

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

FANNY SCHWARTZ

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Josey G. Fisher
Date: April 27, 1981

© 2009

Holocaust Oral History Archive

Gratz College

Melrose Park, PA 19027

This page left intentionally blank.

FS - Fanny Schwartz [interviewee]

JF - Josey G. Fisher [interviewer]

Date: April 27, 1981

Tape one, side one:

JF: This is an interview with Mrs. Fanny Schwartz in care of her sister, Mrs. Hermina Schwartz. Could you tell me where and when you were born and a little bit about your family?

FS: Yes, I was born 1911 December 16, in Stavna.

JF: How do you spell that?

FS: S-T-A-V-N-A. And it's in the Carpathians, Czechoslovakia.

JF: And can you tell me a little bit about your family?

FS: My father was a *shochet*. It's a slaughterer.

JF: A slaughterer.

FS: Slaughterer and we had a very religious upbringing.

JF: What did that involve?

FS: What did it involve? *Davening* [Yiddish: praying] every day, and he got after the things. You couldn't go for dates like the other children for instance and still we were a happy family.

JF: Who taught you?

FS: My father.

JF: Your father taught you at home?

FS: Yes, yes. He taught us of reading, writing and, I mean, but in the secular school we went then to school after, only in Jewish, he taught us.

JF: He taught you Hebrew?

FS: Hebrew, yes.

JF: Did you know Yiddish?

FS: Yes. We spoke only Yiddish at home, but then we spoke outside the Hungarian and Russian. And later on Czech.

JF: What about sisters and brothers?

FS: I had three brothers and four sisters. We were nine children together and we survived only three of us.

JF: Only three of the children survived?

FS: Yes. Three sis -- three sisters.

JF: What was your schooling like? You mentioned that you were in a secular school?

FS: I --yes, I, I had like middle, middle schooling, they say like high school here. Because higher education, I couldn't go. My father wouldn't have allowed. But

poor daddy, he used to say, [unclear]. School. It was, it was higher than the regular school.

JF: Now, this school was a Czech school?

FS: Russian.

JF: It was a Russian school?

FS: Russian, yes.

JF: You were in school then with children of all different religions.

FS: Yes.

JF: And what was that experience like for you?

FS: It in, in our town, it was a little antisemitic, but not too bad.

JF: In what ways was it antisemitic?

FS: In that they used to call us names and sometimes in in the city, in the school, we didn't experience it as much as outside. Outside, they used to throw stones after us, the gentile kids. And where they put they stop somehow, stop us and beat up us. They did it.

JF: They wouldn't do this in school.

FS: In school, not.

JF: Would the authorities at the school have stopped it?

FS: Yes, under the Czechs it was very democratic ruling. And so they would have punished them. There, in the school.

JF: The school was a Russian School? Why was that?

FS: Because after the first World War...

JF: Yes.

FS: ...We were starting on our own, like a Czech so they didn't, the Czechs didn't have enough teachers so they had to import from Russia.

JF: I see.

FS: The cream of the teachers. That was in the beginning when I started school. My sisters went already to the Czech Schools. Later on, they had enough teachers to supply us with, with the Czech teachers so mostly all the Jewish kids went to Czech Schools. And we learned Czech, too, but only a few hours a week. Like as a, as a language.

JF: As a second language?

FS: Yes, but the main language was Russian.

JF: Russian. And what was the attitude of the Ukrainian teachers towards the Jewish students?

FS: If they were antisemitic, they didn't show it. Because sometimes, for instance, later on, when the Hungarians came in, they were very, very antisemitic, the teachers to the kids. Because of my two nieces went to Hungarian School and they were, they were the best in the class, but not to give them good marks all the way so with, with gymnastics, they gave a bad mark. And, she, she had to fight for her marks.

JF: What kind of community did you live in?
FS: It was a small town.
JF: About how many people, do you remember?
FS: About 30 families, but not far away, five kilometers away, was a bigger town, and I went to this town to school. I walked every day there and back to the school, for four years.
JF: Thirty families total in the town?
FS: Jewish.
JF: Jewish families. Oh.
FS: Yes, Jewish families.
JF: And what part of the total was that?
FS: Of the total, to tell you the truth, I wouldn't know.
JF: Did you live all together in one area, the Jewish families?
FS: Yeah, but mixed in between there were gentile families.
JF: Did you have your own synagogue?
FS: Yes. Yes.
JF: Was there a Jewish council? Was there a *kehilla*?
FS: A teacher. They hired a teacher every season for the Jewish kids to go to *cheder*, and they went half a day to *cheder*, half a day to school.
JF: But this school was in the other town?
FS: No, the, the regular school from the first grade, we had schools. Only the, the higher education or schools, there I had to go then.
JF: I see, I see.
FS: But we had till eighth grades, there was in our town. And then I went to another, so I went to Velký Berezný¹.
JF: This was the name of the other town?
FS: The name of the other town; this was Berezný² and the other Velký Berezný.
JF: Can you tell me how that was spelled, by any chance?
FS: V-E-R-L-K-Y a big B-E-R-E-Z-N-A.
JF: The town that you were living in was a small town?
FS: A smaller town, yeah.
JF: Was Velký?
FS: Was kish-- no. Berezný just there.
JF: Oh, okay, okay. And the town that you went to.

¹Other spellings include Velká Berezna [Slov], Welykyj Bereznyj [Pol], Vel'ki-Berezni and Vel'ke Berezne. The JewishGen Gazetteer, <http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/LocTown.asp>, accessed 2/22/2016.

²Possibly a town very close by also called: Kisberezna [Hungarian spelling], Malá Berezná [Slovenian spelling], Maly Berezny, as well as other forms. Ibid.

FS: Mala Berezny, Velky Berezny.

JF: Okay. Did anybody in your family serve in the National Army at any point?

FS: Yes. My brother, shall rest in peace. He served in as Captain in the Army, the Czech Army.

JF: In the Czech Army?

FS: Yes.

JF: What was his experience, do you know?

FS: I, I suppose they were equal. This what I say the Czechs were more democratic than the others there. The Russians, for instance, the Ukrainians. But he was a supplier for the army so I think he, he-- they didn't make any how you say, antisemitic remarks.

JF: Did your family belong to any Jewish organizations? Was there a *kehilla*, was there a...

FS: A *kehilla*, yes.

JF: Yes.

FS: Yes, they, they were and we belonged to it. My father was in the main part, the main...

JF: One of the leaders?

FS: Yes.

JF: Yes.

FS: ...and...

JF: They were very active then...

FS: They were active, yes.

JF: ...in your town.

FS: Yeah.

JF: After you finished this upper school in the other town what did you do?

FS: I got married and I had my, with my husband, he had a store, men's clothing.

JF: Where was this?

FS: This was in Berecin³.

JF: And how do you spell that?

FS: B-E-R-E-C-I-N.

JF: Had you known your husband in your town or was this an arranged marriage?

FS: No, it was an arranged marriage.

JF: And what was his name?

FS: Jacob Schwartz.

³Possibly Perečín (Czech. spelling) a town located 11.5 miles south of Velký Berezny.

JF: And what was your life like? With, with your store in those early years?

FS: We made a good living. And we had a good life there. In those days, that was in the '30s.

JF: This is the early '30s?

FS: The early '30s, yes.

JF: Did you have any knowledge of what was happening in Germany at that time? Did it have any effect on you?

FS: When it started we did have knowledge about it. But you didn't think it would come to harm us. We never thought of this.

JF: You thought it would stay contained within Germany.

FS: That what we, what we thought.

JF: When did you first suspect that your lives might be affected by it?

FS: In, in '38, we got occupied by the Hungarian, the end of '38, so life started already being worse.

JF: This was the agreement where Hungary...

FS: Hungary with, with...

JF: ...occupied your part of Czechoslovakia?

FS: Yes, yes, that was the agreement. The Hungarians sold wheat for, for Hitler and they got us for, for wheat and we had the hunger then because they didn't have food enough for us, the supply. So, we, we had had to mix corn with wheat meal to bake the bread, the bread.

JF: What else happened with the Hungarian occupation?

FS: Oh, it was just terrible, it started already. They took away the stores.

JF: This included your store?

FS: Yes, it included my store. And we, we wanted, we had to make a living so my sister and I, we worked, we could sew. So, we made dresses for people. So, they somehow they knew about it, they came and took away the machines. So, we couldn't even earn a living, only what we had saved up from before so we had to live on this.

JF: Was your husband able to find any other kind of work?

FS: No, they took them, the men, they took for, for work, *Zwangsarbeit* [Ger.: forced labor]. And they took them away to Poland and all over and only the women were left.

JF: Who took them?

FS: The Hungarians.

JF: The Hungarians took them.

FS: Yes and they took them for them to work.

JF: Your husband then went where?

FS: To Poland.

JF: To a work camp?

FS: Yes.

JF: Were you in contact with him during that time?
FS: He used to write, yes.
JF: And what did he tell you about his experiences there?
FS: It, it wasn't a pleasant thing. But towards the end in '44, they did send him back. They liquidated the place with the Jewish people that was in Poland. I forget the name of where he was.
JF: Do you know what kind of work he was doing?
FS: I really don't remember for sure. But digging I think the trenches.
JF: You had children at this time?
FS: Yes. I had a little boy. He was 10 years old. And we left for Auschwitz.
JF: You had him with you then as a young child during these early years of the war...
FS: Yes.
JF: ...when the Hungarian occupation existed?
FS: Yes.
JF: Can you tell me anything more about those years and how the Hungarians treated you?
FS: Yes they-- he went to school and...
JF: What kind of school was he going to?
FS: Hungarian.
JF: Hungarian school.
FS: Yes.
JF: And what was his treatment like?
FS: This, the Hungarian teachers were very antisemitic. So, they wanted them to write on Shabbos and I didn't want to let him do it, so I took him out from this school, and I did send him to my father's place. There was still a little more lenient, and he went there to school then.
JF: Your father's place meaning?
FS: Meaning Malá Berezná, Kisberezna [Hungarian name of the same town].
JF: The town itself.
FS: The town itself, yeah.
JF: And the schools there were not being run by Hungarians?
FS: Yes, they were, but there were all kinds of teachers.
JF: I see.
FS: And the teacher in our place was terrible. And that what it was at home.
JF: So he went and lived with your parents?
FS: Yeah, during the school year.
JF: Did the nature of the non-Jewish people in your town change after the Hungarian occupation?

FS: Yes. Yes. People owed me money. You know, in Europe, they didn't have money right away to pay, so they paid slowly after the merchandise what they bought and they owed me a lot of money and they used to pay every fifteenth of the month and every first of the month. As soon as the Hungarians came in, they stopped paying. And they never paid me after that, never, because they knew what's going on already. That Hitler will come and so they didn't think of paying the debts for the Jewish people.

JF: Was their personal interaction different with you, also? Did they stop talking to you? Was their attitude different towards you? Did you pick up anything else?

FS: Yes, yes. Because when I asked for the money so they said they wouldn't pay. And it was decent people before. Because...

JF: Was there any time when you were helped by any of the non-Jewish families in your town during those years?

FS: No, we didn't need any help then. Till we were home, we didn't need any help.

JF: You were living on savings?

FS: On the savings, yes.

JF: And your parents and the rest of your family?

FS: My, my parents, before we, we left, before they took us, the Passover, no the Passover before, they came to live with me in my town. They left everything there and they came to live with us because it, it was-- we wanted to be together. We saw already what's going on so we thought what, what will happen to us it should happen to everybody together.

JF: When was this that they came to live with you?

FS: That was in the beginning of '44.

JF: The beginning of '44. In those first years then in the early '40s, were you able to continue to have your religious practice?

FS: Yes, because this they didn't bother to, to disturb, the religious practices, because we mostly people had it in, in this, in this synagogue and at home.

JF: The synagogue was not disturbed in any way?

FS: No.

JF: And the *kehillah* was able to function?

FS: Yes.

JF: And the people who were taken away were the young men?

FS: The younger men, yes.

JF: Who were taken to the labor camps?

FS: The labor camps, yeah.

JF: The women and the children were left alone, at that point?

FS: Yes.

JF: And the people in the town were, were not physically harassed? Or did that happen also?

FS: Oh, yeah, yes.

JF: In what way? Can you tell me?

FS: They, they made searches in the house.

JF: Searches for what?

FS: For, for merchandise. For all kind of, of things. For instance, when they closed down my store, I did hid merchandise. So, they came a few times to look for it. And but, there were rich people who, whom the, the police, their secret police, they wanted their money so they took them in and they interrogated them, and beat them to, to take out from them some money. I had a cousin he was a very, very rich man, and they took him in and his wife made arrangements to pay out, they should let him go. And she was supposed to bring the money Monday and Friday he was dead already before. They didn't think that they will kill him, but he probably had, a, a weak heart and when they hit him, hit him, so he just died.

JF: They beat him?

FS: They beat him, yeah. And so that she couldn't do anything, even so she wanted to take 25,000 *tengers* [phonetic] then for, for his release. Another man whom I knew very well, Hershkowitz was his name. He, he was a watchmaker in the jewelry business. So him they kept and they beat him so, that he got mixed up. He did to himself things what it was just terrible and he died there, in the, where they kept him.

JF: Did anyone that you know or any member of your family try to leave?

FS: Not then. Then we still hoped that we, we won't be-- we didn't have-- we couldn't leave because we were surrounded all over, already where Hitler was in. So, we really didn't have any chance to leave.

JF: There was no one who was able to buy their way out or attempted to get out another way?

FS: Yes, one of my cousins. He left, but before the Hungarian occupied us.

JF: I see.

FS: So, he, he left for England to, I don't know what kind of crossings, and so, but before we, we got occupied by the Hungarians.

JF: Once the Hungarians were there...

FS: So, it was, it, it was no way, where to leave, unless to, to Budapest and people had their homes still and, and what to eat so we, we couldn't and with small children, where could you go?

JF: Did you get information during those years about what was happening in the rest of Europe?

FS: Not really information but I had a brother in, in Slovakia. And they took the people away there already in '42 so we got a card from Lublin from my sister-in-law, she did write this one card.

JF: What did she say?

FS: She hopes for our safety. That's all she could write, anything. She just hopes that that we will be safe and we never heard about them, any, anymore. They had two children.

JF: Did you hear anything about the children?

FS: Nothing. Lublin, you know.

JF: Yes.

FS: Never heard from them anymore.

JF: At the time that you got the card, did you have any, any idea what Lublin meant?

FS: We knew that they took them away. That what we knew. But afterwards, we didn't hear anything, and we probably imagined what's going on there and when my brother, another brother-in-law of mine, came home from a labor camp, so he told us that, that they took away the whole place with the Jewish people to the woods. They killed them there.

JF: This was from Slovakia?

FS: No.

JF: This was.

FS: This was from Poland.

JF: The, the people from the labor camp were taken?

FS: The, the people were taken to Poland to that labor camps.

JF: Yes.

FS: And, and he, and they released them then back home. Only to go to Auschwitz.

JF: And how did he come back?

FS: They released him then for a time being. Before they took us all together.

JF: I see. How did things change then in 1944?

FS: In 1944, when it was the Passover, the last Passover we were together. And they came to take the names from everyone, everybody.

JF: How did they do that?

FS: Two *Gendarmes* came in, Hungarians, and they said to us they don't know themselves why they are taking the names. But, they probably knew, but they just didn't, they have to write down everybody's name. And then they just right after Passover, a day after Passover, my brother-in-law and my husband came home from the Synagogue, they were there to *daven*, we were still in bed.

JF: Your husband had come home already then from the labor camp?

FS: Yes. So, they, they came home and they said, "Get up, they are taking us."

JF: This is after, right after Passover in 1944.

FS: A day after Passover.

JF: 1944?

FS: Yes.

JF: Yes.

FS: And so, we just got up. We didn't know what, what to take, what not to take because we got excited, and we didn't know what really what to do.

JF: Did you have any idea where they were taking you?

FS: No, no idea. A day before, they bombed Budapest, no Prussia, and they said-- they did it themselves, the Germans. But they said the Americans did it, and then for an excuse they told, they told us that they will kill 20,000 Jews because of this. So we thought we are the first martyrs to go for the...

Tape one, side two:

JF: This is tape one, side two of an interview with Mrs. Fanny Schwartz. At this point, you were in the town of...

FS: Berecin.

JF: Yes. Can you tell me then what happened?

FS: So, we, we prepared to leave. And the, the *gendarme* came and took us.

JF: They told you at night?

FS: No, that was already in the morning.

JF: And how long did you have to get ready to go?

FS: Oh, half an hour, nothing more. They came right away and they took us and we marched to the station. They took us with the train to Ungvar.

JS: And what, how do you spell that?

FS: U-M-G-V-A-R.

JS: And what kind of train was that?

FS: This was a regular train.

JS: A regular train?

FS: Yes. And in Ungvar, they put us in a ghetto.

JS: The ghetto was in Ungvar?

FS: Yes. It, the ghetto, it was a brick factory where they made bricks of buildings.

JS: And how long were you there?

FS: We were there till after Shavous.

JS: And what kind of experience did you have in this ghetto?

FS: Terrible.

JS: Can you describe it to me?

FS: On the floor we had to lay.

JS: You slept on the floor?

FS: Slept on the -- in the -- it was only, only some kind of a roof, but open, it was cold, terrible. People didn't have, didn't bring themselves covers because they didn't have the time to pack and to, to carry they just could carry what they could carry on themselves. And the...

JF: Were you working there or were you just detained?

FS: They took the young people outside in the city to work. What was the work? Where they took the Jewish people out of the houses, they went there and packed stuff for the Germans to deliver to Germany.

JF: Were you, were you involved in that?

FS: Yes.

JF: Who was overseeing this work?

FS: The Hungarians.

JF: The Hungarians.

FS: The police.

JF: And what kind of treatment did you get from the Hungarian police in this job?

FS: It was all kinds of them, too. When we walked to the station from in our place yet, one of them came with a bayonet and, and hit my father, he shouldn't, because he was slow walking, from the back, he gave him on his shoulder that he should march faster. So, there were all kinds of them too. And the Hungarian people, they were very rough and, and dumb. They listened everything what they were told to do and even more.

JF: Was your husband also one of the people who was working in the city when you were in the camp?

FS: No, the men they didn't take, took girls mostly.

JF: And what about your son?

FS: My son stayed with my mother. We were all together in the ghetto, yet.

JF: When you say all together, this was your parents?

FS: My parents, a sister with my, with two, two children, another sister with a baby and, and two younger sisters, girls.

JF: And your husband.

FS: Yeah and, and my brother-in-law. And a brother of mine, he got stuck in our place because we couldn't travel anymore. So, he was with us, too. My oldest brother.

JF: He was living with you and traveled and went to Ungvar with you.

FS: Yes, to the ghetto. We went together.

JF: What was the food like there?

FS: We had, we had to, to prepare ourselves the food. We didn't get any food to eat. Only what we brought along, so we, we could cook and, and make ourselves.

JF: Could you get additional food in anyway?

FS: No. An uncle of mine was still living in this city in Ungvar outside so he did send in for us some food additional, but in a few days, they took them away, too. They never came back. None of them.

JF: So, the facilities that you were living in, were...

FS: Were just.

JF: ...open rooms where you slept on the floor?

FS: Not rooms. Where they packed the bricks together, so open spaces like, so on the floor, on the floor, dirt, like.

JF: And how did you cook?

FS: You made fires. Outside on, from wood somehow we get it together.

JF: Did anybody try to escape from this ghetto?

FS: They shot them down, even they didn't want to escape. One woman, she wasn't right in her mind. She walked past the sign there, she didn't know, so they shoot her down.

JF: Anything else about that time? In this brick factory? In the ghetto?

FS: So, it -- the situation was so hysterical. No clothes enough to -- we had-- there was cold water, we washed the clothes. But it didn't come out right and bathing was impossible to take a bath. And the, like I say, the food was, wasn't enough even for to keep alive. It started already then.

JF: What happened then?

FS: Then a few days before Shavous, they, they took every day transports to the train and they send them to Auschwitz. We didn't know then where we are going. But we were supposed to go a few days before Shavous.

JF: Transports had been leaving...

FS: Leaving.

JF: ...all along.

FS: All along. All along and somehow we, we managed to hide out this transport because we didn't want to go before the holidays. We wanted to be still in one place during the holidays and so we managed to hide out, and a day after Shavous, they took us.

JF: Were you able to celebrate the holiday in some way?

FS: In some way, that we, we *bentsched* [Yiddish: made a blessing and lit candles] candles and what we had to eat, so we managed to eat like a, like on a holiday, but it wasn't a holiday like it used to be.

JF: And the day after Shavous?

FS: And the day after Shavous, they, they took us off together.

JF: And how did they take you?

FS: They marched us to the, to the station in cattle trains. They pushed us together, maybe 80, 100 people in, in one wagon.

JF: Were you with the rest of your family?

FS: Yeah, with the family we were together then, yet. Yes.

JF: Were you able to taken any of your things with you?

FS: Yes, what we could take from the, from the ghetto, we could, we could take on, on our shoulders and so on.

JF: Can you describe the trip to me?

FS: The trip? It's -- no water, nothing and the children were crying. It was one of one of, the child of our neighbors died in the wagon. She, she took it till Auschwitz.

JF: She took the body with her to Auschwitz?

FS: Yeah. And it was, it was just, you, you didn't have place where to sleep but or even to sit one on another. We were cramped together.

JF: There was no water?
FS: No water, no nothing.
JF: No food.
FS: Only what you had, what you brought with you, so you could use...
JF: And you sat on each other?
FS: Yeah. And if you had to go, you had to go inside because there was, wasn't a place to go outside.
JF: They never stopped the train.
FS: They stopped, but they didn't let us go.
JF: Could you see out of any slats where you were?
FS: Through, through only like little things, like the, the wagons, you know, from, for the cattle. They have some, some little spaces there, but nothing else.
JF: How long were you on the train?
FS: From Tuesday till Thursday. Thursday morning, around 11 o'clock we arrived at Auschwitz. There, then, when we got off, there were Polish workers, Jewish boys, they knew already what's going on there. So, they told us, the kids with the old people, the kids with the old people. We thought it's an order. We didn't know what was going on. So, I told my little boy to go with my mother and my sister had a one-year-old child, so she gave it to, to my mother.
JF: You thought this was an order that the children had to go with the older people?
FS: That the children had to go with the older people so but when we came to a place where the roads were separated so Mengele was standing. Dr. Mengele was standing there, and he said to old people and the, and the children, "This way," the young people, and the other way. So, my sister, when she saw my mother going other way, she wanted to run after her because she was still nursing the baby. And Mengele didn't let her. So, he told us in German, "*die Altehn mit den Kindeen kommen nach mit Wagen.*"
JF: Can you translate that for me?
FS: The old people with the children will come with the wagons after us. They can't walk so far. So, we believed him, and when we came to the place where, where we were staying, we were waiting for days for the old people to come and never saw them, again.
JF: Both of your parents?
FS: Both of my parents, my son, and the men they separated there, too. The younger men, so I never saw my husband anymore, not my brother-in-law and my older sister.
JF: Your older sister?
FS: Older sister, she, somehow she went with the...
JF: With the old people.

FS: She was, she was, she was young still, but she carried a, she carried a cushion, and they thought that she has a child probably so they took her with the old people.

JF: So, she was sent to the side with the older people?

FS: Yes.

JF: Where did they take you?

FS: They took us to Birkenau, and they shave our heads and they took us in a barrack there; it was called Block. This block didn't have no cots, nothing. And we, it was raining cats and dogs and rain fell in. And the earth was wet, muddy and we had to sleep on this without anything.

JF: Who shaved your heads? Were these Germans...

FS: The girls.

JF: ...or Jews?

FS: No. No, Jewish girls. They were there already since '42, it was the Slovak from Slovakia. This girls, who survived, they were very hardened. They were very angry at us, that you let us bring in. Why we went we came in.

JF: They were angry at what?

FS: At us, that, that we didn't do something, like escape or so. But we never know what's going and, we never thought that the Hungarian people will come to it, that they will take us.

JF: They were angry that you had permitted yourselves to be caught?

FS: Yes, because they were there already. We should have known. Nobody knew what was going on, nobody knew.

JF: And you, at this point, were with your sisters?

FS: We were told when they came to take us, that they are taking us to work.

JF: And you believed them.

FS: So we believed it.

JF: You hadn't heard of Auschwitz?

FS: Before, never, no. No.

JF: When, when did it hit you that your parents and your husband and your son would not reappear?

FS: When? When we, when we saw already the, the smoke from the crematoriums go up and then this Slovak girl, told us what's going on. But my cousins from Ungvar came sooner. They came in the nighttime so they, their parents and their, all the people, children they burned alive and they saw the fire burning...

JF: They burned them alive?

FS: ...themselves. Alive, they burned them alive.

JF: How did they burn them alive? In pits?

FS: In pits. In pits.

JF: And they saw it happen?

FS: They saw it happen.
JF: They saw them put into the pits?
FS: Yes, yes.
JF: And they told you of this when you got there. These were girl cousins.
FS: Yeah. These cousins, yeah. And there, in the wagon we had to leave everything. We couldn't take along anything with us. And there they took us in a shower and stripped us of our clothing. Everything. And they gave us a rag after the, the shower to wear. One dress.
JF: A dress.
FS: No underwear, nothing.
JF: Was this a uniform or was it...
FS: No, no.
JF: ...or just an old dress?
FS: No, no, it was just an old dress from some other poor people.
JF: Yes.
FS: The good ones they did send to Germany.
JF: Yes.
FS: The good clothing. But the, the rags they left for, for us.
JF: Did you have any shoes?
FS: The shoes they left us, yeah.
JF: And what about the number. Did you receive a number?
FS: No. Because we were in the C camp. C camp was that they made selections every day and from there, they took the people to work and to, and to the gas chambers. The skinnier ones to the gas chambers, the healthier ones to the, to the work. So at work, where they went there to work, they got the numbers. But we didn't get in the C. We were there for a half a year from, till October.
JF: And what did you do while you were in that C camp then?
FS: They took us out always, for some kind of stone carrying and so, but not really hard, not really work what that you went in every day, you know, only sometimes because this people were only for waiting time or to die or to go to work.
JF: And when you worked you would carry stones?
FS: Yes. Stones -- or-- then some of the people went in the kitchen to work, to carry kettles with the, with the food to give out for the, for the people. And but there, there was selections almost, almost every day.
JF: Were you ever part of those selections? Did you ever come up?
FS: Yes. First once they, they made entlousing, this is, what you know, insects.
JF: An insecticide?
FS: Something like it yeah. So, they took our clothes away everything, and they cooked them there, I don't know.

JF: The delousing.

FS: Yeah, the delousing.

JF: Yes.

FS: So, towards the end, there was, there wasn't left enough dresses to, to give back for every people because they got torn in the, in the process. So, my younger sister, she, you know, you had to, to be aggressive to get a dress. I get, I got somehow. You are there still four sisters together and two nieces. My older sister's two children came with us. So my younger sister, she didn't want her feet to, to hurt so she stayed without a dress. She was naked. So, I gave her my dress because I thought when they will bring dresses, she was still because she wasn't such, she was a young girl and she was afraid to go to because they were hitting each other, you know grabbing and so, so once it was a selection and they took -- they said everybody except the naked and the, and the sick shouldn't go. But they said it's a concert. You know.

JF: A concert.

FS: A concert, yeah. But, but later on, we knew that it was a selection. So my sisters went and they did select my, one of the nieces and one of the sisters, they wanted to take away for work. We didn't want to separate from each other. And, I was staying in the barrack because I didn't, I was naked. And one of my other nieces was sick really, she, she couldn't go. So, when they, they took my sister so she didn't want to go because she didn't want to get separated from us when they made like a curve, by him, and and they took in the selected ones inside. She wanted to go out and one of the girls didn't let her and a German SS came and she slapped her on the face because she wanted to run away. But later on they put them in the, in a barrack. They kept them there for a few weeks, so she did manage to run away then.

JF: She escaped from the barrack.

FS: She escaped from the barracks, yeah.

JF: In other words, the women who were selected to go to the gas chamber were separated and put in the barrack, in a special barracks.

FS: In a special barrack. Yeah. This was a working camp. Working camp really, these people they took but you never knew where they are taking you, because we didn't know, we knew already what's going on inside, but we didn't knew where they are taking these people. And she didn't want to get separated from us, from the other sisters. So she came back with us.

JF: But it turned out those people were taken to the gas chambers?

FS: No, not this ones. But other ones were taken, but I, I knew a lot of people. This ones were two cousins of mine were there so they survived. They went to work someplace. And but they were two young girls, girlfriends of my nieces, they were together in school and they were still with their mother together in the beginning. But once was a selection, and they took away their mother. So the two girls stayed with us, always. Then was a selection, Mengele himself made the selection. And he, he looked at

the nice faces, two, good looking girls, you know. So my nieces, they were, they were young, too, somehow we managed to get all all through, and the two little girls, one of them was a very nice little face, but the other one was very skinny. So, he wanted to separate them. And the, the younger was the better looking, so when she saw that they are taking her sister, she didn't want to stay with us so she went with her. They took her to the gas chambers.

JF: You came up before Mengele yourself?

FS: Yes. Four times, not once.

JF: What was it like?

FS: What was it like? He was selecting the, the like if I say the skinny ones on one side, the other ones on other side. So, when they selected the skinny ones, we knew they are going to the gas chambers, when they selected the, the fatter people, they, they went to work. So, this was in October, they wanted already to liquidate this our camp, so they started to make selections in every barrack. They were how many barracks were there? I think 30.

JF: How many people were in your barrack?

FS: 1,200.

JF: And these women were all sleeping on the floor. There were no cots, no bunks.

FS: No cots, no bunks. It was, they were sleeping on the floor. The first night was just terrible. Just terrible.

JF: Can you describe it?

FS: The--you know, people were separated from children, from grown ups and it was raining, and it was a mud inside and they were crying and they were hollering and one of them always cried out *csendlegen* [Hungarian, phonetic]. That's in Hungarian. "Be quiet, be quiet." And, that was, that was going on all night, all night. The second or the third day, I thought I will get crazy, because it was just mixing in my head. If I, if I would have stayed in this barrack, I wouldn't have been able to, to survive.

JF: What was mixing your head, the noise?

FS: The noises, the the crying, the everything, but I, I don't remember for sure was it the second day or the third day, one of my cousins went looking for relatives. They were there, but I say they saw their their parents burned and she goes in another barracks where there were cots. So, where she found us, she took us to the other barrack.

JF: Was that any problem for you to be moved to another barrack?

FS: It wasn't for us, it wasn't any problem. But there was *Zähl Appell*, you know, they were counting us every morning and every afternoon.

JF: Yes.

FS: So, here were missing people and there were plus. So, they always took the plus away, and we run always back there because we pushed together in the, on the cots, and we, we could at least sleep better, not in the mud.

JF: Did they know who it was?

FS: No.

JF: Who was leaving?

FS: They couldn't tell...

JF: They couldn't tell.

FS: ... because there were so many people without names, without numbers, we were still there without numbers. So, once it was raining cats and dogs, and we were in the bar -- in the block, they were making the *Zähl Appell*, they counted us. Heads, you know. So, it was plus in the barrack, and we want -- we couldn't be all of us in one place on one cot, so one of my nieces was in the last row, the last row in a, on a cot, so when it was plus, they counted us, and we were plus in this place so they took the whole group away there, and, and we couldn't say a word. We saw our niece going, and I thought I, I couldn't wait till the end and I went down right after the *Zähl Appell* and asked the block [unclear] where they took them. So...

JF: What? She hit you? She hit you in the face.

FS: Face. And I don't know, I started looking for her, and I found her in this barrack, in this barrack where, where we were supposed to be.

JF: The original barrack.

FS: The original barrack, so I took her back, again, to us. And...

JF: The woman who hit you, was this a *Kapo*, this was a Jewish woman? Can you tell me about the *Kapos*?

FS: Not all of them were bad. But there were...

JF: It depended on the person.

FS: It depended on the person, yeah.

JF: Were they primarily in charge of...

Tape two, side one:

JF: This is an interview with Mrs. Fanny Schwartz, done by Josey Fisher, April 27, 1981. This is tape two, side one. You were talking a little bit about the Jewish *Kapos* who were in charge of your daily activities.

FS: No. Towards the end -- we were separated a few times when the selections were going on, one sister from the other because we weren't the same build. And, they were looking for different types of people, so once they separated, they, they selected one of my sisters and, no, two of my sisters and, and one niece, and somehow they didn't want to go because they didn't want to be separated. So, the *Lagerälteste* [camp senior], she was a very nice girl.

JF: And this is who?

FS: *Lagerälteste*. She was the main from the, from the whole block there.

JF: And this was a *Kapo*?

FS: She was, she wasn't a *Kapo*, she was the, she was manager, like, from all of them.

JF: And what nationality was she?

FS: She was Jewish. She was Jewish, so she told us that we never will be together because how it will, how long we can hide out, but towards the end, we will be separated. And they, they should go because this is a, a good working camp where they are sending these people. But still we didn't believe it. We, we did stay together still, further.

JF: The woman that you are referring to was a leader.

FS: A leader from this camp.

JF: How did she become leader?

FS: She was from Slovakia, and she, she was more intelligent, not leader in a, she was our leader-like.

JF: The Jews themselves...

FS: The Jews, yeah.

JF: ...decided that she was a leader.

FS: No, somehow, I don't know who, who, who chose her. We weren't there then.

JF: But she was not, she was not a *Kapo*. She was not in...

FS: No, no she wasn't a *Kapo*.

JF: ...contact with the Germans.

FS: She was in contact because through her they ordered everything what she had to do with us. But she was intelligent, fine woman. Magda Hellenger [phonetic] was her name. She was from MichajLovskij, I think.

JF: Did she survive?

FS: This I don't, probably yes. If we did, then probably she, she survived, too. But I never met her after the war.

JF: Who else was in charge of you? Germans, Poles? What other kinds of guards did you come in contact with?

FS: Germans, in the, in the, where we were working. They were, they were German *Wache* [guards], watchmen. They watched us working.

JF: These were men?

FS: These were like officers and lower, soldiers, like and SS, SA, but then, let me start, again, from Auschwitz, how we got to this working camp.

JF: Yes, this was in October?

FS: In October, they started to clean up all the camps, ones to the, to the gas chambers, ones to the working places, so they made, they made selections in every block. There are relatives of ours, three beautiful girls, tall, and they, they were once selected to the, to the gas chamber. But not by Mengele, but by a lower rank officer. And when they came to the gate, they were dressed so their faces showed, so he did send them back. They didn't take them to the gas chambers. When they came back and this selection, we did hide out. Somehow, we managed to hide out. Because of the children, the two nieces of mine.

JF: How old were these nieces?

FS: Thirteen and fourteen.

JF: And how, how did you hide? Where did you go?

FS: In another barrack, where there wasn't selections yet. But somehow, you know, it, it was difficult. It was very difficult. But somehow we managed to, to hide out. And when they came back so they said, they won't never again to be on a selection and they wrong, but they made a mistake because the last selections they went from barrack to barrack. They, they locked up the selected ones and they went further. So, they managed to escape from the first selection.

JF: Who is they?

FS: The, the three girls.

JF: Yes.

FS: And then, when they, when we, we were already selected, somehow they managed to, to come into our barrack where we were locked up. Then it came a rumor it's going to be, again, a selection because people were running.

JF: People were running.

FS: They knew that Germans, that some did hide out. If they would have stayed in this barrack with us, they would have been saved. But when they heard it's going to be, again, a selection they started, they run out again.

JF: You were locked into a barrack...

FS: Into a barrack.

JF: ...after having been selected?

FS: Yes. But they came, and we had already in, in clothes, not naked. We had to run from this barrack, across the street to the other barrack and clothes, we could have run. Because run they knew, they, they could so they would have been saved. But they went back to the, some other barrack and they, they were selected, and they, they took them to the gas chambers.

JF: The selection occurred as you were running?

FS: No. The selection occurred naked in the barracks...

JF: In the barracks.

FS: ...from one side to the other side and the, the skinny ones, again, to, to another place.

JF: Were all the selections done that way?

FS: Yes.

JF: Naked?

FS: Naked.

JF: So they could see how heavy, how healthy you were?

FS: Yeah, yeah. All the selections naked. And then the last selection was when they, when they took us to the place to work. So, we got separated from my, they took me and my youngest sister and other ones stayed, and we couldn't get together any more. So, they took us away from there, from Auschwitz. They put us on a train, and we were going to Schlesiersee.⁴

JF: Can you tell me how to spell that?

FS: S-C-H-L-E-S-I-E-R-S-E-E.

JF: This was in what month?

FS: This was in October.

JF: This was in October of 1944.

FS: End of October. It was after the holidays [unclear].

JF: Before, before we leave your discussion of Auschwitz, did you know of any kind of religious services that were going on in Auschwitz?

FS: Not officially.

JF: Unofficially.

FS: Unofficially, we found a little book, a little *siddur*. So, we just prayed, when we when we had a, a chance but, but nobody knew about it, only among ourselves, who wanted. But officially, there wasn't, in our barrack, not. And but, when it came a fast day, we were fasting. It was *Tisha B'av*, this I remember, and especially, when, when they knew that we had some kind of a -- so they made a better soup. And we put it away, under the bed, under the, under the cot, until the evening, it got sour. So, we didn't have what we...

⁴Schlesiersee - sub-camp of Gross Rosen, in Western Poland. Established in 1940. Major industrial complex. Work being done for Krupp, IG Farben, Daimler Benz. 97 sub-camps. Largest grouping of female prisoners. USHHM.org

JF: Until the evening and then what happened?

FS: It got sour.

JF: It got sour.

FS: The soup. It was a thicker soup, some kind of a different soup than everyday. Every day it was barley and, and water, that's, that's all. Sometimes a little potato inside, but you, you were lucky if you got it in the soup.

JF: How many women do you think were, were able to participate in this fast with this temptation?

FS: Not too many. Because most of them they didn't believe any more. What happened to us, you see, the faith kept me alive. Because if not for this, what I went through after the liberation, I was for 10 years in hospitals. And a lot of people committed suicide in my, in in the hospital where I was. So, what kept me alive was the faith.

JF: Your faith?

FS: Yes. That, that what it was.

JF: Did anybody try to escape from Auschwitz when you were there?

FS: Yes. But we, we didn't know how it happened. We only knew that they, when they escaped that we had to kneel all day long because of this. In *Zähl Appell*, you know, when they counted us and they kneeled us down and we had to kneel all, all day long because of, of this. We heard later on that somebody escaped.

JF: Did they ever find them?

FS: If they escaped entirely, we never knew.

JF: You never knew.

FS: Some of them they probably brought back because it was an impossibility. It was wired, electric wire all around, so how could you escape?

JF: Was there any way of having any contact with the outside world? Any kind of contact with the underground?

FS: Outside world, not from there. But with the men, the men, were maybe over the wire, they were in men's barrack. So, sometimes some girls found their husbands there, or, or some friends they knew. In Auschwitz itself, there was a barrack next to ours, to see. It was a Czech barrack with elderly people still and the children. When we came, and I can't remember for sure, a few weeks later, they, they said that they were clean out this barrack. So, they took the, older people with the children to the gas chambers and, and the younger ones wanted to give up the children, they stayed alive. But so one morning we got up and the barrack was empty. This people they brought from Theresienstadt, you know and there was another barrack with young girls, 12 years to 16, must have been and 200 pregnant women in this barrack.

JF: Two hundred pregnant women?

FS: Pregnant women because they took away the pregnant women. A cousin of mine was pregnant and she, they took her the last minute. She wanted to go in in the

hospital to give birth and this, the last night, they, they took her away to the gas chambers. But it cleared out this whole barrack. They, they separated us from the two nieces from us because they were children, too. And they wanted to put them in this children's barrack. So, the next day I went, and I took them back, 'cause I knew they wouldn't survive without us because what we got the food, so, I tried to give them always more than we ourselves were eating. So, this way a child needs more. And even in other ways, they were still children. So, I took them back to, to our place, and one day, the whole barrack was empty. They took them to the gas chambers.

JF: Both of your nieces.

FS: No, no, no. My nieces were with us.

JF: Oh, I see.

FS: Because I didn't let them stay there in this, this barrack. But all the other children it was, it was, about 1,000 children and 200 pregnant women. They all went to the gas chambers.

JF: These children were about how old, ones who were in the barrack?

FS: From 12 till 16. They...

JF: Young adolescents?

FS: No, yeah, yeah. They, in the beginning, he let them go, Mengele. I mean true and they, he kept them and then, then he just finished them off.

JF: So, your nieces then were kept safe with you?

FS: Yeah. Because we tried to hide them out from the selections, from all the stuff, and, and they are alive, thanks God.

JF: You mentioned before that you had barley and water soup, primarily.

FS: Yeah.

JF: How muc-- what other kinds of food?

FS: And green grass soup because it wasn't spinach with all the stones inside. In the beginning, we couldn't eat it because it was just impossible, you know. And we weren't used to things like this so we didn't eat in the beginning this soups. It was on the beginning that the stones were-- because the grass wasn't washed right, you know, so I don't know what kind of a grass it was because it wasn't spinach. But it was supposed to be spinach.

JF: And how much did you get?

FS: A bowl. A bowl. There in Auschwitz, they gave us one pot, and all of us had to drink from this pot. We didn't have any spoon, any cup, nothing. One pot. So, I bought from another girl who had a little cup for a piece of margarine what we got, I bought the cup. We should be able to separate, everybody should drink a cup, from, from this pot. The big pot, they gave us they gave us, but not to eat separately.

JF: This was how many people then from one pot?

FS: Twelve people.

JF: So, you were able to get a small cup so you could take turns having your soup?

FS: Yeah. Because and like I say, I had to buy it for a piece of bread or for a piece of margarine.

JF: You had how many cups of this soup then a day?

FS: It's -- one cup.

JF: One cup of soup.

FS: Yeah.

JF: And bread?

FS: Evening, they gave us -- it was a, a bread like this probably, square bread, so this was cut in five parts. Five people got -- it was maybe, maybe it was two pounds.

JF: About a two pound loaf?

FS: But it was heavy, you know, it wasn't this, this very heavy bread. So, five people got one. They had pieces, but we were sisters together, so we got one whole bread together and one portion because we were six of us, four sisters and the two nieces.

JF: And you got some margarine?

FS: And, and a piece, a little piece of margarine and sometimes a little jelly. That was, that was all for the daily rations. In the morning, we got a, a tea, it was supposed to be. Bitter, but not, not tea leaves from something, I don't know from what they made. It was a little black. What we mostly we washed our faces with it in the morning because we didn't have water.

JF: Did any of you have any kind of medical care in Auschwitz?

FS: In Auschwitz, no. In Auschwitz, if you had to had medical care they took you to the, to the...

JF: To the gas chambers.

FS: ...gas chamber. No.

JF: Did you get sick, you know.

FS: Yes. Once my younger sister, she didn't survive. She, she fainted during the *Zähl Appell* but, but somehow we managed to survive her and, and she was standing in the *Zähl Appell* there so that he didn't know that she she's sick. But before--then wait a minute, my other sister too fainted. She had the milk from the baby. So she fainted too, once.

JF: And what happened?

FS: So, like I say, the Germans came to count us after we were standing already an hour there, waiting for them, you know, maybe two hours, in the bitter cold, in, in one little dress, nothing on, so she came to it, 'til they came counting.

JF: Can you tell me now about the train that took you to the work camp?

FS: They gave us a half a loaf of bread and...

JF: Each of you?

FS: Yes. And we wanted to stay-- we took two of us, because we thought maybe if it will be plus they will take us back, to my sisters, you know. So we didn't get on the, a coat like a raincoat, a thin one. Because the other people got wool coats on. From our coats, I mean, but we didn't get.

JF: You didn't get a coat?

FS: No because it, it wasn't left enough already on [unclear] and we had to go. So when we came there, it was already started to being cold and it was terrible cold one time. So there we came to Schlesiersee.

JF: How long was this train ride?

FS: I can't remember for sure how long it took us.

JF: Was this also a cattle car?

FS: No. No. I-- you think I remember, I really don't remember but it was something better than a cattle car, I think. And we went-- when we got off the train it was-- we saw written on the place it was Schlesiersee. But we had to walk about five kilometers or maybe more to the place where they took us for work. There-- we were, 2,000 women from Auschwitz, two of my cousins were with us, but somehow there they separated us in two parts. Thousand women went on one place and other thousand to the other place.

JF: Two different work camps?

FS: Yeah, but near each other.

JF: Yes.

FS: But we never saw each other. My cousins were with the other one and we were with the others. I don't know which one was better, but ours was just terrible. We were sleeping on straw. It was like a farm.

JF: In a building or outside?

FS: In a building, but not a, not a building what it was heated. It was like where you keep straw and hay.

JF: A barn?

FS: Like a barn, yeah. So, we were sleeping on the straw and we got everybody one blanket.

JF: Each of you had a blanket.

FS: Yes, but every morning, they took together, they didn't leave the blanket for everybody there, but there were *Stuhldienste*, that was housekeepers like from our people, so they had to take us together and put together and the evening, when we came back from work, they gave us back.

JF: I see.

FS: But one morning, it was, it was so cold that-- and I didn't have a coat, a real coat and I couldn't manage, so what did I do, I took the blanket and I put it under my coat, too. I wrapped myself in under the coat because they shouldn't see that I have a blanket.

JF: You had a thin raincoat.

FS: Yes.

JF: Is that it?

FS: Yeah. So when we came back from work, they knew that they were missing blankets because I wasn't the only one. There were a lot of people who were freezing there. So they told us already that there is searching and if you have a blanket, they would shoot. I didn't care. I thought if I throw away the blanket then I wouldn't have with what to cover myself. The others threw away. A lot of them threw on the way walking, the blankets, but I didn't. And then we came in so they called us. Now I can't remember how many, I think 18 girls we were, we had the blankets. So, first of all they put us face to the wall. It's like they would shoot us down. Then they put us to kneel down, and, and then we didn't get any supper. And we were kneeling there till it was real dark and then one of the officers, two of them came to question the girls.

JF: These were German officers?

FS: German officers. So when, when they questioned the other girls, I didn't hear their response what they said to them. But when they came to me, and questioned me, so I just pulled up my skirt, I didn't have anything, underwear. And I said I am freezing and because of this I took the blanket. So he turned around to the other guy and he said, "*Die Leute müssen Mäntel haben.*" "We will have to get coats." [These people must have coats]. Because he saw that I didn't have anything on. So a few weeks later, we got coats. Warmer coats. But till then, I had to freeze.

JF: And none of you were hurt in any way after that?

FS: No, just we were punished, we didn't get anything to eat, and we were standing in the rain outside.

JF: This was outside that you were.

FS: Outside. Sure, outside and kneeling outside and because of this, because of this, the [unclear]-- I told him why. I don't know what other girls told, told him really. I didn't hear. But then I told him that we that we are naked, we don't have a-- we are freezing, so he, he just turned around and said that we will have to get the coats. And there, there were six girls they, who couldn't go to work about 150 girls were already in the barracks. They, they couldn't work.

JF: What happened to them?

FS: And they in the beginning, they said they would send them back to Auschwitz. But they probably didn't get any trains going back already because it was-- so, they couldn't send them back. They had to keep them there.

JF: Was there any medical care?

FS: Yes, it was a Jewish doctor. But medical care, I had once terrible pains in my back. But, I never experienced. It was from the cold, you know, all day long working in the, in the cold. We were walking, walking three miles every day to work and from work. The snow was high and, and the snow was setting down in the shoes, you

know that you had to, to really work hard to get 'em off. And, and it was cold, so I got terrible pains. So, I went in the first time since I was there to the doctor, to this woman doctor and she gave me a pill, and it got better. I don't know what kind of a pill she gave me. But it, it did get better. But since then, I had trouble with my back. All the time.

JF: The pain was from the cold.

FS: From the cold. Yeah, like I say, we, we weren't dressed for, for outside work, and we were, we were making trenches for tanks to, to fall in, near the Polish and German border.

JF: You were digging trenches.

FS: Digging trenches. Four meter deep in the earth and, and wide it was, it was like this room.

JF: As long as this room which is...

FS: No, it was wide. And it went like this, you see.

JF: About, maybe, maybe 20 feet wide.

FS: Twenty, maybe even more. If, if for instance, from the other side a tank...

Tape two, side two:

JF: This is tape two, side two of an interview with Mrs. Fanny Schwartz on April 27, 1981. These trenches were dug about four meters deep?

FS: Four meters deep.

JF: And about 20 or more feet.

FS: Twenty-five feet wide. And towards the end, we covered them with greens on top.

JF: To camouflage them.

FS: Yeah, to camouflage. So there we were divided in 100 people. Every 100 people had a watchman over him and, and others came to watch us, during the day.

JF: These were Germans.

FS: These were Germans.

JF: Yes.

FS: Yeah. And in the beginning, the earth was frozen, the earth was frozen. We couldn't even make a hole for, for an axe to, to get in. We were banging and banging and we couldn't start anything. So they brought down about 100 Russian prisoners and they dynamited the earth. It should get softer inside so, inside, and we started digging. We were there from October till January 20.

JF: What were your living conditions?

FS: There?

JF: Did it continue living in the barn?

FS: It was better than in Auschwitz. With this respect, that we, everybody had for themselves a, a bowl with a, with a spoon, with a little cup. There we didn't have anything and here is in the beginning, we thought it's heaven on earth when we, we came there. It was still warm. So, and we didn't mind going work, to work so there we-- but the sleeping conditions was terrible. A lot of people got lice because we came home wet. We couldn't take off the, the clothes because it was cold to sleep without the clothes. And so I, myself, my sister, we managed to be together with five, three other girls. There were more, but the three girls were from the same place from where we were. And they were staying in the place, in the kitchen and, and making work inside. So they had it better and so we were sleeping with them.

JF: These three girls were working in the kitchen.

FS: On, on top of the--, in the first row of the straw and so that we didn't get the lice there but the other ones, got 'em. Because conditions were, water wasn't, the pump, what-- was frozen up and you couldn't wash. And, and the little food when we got, if not for this girl, what-- I came back from work, it was a little lamp there so I made. I was sewing a pair of pants for one of the girls who was staying there and she cooked me every day for this, a little water and a potato.

JF: Where did you get the fabric to sew?

FS: She managed to get a coat. Because if you work inside, you, you have always somebody who-- and from this coat, I cut her and the thread we pulled out from the blankets. Yeah. So every evening, when I came after work, I was up till twelve o'clock, till one o'clock in the, in the morning, sewing for her because by hand I had to make it, the pants, and because of this, she gave us a little food, more food. And this what it kept us alive because most of the people got sick and a lot of them died there, but a lot of them. 20 of January, they took us out and they gave everybody a half a bread too and they, they started marching us. Where, we didn't know, where they are taking us. But we knew that probably the Russians are close already, and they want to escape, so they didn't want to let us get liberated there, so they took us along. We, the healthy people, had to carry the sick ones on, I don't know, you know, a *forick* [phonetic], you know, a pushcart-like.

JF: Like a wheelbarrow?

FS: A wheelbarrow, a wheelbarrow, yeah. So, we, we *schlepped* [Yiddish: pulled] them two or three days along with the transport. After this...

JF: You were, you were walking?

FS: Walking. Walking. No rest, 30 kilometers daily, and in the evenings, they, they on the places we passed, they put us in mostly in barns, all night, but we didn't have place, where to, to stand even. It was just pushed together like herrings. But the third day, we had to take them in a wood, a wooden place and they shot them off, the sick girls. But one, one was still alive but was so sick that she didn't know anymore, so they buried her alive there, in the woods.

JF: They buried the girls that they shot?

FS: Yeah.

JF: Who dug the grave?

FS: The graves probably we did. I can't remember for sure, probably we did, our people did it. I didn't, so I don't, I don't remember for sure.

JF: Did they give you any more food? Or just the original?

FS: Nothing. That's just ...

JF: Just the original piece that they could give you when you left?

FS: That's what I, what I say. On, on the way there, we stopped then in places where there are other girls. Grünberg. We stopped there, there was a place where Polish girls were working in factories. About 500 girls and they had a very good place, but bedbugs. So, they took them out from their places and we slept over in their cots, but the bedbugs were terrible. But, they had still their own clothes. And what did they do? They took them with us along, to march.

JF: About how many people?

FS: About 500 girls.

JF: And how many people were left in your group?

FS: In my group, we, we came together the last night, when we the 2000 of us, I mean...

JF: Oh, the 2000 were reunited.

FS: The 2000, united, yeah. Then I saw the last time my cousins. Because we were walking somehow like this and we met. So, but this was the last time, they died in Bergen-Belsen in Germany, in typhus.

JF: From typhus?

FS: From typhus, yeah. This what I heard later on.

JF: But they originally started out on the march?

FS: Oh, yeah, they originally started out on the march and they went probably to Bergen-Belsen, but we dropped out. I did hide on the way because I couldn't march any longer, and I knew if I won't be able to march, then they would shoot me like they shot, shot everybody. Everybody who couldn't march, who fell down, they shot them on the spot. They didn't, they didn't care even taking with them later on, to, to a room, place or something. They shot them on the, on the spot. So I knew I got [unclear] my foot on the way and I had terrible pains. The night before I did hide, and I have to go back because we stopped on other places yet, and we stopped in Kristienstadt.

JF: The first place that you stopped was Grünberg?

FS: Grünberg.

JF: How do you spell that one, about? Approximately?

FS: G-R-U-N-B-E-R-G.

JF: And then Kristienstadt.

FS: K-R-I-S-T-I-E-N-S-T-A-D-T. There in Kristienstadt, we got food in, in the barracks there. Girls were working there, too. They were filing root. And in, in the place where we were standing, is staying, there came in a girl and asked for Smalleran [phonetic]. That's a town where I had an aunt living, if there is among us from there. And then I said to her "Who are you, from there?" And she is telling me she was my cousin's daughter. When I heard she says, "Freda, you are the one." And then when I said, "Hannah, you are"-- we couldn't recognize each other, how we looked. But she ran out and she, she cooked a potato there, and she brought in, and she saved our lives really because we were so out-hungered that it was just terrible. But the girls from Grünberg who came along with us, 500 girls, they saw us how we looked, we were run down terribly, so they were afraid that they were have the same fate. So six of the girls, they, they weren't smart enough, they should have counted us a few days not right away, I don't know was it the next day or the day after, we had rest in a wood, but the trees were very not, not together. You could see through, you know.

JF: It was an open...

FS: Yeah, like openings, yeah and they started running in the daytime. They brought them back, they hit 'em, they beat 'em up, and then they shoot them. And they

were beautiful, healthy girls. Six of them. So and then we started going further till we came to Bautzen was before that, yes, yes.

JF: B-A-U-T-Z-E-N⁵.

FS: There, I can't recall how it was. No. It wasn't Bautzen yet because on the way, in some other places we, they-- now I know they took us on wagons, because I couldn't walk anymore. I think in Königsberg, Königsberg we stopped off and it was so that they will take us in the hospital.

JF: In Königsberg.

FS: In Königsberg, but when the *Bürgermeister* their, their mayor saw us, and he knew that we are Jewish, he didn't want to have us there, so he took a horse and a wagon and a driver. He put us on the wagon and did send us further. This driver put us out in a place what I don't know the name of it. But it was an inn and he put us in the snow outside on the floor and he went back. And he-- no, this was already after Bautzen. It was already after Bautzen. Because we had already a piece of paper that we are Jewish to take along.

JF: Where did you get that piece of paper?

FS: In Bautzen.

JF: Who gave you that?

FS: In Bautzen when we arrived in Bautzen in the forenoon our transport--, I didn't, I didn't, I really should have started differently...

JF: That's okay. That's okay.

FS: ...because when my foot got frozen, I couldn't walk further, and I knew if I wouldn't walk further, then, then they will shoot me.

JF: Yes.

FS: And I was still with my sisters together so they drove us in overnight in a place a lumberyard. It was a lumberyard. The place I don't know the name of the place, but it was a lumberyard and there was a box, what in Europe they used to keep flour in the stores, with separate holdings, three holdings and this was empty, in this place where we were overnight. So, in the nighttime, I crawled in in one of this, in these boxes and I thought my sister should go further because she could still walk and I didn't want risk her. I didn't know what would happen to me if they find me. So she started to cry and she will carry me. How can you carry me, if you can't walk by yourself? So, she said "If they will kill you, let them kill me, too." And she stayed with me in the other part of the box. And we covered up the things and in the morning, the transport left and 10 of our girls came back with the German woman, to clean up the place because everybody went there, when you have to go. And they left then and we are sitting there all day in, in this boxes, and in the evening, workers were coming and going out, but nobody bothered to look at up, and in the evening, when the workers left, my sister got out of the box and she

⁵Bautzen: subcamp of Gross-Rosen. www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

saw in the cellar running water. So she took a bottle from there and she brought up the water. In another place from what we did live through then, in another barn, we found a sack of not barley and not wheat, but the, the other in Europe, we used to say corn, but here is corn different. It is another thing. But it was some kind of a grain, than the...

JF: Oats

FS: Maybe oats, maybe. Anyway, everybody took a little part what we had. So we organized this and this we ate every day one spoonful raw and this, this kept us alive. So this we had still a little bit left there in the box, inside where we were sitting. And so we were there for four days and four nights.

JF: How long had you been on the, on this march before you left it?

FS: On this march, 20 of January and 17 of February we arrived in hospital, finally.

JF: This was, you had been walking.

FS: This was almost a month.

JF: Almost a month that you had been walking?

FS: Yes.

JF: Until you separated from the group which was after...

FS: This was then, I think, two weeks I was with the transport.

JF: Two weeks you were actually walking with the transport.

FS: With the transport, yeah. And then I stayed there with my sister. And...

JF: This is after Königsberg or before?

FS: Before.

JF: Before, so it was after Kristienstadt?

FS: This was in, in it was before Bautzen, yet.

JF: It was before.

FS: Before Bautzen.

JF: After Kristienstadt?

FS: After Kristienstadt, yeah. And yeah. After Kristienstadt, we were stopping off in places like in smaller places, they, they took us and they thought they would take us to the transport because they knew when the transport passed through.

JF: They were trying to link up with the, with one of the trains.

FS: They didn't want to kill us their selves so they thought, the commander from the transport, our transport will, will do it, will do the job. So they took us once we were overnight in a prison, and then the second day, they put us on a wagon what they delivered milk. And I was so thirsty so I asked the man who was driving us, if I could have a little from, it wasn't milk, it was left over from the cheeses, you know, the water from the cheese.

JF: The whey.

FS: Yes. So I was thirsty, and I drank. And I got the diarrhea, don't ask, after this. It was just terrible. And here I couldn't walk already because my foot was, was

frozen and was-- how I was sitting in the, in the box. I was like this so the whole knee got swollen up, the pain came up here and I couldn't stretch anymore my foot. So, then in, in other places, small places, they put us overnight and the last day, in the morning, our transport left, and in the evening, we arrived there, in the same place. This was our luck.

JF: This-- clarify this for me. You had stayed in this box...

FS: In this box for four nights...

JF: ...four nights.

FS: ...and four, and four days.

JF: And then where did you go?

FS: Then it was a Saturday afternoon, and we heard, we thought we can't live longer without food so a man came in, in the, in this place, an elderly man, we were looking through the thing so I thought maybe he will help us somehow. So I pushed open the cover from the box, and I told him. I asked, he, he couldn't bring us something to eat, and he shouldn't tell anybody, and when my feet will get better, I will go after the transport is what I told him. So he went back and he brought two little pieces of bread for us, and he said, "*Ich kann das nicht für mich alleine behalten, Ich muss es meiner Cheffin melden.*"

JF: Which means?

FS: I can't keep it for myself. I have to, to tell it to my boss, woman boss. So I ask and how is your woman boss, will she understand our situation? Yes, she is a good woman. She was good. They left us, they let us sleep over still in the box overnight, and the next day, I heard men come straight to the box, and it was, it was luckily it wasn't SS. It was the, the plain soldiers and the officers.

JF: German soldiers?

FS: German soldiers, and officer, an officer probably. And "*Raus!*" Out! I wanted get up and crawl out, I couldn't. I didn't have the strength any more. So, my sister wanted to come and help me so they hit her, with a rubber thing. And they didn't let her help me so somehow, I managed to crawl out. So they started questioning us, from what we did live, on what we lived, and they knew that a transport left already four days. They thought the woman who came in, with the girls to clean up, that she managed to, to give us food, you know. So they brought her in. She was pale like a sheet and asked her, "Did you know that they are here?" She said, "No." She was so scared I'm telling you.

JF: This was a German woman?

FS: A German woman. Yeah. And then they left us and they said, not to run away. I thought to myself if I could have run, I wouldn't have stayed that you should catch me. But, but I would have run in the nighttime, but I couldn't, couldn't walk anymore. So, there were a lot of French workers who worked in this lumberyard. But as prisoners. No. How do you call it the other ones? Prisoners. Not prisoners.

JF: Laborers.

FS: No prisoners, probably. Yeah, they, they called them, the soldiers probably and they kept them for, for work there. And they did get from home packages and when they heard that, women probably told them that, that we are there, so they started coming to the window and giving us food. Through the window, you know, what they had. And till they came back, the soldier, with another civilian man, and they brought us some kind of a soup. It was bitter like the gall. We ate already from this, and we couldn't eat anyway because our stomach was like together a piece of bread, we couldn't eat more than the stomach took us. Because when, you see, when we left the place where we were walking so I managed to, to take along-- because there were laying on the floor, stale bread. So somehow I managed to take, I couldn't carry because I didn't have the strength to carry the, the bread. So I wanted to eat how much I could, I couldn't. I had to drop the bread on the floor because I didn't have the strength to carry it. And there, now I remember they put us on the wagon and they wanted us to go after the-- but in every...

JF: Wait, excuse me. Who put you on the wagon? The French?

FS: No, not the French. The Germans.

JF: The Germans.

FS: But like I say, if they would have been SS, they would have shot us right on the spot.

JF: I see.

FS: But they were civilians and, and a regular officer. So they put us on the wagon, they didn't want to bother with us, and they sent us after our transport.

JF: Who was driving the wagon?

FS: A Ukrainian worker who was working there, but he came by himself there. Mostly the Ukrainians they came to work there and help for the Germans, I guess. Because I still managed to talk to him in Ukrainian so, so this way I knew who he was. And in another-- he took us to another place, there they changed again, horses and wagon and then again, on the way we found other girls who hide, who hid. Two of them were from Kopisch. Two of them from Kisvarda and two Polish girls.

JF: Did they come out of hiding when they saw you on the wagon?

FS: They came out after probably the transport left so the people found them there, the same way as they found us so they put us together on the wagon.

JF: I see.

FS: And they did transport us after, after the transport. When we arrived in Bautzen, Bautzen was in the forenoon, our transport left and we came late in the afternoon there. The farmer who was, it was on a farm, they put us on the straw there in the barn again. The farmer thought to himself why should he give a horse and wagon to take us to the transport. There's, there was coming another transport in the evening so, so he will get us to the, to the other commandment, commander and he will manage to, to do to us what the other one did. This way we were lying, the two girls from Kisvarda

were very, very sick already. They didn't know what they are doing already and, me too, only that I, that I, I was by my senses yet but, I couldn't walk. So a woman came in to get at the eggs in the, in the thing and I asked for a little water. She didn't bring us. She didn't care a thing about and, she saw there people lying on the straw, dying, and she didn't care a little water, she didn't bring us in.

JF: This was a German woman?

FS: German woman, yeah, sure. And in the evening came another transport, with healthy girls, about 500, and when their commander was a human being already. If he couldn't feed them so they let them go to organize and places to go in a house, so you got a carrots, you got anything what had so they kept alive. When the *Lagerälteste* [block oldest] saw us, she was a Jewish woman, too, a Polish so she just hid...

Tape three, side one:

JF: This is tape two, I'm sorry, tape three, side one at an interview with Mrs. Fanny Schwartz with Josey Fisher on April 27, 1981. Could, could you tell me what happened with the Jewish leader?

FS: The, the leader from another camp came in and saw us lying there on the floor so she just hit together her hands and said "*Kinder was mach mit euch. Einen Wagen krieg Ich nicht.*"

JF: Which means?

FS: Which means, "Children, what, what will I do with you? A wagon I wouldn't get. [conclusion of comment in German]. My people are all healthy, they can, they can walk." And so I started begging her she should take along us with them because I knew if we would come to our transport then we are not alive. She went back to the, to her commander, and she talked it over, and they took us next day, there to a hospital but...

JF: This is in, in Bautzen?

FS: In Bautzen. But in the hospital, they saw the two girls, they didn't want to take us because they had the typhus, probably.

JF: The girls had typhus.

FS: Yeah. And they didn't want-- so they, they just bandaged my foot because my foot started running already pus. I had full of pus and I had...

JF: It was running pus?

FS: Pus, yeah. I, I had, I had pains I can't tell you what kind of pains I had. So they bandaged and they did send us back. So this commander did write a note, a piece of paper, and they took it a wagon, a horse and wagon and on the piece of paper was written this, they are Jewish people, take them from place to place and feed them. This commander that did write on this piece-- how do I know it? When we arrived to Königsberg, with this, with this wagon-- we were on other places, too, it's a long story to tell, but in Königsberg, I remember he told us they would take us there in the hospital. When the mayor saw us he didn't want to have anything it was, already almost dark. He took right away a, a horse and wagon and put us on another wagon and send us further.

JF: Who, who was together, at this point?

FS: At this point, we were already six.

JF: You and your sister.

FS: And, and the two girls from Kopisch and...

JF: The two girls that had typhus?

FS: Yeah from Kisvarda. And the two Polish girls run away. I don't know what happened to them. But, they were warning us, there in Bautzen, if somebody will run away they will get punished so and so, but they, they will kill us is what they said.

But the two girls didn't bother and they did run away. If they managed to escape, I am glad for them. Because it was really a terrible situation and if maybe if I would have been able to run, I would have run, too. But I, I wasn't able and other ones were sick, too.

JF: Who was in charge of you on this wagon?

FS: Only the driver. So the driver had this piece of paper and this driver from Königsberg brought us to another place, what I don't know the name of the place, but it was an inn. He didn't put us inside inn, but outside on the snow. He put us down, he gave me the piece of paper and I knew how to read it so I, I saw what was written in it. And we, we were laying there outside. Then an officer came outside with a gold star and he asked us what, what we are. We didn't say that we are *Häftlinger, Gefangene* [Ger.: prisoners] like prisoners. We were, we not from Auschwitz. We wanted to, you know, escape so we just said that we came from Hungary because the Russians came in so we left, and we are now sick people.

JF: You were refugees.

FS: Refugees, that's what it is. I said that we are refugees. But later on came-- he took the Yugoslavian prisoners that they should carry us inside. It was cold outside and every movement I had terrible pains. I would have rather stayed in place there then to carry me. So going inside he asked what kind of sicknesses we have. He was a doctor. And, and he-- so I told him I had, all of us have the diarrhea, and then I have frozen my foot and I have terrible pains and it has to be bandaged, I didn't have with what to bandage, I didn't have a rag even. So he said he will, he will do it. But it didn't take 10 minutes. He gave us cold tablets for all of us and he wanted to, to bandage my, my foot. But it didn't take 10 minutes another officer came with a silver star. He was lower than this one. And he asked for the paper, for the piece of paper. They probably phoned them that, that we are there and so and so, so when he read the piece of paper and he saw that we are Jewish, so he ran out with a red face and in a few minutes, he managed to put together a wagon with horses, and carry us out and, and sent another guard with us already [unclear]. And there-- but carrying us out, the officer with the gold star was standing in the door and gave me in my mouth nobody should see two tablets to swallow, I shouldn't have so much pain. Because I didn't have-- so this helped me a little bit. And then they, they took-- wait a minute, there was another German man who had a wag-- a car like a small station wagon like and, and we didn't fit in all of us on the, on the horse wagon so the healthier ones went with the horse wagon and he took the two sick girls and me on his car and they took us to Schandau.

JF: How do you spell that?

FS: Schandau. S-C-H-A-N-D-A-U.

JF: This is in Germany?

FS: This is in Germany still. And they put us there in a big garage, it was cold and terrible overnight. In the morning, some people came, black suits with carriers they took us to a boat. To the water to a boat.

JF: What water was this?

FS: The Elbe, I suppose, but I am not positive. You know I was there in the middle, I couldn't ask because we couldn't open our mouth to ask any questions. So I really-- but I think it was the Elbe. And they took us on this boat to Pirna. About two hours, three hours we were on the boat, I can't recall for sure.

JF: And the name, how do you spell that?

FS: Pirna. P-I-R-N-A. There they took us in an, in an inn, too. They put us down there and I was very sick and the two other girls too, but I had terrible pains. So two male nurses came with a wagon, and they took me on the wagon and my sister didn't want to let me go where she would have stayed there, we would have been together. But the way she didn't want to be separated from me so she came running after me, and they took me to a hospital in Pirna there. So when they went in to say that they have a sick person, they came out and asked me what kind of nationality I am. So I said, "Hungarian." So they went in and they came back and they said one to one another, "*Das ist eine Schweinerie. Man shaut sich den Kranken gar nicht an und man schickt die weg nur weil sie keine National Deutsch ist*".

JF: Which means?

FS: Which means. "It's a piggish thing. They don't look even at the sick person. They sent her back only because she is not a national, German nationality." This was, later on I got to know that this was a hospital with brown nurses they, they were the real nurse. So, they didn't know that I'm Jewish yet, but they, but they didn't let me in because I, I wasn't German. So they, so I begged them to take me to a Red Cross maybe because the foot should be bandaged because I have terrible pains, and they took me to a Lazarette [It.: a hospital treating contagious disease]. And they put me there in, in a white bed that I didn't see since I left my home.

JF: This was where?

FS: This was in Pirna.

JF: In Pirna. A Red Cross hospital?

FS: Yes.

JF: Was you sister with you then?

FS: She was with me, but she said she couldn't see my things so she said to the nurse, "She is healthy, only they should keep me there." But they said they can't keep me long because this is at Dushkan's [phonetic] Lazerette. It's only for, for one or two days, they can keep sick people, but they will transfer me someplace. And, they, in the evening came an ambulance, took me and didn't want to take my sister because she said she's healthy. And they went back there to the place, and they took the other girls, all of them, and they took us to Heidenau.

JF: Which is H-E-I-D-E-N-A-U.

FS: Yes.

JF: So they took all of you except your sister?

FS: Except my sister, yeah. And there they put us in a barrack, but it was for foreigners. People were working there in Germany, in Dresden, it was 14 kilometers from Dresden. In Dresden, there were a lot of camps, foreigners working, like, Gentiles. I don't, I don't know there were Jewish people, too, but this was gentile foreigners, for them they built a separate barrack near the hospital and they had separate nurses, separate everything. So there was one room emptied out only I think one Polish woman was left there in the room, and we were placed in this one room, and we were staying there. So the first day, they didn't know that we are Jewish. But in a few days, somehow this, this paper came to, to somebody's hands and the doctor and the main nurse knew about it. So and one of the nurses was an Italian. So she came in and she said, "Children, *Ihr seid ja Juden*. You are Jewish." So we got scared, what can we do? What will happen will happen. So we asked her, "What will happen to us?" So she said, "Our doctor is a good man," and he probably will keep us. But she wasn't sure yet. And this was when that they start-- we were, we were there in this barrack with bedbugs. I didn't sleep. I don't know how I managed to be there three months without any sleep. They found me at probably I was more, more [unclear] to it because the, the Polish woman was sleeping next to me, and I asked the girls to leave the light on because in the light they, they are not crawling as much as in the dark. So I saw on her face crawling a bug, and I asked her the next day, "Do you feel them? Do they bite?" "Nyet" she said, "No." So, we were there, the doctor came in once in three weeks to, to examine us.

JF: Who was guarding you at this point?

FS: Nobody.

JF: Nobody.

FS: Nobody knew in the hospital that we are Jewish. Only the doctor and the two nurses. Doctor knew what's going on. He was in the Party, Partei, in the Nazi party. And so he wanted to save his life. He knew if he will save us, he will save his life.

JF: I see.

FS: And that what it was later on, when the Russians came. So, but the nurse was a really beast even so, she was a, dia, dia, I forgot already, diagnition [phonetic] that's that, you know, the religious nurses. But I had so much pain in my foot that I couldn't leave this way or this way, so I took the, the cover for myself, and I rolled it and I put it under my knee and when she saw it, she, she said I shouldn't do it because I making something, you know, it's against the rules. But she could have given me a sedative like she gave me after the liberation. She knew that I have pains, but she didn't.

JF: She could have given you a pill?

FS: A pill. I never got a pill, and she knew I had, when she tore up every. She, she did. She tore up everything gas from the open wound and put on a new one. [Mrs.

Schwartz is probably referring to gauze]. But I had pains I can't tell you. And, and she never give me anything in tablet form. Anything. Maybe they didn't have enough then I don't know. But they kept it for the German people. Anyway, we were, we were there already a few weeks. The two, the two healthier, the two girls from Kisvarda, one of them died Monday morning, we came in Saturday evening in the hospital, one of them died Monday morning and the other one died Monday afternoon there. So they are buried there in someplace. After the liberation, I went to see but, I don't remember if I saw the grave or not. Anyway when I came...

JF: You arrived at this hospital you said in February.

FS: February 17, I was there for two years.

JF: You were in this hospital in Heidenau...

FS: Heidenau.

JF: ... for two years. After the February 17 arrival.

FS: Yes, but I got liberated 8 of May. So this nurse, took me to the doctor, because when she saw that it started a little bit healing, the skin started growing back, so she took me to the, to the doctor because the doctor didn't come every day. So the doctor told her to stretch my feet, because, I'm telling you, then my feet was, was like this, it was one knot, I couldn't stretch it anymore. So he told her to st-- because the doctor told me after the liberation that he thought when they brought me in that the foot had, had to be amputated. That's why he left me lay just like that without stretching it right away. He thought it has to be taken up. But, when they saw that it started to heal a little bit then he told her to stretch it. She started to stretch it, but I saw stars in the heaven for pain. It was just terrible pain, and I was crying. So she, she said to me, "*Sie werden mir noch dankbar sein dafür.*" "You will be thankful for me that I--". And that's the truth, because if it, if I had stayed with the foot like this, I would have never been able to walk. But still and all she could have, she could have given me some pain killers. At least. Afterwards, the, the two girls, like I said, were a little bit more healthy. Oh, there was another girl, since she, she was very sick, too. So we two couldn't leave the hospital. '*Die zwei können schon verlassen das Krankenhaus.*' [Ger.: These two can leave the hospital]. So the doctor said '*Na Ja. Die wollen doch zusammen gehen.*' [Ger.: "Yes, they want to go together."] So she said, '*Aber mir wirds noch lang gedauert.*' [Ger.: "But, me, it will still take long."] "By me, it will take too long to heal my feet." So, like, we can't keep them so long. So, the doctor said '*Die sind noch unterernährt.*' [Ger.: "They are still undernourished."] "We will feed them." And this way he managed-- he knew what's going on and any day we will get liberated. And if he would let them go then would have any part of the [unclear]. And, so he, he talked her out of it. He couldn't be open because everybody was watched by Hitler here. He couldn't say no, I want them to be here, something like. So one of the girls was very afraid that they won't let her go later on because, it took three months until we got liberated. So she faked an appendix. But, they checked her out and they saw that it's nothing. So they didn't do anything to her.

So the doctor told her she shouldn't do this. Anyway, we were together until the liberation. The Russians came in, and then Jewish doctor. A soldier came in and found us there, a Jewish, Russian soldier so he started to ask us about how, how it was, what was going on. So we told him everything and we told him about the hospital, too. How the nurse wanted to get rid of the girls and the doctor kept us back. He really wanted to be the doctor to save us for three months. It was a nice thing of him. So the soldier asked us, "Where is the nurse?" And I knew she, she was there. I knew I will have to stay in the hospital. How will it be there with the nurse, because he said, "I will kill her like a dog." And the other girls wanted to tell him where she is. I kept them back and I said 'No, she, she left,' because before the Russians come in, a lot of people left for the American zone, you know.

JF: Yes.

FS: They didn't mind being liberated by the Russians but they went there. So he believed me. But after the, the liberation, you know, before, I didn't have any other choice. I ate what, what they gave me. But after the liberation, I wanted to, I didn't want to eat meat, so I asked for, instead for milk and eggs. They should give me. They took out the meat, but they never gave me the milk and the eggs.

JF: The Russians then were in control of...

FS: No, no. The Russians were three weeks in the hospital. Then we had food enough because the Russian soldier did send us from the, from their kitchen the food.

JF: Yes.

FS: But after three weeks, they left and the Germans were in charge?

JF: The Germans were in charge?

FS: Yeah and this nurse was in charge. So I, I was hungry after the, after the liberation more than before because you see, I started slowly by slowly eating. In the beginning you couldn't eat everything what they gave us so the bread we dried out and we kept it hidden. But afterwards, the stomach, you know, the stomach was so shrunk that, that we couldn't eat really. And, and afterwards, slowly by slowly my stomach started getting bigger and later on, a few months later, I could have eaten a [unclear] and, and I wasn't satisfied. I never was satisfied. [unclear].

JF: You never could have enough food?

FS: No. No.

JF: Did you get adequate food after that time?

FS: After?

JF: After this period of adjusting to eating?

FS: After, after I came to Berlin then I had already, it wasn't as, it was still as bad, but you know, not as bad as, as it was there.

JF: You were in this hospital for two years?

FS: Yes. I couldn't leave the hospital. Nobody came to tell me. [unclear]

JF: You weren't in contact with your sister?

FS: No because, because, there was, the mail didn't go.

JF: She had no idea where you were?

FS: She knew that she left me in Germany. But she didn't know if I stayed alive or what happened to me and I didn't know what happened to her, you see. And, and but we had here a brother in the United States, both our brothers came in '39 here. So they got in, in touch with him from Czechoslovakia and after a year, mail started going so I didn't write, I didn't know the address. I remembered from home a place where he lived, but I knew we had an uncle there living. I knew they would know my brother but they will know my uncle because he was there already years and years.

JF: This was in the United States?

FS: In the United States. Yes. So I did write a letter to him to my uncle in German that I am there in the hospital and he should let my brother know where I am. And of course, I knew only third part Pennsylvania and the name Moskovitz, Morris Moskovitz, and we thought he had a furniture factory, but he had only a furniture store there. So they found him and I got a card in the forenoon and a letter in the afternoon from my brother right away because he thought [unclear] letters so he wrote just a card and he told me that my sisters are in Czechoslovakia and send me the address there.

JF: This is while you were still in the hospital?

FS: Yes, I was still in the hospital. And then, they-- we, I think, so this was-- we got in touch with my brother and with my sisters. My sisters wanted to come to Germany to this way to come to the United States, but that's why I never wanted to go back there. First of all, the place where I live the Russians, the Russians occupied it. So I wouldn't go back to the Russians. Because I left, after two years in the hospital, I went to Berlin, I didn't know what's going on, you know. I didn't have any papers so I closed myself that I was saved in the back with Russian nurses. This way I thought I [unclear] made myself.

JF: You were in the Russian zone?

FS: I got liberated in Heindenau, that's near Dresden. They were going by to Dresden so we hear the bombs falling.

JF: Dresden?

FS: Dresden, yes. All of the people were leaving the hospital through the cellar, I didn't bother to go. We were there.

JF: And when you went to Berlin, you were still in the Russian zone?

FS: Yes, then it was over. That was in '47, the end of '47. November, I left the hospital. And I missed the day to come to the United States because only who was in Germany in the American zone, the 21 of December, '45 could go to the United States. So I couldn't be there because nobody bothered to take me there, and I couldn't walk by myself. The French people came. There was a Belgian girl, single. They came once right away after the liberation, they wanted to take her but the danger is she was from the bombs she was hurt very, very badly. The doctor told them it would be dangerous to take

her this way so they left her another year, and we were in the same room together, and they came back after a year, again, but nobody came for me. I was the only Jewish person there, and I couldn't even tell the Polish people there, the Gentiles, that I am Jewish because they are so jealous. Even so, they were privileges and one of the women was a terrible one. [unclear] I am Jewish, and we were a year together. Then she told me [unclear] that the priest taught just the opposite. But the priest taught wrong. She was from a small town. Jewish people didn't live in this town, but she never knew personally a Jew, but she was taught in the, in the school by priests and taught that Jewish people are the worst [unclear] and then she got to know me, so she just said she can't understand how people can lie like this.

Tape three, side two:

JF: This is tape three, side two of an interview with Mrs. Fanny Schwartz on April 27, 1981. Did you want to go back to the trip?

FS: To the trip. Yeah, because this is an interesting thing, too.

JF: Yes.

FS: When we were on the way still walking we stopped in, in one place where they were giving us cooked potatoes in the, in the-- and it was on a wagon, but during the night, we slept on dead horses were in this place.

JF: You slept on dead horses?

FS: We didn't see it was dark. We didn't see what, what was there. So we thought it was a person there so we were sleeping there with, with I don't know if it was more, I don't remember or a few of them were there, dead horses, and we were with them together, sleeping on them. And in the morning, they took us outside. It was two doors, it was a big place. Like, I don't know what it was a horse place or something, so outside was a wagon with cooked potatoes. So people were going in one door out and the other door in and in the middle, it was like the people they got one potato, so what was it so some of them started to go back and they got maybe twice till it came to our, to us in the line so I, I couldn't walk anymore to the wagon, but the watchman, the German watchman, knew me as a very good worker from the plant there so he took my bowl, and he went to the wagon and he brought me back a few potatoes, but my sister till she had to go there, she didn't get, she get hit already. It was, I think there was no more potatoes so I, but before I had these potatoes, my face was swollen up from hunger already, you know, so one of the girls said, "You are next." And you know, this potato saved my life then. As soon as I ate a potato, the swelling went down from my face. So I really can't say there are still decent people there, too, because this watchman, if not for him, I wouldn't have any potatoes and I would have died there, right away and now...

JF: You are in Berlin?

FS: Yeah. A day before liberation, came in the nurse and talked to me because I was the oldest from the girls, the other ones were younger, so she just talked to me so the other girls thought in German it sounds just only me, but this is meant for all of us. So they couldn't understand it so good so she said to me, "We will take you to the big hospital." Because they are bombing, they didn't bother to take us before when they bombed there. But they knew already that what's going on that the Russians are there so, so they wanted nothing to let the Russians know that we are in this barrack only so they took us in the big hospital, you know. And the next day, we were liberated there in this hospital.

JF: How were you treated by the Russians who liberated you?

FS: The soldiers were nice. But the doctors didn't even bother to come in and see us. They were ashamed for the German doctor, you know.

JF: Can you explain that? A little bit please?

FS: I don't want to say [crying].

JF: Okay. All right.

FS: You know this goes into history, history. I don't know what you will do with it. So.

JF: Okay. You went to, after the period of time in the hospital, you went to Berlin?

FS: When I could already walk, but on crutches the first time, and then with a stick because I was still limping. So I went to Dresden first to a Jewish place to know what I should do because I want to leave the hospital. So this man, Loewenkoff was his name, he asked me, "*Sprechen sie auch Yiddisch*" [Ger.: Do you also speak Yiddish?] because I didn't have any papers.

JF: Yes.

FS: So I said to him, "*Selbst verständlich, besser als Deutsch.*" [Yiddish: Absolutely, better than German]. I thought I still can speak better than German the Jewish language. But I was mistaken, in the two years, I forgot the Jewish because it's similar but it's a big difference. But I learned it in two weeks, I came back to it, and I became among the Jewish people. But you see a lot of SS and German people after the war, they wanted to hide out so they gave themselves as Jews so they didn't know who to believe, who is Jewish and who is not Jewish, so they have to question.

JF: The SS and the SA were telling people they were Jewish?

FS: Yeah, because they knew that the Jewish people nobody would harm them after the liberation. Yes. When I came to Berlin, I, I came to Schlesiersee⁶, there was a camp for, for Jewish people, mostly from Poland, already, they, they were meeting already their countries and it was a gathering place for, for the people there.

JF: This was where?

FS: In, in Berlin.

JF: In Berlin.

FS: Yes. And I didn't have too much willing to go to this place, but I didn't have any other opportunity so I had to go. And I registered there, and you had to work for the food. I was still from a, from a hospital straight out so what could I do?

JF: This was a DP camp?

FS: Yes. A DP camp.

JF: And the name of it? Again?

FS: Schlesiersee. Schlachtensee, Schlachtensee.

JF: How do you spell that?

FS: S-C-H-L-A-C-H-T-E-N-S-E-E.

JF: Schlachtensee was the DP camp that you went to. It was near Berlin?

⁶Schlesiersee is a sub-camp of Gross Rosen located in Western Poland.

FS: Yes.

JF: Yes.

FS: It was in Berlin, but outside of the area.

JF: Outside.

FS: Outside Berlin, yes.

JF: And you were there from November '47?

FS: Yes, and...

JF: For how long?

FS: But not long because I, I couldn't take it. I thought I will be able to come to the United States. Here I had my brother. Here I had relatives. And like I say, I missed the day when they cut it off from, from going so I couldn't go to the United States, either. Even so he did send me papers right away. So, I went there to the doctor, 'cause I was there. The doctor was a Polish Jew and in an American uniform. I thought he was an American. So when I came in, and I talked German and there was a woman in, in a white robe like, so I don't know if she was a nurse or she was a doctor, too, this I don't know. So when I told him that what the problem is, I had come from a hospital and I would like to go to the United States, maybe he can do something about it, but I, I talked in German. So he said to me, [unclear]. That's terrible.

JF: Which means?

FS: Which means I don't know what to do with the, with this German Jewesses. And I understood so I just said, I thought, I still thought he can help me so I said, "I am not a German Jewesses" in Polish language back. So he thought I am Polish so he said again, he got red and he said, again, "I don't know what to do with the Polish Jewesses." So I said, "I am not a Polish Jewess either." So he didn't know what to, to say anymore so he told me to go to another doctor there, Commission, like it was called there. So I went to the other doctor, there were two doctors, a Polish one, a very nice person, [unclear] who might be Polish, but one of them, the other one was a very nice person. And when I showed him the paper from the hospital because I got paper from the, from the hospital from the doctor that I was there, I got liberated and I was sick and so on, so he read the paper. The other guy didn't read, but did send me here. So this guy says to me I should go to him this was Dr. Borack, the main doctor, he can do something for me. But he can't. So I said to him, "I was there and he did send me to you." So he looked at the other doctor and he said, "*Ja*, he didn't want a, he doesn't want to help and we can't help." When I saw where I am and the thing is this that for the food I had to work, so I went to work. A sack of potatoes to peel, I started peeling. You know how it is, I didn't do for two years nothing in the hospital. So the, the skin came off and I, I got pus on, on all of my fingers. So I went back to this doctor and I asked him to give me an easier work, put me in an office or something. He wouldn't do it. Only if I paid him-- where would I have-- so, so I saw that it's impossible. I couldn't get where to stay. They

want to put me with men together in, in, in a room, so I went to the Jewish community in Germany.

JF: In where?

FS: There in Berlin.

JF: In Berlin.

FS: In Berlin. And I told them this, this story and I said I would like to get cured my foot yet because I was still limping.

JF: Was this still within the Russian zone? Then of Berlin?

FS: No, no this was already-- Berlin is in the Russian zone, but it was divided in four sections.

JF: Yes.

FS: So I was in the American zone there at this DP camp.

JF: I see.

FS: Then the Jewish community was in the French zone.

JF: I see.

FS: So I went to them, and I told them what was going on so they put me in the hospital.

JF: In the French zone?

FS: In the French zone. And in the hospital, I got sick. I mean, I was sick, but it didn't come out, yet, you know. I, with my bellies, I had the diarrhea all the way, you know, so I got tuberculosis. But the doctor in the beginning, they couldn't find what was wrong with me. Took them a long, long time. The doctor told me as there is new, new sicknesses there, no, new...

JF: Medicines?

FS: Medicines, there is new sicknesses. My sickness they don't know the name of for it. But afterwards, they, they got to know the name because they didn't want to tell me. But when I saw I have to stay there so, without and again, in a DP camp, I had it to there.

JF: So the hospital that you were in...

FS: I was for six, six months there in this hospital.

JF: And what was this hospital?

FS: *Judischegemeinde, Judisches* [Ger.: Jewish community, Jewish]. It was a Jewish hospital.

JF: Okay. And then when were...

FS: Then they came, they came to inquire from the Joint so they didn't want to believe me that I am Jewish, you know, the same way. So then he asked me what I can tell him about the Jewishness. So I said, give me a *Siddur*, [Heb.: prayer book] I will *daven* [Heb.: pray]. So, this way, know-- because he told the nurse that I am probably not Jewish. But the nurse said, "You can see that she is Jewish, somehow like this." So then I told him that he should give me a *siddur*, and I will *daven*.

JF: It's okay.

FS: So we-- I was there for six months. After this, I didn't want to go back to this camp, because I saw what was going on there. So they, they put me in the old age home across the street. There, there was, there were people, young people too, but only for a few days till they got some places, you know. But I was staying there till '48, till the blockade. When the blockade came, I was afraid to stay in Berlin because I was afraid to, to be caught again with the Russians. I didn't know if they were take over all, all Berlin. So they took us out by plane to, to the West. They brought in coals by plane for Berlin people to heat because the Russians didn't let through the trains so and this place, the coal place, they took the people who wanted to leave, took them back to near Munich, Gabersee⁷. First, they put us down in Frankfurt and then they put me in Gabersee, but I had pains already in my back, terrible and pains. But the doctors couldn't find out what I have. So, when, when I was there, two of my cousins were in Schwäbisch Hall in a camp. And my brother did write to them that I am there staying. So they came and picked me up and took me to Schwäbisch Hall. I came there Thursday and Monday I went into the hospital. And I stayed there.

JF: Now the name of that town was?

FS: Schwäbisch Hall.

JF: How do you spell it?

FS: S-C-H-W-A-B-I-S-C-H H-A-L-L, I think.

JF: How long...

FS: And there they found out -- there I was for 15 months. Fifteen months in a cast in, cast back, for the back.

JF: Yes.

FS: I had tuberculosis in my spine. And I was there for 15 months, and I saw that it's not better. So I didn't want to stay longer there because I was by myself there, too. One, one because the camp left already from there, they went to, to another camp there, near Munich.

JF: So, where, where did you go then?

FS: So my cousins left. Till then, they came to visit me every day and till they were there, but afterwards they left so I was by myself, again. And so I did write to my brother here, he should see something from here by the Joint that I wanted to go to Switzerland. Because there was a girlfriend of mine went there. So they came, they came but they didn't take me to Switzerland, but they took me to Gauting, in Germany.

JF: How do you spell that?

FS: Gauting is G-A-U-T-I-N-G. There were a lot of people in the same situation, sick people. It was like a sanitorium for, the, for this kind of people,

⁷Gabersee – “a DP camp in the Munich district, located near Wasserburg in the American zone of occupation. It opened on March 29, 1946, under UNRRA auspices. The Jewish population averaged 1,750 people in the years 1946-49. On June 30, 1950, Gabersee closed.” www.ushmm.org, Accessed 2/23/16.

tuberculosis. And so there they made another cast for me, and I was lying in already together, together for three years and it didn't heal. So I decided to let me get an operation. They took me to Munich and there they made an operation. I was supposed after six months to walk, but I didn't. It took another year in a cast.

JF: Who was paying for all of this medical care?

FS: The Germans.

JF: Part of the reparations?

FS: It was their, their fault.

JF: Yes.

FS: So anyway, from Gauting straight I came to the United States.

JF: In what year?

FS: It was '55, 1955. It wasn't so easy as I am telling you, you know. I could -- there are a lot of loopholes that I didn't-- that I couldn't remember right away, but then my -- and, and what was going on, how, how I had to, to fight for my medicine there in Germany afterwards still because the doctors were antisemitic, very, very, especially ours. Not all of them, I wouldn't say all of them, but mine in my department, she was a terrible person. In the beginning, in Schwäbisch Hall, there all the doctors were very nice, very nice and the nurses, too. Really, I couldn't complain. It was only that I was by myself, and I didn't see any results, and I got sick and I got very, very sick. You know, my eyes got blurry. I, I got burning in my back and they couldn't find from what it comes. Later on, I, I knew what it was. It was nerves, everything was nerves, you know. And, and one of the patients came to visit me and she, she left the hospital, but she came to visit me because she thought I would die because my eyes were already like, like, people who are going to die. So, I was really, really, very-- all of them were easy, easier than, than I was. I couldn't sleep nights, I couldn't eat because I had with my stomach when I was lying.

JF: Let me ask you something. How long once you came to the United States did it take for you to recuperate?

FS: I am not 100% yet, you know. But it took me a long time to recuperate.

JF: Were you able to work when you came to the United States?

FS: I did some work in, in an office.

JF: And how did you live? How did you support yourself? Your family?

FS: I, I'm getting from Germany some...

JF: You're getting reparations from Germany?

FS: Yes. But I, I would have never gotten it if I wouldn't have written a letter to the President there in Germany, President Heuss, when they gave a pension for Neurath's⁸ wife, she -- he, he was an [unclear] in Prague and they killed him and then

⁸Mrs. Schwartz may be confusing Neurath with Heydrich. Konstantin Neurath, 1873 - 1956; Foreign Minister of Germany from 1932 - 1938. Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia 1939 - 1941. Defendant

they burned Lidice all the people there, the Czech people. So and his wife got a pension, and I read it in the, in the newspaper, so I did write a letter to Professor Heuss, he was president then in Germany, and I asked him questions.

JF: This was from the United States?

FS: No. This was in Germany.

JF: Still in Germany.

FS: And this way you know they did write then in the Jewish newspaper people shouldn't bother the President because he can't help. But they took out my papers and just before I came, I started getting.

JF: Is there anything else that you want to add?

FS: I, I would have a lot of things, but right now, just I can't think of it, you know.

JF: Okay, all right.

FS: There is, there is, there were a lot of things, but, but really it, it would have been important to put down, but somehow...

JF: Perhaps at a later time we can talk again.

FS: Maybe, maybe you can shut it off and let it go further.

JF: Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg. Sentenced to 15 years for war crimes. Released in 1954 after eight years from Spandau Prison. Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Book 3, pages 1058 - 1059. Reinhard Heydrich, Acting Governor of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Died of wounds caused by assassination attempt, June 4, 1942. Five days later, Germans destroyed the village of Lidice and killed all its male inhabitants. Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Book 2, pages 655 - 657.