

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Eva Brettler**  
**November 9, 2008**  
**RG-50.030\*0546**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Eva Brettler, conducted by Stephanie Blyskal on November 9, 2008 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Alexandria, VA and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## **EVA BRETTLER**

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Question: This is the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Eva Brettler**. This is **Stephanie Blyskal**. It is November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008, and we are in **Alexandria, Virginia**. Good afternoon.

Answer: Good afternoon.

Q: Why don't you start by telling me where you were born, when you were born and what your name was at birth.

A: Okay. I was born in – on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936, in **Cluj, Kolozsvár**, or **Klausenburg**, depending. **Klausenburg** is the Yiddish word, but depending who was in power, the name was different. My –

Q: And who was in power when you were born?

A: Actually, I believe it was **Hungaria**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And – no, it was **Romania**, because as a little girl I remember standing and greeting the Hungarian soldiers coming into town, okay.

Q: Okay.

A: So it was **Romania**, then it became **Hungary**. But as I recall, I spoke most of my life, as a young child, only Hungarian, I don't remember speaking Romanian.

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: My father – my maiden name is **Eva Katz**. My father was one of 10 children, and my mother – his name is **Aleksander(ph) Katz**, or **Alexander Katz**, depending where – you know, what paper it appears. And my mother's name is **Margit Katz**, her maiden name is **Roth, r-o-t-h**, and she was one of six children. I believe both of them were the second children in the family. My father became a printer, and my mother was a hat maker, and I love beautiful hats. I remember we lived in a very nice apartment, it was a multiple unit apartment. And I have some memories of being in **Kolozsvár**. I never called it **Cluj** til later. And I had a vivid, active life. I remember being spoiled.

Q: Were you – were you an only child?

A: I was the only child. My – I remember once I was being punished because early age on I was kind of looking around and I ended up in a Christian church, a big Catholic church. There was music coming out of it and I went in and my poor mother was looking for me. And I ended up being punished, and my punishment was that my father took away my shoes, and my mother had to carry me. And I was a little – kind of bad, so I said, this is really no punishment. I loved being carried by my mother, so my father got pretty angry [**indecipherable**]. So early age on I had a certain amount of independent spirit. And we moved, I think my parents moved there when they got married, so they didn't have as many friends. And I remember

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my mother kind of talking to me always about what was going on. I was her little confidant, which continued. Unfortunately, she died at age 28, so it was to – for a very short time.

Q: Was your – was your – I'm sorry to interrupt, was your – were you in a li – religious family?

A: Both my father and mother came from very religious family, but I believe when they moved up to **Cluj**, some of the religion was left a little behind. And my father enjoyed playing cards, and I remember that causing some problem.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He played chess and cards, and it wasn't something what my mother was used to, so as a young girl I remember arguments about that.

Q: Did you keep kosher til your move?

A: We always kept kosher, yes. And I don't recall my – I didn't recall that my mother was working, but my aunt, who survived, her aunt – my aunt is my father's younger sister, her name is **Ibby(ph) Steinberger(ph)** now. She remembers that when I was a baby, she came over to watch me while my mother went to work. But for some reason, I had no recollection of that. My mother always dressed beautiful, and she was a very beautiful lady. And we ended up moving because my father

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heard what was happening around him, and he was worried that in a small city, people know us.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And if we go up to **Budapest**, we would have a better opportunity to survive. Even though most of the people didn't believe it can happen where we lived. It may happen in **Poland**, but it won't happen in **Kolozsvár**. So my father went up and secured in a – a room in **Budapest**, and there was such a tremendous amount of shortage of – of apartments already. It must have been either I was four or five, I have no recollection of the date. And my father talked very little about my life before the war, after I came back. And we moved up to **Budapest** and all of a sudden we had to share one apartment unit with several families. And I remember that was a little difficult. And my mother's father, who had long beard and **payos**, you know, the usual, sometimes he stayed with us. And in one room my father lived, my mother, I, and occasionally my grandfather. And it was ov – you know, crowded, and there were some arguments about that. I have very, very precious memories of my grandfather. He always had real deep pockets and always some goodies for me. He spoiled me whatever way he could. And when the – the **Nyilas**(ph), which is the Arrow Cross came into power, I remember that once he came home all beaten up, bloody, part of his **payos** being pulled out. And after that

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I never seen him. He came to us, and he kind of – I don't know where he went, but that was the last time I seen him. My father went to work as a printer, and my mother continued working as a – as a hat maker. And when the war broke out, I happened to visit with my maternal grandmother in **Tashnalt**(ph), and they were – I was visiting with my grandmother and I have vivid recollection of that, that she was pre – baking **challah**, and the smell in the room was overwhelming. And all of a sudden they knocked on the door and they said the Jews are being collected in that city. And my aunt, younger aunt, her name is also **Ibby**(ph), my mother's younger sister was there, and my grandmother, whose name was **Sarah Roth**, and she says, **Eva**, you are not – she didn't call me **Eva**, she called me **Havelah**(ph) -- **Havelah**(ph), you are not listed on the list, you go and hide. And when it gets dark, you will go to the rabbi's house, and they will send a message for your father to come and get you from **Budapest**. **Tashnalt**(ph) is pretty much in the **Transylvania** section. So my grandmother left, and I was hiding in the fields. And they usually kept the keys, I remember her locking up and pointing where she is putting the key. And I was ready to go inside when a group of Gypsies appeared. And I pretended that my grandmother was inside the house, because they had s – they were telling stories the Gypsies steal young children, and I didn't wanted to be stolen by Gypsies. And I pretended that my grandmother is in there, and I said,

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Grandma, Grandma, the Gypsies, don't leave me alone. Naturally, everything is in Hungarian. And the Gypsies kind of stayed there on. And I said, just leave me alone, my grandma will come out and she will be very angry at you. And they left. And I felt like a sense of accomplishment. I could fool the Gypsies, I'd be able to go to the rabbi's house.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I did. And I think a day or so later, my father came. He was not – my mother's – my grandmother must have – the rabbi must have called my grandmother, and my grandmother sent – and my mother sent message to my father, who was in a labor camp by then, what happened. And my father came to get me from the rabbi's house. And my father had to wear his yellow star. And he told me, if by any chance something happens, and I'm being arrested, you go back to the rabbi's house, and I will come and get you. As we were walking toward the railroad station, the police stopped my father and they took him in. And I think we had some kind of agreement where he motioned for me to go back. I'm seven, this had to be in April of '44, so I'm seven and a half that time.

Q: Right.



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A: And I go back to the rabbi's house. My father is being kept overnight there and beaten up pretty bad. And he had the **chutzpah** that when they let him go, he did say why he came up.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He asked for a – a note from the police station that they kept him overnight, because he had only a short duration he could come and get me. So he had the note. And next day when we went to the railroad station, we got on the train, but my father couldn't come inside the train. And before the train arrived, my father approached a woman with a young child, and ask her if she could take me, and pretend that I belong with her. And that's what we did. My was – father was – I could see him from the window, he was between the railroad cars, you know, the open place where he could stay. And this lady started flirting with the German soldiers who were inside the train, and I was petrified. That time I didn't speak anything –

Q: Right.

A: – I was quiet. And when we arrived to **Budapest**, my father tried to hold my hand, and I just run off. And I don't know how I knew the way how to get home, but my father couldn't catch up with me, I run all the way home. I wanted to be – I wanted my mother to hold me because she – she meant safety.

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Q: Mm-hm.

A: A short time later where we lived, the apartment was being emptied. And we had the choice to go into the ghetto. And my mother secured papers to go into – I don't remember if we went – I think we went first to the Swiss safe house. And when that was emptied, then we ended up in the Swedish safe house. And I remember once when we were in the Swedish safe house, my mother hid me on a top of, you know those – in **Europe** you have those big cli – furnitures, you know, which opens up and you have –

Q: Right.

A: And on top of it was a basket, and she put me inside that basket, and she told me, **Eva**, you have to be very quiet, and even if you have to go to the bathroom, you just stay in that basket until I come and get you. Well, I was there for several hours, and I think my mother hid somewhere in – they had those, like in a elevator shaft **[indecipherable]** she was hid – hidden there. It was an elevator actually there. It was between the windows, which you know, it was like – I don't see it here, but it – it's like a place where windows look out, and there is really no access to it, and she – I thi – that's what she told me, she was hidden in one of those places. When she came to get me, I remember I was wet, I was there for many, many hours. And she caressed me and told me everything is okay. And we were trying to sneak out from

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the building when the Hungarian policeman seen us. And she said – the policeman said, I don't see you. Go.

Q: Wow.

A: So I remember my mother telling me that there is no other place for us, we will – I will get somewhere some false papers, false identity. And – I have to go back. The person from whom we rented the room where we stayed, she rented one room to us, and an other room to a woman who was actually a **SS** woman, became a **SS** woman. And the lady's name whose apartment it was originally, and the place na – I remember the address, it was **kira(ph) utsa(ph) tisanirt(ph)**. **Kira(ph)** is street number 15, and the lady's name was Mrs. **Gross**. My mother befriended the person whose – who was the **SS** woman, the brother, and we hid with him for awhile.

Q: Oh my.

A: And I don't know what was the reason, my mother felt that that wasn't a safe place –

Q: Right.

A: – for – I don't know what was the reason behind it. And that's when she got a name and I got a new name. My name was **Eva Noig(ph)**, and **noig** means in Hungarian big, so she says, now you are a big girl, and I'm going to enroll you to school. She enrolled me to school, we were – she was dressed up, you know, very

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fashionable, and dressed me up pretty. And I was accepted in the class and she found a new place.

Q: And this – was this the first time you had gone to school, or is this –

A: I never went to school before.

Q: You never went to school.

A: And I remember I was skipping, I was so happy. And in **Europe** you have these round places where they have advertising posted. And I remember going by there, and my mother saying, we'll just go get our belongings from that person where we stayed for awhile. And I have no idea the duration how long we were there. And as we were passing that round thing, somebody said, Mrs. **Katz**? So we were turned in. We never got to the apartment. And we were marched to the police station. And at one point my mother says, come on **Eva**, sneak off, and I was frozen, I couldn't move. And for years afterwards I was feeling that maybe if I would have moved, my mother would be alive today. From the police station, they knew who we were, we were taken to a place called – a brick factory [**indecipherable**], which was like a holding place.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And from there we were s – they were marching us toward **Germany**. You have to realize that most people had a little warning and had some clothes with them. We

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had absolutely nothing, my mother wore fashionable shoes. And every so often they gave rides for children on, you know, those horse?

Q: The carr –

A: Carriage.

Q: Right.

A: You know, where they carried their – and every so often – and one day my mother ask if s-she could come, because her feet were killing her. There were a few children on that wagon. Short time later we heard shots, and I never seen my mother again. At night when we arrived, they had like a makeshift Red Cross station where people were united. And I remember every time the door opened, I was listening for my mother's steps. Never came. And I was crying. There was bombing going on around, and I just couldn't believe it. How could my mother leave me? And there was a woman who was working at that Red Cross station, and she says, until your momma comes, I take care of you. And actually, I was with her until we got to

**Ravensbrück.**

Q: Mm-hm.

A: She got – she was half Jewish, or I don't even know if she was half Jewish or she bra – did something, but they gave her a different position, they didn't put her in the lager, and I was separated from her. When I arrived to **Ravensbrück** they took the

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clothes which I had on, which was very limited. And by that time the weather's changed and it was cold, and I was freezing. They shaved my hair, and I had to go through a so-called spray where they disinfected you from – oh, by the way, when we – before we arrived to **Ravensbrück**, I was put in cattle cars. And I remember some people died in the cattle car. We were shoved in, that you couldn't even move. There was no food, nothing, and it was dark, you couldn't see. In **Ravensbrück** I remember going through that disinfectant area, and I came from where – you know, we didn't go naked anywhere, and I was so embarrassed being naked, and I tried to cover myself up. I didn't have much development yet, but still, I just – the idea of doing – and I remember a woman putting a stick to me, and she said in German, put your hands on the side. Yelling at me. And even though I probably didn't understand, but I knew what I needed to do, so I did it. And I remember kind of running between – it was almost like a train, you know, a stationary train, and I was walking between it because I was thinking, maybe I should just fall between it. And one of the women, she was a little older, it was almost like she read my mind. She asked my name and held me. And I kind of – she atta – she kind of adopted me. And in the barracks in **Ravensbrück** where I was, we were in the upper, you know, they had layers of –

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: – cots, you know, where you know, like bunk beds.

Q: Right.

A: And we were on this middle one. And I remember one morning, her arms were around me, but she wouldn't move. And I re – I tried to tell her wake up, we have to get out of bed. And they se – some women must have seen what I was doing, and they said, oh my God, she died. So I laid back on her, I wanted to die, too. And the women didn't let me, they pulled me off. I have no idea how long I was in that barrack. But I remember once hearing a baby cry. And the woman's whisper to me, he says, you have to be – keep it. We have to keep this a secret. We are going to hide the mother and the child. So there was actually a baby being born in the barrack where I was. And I said, oh my God, will I ever re – have children of my own? Will it ever happen, or – and all through the time when I was totally petrified, I repeated the **Shema Israel** over and over. I kind of went in my own private little world when I said the prayer.

Q: Was it like a meditation almost?

A: In a way. And I remember praying, please God, give me the opportunity. Once while we were in **Ravensbrück**, there were a lot of people speaking other languages. I don't know how I communicated, I really have no recollection of that. I think mostly in Hungarian. But I seen a soldier at the w-wires, and he was with a

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big dog, and I was petrified of those German Shepherds. And he told me in Hungarian, come closer, and he gave me some food. And he said, if I'm here tomorrow come again, and I give you. I went there next day, he wasn't, but the Russians were approaching **Ravensbrück**. I didn't know about it, but the people were talking about it. And they – we were being collected. Some people hid. I didn't. We were pushed again in cattle cars, this time directly, we weren't being marched. And I was taken from mar – **Ravensbrück** to **Bergen-Belsen**, excuse me.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: [coughing] When they opened the cattle cars, the first thing I remember seeing in **Bergen-Belsen** when they marched us in, were the big mountains of bodies. And I remember I just couldn't take off my eyes from it. And there was another little girl, a little older than I, and she pulled on my hand, and her mother and I – her mother and her kind of adopted me. Except the rations when we got, sometimes the mother didn't give me my ration, she took some of the rations and gave it to her daughter. Everybody in **Bergen-Belsen** – sometimes, I remember going by the area where there was a kitchen, in back of the kitchen, and they had potato peels backed up there. And they pushed me through, because I was so small. And the first few times I brought out the potato peels, there was nothing left for me. And I remember some people telling me, oh you saving me by giving me, and I think the idea of



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helping somebody really sounded good for me. I remember the third and fourth time they pushed me in, I ate first, before I brought out some potato peels. Raven –

**Ravensbrück** was bad, but **Bergen-Belsen** was horrible. I don't know how long I was there, but all I remember that my feet – I was so cold my feet got frozen. And I was going to go to the hospital or clinic, whatever they had there, and the women didn't let me go, because they said, you go in there, you won't have a leg left. I still have a little mark on my leg where it was frozen, but my leg wasn't amputated.

When I was liberated in **Bergen-Belsen** by the British on April 15<sup>th</sup>, I remember getting some food from some of the soldiers. And they looked at it – the children in marvel. I think the food I ate, or whatever, I became so sick, very soon afterwards.

And while I was in – actually, it was, I didn't get sick right away, it was like a few – little while later, because I remember meeting that Mrs. **Gross** who rented us the room. And she told me **Eva**, come on, I take you back. And I told her, I'm not

going back to **Budapest**, to **Hungary**. I'm sure my mother is dead, otherwise she would have come and got me during this time. And probably my father was killed,

too. I said, I'm going to live in the King's castle in **Sweden**. I heard about the

woman who took care of orphans in **Bergen-Belsen**. People were whispering about it, and heard – I – all I heard was that her name is **Luba**(ph). And I wanted someone

to take care of me. I wanted to be together with other orphan children. And I said,

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I'm sure I'd be able to go to **Sweden**. And I don't remember the process going through, how I ended up. But before I ended up going to **Sweden**, I was in a ho – for a long time in a hospital because I was so sick with typhus. And there was a British doctor who really liked me. And he says, my wife and I don't have any children, we'd like to adopt you. And I told him the same thing what I told Mrs. **Gross**, I want to live in the King's castle. I had it so bad. I w – I want some servants, and I want people to take care of me. Well, I – just before I went on the boat to **Sweden**, I met the young girl who I connected in **Bergen-Belsen**, and her mother died. She apologized to me. And she hugged me and kissed me, she says, I'm sorry if we – any way you were hurt. And on the boat going over to **Sweden**, I remember there was another Hungarian girl who had the sister who was – he couldn't speak – deaf.

Q: Deaf.

A: And after the first time I was interviewed, she actually got in contact with me because it – her husband worked at **Yale**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And my late husband became very sick and I never really connected with her, so this is something I'm – still have to do one of these days. So I ended up in **Sweden**. I don't know exactly when I went. And I was in a orphanage, first time. We didn't

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have no more schooling, but I started to learn. And we were being prepared to go to **Israel**. First time I was told I'm worth something, I'm special, I can do things. Look at, you survived, and you will be a soldier in **Israel** and you will help us build **Israel**. And I remember having campfires and singing and really had a wonderful comradeship, you know, with other children. I r – I remember being – going on the – you know, the slides, you know sa – i-in the snow?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And just doing everything, you know, as a [indecipherable] so for me that was very special, I liked it there.

Q: And you got to be a child in a w – in a wa – in a way that you weren't able to.

A: I was – I wasn't for quite some time. And then I – I remember – and I connected with **Luba**(ph) there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I forgot to mention something, that I had the ring. And I kept that ring all through the camps under my tongue. Because that was – I felt if I survived, that's the only way they'd be able to recognize me, because I changed so much.

Q: Right.

A: And while I was in **Sweden**, my – the ring became small on my finger, and I moved it to my little finger. And it slipped off, and it went down the drain. And that

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**Luba**(ph) was holding me for hours, and said, **Eva** – she didn't speak Hungarian, so by that time I spoke Polish.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: She says, **Eva**, the ring is not who you are. Your mother will be always in your heart. And that was the end of my ring, but I had that very close connection with **Luba**(ph), and I talked about her many times. And when I was – okay, I get back to that. One day I'm being called that my father is alive, and he wants me to go back. And I think I had the telephone conversation with my father. Somehow they arranged it, and I remember telling my father, the only way I come home, if you promise you won't argue any more, and you won't play too much cards. Naturally, my father promised. And I must have spoken to him in German, because we were educated in German. And in 1947, January, I went back to **Hungary**. And I didn't know how to speak Hungarian, because – it wasn't that long time, but apparently a child forgets easily, and learns.

Q: Right.

A: And by that time I'm 10 years, I just turned 10. And they enrolled me to a religious school. My father remarried, I had a new mother, and a new brother. And while chronologically I was 10, I survived for a few years by the wit, and a certain street smartness. And when somebody told me no, I wanted to know the reason

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behind it, when I came back. And my father said, what happened to you, it was horrible, but we are not going to talk about it. We want you to be, quote unquote, a normal child. And you will call your norm – new mother as mother, because she's going to raise you, and you have a little brother. He was six months old when I came home. And you will go to school. They hired a tutor who – who was teaching me how to speak again Hungarian. Can we stop a minute?

Q: Mm-hm. **[break]** This is a continuation of the interview with **Eva Brettler**. Now you – your father came back from – for you, and you went back to **Budapest**, and you had a new mother and a new little brother. Did it surprise you that your father had remarried already? Cause it – there wasn't a long time –

A: I was shocked. It was very short duration, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And actually there's some family disagreement about that, because some of my aunts, my father's sister, said, how do you know she is dead? And then he said that he was told that she is dead. It happened more often. I – my father was the type of person who needed someone, and she – my stepmother, in many ways was good for him. She was a strict woman and everything, and she lost her first husband also, in the Holocaust, so there was something. And my father, when he wanted something, he went after her – and, very handsome man. And he had – she had difficulty and

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she was alone, and a lot of people connected after the war. And they got married in March '45, and my brother was born in '46, so you – you know. So it was little after a year. I brought up something when I was interviewed in 1982, I went and asked certain questions of my father, he was still alive. And my stepmother said, you stinker. You were so angry at me, you refused to talk to me. And I told her, Mama, I didn't speak the language. All these years she was under the impression that I was angry at her, and that's why I didn't speak the language. I could speak with my father, my father spoke fluently Yiddish, and if you spoke German, Yiddish was understandable. It was, in a way, typical. She is a very strong woman, and unfortunately my brother is not doing as well as he could be doing in life. And partially had to do with maybe my father being a little too giving in to her needs. And I felt a little bit deserted by him. And mostly I felt deserted because I couldn't talk about her. And a couple of times I approached him to talk about my mother, and he refused to tell me anything. So, whatever I found out about my mother was much later, when I connected with my mother's sister, who survived. Her name is – was **Blanca**. And also with my aunts and uncle through my father's side. So, I didn't have an easy childhood.

Q: Right.

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A: I came home, my father at that time was running a grocery store. And before that he had some black marketing ways of doing things. I think for awhile they called him the salt king, because he went to **Romania**, brought back salt, and there was no salt in **Budapest**.

Q: Right.

A: So, he had all kinds of ins and outs.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And so he, you know – and I helped out occasionally, deliver things, you know, from the grocery store, until the communist government took over things. I ended up going to a Jewish school, a Orthodox school. And the first day I went to school I was taken to the principal office, the principal introduced me to my teacher, and the teacher had to go to the bathroom and he said something to me to go into the classroom. I misunderstood him, and I walked into a boys' classroom, and they were saying the mor – you know, the morning prayer, the **Modeh Ani**. And I hang up my coat, and I hang up my backpack and I see everybody staring at me, feel kind of awkward. And the teacher ask me in Hungarian – I understood Hungarian, I just couldn't speak it – and the – he ask me, what are you doing here? And I said – the teacher told me to come in. He says, you are on the wrong floor, you have to go a floor above. Well, all of a sudden everybody heard somebody speaking German. So

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I was nicknamed for awhile, the Kraut, which you can imagine how delicious that felt. But all of a sudden, people heard about me. There weren't too many children that came back. And from early on I kind of took on certain – I don't want to say leadership, but I was independent, okay?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I spoke up, like I mentioned before, I questioned things. And people found out that I came back from the camps, and suddenly there were a lot of people coming to our home. And I remember people coming with pictures, wanting to know if I remember seeing some of their relatives, and so on. I'm 10 years old.

Q: [indecipherable] right.

A: So as a 10 year old, I kind of adapted to the situation, and I remember crying and telling them, I'm sorry, I don't remember. And I promised to write. I don't know how I even could promise [indecipherable]. And I remember somebody said, I'll give you the money to write. I said, give me the money after you get the answer, or something to that nature. Going back – and we had a grocery store, and I remember once getting a basket of like, those light biscuits.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You have to remember, I lived in a place where sweets and things like that, I obviously had a sweet tooth, were limited. So I decided to have one, then another



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one. By the time I took it home, the box of biscuits were gone. And I couldn't live it down. My stepmother was bringing it up all the time. So I ended up kind of getting mixed messages, you know. In one hand, they admired that I survived, on the other hand, at home I was miserable. I really was miserable. My stepmother's mother, who left illegally with her son to displaced person place, she couldn't stand it there and she came back. And if I turned at night, she accused me of doing something. I didn't know what she was accusing me, but she – so I – I really had it difficult being home. So, I must have been about 11 and a half, I befriended a girl, and I said, can I move in with your mother? And I approached the mother, and she loved me. And she was a widowed woman, her husband didn't come back. And I made all the arrangements. I went home to pack, and my stepmother took me aside, she says, you cannot bring that kind of a shame on your father. You can't do that. So that was kind of my childhood. I – I remember those days, punishment was that you were actually beaten, and my father tried to hit my brother and I stood between my father and my brother. So my father took off his belt, and I ended up getting a nice beating. So being home wasn't exactly comfortable. Did I crave being among the kids I were, where I was one of many, and we kind of looked out for each other. The younger ones, you know, and the older ones looked out for me. So I – I realized I missed that. So from early age on, I realized that I had to look out for myself. And

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I think that stayed with me for the rest of my life. Maybe it started already in the camps, and it continued. I made friends. I was selective, but I made good friends, and I kept them. I tried to be good friends, and they were good friends for me – to me. I – when I went to **Israel**, I found out that I probably cried more than I recall, because some of my old classmates were telling me they remember me crying.

Q: Does – so when you went to this school, this Orthodox school, did – did you stand – besides being called the Kraut –

A: Didn't last long.

Q: Didn't last long. But did you –

A: No. They got the –

Q: – were you the only chi – survi – were you the only child that came back from the camps?

A: Yes.

Q: Did that – did the other children ask you about it? Did they talk about it?

A: No, no, no.

Q: No. But they all knew that you ca – had come back from the camps?

A: They knew that I came back from **Sweden**. How much they knew where I was, I really don't know.

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: I stayed in the Orthodox school until the state took over. So that was in the sixth grade.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So seventh and eighth grade, I had to go to the local school where – the district I belonged to. Apparently there was way of doing it, but it cost money and they decided I – not to do it for me. And from a straight A student, I went down, because I had the one teacher who picked on me non-stop, she was not Jewish. And I used to be exceptionally good in math. And she was cruel to me, so I took a book with me to class, and when she was teaching, I was reading. So the pi – my parents were called in that I misbehave, and so on. So from a straight A student, she ridiculed me; oh, in the Jewish school they give good grades easier, don't they? Next year, when I didn't have her, my grades went back up.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I liked school. I liked to learn.

Q: Right.

A: When I graduated at age 14, eighth grade was mandatory. My mother called together so called advisory committee, and they decided my grades, I'm not such a good student, I should go learn a trade.

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: And they found a place which didn't work on Sabbath, because I wasn't working on Sabbath.

Q: Right.

A: I started to work there, and I realized that something was happening to me which I really don't like. And I worked in a textile factory, and I learned how to desi – you know, you had to design textile.

Q: Right.

A: And in the olden days they had – I'm – I'm sure I won't have the English **equalant** of the word, but each thread you had to pull through a needle.

Q: Mm-hm, like a loom.

A: Yeah, and you made the design.

Q: Right.

A: And that loom was put in a machine, and that's how they made that.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: Well, I was young, I did very fast, and I became a **sztahanovista**. **Sztahanovista** is a person who da – produces a lot.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Well, the fellow workers were very upset with me, you shouldn't work so fast, because the new norm will be much higher. So, I worked very hard, and I still got

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together occasionally with – I got together with the friends I made in the Jewish school. And I belonged to a group where we kind of had after school activities. And I realized I have to do something. So I am about – closer to 15 by now. I didn't go to school for a year. I found out there is a school where they – you can become a chemist. I will try that.

Q: You said you like math.

A: I like math. In order to go, you had to go through a preparation class, and I did that. And I did exceptionally well, I had good math skills and so on. And they accepted me to school. But the problem was that the factory had to request for me to go to school. And I wasn't in a communist party or anything, so I didn't qualify. And the school requested me from the factory, because this factory send a few people to do, and they didn't qualify, but I did. So I worked – oh, I forgot to tell you then, the hours changed, and I had to become a [indecipherable] Shabbas, that meant that I had to work on the Sabbath, too. And that hurt me more than anything else. And when I started school, it was at nighttime, so they couldn't put me – I used to work either from six to two, or from two to 10.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: And I was petrified because the factory was next to a cemetery, and at night to get to the bus stop I had to go by the cemetery, and I'm only 14 years old.

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Q: Right.

A: So I was – I'm surprised they allowed children that young to work that hours.

But a lot of thing changed, because they took me out from the assembly line and I started to work in the lab.

Q: Wow.

A: Yeah. So, you actually hear more about my after –

Q: No, it's – it's very interesting. I mean, especially, I mean, given your age, given your circumstance, the fact that you started school later than other kids, and you were able to – to achieve that –

A: So –

Q: – in such a short period of time.

A: Yeah, so I actually was working, and then the factory in the – where I worked, they send me out to work at university on research. I was going to a technical school at night. And I really – I befriended the person, you know, I had to give her my wages, and I befriended the person who gave me a phony paycheck. And I had some money to spend, because I was supposed to give all money – so I learned early on that there are certain back ways, yeah. And my relationship with my mother wasn't too –

Q: Right.

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A: – too good. And not because – I did try. I really tried, but if I hugged her, you squeezing me hard. So you know, it was – and – and my father wasn't really there – that much there for me so the irony is that now my step – my father died, and I'm in charge of my grandma – my stepmother and I do take care of her.

Q: And your brother still –

A: My brother is – he hasn't worked for a number of years. My mother helps to support him and his family. He married, he has two young children. So, I really didn't want to talk about that.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: I appreciate if you don't talk about that.

Q: That's fine. When did you come to the **United States**?

A: So, when the revolution broke out.

Q: Aha, here we go.

A: I was on my way to school when I heard there will be a big demonstration front of the parliament. So I went with another girl who was about to get married. And I said, it's a lot of – we – we should be there. So I was actually at the point where the revolution started, when all the speeches were going on and everything. When I got home that particular day, I remember I came home late, and my aunt and uncle were visiting from **Szatmár**. And everybody was waiting for me because in **Europe** the

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gates to the apartment building closed at 11 o'clock, and I was home much later, because there was no transportation, you had to walk home. And I told them that I probably will be leaving. By now I'm 20, 20 years old.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: I wasn't quite 20 yet, but close to 20. And the revolution was October 23<sup>rd</sup>, and I would be – a – a few months later – a m – a month later, almost. And I went with another friend to the train station, packed up. The only thing I packed up to take with me was my Red Cross certificate in case I get caught, I would say that I came to help people who need help. And I brought my prayer book with me. And no pictures, nothing. Those were – and my photo i.d., which I still have. And the girl I started out with, she had more money, she could go with the transport. I met one of my stepmother's cousin, who was helping other people cross, and he ended up taking maybe the bus, and several other family – families, we went to a little city called **Burschavkine**(ph) and I crossed the border there to **Austria**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And it was during the night, and it was a bigger transport of people. And I stayed behind with the family who had the young child.

Q: Mm-hm. So you were cross – you crossed the border into **Austria** –

A: I –



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Q: – or you're waiting to cross the border into **Austria**.

A: We are cra – we actually crossed the border and we didn't realize we were crossed already. So for awhile we were actually at night fumbling around in **Austria** when, you know, they were going around finding refugees. So, I was first on the outskirts of **Vienna**, and this family who I crossed with, their names were **Fisher**, and they were related to my stepmother's first husband.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It's a small world.

Q: Yes.

A: And there were a lot of young people who crossed, and I remember one saying all the Jews are leaving. So I turned to him, and what the hell are you doing here? So the guy was ready to beat me up, and this family, they put me in the middle of the children, next to the wives, and the husbands on the end. So they protected me. The next day we left. I had an address in **Vienna**, and we went up to **Vienna**. And I connected – in that particular place I connected with quite a few Orthodox kids I knew. And we went to somebody's home who is – actually, he was a reporter from **Austria**, and he was related to one of the young men who I crossed with. And, I remember going into that apartment and the husband was caught in **Hungary**, and the wife was having a party. And when she seen us, she put us in the kitchen

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because we looked too dirty. She didn't want it to ruin their party. So after that we ended up going into like a holding place, you know, it was a big s-school which was converted. And I stayed there for a short time, until they opened, the Orthodox community opened that big hotel. And I stayed there for a very short time. And through the Joint and **HIAS**, I ended up coming to the **United States**. But before the **HIAS** and the Joint accepted me, they gave me a prayer book. They wanted to make sure I know how to [indecipherable] I'm Jewish, because a lot of people claimed to be Jewish, who weren't Jewish. And I got my traveling to the **United States**, when my parents arrived with my young brother. I actually sent somebody for them. And my father said that he had a passport fo – that was my letter with, you know –

Q: Right.

A: It wasn't actually written out, but we had, you know [indecipherable]. And I arrived end of – they arrived end of December, and I was supposed to leave the following day.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I didn't want it to leave them. I thought it would be nice for me to be together, but they said their opportunity to come to the **United States** would be much better –

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Q: Right.

A: – if I'm here already. So I came to my stepmother's brother and sister-in-law, and their three children. I couldn't have been welcomed nicer if I would have gone to my first degree relatives. They never met me.

Q: Right. Where was this?

A: This was in **Los Angeles**. First I went to Camp **Kilmer**, and from Camp **Kilmer** I had another incident when they said the Jewish – Jews are leaving and I told –

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I had a big mouth those days already. And I told him, what are you doing here if –

Q: Right.

A: The same story as before. And I was in Camp **Kilmer** for a short time, then for maybe a couple of days in **New York**. And from **New York** they flew me, for the f – you know, the second time I'm flying, because from **Sweden** I flew back to **Prague** on a plane.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I arrived to – first to **Chicago** with a short stopover, and from **Chicago** to **Los Angeles**. And my aunt and uncle and their children and her brother, and I mean –

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Q: Right.

A: – there must have been about 20 people waiting for me. And they just fi – they loved me, they fussed over me, I –

Q: Wow.

A: – I really had a beautiful, beautiful connection. And for a long time my stepmother was a little jealous on her sister, you know, because I just connected totally, and I'm still very close with the chil – with the daughter.

Q: What must it have been like – what was it like for you leaving cold **Europe** and winding up in sunny **Los Angeles**? I mean that – it's a completely different –

A: You know – don't forget, I'm 20 years old.

Q: Right.

A: So look a little different, a little slender. The taxi driver who took us from the place to the airport, he gives me some money. I mean, he had no – not money because he wanted something, it was – and the other people who were taking, he says, how about us? He says, I like her. So, I – I was overwhelmed with – first of all, overwhelmed in **Vienna**, was beautiful, but over there we went hungry a lot. And over when we – **United States**, I remember coming, when I see the Statue of Liberty, I was just – amazing. When – I wanted to go to **Israel**, and my stepmother

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said, you lived through too many wars. We have relatives here. You can go later to **Israel**, let's go to **United States**, you can always go to **Israel**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I felt a little guilty coming here, but once I was here I managed to kind of adapt to the currency Jewish, and – and being with my aunt and uncle, my new cousin gave me private tutoring in English, I didn't speak a single word English, but he was – **Robert** must have been like seven, eight years younger than I am, had a little crush on me. And my ha – the youngest one, who was **Stanley**, he says, wait for me, I will marry you. So I knew. It was all of a sudden, you know, it was wonderful.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I went to work here and I worked – I went to Jewish Family Service, and they found me a job, and my first job as a chemist. They thought, if you do chemistry, you can become a – dye clothes in a cleaner. Well, the problem dyeing clothes in a cleaner was that that was so heavy, and to move those heavy things, I just couldn't handle it. Oh, I had a job before that, that was even funnier. I – it was where you make window shades. And he says, I give you more hours to work, stay and work. And then he says, I also want you to meet my son. I told my father, I'm not going back to that place. You know, I was very naïve, and it kind of – you know, a Orthodox girl, and they didn't have those many days –

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Q: Right.

A: – religious girls. So I think they started to match you up very early on. So coming to the **United States**, and walking around, and seeing all the things, it was absolutely amazing. I met my late husband probably about four months after I came to the **States**. My parents arrived and then I moved back with them. And I lived in the Orthodox area. And they were trying to match you up daily. I had a blind date, somebody came to the house, one guy I had nothing to do with. The second one was pretty smart. He came in, he sized up the situation, he seen that my stepmother was the person in charge, and he started to talk with her. And I played the games with some of my brother's friends. And he kept on calling, and four weeks later we got engaged, four weeks later I got married.

Q: Wow. And how long were you married for?

A: Until, unfortunately, he died in 1987.

Q: Wow.

A: We were married 31 years.

Q: Wow.

A: Four children.

Q: Mm-hm. How many grandchildren?

A: Not enough. I have nine grandchildren.

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Q: Oh, that's all.

A: Eight – eight natural, and my daughter married somebody who had the child from the first marriage. And my late husband was very, very supportive. He wanted me to learn everything, early on. Not typical European man. And while the kids were young, I did the same thing what I did at home. I went back to school.

Q: Wow.

A: I got a degree here, I went back – and went to **UCLA**, got a degree in psychology and I've worked as a social worker at Jewish Family Services.

Q: Wow. Wow.

A: Yeah.

Q: That's fantastic.

A: And my late husband was a electrical engineer. He was also a survivor. Unfortunately, he never talked about his experience. His father was killed the last day of the war in **Debrecen**, which is in **Hungary**. And to some extent it turned him against religion. And so the kids kind of had to do a message about religion.

Q: Mm, right.

A: One of my daughters sends her children to reli – to Jewish school. The other ones are more into science.

Q: Right.

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A: I ha –

Q: And do you have any influence on that?

A: In the science, a little.

Q: Yes, a little. Buying all your grandkids their first chemistry set, I'm sure.

A: No, not really. I have one son, my oldest son became a rabbi, he's not having a congregation or works in that field. My second son became a physician. My daughter is an architect, and my youngest daughter has a doc – a **PhD** in neuroscience. And, when the money ran out for research, she went back to school, and she is teaching now.

Q: Wow.

A: And I am very proud of all of my children.

Q: Yes, I can see that.

A: Yeah. Thank you. And I'm going to show you something.

Q: Okay.

A: Actually, some of these pictures –

Q: Mm-hm. Oh.

A: My son put it together just be –

Q: Right.

A: This is my mother.



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Q: Wow, she was beautiful.

A: This is my father.

Q: And handsome. And now I see where you get it all from.

A: Oh, my mother was beautiful.

Q: Yeah.

A: This is my grandmother, my father's mother and father.

Q: Uh-huh, right. Wow.

A: This is me when I worked in a lab here. And that's my late husband.

Q: Wow.

A: And that's my late husband's mu – brother. I don't know why he made the double. And these are my **grandkiddellas**.

Q: Oh. Wow, what a legacy.

A: Yeah. And turn one more page, I don't even know what's on it.

Q: Oh.

A: These are the married pictures. This is the son who is not married, and the other three are.

Q: Wow. That's just amazing. And this is?

A: This is a family picture. It was taken a few years back. Both of them are family pictures.

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Q: Mm-hm. Right.

A: This is my stepmother, she's in a wheelchair now. And –

Q: That's it.

A: That's it.

Q: Wow.

A: So, you kind of have an idea.

Q: You have a wonderful family.

A: Yeah. A **Dafka** for **Hitler**.

Q: Is there anything else you want to add?

A: Why don't you think about it? What else would you like to know?

Q: Oh, well, you were very thorough. I mean, I know there's little things that – we're never gonna get everything in every interview, unfortunately, but I guess I just – when you went back to **Hungary** after you left **Sweden**, when your father came for you and you still didn't speak hu – you didn't speak Hungarian any more.

And you were –

A: That's a short time.

Q: Right. And you were learning Hungarian again.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Did you forget your German?

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A: Of course.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I forgot my German, I forgot my Polish. I could talk to my fr-friend's father now. I forgot Swedish. When I came out in '56 from **Hungary**, within a month I almost spoke again. So apparently is somewhere buried, and it needs to be retrieved.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I tried Swedish, I have a friend who wa – is Swedish, and made no sense. So maybe too much time lapsed now.

Q: Right.

A: Don't forget that was a – one was 10 years later, and the other one was – is now 60 year – you know, it's a big difference.

Q: Do you know what happened to your father while your mother, you and your mother were –

A: Yes.

Q: – running all over in – in – in –

A: He was in a forced labor camp, which quite a few Jewish men were. And he worked, you know, whatever work they had to do. And he also did some black marketing while he was in the [indecipherable]. He always did sa – you know, he – he sold and he bought and I don't know how he did it, but he did it. So –

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Q: And he was – he was in **Budapest**, or – the whole time?

A: He wasn't in **Budapest**, he was somewhere else [indecipherable] of **Budapest**.

I don't know –

Q: But he was in the general area, he wasn't sent –

A: He was sent outside of –

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, he was working outside. And like I said, unfortunately, I really never got the story from him.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. A-All I know, that he got a letter from my grandmother. And the letter said, all these years I tried to help you to grow up. I'm s – we are starving. My grandmother was together with my aunt, who had twin children. And they were famished. And there were witnesses who seen my grandmother, that beautiful grandmother of mine, who was marched into the gas chamber holding onto one of her twin grandchids. Yeah. And the husband, the son-in-law survived, and my aunt kept in touch with him. He remarried after war and have a other family. But most of – all my aunts and young uncles were killed. My grandfather, my father's father, died just before the war. So I went back to **Szatmár** and I visited his graveside. So there is a graveside for him in **Szatmár**.

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Q: Because it was before the war.

A: Yes, and apparently there are – a lot of people put it – **Szatmár** is a well known Orthodox commun – you know, was a very well known, that big yeshiva is there. And I remember visiting there as a child, my grandparents. I did some mischievous thing there too. I let out the neighbor's rabbit. I don't know what the rabbit was doing there, and I know that I got in trouble. I did some mischievous thing as – like I said, I was a spoiled little girl

Q: Right.

A: From early age on I kind of did things which maybe I shouldn't have done. And I'm much better now.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Is it true?

Q: For the record, she's shaking her head.

A2: Yeah, I'm allowed to do that.

Q: Yes, you are.

A2: I'm her best friend [indecipherable] sister, actually.

Q: Is –

A: [**whispering**] I know. Have fun, enjoy it.

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Q: I guess the la – when – one of the things that I’m curious about is, you know, you were seeing all of these dead bodies as a child. Did it – were you afraid of them, or were you afraid that you would be one of them? I mean, I guess – it’s – it’s one of those things –

A: You know, whenever I see dead bodies, I always look for my mother. And for, I think I was already married when probably I stopped. I was always hoping that either she had amnesia or something, and somehow she will come back again, find me. I think the idea of losing my mother – she was not only my mother, but she really gave me the inner strength from very, very early age on. And my mother was amazing, I didn’t bring that out.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: She risk her life, and she smuggled food in for people who were **incarcerated** or something. So, I looked up on her. She was beautiful, she was – she was there.

Q: Right.

A: While my father was, you know, all over. He – my father was a very good man, people adored him, he was hu-humorous. I mean, he made the jokes all the time, and my fr – girlfriends were – thought my father was somebody – you know, they used to come over and stare at him. I think I missed my mother tremendously, in a sense that – especially when my – she and I were in hiding in this – you know,

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and my father wasn't in the picture any more. She really talked to me like an adult, and **confined** in me and **tore** me like – I didn't tell you about stories that, when we were on the far – fictitious – you know, for – you know, we were in hiding with that man. And I remember walking, and she taught me how to put the cross on me. And at that time already I'm seven and half, eight? I'm eight probably – no, not eight, because eight I was already in the camp. Instead of putting the cross, I scratched myself. And my mother said, don't do that. She said with one word, and next minute she kissed me, that I couldn't put a cross on me. So, she kind of seen the good in me, which for – you know, I – I think that reassurance meant a lot to me, and that acceptance. I really looked up to her, she was someone very special. And she could put up with my Papa, which wasn't the easiest thing those days. It's kind of sad because when my father became sick he totally withdrawn. He was making jokes and everything, and when he got sick he became withdrawn, he didn't go to the shul any more. He used to go every morning, you know, to daven, you know what that means. Yeah. And when he became sick he totally withdrew himself and he – when my late husband died, he died in '87, December 24<sup>th</sup>, it was such a big loss for my father, losing my husband. It was – he really looked up to him, they really did a lot of things together. My late husband was a wonderful chess player, and my father was a good chess player, they played chess. They played pinochle

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together, you know, cards together. So – and I took, you know, my fa – I left my late husband home, he played cards with my father, or played chess with my father. And if one of them won you heard about it for days, or **vice-a-versa**. And I took my stepmother shopping, you know. So, you know, there was a division between it.

Q: Right.

A: And I did play – I didn't play chess with my late husband, but I played a mean player – mean hand of cards, and so did my kids. My kids, from early age on got tremendous amount of self reliance, in a sense. You have to be independent, because my brother wasn't so independent, and we wanted to kind of – we kind of over –

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And the kids' education was – emphasis put on, to the highest degree. And my late husband took such pride in it that all of us became college graduate, including his wife, you know, over here. And my kids were exceptionally good students. My – one of my daughter attended **Harvard**, you know, as a undergraduate. And – to become, you know, the professions they choose, and they are still leaders in their community, so they learned something at home.

Q: Mm-hm.



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A: And I, as a young American I had an accent, much worse probably than even today, and I was active in school activities. I was the treasurer for the Boy Scouts, for the Girl Scouts. I became a room mother representative. So I – I was a typical American. I visited women who didn't have husbands and helped them out, you know, to connect them. And then my late husband says, you do it anyway, go back to sc – get the degree, and – and do it full time. So I went back to school and I did it because I still tend to overextend myself. I have that tendency.

Q: You're living life.

A: I try to give back, because I feel that I survived, and I survived because of, as a young child I probably couldn't have survived if somebody wouldn't have give a kindness to me, but they did. And I, if I can help somebody, I like the idea of helping, and through the Child Survivor organization, I made friends, which is a combination of friends and relatives. I – to some extent they are maybe closer than you can be to some relatives, because you can talk about the pains and everything. And nonjudgmental.

Q: Do you find that a lot? Do you find that – that people judge you because you did survive, or – have you experienced that before?

A: Oh yes. My poor stepmother's mother, her son **Shlymie**(ph) was killed, and he was apparently a saint. I never knew him. And she told me. Not once, not twice.

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And then she apologized, you know. But she personally told me, and I have been told, you know. We went to conference, I will never forget, the guy wasn't aware that I was in camp. He said, what do you know, you were just a child, and you were not even in the camps. Or, you were Hungarian, you were a shorter length of time. So, you know, they don't even know, but they look at you as a child, and you know, you were a child, how would you know what suffering really was?

Q: Right.

A: I mean, suffering was pretty crucial. I mean, there was a time I had clothes, in **Bergen-Belsen** I remember I put something under my hat that – and I slept on it, that you know, I was together with Gypsies, couldn't get away from Gypsies. So, there were Gypsies in the same barrack where I was. And in the morning, it was gone. And I remember putting some kind of a blanket – it wasn't a blanket, but something like it, around me. And when I had to stand **achtung**, you know, the line-up, the woman threw it off from me, the same way, you know, with that stick. When I see those sticks it scares the daylight out of me. And for a long time I was petrified of darks, too. So it – it was really – I mean, I listened to some older survivor describe and it – flashes come back to you. You know, things which you think you forgot, and then kind of ha – I go to sleep and all of a sudden I – I see

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certain things which I didn't realize that they were – some were stored in the memory, they laying. And it – they come forward.

Q: Yeah.

A: And like, recently, just in – I think it was in June, I was involved in the Bearing Witness program with **UCLA**, did you hear about it?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I was matched up with a young man who comes from a Iranian background, I think he was born here already. And we had like three or four sessions together. We met for lunch, and – and I remember when I told him how old I was in **Bergen-Belsen**, he went in almost like a state of shock. And I remember touching him and holding him. His – I said, I'm here. And he just couldn't – what did you do all day, was his a – a question. How could you be here? So I realized it's – even for me, when I look at my grandkids, it's hard to believe that a person at that age, I don't know. God forbid nobody should be tested on it. And I – when last year I came back from **Israel**, I went to visit my daughter, because my granddaughter's birthday is November 15<sup>th</sup>. So I came back two days later, I flew to **Seattle**. And I looked on my granddaughter, she just turned eight. And I realized I was in the camp, I probably didn't even know what day it was.

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: And tears got into my eyes and I started to cry. And my daughter and I went a little later on a ride, and she says, Mom, I can't handle it. I can't handle the idea of knowing what pain you went through, and I can't handle you associating it with my daughter. So I heard it.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I – I'm respecting it, and I – I make a point of not bringing it up.

Q: Right.

A: But my other daughters – my story was written up re-recently in the **L.A. Jewish Journal**. It was about four or five people were in the Indestructible Spirit project, I don't know if you heard about it.

Q: I haven't heard about that, but you seem like a good subject for that.

A: Well, and they quote me – they took a picture of my youngest grandson and I.

**Bill Aron**, did you hear of **Bill Aron**?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He's a very well known photographer and he – he took pictures of quite a few survivors. And there was a write-up, you know, somebody interviewed me, and er – and the story about the potato peels was written on. And with my grandson, I am holding my grandson. And my 10 – 12 year old grandson was reading it. That's my Grandma. So, in a way he – yeah.

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Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know, there are stories which happened, and cruelty which happened, some of them I probably still cannot talk about. And maybe they are better –

Q: Left unsaid, yeah.

A: – not to be said. I have memories of stood – trying to find a solid surface to put my head against it, to kill the lice which were biting. I mean, it was so painful. I mean, how can you da – talk about things of that nature? It happened. And then I remember about my feet when it was frozen, and it was painful. And people, total strangers who never knew me, were holding onto me so I don't go into there and don't have my feet amputated, or probably killed. So cruelty still happens today, and injustice still happens today, and probably the reason I started to speak now, and I wanted to give my oral in – interview to you, because if we can stop only one person – and that particular young man I mentioned to you I met through **UCLA**, he said it was one of the most meaningful experience I had til now in my life, he says, seeing you at **UCLA**, he says, to me, to meet a survivor and to see where you are today. So, you hear my reason for being here.

Q: I do, and I appreciate your time and I appreciate –

A: Thank you, and I felt –

Q: – your strength.

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A: – a very strong bond with you, I don't know why. You have the face, you could be one of my – you are too young to be my child, maybe a grandchild, not quite.

Q: Well, thank you so much.

A: Thank you.

Q: This – this concludes our interview with **Eva Brettler**.

**Conclusion of Interview**