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Dora Edelbaum Interview

September 28, 1999

[Interviewed by Estelle Edelbaum (daughter) and Harold Edelbaum (son). Unless otherwise indicated, all questions are asked by Estelle Edelbaum.]

This is the interview for Dora Edelbaum. She is being interviewed today by her son and daughter, Harold Edelbaum and Estelle Edelbaum. I am Estelle. We are in my living... in my dining room. Dora has on a pair black slacks and a red and black striped sweater, and we going to get started now. Today is September 28, 1999 at 3:30 in the afternoon. Okay, Mom, or Dora ... what was your ... what was your maiden name? What was your name before the war ... or at birth? What was your given name?

Dora ... Dora Kibash.

Dora Kibash? Okay.

Dora Kibash.

And when were you born?

Dora Kibash. Dora Kibash. Pabianice.

And when ... when?

1929.

[Harold] Where, where, where is ... where is Pabianice?

By Lodz. Like Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri.

So it's very close to Lodz.

[Harold] In Poland.

In Poland.

Okay. And were you born at home or in a hospital? Do you know?

I don't know.

Okay. And what were your parents' names?

My mother's name was Hinde Fayga Bude.

Okay. And your father?

And she lived in [?].

Pardon me?

She lived in [?]. It's a state ... a city.

[?] ... is that in Poland?

Yeah.

You said she's from, [?] Poland?

Yeah.

Okay. And your father?

My father is Hersh Kibash.

Do you know where he was from?

He was from Pabianice as far as I know.

Is that in Poland?

In Poland. Pabianice, Pabianice.

Pabianice?

Yeah.

Okay. And how did your parents ... what roles did your parents have? Did your mother work? Did she stay home?

My mother was a housewife, and sometimes in the evenings she would , she would help my father with handwork ... sewing by hand some things.

What did your father do?

My father was a tailor and my mother was a housewife.

Okay. So your mother would help your dad. Did he have his own shop?

Yeah.

Okay. What kind of things did he make? Was he ... for men or women ... clothing?

People would come in. He, you know would take a measurement and measure for men, for women, for a factory. He would make tops.

Like uniform tops?

Like uniform tops for a factory.

Okay.

I think the factory's name was ... I can't remember.

Okay. And so your mother helped him in the shop sometimes? Or she did some...

Some help. A little.

Fine sewing?

A little handmade sewing.

Okay.

Like a lining or something to sew.

So she finished work, kind of?

Yeah.

She was a, okay. Good. And so your mother was just ... she was in the house. She didn't have a job outside the home.

No.

Did many women have jobs out of the home?

In Europe, the majority of women were housewives.

Okay. And who ... you had brothers and sisters?

I had three brothers and a sister.

Okay. And what were their names?

One is Yakob [more correct pronunciation: Yakov] Kibash ... Yakob Volf Kibash.

Volf?

Uh-huh.

Okay. Was he the oldest?

Yeah.

Okay.

And then was Kalmen, but I don't know his other ... I don't know if he had another name or not. Kalmen Kibash.

Okay.

He was the second brother. And then third brother was Avrum Mayr.

And they were all three older than you?

Yeah.

Okay. And then you ...

Three years ... let's see ... two, three years older.

Okay. And your sister?

And my sister was Masha Kibash.

Masha? .

Yeah.

And you called her Masha?

Manya.

Manya?

Manya Masha Kibash.

And how old was she in relationship to you? How many years difference was there?

I think she [?] ... I don't remember. The medication kind of makes me kind of mixed me up, I don't remember ... I used to remember all the dates which I am ashamed.

That's okay.

And a few months ago ...

That's okay.

All my names ...

But she was younger?

Yeah.

Okay.

All my names ...

And you got along well with your brothers and sisters?

Yeah.

Okay. So ... okay ... so you got along well with your brothers and sister. What kind of neighborhood did you live in?

We lived in a Christian section.

A Christian section?

A Christian section. In my neighborhood, there was I don't know, about four people ... four Jewish people in there.

[Harold] Did they live together as ... in one building or on one block?

On one block.

And did you live in a, did you live in a house ... did you live in a house or an apartment or ... ?

We lived in a house with my uncle. I think it was my uncle. We got it for a present when my father ... when my parents got married. A *drushe geshank* [Yiddish: wedding gift] they called it.

Which means what?

A wedding present.

Okay. And, so it was a build ... so they ... it was a building that you lived in and this was an apartment within the building? Were there other apartments in the building or was the whole building a house?

No. This was ... this just an apartment, just a building.

One building. So one house. You were the only family that lived in this building?

Yeah.

Okay. And were most houses on that block like that? They were just single family ... single families living in each house?

Houses, yeah.

Okay. And..

[Harold] Did you have running water? Did you have toilets to flush, water in the sink? Or did you have to ...

On the outside.

[Harold] The outside? So how did you get water into the house?

We had buckets. Buckets.

Buckets?

Buckets.

Did you have a well?

Yeah.

Okay. And usually... who would get the water from the well? Was it the kids or the parents or ...

I guess so. I don't know.

Okay.

Maybe the janitor. I really don't know.

Okay.

I don't remember.

Okay. And what did the inside of your home look like?

But when I ... when we needed water, I went out to get a little water ... a little bit of water in a bucket. And then my father was running after me and he said, "Girl do not carry a lot of heavy things like that."

So there were definite ideas about what boys and girls are expected to do. What other kind of things like that did ... were you taught?

My father used to say I'd get ruptured.

Get a rupture? Okay.

Carrying heavy things.

What other kind of things do girls not do or do girls do that your dad would tell you?

I know what my father did but I don't know what the other parents...

No, tell me about your father.

Another family... My family lived ... no, this is the ghetto. I'm mixing it up with ghetto.

It's okay.

Another family lived there too. I don't know what they would tell us.

No, what did ... what your dad told you that girls don't carry water, right?

Not the water.

Don't carry heavy things. Okay. What other kind of things do girls not do? Can you think of things that your dad told you ...

No.

... not to do because girls ... or nice girls don't do this?

He didn't say that.

Okay.

[Harold] Or were there like certain, certain customs or just things that weren't done by girls that the boys were allowed to do?

I think the boys were allowed to do, because they were boys and not girls, heavier things.

[Harold] Were there other things besides just carrying things ... that boys were allowed to do and the girls weren't?

No.

Kind of behavior?

No.

Okay. Okay. What kind of ... what was the inside of your home like? How was it decorated?

[Long pause]

Did you have your own room?

Not really. I shared mine with my sister.

And then did the boys share one room or did they have their own rooms?

They shared ... they shared a room, two boys, and a brother separate. They all went together.

So two of the boys were in one room ... or in the same bed or in the same room?

Same room.

And then ... so one of your brothers had his own room.

Yeah.

Okay. Who was that?

Kalmen.

Kalmen? The middle boy had his own room?

Kalmen Mayr.

Avrum Mayr ... or Kalmen? Avrum Mayr. Okay. So which one had his own room? The oldest one? Was it?

We didn't have our own room. We set up [?] overnight bed.

Like a cot?

Uh-huh.

Okay. So they were in the same room, but different ...

Yeah.

Okay...

[Harold] Did you ... what kind of heating did you have or how did you cook your meals? How did you heat your home and cook your meals?

Coal.

Coal?

Uh-huh.

Coal stove?

Coal wood. Coal wood.

[Harold] Where did all that come from? How did you get it?

I don't know.

Okay.

[Harold] Did you remember ... did you go buy it at the market or go out to the woods and cut a tree down?

No, we didn't do that. We just got it, I think. You go far away... [?] We bought some coal, you know, coal? We had a box with the coals in it and we need it, we put it in the stove.

To make more heat.

A lot of heat. Yeah.

Did you have any servants? Did you have maids or things like that? Would you say your family was well off or ...

Average.

Average. Okay. Comfortable?

Yeah.

Okay. Did you ever ... did you ever take vacations as a family or go anyplace as a family?

No. No.

Okay. What kind of foods do you remember eating?

Well ... chicken soup. Noodles.

Did your mom ever make anything that you especially remember?

***Kreplakh* [Yiddish: meat filled dumplings usually served in chicken soup] she make. *Kugel* [Yiddish: potato pudding or noodle pudding] she make. *Kreplakh*. She would make ... what do you call those?**

Knaydels [Yiddish: noodle dumplings, like German *szpaetzle*].

***Knaydels. Angelagte* [Yiddish: put into] noodles, soup, you know, you make a rich dough and you put it in salted water, and you cook ... you boil it.**

Okay. Did you ever get to help her make things?

No. When she came home ... when I came home from school, everything was made.

Okay.

She didn't want nobody around her feet.

So how did you learn how to cook?

I didn't learn how to cook. My mother did everything. When I came home from school, everything was made.

[Harold] But ... I think you're able to put a good meal together, for like your family. So how did ... where did you learn recipes and how to put things together like that?

This country.

When you came over here?

Uh-huh.

Okay. Good. Okay. What kind of school did you go to?

I used to go to Jewish school. Bays Yakov [Speaker pronounces it “Yankov”], we used to call it.

Bays Yankov?

Yeah.

Where was that?

It's a Jewish girl's, a girl's school.

Okay. Was it a private school or a public school?

Private school.

Private school?

Uh-huh.

So you learned ... what did you learn there? What did they teach?

They teach Jewish songs. This was when I was really young. Four years ... four or five years old.

Like a pre-school, kind of?

Yeah.

Okay. And do you remember any of your teachers?

Klamplatz.

Klamplatz.

Uh-huh.

Is that a woman or a man?

Woman.

Woman? What do you remember about her?

She was my ... my class teacher. Klamplatz.

Okay. Did you like school? Did you like going to school?

I didn't mind.

Okay. And what kind of things did you like in school? What subjects?

As a young ... As a young kid, we I learned how ... I liked what I learned.

Okay.

Time always went... Sometimes I didn't even feel like staying in school, so I went ... I was in school, and there was no lunch time yet. And I don't know how old I was. I was very young. I didn't like my teacher. I picked myself up and ready to go home.

[Harold] Did your teacher say anything or do anything?

She didn't know it.

[Harold] She didn't know you were going?

She ... she didn't see me. I was leaving. I had a little lunch box, a brown little lunch box with a leather ...

Strap?

Strap on one side, and I left it in school because I felt if I'm going to take that lunch back home, she will know I'm leaving. I left. So I left it.

So how did you explain leaving the classroom?

Nobody knew I left.

You just walked out. And, so ... how did you get home?

My mother was shocked. I walked from the class and I was going home. I didn't know how to get home. I, I, thought I made cold cut ... how you say?

Shortcut?

I make shortcut in the back yard until I got home.

So she was surprised to see you.

Come down, my mother was shocked. "How did you get home? Who brought you home?"

[Harold] Did your parents or your brothers and sisters vote? Were there like elections of presidents or ...

No, they were young at the time.

[Harold] Do you remember if they voted or anything.

No. Nothing voted at that time.

[Harold] Did they favor a political party or anything?

They were too young for that.

[Harold] Okay.

Your brothers and sisters?

[Harold] Your mom and dad ... do you remember ... did they do anything?

I remember my parents going someplace.

For ... like a rally or something?

Something like that.

Okay. But you don't know what kind of groups they favored or ...

No.

... who they supported? Okay.

My brother belonged to ... my brother wanted to go to Israel when the war broke out, and my parents would not let him leave. They wanted we did, would always stick together, the whole family stick together. They wanted to be together ... whatever happens, happens. We'll always be together. And, he wanted to go to Israel. I forgot the name. Maccabee.

Oh, what kind of ...

He belonged to the Maccabees. And he couldn't go on the boat to Israel. And my parents wouldn't let him go.

That was a Zionist group?

I'm not sure, but I think so.

Okay. Well, what kind of things did you do as a kid for fun? What kind of things did you play? Did you play games or ... ?

Oh, we played like a hopscotch.

Hopscotch?

Yeah. We played... with rocks, make hopscotch.

Yeah okay. Your markers?

Uh-huh.

Anything else? Did you play with your sister?

Yeah.

Did you like going places with her?

She went with me to a, that a... my friend ... with my friend. But she reached an age that my girlfriend did not want to have her because we were more or less going already like boys ... you know, boyfriends, girlfriends.

How old were you then?

I I, was young.

Yeah.

We were going ... going with boys.

So your sister came with you?

No. I was giving her a nickel to stay home because my girlfriend ... my friend ... my girlfriends tell me, "If you with us, you cannot go, you're too young." So, it lasted a few weeks and then she didn't want to stay home. I gave her a dime to stay home. She took the dime for a few weeks. She didn't want a dime. She want ... she wanted to go. And my parents and my brothers said, "Take her with you. If you're not going to take her with you, you cannot go."

[Harold] Now ... how old were you when you were doing this?

I'm 12. 11. 10.

Okay. So, did you have any hobbies when you were growing up? Anything that you liked to do? Did you sew? Did you ... ?

We did a little sewing in home in Poland. At school. Private, not private school, the regular school. We learned how to sew... if you had a sock...

Oh, to darn?

Uh-huh.

Mend a...?

Yeah.

Okay. So, kind of like Home Ec, you had?

Yeah.

Okay. Did you belong to any organizations? Were there any girls' youth groups or Jewish groups or anything?

No.

Okay.

[Harold] Did you have bicycles? Did you have ...

I didn't. I had a tricycle.

[Harold] Tricycle?

Okay.

I used to ... when a customer came to my father to buy ... I think he may have to have something made ... a suit, a pant, whatever ... he would come on a bike. While he was going to my father, I stole a bike and took a ride. And I was on the bike ... I couldn't drive. I didn't know ... I didn't know how to drive on the bike. With one leg, I used to go. You can go one leg and pedal it. All the time, they didn't know what happened. The bike is not there.

[Harold] They thought it got stolen?

It did!

No. It didn't get stolen. I took off.

[Harold] But they thought it was stolen.

Yeah.

And did your ... did your dad make clothes for you all too? And did you have any say in like ... what kind of clothes you got?

When I was young, my father and my mother, they'd choose what kind of clothes I should wear.

And did they make them?

Yeah.

Okay.

To a certain age. Then I reached an age when I had to have a journal [pronounced with a Yiddish/Polish accent] You know what a journal is?

Un-huh.

What do you call it now? From a cat ... not in a catalog ... journal ... a journalist.

[Harold] A journal?

Like an original? Like a ...

I picked ...

Something ...

[Harold] Were you ... were you ...

... like a pattern?

[Harold] ... going to order something?

Yeah. A pattern. I would pick from pattern. Because she was a dressmaker and she would give me a pattern to choose from. So I choose what I wanted to wear. But they were always wanted to make big, fat and tall ... you know, heavy.

So that you'd grow into it?

Yeah.

Okay.

And I hate this. I hated it always. I always like stick to my body, tight.

Uh huh. So your dad would make it the way you wanted it or no?

From beginning when then I said, "No." I have to have from a journal, picking a style.

But I mean, could he make what was in the catalog? Could you point something out and he could make what you wanted?

Bought material, I guess he could. I think he did. But I wasn't satisfied. I have to have on tight stuff. My father was making it so I could grow into and I didn't like that. So I quit with my father. I had a lady then who would take, take, take my measure and see the style I want and that's the way to make it.

And she was a competitor of your dad's, I guess? She was in the business too?

No.

Or was she someone that worked with your dad?

She was a separate lady ... another lady that ... she was a sewing operator, sewing machine, for sewing.

Okay. But did she work for your dad or was it totally a different place?

Different. She wasn't Jewish. She lived in the back yard ... she was in the back yard. She used to live in an, in an apartment. She would sew and what I wanted. She made it the way I wanted and I was happy.

And your parents let you wear it? I guess.

I picked what I want and my mom didn't have no choice. This is what I want. This was like that.

Okay.

[Harold] Did you belong to any organizations? Did they have like Girl Scouts? Anything like that?

No.

Did you have any friends ...

I was going to Hebrew... I was going to... Bays Yakov. We used to stand in little lines before lunch. Before lunch, we used to go to pick up some food for poorer people and bring it to the older people. I went ... for poor people, to give it to older people.

[Harold] This was a group that you were in ... would do this?

My class. Yeah.

Your class?

[Harold] Your class.

Yeah.

Would take food to poorer people and old people?

Yeah.

Okay.

They told where to go. We would meet on Saturday like the *chulent* [Yiddish: often also pronounced *cholent*; refers to a beef, bean and barley stew, traditionally eaten on the Sabbath] or something. You know the *chulent*?

A *chulent*?

Yeah.

And you would do this as a group? As a class? Or did you bring things from home?

No.

To give to people?

No ... from the group ... from the class ... from the ...

[Harold] But where did the food come from?

From people, private people.

So you went around and asked people for food, or ...

No. We were told to go here, there ... where to go. Bring the food to the poor people, the poorer people.

Okay. And what ...

All the people.

And what food did you bring them?

Most of it was *chulent* for *Shabbes*..

Okay. And who made the *chulent*.

My mother.

So all the kids from ... in the class, would bring things from home ...

There were fish. There were all kinds of things.

Okay. And then you would donate it to poor people and older people?

Yes. You know, to whoever.

That was nice.

I was feeding people. And at a young age, I was combing their hair when they were laying in bed.

Did they have nursing home kind of places or ...

Yeah. they had for older people.

And you would go visit.

No, I wouldn't go visit.

No? Just the individual people?

Uh-huh.

You would go and help them comb their hair and ...

Straighten the bed. Straighten out the bed.

Kind of like a nurse's aide kind of thing.

Uh-huh.

Okay.

[Harold] Did you have a boyfriend? Did you have a boyfriend when you were ten... you know, in your younger years?

In Poland?

[Harold] Yeah.

I thought I did.

[Harold] You said you paid your sister to not go with you.

I, I thought I ...

[Harold] So I wondered if you had a boyfriend or someone you were seeing.

I kind of had a boyfriend.

[Harold] What? Did something happen?

He came to visit an aunt in Poland and I met him. Lasted a while, and he left home I guess... I don't know. He left home. He left home.

[Harold] Did you communicate? Did you communicate with each other after that?

No.

[Harold] No?

No.

Okay. Did you mostly go out in groups or was it like a bunch of girlfriends would go out and meet a bunch of guys or ... how did, how did, how di kids interact with each other? How did they...

[Harold] How did they meet each other?

There wasn't much interaction.

Not much?

Uh-huh.

Okay. So when you and your girlfriends got together and you went out with boys, were you in groups? So were there like groups of boys that were meeting you guys?

A few ... a few boys and girls.

[Harold] Where, where did you go? What did you do?

Go to the park on a bench or something. Or just walk.

Did you go to movies or anything like that? Were there movies to go to?

No.

Okay. What kind of things did people do to have fun as kids, for entertainment? Was there shopping? Was there ...

No. There wasn't too much entertainment.

Okay.

We had to go...

And you didn't have cars either, did you?

No.

How did you get around?

We used to go to the park and we'd do some walking.

[Harold] Were there a lot of people in your city? Were there a lot of people in your town?

Not that I know of.

[Harold] Not, it wasn't real populated?

No.

Okay. Did you own a horse?

I was the horse.

Did your family have a horse? Did your family have ... like a horse and buggy to get around?

No.

So there was no transportation?

Yeah, you have to rent. You have to rent horse and buggy. You know, like there's a [bride and groom?] that's gold and black big wheels. You want to go somewhere, you rent it. And they take you wherever you want to.

Okay. Did they have ... what kind of transportation was there in Poland, besides horses?

Walking.

Anything else? Any street cars or ...

Street car.

... or trains?

Street car. My brother fell off on a street car. I don't know how old he was.

How did he fall off?

The street car was moving, and he started the... the street car was standing and he just tried to get off. And he fell off.

Okay. Was he badly hurt?

No. He skinned himself. And my mother wouldn't give me any money to go on the street car. She was afraid I might do the same thing.

[Harold] Did you, Were you too young to have a job, to work?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay. So how did you get money to do things ... to buy things?

I didn't get any money. There was nothing to get money for.

So there was nothing to buy ... nothing to ...

Right.

... go shopping for?

Ice, ice cream cone. Saturday night you ... boys and girls ... they go out...

[Harold]: What did you get?

And got ice cream cones, you know. And you know, they have ice cream cones... from around the ice cream, shells, you know. The shell we put the ice cream in?

So it's not a cone. It was more like a cup?

Or it was more like a sandwich.

Okay. Like an ice cream sandwich?

Uh-huh.

And so ... who paid for that? On Saturday nights when you all went out. Who paid for ice cream?

I, I don't remember.

Okay. Okay.

I'm sure I my mother paid. My, my ...

Parents?

Parents yeah. Gave me money.

So would you say you got along really well with your parents?

Yeah. I'll tell you, one time I got a licking from my father I never forgot.

For what?

Having a big mouth.

Do you remember what it was about?

**I said something. "I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it. And I didn't do it."
So this is, [?].**

So talking back got you a licking?

Oh yah my parents, My father was very strict with that.

So there's a lot of respect?

Uh-huh.

Okay. What other values do you think your parents had that were important to them? What other expectations did they have of you that you'd do as a good kid?

Well, she'd give me a nickel.

Well, I mean, like if you ... you don't talk back to your parents. Things like that. What other things like that?

[Harold] Things that were important to them that you ... your ... you children ...

... were supposed to do.

[Harold] ... do.

You would listen to your mother and father. And you obey them. Pay attention to them. Don't have a big mouth.

Okay. How did your parents get along with each other?

Nice. I don't remember that I hear them ...

Argue? They never argued? Or they always got along?

My ... my mother and father was always in discussing among children. You want to say something, there's something to do. Children don't hear. We should know from nothing.

Okay. So whatever problems they had were separate from the kids?

I cannot remember him.

Okay. Good. And how do you think ... do you think you are like your parents in any way?

Yeah.

In what way?

My father, strong with the personali...

Personality?

Uh-huh. Listen to your parents. Pay attention, listen to your parents, And don't have a big mouth.

Okay. And how do you ... how do you see yourself? Do you see yourself being like your mother or like your father?

You know, I think I am more like my father.

In what way?

Hard headed. Disciplined. Obey.

Whose heart do you have?

Hmm?

Whose heart do you have?

I think both ... both hearts. They both had good hearts. If something was coming to you, you'd get it. But they were good parents.

Any lessons that your mother taught you ... that you can think of off hand? What did you ... did you do things for Jewish holidays? Did you celebrate holidays?

Yeah. We had Jewish ... we had Jewish holidays.

Like? *Shabbes*? Did you do *Shabbes*?

Yeah, we always did it Friday night.

How did you observe?

My father went to *shul* [Yiddish: synagogue].

And your mother?

I don't remember my mother. I don't remember my mother, my mother would do on Friday nights.

Did you light candles?

We had everything like a Jewish home. Candles. Wine. For *Shabbes*. My father would bring home, you know, in Europe, poorer people... They used to go house to house. They would know where to go. Beggars. They would beg, you know, like Lodz, like Missouri to Kansas for food, rice. For food. They were beggars. And a lot of them couldn't make it because it was the holiday, in the *Shabbes*, then. So they would stay in. They would go to services with the Jewish people, where there were Jewish people. Now the first night, I don't know what happened to them the first night.

So these are poor people that came into town but then couldn't get back out because it was getting to be *Shabbes*?

Yeah.

And you couldn't ride on *Shabbes*.

No.

Or people wouldn't give them a ride for *Shabbes*?

You're not allowed to stay, whatever. But Saturday, Saturday, people came in from the, from the synagogue and they wanted to ... after the services in the synagogue. Whoever wanted to go with people for lunch and, my ...

[Harold] So you took people in for the meal on Saturday?

So ... your father would bring them home?

[Harold] After synagogue?

Yeah. My father would bring them home.

And there was always enough to eat for everybody?

Oh, yeah.

Your mom made enough?

My father would bring home ... there's one and there's two.

What holidays did you like the best?

I liked all the holidays.

You celebrated all of them? Okay.

When my mother ... when my father brought them home, the people, the poorer people ... poor people ...

Poor people.

When he would bring them home... And she was fixing the table, you know, food, she was so ashamed she wanted to kill me.

Kill you?

Uh-huh.

Why?

I dugged out from the cake. Butter cake.

Uh huh.

[Harold] You sampled the food before the people got there?

Saturday. [?] there was a cake and wine, you know. And I would, with the knife and my fingers, whatever, I would make holes ...

In the cake.

To take out the crust ... to take out the butter ... the butter lumps.

So your mother would serve cake with these big holes in it?

She wanted to kill me. She was ashamed of me. I liked to do that. She didn't have nothing to serve with. Had to serve with the holes. You know, ashamed. We have food you put at the table, and it looks like a mouse had been there.

Okay. All right. Just a second. Okay. So your mother wanted to kill you because you made the cake look like a mouse got to it. But ... so when she wasn't mad at you, what ... how ... what was she like? What was your mother like?

My mother was a good mother.

And what kind of ... in what way? What kind of person was she?

She was a good, kind person. She didn't want to talk about nobody ... Didn't let nobody talk about anything. She used to say to me, "Here's some, there's some dishes in the sink to be washed up. But when they're dirty, you will have to wash them again. You have nothing else to do, wash them again. But don't go to neighbors and gossip." She didn't like gossip and she didn't want me to be a gossip. I never seen or hear my mother gossiping.

What kind of things did your mother ... what kind of nice things did your mother do? Was she nice to the neighbors? Was she ... ?

I'd say she was nice... the neighbors. Not too much with each other. In Europe it's not like it is here where neighbors will live close together.

Was there a particular neighbor that she helped out one day? That she used you to do that with the...

No.

With ...

No. She ... you have it on? She told me. She had a bucket with some potatoes. I don't know how many pounds it was at that time. And she says, "I want you to take it to this neighbor." I don't know, she must have been a poor, poorer neighbor. And she would say, "I want you to take it to this neighbor." She would say, "Take ... I want you to take it to this neighbor and take the... take the bucket of potatoes and take it over there." It was in a bucket, you know. And I could carry it. And she would say, "I want you to take it to this neighbor. You know, knock on the door, whatever it took." She says, "And hand them to her. Give it to her." And she wanted to know what it was. And I told her that my mother said, "This is yours. It's for you. It's yours," she said.

That you were returning them?

Yeah. She said, "I'm returning this." Because my mother borrowed from her.

So that was what you were supposed to say.

Uh-huh.

Okay. But your mother didn't really borrow the potatoes? That was just her way of giving her some potatoes?

She learned a way of helping poorer people. And not let them down, you know. Just tell them that mother borrowed and I'm bringing them back to her. And thank you.

Okay. So she let her ... she did something nice and let her save face.

I take, I take it over there. "And don't come home without it ... without ... with potatoes. Tell her she borrowed it and you borrowed..."

You're bringing it back.

You're bringing it. And I can remember. This neighbor didn't want to take it back. She didn't know what I was talking about. I told her, "No. I cannot leave with it. My mother told me I cannot leave it. It's yours and I brought it back to you." I must have left that there.

That was very nice thing. Okay, I'm going to flip the tape over.

(End of Tape 1, Side 1)

(Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2)

Okay.

And she it with...

So she took the potatoes?

Yeah.

The neighbor did... Okay. Good. So your mother was a very kind, compassionate woman?

If she did something, she didn't want people to know. She belonged to an organization for the *moyshav zekaynim* [Yiddish: old age home]. It must have been *moyshav zekaynim* for poor people living in the ... orphanage ... in the old age homes. My parents used to go Saturday night or Sunday at night for meeting ... they had meetings.

What kind of meetings?

For poorer people.

Okay, like to plan things to do for poor people?

Uh-huh.

Okay. So they were very active in the community, doing things like that?

I would say, yeah.

Okay. That' a good example ... to set for you.

[Harold] Did ... did you go to religious school? You went to a private school. Did they teach the Jewish religion there?

Yeah. And they also teached in school ... public school. Yeah. The public school is Jewish too.

So all the kids in your public school were Jewish, or no?

[Harold] You said there ... there were just a few Jewish families in the neighborhood.

Yeah. About three, four.

[Harold] So most of the people ... kids were not Jewish. Is that right?

Right.

[Harold] Okay.

And that was in your public school?

[Harold] So, how did you learn religion in public school?

It was Jew ... in the Jewish school we had a teacher who teach Hebrew.

What was the Jewish school called?

Used to call by Bays Yakov, Jewish school for girls Bays Yakov.

Did your brothers go to a Jewish school too?

Not Bays Yakov. That was a girl's school.

Where did the boys go to?

***Kheyder.* [Yiddish and Hebrew: religious school]**

Kheyder?

Uh-huh.

Did you ever ... so girls never went to a *Kheyder*?

My mother sent me to *Kheyder*, but I really didn't like it because it wasn't a girl's school.

Okay. Did you have friends that weren't Jewish?

I had a few. Girlfriends.

Everybody got along okay?

Yeah. Sometime my friends, they were not jew... there were not Jewish, They rip my clothes off.

The clothes that your dad made for you?

Yeah. They were jealous. I had pretty clothes.

[Harold] How old were you when this happened? Do you remember?

I was nine.

[Harold] What did you do ... when that happened?

I came home crying ... what they did. And I think we were fighting. We were fighting.

[Harold] You and the other kids ... were fighting?

Yeah.

And they ripped your clothes?

And they ripped my clothes.

And you went home crying. And what did your ... how did your parents handle it?

After awhile I was crying a lot and then, the second ... you know, not there was once happened. A lot of times it happened. So one time, my mother opened the door and she said, "Out you go. Fight for... fight for yourself."

Fight for yourself?

"Fight for yourself. Don't come crying to me. Just fight for yourself." Because then she would say, "You gonna ... you gonna ... you gonna go to my mother. You gonna go the girl's mother and tell her how you were the fighting and crying." She says, "You go out and you take care of the problem. Don't get me messed up in it because I don't have nothing to do with this." She says, "Parents aren't going to fight with each other and ten minutes later, the children are going to make up. She says "The kids are making up and the parents will be enemies." So she says, "Fight among yourselves."

Your mother was very wise.

She don't wanta' mix in with the parents. The parents will be parents. And the children will be children. So just fight for your right.

[Harold] Did your family listen to music or Jewish music? Did you have a phonograph?

Radio.

[Harold] Did you have a radio or phonograph in the house?

I don't know. I don't remember.

[Harold] Do you remember? Do you remember hearing news or anything? How did you get news?

I don't remember. My father used to get a Jewish paper.

[Harold] Paper?

Uh-huh. Fore... I think *Forward* ... is what it was called.

[Harold] Called what?

Forward

[Harold] *Forward*.

The Jewish *Forward*.

Yeah.

Okay. Did you have any jobs as a child? Did you do any, any jobs?

tools?

Jobs. Did you work?

10-years-old... or eight?

Did you do any chores around the house? Did you earn any money, like allowance, or anything like that?

No.

Okay.

When I wanted something, I ask my mom, and she gave it to me.

Every time?

Most of it, she, she did.

Okay.

[Harold] Okay. We're going to change the subject and start another topic here. When did you first hear about the Nazis? When were you first aware of Germans or Nazis and what, what they were all about?

When they were coming?

[Harold] Just ... what ... when were you ... when do you remember hearing about them or do you remember what you heard about them?

Saturday after my father ate ... after he was laying ... he was relaxing, you know, laying up on the chair? Looking at the paper. Then he took a little nap. I don't remember... I hear my father saying, "Oh, I'll be ... " Hearing my parents saying what did that German, you know, when the war broke out. They would say they don't trust the Germans. Because you don't know what the Germans going to do next. They say one thing. They do another thing.

[Harold] With the Polish people, you mean?

With the Jewish people. Yeah.

[Harold] Jewish?

With the Jewish people. I don't they specifically mentioned Jewish people.

Was this before ... this was before they came into Poland?

Yeah.

[Harold] Do you remember when they came into Poland?

One time 11:30... I think it was a Friday night ... Friday morning ... noon, 11:30. Sirens all over.

Sirens?

Uh-huh. Nobody knew what it was and we found out that the Germans were coming. They're here.

[Harold] They were already there.

Uh-huh.

[Harold] They had invaded Poland already?

Yeah. Invasion of Poland, they say "Now the Germans are coming. Now I'm going to have to learn German."

[Harold] Who said that?

My mother.

[Harold] She was serious?

Huh?

[Harold]:She wasn't kidding?

Why would she kid?

[Harold] Well, I'm just ... okay. She was serious when she said that.

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay.

She said now that the Germans are here, we have to learn German. So I got a ... I got a ... I got the teacher.

Like a tutor?

A tutor. It was a rabbi's daughter. She was teaching. She taught me... She was teaching Hebrew, German, Yiddish.

She taught you all three of those?

Uh-huh.

[Harold] Who else was she teaching? Just you or some other people also?

Lots of girls.

[Harold] Friends? You and your friends?

[Me and the?] friends.

When was the first time you saw Nazis in your town? Do you remember what you were doing or ... ?

It was 11:30. Everybody at their own home. And the war broke out.

So you heard sirens and you went home. And then, when was the first time you actually saw Nazis in Poland ... that you saw Nazis in Poland?

After a while. I didn't see them right away.

Were they in groups? Were they individuals? Do you remember? Okay.

[Harold] Do you remember your parents talking about them ... about the invasion or what, what they might have said?

They were saying that parents and children should stick together because they would like to separate children from their parents.

They knew that?

Uh-huh.

Okay. So they kind of made a pact that whatever happens, you all stay together?

Yeah. When the war broke out, and my parent, you know, birth certificates? My mother laid them out on the mat ... everybody's birth certificate ... wrapped around.

What did she wrap it in?

In plastic... She wrapped around something.

[Harold] What?

Folded it down.

[Harold] Why was that? What was that for?

She laid out for each child should have a little bag ... a little bag ... no, not a bag, plastic holder.

So it's something for you to wear with your birth certificate on it?

No. Every time my father made every child a pocket and you could snuck in the... the birth certificate.

Like a secret ... inside a piece of clothing?

Yeah. In the clothing?

So like inside the coat there was a secret lining or something?

Yeah. Double lining. It was like a pocket.

Okay.

[Harold] Did you have other things besides your birth certificate in there?

My father gave each ... my father, my mother, everybody got to have [I believe?].... 500 or more than 500.

500 what?

Zloty. This is money. I remember recognizing 500 or whatever it was. For each child.

[Harold] And what was that for?

Because my father... my father ... my parents were afraid ... we didn't trust the Germans anymore ... when they came into Poland.

[Harold] Okay. But why did each person have that on them? What was that for?

This was ... my father ... my parents were prepared if we get separated ... if my mother and father were separated, so anybody who will get us children.

[Harold] Kind of pay them off to take care of you?

To take... Yeah ... to give ...

[Harold] Something like that?

To give them a little money to care for us.

Okay. That was pretty forward thinking, actually.

[Harold] Did a lot of people do that?

I don't know.

[Harold] Do you know of any other families that did things like that?

No. My father said the them, they kidnap all the others and take the children away from their parents. It's not a [burden?], but you have something to help to give to those people who would care for us.

To kind of help support you.

Right.

Okay.

Right. Support.

[Harold] How did your life change when the Nazis came to Poland? What kind of things started changing? What happened?

Oh, they would say we can ... the Christian children would ... people would say, "Don't buy ..." this was before the war. "Don't buy by the Jew. Go to your own clothes for whatever it was."

[Harold] You said before the war?

Yeah.

So they would say don't buy from Jewish stores?

Yeah. Antisemitism. Jewish Semitism.

[Harold] So your town didn't really get along well with the Jewish people there before the war even started?

Well... Not everybody liked the Christian ... Jewish people.

Okay. So they stopped buying Jewish clothing and Jewish food and Jewish ...

They used to say, "Go to your own. Go to your own. Don't buy by a Jew."

Okay.

[Harold] Did that get worse when the war broke out?

You know, I was young. I don't remember those things.

Did any of your friends change after the Nazis came? Did you have people that maybe you got along with and then you didn't? Any of your friends change their attitude towards you?

It was all right. But when I was 10, they made gh... we started living in ghettos. They didn't make any wiring, but they would say, "Don't ... you know... you can live in those area. You have to move to those area. You cannot stay here." We had area that we could live. And area that we had to move.

So you were forbidden to go to certain areas.

Right. Forbidden. And then they made ... and when the Germans came with wires, they come, cut off ...

[Harold] Like fencing?

Like ...

Like borders?

There was borders. You could not go in those vicinity. Certain places you can't go with the Germans.

[Harold] What about the wearing of the Star of David? Did you have to do that?

When the war ... when the war broke out, they wanted to have all the Jews to be recognized, the Jewish and the Christian. So they made red ... yellow ... [*latas?* She seems to be using some form of this Polish word, meaning "patches"] they called it. Star of David. It said *Jude* [German: Jew]. They have to have it in the front and they have to have it in the back. It said *Jude*. So the Germans can see you, from the front or from the back, that you are a Jew.

[Harold] You called it the *zlotys*? Was ... is that money?

No.

What were the stars called?

[*Latas?*].

[*Latas?*]. And what was the money called?

***Gelt* [Yiddish: money].**

No. Your, your parents gave you 500 what?

My father gave me ... I don't remember exactly how much ... I was a child ... at a time ...

500. But what was it called? Did you call it zlotys too?

Zlotys... is money. [*Latas?*]... ... is ...

Is the Star... There's *latas*, there's zlotys

Yeah.

Okay. Um...

[Harold] Were there any non-Jewish people in the area that helped the Jewish people ... that didn't go along with being mean to the Jewish people ... that kind of took care of you.

At first we had street that you could go and there was street that you couldn't ... you were forbidden. But we could not cross it. Like when you started going in the grass, they shoot you.

Okay.

[Harold] Who is that? Who would shoot you?

The Germans.

[Harold] Okay.

Was this in the ghetto?

Yeah.

This was in the ghetto? And were there people outside of the ghetto that were good to you ... that helped you or ... were all the Germans mean or were there some that were not so mean or ...

To me, they [?]. ... very good ... we got along, you know.

To you personally?

But my parents always say you cannot trust German people because they destroy ... take away the children ... like in the first war ... something like that. So my parents always said to stick together, and do things together.

Okay.

[Harold] Did the, did your neighbors start carrying guns and things like that ... to ...

Protect themselves?

[Harold] ... protect themselves from the Germans or protect themselves from the Jews? Do you remember if they did that?

I don't remember.

Did your parents have any guns?

No.

Do you remember any Jews carrying guns or ... and, so you went from your home ... was your home within the ghetto or did you have to move out of your home to go to a ghetto?

In the ghetto.

Okay, your house was within the ghetto?

Yeah.

So you didn't have to move. You just couldn't go certain places.

Uh-huh.

[Harold] They just put up borders around you, then.

They didn't put no boards. We know what boards...

But your house was within that area that you could go?

Yeah. Uh-huh.

Okay.

Other people ... the other people had to move. I guess we had to move. We had to live in ... we had to live in, in Germany. You see, I'm mixing up.

That's okay.

[Harold] Where did you go? What happened to you from Pabianice? Were you transported somewhere after that?

From Pabianice? We went to Lodz Ghetto.

[Harold] Okay.

And you were all still together at that point?

Yeah.

Your parents and your ...

Uh-huh.

Okay.

[Harold] Was the whole town ... was your whole town taken

Yeah.

[Harold]: All the Jews from your town taken to Lodz.

Yeah.

And then when you got to Lodz, where did you live? Wait a second. Okay, we're back. So you went from Pabianice to the Lodz Ghetto. And at that point, you and your family were still intact. Okay.

[Harold] How long were you in the Lodz Ghetto? Do you remember?

When I was, when I was sent to Ludge Ghetto, I got separated from my mother.

[Harold] That ... that's ... Lodz Ghetto is where they started separating families ...

Yeah.

[Harold] ... and sending them out to camps? Is that right?

When I came from the ghetto, I was separated from my....

Okay. So they took you from Pabianice to Lodz and then they started separating?

Auschwitz they start separating.

In the Lodz Ghetto?

Yeah.

And then they started sending people to the other camps?

[Harold] Did your whole family go together from Lodz somewhere?

From Pabianice.

[Harold] You went from Pabianice to Lodz...

Right. And we were separated there.

[Harold] You were separated in Lodz?

Right.

[Harold] Right. Okay.

And then where were you sent?

I was sent to Lodz Ghetto.

Okay. And then from Lodz Ghetto, where did you go?

Concentration camps.

Which one? What was the first one? Do you remember?

We went in a field.

Field?

I'm not sure... [?]

You want to stop a second? Okay.

We were in Pabianice. They tried to ... the Germans tried to take the families and put them all together, like two families ... two, three families live together. They were doing that.

[Harold] So instead of one ... two or three families being in one ... in two or three houses, they were in ...

They put into ...

One house because ...

... together because ... because the Germans were wanted to keep a close ... a close check on us, so they put people together ... two, three houses.

So they concentrated people in different ...

Yeah.

Okay. Okay. And, how many camps were you sent to?

I was sent ... I was sent to Auschwitz. [?], you know, in the camp.

When you were in the ghetto.

I was in the ghetto for a little while. I was near ladies' factory. We making brassieres, house uniforms. House. House dresses, this was in the Lodz Ghetto. And I learn how to fold uniforms, house dresses. And I was folding house dresses in the ghetto. And I got a piece of cardboard and put it down on the sleeves, like this, and like that and like that, and fold like, you know?

Okay. And you folded them for a company?

Yeah.

To sell?

For a German company.

Okay.

They should pay the suckers.

Uh huh. Okay.

[Harold] Where was this now? Where did this take place?

Lodz Ghetto.

Oh, from the ghetto?

Yeah.

[Harold] So you were doing work before you even went to the... camps?

Yeah.

[Harold] You were working for the Germans before you even went to the camps.

Right.

[Harold] Okay. Okay. We're going to go another topic now. We're going to go to your liberation. We're through the war and everything that happened there. And we're going to go to your liberation ... when the war was ending. Okay? Do you remember the circumstances that led up to the liberation of your camp? What camp were you in?

I was liberated in Bergen-Belsen.

And who liberated you?

[Harold] Yeah, do you remember when and who?

I was liberated 1945.

[Harold] Was it April?

April something ... April ... it was 1945. I was liberated by the Canadians.

Canadians?

Uh-huh. I have a picture from them. The Canadian people make the pictures and I ... and...

[Harold] Was they Canadians or British?

Canadian is the word, isn't it? Canadian British?

British...

[Harold] I don't think so. I think the British ...

I think it was the British.

[Harold] ... liberated. The United Kingdom. Yeah. British. Okay.

British. But they were Canadian soldiers came, ...

[Harold] Okay.

... you know, when they liberate ... when they ... when they discovered this was a concentration ... a camp ... when they liberated. They came to see around ... they found out it was a Jewish camp from a Jewish girl in the camp. So Jewish soldiers, a whole bunch of them, came to see, to see the Jewish people from the camp. And we ... they took pictures . And I a told, a soldier ... please make me, make me a picture, [?]. Through a translator, I couldn't talk. I was translated.

[Harold] And what happened?

And ...

[Harold] Did he do it?

He pushed through the fence ... through the wires ... through the wires ... and he made us a picture. And then the picture I had from the whole group who where ... Canadians... or British.

Of the soldiers?

Yeah. They gave me this to remember it back to me.

How did they find you? I mean, how long a time was it from the time you took the picture to when you got it back?

I don't remember. A long time. When they brought back the pictures to me, I was sick. I got the typhus. Typhus fever. And the typhoid ... and they could not give it

to me, so they gave it to some other girls. You know, from the pictures, you can see who I am. And they would give them ...

[Harold] They recognized you?

They didn't ... the girls recognize who the pictures belonged to.

[Harold] Yeah.

So they found you?

So they gave her the picture. She gave it to me. And I have it, those pictures.

So you were in a hospital recuperating when you got those pictures?

Yeah. I was laying in a hospital. I had typhus fever.

Okay.

I couldn't...

[Harold] Do you remember ...

I couldn't ... I couldn't walk, you know I was weak. And when, when they give me the picture, I cherished the picture always. [?] I know who was the pictures in the whole group ... Canadian soldiers, British soldiers.

[Harold] Do you remember exactly the moment that you knew you were free? That the war was over and you were being rescued?

Yeah.

[Harold] What happened? What'd it feel like?

The Germans went crazy. They were running on... the big shot ... the big shot in the camp ...

[Harold] The commander?

Commander. He was calling the horse. And he had a whip.

[Harold] He was on a horse?

He was on a horse. And he was going for ... with the whipping ... to hit ... to hurt us.

[Harold] As many people as he could before ...

Before ...

Yeah.

Okay.

Before they arrived. And he was going in the barracks... he's going in the barracks ... and he does too. Because ... and the chimney, the fume goes out and we sabotage them.

The prisoners sabotaged the chimney.

The Germans think I that we are sabotaging against the Germans. Do you understand what I am saying?

No. Say it again.

[Harold] Now, what ... what ...

What ... what were they doing ...

[Harold] What does the smoke have to do with it? From the chimney?

Before they ended the ... before they ended the war, they could see they are losing... the Germans are losing. So they going crazy. They used to tell us we couldn't have lights in the evenings. It was dark in the barracks.

[Harold] You had blackouts?

So they would ... they would hit us. "Shut off the lights ... shut..." We didn't have no lights, [?!]

Oh, so they couldn't be seen from the air.

Right. And we was sabotaging. And so they could beat the heck out of us.

[Harold] Oh.

Oh.

He was going around ... he was coming around on the horse ...

[Harold] With a horse whip?

Yeah. With the horse whip.

With the horse whip. So that the lights wouldn't ... telling the Allies ...

Right. Where we are.

Where you are.

[Harold] Okay, what about the smoke? What'd you say about the smoke?

They didn't want to have the fumes coming out of the chimney. They could see that this is a pen or houses or buildings or whatever it was.

Right.

[Harold] So, did they shut down the crematoriums?

No. At that time.

[Harold] How did they keep the smoke from ...

This is camp. The crematorium was going day and nights, burning people. The crematorium was going day and night, burning up people.

[Harold] Okay. But you said ... I thought you said that they didn't want any smoke.

Not smoke.

[Harold] To, to give away?

Smoke wouldn't give them away. It was fumes. Fire.

So, like from lamps and things like that?

We didn't have any lamps.

Okay.

Candles.

Okay. What kind of fumes were they afraid of?

Wood.

[Harold] You mean flames?

Flames.

Oh, so like, heat.

[Harold] Flames. Flames.

To heat.

Yeah.

[Harold] Not fumes, Flames.

Okay. From flames. Okay. So they wouldn't let you have any heat. They wouldn't let you have any lights. So as not to give away where you are.

Right.

Okay. So you knew you were free at that point? You knew that you ...

No. We didn't know. They were going crazy. It was night, at day. And you could tell they are losing. And we were so happy. We were screaming in the camp. [?] liberated, it's good to us.

[Harold] You knew something good was happening?

We knew something was happening. They are losing the war. And they wouldn't ... we didn't suffer... get the heck out, you know, with the head and body, whatever.

Okay. So, it was kind of worth the beating, knowing that you were free.

Uh-huh. We could tell that they were losing, we were not gonna' give up.

You knew that if they were going nuts, that meant that it wasn't good for them?

Right.

Okay. And it was probably good for you.

Right.

[Harold] How did the prisoners react? Did the prisoners feel more free ... free to do things? Free?

We were the prisoners.

[Harold] Right.

We ... that was, the next day ...

[Harold] But how ... how were you starting to act? How were you acting then ... when the Germans were going crazy, how were you acting? How were the prisoners acting?

They were acting very wild. They hit us very much.

[Harold] Very much?

The soldiers? The soldiers were ... were trying to hit you?

[Harold] I'm talking about the prisoners. What were they doing? How did they react to all this?

We all were happy that they were losing the war. We had to leave one camp and go into another camp because the camp, the camp would come home from work, the whole camp was burned up.

[Harold] Who burned it up? How did it get burnt? Do you know? Do you know what happened to the camp ... how it got burnt?

French ... England ... were bombing the camps.

So you weren't in the camp when it happened. You were at work. You work... Where were you working?

We was working in snow in the streets, shoveling snows. We were making for some, different companies, cement steps, and we worked for the German... cement steps.

Do you remember what the company was?

No. I don't remember. But it was a private group ... private, private companies, we were hired. Not me, but I mean someone was hired... Germans... hired. I was cleaning up. They were bombing day and night. We were cleaning up ... we were cleaning up buildings so the street car] could go through streets and stuff.

So every time something was bombed, the prisoners were the ones that cleaned up the streets?

We had to clean up streets ...

Cleared everything.

... so people could walk ...

Okay.

... on the sidewalk ... not sidewalk ...

On the streets?

On the ...

Along the side?

[Harold] Okay. Did ... did you have any chance to get back at those soldiers of the camp, at the guards? Did you have a chance to get back at them when you were liberated? You know, kind of get even? Did you have a chance to get even with them somehow?

Well, no. A lot of soldiers, we liked very much. They were good. One was [Jeszko baci? Hungarian: first name of some sort plus the Hungarian word for "Uncle." In other words, "Uncle Jeszko]] his name was Hungarian. Soldier [Jeszko baci?] he used to scream at us, you know. [?], he would holler, "Clean up! Clean up! Clean up! Clean up!" You know, his language in *deutsch* [German: German language]. And he would say ... he would say, "They're here. They're here." And, "Clean up! Clean up!" he was screaming.

[Harold] So he was like warning you? Giving you a warning?

Yeah. He was good to us.

[Harold] Okay.

He didn't put us down. He was saving us from the Nazis.

So when his ... the other Nazis were around, he was mean and he was yelling at you. But then when they were gone ... so he was doing his job when they were there?

Yeah.

So that they could see that he was being mean to you when, in fact, he ...

He was a good guy.

He was ...

One ... was a young ... [Jeszko baci?], "Hungarian uncle," we used to call him. I used to carry home ... I had, I had a bucket I found in the camp. I had a bucket. I went into houses to find clothes, food, whatever. I'd climb in through a window or slide in, like a basement. And I found out ... I didn't know at that time. I was a kid. [?] and bowls. That the Germans keep, keep wines. In the wine cellar in the basement. When I didn't do washing. I just looked and looked. And I saw some red

color. What is here in the red? I took a bite [?]. I took a sip. It was good and sweet. It was delicious. I was knocked out! [LAUGHING]

[Harold] You got drunk? Did you pass out?

Yeah.

[Harold] Yeah?

This was before the knocking out ... before they were knocked out. But ...

Yeah.

[Harold] Now, where was this now? What camp was that in?

This was in Bremen.

[Harold] Oh, Bremen, Germany?

Uh-huh. Bremenhaven. Bremenhaven. [More correctly, Bremerhaven.]

[Harold] That was a camp?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay.

And ...

So who found you... drunk? Who found you passed out?

For the drunkenness. We found the bucket. I used to do business with the Germans.

[Harold] You used to do business?

Yeah. Used to take them some bottles.

Empty bottles?

No. What fun is an empty bottle?

[Harold] Bottles of wine?

We had wine. Put a few bottles in the bottom and put some wood on. Cover everything. General pretend I'm bringing wood. They wouldn't bother me, you

know? And this is my business in the kitchen. I went to the kitchen, asked anybody ... “I got these... I’d like to get some bread, some food.” And the people in the kitchen, they need my food. They need my liquor. And I need their food. So, business.

[Harold] That's the way you do business, huh? And what did you do with food that you got? Was it for yourself or for other people or ...

Yeah, they gave me a few loaves of bread and I think I ... some bread.

[Harold] But did you share that with someone else?

With the whole room.

[Harold] Okay.

Shared the whole room.

[Harold] Several people?

So did they know you were a ... you were a prisoner? Did the people in the kitchen know that you were a prisoner?

Yeah.

Okay.

They were good people in the kitchen. Cooks, you know. Hungarian. Not ... they live in the camp ... from the camp.

Okay.

[Harold] Okay. Let me go back to this question earlier. Did the prisoners have a chance to retaliate and get back at the guards?

After the liberation?

[Harold] Yeah. When you were liberated? Did you have a chance to beat on them or yell at them or anything?

I don't think so either. But they were mad. After the liberation, they were killing a lot of people. Of course, there were the *kapos* ... you know, the *kapos*?

[Harold] Who was killing who?

After the liberation, Jewish boys ...

They were killing the *kapos*?

They were killing the *kapos* because they were working for the SS ... for the Ger ... they were working for the Germans.

[Harold] The *kapos* were ... what? What did they do?

They provided all kinds of information ... make them slavery. All kinds of things.

So *kapos* were Jewish?

Yeah. You've got it.

They were Jewish guys working ...

... for the Nazis.

For the Nazis. So they were like turning their own people in?

Right.

Basically.

They have a ... they had a ... they had a building. They took all the Ger, the Jewish people in this building. I forgot what they called it. All the rich people and the *kapos*. The *kapos* took all the Jewish people, and the Jewish people knew who was Jewish and they reported to the *kapos*. Do you understand? They reported who was a *Jude* and with the money, and all that stuff. And Jewish people had to come. One of the Jewish people didn't come... a *kapos* ... I forgot the name ... it doesn't come to me. They said ... I forgot the name. What do you call it? For them to come every day. They figured [?] every day they [?] the people.

So they would turn these people in. So after the war was over, people would go to the *kapos* and beat them up for everything that they had done to them?

They was on their own.

So the *kapos* were getting beat up?

Yeah.

Okay.

[Harold] When you were liberated, were you treated okay by the liberators ... by the British?

Oh, yeah.

[Harold] Did they treat you pretty good?

But not in the c... I wasn't ... not in the camp.

[Harold] Did they offer you food and water or medical attention? That kind of thing.

It was the Red Cross. The Red Cross took care of us.

[Harold] They came ... they were there immediately?

Yeah.

[Harold] Or did it take a while for them to get there?

I don't remember. I think they was there. But it was the Red Cross.

[Harold] Okay. How did you react to being freed ... to being liberated? Were you a little ... what did you think? Do you remember what kind of thoughts you had?

You know, I don't remember. I know we were liberated and that we could do as we want and go as we wanted... do what we wanted.

[Harold] Okay.

At that point, did you know what had happened to your family? You knew where ...

Oh this was when the Germans send us to ghetto ... '43, '44 ... something like this.

Okay.

Separated us from the family before that. We didn't ...

I mean so you knew what happened to your mother? What happened to your mother?

I didn't know. They separated ... I mean... let me see, in a field. We had our papers [?] at the house where they made [?].

Okay. Without going into ... okay.

[Harold] Okay. You were liberated. You came down with typhus. You were in the hospital. You got out of the hospital. What happened after that? Where did you go after that?

We were in DP camps.

[Harold] Okay. And what is a DP camp? Where is that?

A DP camp is a prisoner. I guess it's a prisoner.

[Harold] Is it a displaced persons camp? Is that what it is?

Yeah. Uh huh.

[Harold] Okay. Okay. What was done there? How did that ... who helped you and what kind of help did you get?

From the Red Cross was taking care of us.

[Harold] Okay. What did they do for the prisoners ... for the refugees?

Oh ... we all got... got set up. We got food. We didn't have any food to eat, but ... you know care packages? We got ... everybody got ... I don't remember how many it was ... but, then we got water in it, and butter cookies and cake and that. All kinds of good things.

[Harold] Good food for a change, huh?

Yeah.

[Harold] To get your health back?

Yeah. But I didn't always eat the fo... I didn't always eat the food because I was trading in the... on the black market. I wanted money. I wanted money to buy shoes.

[Harold] Okay.

So that's what you had to do then?

[Harold] So you had enough to eat at that point?

Then they start to build up the DP camp kitchen and we had to man the kitchen.

Okay. I'm going to ask you to pause just for a minute so I can change tapes.

(End of Tape 1, Side 2)

(Beginning of Tape 2, Side 1)

Okay. This is the third side ... or I guess the first side of the second tape for Dora Edelbaum. We were talking about ... Dora was just saying that she got CARE packages after liberation. She ... the Red Cross ...

The UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration].

The UNRRA. Now who was the UNRRA?

It ... was a committee.

[Harold] United Nations.

Something like that.

Okay. And they, and gave you food and ...

They gave us care packages. The packages ... we had the cake ... we had the ... all kinds of things.

And you ate some of that and some of it you used for ... to trade for other things?

Yeah. I need some money. I took the food and exchange it for marks on the black market, the German black market.

Okay.

[Harold] What were your feelings in the displaced persons camp? What were you thinking or feeling about ... you know, losing your family ... you know were you trying to locate your family members? Were you planning to go back home? Were you planning ...

We were planning ...

[Harold] ... to move somewhere else?

We were planning ... we were planning ... we were planning to move ... at the end of the war. And we were going to get liberated and get back to the family. Going to find my family.

So you, at that point, didn't know where your family was?

I was separated from my family in 19- ... it was when we were in the ghettos.

So once you were separated, you don't know where everybody went? Correct?

Right.

Okay. So you don't know where they were sent or what happened to them?

We had been on a ... on a ...

Field?

... on a field. When we went to Auschwitz.

[Harold] Okay. That's where you were separated from them?

That's where they were separated.

Yeah.

[Harold] All right.

And we were sent to Lodz ghettos ... to ghettos.

[Harold] Now, in the DP camps, did the ... you said the Red Cross was there. Did they help try to locate families ... get families back together?

Not while we were there.

So their purpose was to just give you food and ... and ...

[Harold] ... medical, medical attention?

Take care of us.

[Harold] Make sure you ...

Because we didn't know where our parents are.

[Harold] When did you find out? How did you go about doing that? At what point did you start looking for other people?

After the war. After the war.

[Harold] Well, the DP camps were after war.

Yeah.

[Harold] So ...

Was that after the DP camps?

After the DP camps. I used to go with a girlfriend to different cities to ... I was told I could find my brothers. So my girlfriend ... she was to me like a mother. She looked after me.

[Harold] So it was kind of a ...

She went with me to find my brother ... but I didn't find my brothers. They told me, no, they couldn't ... he was not there in that city.

Okay.

From mouth-to-mouth. Nobody knew. Nobody knew nobody.

Did you see a lot of people from your hometown? Did you know of people from your hometown? So this friend thought that your brothers would be in a certain town because that's where a lot of the men were sent?

No. They had lists.

Oh, okay.

[Harold] Who had lists? Who put the lists together?

The Jewish organizations. They had lists ... where the camps ... where the people lived in the camps. They had a list.

[Harold] What camps where people ...

They named ...

[Harold] ... what camps where people were ...

Yeah. Exchanging from within camp. Maybe they are in the other camp. They had lists. One camp ...

Okay.

[Harold] You're talking about the DP camps?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay.

Okay. So there were lists of where people were sent from one camp to another?

Yeah.

So maybe you could trace ...

Yeah.

... where they'd been? Okay.

Mom. Oh, I'm mixing up again.

Okay.

On the field ...

When you were ...

6 o'clock you have to make [?].

It's okay. When you were ... so when you were in the hospital, you had typhus. But, otherwise, did you have ...

I couldn't ...

... did you have other ...

I had typhus. I couldn't walk. I was ... I don't know how many weeks or how many months I was there.

[Harold] Do you remember how much you weighed ... what your weight was?

No.

[Harold] When you were liberated? How old were you when you were liberated?

13.

Okay.

You know, the medication [?]. Sometime ago I lost all my ...

Teeth?

No. My memory ... how old they were. The dates and everything.

Were you liberated at 13? No, I think you ...

15.

I think you were probably older than 13.

15, 16, something like that.

That's closer, I think.

I don't know how a brain can get washed up like this.

Well, you've been through a lot too. What kind of plans ... did you have any plans for the future? Did you see any kind of ...

I was 10-years-old. Who cared for the future?

I mean after the ... when the war ... after the war was over ...

We were praying.

... and you were getting better.

We were praying. We were praying together, so we could find our brothers and sisters, mother and father, because my father was already ... he died in the Lodz ghetto, my father.

Okay.

[Harold] Okay. Did you meet anyone special in the DP camps?

No.

Did you ...

After the liberation, I found the girlfriend ... brought into her house. They were going to go to another camp the next day and we slept at another girlfriend's house. This girlfriend had a girlfriend and we slept in the house. And I met the girlfriend's girl for three generations.

The friend of another ...

[Harold] The girl ... girlfriend ...

Another friend of a friend.

[Harold] Okay.

Okay.

And one night I came to this friend who was sleeping there and I found a young man and I found ... and the young man was Benny [? She seems to be using some form of a Polish first name].

[Harold] What's his last name?

[? She seems to be repeating the same Polish first name as a above] **Edelbaum.**

[Harold] Did you date? Did you start dating?

This is the first time that I met him. And I was, there we were. I was there we were three or four days in that girlfriend's house. This girlfriend had a ... had a ... she was alive. She lived too. She found a husband and she found in the camps with me, she found a son, a daughter and a husband ... her husband found her... his son.

So they were married before the war?

Yeah.

And they found their ...

They found each other.

Okay. And they had a child?

I'm not sure. Each one of them had one. The daughter ... the mother had a girl ... a daughter... and the husband had a son.

[Harold] Okay. You started dating Benny then?

[There and then?] and I started dating Ben.

[Harold] What happened? Did you get engaged?

I started to date Ben for a few days because I had to leave to my home city ... my home ...

Hometown?

Camp ... DP camp.

So you had to go back?

Yeah.

You were just visiting a friend.

I was looking for my brother. They told me my brother was in this camp. And if we go down, we will find him.

Okay.

So ...

So you left to go, and then ...

[Harold] Did Benny follow ... try to find you then after you left? Or did you come back to where he was?

Or did you ever see him again?

I have not seen him again. We were ... we were writing ... we were writing letters.

[Harold] You wrote back and forth.

Yeah.

Okay.

[Harold] Okay.

And send pictures forth and back.

Okay.

[Harold] Okay. And then what happened? Did it get serious? Real serious?

Yeah.

[Harold] What happened?

I went back to Zeilsheim [a displaced persons camp in Germany].

[Harold] Uh-huh. Which is another DP camp?

Yeah. Another DP camp.

[Harold] Okay.

He was a [?] in between story. [?].

That's okay. Just remember what you remember.

[Harold] Okay. So, did you and Benny get together?

Yeah.

[Harold] It became serious ... about each other?

We were writing to each other. Exchange ...

Pictures?

... pictures.

[Harold] Okay. And what happened then?

Then when was the next time you saw each other?

[Harold] Was it a serious relationship?

Oh, friendly. I was serious about him. He was serious about me.

[Harold] So what happened in the end? How did the relationship ...

The end was ... we were cut off, They were [? She seems to be indicating that they were separated]. But, when I was in DP camp, I was sent ... I was in DP camp and when we went to dance, to party, you know, on Friday night or Saturday night and dance. And I go to the dance too with a friend. We always exchange clothes. You know, like she wore my blouse. I wore her skirt. Like that. You didn't want to look like we had the same clothes so we were exchanging two, three.

Right.

[Harold] So what happened at the dance? Did you see someone?

I go to the dance. I'm at the dance. I'm looking, looking, looking and I said, [? She seems to be saying "There is" and following it with Benny's Polish name].

[Harold] Oh, Benny was there?

Yeah! And we hugged and we kissed. We saw each other again.

[Harold] So you ... even though you didn't write each other, you missed each other?

Oh, we missed each other. We were totally cut, cut off because I know where it was.

Oh, the mail service wasn't ... ?

I don't remember what it was.

Okay.

Cut off.

[Harold] What happened after that? You're ... now you're together. So what happened?

What happened? Ben, Ben met his sister there while I was there. His sister lived ... was in the camp.

[Harold] Okay. But what happened between you and Ben?

And his sister was not together at that time. He found his sister, so ...

So you were looking for your brothers and Ben was looking for his sister and found his sister.

Right. He found one sist ... he found one sister.

Okay.

And ... and ...

And you two found each other.

And we found each other. And ...

And?

[Harold] Were you engaged? Did you get engaged there? Or married there?

I screw everything up. He found his sister and I found Ben.

[Harold] Okay. What happened ... what finally happened between you and Ben?

Well ...

Did you ...

I came to the ... I came ... we met each other again.

[Harold] What happened after that?

What attracted you to him? What did you like about him?

I like him because he was a nice boy, a good-looking boy. I liked him very much. He was fine boy and I liked him very much and we started to make plans to get together.

[Harold] Like dates?

Yeah. Some dates.

And at what point did you think you wanted to marry him?

And, and his sister ... his sister lived there in that camp. She was in DP camp. And his sister ... when I was there with him, he didn't have a sister yet. The following day he found his sister in the DP camp.

[Harold] Okay.

And did he introduce you to her?

No.

At what point did you decide to get married?

We get married right away.

[Harold] Were you engaged for a long time?

I don't remember how long we were engaged.

[Harold] How long were you in the displaced persons camp before you moved from there?

I couldn't tell you really.

Was it months or weeks? Do you know? Days?

Maybe months.

Months? Okay. So did you get married, did you get married to Ben?

I got married to Ben.

Was that in Germany or in Kansas City?

Germany.

And what was your wedding like?

[Harold] How many people were there and who was there?

All my friends were there, I invite. Ben and I were saving up money ... we bring money together. A bundle of money together for a wedding, to make a wedding. And we had a nice wedding.

[Harold] They had a rabbi there?

Before the wedding ... before the wedding, my girlfriend ... My, Ben and I, we saved up some money, extra money, for a wedding. And I had a ...

[Harold] So the couples had to pay for their own weddings? Or what was the money for?

They used to have groups ... the committees ... they married people ... couples.

[Harold] At once at a time?

Uh-huh.

[Harold] Okay.

And ...

[Harold] Was yours like that or were you married by yourselves?

No. We got married by ourselves.

And who did ... who did the wedding? Was it a rabbi or was it a ...

It was a [?]. I had [?] saved up, saved for the boat. Saved up some money for the wedding.

[Harold] Was it a ...

But the money ... the money ... I had money missing. One day we bought ... we went to movie, Friday night and I took out, I had somebody once a week to clean house ... to clean, because I didn't have all those utensils and stuff. So when ... with food when you get UNRRA care packages, we would pay with this on the black market.

[Harold] The money you got from selling the food, you would hire someone to help clean?

Yeah.

I see.

On the black market. I would sell it on the black market. And then I got the money from it. And then ...

[Harold] Anything happen to the money?

And one day ... one day, I had a lady to come in and pick up my laundry. And we didn't have any kitchens or laundry ...

No washing machine or ...

No. So we hired people to work for me and I pay him back.

[Harold] Well, that was nice for a change.

Instead of you having to work.

I think we sold them. We exchanged the money. He gave me the money. I don't know if it's money, coupons, the food, whatever it was. And, one day I put the food ... the money ... I had a big ... mama gave me a big, red pocketbook. I put money in that. And I put my money ... and the money ... I had money that I needed... to go to the movies, and ...

It disappeared?

The next... the next day I go into ...

[Harold] To get it?

To get my money, and my money was not ... it was stolen.

[Harold] Was your purse there? Your purse was still there but the money was gone?

I don't know.

[Harold] Okay.

Called the poli... we called the police. She was arrested.

It was your housekeeper that did it?

The housekeeper. She just came once a week to clean house.

But that's who took it?

I think she did. But they don't catch you.

Yeah. They can't prove it.

They cannot prove it.

[Harold] Okay.

Okay.

[Harold] At your wedding, was it traditional ... traditional Jewish wedding? You had a *chuppah*? [Hebrew and Yiddish: traditional wedding canopy at a Jewish wedding]

I had a *chuppah*, and I had cover my face.

[Harold] What's that?

A veil?

With a veil. Then another veil.

[Harold] Two veils?

I think it was two veils.

[Harold] Okay.

We had a nice wedding. We served at the ... we served the wedding ... cookies, salami, cold things, like that. We had a sweet table.

[Harold] Did you get gifts? Did you get presents?

Yeah. I got nice presents.

[Harold] What kind of things were given to you?

Like a [?] ... like aluminum pots and pans and [?]. I got, I got playing a [?]

[Harold] A harp?

Yeah. I got a harp.

[Harold] Now who gave you these things?

Friends. A lot of friends.

[Harold] And they bought these with the money that they had from the black market or whatever.

Are these ... are these ... ?

Boy... From boyfriends.

[Harold] From boyfriends.

Are these friends that you had in the camps or that you met after that weren't in the camps?

After the camps.

So were these friends of yours in the camps too, or were they people that you met afterwards.

Afterwards. I think, afterwards.

Okay. So you had music also at your wedding? Do you remember?

I'm not sure.

[Harold] Okay. You didn't have any children born before ...

In Germany?

[Harold] ... during the war or after the war? Is that right?

I [ten year old?] child.

[Harold] Okay.

Okay. So ...

[Harold] After the displaced persons camp, where did you go?

I would go from camp to camp to find out....

[Harold] I mean ... what ... how did you wind up in the United States? How did you get to the United States?

I would go from camp to camp to hear if my brother is there or look at the charts ...

Right.

[?] brothers of somebody.

And then at what point did you get to the United States? How did you get from ... did somebody sponsor you to come over or did you ... ?

The Jewish Federation Committee. I don't... I don't...

[Harold] Was there ... ?

I don't know what organization it was, but it was a Jewish organization.

And they brought people over?

Uh-huh.

[Harold] Were there lists? Did you sign up to go to different countries?

I signed up to go anywhere to be... to be free. I didn't care go to England. I know I had cousins, uncle in England. Before the war I hear where I had somebody, so I did the Red Cross check, you know, and tried to help him.

[Harold] So the displaced persons refugees, is it right that they put their names on lists ...

Yeah.

[Harold] ... to sign up for different countries and whoever called ...

Not countries. Cit... Cities.

No. He's saying for you to move from the displaced persons camp, for you to live somewhere, you could choose what countries you wanted to go to? You had ... there were lists of choices that you had?

[Harold] And whoever called ... whoever called first ...

Is that how that works? Or did they just send people to different countries, or did you get a choice of where you wanted to go? Do you remember that?

They didn't give me a list where to go.

Okay. Do you ... did you ...

I just ... I just ...

You had a choice of where to go?

I just signed up who called... you know when I get out from there, We want to go to some nice places, good countries. America was good. Britain was good. Israel was good.

So how did you end up in ...

My girlfriend ... my girlfriend, she had ... she had a boyfriend and a girlfriend and the girlfriend and her stick together and another boy and girl and they all stick together. And they went to Israel because it was the first boat. I think they came by boat. They were the first ones coming.

[Harold] How did you get to America?

And they, they came.

[Harold] How did you get to America? You and your husband, Ben. How did you get to America?

Aunt Helen had an uncle here ... and I met... Uncle Leo. Had a Uncle ...

So your brother-in-law had an uncle?

His father ... his brother ... his uncle.

[Harold] His uncle? Okay.

Yeah.

[Harold] He was in the United States?

No. Yeah. He was in the United States.

[Harold] Okay.

And he made papers to come over to the United State.

[Harold] Okay.

So he brought ... he brought you and Ben and Ben's sister and her ...

He brought Helen and Leo.

Okay. Helen and Leo is your sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

Right.

Your... Ben's sister- and brother-in-law.

He brought ... he brought them to the United States.

And what did you think of Kansas City when you got here?

When I came to ...

[Harold] You came through Ellis Island? You saw the Statue of Liberty?

Yeah. I sit down and kissed it too!

[Harold] Did you?

And the ground!

When you got off the boat?

Uh huh.

[Harold] How long did it take to get over on the boat? How long was the trip?

I don't ... I think a week. I don't remember.

[Harold] Did you get seasick?

I wasn't seasick. Ben, Ben was seasick. Bronia was on that boat too. And I looked ... I looked after the sick ones.

[Harold] Because you weren't sick, huh?

You took care of them?

[Harold] What was the name of the boat?

Ernie Pyle.

Ernie Pyle?

[Harold] *Ernie Pyle?* Okay.

I was going into su... into supper. You know, on the ship, [?] boat.

[Harold] Ship.

And then, every time we went to eat, were going to eat, a-h-h-h-h-h!

[Harold] Didn't stay down, huh?

Couldn't eat nothing. Not me. He couldn't eat nothing. Some other people couldn't eat nothing. So I used to steal Harold Greenberg's little boy, Stanley Greenberg, [I had to give him?] to the kitchen to get some oranges, because a sick person cannot eat nothing. Nothing else to eat. And I tell the cook ... I had translator or he knew what ... I had a little boy to give me some oranges.

Oh, you took Stanley with you so that the cook thought that you were getting it for the baby?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay. So, you ... so you ...

And I got ... I got it for the sick ones. Ben couldn't eat. Somebody else couldn't eat. So they ate oranges.

And that helped?

[Harold] Okay. So you came to Kansas City. You got settled in. Did different organizations help you settle in, find apartments and jobs? Were there organizations that helped you get set up when you came to Kansas City? Where did you ... ?

We had ... we had committee that look ... that looked after us.

[Harold] Okay. All right. Where did you live ... in an apartment or a house ... when you first came?

I lived with Aunt Helen because she came earlier than we did.

[Harold] So did she have a house or apartment?

She had an apartment.

[Harold] Okay.

Aunt Helen is your sister-in-law?

Sister-in-law.

Okay.

She lived in an apartment.

[Harold] Did she have children at that time?

Nuh-uh.

[Harold] Okay. And did you have children at that time?

No, we didn't have any children.

Did you know any English when you came over?

Translation, translated.

How did you learn English?

Used to go to night schools. I used to work, then from the col... from the people I worked together, picked up here and there. Night school. Hat, house, chair, things like that. And there ... no, drawing, chair and a house and a hat. So we looked at the hats and the houses and hankies and things like that.

[Harold] Pictures, huh?

Pictures.

Yeah.

What were your biggest ... what was the hardest thing about adjusting to this life? What was the hardest thing for you to ...

When I go someplace, I didn't know ... I couldn't find my place to get home. I used to ride in the ... I was in the United States a week. [?]

In Kansas City, you mean? You were here?

And they were also here in Kansas City [?], with the Lutzk family.

[Harold] Did he own a company?

Huh?

[Harold] Did he own a company?

No. He was a foreman in the factory.

A foreman?

[Harold] A foreman?

Yeah. Foreman.

[Harold] What kind of factory?

Tailor.

[Harold] Oh. Did you work there?

So after a week, he used to pick me up every day, six o'clock. Find me a job. Clean the treads.

[Harold] The seams?

Seams.

Finishing work?

Cut off seams. Clean it up. And tailor them. Presser. From the presser used to go.

[Harold] Through the process ...

Yeah.

[Harold] ... to fix the garments?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay. How long did you do that kind of work? How long did you do that?

A year.

[Harold] Okay. What did you do after that? Do you remember where you worked after that?

I didn't work. This was my first job. In the factory doing that.

Did you have any friends at that time that you met here?

No... Not at the beginning. First you have ... I used to go on the streetcar.

To work?

No. He would take me for a long. I knew exactly how long it was taking me. He was picking me up six o'clock.

Sol did?

Yeah.

[Harold] In the morning?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay.

Okay. So you did that for a year.

I don't remember how long I was doing that.

[Harold] Did ...

Then

[Harold] what year were you married? What year were you and Ben married?

'47.

[Harold] 1947?

'49?

'47

When were you born? About '49?

Uh-huh.

[Harold] Okay. Did you have another ceremony at some time?

How many weddings did you have all together?

One.

Okay. So how many weddings did you have all together?

I had a Germany wedding.

Do you know what year that was?

'46?

Okay.

I think it was '46.

Okay.

[Harold] What year did you come to the States?

'47.

[Harold] Okay. And you had your second wedding ceremony in the United States?

In the United States, I want to get married because they didn't count the other wedding from Germany.

Were there rules about coming over to this country?

Yeah.

You had to be a certain age or ... ?

I don't....

Okay.

No, I was young enough to come ... I was old enough to come to the United States.

But were they ... could you be married and come over? Or did you have to be single?

I don't remember. I think you had to be sing... I don't remember.

Yeah, you do.

No, I don't remember. [?]

I know, I know... But wasn't there a requirement that you had to be a ...

This was a ... this was a ... This was a camp.... This was a camp for

... and listen.

... camp for chil... orphan's children.

And you couldn't be married, correct, to come over?

They didn't say nothing to me. I never was told I couldn't be married [?] of the orphan's children.

Okay.

[Harold] You and Ben couldn't live together because your marriage wasn't recognized, right? That's why you got married again?

Yeah.

[Harold] Okay.

Okay. So you were married in Kansas City. Do you know ... do you remember who did the ceremony here? Was it a rabbi or a ...

I think Rabbi Solomon.

Okay.

[Harold] Where did that wedding take place? Where was that?

In, in, in, I think ...

[Harold] Was it still in the Kansas City area?

Yeah, we were in the Kansas City area.

Okay.

[Harold] Kansas City, Kansas?

Was it in a synagogue?

Yeah. Rabbi... I remember now. Rabbi Miller and Rabbi Solomon married us off.

Okay. And what synagogue was that? Do you remember?

I don't remember.

Okay. And did you have a lot of friends there for the second ceremony?

No.

Okay. Did you have anybody there?

I don't remember.

Okay. Any ... were there any other survivors there that you remember?

I don't remember this either.

Okay.

[Harold] You said you went to ... you got kind of settled in. You got a job. And you went to school.

Went to night school. In the daytime...

[Harold] Night school? Where was that? Where did you go?

Jewish Community Center on Linwood, Linwood Boulevard.

[Harold] Okay.

Jewish Community Center.

[Harold] They had teachers there that would teach you ... draw the pictures and you learn the words and that kind of thing?

In the school there's classes for learning. A like ... words ... sentence ...

Vocabulary?

Yeah. Uh-huh.

[Harold] And how long were you here when you became a citizen? A United States citizen.

Five years, it takes, to be a citizen.

[Harold] So you went through the classes ...

Yeah.

[Harold] ... for that?

Uh-huh.

[Harold] Okay. How was that experience?

Passed my citizen papers. The first time, I flunked.

[Harold] Okay.

So, I liked United States, so I worked harder that from my sleep, I used to talk.

[Harold] You tried harder to pass the test? Okay.

From my sleep, I used to know everything by heart.

[Harold] So you took it again and ...

I was accepted.

[Harold] Okay.

Good.

[Harold] Very good.

Ben was accepted the first time.

And do you remember some of the questions that were on the test?

No.

Anything? Okay. So over the years, what kind of jobs have you had since you've been here?

I worked a whole year since I came to the United States.

Working at ... doing what?

In the factory.

In the factory. What else?

So I did work in the factory.

Okay. But in the time that you've been here, you've been a factory worker. You've worked ...

All the time in the factory, and ...

[Harold] What other ... what other jobs have you done? What other kind of work have you done since you've been here ... in your life?

When I worked ... when I worked in the... when I worked in the factory ... we didn't have enough suits ... pants. They taught me how to sew vests.

[Harold] Okay.

Because I'm really not busy with, with suits. They taught me how to sew pants ... a vests... on the vests.

[Harold] Did that help you get a job somewhere else ... some other company or something?

No.

[Harold] Having that knowledge. Did you work ...

I wasn't looking for anything.

[Harold] In later years, did you use that knowledge to any other kind of work like that?

No. I had a baby and I was a housewife.

[Harold] Did you go back to work?

They tell me to come back to work. I can bring my playpen there and the baby there and the old women take care of the baby.

[Harold] Okay.

But I never done that ... going back.

[Harold] What ... did you have other jobs besides that? As a kind of volunteer work you did or anything?

Not at that time. I took care children. They would not ... they didn't have a home with the baby-sitter, so I took them in and I baby-sit them.

So you brought kids into your home.

I brought children to my house.

And baby-sat. So you were like a day care, sort of. So, you had ...

Somebody had a ... had the baby... somebody had the baby they used to bring over to my house and I used to take care of them while the mother was in the hospital and the child didn't charge them nothing because we didn't have any parents, to call parents to come watch my baby and take it home. So I was ...

So you would baby-sit for the older siblings while the mother was having a new baby?

Right... Any kind.

Right. And then you had ... these people would have kids and they would play with your kids?

Yeah.

How many kids did you have? How many kids do you have?

I have kids in the neighborhood. Kids would come over.

And how many kids of your own do you have?

Three children.

And they are? Who are they?

Harold Edelbaum, Helen Edelbaum and Estelle Edelbaum.

Okay. And they were all born here in the United States?

They all were born in Kansas City, United States, in Kansas City, of America.

Okay. Were any of your kids named after anybody?

My son was married after ... was named after my husband... my father.

Your father?

Hersh Kibash. And Helen was named after my mother, Hinde Kibash... Edelbaum.

So Hinde...

Hinde Fayga..

Was Helen Fay?

Yeah. There was Estelle May.

And I'm named after who?

After my.. my sis .. my sis... after my ...

Husband

... husband's sister.

Two sisters?

Uh-huh. Zelda. After my husband's sister, Zelda, right?

Your husband's sister... Stella

And I used to take care of Mrs. Nussbaum child... used to go to the hospital to have her child, and I would take care of another people's children. I would take care of...

So these are also survivor's kids ...

Yeah.

... that you took care of?

Yeah.

And, so you all were so of your own ... each other's families?

Right.

Okay. Good.

[Harold] When did you think about having ... were you affected by having children? What did you think about having our own children?

I wasn't affected by my own children.

What did you ...

[Harold] What did you think of being a family again ... having a family again?

I always missed my parents. And my children missed out on grandmas and grandpas and uncle.

Did having children in some way kind of make up for people that you lost?

Yeah. Yeah. Not many, but the best I could do.

And do any of your kids look like anybody that you ...

Yeah. Harold looks more like my father ... my uncle. Harold looks the picture of my father. Helen looks the picture of sister's Uncle... Aunt Helen's daughter.. sister.

Helen looks like who?

Aunt Helen's ...

The daughter.

Daughter. And Estelle looks like my mother. She looks like me and she looks my mother. When I saw them bring her into the room, I thought I could see my mother, the first time, and the same thing with my granddaughter. When she had ...

Joanna?

No. When she had a child ...

Which granddaughter? When your granddaughter was born? Your first granddaughter?

Amy.

Amy was born?.

When Amy born... They brought her in. And she ... she looked exactly like my mother again. Just like my mom.

(Tape Counter at 600)

[Harold] How many grandchildren do you have?

I have five grandchildren.

[Harold] Do you have any great grandchildren?

Yeah. I have five.

No. Great grandchildren. How many do you have?

One.

And is it a boy or a girl?

Grandchild...

Who is your great grandchild? Your great grandchild.

Benjamin?

Benjamin is who?

Helen's.

Helen's grandson? And who is Benjamin named after?

Benjamin is named after my husband. Ben and Benjamin. And the other grandpa, too.

That's right.

He was named after.

Okay. Okay.

[Harold] Do you remember when you first talked about your war experiences to the family? Do you remember when ...

(End of Tape 2, Side 1)

(Beginning of Tape 2, Side 2)

[Harold] Do you remember when you first started talking about your war experiences to the family or other people ... and how you were affected by that?

I can ... I used to always crying. And I couldn't talk.

[Harold] Couldn't talk about it?

Yeah. I did talk, but I couldn't talk.

[Harold] It was disturbing to you to bring it up?

Yeah. Yeah.

[Harold] Yeah.

Very emotionally.

Okay.

[Harold] Yeah.

And so how old were your children when they first found out about what you'd been through? Do you know?

They couldn't understand what I was ... when they were young. They couldn't ...

Okay.

[Harold] Did your husband ... did Benny kind of bring it up more? Did he talk about it more?

No.

At first? How did your kids learn about what you and Ben went through? Did you tell them or did Ben tell them?

I think Ben, Ben was telling them.

Okay. And how did they react to it?

[Harold] Do you remember how they reacted to it?

No.

Okay. Do you talk about it now?

No. I don't talk about it at all.

Okay. Maybe sometimes?

No. At least I don't ... I don't wanna. I don't talk about it anymore.

Okay. But do you find it easier to talk about it today than you did back then?

Yeah.

Okay.

[Harold] You'd done ... you did an interview previously.

Yeah.

[Harold] A videotaped interview. How did you feel about doing that? What did you think when you did that?

I feel better now I did.

[Harold] Do you think that was a good thing ... worthwhile thing to do?

Yeah.

[Harold] Why, why was that? Why do you think that was a good thing to do?

I help to get my emotions like I used to have.

Okay. And do you think it was worthwhile to put your story on tape, on a videotape back then?

[Harold] And to do this now? To do this project now?

I agreed at that time. I was very upset. Made me sick. But I cannot do it. Makes me sick.

Okay.

[Harold] How does your war time situation affect you today? How are you affected by that today?

Emotionally... Mentally...

In what way?

[Harold] How's that?

Because I went through a lot.

And is there anything about that time that comes up in your day-to-day life?

From beginning, I used to ... I used to dream that the Germans are here and I am running away from them. They're chasing me. And I used to run out from bad, just too far from the bad. They're chasing me and I'm running.

[Harold] Like a nightmare?

Uh-huh. In my nightmares.

[Harold] Do you still do that or is it better?

It's better now. But from beginning, there was a lot of nightmares. And I had psychiatrists.

And other things have happened today that remind you of that time? Do you ever look and see something that reminds you that time or ...

Well, I see now that the Nazis are back here again.

Like when you see things on the news?

Yeah.

Okay.

[Harold] Have you ever stopped believing in God?

Yeah. I lost faith in God.

[Harold] When was this? Do you still believe that way or is that ...

In my younger years. I always said from beginning, you know, when we were liberated, later on, that there isn't a God because... God... God couldn't do the things and not do something about it. There is no God. Separate kids from family. Breaking up families.

And do you still not believe in God? Or did that change ...

It took time ... it took time. But I get ... I got my ... want to say marbles back. That I have faith ... having such faith in God.

Having faith in God?

Yeah.

Okay.

I always do.

[Harold] Do you belong or go to synagogue or temple now?

Go to synagogue.

Which one?

[Harold] Where do you go?

Do you go to Beth Torah?

Yeah.

And how often do you go?

I [?] once a week. We both go to Beth Torah.

[Harold] Okay. You celebrate the holidays, like that?

A lot of them I remember... I celebrated ... till I don't remember ...a lot of them I don't celebrate because I don't remember. I don't celebrate it because I don't remember.?

[Harold] Do you have a favorite Jewish holiday?

Today?

Sukkah...

Sukkos?

Sukkos.

[Harold] You like that holiday more?

I mean, today, in the present. Is there a time ...

[Harold] What ... what ...

No, it's around *Sukkos* now. Do you have a favorite holiday in this time that you like? As an adult, is there a favorite holiday that you have or ...

[Harold] Passover or Hanukkah or ...

I like Hanukkah.

You like Hanukkah?

[Harold] You like Hanukkah?

Uh-huh.

Okay. Are there some things that you used to do with your family that you do now when you celebrate holidays? Are there any traditions that you remember that you used to do with your parents that you do now with your kids?

Get back together with my family ... my family, my children, you know, with my children.

So getting together and just the fact of being together.

Yeah.

All right. And... Do you think you were able to adjust pretty well after the war to a normal life?

Yeah. I think I am.

I think so too.

I adjusted to normal life.

And how do you ... what ... how do you attribute that? What do you ...

[Harold] What has helped you do that? Or what things have helped you lead a normal life after everything you went through?

In God.

[Harold] Belief in God?

Believe in God.

[Harold] Does that help keep you strong?

Yeah. I always felt that strong. I didn't give up.

And do you feel maybe some of ... some of what your parents would teach you is inside of you and that's helped you become an adult and become the person that you are?

What?

Do you think that you have part of your parents within you?

Oh yeah? I have part of my family not to talk about anybody. And my mother used to teach me if you're ...she showed me a piece of floor and she said "You scrubbed it. Cleaned it. If you have nothing to do, clean it again. But don't go gossiping."

So instead of gossip, you stay busy and mind your own business. Okay.

Right, right.

[Harold] Are you glad that you ... Came to...

... came to America?

She used to say, "Wash the dishes. You wash the dishes. They're clean. Wash them again."

To keep you out of trouble from ...

From gossiping.

Okay.

[Harold] Are you glad you came to America? That you wound up in America?

I love... I love America. America been good to me.

[Harold] Do you think people take their freedom for granted?

Yeah. People take freedom for granted.

[Harold] And you think maybe they don't realize ...

... what they have?

Yeah. They don't appreciate ...

[Harold] ... what it's all about?

They don't even appreciate it yet. Some people don't appreciate what they got.

Do you think you kids appreciated what they have?

I think they do. They're good kids. They say good things. The parents didn't in doing and keep doing. And in every, in every little way. And I taught them to be like my mother. Go visit people in the hospital or in the old age home.

Okay. Very good. I want to thank you for your time. And I think this went very well. This concludes our interview of Dora Edelbaum on September 28, 1999. And thank you very much.

[END OF RECORDING]