

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

ELIZABETH BLEIMAN

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Marian Salkin
Date: March 26, 1981

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Gratz College
Melrose Park, PA 19027

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EB - Elizabeth Bleiman [interviewee]

MS - Marian Salkin [interviewer]

Date: March 26, 1981

Tape one, side one:

EB: Excuse me. You will have the questions?

MS: Oh, yes, yes. This is the interview with Elizabeth Zuckerman Bleiman and we will proceed with her interview in just one moment. [Short pause] Mrs. Bleiman, would you please tell me where you were born, and when, and a little about your family?

EB: Yes. I was born 1921, July 10, in Ófehértó, Hungary. My father, Janosz Zuckerman, and my mother [unclear] Rosa, we--my mother, I think she, she died in 1926, and my father remarried in 1929. I went to school in Debrecen in Hungary and finished in 1937.

MS: Was it a Jewish school?

EB: Jewish high school.

MS: Jewish high school.

EB: Yes. Elementary school, the first grade, the first four grade, I went in Ófehértó, in my hometown. After then, in a Jewish high school in Debrecen.

MS: Was that a distance from your community? Did you have to live away from home?

EB: Yes. I, I lived with my aunt there. In 1937, when I went home, I lived with my parents. I had a sister and a brother. And I was the oldest girl. So in those days as it was, you know, I almost got married. I was engaged. But the times started to be bad in Hungary. We already noticed, not noticed, felt, my father was in business, and they felt hardship in business and the antisemitism what was already beginning in the country.

MS: So the conditions, business conditions suffered, started to suffer because of antisemitic feeling, not because of the economic situation in the country as...

EB: As the whole?

MS: ...as a whole.

EB: Well, no the economy--no, not as the whole, because of the antisemitism. In universities start *numerus clausus*¹, but it was cut out for the Jews in a certain percentage just to continue study. And so, I was at home. In 1939, my father was called in the working army and he was there a year. In 1940, he came back in 1940, and in that time my brother was called in. I was--my sister was still away in school. She attended

¹*numerus clausus* - a Latin term meaning a restricted number which refers to a policy of restricting admission of certain people-- usually Jews-- to an educational institution. It was common in Czarist Russia. After World War I, Hungary also took on this policy limiting Jews to 5% of the total student population. Other countries took this policy on as well. In Poland Jews were limited to 10%. (The Standard Jewish Encyclopedia, Cecil Roth, Editor in Chief, Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, New York: 1959).

after she finished, what year was that in 1940. Yes, she went back to Debrecen and attended university as a student who was not enrolled in the school. She just was like, listened to lectures.

MS: Auditing courses.

EB: Yes, but she was not enrolled. So I was, I was at home with my mother and father and just lived a life of a, a young girl.

MS: Did your family have any experiences with antisemitism before the Hitler period? Did you feel any antisemitism on the part of your neighbors or people in your village as such?

EB: My parents was very well liked in the community as business people as in private. So, we did not feel from our close, I mean relation with, in the community, antisemitism. Whatever we experienced just came from higher, you know, from, from the government, as I say, in business conducts, or to--yes. But not in the, not in the community.

MS: And you said that your, your father served in the, in the work force that was attached to the Hungarian Army and your brother was--he...

EB: ...after, yes, after when my father came home.

MS: He served how long?

EB: My father?

MS: Yes.

EB: About a year.

MS: And they discharged him?

EB: They discharged him. And then it is the younger group was called in, my brother.

MS: And how long did your brother serve?

EB: My brother was from 1940 until, till, until he was freed in 1945. So he was over four years.

MS: So did the German invasion of Poland in September of 1939 cause changes in your situation at home?

EB: Well, the situation, and not necessarily at home, the only thing that we already were talking about it, what will be the next.

MS: I see.

EB: We did not live in a necessarily in a fear, but we did, we did talk about it.

MS: In other words, at that point in time you were becoming very concerned about...

EB: Because we--right, what we...

MS: ...your own situation?

EB: Right. We were concerned about it. And as I say, in business we start to feel it. I mean it was not as, you know, as, as, as oppressed in Hungary as it was in Poland, the Jews. But it came already from the government in certain restrictions. It was

not destroy yet and not everything taken away, but it began the restrictions. I remember when my father had to make all the details, everything, you know, what you own and what you, every little things they had to...

MS: Like an inventory.

EB: An inventory. That's right.

MS: And that had to be handed over to the authorities?

EB: To the, to the--yes.

MS: Well, did the Germans move into your community? Were there German officers?

EB: No, no. Your question was in 1939, the beginning. No.

MS: They were not on the scene yet. Right. Okay.

EB: The Germans came in 1944 [short pause].

MS: Well, would you tell me, because some of these questions don't apply exactly to your situation, when did your family have to leave their community? And where were you deported to, and how were you deported?

EB: The, excuse me, Germans came into Hungary in 19--in March, 1944. Then became, it was, you know, we had to wear a yellow star. And at the business, you know, they started to, you could not, it was like a curfew. You could not go out after evening certain hours. When, when you traveled you had to take all this you have to have your identification whatever you did, you couldn't go in certain long distances. So it was certain regulation you had to follow. That was in March. In end of so--then already we feared, feared what will come next. In end of April, it was after Passover when we heard that--I mean it came the order that's all the Jews we have to leave Ófehértó. We will be go in a certain place in another town, so we can take along as much as we can carry with ourselves. And they gave us two days to get ready. And it was I think as I remember, they did not say where we go or what will be with us, what you know, what we will do. We gonna live there and we will get further instructions. So whatever we could, as I said, I was home with my parents, and we started to pack whatever. We make like sacks, you know, whatever we could to sew and to gather food and clothing and whatever we could carry, you know. And everything else we left. And we had to, as I said, they gave two days and we have to get ready in early morning. I think it was a Sunday morning, I can't even recall it. And the front of, well it was the main street in fact in front of our house. It was some wagons, horse and wagon, you know. And we were, we were just carried to this next city, what was about 30 kilometers from us, from our place, and the name was Kisvarda.² So there was like a ghetto was made from a lot of these small towns, there was people brought together. And there, you know, it was a, a place a part, where it was separated for us. And...

² Kisvarda Ghetto: Ghettoization of Jews began April 8, 1944. The Jews of Kisvarda proper were moved into the Ghetto between April 15 and April 30. 7,000 Jews were squeezed into the small ghetto. (www:Voice of the Holocaust)

MS: Was it all outdoors? Were there buildings?

EB: No, it was buildings. It was buildings there. And we had to make our, like they did not tell us how long we gonna stay and how long we're gonna--so we had to make our home there. Well, the home it was a couple big rooms and as many people, you know, for a, for a room.

MS: Do you remember how many people were, approximately, were put into these rooms?

EB: Well, it was-- I don't remember, maybe 20 for you know sections, it was places. Because as I-- we were there that was the end of April, the beginning of May, you know. In May already, in Hungary getting around here, too it's getting warmer and nicer. So most of the daytime we were out to get together to talk what going to be. It was starting to do something you know, with us, maybe it did not know how long we stay or what will be there. So things have to be work they started to fix up the place. Everybody, I myself, the first thing it was because a lot of old people there so they made like a [unclear], little infirmary, a little hospital, you know, so was there a doctor and they asked you who wants to help. So my husband, not my husband, my father--the doctor was one of our friends, so he said this will be very good if I help him out as a nurse. There were no other nurses there, you know, so I right away, we started to make, from a sheet I made my, myself a uniform. And I was helping out in this other place, what we call a hospital. They brought out just emergency cases and all the older people. We were hearing that you know, a place about six weeks...

MS: Did it have a name, the area that you were concentrated in?

EB: No, it was the ghetto, you know, in Kisvarda.

MS: A ghetto. Say that again, a ghetto in...

EB: In Kisvarda.

MS: Kisvarda.

EB: Kisvarda. That was the name of this town where we were.

MS: Could I just ask you, that, did the people that were in the ghettos, or in your community before you got into the ghetto, did you have any knowledge of what was happening to Jews in Poland and in countries surrounding you that had already been invaded by the Nazis? Word must have spread through...

EB: We did hear something. In fact, my mother, my stepmother's family who lived in Czechoslovakia, they were already, some of them, deported in 1941. And we got a postcard from her sister-in-law, around the end of '41 and '42, that we were taken here in Poland. And she wrote Jewish you know, and with a few Hebrew words, in there and she said we are working in the field. They don't give us, we don't have what to eat, and we take potatoes from the ground and whatever we can supplement what they give us, and we are in a terrible shape. So, you know, it was written with Yiddish and with Hebrew that the authorities should not understand. So my mother, from that time already,

you know, what will be with us, what will be to us. But so we always hoped, you know, that it will not come to Hungary.

MS: You were hoping the war would end?

EB: The war would end, yes. We heard about, you know, the war was on. And when they, when it changed, because it changed, what year was it, '44 in the beginning, when the Germans started in Russia, you know. I remember we were in, in home yet around Passover after, before we went to the ghetto. And Uncle, had a--he was a bachelor uncle was with us, and we heard, we was sitting outside and like kind of a noise, you know like guns from far away, from the Carpathian Mountains around the country. He said, "Oh my. The Russian, all the Russians are coming. How good they're here already. They, they're coming closer you know. The Germans could not, will not have time to invade Hungary and we will be safe." That was, that was in April. In April, in 1944, before we went to ghetto. So we did know about it. We did not, we did not know how bad it is. We did not-- I don't think we, we talked about it. I don't-- we did not hear about gassing.

MS: Interesting.

EB: But we heard about the people disappear. We did not know where. But I said as before, they took away families and they somehow some of them came back. So we always looked those who came back. Who, who did not come back, so we did not know where they-- what happened to them.

MS: But it never occurred to anyone that they may have been killed or...?

EB: Not at home. Not until we were at home. But if, if it did occur, we did not talk about it. As I say, we did--we were in a small community. There was--I was not in Budapest. It was there already. Maybe they had the communication, it was not between the places. We could not travel, as I said, you know...

MS: Excuse me. How far was your community from Budapest?

EB: From Budapest? Oh, we were far. We were 270 kilometer, you know. This is far there. It is not as far today, but in those days with train it took a day to travel. So we [unclear] train. So that was far.

MS: So when, when you went into, into the ghetto, you worked in the hospitals? And your...

EB: Well, hospital, a makeshift hospital.

MS: Right, right. And you were confined there for what length of time?

EB: I was there until, until we were sent to Auschwitz, until we were deported.

MS: And was it weeks or months?

EB: About six weeks.

MS: About six weeks in this ghetto.

EB: In this ghetto.

MS: And then what kind of deportation did you go through from your ghetto to Auschwitz?

EB: Well, the deportation was first they said they did not know where we go and what going to be with us. So they said it's good if you are working. You will be working there also so it's better if you go there where working the place where you are working. So my father had to go in the hospital with these people who were sick. Then some news came that is better if the families going together, because if you go with a unit where you are working and your family will be booked in a different working place, then you will be separated. So there was my father, my mother and me. As I said, my sister and brother was not there.

MS: What happened to your sister and brother?

EB: My sister, as I mentioned earlier, she was in school. Meantime, she got married while away in a, in this, you know she got married. And she--in 1944 before we went to the ghetto, she got a baby. She lived in Szeged in that time, what was another big city in Hungary. Her husband was a half-Jew, and a half, I mean a half-Jew. So as those--Szeged was a more assimilated city. I mean the Jews there were more assimilated. It was lot of mixed marriages, a lot of--well, a lot of mixed marriages. She could hide there at the beginning more. No one knowed her, and no one--so they were there. When we--after the ghetto, we did not hear about her. So when we went in the ghetto, she was there. After then she went up and they moved out. She and her husband moved to Budapest with the baby.

MS: When, when your family was transported, transported...

EB: To the ghetto.

MS: ...to the ghetto and she moved...

EB: And she moved to Budapest from Szeged. And my brother was in the farm, in the work service.

MS: In the work force.

EB: So I was the one who was with my parents.

MS: So you went to Auschwitz then. You decided to go as a family unit?

EB: As a family, with my aunt, uncle, with the children, and my father, mother and me and the aunt. And you know, they came, the cattle cars in the station there. We were jammed in just like you saw in the pictures, without any telling where you go. Well they told where, you going to work. We're going to work. Where? Nowhere just you will go to work, without any explanation or without anything, it was no, no questions asked and you had to do what you were told. And it was--no, I do not know anybody who escaped even from the ghetto. It was, was not, I don't think it was guarded that strongly. I really don't knowed we, we did believe that what, what waiting for us. I mean it, it just was not any--we did not know. We, we thought that we were going to work and, and things are bad, but as long as the family was together so we will stay together and we will work together, what, whatever hardship you know. But it, it was not until we get to Auschwitz when we--well they already on the train it was already horrible, you know. It is jammed in, women, children, men, days after days, you couldn't-- and I just recall a lot of

times that a little cousin, she was three years old, a beautiful little girl, and this little girl was all the way like talking like a, like a little bird, singing, and like, like kept alive everybody, you know who was when if somebody was crying and, and what [unclear]. So, it's and then, then we got there. Certain things you know as I [unclear] I, I can't recall, a lot of times, like how it was and what did this in-between, I don't know.

MS: What happened? You can't remember that.

EB: I come there. I remember when we arrived. Certain things are so clear in mind, you know. And other things I just get over.

MS: Well, when, getting back to the ghetto, you say the ghetto was not strongly supervised or, with soldiers, but no one was thinking in terms of escaping or trying to get back to their communities, to their homes, out of the ghetto. That...

EB: Oh, they could not go back to their homes. They were watched. They just could go away, you know, like escape, like a prisoner escape from somewhere. If no one recognizes you, you could escape if somebody help you. It was one time my father you know said maybe, maybe I should go. I was--I did not want to go. I was--I just did not want to go, you know, afraid or what. So I said I stay with you and would not want to go. But you have to be afraid. I mean they could get you, I mean caught you and they put you back where you were, so just beaten up and that's it.

MS: Do you remember when you first heard the Jews were being murdered in mass numbers, or being gassed? Did you believe these reports?

EB: No. No. I mean we, we did not really hear this were gas. We heard, as I said, that we got, we got that car that was taken away from homes and that they were working. But that was a terrible thing, you know, already take away everything confiscated and, and you know they were well-to-do people, and, and they have to work on, on fields. That was terrible, also. But we did not hear they were...

MS: And when you got to Auschwitz, you did not realize that, that...

EB: No, then we got to Auschwitz.

MS: You didn't know it was a death camp though at that time, did you?

EB: Then something already, we, we, then my mother said-- you know, my mother was very bad in the, already in the train and then she said, "We going to be killed. We going to be killed." She did not say how or what, but we will be killed, we will be killed when we get there. Whatever, we do that's will be the end of us. Although we still said it, "No, we will be together," you know, and when we get to Auschwitz, then somehow you get off from the train. I don't know, you saw the picture, but that's the way it was. The man goes one side and the woman on the other side.

MS: So you were immediately separated?

EB: Immediately, from my father. So we just, you know, kissed each other and then we went on the other side. And I holded my mother. You know she was already all broken down, although she was a young woman. I mean [unclear].

MS: Emotionally, she was shattered.

EB: Emotionally, yes. She was only 40, 40 years old. So, and I hold her, [unclear] beside came this aunt with the three children, you know with the little one. So she hold up her, she hold her children. And she went first, my aunt with the children in front of us. You have to go in lines, and she was pushed right away. And for me, it was just the opposite. There was the German and there we went, and I say myself as she was pushed on the right side. Here you are we see that they were pushed on the left and she was pushed with the children that way. And then I came with my mother. And my mother was in this side and I was on the left side. And he pushed my mother this way and parted me off on that way, and I holded to my mother and I said I want to go with her, you know. And then he looked at me and gave me, you know, like a knock as they said and throw me down on the...

MS: On the ground.

EB: ...ground. So meantime already, that where I went, on the other side. My mother went right away to the gas and I was there. You know already people came after me, I was there and I had to get up and go.

MS: Was that the last time that you saw your mother in the camp?

EB: The last time.

MS: And your father too? You never saw him after that?

EB: Yes. Then already you know, they--as soon as we got here in the other side those who were--you went you had to go fast in line and pushed each other. That was in Auschwitz. So, we went to the, to that, to that, what they call it, to take the shower, to the off the clothes, to get undressed, and shave your hair and that-- but there already said this, "At least you are alive." The other ones went to--we heard already.

MS: That quickly. Within, within that same period of time.

EB: I mean the people already--not those who came with us. Those who were working there [unclear] "You are alive, those went to the gas." And the smell [unclear] just--[unclear] you could not help-- at first, I thought, I just cannot breathe.

MS: How old were you?

EB: I was 23.

MS: You were 23.

EB: Twenty-three.

MS: And what did you do in-- what type of work did they have you do in Auschwitz?

EB: Well, in Auschwitz, I did not do anything. We arrived there in July. See, I am not even--I don't have even numbers on my arm, because it was already too late. I mean they did not have the time for everybody to get the transport from Hungary came so fast. In the meantime they had already [unclear], they didn't. So we arrived in July from all different, different parts of the country. I, I had nobody whom I know before. I was not together with anybody in Auschwitz whom I knew, not from my friends, not from my family, anyone who I know. Later, I met a couple so I was very...

Tape one, side two:

MS: Three levels.

EB: Three levels, and I was on the third one. We were five of us there and next to me was a woman, what is--she was older, at least 10, 15 years older, I did not ask how old she was. But she took me like, like, not a daughter, but an older sister. So we started to stick together. She was in another part from the country, and...

MS: Hungarian.

EB: Hungarian woman, yes. She had some friends there. She was from Marshva-shat-hey [phonetic] and she has no one, I had no one, so we will stick together. We said, "Let's, let's do that and at least we have somebody." And we really did. When, when I cried, and she tried to comfort me; when she was sad and I, I talked, I talked to her and that's the way we feel. At night we wake up with all the screaming, and you already know that the *Blockältester*³ was from Czechoslovakia. She was not as bad as the young one who was-- helped her, the *Kapo*. They said then already we heard the stories you know, she was maybe 15 years old and they said that she was already three years before with a German soldier in, in the front. She couldn't stand an older person. The young ones well, with the young ones, she just screamed, but when she saw an older one then, they then she hit with the--and she was a Jewish girl too.

MS: And she was the *Kapo*.

EB: And she was the, you know-- and...

MS: And she treated, she treated so inhumane.

EB: Terrible. So, but they said that because she became like a mad, you know, from the experiences what she went through, you know, then. And then mostly we were the Hungarians, the well-fed Hungarians who came, just came. She had, dated already three years behind them, some of them. So it's not funny. It was very, you know, the thing of how the hatred because we just came. But it was real, you know, like a, like it was our fault or that they were there and they suffered more and they, they went through more than, than, than we did.

MS: Were the *Kapos* German or Polish? Do you know their nationalities?

EB: No. These were Polish. She was a Polish Jewish girl. I don't know what happened to her because-- so I was in Auschwitz in, in June, end of June and July. And then as, you know, you know what is in Auschwitz the *Appells* process. Early in the morning you have to get up and stay in line and you get five in one can, and one--they gave each other the soup what we got in the morning, and in evening a piece of bread.

MS: And that was your food ration for the whole day?

EB: For the whole day.

MS: A can of soup?

³*Blockältester* - the elderly inmate of the barrack.

EB: Not a can. A can was for five persons. The first one had the can and we drink from--she got it in it and then we give it one to the other. That's the way we got it in Auschwitz for five, drink a little bit from that.

MS: Out of one cup?

EB: It was a ...

MS: Yes. Container.

EB: Container, whatever it was. Then you got your [unclear].

MS: And at night you got a piece of bread.

EB: Later, we got a piece of bread, yeah, [unclear] in the afternoon. And you stand, you know, in, in the row and, and you waited on your-- a lot of times I, I was, I couldn't even eat-- she always--her name was like my Bushka [phonetic] also. And she tell me we will make it, we will make it. And somehow I still did have the feeling that I will get out from there. I don't know why, but I--and then came a, a, German prisoners was working in the *Lager* also. You know, they came in to sometimes to do some work. I was in *Lager C* and he told me, it was a, he said--it was an older man. I don't know how old he was, without any teeth, without any [unclear]. He told, "Just get away from Auschwitz, whatever, the first transport, whatever comes and they selecting, you don't know where you go, you should get away from here," you know. He was talking to us there, we were--one day he came in and I was crying that all this happened. He said, "Why, why are you crying. If you're crying you will never make it." He said, "There is not to be no crying. The Russians are already coming and maybe this will be an end." And, you know, with my friend who was listening, "You hear, you hear [unclear]." So, we said, we have to go away from here. We have to go away from [unclear]. So the next time it comes Mengele [unclear]. But, you know I do not care. I can't distinguish between them. He just came with the, with the dog, with the-- I was not that long, as long in a place that I could remember how it, how exactly everything it was. So when came this selection, so she said, my friend said we will go. No. We will go. We try to get in there.

MS: May I ask you a question? You said, "when the selection came." Would they come into the barracks? Would someone come into the barracks and...?

EB: Not in the barracks. We had to get out.

MS: Oh, you had to go out into the...

EB: Stay in line. Stay in line.

MS: I see.

EB: And then usually he, he, he showed, you know showed, you, you, you, you. But you, you managed to go in line sometimes in this line, in that line. You run from one place to the other, so in that if you got meantime beaten then, then you were beaten there. But, but you tried something.

MS: You had a feeling, you had a feeling that if you got into...

EB: Just an instinct. Instinct.

MS: An instinct if you got into the other group, that there was a chance of...

EB: Maybe.

MS: ...getting, of being saved?

EB: Yes. Getting away from this gas chamber. So, we, we got in, both of us there, and we, we went away from Auschwitz in a big transport.

MS: Again in a cattle car.

EB: Again, in a cattle car and again don't know where. But we already did not, family we did not have, and we had nothing anyhow, so we went away from Auschwitz, the gas chamber, here was behind us. Then we went to--we didn't know where to go.

MS: Did they tell you-- again, they did not tell you where you were going?

EB: Oh no, they never told us.

MS: They didn't tell you another work camp, nothing?

EB: No. No. But usually when it was a selection, this kind of a selection, that was, it was known as they going to work. And we did not work in Auschwitz. I did not work. Those who work was better off. But, those who did not work, these they, these Germans said it and everyone said that I mean, at that time already when the rumor, those who did not work sooner or later will end up in the gas chamber, gas.

MS: Chambers.

EB: So then you try to get away, those who could. Now in Auschwitz, well, this is another story. I had a cousin who had a baby there later. I, I-- but I was alone and that's the way I was, so I got away from Auschwitz. Again, went maybe two, three days in this cattle car, and we arrived a place. We arrived by night. We arrived in Stutthof.

MS: Stutthof?

EB: Stutthof. That was the name of it.

MS: Do you know what country that was?

EB: Oh, this was in Poland.

MS: In Poland.

EB: In Poland.

MS: Still in Poland.

EB: What was just as bad as Auschwitz. But I did not know where I am going. So we got there. In a way in that time was even worse, because Stutthof was so overcrowded. So much, so many people were there. And it was a terrible-- I don't know his name what it was, although he was famous how terrible he was, that man.

MS: Who was, who was in charge of the camp.

EB: Who was in charge of the camp. He was in a way just like Mengele. I now forgot his name.⁴ I don't know. I don't know.

MS: A German, a Pole?

EB: A German. A German, a Pole, it is all--I think it was a German. The head, head of the camp was German always. Only the *Kapos* there under...

⁴The camp commandant of Stutthof was Max Pauly (www.ushmm.org, Photo of Himmler greeting camp commandant Max Pauly).

MS: The *Kapos*.

EB: ...they were the Polish or whoever they were. But the head was always the--so we were--there already was no--it was a barrack, it was, it was covered and it was side walls, but it was no, when we went there it was no, I mean not even these sleeping...

MS: Levels.

EB: Levels. It was everything on the floor. I mean everything. It was sand, and on the sand was some kind of, you know something mixed in it or something. So we all was under...

MS: All slept on the floor.

EB: All slept on the floor. It was summer, you know was end of July. Was terrible heat, heat and stink and there was a chamber too, a gas chamber. And we did not know what gonna be so we were already sorry that we came here, but we were already there. And every day came back the, the *Appell* was the same, you know, the order was the same, you had to wait the same five line, and he was even hitting more than over there, so it was just terrible. So we already know this, we have to somehow get away from here, too. But we did not know how. So we--then they, day after day sometimes we heard they brought back woman half burned. The skin was, you know, their skin from the sun, there was the sun terrible, terrible. All day you stay out in here, too but there, hot. And they, they came back and, well, you know they going to be gassed. But they said the place where they come from there was work. They were working you know. They just brought back who was already out. So again we have to go somewhere, you know. Here is no work and the condition was just horrible. So we, we tried to get away again. And we already were together, the two of us. So she was very nice. So she said, "Well, we will go, we will go. We will try to go away somewhere."

MS: Again, did you try to escape through a selection? Or...

EB: Through a selection.

MS: Again?

EB: There was a selection.

MS: There was no chance of breaking away from...

EB: Oh, no.

MS: ...leaving the grounds?

EB: We were in, in deep in, in Poland and never even talk about it. We were not in condition and not in, in a, you know--everybody was your enemy. Nobody would hide you in the end. To, to escape really you have to be--I mean--no we never.

MS: You had to know the terr--you had to know the area. You had to know the terrain.

EB: We had to know--or you have to be in--I was never, I never talk about it. None of us never talk about it.

MS: So again a selection.

EB: Again was a selection, and we sent to a place and that was a working place.

MS: They sent you to a working place?

EB: Yes. Then we already it was not a transport. It was just like a, we were on a big truck, you know, a car. And we did not know where it goes. And we, I was-- whenever I saw an army truck which was covered, you know, with this gray, even now it goes something what is under it. So with a truck [unclear] you're taken, but where you're going to take-- but we were selected so we had some hope, you know, that's we will be. Maybe it just another place and maybe we will go to work. And yes, we went, we, we were taken to a work camp then.

MS: Do you know the name of the camp?

EB: The name was, I don't know the name of it. It was close to a town called Praust.⁵ Praust was the town. And we were close around there because it was in the, in the, I mean, this was in nowhere in between. We were starting to build, they, they were starting an airport. We were told that's what they building and, and I think that we was putting down-- different work had to be done, but we were putting down cables, you know these cables. Sometimes I go in here and men, you know some workmen with electric drillers doing the pavement. We did this pavement with picks, with this pick-axe. I, I used to show my, see my muscle? I got it from there. So that's what we were doing. And the pavement and the cement slab were about I think a yard or a yard and a half deep, in the, in the pavement in the--and when they say you now, that they don't know anything about it, I worked with--we were working in the city, too. In the town, we were working. So they saw the woman coming to bringing the pick-axe, I mean the population, you know. And then today they don't know anything about it. So, there we were and, well I had a different--I was already from, I was--I get different kind of *Furunkels* on my, you know, this, *Furunkel* this, a, pimples.

MS: I see, like warts, or boils.

EB: Boils, yes. Terrible pain. So here we were that much better treated because we were working. It was around 400 women in this camp.

MS: Just women, mostly?

EB: Just women. Already all the time it was just women wherever I was, only was women. And so different commandos went out in the morning. You know it was wire, electric wire fence around us. Every morning we went out in commandos and every...

MS: They brought you back.

EB: ...we came in, yes. And...

MS: Did they give you medical treatment for your problem?

⁵Praust - near Gdansk, location of female concentration subcamp of Stutthof. (www.ushmm.org)

EB: We had a, a, an infirmary they called it there, too. But everybody, most of the people was afraid to go there because, you know, if they caught you there, then the next step was the gas from, from the...

MS: Gas chamber.

EB: For that I couldn't go to through that. I ran in so she cut it out. It was a woman doctor there.

MS: German, do you know, or Polish?

EB: No, no, no, Jewish. Jewish, not German. It was a Jewish woman doctor. One of the also...

MS: One of the prisoners.

EB: One of the prisoners. And she cut it out, terrible, you know, with nothing, and I had to go back to work. So I went back to work. And the *Kapo* was a little Hungarian girl, a Jewish girl. You know, she was--so they called me *Zuckie* [phonetic]. You know *Zuckie*, this is a shortening for *Zucker* [sugar]. *Zuckie*.

MS: Oh.

EB: And she said to me--so I stand there, it was raining out the window, there then this again, you have something what you can see just as it was. I stayed there and I couldn't do this, as, as you know.

MS: You couldn't do the physical work.

EB: The physical work is just like it would be [unclear] a knife in me again. And I was standing there and she come there to me. She said, "You must do it." I said, "What do you mean I must do it? I cannot do it. It's terrible pain, so what can you do with it? I cannot do it." She said you know what she, she had to say it, I have to [unclear] because the German, the SS man was around there. But he was not there. She was [unclear]. But without any you know understanding, I just felt such a terrible [unclear]. And she again, she said, "You have to do it. You have to work and we have to finish this," and she started to holler at me. So I answered to her back. I said, "You going to tell me what I have to do. I don't want to do it, whatever happen, I don't want to do it." "No," she said, "you do it." She picked up her hands. She wanted to slap me, you know. She wanted to slap me. I picked up my hand and I, I gave it to her or whatever. [Brief interruption. Mr. Bleiman enters room.]

MS: You were describing the treatment of this young *Kapo* insisting that you...

EB: Should work. I should work. So then you know and then the SS man noticed as I picked up my hand on the *Kapo*, and that was not allowed to do either. So he came and he gave me, the SS man...

MS: He beat you?

EB: He beat me. So after then, you know, that was the end of that. I got back in [unclear] and the barrack and then next time, you know, whatever I could do I just...

MS: You didn't go for medical help with that?

EB: It was no.

MS: Well, what happened the next day? Were you able to go back to work?

EB: I went back to work and I, I, you know, I tried to do whatever I could in moving. It was not, maybe, I don't know if she came back or she tried to avoid me. It was not, was no follow-up after that. She did not. But it, but you know sometimes you felt that between the *Kapo* and the rest of them should, could have had a little more understanding and a little more feeling. But everybody is you know--she thought it was her job to do it. I don't know what happened to her if she came alive or--you know we were there till end of the--and during the winter I was in that place.

MS: You stayed--how long did you stay in this second work camp?

EB: That was my first work camp.

MS: I'm sorry.

EB: The only camp where I was working. This, I stayed there about four months.

MS: Were you liberated from...?

EB: No. It was terrible. At the beginning was terrible hot. And we working, as I said it was--I did this type of a job where--not always whatever it came. But they were building there something, also. And in some part of, of this place, of this--it was large, I think it was an airport, so they were working French prisoner, men. Sometimes in the morning when we went to work, they went to work also and we passed by.

MS: Did you communicate with them?

EB: Well that's what I, this--my friend, she spoke French. Some of them, the soldiers, gave a little note, you know, sometimes some of the girls, she was who translated. So they gave us already some news for encouragement. They did not have much either, but they used to get some Red Cross packages or something. And they-- he one of them wrote, you know, little messages sometimes they could into this they are, you know, how advancing the Russian one place, the American the other place. You just have to...

MS: Hold on.

EB: ...hold on and you just have to--so and we already very down, and that's what, what it kept us alive.

MS: It kept your spirits going.

EB: It kept our spirits going. Nothing, other special--end of the--and then, you know, it was--so summertime was terrible hot. We had to keep some where covered also from the sun. So there was this paper bags you know, from cement, it, from the cement.

MS: Yes.

EB: That's what we tried to cover ourselves with.

MS: You cover your bodies with cement bags.

EB: [unclear] a special number. Then these cement bags, later, it is in winter, when it came getting colder. We did not have good clothes there either, you know. We had a, this striped dress and that's what kept us. But in around December, terrible cold.

Just the way it was hot summer, that cold got in winter. And end of, in beginning I think January it was, the snow, and we still was working in the snow, whatever we could do, we went there. But then the Russian came. They heard that the Russian are getting closer and we, we have to move.

MS: Could you hear any artillery or guns?

EB: Well, we, we thought we did, you know. Maybe we thought, maybe we did, I don't know, but we were ready to move.

MS: But the camp was going to move at that point?

EB: The camp had to be evacuated.

MS: Evacuated.

EB: It's not only because, because camp had to be evacuated because other ones before we were evacuated, we, we tripled in, in the same camp.

MS: In size?

EB: In the size, because they already evacuated people from other camps.

MS: And other camps were coming into your camp.

EB: That's right. So then already you know with the evacuation was so many, you didn't know who is going, who is not going. We were in that time already we were five of us who were keeping together. Two other friends of hers and another of mine. So it was already, yes, who will go together and we will see what you know. So we did not have any shoes. Shoes we did not have. So just some kind of a--so, we, of these sacks and these paper bags that we have, that is under our--that's the way we covered ourselves. That's the way we started to march, you know.

MS: With paper wrapped around your feet?

EB: Wherever we, we, whatever we could cover ourselves, you see. So you see I [unclear] talk about it without any--I mean...

MS: You lived through it. That was enough.

EB: Yes. Yes. So, then we started and we went and, and in snow and in, in freeze and in mud and, and whatever through villages, through--we, we, we were in churches. We were in, you know what where we slept. And they gave us some rest a little soup, somewheres a little bread, whatever already was no more.

MS: But you were marching. You were marching in groups.

EB: We were marching up in groups.

MS: And were you guarded?

EB: Yes. Of course we guarded. Who could not march it was shot out.

MS: And they killed them.

EB: They killed them in the, in the way. And the, in, between, it, we did not go in roads. We, we, went between the in, in forests in, in, sideways you know what it was, even, even--the moving was ten times harder in the snow and in, in--and then we even if evening came then wherever we were, you know, there; we in barns. So then this one of my girlfriend, it is, she, she was there--we were--she couldn't go any further. And she

said--she, she was all bitten with lice [unclear] with everything. And then we were in that barn. So she was laying, so she said she gonna stay there. And you know, as I said before, it is understanding, and I was just, I was thinking of this. At night they took her shoes off. She had, I don't know how she had, but she had a shoe, and something, and whatever, little clothes, a kerchief over her head, and so. Next morning, when she got up, she said, "You see." She said, "They took away. Why didn't just wait until I die?" She said just wait until I die and then take it away.

MS: You were guarded, you were guarded in the barns.

EB: In the barns. Everywhere. And the guards were they still there and we went so--in, in fact, from, from that barn, we were around in a field and they went a couple of went out at night and they wanted to get in some potatoes, and this as I [unclear] it came back as they grabbed the potatoes that's the way it was shot, you know, one of the girls. I did not know her. But, it came back to--that's the way we holded the potato in her hand.

MS: And she was caught and she was killed.

EB: She was shot. So in, in, that time already a lot of 'em they just they, they followed, on the way that they--you did not know it is--I mean you were in a group, you did, you don't know, as I said we were the five of us. I know these five. I did not the other, the rest of them. Nobody. I mean it is--and, and what could I do for her when she was already dead. So, she died there. We were, we were another day she [unclear].

MS: They stayed and your friend died.

EB: She died there. And then we went, we marched again. We marched further. And we marched, and we, marched and we marched. And we don't know where and we don't know when.

MS: Do you have any idea how many days you were on this march?

EB: Oh, we were about, weeks two, three weeks. Is, as, we went, I got part way by Danzig. So how we got there, I don't know how we got there.

MS: They were marching you in--do you have any idea what direction, they were marching north?

EB: Toward Danzig. So because in Danzig you know, that is by the sea.

MS: Right. Important.

EB: And supposedly what we heard later, they did it with a couple of them. They just put on the boats and then they sink the boat. I mean in, in the water there. So if, if would have been that's our fate or what it would have been, we don't know. But that's the way when we got there, and we just the outskirts of the city and it was a night and we, we already couldn't go any further. We have to stay and wherever we were. We going to sleep there. And I remember we just were outside. It was not already indoor. But we had to some kind of a yard there we were huddled. I don't know how many. We all warmed each other you know. It was no--and at night, and we woke up in the morning. We heard, we heard of course, in that time we already heard the shooting, and the...

MS: You could hear the artillery.

EB: The artillery and the sirens and, and everything. But we [unclear] we were not afraid from, from anything. I mean it is--we didn't have to escape or hide ourself or--so we came in this. We didn't see any people. People, we did not see. But the German who, the SS men, still was with us. So, we, we just stayed there and in a, in a group and we laid down and then we were holding together and fell asleep, you know. It was froz--half frozen and half dead and half alive. You fall asleep and you were glad you were sitting and you don't have to move and you don't have to go. And when we wake up, the Russian was there. The next thing what I know that's, it was you know, clearing and the Russian said, "Go, you are free." I just heard what my friend said, we are free, no one is around, no one is here. So we run, and we run into the first house whatever it was. And we see nobody there. You know it was no one and the house was empty. But it was food on the table and it, it, it was a, it's not a beautiful house. And we sat down and whatever it was you know, they had the *Speisekammer*, this they call it, the pantry. And the pantry was full with, with everything, I know. So we starting to eat. We started to eat, and everybody was hungry, out of everything so we started to eat and to drink whatever we found, and you know whatever it was. So we ate until, until we fall half dead.

Tape two, side one:

MS: ...after eating in the, in the home that you stumbled into, then you, you fell asleep, and then when you woke up you were in a hospital.

EB: In a hospital, yes. The hospital that was, as I said, that was in the outskirts of Danzig. But in the hospital already was, it was filled, the hospital was filled because everybody, I think all of them got sick. Whoever got alive, I don't know how many fell dead there. But we were, those were survivors in that part. In the hospital, as I said, it is, you know with this diarrhea and it was terrible. In this hospital, I got my hair again, they shaved us the hair and the attendants was you know was [unclear] very bad because the nurses and the doctors whoever, this was all new people there, you know, and you can imagine that they did not care that much about us. It was not the American who freed us, but the Russian [laughs].

MS: It was the Russians who liberated you.

EB: Who liberated, yeah.

MS: And you don't know what nationality the people were that were in the hospital?

EB: Who was working is mostly Polish.

MS: Mostly Polish people.

EB: I think in the hospital already was Polish. It was not Jewish. Those, those were already Polish who lived there, you know, because the, Jews were liberated so they-- everybody who could they wanted to get home. Everybody was away from home. So, I was sick. That was in around in end of February. Yes. And with this typhus, and you know it no, I guess no medication. I don't know, and we just have to take care of whatever it is, we have to take care of ourselves. And, again, I had, got a bed on the second, then was already the second [unclear] hardly could get up, you know didn't have the strength. But then we started to just, just if we made it until now, maybe we'll do it a little longer.

MS: And your friends remained with you, the group of women?

EB: One of them she, she this friend, was alive still.

MS: The one that you, that you went all through the camps with?

EB: Yes. We were in the, in the hospital, still together. The two of the other ones they died there.

MS: Died in the hospital?

EB: In the hospital, in there, from the typhus from the end of the road [unclear] and she and I--so then somehow we made it.

MS: How long were you...

EB: Oh, I was in the hospital maybe till after late in April, about two months.

MS: You were...

EB: In the hospital.

MS: And were there medications available? Was there any kind of...?

EB: Well, in the end, you know. At the beginning, it was none. And they--I just, I just, you know, it is this diarrhea just kept 'em--well, we were just like bone and, and skin.

MS: Were you given food? At least there was food to be given, what you could eat.

EB: Well, we could not eat.

MS: No, but...

EB: After, after then it started already, remember, the war still was on. So, this it, was in February, March, April when the war ended is, I think, in May, the beginning of...

MS: '45, yes.

EB: So it is, it was everything scarce, but we did get some kind of a medication then. And the Russian soldiers was terrible, too. Those who--the Russian soldiers even in...

MS: That were, that were in the hospital, or that were in charge?

EB: They, they let us, they let you do everything. They were not in charge. They were not, you know, they did their own thing. I don't know how it was the liberation under the American Army. But the Russians, they, the soldiers, you were free and you go and do whatever you wanna do, you know. You could go to a German. You could go--they, they would--the Germans was, would have been [unclear]. I don't know because I, I was as I said in this time in the hospital. But when we got out, we didn't know what's going to be with us. So then came a trying period again, because nothing was organized. They don't know who you are, you know. We were Jews. They know, they heard something about this, that Jews, Jews was massacred and, and this. But they had a war to fight and they were not like, you know. They liberated us and from then on, we took our, our life in our own hands again.

MS: You were on, you were strictly really on your own.

EB: On your own.

MS: And they had no responsibility for you.

EB: They, they had no responsibility for us. No.

MS: Well, what did you do at that point when you left the hospital and you said you didn't know where to turn?

EB: We went into--we, we had to look for a place, and empty house again. You know there was plenty empty house because the rich Germans, you know they, they escaped. They were, well they were hiding somewhere. So they left the house empty and they escaped. So we, we went to look for a house, you know where we can live. There is again some of the stronger and the more vital ones and then they...

MS: More aggressive.

EB: Aggressive ones, they got the better places. So, so some of us, we did not get the better place. Well anyhow, we had a place where to sleep and we could gather what to eat. If it was not our home, then we went to another house. And we, we did find something. We had already that much strength that we could go. If I never will forget, I said how must I look. A Russian soldier came and took a picture of me, you know as we were dressed. But at that time already, one coat on another because it was that cold, you know, when they were--and without any hair. I was shaved, in the, you know, in the hospital.

MS: Where did you get, where did you get some clothing? Did they...?

EB: Nowhere.

MS: No one gave you?

EB: No, no, no. we just, as I said, we'd find in the houses. We went to the closet and took the clothes and we found the clothing. It was no order whatsoever. In fact, what the Russian did as I said so we were, we still were sick and still were not well. But they were [unclear] women. Yes, they went after woman. And then were--so we huddled, a couple of us together in one room. You would not dare to stay by yourself or even with two just because you never know as weak, as miserable as we were what happen next. And that was after when you were free and you were liberated. Well anyhow, we went through this period and then we got a little strength and we have to go back.

MS: Where?

EB: To go back home.

MS: Back home.

EB: Home. We were foreign in, in Poland.

MS: Well, did you think to, to--where did you turn for help? I mean you had to think that there was an agency, there was some...

EB: There was nothing there, nothing there. And only, only mouth to mouth.

MS: Word.

EB: Word for word. So some of 'em said at least we have to go to the station and wait for the train, till the train go somewhere. So we started our journey back home. So that's the way it started. The weather was a little bit better.

MS: What month was this now?

EB: That was in May, in May. And we went out and we will go home. And then, well the trains came. It was--one of them was full with soldiers, they didn't take anybody. Then you had a little place somewhere on the side or on the steps, and you got on the train and you went. And you never know where.

MS: You didn't know where the train was going? You don't...?

EB: No.

MS: You just got on the train and went.

EB: You know it didn't go to the front. I mean then was already we know already it was end of the war and we could get try to back home. So, if--and we know

then already, you know it is which direction, just the direction. And after that so after that we started to--I still was with this friend, one of the friends. I did not know about anybody. I did not meet anybody from friends or family after that.

MS: Well, tell me about your trip from Danzig home. How, how...?

EB: That was the trip. Whenever it came a train, we were at the station. And if we couldn't get in, it was not a, a civilian train. It was still you know whatever it was, how they call it, these freight trains, open cars, open [unclear], you are not locked in anymore. But just we wanted to get home.

MS: All right. So you knew the train was headed in a southerly direction and but how--then you were headed back towards Hungary. Alright and how, about how long did you actually arrive back into, in Hungary?

EB: Yes. In the end, we did arrive in Hungary.

MS: And how long did that trip take?

EB: The trip took probably three weeks.

MS: Three weeks.

EB: Oh, yeah. And in the meantime, as we were, you know, wherever we were they, they already gave us to eat. We don't know who or what, wherever we stopped and we said who we are.

MS: There were no centers set up yet because it was too soon after the war.

EB: No, I did not go ever. Maybe it was center. Maybe it was in certain cities or somewhere, but I did not encountered any of that. We just went to waited or went into wherever we stopped in the town, and you know, we got some food and then we tried to go further. Sometimes we went backwards you know, back and forth. The train went different direction, we didn't even know where we go, you know. We just know that we want to go back to Hungary, Hungary already, we were at home wherever we go. Well, finally, we get back to Hungary and then I departed from my friend, and I never heard from her again. Never.

MS: Oh, how sad. So you don't know what...

EB: Yeah, that's what I say, you know. I went back, we lived very far away from each other. She lived in the part was belonged to Romania, and after it was Romania again. And I went back to, to Hungary to my hometown. Well that was not that simple either. I got there because there was no transport even in Hungary even after, in '45 it was terrible, everything, transportation and things. And then, then another thing, you have to be afraid of the Russian soldiers there, in Hungary. So a girl alone until I, until I got there, somehow I met in the train a Jewish, a Jewish boy who was in uniform. I think a Czech from Czechoslovakia, you know. So he said I'm going to go with you until you get where you want to because you are not safe here. So I was very grateful to him, you know. It is--and he, he came along until, he went further. I got off on my, my town and I got home.

MS: Did you find any of your family in Hungary when you got back?

EB: That, that was a homecoming. I arrived in, I don't know it just so happened in was on a Sunday. In a small town you know, it is Sunday, a lot of the young ones they go into the, to the station just to watch...

MS: The trains.

EB: The train passing by. Maybe they already heard some of them coming back or something, but in Hungary the war is ended. The Russians were there in, in '44, end of '44. Nobody came back till [unclear]. So I came in a Sunday afternoon and it was, you know, summertime, and I had a kerchief around my head, some kind of a funny dress you know what I find. And I step off on the train and there were some young people, you know, some of them I know. And they started to stare at me, you know. I'll never forget, I said, "Oh, you came back, you came back." That was it, you came back, you came back. But, you came back, you know. It was like a disappointment.

MS: Oh! My goodness. And these were your former neighbors? Not neighbors?

EB: Not necessarily neighbors.

MS: But people from your community?

EB: People from the community, you know. You came back. So then I came back and I wanted to go home. You see, I went home. I walked home. We lived about I don't know, a mile maybe from the, from the station. And I come to our house and there were three family living in there. Three family and they, you know, they are, they were refugees. They came from Romania or somewhere, and they occupied...

MS: Other Jewish refugees?

EB: No, no. Not Jewish. Not Jewish, Gentiles. So you know you came back to your home and there are people, there are families. So I said well one room I would need. One room. I had no room where to--who should give me the room, see. I had to go up to the, to the--well it was Sunday so I had to go some of the neighbors to stay because here was no room. I didn't want to stay there. Then I went over to--and some of our furniture was there. Some, not, not all, some of them. And I slept at a neighbor's, you know. But you see you came back and most of them was disappointed.

MS: Your neighbors, too? Was that the reception? Do you remember if they were...

EB: The neighbors, it was so. Those all, all our belongings what we left there, see, they took.

MS: So they were not happy to see you then.

EB: So when they come to see me, they know that it is not theirs anymore. So it was no friend and no foe. I mean it is, it is you could not-- they used them up. I did not even ask them anything. But maybe is their feeling, the bad feeling was there. They took it so soon as they took us away. They cleared out the house after that. As I said, my father was a well-respected man in the community and he helped most everybody. The workers he used to have, I don't know how many, 50 workers a day. And he always thought, I mean, that's way--they were--well paid. And he had a...

MS: Good relationship.

EB: ...good relationship with them. But they were still you know, you know how it is, it's workers. After then some of them was you know nice, but then they was afraid of the rest of them. It was a small community. And when we were in--I mean if something we wanted to say, something was in trouble, those who, who was the more, who we would not think about it as, as you know friends or and from the community, from there, *they* came forward as they going to hide us something. And we were welcome to give them because I mean my parents, because who they are I mean they were never so, so friendly. And they were those were some of them the nicest when we came, when, when even I came back. But you would never know what will be the outcome. For example, when we were, I did not tell you that. When we were, we went to the ghetto, we were getting ready the two days we got. Well, my father had a lot of jewelry. I mean my mother gold and money and different things. So my father helped a lot. We did not take along not much.

MS: Well, what did you do with your possessions, your valuable possessions?

EB: But that's what I say, the valuable possessions, my father said, he, he ...

MS: Would bury them?

EB: ...bury them in the ground. Now I was alone home and my father, before we went to the ghetto, my father told me listen, you must know where I put the things. [unclear]. And I was such afraid of, of, you know I said, "Look Father, all we come all back together. We're going together and all we come back together or if not, I don't want to know about anything. I will stay, I will stay with you anyhow, and we will you know, you will--we won't come back. If he won't come back, won't come back. If he come back, we all come back, I don't want to hear about it." But my father was telling, you know, all this because he was such a good man, you know. He was always giving for everybody. Always doing this, so I said I don't want to know about it. But he...

MS: He insisted.

EB: ...he insisted you must listen and you must listen. And when I came back in '45 at the beginning, I couldn't think what he said. I did not remember anything. Later, when I was already, I got back to the house and, you know, I started to think, my father he did tell me something. Maybe I will try. Well, what I tried, I tried to look for something. Some thing I found, not everything.

MS: So you were not able...

EB: I was not able to, to recall.

MS: Well, tell me something, when you found that the other people in the community moved into, into your parents' home, was there anything you could do about this? Was there an authority in, in the community?

EB: Yeah, then I already could.

MS: What did you do about...?

EB: I, I didn't. One, one family moved out. I think they moved or something. So I got a room. I couldn't stay there. I couldn't stay there because another family came back. Not family, it was some, a second cousin who came back in this...

MS: To, to, to your town?

EB: To my town, yes.

MS: And what did you decide then?

EB: And then they said well it was not my brother and not my sister. I did not know about them in that time yet.

MS: Did you try to find out about them at that time?

EB: Well, as I said, I was in Hungary already. They did not contact this town. So I said I have to go to Debrecen. I have to go away from here. I cannot stay there. This was two young men and a girl was there. So they said you stay here. Stay here with us. I couldn't stay there. I said I have to go. I, I left, you know they know, you know I am back if anybody come back. They, I will always call here or get in touch here. But I have to go and to look for what happened to them. Well, even if I know what happened to them, but you still, you did you could not you could not stay. I said there was no, no you know, use and anything. We were still cut off of, of the cities, of the big cities and I did not know what happened my sister or my brother what would be with them. So I went first back to Debrecen. In Debrecen I had friends, and...

MS: This was the...

EB: This was the town...

MS: This was the town that you went to school?

EB: The town that I went to school, yes. And there I, I, I heard already about my sister, that she was in Budapest. That she was, something that she might come back. So I was waiting there in Debrecen already where I had, I had friends and in Debrecen already started...

MS: Were they, were they Jewish friends or gentile friends?

EB: Jewish, [unclear] all Jewish already.

MS: But they, too, had returned from where...

EB: They all returned. So, some of them returned from concentration camps. Now this city, Debrecen, was where a lot of 'em, for example, I have an aunt. She had five children. And she was, they went and they were put in ghetto. They were in the city Debrecen, in ghetto and only for a, was a [unclear] separated. But they were not there too long, and from there they, they took them really in a working camp. They were [unclear] just was waiting in horse in, in, these tight trains. But they went to Austria and they, they worked there, and the whole family was together. And the whole family stayed alive. They never got to Auschwitz. They worked all the whole time. And they were, they were close to, to gas chambers, but somehow they was working. They were needed there, you know, the young people, and then they just did not, you know.

MS: They were fortunate enough to.

EB: They was fortunate enough to stay there. So at that time when the war was over, these people get first back, those who, who was in a more fortunate position. My aunt came back. As I said, she had five children. And she came back, and then other people in Debrecen also. In Debrecen was the same thing, some of them went back to their old home, they find their house and there was already somebody live there, who could [unclear] take, go to the authority to take them out. I mean move them out. And you put...

MS: Move back in.

EB: Reown your possessions, yes. You could do anything, you saw somebody wearing your things, you could go and take it. But in a way you were afraid to do it because it still was the, you know.

MS: The feeling was still there.

EB: Little things--sometimes you were mad sometimes. I remember it, I, I was going home from Debrecen, it was still in another city. I was at the station, waiting for the train and there came a German prisoner train. They were taking them to Russia. And I standing there at the, at the station alone. I wanted to go home. And come this train and they were packed the same way packed in the train as we were packed in those trains when we went to Germany. And I had a, I had a stone you know and I just I said I just throw them somewhere. And you looked at those faces and you just couldn't do it. I mean, I, you know it is, it is, so, so horrible. Think. *Das* [Ger. : that] is, I was, I was recalling-- certain you know, certain things you just cannot forget. That's not that I forgave them, you know.

MS: You didn't feel that you forgave them. But you...

EB: Oh, no, no. I never could. I never can forgive them.

MS: But at the same time...

EB: I see them today, I see them today whenever I always go back what her sister or what her mother or her brother was.

MS: Right, right. Exactly, exactly.

EB: But to see someone in that circumstance, someone who went through when I was there, and, and, and it was just awful. I just felt awful.

MS: Were you able to make contact with your sister in Budapest?

EB: My sister then came back to Debrecen. She came back. She came back.

MS: She heard that you were there and came back?

EB: She, she, I don't know if she heard it, but, she, she wanted to look for--I was looking for her. She was already looking in Budapest for the whole family because Budapest had these centers. Debrecen had already them, too. So people who came in the big communities you know, maybe they went through there, maybe the register, maybe somewhere, somehow. So you were looking. So my sister came back to Debrecen. And Debrecen was the center, you know, cause we all grown up somehow there. So we came there and my brother came back, too. My brother had an also, he was in the end of the

war he was marched to Mauthausen, also a concentration camp. He took them there and he also got the typhus. But in Mauthausen, came the American army. So they freed him after he got out from the hospital. He never talked about it. I never even know what was his story, you know. He never talked about it. But I know this is American soldier who was, who, who talked to him there in Mauthausen and came back [unclear]. He brought news from him from Mauthausen to my aunt. He sent a note that he's all right. And then my aunt sent from here a package to there with some clothes and [unclear]. So then I got my sister and my brother. Of course, we all went to different things, you know. We had the whole last, last five years we were not together. My sister's husband, as I said, who, unfortunately, when the Russians came into Hungary he was so happy, he went out to greet them.

MS: He was not, conscript--he was not in the service? He didn't have to serve in the Hungarian army?

EB: Army? No. no. He was--I don't know what was he or what it happened or what it was but he, he, he was, was at home. I think as a student he was a studying and he was a medical student in that time. I don't know what it was that's the way he was nowhere. But he was hiding and when the Russian came he was so happy cause they came, you know, he went out to greet them. And the Russian just in that time whoever find in the street they took them, they took him away as a prisoner. That was his story. So as I said, then my sister was there and she had to look for her husband, and...

MS: Your sister remained in, in Hungary. And your brother?

EB: My brother was in Hungary also. In, they--you see, my--I should tell my brother's story first. He got in '50, '47, '47, no that was '45, '46, I lived in Debrecen.

MS: You stayed, you remained in Debrecen?

EB: In Debrecen. And there was my--so there was like a home for, for all the three of us, and my brother and my sister. But my sister was travelling back to Budapest because she had the baby with her mother-in-law. The baby, she had a year old infant girl and she wanted to look for her husband. And my brother and I was in Debrecen. And of course, we got a--my brother, well he was a young man, and the girlfriend, my sister-in-law, they went together. My sister-in-law, was, they had brothers and sisters, five I think, and they were all in Hungary during the war, with these Aryan papers, gentile papers, if you know that. So they were hiding. They were not in concentration camp. His parents was in Auschwitz, but not she. So my brother got married in 1947. No, '46, '46. And in '46, at that time...

Tape two, side two:

EB: ...and my father, never anyone met him, never anyone I heard who should know about him. And so I, I did not have much hope for him either. So, my brother, in '56, I mean, so, '46 he got married. He said he'd stay there, in Hungary. My sister went to school yet. She continued her studies. And was waiting for her husband so she didn't wanna go. So I said I go in Germany. I had my cousins, and I don't want to stay in Hungary. I don't want to live in Hungary anyhow anymore. And I go to Germany. Then was this already here, the displaced camps by the Americans set up. And I would come to America or I would go to Israel. I did not know where I want to go yet. So, and I didn't want to get married in Hungary either. I just wanted to go away from there. So then it was not so easy to get away already in '46. That was in '46 from Hungary. Again, with a group but then with a group we got together, and again with trucks at night through the border, through Austria. And we paid the Hungarian guides. Anyhow I got over to Austria and then we got there. And Austria already was regular transport; went to Germany back to the American zone. So I did not stay in Vienna at all. I went right away to the train. It was--my cousin was this group leader and I went back to Germany. And there I had these few cousins who also stayed alive, who came back and did not find anybody. And after then we did stick together.

MS: Did you go into a displaced persons' camp?

EB: Yes. Right after that it was a [unclear]. And my sister stayed in Hungary, and my brother [unclear] in Hungary. And she, she did not know from her husband about two, two years, two and a half years.

MS: So it's taken...

EB: Taken to Russia in a...

MS: Prison camp.

EB: ...prison camp. And she went through the border to Romania after them and nobody didn't know anything. So she went back to school and little girl was there with her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law was Jewish. So that's why I said it is--her husband was a half-Jew. And then she finished her schooling there. And after then I was, I was already in Germany. Then he came back I think in '48, her husband, '47, '48 when he came back. And, they had--so she finished school there and she got a position and, and he had a position. Then it was, hard for them to--in the meantime the borders was closed and they couldn't get away as a unit together. It was very dangerous. So the same was with my brother. They had a child the [unclear] got harder. They postponed it and it became more difficult, and they, they stayed there.

MS: How long then did it take for you to leave the displaced persons camp and come--did you come directly to the United States from there?

EB: Yes. I, I was there I think in '47, '46 right away and then into displaced persons camp. And then I met my husband there and we got married in 1947.

MS: In Germany?

EB: In Germany, yes. And then is--then, then came the new law. At the beginning it was no, we did not know where to go. He wanted to go to Israel. But in that time I already said, you know, it was no Israel, then yet. It was Palestine. And I said I just can't go again through what I went through. I just can't. So, I, I better go to America. I want to live free and live if I can live yet. So, we decided to come here. But at the beginning it was no quota.⁶

MS: Oh, there was no quota then and you could come in at any time?

EB: It was the quota, just the old system, you know, what countries. And then it came I think in '48. We came here in '49, in 1949.

MS: Well, didn't you have to get a visa, a guarantee or guarantor from this country?

EB: Not anymore. Then it was, you know, at the beginning, when we just registered, then, yes. But then it came over a new law and all the displaced persons come in without any. I don't think you need it anymore anything. I mean before, my husband has some relatives here so they would have been willing to send, you know, the papers. At the beginning they did that, yes, and, and money, a ticket for the boat. But then we came with army boats and army, you know. It was this new law what allowed all these camp, leaving these displaced camps, I think you're right. I think still you needed something because some, some who had relatives, but who did not have relative, the Joint, gave the papers.

MS: Yes, the Joint Distribution Committee.

EB: So it was no work involved anymore, I mean no working papers, or anything, no. And we came then in 1949 to the United States. And...

MS: It was quite an experience, Mrs. Bleiman.

EB: Quite an experience. And when we came here, it was not easy here either in 1949.

MS: No, no.

EB: You know. So that's why I say it is not everybody who [unclear] and what went through it is not the same. And now we got there. Although we came to relatives, my husband has [unclear] relatives in that time. They died already then. Who helped us most was who could least afford it.

MS: That's interesting.

EB: Could least afford it.

MS: They were the ones that helped the most.

⁶ Harry Truman issued an executive order so that thousands of displaced Jewish Holocaust survivors could enter U.S. from 1945-47. 1948-Displaced Person's Act expanded Truman's executive order. Modified twice later to accommodate more immigrants, about 600,000 refugees-outside the regular immigration quota system- came to U.S. through 1953. www.HNN.US/articles

EB: Those relatives that tried, those relatives I remember was, we went--we were put to an aunt and an uncle. It was not really an aunt, but we came to because my husband and me--I had a cousin who was in Baltimore but they came for us and he took us off from the boat. I mean he took us right away with, with a car from, from where we arrived in what the name, Boston, Boston. Boston to...

MS: Oh really. To Baltimore?

EB: Not Baltimore. We came too late.

MS: Oh, I see. Oh, I see. Oh, I thought the relative that met you...

EB: He lives in Baltimore but he took us to [unclear]. That's what I said with that older couple who didn't have any children, you know. So, I had a hard life in the United States also in the first 10 years. It was pretty hard till I get adjusted, and...

MS: Did your, see your sister then and your brother always remained in...

EB: No, no. It goes then my sister, she's still there. He [Mrs. Bleiman is probably referring to her sister] finished and he became first a doctor and then she specialized in psychiatry. And you know she went to work for the government. Today that's what I showed you. She has one of the highest position in the SF. She's a, what kind of a psychiatry is she, with the law, she is a--no, that was what I show you. That was a conference. You see that, the first world meeting on medical law.

MS: Oh, medical law.

EB: Medical law. That was in Ghent, in Belgium, Ghent. She was from Hungary, she was the one who was sent.

MS: By the government.

EB: By the government, as a delegate. It was in 1967, yes. That was--they call it forsenic [Mrs. Bleiman is referring to forensic psychiatry] psychiatry.

MS: Oh, yes.

EB: You know the medical with the law connection. She's today with the Justice Ministry in Hungary. With the, you know who decide before someone will be...

MS: Does that have to do with criminal...?

EB: Criminals, yes.

MS: I see. Oh, I see, they make judgments as to whether they're...

EB: Sane or insane.

MS: Insane.

EB: She is on the commission, now.

MS: I see.

EB: So, and you know, she has a baby grown up, a baby daughter. She already a young woman and she got married. And then you now family things came together. So I [unclear]...

MS: I should have asked you this much earlier in the interview, but when you were growing up in Hungary and with your family, did they have any strong religious practices in your home?

EB: Yes. I was brought up as in Orthodox, but in a modern way, you know. It was my--you can see my father, you don't see the skullcap on his head. I mean if you know about the Orthodox Jews. My, my grandfather he was yes very, you know--but we kept the holidays, we kept the *Shabbat* and we, I mean in this way. But, we were, I mean I would say we were modern Orthodox. Not even like here the Orthodox Jews, you know, whom I encounter with. And we did not speak Yiddish at home.

MS: Interesting.

EB: When I came to the United States, we learned German in high school and spoke a little bit, and in this way we did, we understand Yiddish. I mean, it's because of the language similarities.

MS: Similarities, yes, yes.

EB: But we did not speak at home Yiddish. And the most frustrating thing was for me when I got in even in camp in Germany already, the Displaced Persons camp, mostly the positions was Polish and you know. My husband is not Hungarian either. He's from Lithuania. And they all spoke Yiddish you know.

MS: In the Displaced Persons camp.

EB: In the Displaced Persons camp, Yiddish. And if you did not speak Yiddish, you know, then you just were lost. And I had learned as much as I could, but they know right away, so they call me the *Deutchka* [phonetic] because -- you know the *Deutchka* [phonetic].

MS: Yes, I know what you mean. But tell me, not that it's terribly important, but in, in Auschwitz you were with, you say there were not that many Romanians, or rather not Hungarian prisoners with you, but they were mostly Polish, probably?

EB: Yes. No, I meant not Hungarian, it is Hungarian but, not from my community.

MS: Not from your community. So many languages must have been spoken.

EB: Yes. Yes. Mostly Czechish, you know, Romanish, yes, Hungarian, Polish, all languages.

MS: Yiddish?

EB: Well the Yiddish would have been the, the common language what I did not spoke. Well, none of my friends did either. None of these friends, whom I was, you know -- as I told you, she spoke beautiful French and her husband was a doctor, and she spoke German. And see after the war what it was, what it was it happened, it was no--at the beginning we did not know where we'll be. I gave her my address, and she did, she did not gave me her address, just the town, the city, because she did not know where she will be. And we thought somehow, we will communicate somehow, we get somehow, and it never, never happened.

MS: That's very sad.

EB: Yeah. I wanted to know what happened to her. This is--I thought it's probably her husband did not come back and she did not stay at home. She must have gone away somewhere, just like I did, you know. That was the...

MS: Would you--other, you know--I guess maybe it's almost a silly question, but other than your strong desire to survive this terrible ordeal in the ghettos and in the camps and into the labor camps, was there any other, any other thing that came through your mind, anything from your youth or from your religion, or anything that kept you going in a sense, in addition to your strong friendship?

EB: Now you see, as you said, a strong desire. I saw people who had the strong desire. I couldn't say this for myself. I did not have a strong desire I wouldn't say. But I had something in a kind of a faith. I don't know what was it. I, I just felt, I, I felt [unclear] horrible [unclear]. I just felt I will go through with it, just like that. When I went with my--I think in that minute when the German soldier threw me the other, the SS you know on the other side, I think in that minute I feel this I will live, for some reason.

MS: That's interesting.

EB: I don't know. I never, as you said, the desire because I know some of them who had the strong desire and some of them maybe lived through, I don't know what happened to them. But I know who died because of, because of this food. I never went after anything extra. I never did anything extra. As you hear, this [unclear] because they, they, they worked or because they did this or because they did that. In fact, as I said, I wanted to slap the *Kapo*, who was just another poor soul maybe like I don't know, 'cause you know. So, I, I did not have that. But somehow I always felt, I, I had a certain--I don't know why. I thought I will meet my sister and my brother. I did not know. I had the feeling about my father and my mother, I think I thought I somehow knew that I was cut off from them right there.

MS: But, of course, you knew, you felt that there was still the hope that you would be reunited.

EB: Hope, you always have hope.

MS: Sure.

EB: But something you felt cut, you know, in you. I mean that's the way I felt. And the funny thing, when I was in Auschwitz I always just prayed that my sister should not come here. I did not want it. I always wanted to her in a safer, safer place to keep. Where she was, it was not safe, you know. It was, she went through a pretty terrible thing in Budapest, Budapest was not safe.

MS: Was she hidden in Budapest?

EB: Oh, yeah.

MS: She was never in a concentration camp then?

EB: No.

MS: But she was hidden.

EB: She was--she had, had these papers what you hear about.

MS: The Aryan papers.

EB: She just showed me. As I said, two years ago she showed me the papers. She has everything with, with her. Today she has all this decoration from the government. With this she keeps these documents. So and she went to [unclear], she just should not come here to Auschwitz. That, that was my pray. And somehow, I, I, you know, I wanted to meet them, of course, my sister and my brother. And, my parents, I thought I will never meet them. I mean, it is, as painful it was. I, I went to look when we came again. My sister, you know, she went from place to place. Sometimes I felt, maybe because I was with them, that in a way you know I felt better about it because I went with them to the last step in their...

MS: In their lives.

EB: ...life, almost, you know. So, sometimes it gave me somebody even if-- but, and even I did not mind I did not find everything what my father told me. Sometimes I thought I would [unclear] if I would find everything.

MS: It would only bring back all those memories.

EB: Yes. It could.

MS: Was the family properties ever settled out? I mean, did...

EB: Well, the family property to us. This...

MS: Were there any compensations paid?

EB: Yes, it is--something it was. It's my sister since she stayed in Hungary. Oh, my brother came in 1956 to came to the United States. My brother came after the Hungarian revolution. He had a lovely family, I mean two sons.

MS: So he is here now?

EB: He's here in New Jersey, yes. And only my sister is, is there. And, and that's what happened. She, since she was there alone after my brother came here. So at the beginning was nothing, but then she got everything, the house and then you know. So, she saw that she didn't want to go there back. She lives in Budapest, and now, of course...

MS: I guess because of her high position in the, her profession and probably with the government, she has not been touched by antisemitism?

EB: Oh, yes. I mean, you know, well we talk about religion and today I hear this. I don't know if you read this articles lately in the papers, coming out, it's so beautifully written and so beautifully sad. This Hungary, Hungary is the only country, what is, what is true, is true that Hungary has the only seminar and the only, you know, Jewish community, I think in whole Europe is the biggest. It is, well, I whatever it is how many thousands. Nobody count them and nobody can count them because as is, as one of the--I have another what I saw, it just so happens sometimes. [Tape interrupted] It is a Hungarian--it was, it was a television a couple of months ago, in November, I got from the Jewish Theological Seminary that program, so one of them who did the radio, I mean for the television, I think it is a television producer or whatever, he's working there he

said well, he's not a registered Jew, and he's not a participating Jew, Jew. And he's, he, he's--but he was born as a Jew and he has relatives, so he's a Jew. So he's not registered and he's not practicing or participating in anything. So who knows who he's a Jew.

MS: Yes, yes.

EB: Do you understand what I mean? Last time when I was there, it was two years ago, so my sister told me that it was some kind of a meeting, and was a lec--not a lecture, it was some kind of a celebration, a meeting, I don't know what it was, and one of her colleagues, a woman, was the guest speaker or something. And she was in high position in some kind, I don't know. So she, she made a speech and she quoted something, from Maimonides. Well it's a medical you know, it was some kind of a medical meeting or something. So after the meeting, the, the president or whoever it was, I don't know they have the different, goes to her because she was like a guest speaker, so who had arranged the whole thing, so he goes to her and he said the whole Hungarian past or something, you couldn't find anybody to quote from?

MS: Oh, I see.

EB: You have to quote from Maimonides? She said, you know she did not answer him. And she could not answer anything. It did not, this did not mean which was not a Hungarian who she could not quote, but maybe it was, but what was the difference if she quoted from there, from another source. Just because the other one was a Jew.

MS: Very interesting.

EB: So, she said she was very--she did not answer anything. She was very hurt but she said you see that's [unclear]. My sister, for example, she had here a friend, also a psychiatrist. And I did not know, I met her already three times, and only now she told me that she was in concentration camp, was a psychiatrist. That she was here in fall, in last October. And she was in New York visiting some friends and, and also a professor, I don't know his name, who was in Hungary also with some kind of a you know, some, some kind of a conference or what was it. Anyhow, she tells he asked her if he know this doctor whom he met in Hungary. [unclear] So she said, "Oh, yes, I was in his Bar Mitzvah." So this man from New York, he's an older, a doctor also, I, I don't know who his [unclear]. "His Bar Mitzvah. He told me he's not Jewish."

MS: Oh, my goodness.

EB: You see, she said, I thought, I, I said she was so embarrassed. She said here is better this position this one in Hungary and he, he might ask him for some reason if he Jewish or not. And he told him he's not Jewish. And she told him that she was on his Bar Mitzvah. Somebody must tell a lie, yes. And all people who are, you know...

MS: In a profession.

EB: A profession [unclear]. So why, why should this one tell him that he's not Jewish. So, so it is, it is, it is the antisemitism. So it is government not allow it, that's true, I mean not officially, but...

MS: But it exists.

EB: But it exists.

MS: It exists amongst the people.

EB: Among the people. And you never know where it comes out. Its the same thing, it is here. Well, all right here you are freedom and you are allowed to say whatever you want. You can be a Nazi, well not exactly a communist, you cannot be so freely here. Maybe you can.

MS: Well, to a degree.

EB: To a degree.

MS: Yeah, certainly, certainly.

EB: Alright, so to a Nazi you can be a [unclear], a Nazi [unclear]. So it is the antisemitism it is here, too.

MS: Yes, but to, to a different degree, I'm sure.

EB: A different degree, but you never know, see. You never know what the degree comes out.

MS: Well, let's hope it does...

EB: You never know what the percentage is. Let's hope not.

MS: Well let's hope it's not is correct. Of course, we feel that in this country that we, God willing, would never live through what the Jews in Europe lived through, Hitler, because our constitution is set up in such a way that we feel that we are protected. You shake your head, no.

EB: The constitution can be set up that way. But you see not the constitution brings the antisemitism not the constitution. The constitution is very good today, the basic of the American. I, I don't know the American democracy. I just talk to my feelings.

MS: Yes.

EB: Yeah. Antisemitism it's something different. It comes always when something goes wrong.

MS: Oh, yes.

EB: Something goes wrong in the country...

MS: Exactly.

EB: ...and this does not, this does not comes from there. And something goes wrong. In Germany, when did it sprung? When the country was down in economic struggle or something. Then it sprung. And then it is--then you are a small majority. You are, I mean a minority. Yes, you are small. If, if, if you are--well around here is certain places when [unclear] I remember was in Philadelphia, Strawberry Mansion, was almost like a ghetto you know, with all the Jews, they meet together. Then you can, can stick together. Maybe you can work together, you can organize, you can do something. And people ask me, "Why, why is the Warsaw Ghetto worked that way? Why is in, in Hungary we couldn't do anything about it in certain places?" Because we did not have any people. We did not even know. We did not have the communication, not only we--

and we did not believe, just like you, as I'm talking to you now. If I telling, do something, yes? We, we got this postcard from my aunt from, from you know.

MS: Czechoslovakia.

EB: That's what she wrote. So we said it is terrible, but this wouldn't happen to us. And she's working now, so the next year she will be back, get back home again. Because, first of all, this is the Jewish mentality that we always hope.

MS: That's right.

EB: But, but that's the way have the--that's the way we explain it. And now as I talking to you, you know I don't say that is God forbid, I mean, it is somehow you feel, not only to the Jews, that is end of the world already, is no--but look what happened after that. And there is no one who could talk to. No one who could talk, who could explain what happened after if you saw the *Exodus* just on TV on film, yes. These cousins of mine was on the *Exodus* on the boat that went them to Israel. I mean after when the remnants from the six million left only almost nothing, yes? And then they, they had no place where to go. Nobody wanted, even then, nobody wanted them.

MS: Exactly, exactly.

EB: So then what, what it is. We hope, because maybe, maybe I mean I don't know what. Only humanity. Only, only one thing. I think only, only enlightenment only dialogues, only talks or feeling can, can I mean...

MS: Break down these barriers?

EB: Break down this--yes, yes. This is why because it is no understanding. Knowledge is not enough because that's what you know it is--that was all those high top profession, professionals it was the killers. Some of them. I mean not, not, who, who anyhow who made the plans and this they were all educated geniuses.

MS: That's right. Exactly, exactly. Who worked at the camps.

EB: Who worked at the camps. Yes, the plans. So this is not, not knowledge. The plain humanness, that is the way to communicate or something. I think that is the only...

MS: Hope for the future.

EB: This is the only hope for the future, because it is, they said the constitution that is fine and, and wonderful, but it does not say, well, it's over.

MS: You're probably very right. Mrs. Bleiman, I really want to thank you very, very much for giving us your experiences.

EB: That was my experience. Yes, it is, I mean, I don't know what, whatever you can get out of it.

MS: Well, I'm sure there's there's much to be...

EB: Yeah, something.