for work. That were all healthy. We were big ones, all three of us. But Elizabeth was silhouette. So they chose people for work, 500 people. I say people. We were not people. We were numbers.
So they took us to Stutthof, not far from there, in a train. And Stutthof, they add another 500 there. And from there they took us to Praust. And the tent was not ready yet when we were

going to work there, because the water had yet there, it was rusty. And the beds were missing the straw sacks.
So we had to go in a distance and receive the straw sacks. Put it in the bed. And it was so hot. Never in my life I felt that. Over 100 degrees.
So there were people that put cemented paper on your legs and they wanted to take it off of your skin.
That day they did not have food, only some black coffee they said. So next day, we all were exhausted from schlepping those straw sacks. And they take us five in a row. Always five in a row.
And they take us to a big territory. A farm that you couldn't see the end of the farm. You see far away that it was a hangar. We had to build there an airport.
You know what hangar is?
>> Bill Benson: Airplane hangar. So you were forced to build the runway for this new airport, right? That was incredibly hard work.
>> Anna Grosz: We had to take our first [Inaudible] from our farm. But mostly beets, they came out very hard from the hard earth.
And it was told to us, don't you try to eat from this, because this is going to be used, food, while you're working --
>> Bill Benson: The runway.
>> Anna Grosz: If you eat a carrot or something, then you're going to be punished. In German they said that. I didn't even pay attention what they said. I did not understand.
So next day, you could not -- you could not bite in a carrot, you know. You did not eat the day before.
So a friend of mine put a carrot right here. And I wanted to take also for my Elizabeth, because I know that she's weak, and then she said -- we were very good friends. She said don't you take more, because I have enough here for you too.
When we went home from work, always five in a row, then her number was called. She had on the sleeve here, five numbers. They saw when she put the carrot, hide it here. Two persons there -- how do you call that?
Enjoy beating.
>> Bill Benson: Sadist.
>> Anna Grosz: Sadist. Because if you looked in his eyes, even the pupil was, not like this. And terrible. Big. Enjoyed beating.
So they called her number, and she got 25 lashes on her back.
>> Bill Benson: With a whip?
>> Anna Grosz: Yes. And then I start to understand things, because I would --
>> Bill Benson: She had a carrot?
>> Anna Grosz: Yes. She had to be next day, and she was a friend, not a sister. But we shared everything later. Because we were sisters all there, you know?
So that way months and months.
>> Bill Benson: I might just mention to the audience that your job was to fill train cars filled with sand.
>> Anna Grosz: That was our work, to fill the train with sand. One thing came, the other thing didn't even went, but there was the other one. But we were lucky that we had a washroom. Not every camp had a washroom. They just had to clean themselves with something.
See we had the washroom. We could wash our dresses and sleep in the dress, because

otherwise, it was not dry for tomorrow.
And no underwear. Nothing. Just the dress. There, winter or summer. No underdress. Imagine that.
>> Bill Benson: Anna, as you started to tell us, you were there for many months, and at one point you and your fellow inmates, you were asked to make a party, to have a party. Tell us about that.
>> Anna Grosz: OK. So it became Christmas. Yes, I forgot to tell you that during the war there, the most important thing I forget or left it for later was let me leave, that I'm here with you. So we had a Romanian German day. You know Romanian, mixed group, every kind of people.
He was a nice man. You can't say all the Germans or all the Jews are bad, because they are mixed in every nation. I believe in that.
Said who can sing to me in Romanian, and then my two sisters said, oh, Anna. She can sing because she used to sing in the school. She was always the choral singer.
So I sing to him in Romanian.
We were not friendly, because he never brought me a piece of bread or something. Just made me sing.
So it came Christmas party. They wanted us to go do something for them to entertain them. And many talented people were there, in 800 people.
>> Bill Benson: This was a Christmas party for the guards, and you were asked to come and sing at their party? For the guards, this was their party, but you were asked to come sing for the guards?
>> Anna Grosz: Yes. So I went to watch the party. And when the show went on, my German comes to me and he says, why didn't you come to sing in Romanian. And I said, because there are so many really talent, I don't think I'm such a good talent. No, he said, you just come, because I want you to sing.
So come. And then I fall. You said that I jumped. I fall. And I broke my right leg. Now this is the end of my life, because people who were longer, six in that camp. They were sent, never saw them again and brought other three people, because the airport had to be ready for a certain time.
So what's going to happen to me now with a broken leg? That's not a three-day sickness.
So my sister Clara, we didn't know what to do. I was there with the broken leg. Crying. All were crying. All the room who was in with them. We just cried.
So Clara went to the soldier and she said do something about it, that my sister broke her leg. We don't want to lose her. And then, he went to that, save this woman. Probably it was his friend or something.
>> Bill Benson: His girlfriend. OK.
>> Anna Grosz: They put my leg in cast.
>> Bill Benson: So instead of sending you back to Stutthof and Auschwitz, they let you stay there.
>> Anna Grosz: Christmas was December, after that, they did not even take off my cast. Only after. It started that death march. You heard about it, right? It was about the end of the war. And the Germans did not know how to destroy the rest of the remaining people.
So they started to empty the camps, put us in groups. A hundred men, women. And they did the march.
And they start in our camp. But by the time they start there, they even died there. And they

had to made a big hole there, because to throw it in that hole, the people.
They had no food or they had no clothes. Because from a dead person in the hole, another person went who didn't have the shoes, or took it off or something.
That was one group after the other started -- one night in our camp. Now it came the time that our camp would march. So now what's going to happen? I can't march. I can hardly walk.
So I and 27 other people were chosen, that we cannot walk. So what happened to the people -- they don't send to the crematorium. Was 27 people's lives when millions of people died and throw in that hole. And my three sisters left.
>> Bill Benson: They left to go on the march.
>> Anna Grosz: They marched because they were healthy and I couldn't march. So they took off my shoes, because why do I need the shoes when I cannot march. And with the 27 people, sitting down there. I don't know if I cried or not, because to me it didn't count to me if I die. I just felt terrible for my three sisters.
So sitting there without food, that was the other miracle that happens to me. A girl who knew me before there, because we were 800 a year working together.
She asked me if I can sew. First I didn't even answer. I said, why do you ask me if I can sew? Then because if you can sew, we are sewing for the German civilian outfits, and we take you to help us.
Because there is one who knows how to sew and three others who help him. And we'll take you there with us.
So that was that I didn't die with the other 27 people. I was sitting there and looking at that hole. My God! How will I be dead? Man, woman. No shoes. Naked, and I'll be dead.
And then she came, this girl. I did not believe in miracles, but now I do. I do, because that was really. The first time also when I send for the German, and this time also. So I think that two times I was there that I don't die. And I still -- I think that I'm going to die, and I still didn't. But there is a third time again.
I don't think I'm going to die ever!
[Laughter]
Count on me. I'm 92 already, but I'm living to 292 probably.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: And we'll have you back here every year.
>> Anna Grosz: I don't know. The death comes near me and leaves me.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: So with that last of those miracles, as you called it, being saved because you could sew. It was soon after that that you were liberated. Tell us what liberation meant for you and what happened.
>> Anna Grosz: One night the Germans ran away with the people who held [Inaudible] for them, and they didn't tell me to go. So I remain there and next day we heard that the whole airport -- was blowed, they didn't want to leave it there.
And quiet for at least two days. And we were hiding in a basement. When we heard that it's quiet, we came out and we saw that the Russians are coming.
But when I looked far away I just got dizzy and I found myself in a hospital, some Russian soldiers took me there, because I don't know what happened to me. I got the typhus there.
I lost my -- and I go back, I don't know how long after that. Two weeks, I don't know. I did not have hair again. So they took my hair off again. Grew my hair and it was so brown from that, I wanted to say in Romanian.

>> Bill Benson: Beach from the sun?
>> Anna Grosz: The sun! It's not a big difference. Sun or sorry. So it comes to me easier. Yes, they gave me a -- a blouse, I never saw a blouse like that. And they said now you are healthy, you are free.
Imagine that. I'm looking in the window at the dress that I came out. And I didn't know what whether to cry or laugh. I looked like that.
I did not recognize myself, because I lost all my weight. No hair. I didn't see myself for a year. And again, cried. What else can I do?
Came out of the hospital, find another person sitting there, and miserably crying that, oh, I'm so sick, help me. When I get home, I'm an only girl. I'm going to help you. I thought I can't help myself, how can I help you?
So I went back to the hospital. A nurse came out there, and took her in the hospital and after a few years, I heard that she's alive.
So now I don't have too much time, right.
>> Bill Benson: No. We're getting short. So tell us, as the Russians said, you're free to go. Tell us how you got reconnected with your two remaining sisters. How did you do that? How did you find your sisters?
>> Anna Grosz: Oh. After they left me out of the hospital, they said I'm free. Now imagine that. Nothing in my hands, nothing to eat. I'm free. I was waiting for the -- no parents, no sisters, no food. Cold.
And I'm free. And I didn't know -- I looked terrible. I have to have a laugh also, because I went out there and I heard music playing. Polish girl celebrated peace. Made -- with the French prisoners.
So music attract me. And I was sitting there close. What else can I do with my freedom?
So I feel a hand, and I feel my neck. And he said Mademoiselle. My God, do I look like a Mademoiselle?
[Laughter]
It was a -- he brought some cigarettes and some chocolate. I tried. That was the only thing I could do.
So he speaks to me in French and I speak to him in Hungarian, and this is the way we understood each other.
>> Bill Benson: I know we have to close the program now. You did reunite with two of your sisters. You found out that your sister Elizabeth did not survive.
>> Anna Grosz: Wondering there, not just me wondering there. Once our girls come to me and ask me, do you have a sister, Elizabeth? And I said yes, do you know her. And then she said I was [Inaudible] with her and with Clara. And I said how about Elizabeth. And then she said she was shot with the rest of the people from 800. 230 remained alive. The rest was shot.
And she was, because she was weaker than us. So now I was very big to find my two sisters, but how can you find them there in the middle of Poland? The middle of nowhere?
So after a month or so, everybody was -- nobody cared about us. We should go home or something. So I met with my two sisters back in Romania.
Went home the three of us not knowing how to start a life in an empty house there. Totally empty. Robbed from everything.
Not a chicken, nothing in the house. Grabbed everything.
So it is another problem that during that age that we should get married, because we needed a

man to handle that vineyard or something. You know?
What we had. Orchards and everything. We did not find a man, because they were all in the forced labor. So finally, my sister find a man. He came and -- he didn't like to live there. He says he wants to move back where he came from, another city.
And then I had to get married and Clara, because they couldn't leave us there. And I just could not get a man. Imagine that.
I was 20 years old and I felt like an old lady. Because everyone, they got married and I just couldn't find -- there was no man.
So another thing that happened to me. I went to the city for something and then I met a girl there who I was in the concentration camp with her. And she was very surprised that I'm not married yet.
I'm almost 21. And she's already pregnant and everything. And then she said, oh you know what? My husband has a cousin. He's 30 years old. I was 20.
And I said, who cares how old is he! I don't care if he's crippled, but I have to get married. This is not a joke!
[Laughter]
I thought -- I don't know, but I had to leave my house, because my brother-in-law and sister, they wanted to leave. I did not get along with my brother-in-law. So I have to get marry.
I said why don't you invite me to your house. I want to know -- I wasn't sure that he would come to see me. There were so few men.
So I went to her house. Her husband's house. And I found a good-looking fellow. But a very quiet one.
So I talk too much anyway.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: So you got married.
>> Anna Grosz: I got married in two months, two years, and he became a very good man. Remained quiet.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: Unfortunately --
>> Anna Grosz: A very good man. And he remained in Romania for 19 years after the war. They didn't let us out.
>> Bill Benson: And I wish Anna that we had time for you to talk about your life in Romania and all that you endured to try to get out of Romania.
>> Anna Grosz: Yes.
>> Bill Benson: We could spend a whole other hour.
>> Anna Grosz: I wanted to get out from the country, because I want my children to have a future. So they did not need the passport. Only after 19 years.
>> Bill Benson: But you made it. You got to 1964.
>> Anna Grosz: You could live in Romania also like that.
This was the lifestyle then. You know? You have to steal to make a living.
>> Bill Benson: So there were three options. You were either in jail, had been in jail, or will be in jail.
>> Anna Grosz: Exactly.
>> Bill Benson: Anna. We're going to close our program, and we don't have time for questions right now. But after the program, and I'm going to turn back to Anna a little bit. We're going to actually go to another classroom, and we invite any of you to come and join us if you would like

to ask Anna a question or say hi to her, whatever.
Because as you can tell, we just scratched the surface of what Anna could share with us.
>> Anna Grosz: Wait, wait.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: That's OK.
[Laughter]
I'm going to turn back to Anna in just a moment.
>> Anna Grosz: And excuse me for my -- you know I call this a senior moment.
[Laughter]
When I don't remember I'm old. You see I still don't remember.
But a half hour, then I'm going to remember it.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: We're going to come back to you Anna.
>> Anna Grosz: I have to remember the rules.
[Laughter]
Because as I say hello to somebody, they ask me so where are you? And I say from Alabama!
[Laughter]
[Applause]
>> Bill Benson: I want to thank all of you for being with us. Remind you, we'll have a First Person program each Wednesday and Thursday until the middle of August. We hope you can come back and join us. All our programs in April will be live streamed so you can listen to them wherever you are.
There will be another public program at 1:00 pm today in this theater and we encourage you to stay for it if you have time. The program is called "Syria: Is the Worst Yet to Come?" The Museum invites you to this commemorative event examining ongoing atrocities against civilians and highlighting the strength and resilience of the Syrian people in the face of these crimes. Lieutenant General H. R. McMaster, US National Security Advisor, will provide a keynote address.
That's at 1:00. We welcome you to come to this program if you can. As I mentioned before, we are going to go after Anna finishes, we're going to go into classroom B. which is just up the stairs and out the door. Where Anna will be to be able to answer questions. Normally we would stay here, but because we have this other program, we're going to clear the stage.
It is our tradition that our First Person has the last word. So Anna will you close our program with whatever you want to share.
>> Anna Grosz: To share?
>> Bill Benson: Yes.
>> Anna Grosz: Oh. Money, I don't leave to you in my will. No money. But in my will is that you should be the gold in the -- you should forget about the prejudice, the antisemitism. You should make this world a better world.
Try to avoid that. I'm not educated but I have a lot of experience. But you heard my story. Look, I lost my family, and my two sisters also. I am by myself, and I think that in the whole world, I am by myself.
Luckily I have two good sons, and they live here with me. But you know what? I think I'm tired of life anymore. Tired. That's enough for me.
But as I see you here, it's such a good feeling, because all educated people. I see doctors, engineers. Any kind of -- another senior moment.

[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: Teachers.
>> Anna Grosz: Professionals. I found it. You know what? I found it no problem, right?
[Laughter]
But sometimes I need a day to find it.
[Laughter]
>> Bill Benson: So I even see a -- it's far from me.
>> Bill Benson: Thank you.
[Applause]