HELEN LUKSENBURG
December 11, 2007

[Tape 18]

Q: Your name?

A: My name is Helen Luksenburg [SPELLS].

Q: Where are we?

A: Today you're at my apartment. […]

Q: When did you first start to talk about your wartime experiences?

A: Oh, I would say about 25 years ago. It was very difficult to talk about it much earlier.

Take 2

It's about 25 years ago that I talked it, started to talk about it. People were asking questions and I always used to break down talking—

Take 3

Most of the time we were talking about, people were asking us questions.

Take 4

…After we came here we met a lot of people, young people, they were asking us questions so we used to answer them. But some people didn't want to even to hear about it.

Take 5

I started to talk about when peoples started to ask me about the Holocaust. So I used to send him but officially into groups and in school I started to talk about, about 25 years ago.

Q: What happened that you started to talk about it? Why?

A: Because it was important to, to have, get it off my chest, even, and mainly to educate people because a lot of people didn't know what was going on.

Q: Tell me who you first told and describe the experience.

A: First, we were talking. We met some people here when arrive in America in Washington and the people were young people and they were asking questions. There were five couples and they took us in like under their wings. They told us a lot about America and they…we didn't have a car. We didn't— We were greenhorns [CHUCKLES] they called them and they would, they— We learned a lot from them.

Q: What did they want to know? What were they interested in?

A: Mainly, about our experiences. They were young them self during the war so maybe they didn't know about, much about it. It was maybe like if television would be on at the time maybe people would know more and get more involved and maybe these tragedies wouldn't happen. People would speak up. But…so they quest [sic] mostly about our life and they taught us a lot about American life.

I feel that we were more Americanized because of them than other survivors who mostly survivors stay together with other survivors and we got more Americanized and our friends were Americans and so on.

Q: Difficult for you to talk about your wartime experiences at first?

A: [VOICE] Well, yes, it's still is difficult for me because each time I talked…in school kids and the reason I speak to groups—and I don't know if you know it, they make now pictures of us. When we were young is a picture and of how we look now. And because a lot of people…especial school…teachers come over and ask/look for survivors to speak to the students. So we have every time week whoever sits there has the picture on the desk and people come over. Sometimes I'm surrounded with maybe 56-60 student at the time and they ask, *Could you please tell us you…life story?*

Q: When you first started to talk, what was that experience like?

A: I break down each time when I mention my parents and I still do. That is never will go away [EMOTIONAL] because what's left is only memories. I don't have anything tangible to touch even—a piece of jewelry or a spoon or something from my [EMOTIONAL] parents. That's why I— And it never fails when I speak about my parents that I break [EMOTIONAL] down, but I'm not ashamed over it.

Q: Is that what comes to mind most vividly now about the Holocaust?

A: That's, that's what [THROAT] it used to be but, you know, time is a healer. For a while, I was dreaming it stopped with my parents of the many years and I seen my…children being involved in it. That hurt even more.

Q: Being involved in what?

A: To be punished…in a Holocaust being involved. It…lasted a while that I used to wake up and shake, shaken and sometimes scream out because I see my…children going through another Holocaust.

Q: Nightmares?

A: Nightmares, yes. [VOICE] But right, right now it, it's slowed down. It's not as bad. I don't have them anymore, actually.

Q: Give me a sense of what that is. Are the memories vivid?

A: No, they, they faded out lately. They faded out. But the memories are still there. If I take a group upstairs to the exhibit, I still, it's very painful. It's especially it's the map upstairs and people surround me because whoever I am there with I try to explain the route from the complete south to the complete north how they dragged us, evacuating us, and-and people surround me and always listen to me and it's still painful.

Q: Describe when you first went to the museum and why.

A: I started to— When the Museum was open, I, myself, offered to be to be/get involved in it because I'm a…maybe I'm naïve but I…through education I believe we can wipe out ignorance because a lot of people—what is— What is the hate for Jews? Some people are very hateful.

Do you know that in the beginning was sitting somebody outside and, um, demonstrating against the museum that it's not true. It was a hoax. So we have to educate the next generation about it. It's very important to me to educate, maybe we can, because everything is a just a idea and you have to—ignorance, actually.

Q: What was it for you to go through the Museum?

A: [VOICE] Oh, it's very painful and the first time—even today, if I take somebody…somebody comes and I take them, give them a VIP tour, it's still very painful. I break down each time. But, you can't wipe out memories like that. I'm

the only one who is alive…left alive from my whole immediate family so that's makes a difference.

Q: What do at the Museum?

A: I usually, eh, now most of the time in the beginning I was…donations and, eh…and membership and I collected a lot of money. We/I…was self when the museum was open we/I was…had a fundraising and/with another friend and we collected people pledge and in the beginning we were just I pledged. I had to be the example. Gave $6,000, enough to a year or so we decided that we would pay it out and the minimum was $50,000 to be on the wall, the donor wall. I—

We did it for the future generations to know that these people existed like in memory of our parents because of 48 spaces, 48 spaces cost $50,000 and we didn't have room to mention mine even maiden name, my parent's name. It's just in memory of both our parents: "William W. M. and Helen Luksenburg, in memory of their parents." And it's important to me that our future generations, our great grandchildren will know that these people existed. That's the main reason.

Q: What is your involvement with the Museum?

A: …I still work at the desk. It's very slow now. People don't give many donations. Yesterday I got [CHUCKLES] $5 but it's— I— People come over—teachers mostly—bring over school kids and yet to tell them mine life story. That's the purpose of it.

Q: How do you feel about telling your story?

A: I feel that I, I contribute something. It's painful. It's still painful. I break down when I mention my parents but feel it's very important to get across and I always

give the school kids a pep talk. You live in a wonderful country and you have all the possibility to make the best out of everything and to/because genocize [genocide] is be/still being committed to be aware and involved in your country and to/that sometimes history repeats itself—to be aware. Have your ears and eyes open what's going on. Don't be bystander. Be a leader.

Q: What kinds of things do people respond to and ask you?

A: …People respond. Many people cry and things. It's the response is very good.

Q: What are they interested in?

A: [VOICE] They just ask me, *Could you please tell us your, your story about the Holocaust, during the Holocaust?*

Q: Examples?

A: Yes, some, some people. There's some who walk away. That's, that depends on the individual.

Q: Has it changed you in telling your story?

A: My personal…experience is I've living through a tragedy like that I am more, have more compassion and I've, I like to know what's going on. I want to know and help people, eh, because—and, and to educate people because some people are very naïve. They still don't believe that that happened. And in general I like to be involved. I like to know what's going on. I read two newspapers a day. I…know everything—want to know what is going on in the world, not to be a bystander just.

Q: Has the telling of your story changed the emotional reality for you?

A: …It is more distant. It's still very fresh in my mind and just I myself being all that. I think I mellowed more. I'm not as angry maybe anymore as I used to be, because I myself had German students in my house. We can't blame people who are not even born before. I invited them. They stay overnight. It's a group of people who/a professor at St. Mary's…College who brings every two years groups of university students—ten from Europe, Germans, and ten from America, and they wanted to meet. They called me once and they wanted to meet a survivor, to spend a Shabbat with a survivor and I was willing to do it. My husband was a little bit hesitating but I said, *If we don't do it we do this, we go into Hitler's footsteps.*

So I invited them. They stayed overnight and next day we took them to services and dropped them off some meeting place. I think was…they were go/coming from Maryland to go to spend a few days in Washington, go to the Museum.

And one girl, a German girl—her name was Barbara—my husband dropped us off and he was parking the car. And she said to me—I'll never forget it—she said, *I am…if I would be*— (How did she put it to me?) *I couldn't do it to have Germans…in my place what you went through, if I would be in your place.* But I said, *We have to do it. These people were not even born. You can't blame them for what happened. They tried their best to do, to make it better, make the, the war bletter [better].* So that's how I feel about it.

Q: It took you time to get to that point?

A: Oh, yes. It…took time. Oh, sure, it took time to be able to think even like that.

Q: Were you angry early in your life?

A: [VOICE] I was angry. I lost completely faith in God. Why [EMOTIONAL] did he do it? What did we commit? The only crime my parents committed: They were born Jewish. So I was [EMOTIONAL] angry but as time goes on time is a healer and as time go on and you get older you mellow, you are not as angry, you look at the world different.

Q: Other survivors have become more emotional, not less.

A: Yes, I find that out with my own husband because he has more time now on his time. He was busy making a living, working hard, coming home late and being tired and went to sleep. Now he has more time so he sometimes gets like I told you about the German they didn't want them to speak. But I insisted that we have to do it [VOICE] to show the world that you can go on hating.

Q: Your husband gets more emotional generally now?

A: Yes. I think the age has something to do with it. You know you feel you are getting closer to the end and, ah, so you get more emotional. You want to hold on as much as you can.

Q: Is your husband involved in the Museum?

A: […] Willy is got involved. I convince him and we both go now together. They are giving us even a parking spot on the small parking lot because he had a stroke. After the stroke it was…more difficult for him to walk so they want us to come and so he is involved, very much so.

Q: How does he feel about going to the Museum?

A: …Willy feels now—

Take 2

My husband feels much— He, he enjoy and to a point that he enjoys speaking to people. Like yesterday he got so excited. We met that man from Australia, people from Taiwan, people from Israel. It's exciting to read and to be able to pass on the message.

Q: How does your husband feel about the exhibits?

A: …He feels the same emotional thing. He's maybe more, gets more emotional than I do. He…doesn't go too often upstairs. If he has to take— I don't either because it's still it's very emotional to us to see the exhibit but, eh, he doesn't go too often.

Q: Describe what's "upstairs"?

A: [VOICE] Oh, usually I tell them. I ask them, *Did you see the exhibit already?* They said, *No.* So I told them, *You've* [MUMBLES] *got free tickets. We don't charge and, eh, please go and you will see if you— You are a young person. You don't know much about the war; that will give you a good picture to realize what's-what's going on.* I myself—it's one room there with speeches about Hitler—never could go into listen, even to him. I could never do it.

Q: Why?

A: Because the/his voice is just is still ringing in my ears with the hate how he was spreading and it's another place in the Holocaust Museum where they were making experiments and, and I never looked there either. It's still very painful.

Q: For your husband?

A: I think he feels the same way. He was in worse conditions when he was liberated than I was because he wait just— He was 21 years old and he was lucky he was liberated by the Americans 'cause I was liberated by the Russians and he was taking/giving the Americans to, to good care of him. The Russian, if he would find, would be liberated by the Russian and in his condition—he weighed 65 pounds at 21 years old—they would give him a shot of whiskey, of vodka, and kill him maybe. The Americans were feeding him interveneously [intravenously] and he was in the hospital and they took good care of him till he got back for about two months he was hospitalized.

Q: Tell me about the donation of a piece of clothing to the Museum.

A: …When he was liberated by the Americans and one she said— He/we used to have a number sewed on-on our clothes, on the stripes, an American soldier came over and took it off for souvenir. He didn't even know what means a souvenir [CHUCKLES] and took it. And after I heard about—and he kept— He was infested the whole, with lice so when the Americans liberated him, my husband, they/he didn't know what it is but they sprayed him with DDT and he always says that it felt like the whole world stood still because they/lice were not eating him anymore. And they put him in a hospital and they buried the clothes. They still were afraid that they can—the lice can spread or something—buried it.

After he was liberated, he wanted to have the jacket. The pants he threw away but the jacket he wanted to…show to people he believed that people will not believe what we went through. So he wanted to have proof what we were wearing and they/he got the motorcycle and was driving around the farms till he…recognized the farm and told the German woman to dig it out and she put it in a boiled in the hot water and put in on/in a root sack and took it with him, and the German woman was afraid of him because she thought he came to harm her.

He said, *I wouldn't do it anymore.* On the contrary, she was offering him some soup and he said, *No, thank you* and he took off.

When heard about that they're going to build the museum here, I offered this jacket and it's still in their possession. It's not on…. It's not in the case because it's/they are taking, after a while they take it and change around because it's too much whatever weight on it or something so that they really treasure it. It's really the first time I saw it-it's ironic because they were handling it with white gloves and that was [CHUCKLES] infested with lice. [CHUCKLES] That's…that's how they handle it now because it very precious.

Q: Tell me what ages you were during your Holocaust experience.

A: I was 13 years old when the war broke out and by the time I was liberated I was, um, four-four years—three and a half years in a ghetto because I was born near the German border so the Germans arrived at the same, the first day, and schools were obsolete for Jewish children. I had the youngest sister who didn't know even to read yet and was no school for us. At 14 years old, we had to be employed, otherwise we wouldn't— Food was very scar [sic] scarce and to…we didn't get enough food to get/be able to get the rations we had to be employed.

Q: So you were early teens throughout?

A: [VOICE] That's right. I was a— By the time I less, the last time I saw my parents I was 16 years old and I never seen them again. When they came/took me from the ghetto and send me to/away.

Q: Do you think your youth helped or hindered your survival?

A: I think the youth helped to survive because all this people…got sick and couldn't and, and I guess my mother always used to tell me that she gave me a good

foundation. So I never had a lot, much sickness. The only thing what I was, because they didn't, they used to put in something in our food that the women didn't get their periods so and we got boils—some place it came out—and that was my only…problem.

And was a doctor on the premises and he tried, a Belgian doctor who tried to be nice to me and to help me. And once he let me work on the premises and I used to put gravel on the ground and I still remember I had my, my short in the, shorts and a halter because it was summertime and I worked on the premise because we had to shower every day.

I worked in a factory, Deutsche ?_Gazerusverque, where we were all manufacturing soot, black stuff. We manufacture it under hundred twenty degrees and it was made from fine coal and oil. And, and that's what we were producing was mostly going for tires. So I had to take a shower every day. We were black. So in order that I was, my skin would rest to be in the sun's/sun.

So I was working for a few days and the German woman who was in charge said that I the rights and ?_demana. That means I am, I [PAUSE] excite the man because I was a teenager [STUMBLES] still and I guess I looked still halfway decent—that was in the beginning— [SNIFFS] so he had to take me off and had to go back to the factory. And he even decided that maybe to take the puss out from the boils to make into an injection. The Germans refused to handle Jewish blood.

[Tape 19]

Take 2

Q: How is your husband doing in terms of the Holocaust experience?

A: Because he has more time on his hands—

Take 3

My husband is/has more time on his hands because he always thought he retired at 62 because he didn't think he will live longer than 70 years old and by now he's—thank God, he will be 85 in February and he went through a lot—major surgeries—but I really believe that his mother is… [EMOTIONAL] watching over him [SNIFFS] because he always…thank God, he bounce back.

So he is more…. Because he has more time on his hand he sometimes thinks more about it than he used to before. When he was working, came home very tried in the beginning, was very hard for us. When we came to America we didn't know anybody. We didn't…speak the language. It was much more…difficult for us and—

Take 4

Because he has—

Take 5

[VOICE] My husband—

Take 6

My husband I notice is more sensitive now and his way of thinking he mentions very often about his mother. He really loved his mother and every place he remembers the songs when she was singing. [EMOTIONAL] If he listens to music he said, *My mother used to sing it.* I guess she had— I never met her. And because he has more time on his hands—then we came first he, ah, he worked sometimes 15 hours a day. He used to come home exhausted, even when he was much younger, and go to sleep and get up at six o'clock in the morning or five o'clock in the morning and go back to work.

So now being retired he has more time on his hand and it, and he thinks about it much more often what happened. He always talks about his mother how

she used to, he used to cry. She used to tease him and used to cry and he/she used to lick his—to take his tears and put it on his lips, he tells me, [CHUCKLES] how salty they were. So he really lives through still thinking about his mother, not so much about his father but his mother. He was very close to his mother.

Q: Does he talk about his experience to people freely?

A: It's more difficult for him to talk about it…for Willy to talk about it because I know that every year we talk about first with, first person in the Rubenstein Auditorium. So they, the men, who's in charge over it, put us together. I used to do it myself and he used to do it but now we are both together. It's more difficult for him to express himself than it's for me.

Q: Does it help him to talk about it?

A: After his sicknesses, it was more difficult for him and I could see it. I used to help him to think and think and I didn't want to interrupt but it's more—as he gets older it's more difficult for him.

Q: Does testifying help you?

A: …It does make me more alive each time but I do it because I feel it's my responsibility to get across, to educate the next generations that they should know about it and, ah, that's why I spend— I work in the…as a volunteer before the museum was built in temporary quarters 'cause it was very important to me to get across to people, to educate the next generation because history sometimes repeats itself.

Q: How do you think survivors are viewed here in America?

A: Depend on the individuals. Some say, *Forget it.* We have a friend who told us on the 25th anniversary of liberation, *Forget it. It's 25 years ago. Let's start living.* I said, *I'm living but I don't want to forget.* After his wife got angry at him and he apologize. And when they open the Museum he told us in our honor he gave a thousand dollars [CHUCKLES] to the…donation to the Museum because he felt bad. We don't want to forget it. That's all it's [sic] left is the memories.

Q: What role do the Holocaust survivor stories play in that?

A: Yes, it is part of it. Yes. Whenever I can I talk about it because still to young people I'm talking and there— I see— I'm that it…helps because how they react; most of the time they cry. It's nothing something what you…can hide. You see it: the reaction.

Q: Where is the Holocaust survivor in how you identify yourself?

A: I identify myself as a Holocaust survivor but I lift—I have in one place they interview me and I said, *I try to live my life to drink the cup of wine to the end,* [CHUCKLES] *to enjoy it.* I don't live with the past. I remember it and don't want to forget it but I go on living and take the, drink the cup of happiness.

Q: What ways has that shaped you?

A: I think it shaped me for, to become a better person, a better human being—my experience. I have more compassion. I'm very charitable. I try to help everybody whenever I was asked I can help. So I think it make me a better person, my experience, because I saw what human beings can do to other human beings. To be gentle, to be kind, that's what I learn from my experience. And…and I see

myself that I mellowed…tremendously. [STUMBLES] I was more critical when I was younger. Now I mellow. Age does something to you. Why be angry or criticize somebody? Life is too short.

Q: Describe yourself before and now, personality and temperament.

A: Because I was a young child still when I was going through it so my personality develop as I became an adult and I was out in the world and I could pick good and bad in the side. It's like my….

I'll give you an example. My son during the bangda [sic] ?_Bangdalish. (I have a hard time pronounce [pronouncing] it.) He said he went to demonstrate. He was about 18-19 years old at the time—or maybe older—and he said, *Why don't I go and why don't I give money for the purpose?* I said, *Harvey, yes, you are right. We have to help these people but we have to help each, our own people too, because hatred/they it's so big against the Jews and the whole world ?_under some medicine. We have to fight it and help our own people.*

So he…. …And so I said to him, also, I said, *Look at me. Where was it that it/I could go the crooked ?_way. The background counts, how you were brought up.* And I could— When I was liberated was nobody there for me. [EMOTIONAL] I didn't know what to do with my life [EMOTIONAL] yet but I…choose the right to/direction. I never got involved with drugs. I never got involved with bad things because…his answer was to me, *Because your background was different.* […] I picked the right direction because who was there to tell me to go left or right—the right way or the wrong way?

Q: Are you defined by being a Holocaust survivor or as a wife/mother?

A: Yes, it's very important to me to be— It was very important to me to be a mother and that was my main reason I never worked because my husband said, *I will take another job and I want you to be home and raise the children.* Whenever he came

home in later years, we always had dinner together. It was very important that we have dinner with our children. I see and hear about people: This one it's here and this one it's there.

No, it was very important to us to be together. And he always felt that he doesn't have enough time to spend with the children and I used to give him example: across the street for us were people who worked for the government—they were off Saturday, Sunday, and every holiday—and I used to tell him, *It's the quality, not the quantity. You spend the time, shorter time, with your children but you give them more of yourself than these people who are home many more hours and many more days with their children.* I always told him that. *It's the quality what you spend, not the quantity.* We always went on vacations and with the kids and we were always together.

Q: Had you always wanted children?

A: Yes. Definitely.

Q: Tell me about your family?

A: [VOICE] Three children.

Take 2

…We have three children and I had two miscarriages and he's sorry today that we didn't have five children, at least, because to replace. We owned [sic] it to the world to replace what we lost.

Q: Did that fill an obligation?

A: Being to be a parent, he worked very hard. It was very important to ask that our children get a good education. He work very, very hard—many, many hours a

day, 15 hours a day, in the beginning—and because we were not able— Our school was cut off at a early age and…as much as was possible we wanted our children to be educated and we feel very …good about it that they are dependent, they don't need any help from us… they're all professionals and they make a nice living. So that's very important to us. It was very important that they were accomplished it. Our biggest accomplishment is our…three children.

Q: Who are your children? What do they do?

A: …We have three children. The oldest one is a doc, hematologist, the middle one is a podiatrist, and my daughter came after ten years later. She's a lawyer. So…they're all professionals.

Q: Do you have any grandchildren?

A: [VOICE] I have five grandchildren. We have five grandchildren and they're still young. …One is finished, already graduated American University. She lives nearby—she was here Sunday—in Virginia. His brother…went to American U…is a freshman and Amy's children are still young. The oldest one is 15, 13 and 11.

The middle one just started a very good school and he travels from Providence, Rhodes Island every morning to Boston to this school, one of the best private schools—Jewish schools, ?_My ?_Monitors—and he doesn't mind. He enjoys it very much.

He's a very good student, very bright, and I said, *What you do on the trip one and a half hour?* He gets up at five, 6:30 he leaves the house and doesn't come home till seven in the evening. He said he loves it. He's…take a book with him. He reads and…they have somebody— He went to a Bar Mitzvah and…every kid who's on the bus got a blanket, [CHUCKLES] a small blanket that they cover them self and take a nap on the…way home.

Q: Describe yourself as a mother.

A: My husband thinks that I was a very good mother and I'm still very devoted. I constantly shop, especially for my daughter. [CHUCKLES] She always tells me people kept asking her, *Where…did you buy that?* She said, *My mother send.* [CHUCKLES] So I think I'm a very good mother. It's very important to me, my kids. When they were younger, I couldn't sleep at night when they started to drive, used to be at the window watching if they…are coming safely back home. That's our only purpose now is our children to give back to the world.

Q: Did the Holocaust shape you as a parent?

A: I think that…the Holocaust had a big, big part of it— I'm sure—…because we lost everybody. It was very important to us to have a family. Our children don't know what is a [EMOTIONAL] grandparent, a cousin, a uncle; that was very important to us. I'm glad that they are all married and happily married and …they have more family now—in-laws and so on. Yes, it was very important to me…to have children.

Q: Make you more protective?

A: It is more protective. Definitely, more protective, because I have a paper would I still keep. When my daughter was 17, somebody from the synagogue, the youth director, ask her and she knew what she would keep asking her because the girl is a survivor's daughter. So they both knew what's coming. Amy knew what she will be asking her. So I have that paper still—what she wrote—that at 17 we finally—

Because if she was not home at 3:30 from high school, I run or I got in the car and run to the school or called the school. I was worried. It's something didn't happen or somebody…did kidnap her. This thought is always behind on my mind

and she— …We agreed that at 17—she was driving already—that…if she will later than midnight she will call me that she will be home later, not to worry, because I [EMOTIONAL] always worry. It was very important [EMOTIONAL] to me.

Once my son didn't come home…the whole night I was calling people. I woke up people after midnight and he didn't tell me that he has from his…neighborth [sic] group sleeping over at somebody house and I was going crazy meantime. So, yes, I feared. My mother used to— …That paper I still have it. She describe how she used to correct me that my pronunciation in English.

Once I was asked to go and speak for the youth group in the synagogue and a friend called her, *Amy, are you going to the meeting because it's a good speaker.* So…I heard Amy say, *Oh, it's my mother.* [CHUCKLES] So I said...*If embarrass you, you don't have to go.* So she said, *No, I will go.* So after I spoke I said, *So how was I? What do you think about it?* She said, *Your grammar wasn't too good* [CHUCKLES] *otherwise you did a good job.*

Q: Did your children ask about the Holocaust?

A: We did it like my oldest son was reading when he was 24…months old and…many times I notice him—he was a child—?_drawing on the television screen. I told that the television will explode. I didn't…realize that even on the children's cartoons they were showing Hitler or the ?_Hautenchost, the swastika, and he knew already what it is.

He was five years old when he went to Sunday school and the teacher was asking, *Who was like ?_Hamen?*…this story of Purim, a mean man, who wanted to kill the Jews. And he was the only one in the class raised his hand. He said, *Hitler.* He read so early in his life.

And once I asked the doctor, his pediatrician, I said, *Why do they have it in the children's books?* So he said, *It's history. They write it in a child's version. But it's history. You can't hide it.* So…he knew every book what was published,

as he got older, he bought it for me. I have every book of the Holocaust, at ?____ every book. I never read them, even. It's too painful for me but he used to buy it for me.

…I don't think that we fed them purposely with the story. We gave them information as much as they could absorb or understand. We never went back—Even today when I speak to students, I never talk about the horrible, horrible things. I can't and I don't want to scare off…kids. Sometimes people come over with me. With the 80-year-old one, how can I tell him such awful things? Things were bad in general—I generalize ending—and I tell them, *Go into the ?_child Daniel story.*

Q: Were your children interested to know?

A: …By now they know. …I can't understand each one of them. Harvey was there once to see the exhibit. Stanley came in like a wind…through it with his father. He said, *Let's go, Dad.* And Amy came and she came on the way we were taking her to the airport to go home. She was pregnant with the second child and the first child was three years old and she left him with me at the desk and she, *I don't understand, what she meant even.* She said, *Don't show…him anything.*

I look at her, *Amy, what's to show him?* Maybe she thinks there are dead people laying around there. I don't understand why she said it. And she came after a short time said, *Dad, take me to the airport.* They are not—they can't face it. They can't face it. It's too [EMOTIONAL] painful for them. We're very to them I don't talk much.

On the contrary, I was visiting my daughter and son-in-law about six weeks ago, a month ago, and she gave me a look because there were people there—some guests—and they ask questions. So she gives me that look not to talk about it. It's I guess the only way I can…explain it must be that…it's too painful for them. The children are older. I never talk to my grandchildren. I need to…the

permission…from the parents. If they want to know, I would tell them. But I never did.

Q: What do you think of that?

A: They now know already because they are in school and they read about it. I'm sure that everyone has to read Anne Frank's story and things like that. Last time I was in Providence, they started to ask me questions—now they're older, 13 and 15—so I was telling them and they will listen, but they know a lot already. They want now just mine/our personal feelings because they know about it.

So if they ask me, I tell them but I don't push it on them and I never pushed on my kids either. They were asking questions. I would gave them as much as…they could understand. Some parents, some survivors, because there are books about it. Like the first book—I still have it—by Helen Epstein how she came to America and like how one girl was afraid to take the subway that…the train will take her to Auschwitz because some parents that's how they express them self…and that was like poisoning the minds of the children. They were afraid.

Q: Had you hoped that they might be more interested?

A: No, I just hoped that they are more charitable what they are and to give/help humanity. That's my main reason.

[Tape 20]

Q: What type of parent were you?

A: I was more tough parent. My husband was the easy one. [CHUCKLES] He just, *Oh, let them*— when it came to go to—Amy, especially, the boys he didn't care

where they go to school— He would like them all have here nearby and I said, *No, let them go away to school.* With a lot of parents, especially survivors, they want their children close to them. That's how they go out in the world and learn.

So with Amy, he didn't want her to go to any away from—to go to school nearby—and I said no. And I was after that she should go to Brandice [or Brandeis] and she was accepted and she went Brandice [or Brandeis]. And she met her, as a freshman, her future husband, he never left her [CHUCKLES] alone.

The first time we went for Parent's Weekend his parents invited us for dinner. I said, *She just left home. She's 18 years old.* He said, *So what?* He said, *She was ready to marry* [CHUCKLES] *him* and they got married. That's the first he never left her alone. But it was good for them to go away from home because she never did anything at home. I was the type of a mother I couldn't stand—I seen my neighbors messy, throwing dirty clothes…after the kids to pick up in the drawer. And she didn't even know what is in the drawer. [CHUCKLES]

I was always cleaning up after them. So my two daughter-in-laws…when they married our/my son—our sons—they didn't like me because I didn't train their husbands well. [CHUCKLES] They didn't know they trained them. She/he washes the dishes [CHUCKLES] and she is cooking and so on.

But my daughter never did anything in the house either, because I didn't like what/how they did so I didn't mind doing it. But she's an excellent, excellent cook and an excellent housekeeper. Her house is spotless, every little bit. She has the painter maybe three times a year when the kids were little fingerprints and thing. She couldn't stand it. The painter came over to paint over it so. But she sewed. It's very important—your background—what you see at home because children learn and children maybe improve it even. They see mistakes too so they want to do better even.

Q: What role was Judaism?

A: …I lost completely faith that where was God. But when you have children you have to give them some directions. You can't raise children like wheat. You have to give them direction. We joined a synagogue. They were both Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs and we have to give the traditional that now we daughter became Orthodox so I keep even a kosher home here for her because I want her to feel it's still her home. When she comes that she doesn't run out to eat kosher food and it's not such a big deal to do it. I have two sets of dishes…because it's very important that her children are here and she [NOISE] wants to eat kosher and so I do it. A lot of people wouldn't do it—they tell me so—but I don't mind.

Q: Is being Jewish important to your sons?

A: Yes, it's still even— They are not— One is a Reformed, the other one is…agnostic. Amy is religious Orthodox. So it's very, it's important to them, the tradition. I/We observe every Friday night. It's very important. Amy, when she was coming from school she used to say, *Who's coming for dinner tonight.* Friday night we have Shabbat dinner and she always was used and she does the same thing. Every Friday night…sometimes when we were there last time she had 16 people for dinner. It's very important to her. So the background counts. If you don't give it to them, they wouldn't know the difference.

Q: What are the commonalities of parenting with survivors?

A: …Most survivors they don't even spend on them self. Everything is/goes for the children. We try to give them a good education that was very important. We try—I love to buy gifts for them but we have a life too and to enjoy it and they don't mind. They said, *Go and spend the money* and so on. But some don't. Everything is…expression, "For the kinder." Everything is for the children and they don't even enjoy much life to better their lives and to enjoy it more, to travel, to do, no.

That's why/what I see. Not all of them but some. And in Florida where we live—we go to Florida, we have a place—there are…a lot of survivors there and I see it.

Q: What has it been for your kids to be the children of survivors?

A: I don't know their reaction with their friends because I'm not there with them. But it's like I told you with/when the youth director ask Amy to speak about. She mostly she wroted [wrote] my mother was afraid and always checking and we got agreed that don't—

…Now, when I was there last time people ask me. There were two Russian and they were asking me questions and she gives me that look and I told her she was—for her brother's 25th anniversary three weeks ago and I told her about it. *I don't like that look what you gives me.* So because she doesn't like that we talk—maybe people are bored. I said, *They ask me questions. I have to answer. I don't offer it to talk about my life all the time.* So it's hard for me to describe it if I am not there how they feel with their friends and so on. [VOICE] I think Harvey…does everybody knows that we are survivors, his parents, and so on. I don't think he's ashamed of it or anything like that.

Q: Influence the kids?

A: Maybe when they were younger but now, as a grownup adults, I really don't know. […]

Q: Are you a different grandmother than you were a mother?

A: No, because it's a different role we played as grandparents. We love them and we spend the time and after [CHUCKLES] goodbye. So I showered with gifts and thing and I try to be nice and talk to them and discuss it. They call me very often and, *How are you doing? How is school?* And they want to, my son-in-law,

especially, he wants us to come because the kids want us to come to them to see them.

Q: Do you compare what you went through at certain points of life?

A: [VOICE] Yes, with today's kids, yes. […]

I grew up that my father—I'm not talking…before the war, during the war. I went to school and I came home and I had dinner and so on—normal life. We were not very rich but we lived middle class and I always was dressed well and so on. Never had/didn't know what miss hunger.

During the war, at 13-14 years old I carried [EMOTIONAL] a responsibility. My father experienced—send us out. A train was going. My mother was very nervous because she went through, lived through a war already and we lived very close to the German border. So he send us. He heard that the train is going to her hometown which she was born deeper in the middle ?_pond. So he put us on the train. The train didn't [NOISE] go far—the Poles—and we saw the fire between two armies from one side Poles and from other side German fighting. We had to get off of the train and we walked.

My mother remembered somebody's neighbor's parents lived near, not too far. But my father experienced that there was— He remained home. He said, *I will come later, follow you.* He had to take care of business; that was September the 3rd. The war broke out Sepetember [September] the 1st, 1939. He send [sent] us out. We were in ?_Jowlshitza, my mother's birthplace.

And my father, they came, the Germans, took over and they got a older man and they was a law that every man has to come in the register to the City Hall. So for a month he was going to the corner. It was a long walk to the City Hall and return and couldn't/was afraid to go in and register. Finally, the last time he got/went they called it off.

When I came back home, myself—somebody on the…with transportation on the horse and buggy—somebody tell my mother and my brother and sister remain still there. I came home. I didn't recognize my father. He looked like

Gandhi who was released from prison when he was released from prison. My father was bald but he look/lost so much weight. [SIGHS] because the Germans were coming in on the motocycles [motorcycles] and he took a walk with a friend to get/have a beer.

And on the way back like they…divided. The men had to go to the left and my father was going straight so…the Germans were yelling out, *Halt!* The men didn't listen and was walking. My father ran into the first building. They open up. They knew him there. We used to live in that building and he/they opened the doors. Everything was under [VOICE] lock. Let him in. The men were shot on the spot.

My father never recovered from that. He was afraid of his own shadow and I took over. [EMOTIONAL] We were not allowed to have any radios. Listen. If two/three men got together, somebody had to stay outside in the building because if a German policeman would right away would accuse them that a spies and shot them [NOISE] on the spot.

So I used to go out of country. A relative had a rest— We didn't have radios. We didn't have anything—no newspapers. I used to go out to one of the relatives had a restaurant and lunchtime people used to come and eat there and I used to listen to the news. What they—everybody—was saying and used to bring the news to my father. At 14 years old, we had to be employed otherwise we didn't get the rations. That's how they kept track of us.

Q: You became an adult in every way.

A: So I grew up, even at the one point some people were owing my…father money. He made me a list of people who he trusted and I walked because Miss ?_Morgie said, *The next town was the border, the German border.* That was ?_Silesia what had belonged before the First World War to Germany and after the First World War with 1918 was a plebe site there and people were voting because the Polish government was giving them better conditions so they were—so that part was Germany before—and after the First World War it was/belonged to Poland.

So I walked. It was February—I think 1942 or '41 and I— He gave me a list and I came to the border and the guard said, I said was 14 at the time I said, *I'm 13* because at 14 you had to have a permit already. So he said…who was a nice guy I guess because the guard said to me, *Be back at before six because the guards change.*

[DISCUSSION]

Pickup Take

[VOICE] […] I used to bring the news to my father because I was afraid that he goes out. He was afraid of his own shadow from that experience. My mother took over and whatever we could we managed to/selling everything to be able to survive.

Q: Are you more like your father or mother?

A: [VOICE] I am more like my father. I was his favorite. [CHUCKLES] and…. My father said to me, [EMOTIONAL] *You will be the one who survive. You are pretty, you are smart, and you don't need much food.* And I'm the only one.

Q: What was that like to hear?

A: I just thought— I was too young, even, to think…but that's…what happened. I'm the only one. When they…retained them and if he gave me the key and I started to cry. I [EMOTIONAL] didn't want to go home because they retained them. And he said, *Somebody has to survive. Go home.*

Q: Your siblings?

A: [VOICE] I had a brother and a sister. Everybody was special. I was the oldest one, my brother was the only boy, and my sister was the baby. So everybody was special. [PAUSE] And I'm the only one. My brother died two weeks before I have…a little plug what I—in Israel for/in his memory and they send me a copy. I have it here on the wall. He died two weeks before at 17 from starvation. Two weeks before liberation from starvation. Somebody who was with him, she knew him. Our landlord's daughter, she survive and she…told me that after the war.

Q: Your family and who survived?

A: My mother was from 11 siblings—six brothers and five sisters. The only one—

Take 2

[MUFFLED] The only one was one brother who lived in Paris and he was in hiding during the war and that's how he survive [survived]. He died about five years ago at 95. My father was the youngest one and most of his—he had one sister in Poland and they just disappeared. I remember I wrote a letter during the war to my cousin; I never received a [an] answer. They were gone already. And…the rest of his brothers, who are older from, not from the same mother—from the same father—lived in Romania and they all survive and during the war they went to Palestine. So I have a large family—cousins—from my father's side in Israel.

But my mother's side was just the one uncle. I never met him. My mother used to correspond with him because she was the only one writing to him about all the whole family. So once we got a letter that he hoped that I was, as I get older he wants me to come to Paris and to go to the Sorbonne but I [CHUCKLES] never lived to. [CHUCKLES] I never…. I never got to that stage—the age around there that I could go because I was too young before the war.

Q: Did your father know something about you that you would survive?

A: [VOICE] He always told me that I'm smart and think. I remembered the average age in Poland was to start school seven years. He went with me to the principal and they/I started school at six. So he always told me that I am smart; that's all that I know.

Q: How were you able to survive?

A: It's just pure luck. I didn't get seriously ill. Nobody was any smarter or anything. It's just pure luck.

Q: What is?

A: [VOICE] …and the conditions and that I didn't get serious— I got sick after the war. Before the liberation I went up in the hospital. I have problems in camp with conditions, skin conditions. I told you about how I had, they sent me and after the war they/I went to doctors and they send me to go to completely naked and swim in the rivers by myself and think that they will be— They didn't have much— They didn't know even after the war how to cure this. It was like eczema. The first sign I had about it was when I had to work. [NOISE] I worked.

My uncle had a factory and there were three ways of…working conditions…. ID cards was [were] a yellow ID cards when you worked for a German concern like making uniforms for the Germans. The second one was private ?_lip factories and they used to put a German in charge. They called it ?_Threuhandler. They took away you/my uncle's factory and was a Threuhandler, a German running it. So with the ID card was blue and if somebody had a grocery store got a pink. So dependent where you were employed how were you protected….

So worked for the factory [STUMBLES] for my…in my uncle's factory. Once I took the liberty and didn't come on time. My uncle called me in. He said, *I don't want everybody who works here to think that you are…have special privileges because you are my niece.* [CHUCKLES] So he scolded me that I shouldn't do that again. But we had to work. From the time of 14, we had to have…a piece of paper to show that you are employed.

Q: Describe when you came to America?

A: We came to America…September 1st, Labor Day weekend, in 1949 on General Stewart ship, on the ships. We didn't have money. We didn't have visas. The ships were to/are bringing occupation army to Europe were coming back. They were not luxury ships. They were coming back empty so that's how they sent the immigrants.

We came on the President Truman's ?_forda. My husband was in Munich and saw were line and he escorts the line for. He said, *The registering to America.* So…he signed a register. Two months later they called us. I had once papers in my name through…my mother's cousin. I hardly knew him. He sent me paper. I didn't even know how he knew that I survive. And I didn't want to be separated from Willy because the papers were just in my maiden name. So I just destroyed it and I didn't know him well enough to ask him to send papers for both of us.

So that was the opportunity. We were ready to go to…Israel but the War of Independence was going on and I will be maybe selfish to…admit that. There were wars going on then and we just got out from one hell and I was [EMOTIONAL] afraid. So we were postponing it and meantime that came up so we came to America.

Q: What was that like?

A: [VOICE] The transition was very hard because we didn't know the language—the worst thing was the language—and we came— We came on the ?_auspices of Jew [Jewish] Social Services. Everyone was— Every Jewish community accepted the certain amount of displaced persons. I was happened to be Washington, D.C., so when I was stopped in New York because when we got from the port in New York my/I was surprised my friend was there waiting for us. I guess it was in the paper that we are arriving. I don't know how she knew.

So she kept us. She had to sign for us and kept us over the weekend—it was Labor Day weekend—enough that they gave her two tickets and she…took us to…Penn Station and put us on a train and we arrived in Washington. And we took a taxi…I think between us we had $20—that's what all we [CHUCKLES] owned—and so we paid for the taxis and went to this Jewish Social Services.

They right away they put us up in one, in a hotel overnight and the next day we got an efficiency room with a Murphy bed in the wall in order to open the Murphy bed was we had two doors to the kitchenette. When you open it, we put the Murphy bed in the wall and we'd open the doors. Cockroaches were running wild [CHUCKLES] and I became pregnant there and I was [CHUCKLES] throwing up every morning.

I went to work. He worked too. They found us a job and I took a course in Germany. Did you ever hear about OTR—Organization through Training and Rehabilitation, an organization would exist even today in different countries—in Sudan, in Russia now and so—

Because my mother during the war, she send me was a designer from Vienna who used to give in a school. The schools were empty, the Jewish schools, and went/send me to take a course of sewing. He said, *You should never need it. But you don't know what life can bring in life that you would know something to do.*

So I took that course and I still with moving recently I threw away. I had this samples because we didn't have material how to learn on it so on pieces of

small scraps how to make a pocket, put a zipper in, and I just threw it away. I kept it [CHUCKLES] for 60 years. I said, *I don't want to take it with me anymore.* And so I knew sewing. So I was looking for a job in sewing. I had a hard time because I didn't know how to talk. I had one year of English in high school but I knew just a little bit grammar; that's all.

So the time they were very tough. People were taking advantage of us because they call us "greenhorns" and how many things I didn't understand and I used to buy from pictures just on cans and I open up and didn't like it and threw it out—was very difficult—but some people were very nice. We met a group of people— Oh, that was in a synagogue.

I went on Yom Kippur to—they gave us tickets, because we came just before the high holidays in September, tickets to go to the old age home. They had their own synagogue and Yom Kippur is a service for the dead. So I was say the memorial service for my parents and two women [EMOTIONAL] were observing me and one said to the other, *This is not a American girl. An American girl doesn't cry like that.*

And after/during the break, they approached us because we're sitting outside, was very warm and I had my number on, and they knew how to speak German—they were all from Vienna—and they invited us to break the fast. We went and through them there were a lot of couples in the Jewish Community Center. They belong.

We met newcomer Americans who just graduated from colleges in New York and came to Washington to look for jobs. There were two in advertising, a doctor from Buffalo, a couple teachers—so that's how we made friends right away and they were teaching us to Americanize us right from the beginning and we are still friends. Some unfortunately—the men died. Willy is the only one from five couples who's still alive.

[Tape 21]

Q: How important was America to you? What did it represent?

A: America is a wonderful country—freedom and free speech—that you can express yourself and to be part and…very important to me to get involve and know what's going on.

Q: When you first came, what were you thinking?

A: [VOICE] When I saw— We arrived on a Friday night in New York and I saw the Statue of Liberty and I said, *Oh, my God.* [EMOTIONAL] *I always read about it—I knew—and here we see it. We are free in a free country.* The feeling was tremendous. But we didn't know we will do. We were homeless. We was penniless. We—

But people were nice to us like the Jewish organization. They took us. They gave us/send us to school in the beginning. They gave us $30 a week was one philanthropist and here, Mr. ?_Himilfarm, put every survivor in the beginning till they found each…them self, gave/received $30 a week. In that time that was a lot of money. I used to go through the Safeway shopping. For $12 we were bringing bags of food and of every holiday, Jewish holiday, he…sent, not just me ?_off, but all survivors who were in Washington area money for the holidays. So they were very, some very—

They send in the beginning when we arrive a social worker to acquaint us with where to go and what to do. One thing, she took us to a used furniture place. We had just one room and a bathroom and [CHUCKLES] a kitchenette but we needed something to…sleep on and I refused to take one. I said, *I will not sleep on somebody's thing.* I said, *The cheapest one but new.* I had pride in myself too and I wouldn't accept it. So they bought us a cheap studio coach and we slept on

it [CHUCKLES] and after we— I was pregnant and we had the…baby. We needed at least a one-bedroom apartment.

It was very difficult to get apartment in 1950. You know everybody was coming back after the war and they needed housing [NOISE] so we did/couldn't our apartment even. I remember we didn't have the money. We saved up $200 and somebody under the table we got a one-bedroom apartment. It was very difficult to get in 1950.

Q: When did you become a citizen?

A: …It's five years. You have to be…live in the country to become a citizen and on the dot of five hundred thousand people became on the same day citizens when we—exactly to the date five years. We went to the courthouse and became citizen. We had to learn…some questions to answer and we passed it and we became United… [NOISE] States citizen. That was a great day for us.

Also the friends what we made on the first anniversary of arriving in America they took us out for dinner. I remember to the Blue Room in the ?_Shohem Hotel and what they did: They had a cake and…they called because my husband used to go to the janitor because he had a television watch a wrestling. So they was on the cake: "Mr. and Mrs. America" [CHUCKLES] written with a little flag. I still have that little flag, American flag, on it. So that's how grateful we were to become.

And they…bought us a iron because one friend, Jean, who just became a widow, gave us/was once…seen me ironing and I brought a iron from Europe which was very heavy so they boughted [bought] a new iron, bought for us, as a gift, a light iron [CHUCKLES] to be able to iron.

Q: Do you feel American?

A: Yes, I feel very strong as American. American Jew. Because I'm very involved with Israel and American and Jewish…affairs and Jewish organization. I'm a very— My husband always say, I say, *You pay so much taxes.* He said, *I don't mind paying taxes. If I earn it, I like, I don't mind paying taxes. This is my country.*

Q: Do you feel as if you belong?

A: Yes, very much so and every—sometimes people say even the people what I work, *How do you know so many people?* We went through different times in different places and we made a lot of friends.

Yesterday in the Museum, I'm talking to somebody and he says he's from Australia. […] So I ask him about somebody who used to be a neighbor of ours who lives in Australia, used to be neighbor. Like the people who work with us can't believe each—

One woman works with me sits with me. Every time somebody comes over and says, *How are you, Helen?* And that she can't get over how many people we know. We talk, we made friends and people…recognize me. Many times I don't know if it's my accent but people that I'm sure that I change, I age, and they recognize me. Wherever I go somebody always recognizes me.

Q: Do you have lots of survivor friends?

A: Yes, I have some friend, more in Florida than here. There…are some survivors here but I wouldn't say that I socialize too much. One friend who went to school with me—so I/we are very close—and/but the others just hello and so. [NOISE] Last week we had the brunch for survivors so we go to these things.

Q: Do you prefer not to socialize?

A: Just ‘cause we made through the years friends, mostly Americans, and we live the American way so. Some people still live like 60 years ago maybe…so we made our own life. And I have friend survivors and I just…I keeped [kept] in touch. One friend lives now in Vegas and one this we keep in touch and we like led to see each other.

Q: Commonalities that can only be understood by another survivor?

A: Sometimes, certain things, yes.

Q: Example?

A: Oh, when we get together sometimes we’d always, sooner or later, it comes out—that subject—of our experiences. That’s the only time we talk about it and compare and things like that, yes.

Q: Is there value for you in that?

A: Yes. It’s a value, sure. We learn things from it, from the experience; that’s why are maybe a better human beings today from/because of the experience.

Q: How you met your husband? Age when married?

A: …My husband at the time—I didn’t know him—I had an eye for him. He used to work in our ghetto. He used to go. He was by streetcar like a half an hour away in a smaller town there and I knew he’s cousins. So I’d mentioned once to his cousin—that was during the war. I was 14-15 years old, a teenager, and/that she

should introduce me and she never did. So one guy who worked in our factory went to work where he was working. So I said to Joe I said, *Bring him over.*

One day he comes with him and he brings him to my machine and my cousin was sitting across like you are sitting and she said—and he/we started to giggle. We were girls and we started to giggle. He remembers two young girls giggling. That's all what he remembers. He…mind wasn't clear at that time. He just lost his parents and he was homeless. He had to give up his own room and people moved in because he was a single person. He wasn't entitled to a room and [EXHALES] so that was the end.

I come to the camp and who do I see through the fence he is in that camp but I didn't approach him or anything. Once we…didn't have water in our bathroom so it was a backdoor from the men's— We were divided by fence. The mens [men] was a thousand men and 600 women. They were building the factories and we were working in them. As soon as one was finished, we operated it.

We didn't have any water so it was a back door from the men's wash ?____ that we could go and fetch some water. I go in and he's there standing and washing his pants, and a friend of his was there, introduced us. That's all. And he was…sleep on his pants because it was important that the…stripes have a…crease in them and never took off that little cap. He was ashamed because that head, hair was shaven.

A couple days later our barrack was the first barrack by the fence. Somebody comes to the barrack and says, *Somebody wants to talk to you by the fence.* I go out. Here's that and started to talk with me, nothing could go on. And from that time on he used to come to the fence and we'd talked. And one day I was by the fence talking to him and I didn't notice that was a German officer up the hill watching us.

He came around into the barrack and the German came in. And he said, *I counted five people by the fence. If these five people don't come up every other fifth person will have their hair shaven.* There were women 30 years old. I was at

the time 17 years old who never spoke to a man and I…always felt very responsible person and I came forward. Why should people who never even were there and never talked to a man be punished because I had a rendezvous.

So I came forward because I was such a brave Jew. He took me by the neck, rouse, and pushed me out. Nobody else came/followed me so I run into the next room and cry, wanted to go back. *Why should innocent people be punished for my foolishness?* She didn't let me. She was sleeping after nightshift there and she said, *You admitted it. Why should you go back?*

The next morning the comradeship was so great that not the men were watching us who to tell whose head/hair was shaved. They couldn't tell. We had little triangles, black triangles, purposely to put on like a turban that because the soot, the black stuff, doesn't get into our hair when we were working. So everybody took the…people who had their head shaven made a little lock outside and everybody was wearing a turban that you couldn't tell who…head was shaven or…who was.

The comradeship, we were each other's and still remain like related like family because we were thrown together. Everybody was in the same situation, everybody lost everybody, [EMOTIONAL] the whole family, so it was very important the comradeship to us.

Q: You could sustain that love and friendship?

A: I tell you…we used to have every third week Sunday free because there were three shifts and we were working 12…in order that one shift would have a Sunday off. We had to work 12 hours— nightshift or dayshift—and some— On the nightshift they used to call our room, our barrack—not the whole barrack because there were other people there too—but our shift would…were working together, the ?_tango shift.

There were girls who had…was an opera singer…and in the beginning they had these beautiful— I was too young so but these were in the twenties. She

was…. Honey was a German refugee. She had beautiful these Japanese robes and they used to put up shows. We kept our morale up as much as we could to outlive them. They….

And our conversation— What do you think the conversations were? We're talking about food. What our mothers used to make. And my dream was to have a glass of tea with lemon. Can you imagine? Because we were starving so we were talking about just a ?____ about food and that gave us…nourishment or something. …And we tried.

There a few girls on our shift who had beautiful voices and they used to sing. Before we went to sleep, they used to sing. And every comradeship and…was great. We tried to morally, mentally support each other. And most of us from that group survived. Now maybe many died because of old age and so.

Q: Is friendship today still important?

A: …Friendship is very important. You can [can't] live by yourself. You have to have— We don't have family so friends are very important. Sometimes at times we/you have to share things with somebody, not just your husband—women to, a woman to woman. Yes, it's very important.

Q: Drawn to about your husband?

A: …What I was drawn to him he was a gentleman and still is a gentleman. He will hold your coat and he will take/let you and hold the door for you, and he didn't have to give me [CHUCKLES] but he tried. He wanted, after we met, found each other, he wanted to go dancing. He's a very good dancer—he taught me how to dance—and I didn't have shoes. I didn't have— A German woman gave me a pair of shoes and they didn't fit right. The first rain I lost the shoes.

I didn't have any clothes. I came back to Poland. I went after— I went back to Poland. I was liberated by the Russians. I went back because that would be—I thought maybe by chance my brother survive [survived].

I knew what…had been to my parent. When I was in ?_Ravensburg a transport from—we were on the same trains, a transport from Auschwitz and one girl recognize me who knew my parents and told me she went them at the liquidation of the ghetto to Auschwitz and she saw my father going to the ovens. So I knew, had proof.

My brother, I thought, maybe he will survive. That's why I went back to Poland. I was liberated by the Russians and the Russians were tending your home—?_Polotsckdomo, Polish people—and they were dismantling everything in Germany. They were taking apart and sending to Russia all the machinery and we didn't have any transportation at all, how to get.

So when I was recuperating after the war [NOISE] in a villa from typhoid with another girl, I stood by the window…and two Russian…soldiers came by and I very innocently just mentioning "oy-vey" he look to me like maybe he's Jewish. So he didn't answer me. Middle of the night it's a ?_nuck and what I did I put [NOISE] on the door: "?_Zarosuk ?_Forintane" in Russian. It's in Polish the same.

So because we were afraid that the Russians would come in— It was a villa—we were two girls there—and they will rape us. So that prevent, that saved us. So they knocked…. The soldier came back—he was a captain—knocked at the window and I got scared and I said, *Who's there?* And he said, *I am the captain who was here before and you ask me if I "evay," a Jew, and I didn't answer you because I didn't want to admit in front of my comrade. What can I do for you?* And I say, *Help us to get out from here to go back to Poland.*

So he arranged with the general, a Jewish general, a Russian, who was taking a whole truck with machinery back to Russia and they had pass from Germany through Poland to get to Russia because German [Germany] is on one border, Russia is on the border of Poland so. And he dropped us off ?_Shetine.

Shetine now is with moving you know about shifting the borders—it was Poland—and we arrived there, all four are still together and he—

We took a train. You can't imagine. I will never forget that scene: people hanging on the outside holding on, on the trains—everybody was going home. And arrived in my hometown and on the station the girl just died last week who escaped—only one who escaped from our camp—was at this Union…this station, train station, and he said to me, *You have here family. You have here cousins who survived from Auschwitz* and Auschwitz was liberated in January 1945 where we were not liberated till May, the 8th, capitulation.

So had a home right away. I knocked at the door and my two cousins were there and they both worked already and I was keeping the house. I was the housekeeper, had to carry coal from the basement to the four/fifth floor—[CHUCKLES] that was hard—and the coals. And I kept— I went shopping. I bought. I used to cook for them, didn't know why/how but I did—whatever I cooked.

And out…I found out about Willy. I was going to visit my friend. She had an uncle there who was one of the richest men in town. He was hidden the whole war so she had a home where to go to. The two others went away. And as I was walking, visiting Edna, I recognize somebody who used to be in our camp, a man in the men's club. And I said to him, *Through you travels, you know, the luxurious travels did you see Willy?* He said, *Yes, in April I saw him….* […] He said, *He was in line to be a transport, be sent out, but he left the line and went to…. He saw in the wash barrack empty bottles of water so he run out to get/fill a bottle of water. He didn't know how long they will be on transport. At least he'll have—from his previous experience—he'll have some drink of water.*

By the time he came back, the transport was gone. For any price he wanted to get out from there. That was hell on earth, very cold, didn't have— It wasn't in the valley. They were on top of the mountain and he heard every Sunday the church bells ringing in the valley and he thought to himself, *People go*

to churches and pray. People [EMOTIONAL] *know what's going on.* And he missed the transport.

After the war he found out that they took that whole transport in ?_Schweinbach I think…and put in a barn, poured gasoline, and burned everybody alive. I think like a nurse said last year to me in Florida that he has nine lives. How many times he was faced with that?

Q: How many years have you been married?

A: Sixty years was in March, 1947 March, the 2nd, we got married. …How did we found each other? He/I was in Prague. We left Poland because Poland was too painful to remain there. Every stone reminded and the Poles reaction was, *Yes, ?_Yeschaseas, you mean you are still alive?* I went to the building where we lived and he said—and I saw a man in the yard and I said, *How long do you live here?* And he said to me, *Oh, from 9045 [1945] Jews lived here before.* They…this most sipping through. We were not welcome to say, ?_*Yeschaseas* means, "You are still…alive?" like they expected us—everybody—to die.

So I left Poland. They arrested us in…Czechoslovakia. We didn't have a [NOISE] …a ticket, we didn't have money, we didn't have visas, passports, nothing. We got on a train [CHUCKLES] and so they took us off and they retained us I think in Bratislava. They…retained us in a school—that was summertime in August. It wasn't a prison. They retained us just.

My cousin's fiancé said—there were five of us—my cousin's fiancé got out—nobody was watching us actually—and went to Prague and made arrangements how to leave. Came back. He said, *Let's go. We're going to Prague.* We got on the train again and everybody got a bottle of vodka on the…. The Russians were occupied that time, at the time, Czechoslovakia so we went and he made the arrangement. At six o'clock to be on the border, ?_Dembovisa.

I get on the streetcar once step and somebody's calling my name. I step back and it was the girl who was my supervisor—she was from Prague—in camp

and she said to me, *I saw Willy at the ?_just Join [Joint] Distribution*—that's a Jewish organization what still exists all over the world and I started to cry, didn't want to go. I wanted to remain there to go look for him but my cousin's fiancé said, *No,* [NOISE] *...I will be back in Czechoslovakia and Prague and you are going with us.* So we went…over the border.

The first stop was Kissinger's hometown. It was the border from Czechoslovakia to Germany. We stayed there overnight and we had, we went to another city where we had—my cousin had a cousin there—seven people in one room sleeping on the floor. [CHUCKLES] I didn't have what to wear. My cousin was in a camp what she had still have own clothes. So she shared it with me. And people used to—

[Tape 22]

Q: Reunited with your husband?

A: A lot of people were hitchhiking and they/somebody mentioned. We used to get the packages from the ?_owner, the food, and—

Take 2

We used to get cigarettes and I didn't smoke at the time so for cigarettes used to—somebody came visiting and said, *For two packs of cigarettes they make shoes and thing* and she mentioned two names, what I, when I met these cousins somebody in ?_Rabenspregen introduced me that she was on the transport from Auschwitz that they are his cousin.

So she mentioned the name and I said, *Who is there with him? Who did other find?* She said she found her husband, sister, a uncle, and a cousin. I said, *Who's the cousin. 'Willy Luksenburg.'* I didn't know how he felt. Once he said, *I would/will survive and I will marry you.* I was 17 at the time. So I wrote a little

note. They knew exactly where he is. He used to travel, bring people to Prague from Prague to the American zone who used to come from…Russian ?____ zone.

So I wrote him a little note and they said, *He's in Prague again.* He had the special permit to bring people over the border. So they said, *You should*— The girls knew every move. Thursday he will be back. It's Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I felt like Cinderella. I didn't want even to go out. I didn't have what to wear or anything.

My cousin calls, *Throw down the key. Guess who's here?* He came in. I remember like to now his hair just started to grow in and he was wearing a brown suit, took off a man's watch, gave me. *We'll get married*—like that—and I said, *With what?*

His uncle went to America, left him an old fort, he sold the fort, and we made the wedding. And I cooked for the wedding. Jewish custom is if you have a Orthodox wedding that you/the bride fast before the wedding. I almost fainted because I was doing the cooking and everything.

My friend and her father had two rooms. We just had one room. It was a…hotel. [THROAT] So the wedding was in ?_Salawinegarten's apartment and the set part is—and it's in the picture is in the Holocaust Museum that we both stay— You know what is a ?_hopa? We stay under the ?_hopa crying because was a candle was a special memorial service for the [EMOTIONAL] dead for my/our parents and how we both stay and cry.

We got married and he tried to do a little bit business to sustain us and I was ready to go to Palestine. My cousin when at that time— No, Israel didn't exist…. In '48 Israel became a state. So we— He was once in…?____ and I didn't go to Israel yet. We were waiting because there were wars going on and I was, he would be drafted. He was draft age. He was 23 years old.

So he was in Munich and he sees a line. He said, *What's the line for?* He said, *Registering to America.* Two months later they called us. We came a general thing. But we were married already but we were separated because it was the ships what were bringing the soldiers to Europe so I was in/on…one level, the men were on the [CHUCKLES] lowest level and just mothers with babies had the

cabins up…?____ up. And we came to America [NOISE] and they…gave us efficiency apartment, a room, [NOISE] and that's how we started life [VOICE] in America.

Q: Has it been a good marriage?

A: Oh, yes, definitely. Sometimes it's just that he is—I am the only thing in his life. Sometimes I like that he goes out with men or…. No. He doesn't have accept me every place I have to go with him and [NOISE] think so I hope it keeps up.

Q: Shared experience of the Holocaust?

A: …We have a lot of…the same thoughts and thing we talk many times about it, reminiscing and thing because we'd experienced the same life. He was in the same camp. Later in 9045 [1945] when they were sending us out and one incident—

I'm sure you read about it with the bread story. Do you know what a bread meant that time and he breaks the bread. He caught it in the air and that's it's just a sign to—a piece of bread was worth more than today, meant more than today a million dollars and he said to me, *Stretch out your arms* and he broke it in half. He couldn't throw it and give it to Helen because like vultures. Everybody was hungry. So that's one thing would I, what it meant to him to share it with me. But unfortunately it fell between the two wagons. He never forgave me for that yet.

Q: How has the Holocaust shaped you as a Jew?

A: Oh, much more, definitely stronger as a Jew. I've— Because I suffered as a Jew and why should I feel/give it up. We have to fight for it to be recognize [recognized].

Q: Was your identification stronger after the Holocaust?

A: Before I belonged to a Jewish youth organization. My father was a Zionist. I was brought in the spirit of Palestine. His dreams was [were] to when we grow up and move to Palestine. You have to remember that the Jewish conditions in Poland were very bad. At this time of the year they used to stay in front of the Jewish stores and picket, *Don't buy from a Jew.*

So my experience as a Jew—I went to Jewish schools—I felt it from the time I was a young child. So my father's dream was eventually when we get older to go to Palestine to live. …And because I suffer, as a Jew, I feel very strong being Jewish and I support everything—whatever is Jewish—and I saw last week in the road maybe 50 checks to everybody and it means a lot to me being Jewish and I want my children to be and think and I hope my grandchildren will follow in the footsteps because nobody likes us. We have to be…joined together to fight for the same cause. I'm a America. I love America but I feel strong as a Jew, American Jew.

Q: Describe Israel.

A: Oh, the first experience was the first money we could afford—

Take 2

Was we went for six weeks—

Take 3

The first thing we could afford, being in America, we saved up with two children we went on a trip to Israel. It was for six weeks because the only family I have is in Israel. We didn't stay in a hotel. We stayed with my cousin what we grew up together like sisters and it was really a experience would I will never forget. And that was 40-some years ago. I [it] wasn't the last. The last time I was in Israel was

15 years ago. …They tell me— My cousin who just spend [spent] the summer there said, *You wouldn't recognize Israel today.*

I was about nine times in Israel. I went on three missions…through UGA, through the federation, two, by myself. I had a roommate. The third time he was already retired so he went with me. He was my roommate. And the experience is unbelieve not— I can't describe how I felt [EMOTIONAL] having ?____ Israel that we have a place in…to belong. Everybody who's a Jew and wants to live…is permitted to come and live there. And for the other—that we're recognized as a nation. We were homeless for so many years.

The Jewish history goes through centuries to…different areas, the…Turks and the English, the…Turks, the Romans, the Turks, the English, and they mandate Israel/Palestine. So it's very— Israel means a lot and I am a lion of Judah. It means that I give a lot of money and I have a pin, a lion, a gold lion— what I wear. I should put it on today [CHUCKLES] and I support Israel.

And I wish I could go but he's afraid to travel and I wouldn't…go by myself because I would worry about him. He's afraid. After the stroke, he's afraid to travel overseas…at all. …And I have the only family I have—cousins—is in Israel so it means a lot [VOICE] to have a Jewish state.

Q: Were you tempted to live there?

A: Not by now if I didn't live before. I'm too old for it to [CHUCKLES] start to be a pioneer. No, not anymore. When I was young I was hoping to be but it didn't work out. Life was very difficult then. They had a very hard time. Now things are much better. They will be celebrating 60 years soon next spring when they became a state, recognized as a Jewish state.

Q: Close to your anniversary too?

A: Mine would be 61st [CHUCKLES] by that time. [VOICE] I just would like that he's more involved in something. Every place I have to go with him and

everything I have to be there. I would like that he's more outgoing. He's a very good husband, a very good father, so I don't have any complaints.

Q: Losing your faith in God?

A: Because it was a disappoint— I grew up in a [PAUSE] kosher home but my…father wasn't like, you know, the very orthodox and we have—and my mother was more religious than my father. He belonged— He used to go to synagogue and pray at home. But I remember during the war, you know, the pray, if you pray the men during the week and even on Saturday put that shawl tallit, he put away the tallit and didn't [EMOTIONAL] pray anymore. And he said, *Where's God that my children have to suffer?* He questioned it.

And the only meat we got on the ration—it was pork—despite the German that little bit meat would used to get. My mother refused to cook it and my father used to say, *We have to, I have to eat it because you'll have strength to live through it.* She gave me one part and used to send me to her youngest sister. She used to cook it and I used to bring back and my mother gave us a corner in one room that we could eat.

My brother refused to eat it. He became— He was just 13. He became Bar Mitzvah during the war. He used to kiss— You know we have the Mezuzahs. Each time he walked out he was kissing the Mezuzah and he…was and my father and I and my sister were eating it.

My mother didn't touch it and my brother didn't touch it. But that's what the German in spite. They could give us some meat but it was so scarred [sic] scared [sic] [scarce] food. We had to— We didn't have enough food to eat that even rabbis during like Passover were supposed to be—they permit to eat because the biggest mitzvah, the biggest thing to survive is survival. If you save one person you'll save—in the Torah ?_eyes of it—you save a nation.

So…it was very important to survive, to outlive the Germans. So we had to eat whatever was/we could get to survive and my father believe [believed] in

that. My mother didn't. She didn't touch it but my father did so that was— He questioned God. *Where is God that my children have to suffer?*

And after the war…I lost faith in God, too, but…if you…have children you have to give them some guidance and some ways to believe in something. The rest is up to them when they become adults.

Q: Your religion at home for your children?

A: …I belonged to services to synagogue. I go most of the—every Saturday to services. It does something for me and for him too—for my husband—that he— Like every Saturday I say, *Are we going today?* He said, *Yes, I feel good when I go.* So it means something.

Q: Socially or culturally?

A: …Both. You meet people, you talk, and the high holidays. We have our own seats assigned because we paid for it and…he feels that we belong some place with…we belong. We are somebody. That means a lot to him. Men like to show off more their accomplishment, their success with their wives, [CHUCKLES] the jewelry I think. The men care more for that. That shows how successful he is.

Q: Your view of material things as a result of what you've gone through?

A: Yes, but mostly he wanted it. I never cared for—I started to— In the beginning, I used to make my own clothes. I couldn't afford to buy things and…what I bought was cheap and didn't like it. So I started to learn. I didn't even understand the instructions but I learned and how had a sewing machine. I worked as an alterations for a while till I, till the nine month till I gave birth and…I learned to sew and to do things for myself and I started to buy— I had the discount—and we needed…towels and we needed sheets and we needed— It was very difficult.

And he used to tell me if I bought something, *Nobody will lent you money how many "smutters" you have in the closet*—how much money you have in the bank if you need a loan or something. So that was his idea. And he worked first—he was dreaming of having a house, own a house. He worked as a plumber and somebody recognized his ability and the builder said, *I am going to build home and I will give you a break.* And he really did. He gave us a piece of paper that we gave him $1,600, a down payment; that means the house was cheaper for us. We didn't have any money to buy a house and you needed that was—we lived there in '58 I think for eight years and he— I still have that piece of paper.

The man passed away and I because he gave us the break and…when we had/went to the settlement my/I was in the hospital with the second child is a friend went with him and he have— We saved up money for settlement. He use needed pay shoelaces. He didn't buy it because he needed the…quarter to save up. He used to pick up bottles and sell them that to call, have the money to save up to have the money for…settlement.

That's how bad it was [EMOTIONAL] but we never—I never felt that I'm poor. I knew it's a temporary thing that we will make it. To our advantage was America that we were young; that's all what he/we had our youth.

Q: What comes to mind when you think of "homeland"?

A: Homeland to me's [me is] to me America and Israel. I don't…think I will go and live there—never thought of it—but it's I'm glad that we have a homeland, the Jewish people that they have a homeland. And I contributed that to that too because I've supported.

Q: Do you believe in a god?

A: Yes, I believe that there's something above us and/because I have a friend who doesn't believe in anything but every other word she said, *God's help.*

[CHUCKLES] I laugh some time but you have to have, you have to something to believe in, maybe it's some kind of a power or something but it's something—why we are here, how they do exist, who created us? So you have to know [NOISE] something exists.

Q: Do you believe in an afterlife?

A: No, I don't believe in afterlife. No. No. I don't think I would be back. [CHUCKLES][VOICE] …the thing will eat me up and….

Q: Thoughts about mortality?

A: Yes, I give a lot and I'm very lucky at my age that I'm still, how I look and how I feel and I guess it has a lot to do with you genes. As far as I know, all my uncles and aunts lived a long life, the ones who lived, and it's up in how you live that it has a lot to do to take care of yourself. So you can help yourself. But how long? It's not the real things doesn't hit you: cancer and things like that so. But we try to eat…proper and things like that. I don't exercise but I have to. I gained some weight. [CHUCKLES] Now I have to go [CHUCKLES] when I get to Florida I'm still walking, going…to the spa or something.

Yeah, I believe that you can help yourself to live…that you mind also, your way of thinking has/does help too. You can [can't] be depressed and think the worst thing can happen to you. You have to have some faith in doing and help yourself, not to eat certain things, to…live a normal life, not to smoke, not to drink, not to…drugs. […] I couldn't differ and my husband tells me that he can tell/recognize the smell of marijuana. I said, *I don't even know how it smells.*

Q: Does the Holocaust make you view death and life differently?

A: No, I don't think so. …It didn't change my way of thinking because it wasn't— If I survived it means that I have good genes because the only thing I survived that I didn't get surreally [seriously] …sick and you have to help yourself to live a better life, to take care of yourself rather; that helps a lot your mortality too. If people drink too much or smoke too much, that's the back prove now. They finally— The doctors never told you. I smoked through three pregnancies because nobody told me not to. So you have to be aware and help yourself much too. So that helps the mortality. If you drink a lot, you smoke a lot…life is shortened.

Q: Did the Holocaust alter your personality?

A: …The aging process had a lot to do with it too. As we get…I mellow, I was more critical and it changed tremendously because I saw how frail life is. Here you are and after you're gone. So it changed my outlook in life tremendously. I appreciate more life and I want to enjoy more life to make the best out of it, what's possible. […]

Q: Changed your social-political views?

A: …It shaped my political views. Like today I don't know who I will follow. [CHUCKLES] You know what was today in the paper in *New York Times* because opera is supporting Obama. So that 80% of people said it wouldn't affect them. She was yesterday on the… *Where are they now? Wherever they are.* And she— Today's paper was, "It didn't make— Eighty per cent said it wouldn't affect the way of thinking about changing their minds."

Q: Would you describe yourself as liberal or conservative?

A: I am not a conservative because I'm not a Republican [CHUCKLES] and I am more liberal. I think that…there are many poor people and they need help and they're wasting so much money on unnecessary thing. We help the whole world and we have people in Kentucky starving still. That's not fair. We should look out for our own people first.

[Tape 23]

Q: Describe your personality.

A: […] …I am a person, no-nonsense person. I can't stand stupid [CHUCKLES] little people. People who are not aware what's going on, who don't know anything, I don't have patience for people like that. And I am very charitable. I have a lot of compassion for people who are in trouble and I just today, they called me from the federation, that to— I said, *I would still pledge the same what I did.* And I said, *I like to help but they, I used to do the*— We used to call once a year to people for donation, for pledges. I said, *But you are doing it this year in January. I'm not able to do it because I wouldn't be here. But any time you can call me and I would like to try to help you.*

So I like to help people and I like to be involve and I know— I read two newspapers a day to know what's going on and mainly I am very unpatient [inpatient] with people who are stupid. [CHUCKLES] and they don't know anything. It's such a beautiful world and there's so much to learn and everybody should know what's going on.

Q: Are you optimistic or pessimistic?

A: Sometimes I'm pessimistic and sometimes I'm optimistic. If it comes to health, if something is wrong, I can very pessimistic. I think about the worst thing. But in life usually I'm…optimistic.

Q: Resilient?

A: Yes, I'm pretty resilient to a lot of things. I am not— I had a friend who everything was too hard for her. She [CHUCKLES] […] And I couldn't just understand. She was a spoiled only child and everything was a big job to her. "I can do anything you can do." That's my motto.

Q: Are you guarded or trusting?

A: …As I get older I was more trustful when I was younger but now I'm not so trustful. I doubt people sometime because a lot of people don't tell the truth. You know you have to get to know them to be able to trust them.

Q: Was the Holocaust a part of that?

A: I don't think so. Life more. Not the Colocost [Holocaust] I don't think so.

Q: Has the Holocaust shaped your personality?

A: I think so because I was still young. [VOICE] So I guess it…shaped my life because I was in the teens still. When I was liberated I was 19 so that would make a big, left a mark on my life, developing my life, even.

Q: Thoughts about privacy?

A: Personal privacy? I am [EXHALES] I know there's some people— I don't have anything…in front of my husband or anything. I don't feel that I have to be…so private. I feel very free [OFF CAMERA THROAT CLEARING] with him that I don't worry about that.

Q: Feelings about being alone?

A: …As I get older, I gave it, give it a lot of thought and my husband every morning, he tells me, how good it is to have somebody to speak, to talk to. He couldn't speak sleep, I couldn't sleep, and we've talking at four o'clock in the morning and he makes his, a point of it to realize and he tells me that he would never/could live by himself. He doesn't understand how people can be alone. You can go crazy, especial when you are older and you need somebody to be with.

Q: Political views were shaped?

A: [VOICE] But I was very political and aware of it when I was a young child, not child but during the war even I used to bring the news to my father. I used to be aware because always in the newspaper in our house and I always got into discussions with other men: What's going on in this world? Because I care what's going on, how unfair this/how people suffer and…to make it a better world to live [VOICE] for my children and grandchildren.

Q: Are there issues right now that matter to you?

A: …Sure, that…poor people don't have enough food to eat, they don't have— …Do you know that Venezuela is giving free oil for heating for our poor people? Do you know that? Isn't that ironic? They are the goodies. Sitka is supplying it. So,

it's very unfair that in the richest country in the world there are people still who don't enough to eat; children come to school without food. It's sad. We support every…everybody [CHUCKLES] in the world and our people don't have enough. Today just I got for the feeding the people, poor people, in the mail.

Q: Particular interest in the homeless?

A: Yes, because I support it. I send for Thanksgiving I send a check. I send again for Christmas. Yes, I'm very concerned…. It's unfair that people should still not have in the richest country in the world not enough to eat. [VOICE] So much wasted is some people throw it out. How much food is wasted in America because it's too…much and some people don't [NOISE] have enough. And you know it's very—

I had anniversaries and things and…so much food was left over but my daughter-in-law had a hard time going to the…to shelters. They…don't trust you. They don't want to accept the food. They are afraid maybe it's poison in it. You never know. There are crazy people. What about Halloween? People used to put something—pins and needles in apples. You can't trust anybody no more.

Q: Do you care about certain aspects of democracy?

A: [VOICE] It's a privilege to be able to vote. I couldn't wait till I became a citizen to be able to vote and I'm very impatient of people that 50% of American population never even votes. They don't care who is there. It's sad. With this is our country and we should pay attention who would, who do you prefer.

Q: Why do you think so few people vote?

A: …How many people don't even read the paper? They don't. So they don't know. They don't care.

Q: Do you see it as a civic obligation?

A: Yes, it is an obligation to be able to vote. It's a privilege, not just obligation to be able to vote. There are countries who don't have a vote. They don't…. …It doesn't exist, democracy.

Q: Was it a big deal when you first voted?

A: […] It was a privilege to be able, couldn't wait to become a citizen and be able to vote—express who I like and not so. Makes me angry that people don't take it seriously.

Q: Your experiences form your views of minorities and disadvantaged?

A: [VOICE] I was a minority. I was suffered because I was a minority; that's unfair. [NOISE] We're all God's created creatures and we are supposed to be, love each other. I don't expect anybody to love me but to respect me because we are in the human race and to respect each other.

Q: Your thoughts on Affirmative Action?

A: I don't know much about…Affirmative Action. I always ask my husband, *What is it about? I really don't understand it too well.*

Q: What is your understanding of it?

A: …It's about the black people and everybody has a right to exist and to have opinions.

Q: Have you seen changes in race relations in America?

A: [VOICE] …In the time I am in America like my husband mentioned…he had a helper who was a black young man and he went to have a coffee in the drugstores—that time there were drugstores—and they whistled that he has to leave so he left with him. That was unfair. This is a free country, not to— They are human beings. We should have the same rights and everything. That's born Americans—equality.

Q: Your view on the death penalty?

A: I think if somebody kills, an eye for eye, he should be punished, yes, because it's going on too much. Too many people, innocent people, are being killed. Look at that guy last week. Nineteen year old goes in with the…strong—and my husband told me that's the biggest gun you can use, Russian made I think—and…shoots at random and kills eight people and how many wounded. He did the smart thing. He committed suicide. But why are so many sick people around? What's going on? These drugs are killing everybody.

Q: Do you have a strong belief in justice?

A: …I believe in our justice. Yes, I believe in it. Somebody is/has to be proven to be guilty. […]

Q: Your response to the word "revenge"?

A: [VOICE] Depends what's the situation it is. You know if human beings sometimes loses control, too, and the revenge is one of the responses. So depends what is the revenge for.

Q: Did you go through periods of hate and revenge?

A: [VOICE] I don't think I could kill anybody but my husband tells me, *If you would be stronger now, after he was liberated in memo [memory] of his mother he would kill every German.* That was his idea right after the war. I don't think I could kill anybody. When I see blood I just can [can't] take it.

Q: Did you understand the impulse?

A: [VOICE] …Sure, I had the impulse being angry in…. Just in memory or my parents alone [EMOTIONAL] and my brother and my sister. [SNIFFS] Yes, but I could not do it myself.

Q: What have you done with that anger?

A: [VOICE] I just had to calm myself down and to say, *That's it.* I never had— I was very glad to— I don't think the Germans were punished enough at Nuremberg trials but it was my decision to do. Was a trial and thing and they shoot, some died in prison, and some didn't. Some were free.

Q: What wasn't done in the Nuremberg trials?

A: How many Nazis went free or the Vatican had hid a lot of Nazis that went to the Vatican and the…Catholic Church…protected them, a lot of them went to like the South America and some of them still live there. So the ones they should be punished for what they did. How could anybody follow somebody like that to kill?

We just had yesterday we were looking at the albums. One German who is 90 years old found anonymously send album what he had from the Auschwitz and it wasn't actually they were in charge of Auschwitz but they were in a resort

place, how they were singing and drancing [dancing] and music and in behind them people were being burned. So where was the conscious [conscience] to be able to do that? That's the question. But always will haunt to me.

Q: What's your answer?

A: Just it shouldn't be—that they didn't care. Where was the…their feelings for humanity? What did they— How could they do that? Sing and talk…drink and do and behind their backs people were…forced to lose their lives and…being punished. Where is justice? It never could be repaid.

Q: Did it turn your worldview of humanity?

A: …In the beginning, yes, it did. [VOICE] I was very angry at everything about it. But…I mellow and time is a healer and [NOISE] you have to take it.

Q: Where are you at this point in your life?

A: Good and…the ?_mightals are the good…intentions and I…see it working in the Holocaust Museum. I feel that I can contribute something because I talk to people and I hoped—and especially young people. I keep telling him, *You are the future generation. You have to remember that history repeats itself* [STUMBLES] *sometimes and you have to remember to be good and helpful and do good things in life.*

Q: You've been part of major changes in American history?

A: [VOICE] …In the last five…50 years what changes, they're unbelievable but came…not a fact, defacto and with everything the computer is now a completely different world and…in every field: medicine—in every field in…education.

Education…I'm not so keen on American education because I went to schools in Europe. I didn't finish but [NOISE] a kid graduates from high school, doesn't know how to spell, and doesn't know anything. He gets a degree because it's social issues involved in America. In Europe you…left somebody behind to catch up. Here everybody's graduating but, God forbid, if it hurt his social [CHUCKLES] …so. I don't agree with American education. That's the one [CHUCKLES] point what I don't agree.

Q: Seen changes in civil rights?

A: …Tremendous…from the fifties for now and there are a lot of…colored people or black people who really if they are—you see them every pay, if they pay attention on their education they…have it and they can make something of them self. It's up to them individual. They have the possibilities to achieve everything and I see the changes. Sure, I…was here in 9050 [1950] who started with Johnson and big changes. They with living separate everything now. It's equality. [NOISE] That's what the Constitution is based on.

Q: Your thoughts of Joseph McCarthy?

A: [VOICE] …That was awful, awful time. I was afraid myself. [CHUCKLES] He was—

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Started out with the writers. They don't have— they were arrested because they were following—they told maybe— They were not Communists. They were/had social…ideas so you…blackmail them, you take everything away from them. I remember the times. [NOISE]

Q: What were you afraid of?

A: I was afraid of McCarty what…he can come up with something else. Being a Jew I was afraid of that too. So, I didn't like that at all.

Q: Did you understand the risk more than Americans?

A: [VOICE] […] I think so. Because a lot of American [Americans} are very naïve, you know, very naïve. They don't, didn't experience anything. During the war I had to It was ironic actually because during the war they would say—they didn't have enough sugar or enough nylons. I mean this was… [PAUSE] So that's really sad if that was so important. If more people would be involve and pay attention what's going on maybe they wouldn't have an Holocaust like that.

But, on the other side, I know that a lot of people it was of the Depression and a lot of people it wasn't television. I don't think it could happen today because everybody's exposed to it, sees it on television, and that time there were people who didn't know how to read, even. They never read a newspaper. They didn't know what's going on.

When you go to the Museum you see all the papers had the headlines all ?____. In the Learning Center you see it every newspaper. *The Baltimore Sun* and *The New York Times* and *The Chicago ?*____—every paper had it—maybe not on the front page but in the middle of the newspaper. Nobody paid attention. They…didn't believe it.

You know after the war we came and when we…were telling the story they told some reactions were from people, *Oh, they feel like they are in a movie, watching a movie.*

Q: Feelings about other genocides?

A: …This is very important. I cup— When I speak to students I said, *Genocize* [genocide] *is being committed today. People are softening and….* We have now the whole learning—half of the Learning Center is about the Holocaust and the rest is about the genisize [genocide] all over posted. It's still good. You watch television, you see these poor kids with the big bellies—they don't have enough to eat—and the worst thing is-is AIDS. That's what killings most of Africa. [VOICE] …These people are not educated enough. They spread it them self.

Q: What's your response to Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur?

A: …It's the same thing—Darfur, in Bosnia, and…Rwanda. People were dying. It's the same thing. It's genosize [genocide] but their own people are doing it to them. That's the sad part of it. It's not the outsiders.

Q: Has the world changed since the Holocaust?

A: In a way, yes. People are— It's more read about it and think but—[NOISE] not completely. Some people still don't care but it is more…everybody's aware of it. You go to the Holocaust Museum, you see all these things about the Rwanda, not so much Rwanda anymore and Bosnia but Darfur…all the…Somalia. You know what they are doing.

I remember being once in Israel by the wall and somebody was collecting money for Somalia. I couldn't understand how can we here; that was years ago. Everybody's a human being…risk should the same respect, if you are poor or…rich, to be recognized and respected.

Q: Being Jewish today, do you feel secure in America?

A: Yes, I feel secure but anti-Semitic is still here. It is exists and I try, as much as I can, to…try to wipe it out and I keep telling people, *Do I look different than you?*

Q: Examples?

A: I read about it. I personal [personally] …didn't experience this but it's I read about it and I—so I know that still exists. It's one priest now what I really respect him, a French priest, who took it up on himself in…goes to the…Ukraine and people now are open up, opening up and telling him, *We are mass graves.* The people were killed and they didn't even have a individual grave. So he is involve in that. I think he's a great man…but took 60 years.

Q: What is your attitude today toward Germany?

A: This is really something [CHUCKLES] the hate is still there for me, personally, of the grandfathers and fathers but I can't hate the people who were not born then at the time. It's not their fault.

I told you about that I had two Germans staying in my house and I gave them the third degree—gave her—and I said, *What was your father?* So she said that her father was in the army. He's/her grandfather was excuse from the arm because he eight children and a uncle was a medic and he got very being punished because a friend of his was more liberal and was a ?_umpteen Nazis so half uncle was suffering because he was his friend so.

But the younger generation is much, much—I heard—we have always in the Museum interns—volunteers. You know they are excused from the army in Austria and in Germany if they offer to come and work in the Holocaust Museum or other places. They are…against service. […]

I think that today's generation they try to make it good for the, what their grandfather's did, not even their fathers because it's 60 years. Their fathers were born maybe after the war. [NOISE] so but the grandfathers. And…I myself was hosting…the Germans because I can't see— I have arguments with my husband because he's still very…hateful, he said, because…and he thinks about his mother. But I said, *But these people were not…born, even, so you can't go on hating.* If we go on hating, we're doing the same thing what Hitler wanted us to do—what Hitler did—so we have to stop them.

[Tape 24]

Q: How did your experiences shape how you view other minorities?

A: That everybody's equal and should be tolerated equally with everybody…because…we're God's create us creatures and we should respect each other and tolerate each other.

Q: Relating to the homeless and hungry?

A: Maybe the main reason is because I experience hunger in my life so I can understand it better, and I think being in the riches country in the world we should, we help everybody else. We should take care first of our own people that people today in the 21st century shouldn't be/walk without, walk around and be hungry. Children come to school without food and we should set the example to the world. We try with everything else; might as well with that.

Q: You never forget going without?

A: No, you don't forget it. You remember what we were dreaming of. I told you, a piece of bread, what it meant. I made once it was at the end they evacuated us and

they were, I was working in a kitchen. They send me to peel…potatoes for the soldiers and I brought/put—I had a pair of underpants with elastic and I stole a couple potatoes and I put…. If they would find it they will shoot me. I came to the barrack and I shared it with my friend and we made a sandwich. We cut the potato, raw potato, and pretend it's a sandwich [PAUSE] for/between two slices of bread. So I know what means hunger. Maybe that's why I feel like that because I experience it.

Q: Same with minorities?

A: Yes. But in some way they can better their life. I like to listen to Bill Cosby [CHUCKLES] because he really gives— [CHUCKLES] He is angry at his own people. *You can help yourself because the possibilities are here for you.* But some don't but they could have the same—they have the same privileges to take advantage of it.

Q: Beliefs on abortion?

A: I never had— You know [CHUCKLES] my doctor once asked me that question. He didn't believe that I never had abortion. [CHUCKLES] Told you I had three children and my husband still feels that we should have—but we couldn't afford it. When things got better, I was too old already [CHUCKLES] to start again; that we should at least had five children to replace what we lost…and to certain degree. So now I am—

But it's I give them the choice. I am Pro-Choice. If people…want it, they should be able to do it. That's up to the individual. I can't be the judge and judge anybody what they should do. So I'm Pro-Choice. That's it.

Q: Thoughts of the Women's Movement?

A: Oh, I was proud for them. My daughter, daughter-in-law, she's such a feminist. She does— [CHUCKLES] She doesn't believe in any men/gentlemen and think to do something for her. She's a real feminist and she— I agree with it. We have— You know what I learn from my experience in the synagogue, every place, the women are smarter. They conduct services much better than the men. They know how to read the Torah. They know everything today. Equality…women are very able to do everything…even did they…. What are they? They dig ditches. …In Russia they always there. The women would…digging [CHUCKLES] ditches. But that's fine. I am for feminism.

Q: Your role in your marriage?

A: [VOICE] Fifty/fifty. We always have— I have a right to speak up and I [CHUCKLES] I hate to admit but I make the most decision because he leaves it up to me, not that I want it to be…the head of it. But he always ask me what we should do. Yes, at least I never did anything all my married life behind his back and it's 50:50. I respect him and he respects me.

Q: Your kids went through the sixties, the sexual revolution and drugs?

A: [VOICE] …I didn't want to know. [CHUCKLES] If they brought a girlfriend, I said, *You are sleeping downstairs and she's sleeping [CHUCKLES] upstairs. What was…between ?____ I don't want to know.*

Q: Sexual revolution?

A: [VOICE] It's all because of drugs. I blame everything on the drugs. They ruined some people's lives and how can anybody not to have control. It's peer pressure I

mean in colleges and things. It goes on. My granddaughter came to Sunday and she said, *Nana, it's/that's college life. That's all what they do. Everybody is smoking marijuana* [NOISE] *or…taking— This is life in the college today.* It's frightening. How can they concentrate? It costs so much money—college today—[CHUCKLES] but it's a different world. [VOICE] We have stupid people…on drugs.

Q: What does the concept of mercy mean to you?

A: Mercy killing? [VOICE] Depends what's the situation when to have mercy. But somebody who's killing another person takes away his life I can't have mercy on them.

Q: Played out in your life?

A: No, I never got to the point that I had to feel sorry for somebody in mercy, no. I don't associate with people [CHUCKLES] like that. Depends what's the situation is. Maybe innocently somebody committed something not knowingly and…you have to have mercy on him, or if somebody's sick and not responsible for his deeds, maybe. But otherwise if they commit a crime, I don't have much mercy on them.

Q: Forgiveness?

A: [VOICE] Yes, because when I was younger I was more angry and thing and now…age I have more compassion and I have more—I feel sorry for them. But it's again the same question: Why? What did they do? What did they commit? Taking another person's life I don't feel mercy for them.

Q: Examples when you have forgiven?

A: …Yes, I did. We had a friend who was….who insulted me and think and he was very angry. I was very angry. We didn't talk to them for five years but was his daughter's wedding and the daughter were in Florida at the time and the daughter came and said to me—came purposely to Florida to talk to us that she considers us like family—and my…biggest gift will be if I come to the/her wedding. So we went to Boston to the wedding. I forgive. You can go on all your life being and not to forgive. And…as I get older I mellow and I have more forgiveness for people….

Q: Value in your life to understand that?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Without it what?

A: Without I guess…. I just mellowed and I forgive. Have to find out the root for it. Maybe sometimes if I'm very ?____ I wouldn't forgive but most of the time—That's the aging process…maybe because I'm afraid when I go on the other side.

Q: Connected to your compassion?

A: Yes, it does because compassion is the main thing so it goes in pairs.

Q: Without it there is the danger of staying cold hearted?

A: Yes, I don't want to be always angry and…take revenge or something on anybody. No, you have to forgive. Life is much easier this way.

Q: Know about survival that you didn't know before the war?

A: Everybody, it's in the Torah, even it's…written, that if you save one person you save a nation because survival is the first thing to help somebody unfortunate and to ?_survive. Survival is the main thing and the religion, even, to survive. You have to do the best you can but taking a life it's not right. And to take, to live to survive is very important according to the religious thoughts.

Q: What role did luck play?

A: …Yes, it's a lot of luck I think. It's a lot of, a lot of luck. I believe in it that it's a lot of luck and I guess—how to say about my husband? I wouldn't call it luck but it's something would make him survive because in the last eight years he went through four major surgeries and he's still—and he's alright now. So I don't know…if it's his genes or survival, the will to overcome, to survive, it plays a part in it too, and good luck, luck. But it pays—survival means a lot. You have to some time fight for it but if somebody— Don't give up! If people give up, they don't have chance to go on. That is the very sad if somebody just doesn't care so it's survival.

I don't know how many times I questioned myself. How did I survive? I was there and it just maybe was God's way [NOISE] that I survive because many times I question myself. How did we survive under the conditions what you had? I maybe could help some people were less. I didn't steal. I didn't do anything special. Just my luck that I survive.

Q: More than luck to hang on to who you wanted to be?

A: Sure, because the experience taught us what means life and thing, sure. That had a big part in it that to see— You ?_went with so many different people and you

could see they're all human beings and to tolerate each other. …You don't have to love me but tolerate me, respect me. I'm a human being.

Q: Meant to return to the camps?

A: …I went to Auschwitz. I took my two children. It was very painful and I have a picture of my two, my son, the oldest one, and Amy. The other one didn't want to. He doesn't want to talk even about it, see it. Stay under that sign, "?_Autobikemyfrei." You know what it is, the sign? "Not work makes you free." And I taught to my ?_serve. I said, *We paid a high price and some of us survived and Hitler didn't* [EMOTIONAL] *live to see that we have now grandchildren and we'll live to have some of us, not all of us live to have grandchildren.* That my revenge. I have a picture of it that how they stay under that sign.

Oh, yes, I went. I went and carried 27 candles and put on the—it was such a cold day in January in December and I look at the pictures of myself. I look like I'm a hundred years old on that picture because it was so painful.

First, I went with my—I went twice I think. I went with my, my rabbi talked me into it to go. He took a group—25 people—and he tried to talk me into go so I said yes. And after my daughter was on the break that was Thanksgiving time and she said, *I want to go.* So…I paid for it, she came with us, and my older son went.

And the first stop was in the, in a Auschwitz because the other part was Birkenau for this like two miles [NOISE] away and I had to say I was the only survivor in the group and they were under glass on the floor human bones and I had [EMOTIONAL] say a prayer for it, for the dead. It was very painful. But I faced it. I wanted to go and I wanted to see this is—

I don't have a cemetery. I don't have any place to go to put a flower on. Auschwitz was my cemetery. So I did. I went twice I think and I would go again if he would go with me. He refuse [refused]. He never went back to—my husband—he never went back to Poland. It was too painful for him. And I went

twice to Poland because that was I was born and I have some sentiments to it. That was my home. But he refuse [refused]. He never, he couldn't take it. I'm much stronger than he is in that field, in that with my thoughts and my feelings and everything else.

Q: Was the experience at Auschwitz what you imagined?

A: …It was one place where my daughter didn't let me even go. There was [were] some ashes there and she didn't let me even to see it. And also like a hole in the ground and she didn't let me go there. It was very painful and when you go— The Museum was almost…but here we have just a few—we don't have human hair. It's just a picture of human hair. Other there you see it…stacks of eyeglasses and…plate hanging…a whole room full of it, shoes and thing and the smell of it. And they cleaned already here—this shoes ones—so it's…not exaggerated. It is like it was.

Q: Still sights and sounds that will evoke nightmares?

A: [VOICE] Not too often but sometimes they do, not too often, not like it used to be years ago. My friend came. I tell you a story about they told me recently that she find out from her sister what they kept a secret for 60-some years that her mother was killed. She told that she went through the liquidation of the ghetto to Auschwitz, and that haunts her now. She can't sleep at night because— I said, *Why did your sister after so many years told you about it?* She said, *I can't sleep at nights.* I…told her, *Go to the doctor and take something, to give you something—maybe a mild tranferlizer* [tranquilizer]. I don't know if she did or not but that wasn't fair to after so many years to tell her that.

Q: What were the nightmares?

A: …I saw my parents going…got it because we were at the, on the one place in 9042 [1942], August the 1st, the called all the people, Jewish people, to meet on the sports stadium and everybody got dressed to impress, whatever we had the best to impress the Germans and there were table alphabetically set up. And my father kept saying, *Let's wait. Let's wait. Maybe they will get tired and send you, send us back home.*

We finally at ten o'clock at night we approach the table. My name was ?_Helevige, 'C-H', so it was on this seat. And he retained my parents and my sister and took me and my…brother and me and sent us home. I started to cry and then my father gave me the keys and he said, *Go home. Somebody has to survive.* So these scenes come back to [EMOTIONAL] all the time, used to come. Now it's not as bad; once in a while but not as bad as it used to be.

Q: When did the nightmares start and end?

A: Oh, it started I guess right after the war, after I was liberated, because we work hard, we slept, we didn't have enough hours. We used to be up very early. So after the/I was liberated I had the time and leisure to think about it. [NOISE] Before it was a fight to survive so that was— And when it stop [stopped] I really don't have exact date to know but recently I don't dream about it so much.

Q: That's a long time for nightmares?

A: …I never went to a psychiatrist. [CHUCKLES] Once I went to somebody because we get the reparation from Germany so they send me to a psychiatrist and I remember he showing me a picture of like ink plant thing and said, *Ask me what they are?* I said, *I thought he thought that we were all crazy, that we don't know what we are talking.* [CHUCKLES] They approved me; that's all. But I remember

like…ink…spots and what I see in them. I said, *Nothing. It's, it doesn't have any meaning to me but maybe two or three so.* But otherwise I never went to a psychiatrist.

I think I am a strong individual and I could overcome many things. That's the… [PAUSE] end of it to some people might ?____. I just lost a friend, you know, who is ?_Wolfbleizer. His aunt— His father was born in Auschwitz when it was a city and he's aunt went to school with me because they moved to our/my city. So she was always mixed up. She really didn't, she was melancholic and thing and there were a lot of people who just were much wicked, couldn't take it. The strong ones, it's like in the woods. The strong animals eat the…weak animal so the same was [NOISE] with the human beings who was stronger so survive.

Q: Your tattoo?

A: That was experience by itself. We were in the beginning in a labor camp and we still had our own clothes. One day a year later I went to camp March 9043 [1943] till the time I was in the ghetto working. They…moved us to a ghetto and I didn't want the ghetto—they didn't have enough room. On each side [MIC] of the city was a ghetto. They didn't have— We were not in the main city in the main center. So that when they/we went at the stadium, we got a B. It was A and B. We went, got the B, and we got a kitchen and two rooms and the two rooms were two other families and we didn't have any privacy.

We/you left everything behind. Whatever we took—a table and two chairs, two single beds—we were five people—two single beds, some pots and pans and some clothing in winter. Everything what you work all your life for you left behind, but material things are not important. Life is important but…your things can [NOISE] replace and we left.

And I didn't like the conditions so we had somebody in the family who was in the Housing Department. So I went to see him if he could give because we didn't have any privacy. The other people were going through the kitchen.

The militia. We had our own militia and he, the one recognized me was a friend of my cousin and he said, *What are you doing here?* I said, *I want to talk to so-and-so.* So he said, *Look on the wall. They couldn't find me because we moved.* My name was on the wall. He said, *Go home.* As I left the militia was right behind us/me. I went home.

Everybody had prepared a suitcase. You never knew. You never slept at home. Many nights I slept in the factory on the cement floor and I took it and that's the last time and my brother was on the list too. He, my father and my brother, went to a bathhouse. We didn't have any facilities. Because my brother wasn't home they took my mother as a hostage. Till today I don't know if they ever release her or they killed her. [EMOTIONAL] That was the last time I saw my mother.

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Take 2

Q: Your tattoo?

A: My tattoo and the SS man took…"oy-vey" from the labor camp; they tattooed us. We had to stay completely naked—how God created us—in front of three SS men. It wasn't a physical pain. It was a moral pain. You were tattooed like branded like an animal. You lost all your dignity, all your pride—everything—and you became just a number: 13979. That was it. But the feeling just to stay naked in front of complete strangers and men, what it did to us, it's completely indescribable, the feeling. You were treated like a piece of nothing.

Q: Do you have it still?

A: No. I removed it because when my…first child was reading at 24 months and he kept asking me when he will have…a number. And that was just that I couldn't take. So I met a doctor who wanted to remove it but I wasn't ready at the time.

But during the Korean War I read that some soldiers burns from the gunpowder had removed by ?_scent papering. So I went to him and I said, *Is it possible?* So he tested it. *No.* Because it was too deep in the muscle. So he did it like it because it was put on like with dots with a pen so what they did he went back and drilled like a dentist every dot and the nurse was standing by. They gave me a local. It was stopping the blood and he did it twice and you can't tell. It's…still a mark but not as visible that…some of the blue ink is still there.

Q: How do you feel with the tattoo being gone now?

A: I feel I am not marked. I was a marked person and [NOISE] I am now not a…a normal human being. I consider myself. You be the judge [CHUCKLES] if I'm normal or not. I think that I did a good job on my kids that they don't go around with problems because a lot of kids feel like they carried the burden of the parents. I don't think my kids do. So that's that we did a good job because and still do that they're very devoted, they come, they visit, they call, so that's all what you expect.

Q: Meaningful for your daughter and son to be with you in Auschwitz?

A: It was a good lesson for them, I would say. They were really taken by it. Because it's something else it's in Polish it's a saying… [SPEAKS POLISH]. "This is what the eyes don't see, your heart doesn't ache" to see it actually was whatever you read it doesn't make the same effect on it—impact—like when you are there and see it actually.

Q: Purpose of the Holocaust Museum?

A: [VOICE] I remember you know who is [PAUSE] …the one in the wheelchair…Charles ?_Groghammer wrote once about that was unnecessary to build and spend so much money of the…of it to…Holocaust. Later he…corrected himself. Any place else I have that—I clipped it out from the newspaper—any place else would be destroyed but here in the nation's capital will remain as a mark for the rest of our lives and future generation to…be…the witness to the tragedy. Why? Why is such a thing?

I remember my mother's words. She spoke good German and she read German and she said, *The most cultured people, how could they do things like that?* You know the problem was most the people didn't believe that something like that can happen. Nobody believed in it because maybe we could do something, maybe escape, but on the other hand my father who had three kids, young children still, where could we go? The doors were closed for us. Nobody wanted us.

You know when the Danish king died—King Gustav—I sent a condolence telegram to the Queen and do you know that she answered me. I had a thank-you note from her. I still have it. Because I respected him so much that he got on a horse and considered the Jews equal citizens. But not too many—

My husband is still—I have to put that in—still is angry at the Poles. If they didn't want to help, they wanted to protect that life but the, some Poles were pointing at the Germans didn't recognize us. But the Poles could smell us—they recognize us—and point out to the Germans, *This is a Jew.* That what hurts him the most [NOISE] and he never went back to Poland.

Q: Have you experienced betrayal?

A: …Not here in America but in my childhood in Poland, yes. I never had a non-Jewish friend. I went to Jewish schools. …At this time of the year they used to stay in front of Jewish stores and picket and say, *Don't buy from a Jew.* This ?_sentiment is/was a rampant, at least in mine…life when I was in Poland. [NOISE] and even how could people who are intelligent, bright, born in the 20 century say that we killed their children to make from their blood matzo. I mean how ridiculous and…below human thing, a way of thinking to…even to say something like that.

Q: Was that personal betrayal more painful?

A: …But as a Jew I feel that I was born in Poland, now the younger generation consider us part of the Jew, of the Polish history. Poland was invited in 19, in 1100, the century, one thousand and one hundred and century to want to be invited but Kashmir ?_Valiky to come and live in Poland. We're part of Polish history. [PAUSE] So that maybe it's much better. The young people I think are more intelligent. They were teaching—

[NOISE] I'll give you an example. A group of kids went from the Hebrew Academy to Poland to Auschwitz and my neighbor's kids went. And I said to Sammy, *Please don't where the ?_Yalmoka on/in Poland.* No, they were told they should. It took two or three years by the time they admit that they beat them all up in Krakow. So it still exist [exists]. Maybe some people are more intelligent because it's fed to them in the church. How can a human, normal human being say that we from blood to make matzo and thing we kill that we even—

What was it? It's a new Maria-Maria; it's singer. Last week was in the magazine section of *New York Time* or *The Post.* [NOISE] I don't remember where. How she is a child. I just read that. They used to blame her. She's from Portland but I don't know Portland name or Portland [CHUCKLES] [CHUCKLES] Oregon that they/she remembers in [NOISE] school how they used

to call her that she call ?_heal ?_Christ. This is a young girl today. She's now in the 20's. Maria, Mariha, or something. It's not like Maria. It's spelled different with the 'H' there. I just read that.

Q: Have you done what's called D&R's?

A: …No, we never discuss. We have graves. We paid for 'em many, many years ago but we don't…know ever where they are. [CHUCKLES] No, we never discussed it. He sometimes wants to say— I said, *I don't want to talk about it.* I don't want to face it. When the time comes we are—at least we are at the ripe age already. You know we're not [CHUCKLES] getting any younger.

Q: Have your children wanted to approach that?

A: No, never approach us with that. Never ask question. On the contrary, that I even mention [INHALES] because we have what we paid for it…plots in Virginia. "Take me home to old Virginia." [CHUCKLES] And now it's much closer to us where we live here and only is a Jewish cemetery. Maybe we should buy and sell the other one. We/I mentioned it but my son didn't even pay attention to [CHUCKLES] it.

Q: Has the time since the war just been unexpected time?

A: Yeah, time went by very fast. Good life goes by fast. Miserable life stretches out much longer. And [EXHALES] I can say that I had a very good marriage and I was…have good children and my life is pretty good. What comes? Nobody knows. What the future has in ?_store and…for us so that's about— I care for the….

I feel very strong about the Holocaust Museum because…this is— That Museum means a lot to me to prove that my parents didn't die in vain and I

devote a lot of time and money because it's very important to me because…to teach the future generation because sometimes history repeats itself to teach them about the Holocaust that things don't happen again, that people should be educated and know and have your ears and eyes open and know and speak up what's going on—to know, to be a…to be a…educated consumer.

Q: Has your life been a way to honor your parents?

A: Yes, we'd honored because we have the name on the, in the Museum on the wall what we devoted $50,000. We paid it out. I have on the wall in Israel especial from our area, a block wall, marble wall, with their names on it. And our children, grandchildren, were named after them. So we have in many ways honored their memory. That's all what is left: memories.

Q: Want the world to know as a legacy of your life?

A: I just want in general the world to be a better place to live, to have peace, not to fight, not to have wars. We paid such a high price in losing so many lives in America and Russia and every place, to be peace on earth; that's the right time to say it.

Q: What do you want your children and grandchildren to know overall?

A: [VOICE] I want them to remember the Holocaust to know that [EMOTIONAL] we left/lost so many people in the Holocaust and that should be remembered not to forget. That's all what I ask them to remember and to support Israel that Israel has to live. It's a saying, "I'm Israel high that Israel should live forever" because there are many nations who want to destroy it and that's the only just, a small amount. There were six million Jews…killed. They were in general I think 12 millions in the world. Now it's five and a half…five millions and 500, yes.

And it's very important to me that the existence of Israel and to be strong because they are surrounded with enemies and we have to do the best to help them. And President Bush is a very, he's really supporting Israel. That's one thing I respect him for.

Q: Holocaust survivors are an aging population?

A: Oh, yes, it's an aging population and many of them die. Many of my friends died already. I know. So I hope that the children will remember. Some, a group in New York is very active, the second generation. They have every year memorial service and that's run by the second generation and the third generation. I don't think we have here as much. We have a group of second generation [BEEPING] in Washington area but I don't know how active they are in it.

Q: Believe in the power of testimony of survivors?

A: …I still share and I'm very grateful that we have the Holocaust Museum because it's at the capital of the world and it makes a big impact and I see it, witness it, how people come to visit and…I'm glad that it's there and that…will exist for future generations too experiences.

Q: Without it?

A: Without it was just we survivors who dying out will be gone, and it's very important that it remains not just a memory, actually, to exist.

Q: Don't disappear?

A: Don't disappear, no, and that…depends too. We survivors are dying out—we're old people—so I don't know what will be the next generation how they will run it. That's a big question mark.

Q: Thoughts on that?

A: I hope it will go on. [CHUCKLES] That's all what I can say about it.

Q: This project is to place the Museum archives in a larger context.

A: [VOICE] Psychologically how it affected us. I think with the majority we are normal that we [CHUCKLES] maybe some people would think not. But I think that we live a normal life, we have normal children and we participate in everything. We're involve [involved]. I'm talking about myself. I don't think everybody does it. You contribute money toward…it and we to be…aware of what's going on. We're involved in it. That's very important.

…Why do you still remember—25 years and think— [NOISE] that's not the answer to it. It has to be remembered because I think it was the biggest tragedy in the human history what happened. Six million people killed. I don't say they were all Jews. There were non-Jews who suffered.

Q: How did you feel about doing this kind of interview?

A: …When they asked me, I…agreed, right away. I said, *I will be glad to do it. It's for the future.* Because I wouldn't be around maybe in the next ten years anymore so it's very important. Because before all my thing were about the Holocaust itself. Now you've got the inner of me out, how I feel about many things, other things. So I was willing from the—I didn't doubt it at all. I agreed right away to it.

Q: Because you thought it could have some value?

A: Yes. And maybe some people can think that I like to see myself on the…. [CHUCKLES] on film or something. I didn't do it for personal pride or something. It's just I felt it should be done.

Q: Has sharing been important part of your relationship with husband?

A: To certain degree but not all of it, not all of it.

Q: How has it?

A: [VOICE] There are times when we start to reminisce and there are times when…it's a special occasion that we talk about it. But we don't live with it every day. That's very important because the people who live with it every day they are very bad off. That's they…have problems. We try to live a normal life. When we consider ?_norm maybe somebody else doesn't consider it. We never forgot it but we don't live with it every day. That's the only thing I can tell you that it's part of us and it will go to our grave with us.

But we don't live with it every day. I tried to live a normal life in American way, [CHUCKLES] not European even, and speak most of the time and it's one woman now, a new one, in the Museum and she is a survivor's daughter and I don't think she likes me because she…doesn't think that I speak Yiddish. *Why not?* I said, *I live in America. I didn't Yiddish at home. I spoke Polish. I went to school and…I converse.* My parents spoke among them self Yiddish but I…always my parents always and said to me in Polish. So she thinks she's wearing a sign, "If read Yiddish," you know, so [NOISE] …she doesn't like me I think. Don't [CHUCKLES] care.

But I think that we live the American way in a normal life and…a decent life so, an honest life, try to be helpful, give to charity, respect everybody—that's

all—and not to forget what we went through. Yes, it's part of our life. The memories are there. That's all what is left.

[ROOM TONE]

[END OF INTERVIEW]