EMILIE SZEKELY
January 18, 2000
Tape 1, Side A

Q: …and we're with Emilie Szekely in her home in Lexington, Kentucky. And my name is Arwen Donahue and we're going to be conducting an interview today about… well, we'll see how far we get. We're going to start with the birth and move on from there. And I just wanted to note for those who are listening to this tape, that there was an interview done with Mrs. Szekely by the Survivors of the Shoah Foundation in 1996 and we may be repeating some things that were discussed in that interview, but there may be some things that were discussed in that interview that we won't talk about today. So, Mrs. Szekely, why don't we start with you telling me your name at birth and your date of birth and where you were born?

A: I was born in Hungary, Budapest, in 1920, 16th of February, in Budapest.

Q: And your name at birth?

A: Klugman.

Q: Klugman.

A: Klugman.

Q: K L U G M A N?

A: Yeah, and in Russia they are writing, my cousin is Klegman, because "u" in Russia is "e". So he's writing a "u", but he's calling himself Klegman. But it is Klugman. Klugman, you know what this means in German?

Q: No.

A: German, *Klug* is "smart", man. [Laughing] That's the name. He was a smart man. I showed you their pictures. No?

Q: Yeah.

A: My parents' pictures.

Q: Now was your father, you mentioned in the other interview that your father was Russian. Did he have… of German extraction? Or, what was his…

A: The name is Klugman from Russia and there are a lot of Klugmans there. So I don't know how it came, where it, how, but he was born in Kiev. And his family was in Kiev until the First World War… Second World War. I'm sorry. Then they had to run, because the Germans were

there. Whoever was left from the family. He had two sisters and a brother there. The other brother was already on the front. And they had to run. So I never knew about it. A cousin who came five years ago to America, the painter, he was telling me the whole story. Why and how they had to run. And they went past Odessa and they lived in a small village in a house, he said, what didn't have floor. It was nothing, just dust on the floor. And they managed to escape, but they had very, very hard times. His parents were alive that time, but the father and the mother, they all died. Actually they say that it was from hunger they died, but I don't know actually what was the reason they died, because they had very, very hard times. And after that my cousin, who had his mother… no, I'm sorry. The cousin, he has a sister, who is very, very sick. She's here too, in Boston. And him and the sister and the husband, and she had a daughter the same age as George is and a son, they settled down in Odessa. So, when the doors were opening here that the Russians can come, he didn't think about it. He was just writing me, "Save my daughter," who lived in Moscow and had two little children. I told you that story. No?

Q: I don't think so.

A: She had two little, beautiful daughters and her husband was Jewish. And she was a half-Jew, because her mother wasn't Jewish. And the mother was a practicing Russian Orthodox, so she, I think she brainwashed her. But she's supposed to come to America, too. She was on the quota, too. In fact, they are still bothering me that, "Where is she?" I says, "Many times, I've told you that she won't come, never. Please cross her off because she is taking somebody's place." They lived with the husband's mother, whose husband died, he was injured in the war. I don't know, I think he lost his leg. He went underground with the Russians. I don't know that whole story, but I know that they had an apartment in Moscow and the son lived with the mother. He went to school in Moscow and he is an engineer. She, he met my cousin in school, who went for engineering, too. Civil engineers. They met there and he knew that she's half-Jew, but she promised him everything, everything what you want. If they are going to have children they are going to be brought up as Jews. And then she hated Communism, she just couldn't stand it. I didn't know why, but when I found out it was too late already. Because she couldn't go to church. So they came to America. The first Hanukkah, the television came here to our house and took pictures from them, because they were here for the first Hanukkah. So they are here, they were here for six years. Now it was my husband's, my son's birthday, November 20th, they came six years ago.

Q: So they came to Lexington? Or…?

A: They came to Lexington. I was fighting for them that they should come here, because I didn't have… only parents should bring children. But the mother had a brother in Brooklyn and the brother wanted them to go to Brooklyn. And I got his name and I spoke to him and I said, "Look, I know that you love your sister, but the children, they would be much, much better off here in Lexington to bring up children." Finally he gave in and the Federation did it for me. They brought them here. They were waiting for them with a three-bedroom apartment, because the two mothers should come after them. So, they had a three-bedroom apartment. And the television was on the airport, when the first families came. It was a big deal. And Ana was out of her mind that she will have some relatives…

Q: Ana is your granddaughter?

A: Ana is the youngest. And there were two, young children, beautiful two children.

Q: Can you say… before you go on, just, can you say how they're related to you? And what their names are?

A: My cousins…

Q: Uh huh.

A: My cousin's daughter, my first cousin, my father's brother's daughter.

Q: Okay. And what was her name?

A: Galina.

Q: Galina…?

A: Galina Bashikis *(ph)*. Bashikis. My son, by coincidence got him a job with the Gray Construction Company, because she had a student, he had a student in one of the schools, who was his student and then she became a teacher. And he went back with his children there. He goes always, one semester he takes his class to schools and they are… Adopt a School, that's the name of it. And they are teaching there, but they are just students, not graduate students and he's observing them before they make their lesson plans and they have to show it to him. And he's running from class to class. And one day, she came to that school and she said, "Does anybody know somebody who has connections to a construction company?" And that teacher, he says, "My fiancé," one of the Grays' son. He says, "My fiancé." So, from that time on they hired him, and he's a person who, he didn't mind what kind of job they gave him. He did very hard job. And he loves the construction. He loves to see. He was in, I don't know how many buildings he builded. He was already a big shot there. When they got their visa to come to America. And he work day and night for an apartment in Moscow. In the middle of Moscow the apartment was ready and they would be separated from the mother-in-law. And they would have a beautiful apartment there. And the visa was starting to expire, so my cousin said, "It is not worth, what is thousands of thousands dollars that apartment. It doesn't worth, you have to go." He was in Odessa, but he helped them. He came to Moscow and helped them to pack and they came. And she was very happy. And when she got to the apartment she couldn't believe it. You know, they lived in two small rooms there, so many people, four. I mean two children and the couple and the grandmother. And she was very happy. One day… she sent, before she came, she sent a hundred and twenty packages to my name, because she didn't know where to send it and they were all Russian books. And I said, "That woman is crazy. She needs American books. Why is she sending the Russian books?" But all, you know, Dostoevsky, whatever. The children, the big one… the little one didn't go to school yet, but the big one went to school, to the same school where my husband got the job from the teacher. It was in their neighborhood. And she spoke beautiful English already and she had… when the grandmother came the following year in January, his mother came. She didn't come, the other one. And she was

helping her and she was translating and answering the telephone. And then I started to see it. I started to invite them for holidays, and she came. She sat at the table five minutes and after five minutes she excused herself and went to the porch to play with the children. I didn't think about nothing, about it. I says, "It's a little strange, but okay if she wants it." When it come the second year, she said, "I love you, but please don't invite us for the holidays." Still I didn't think it was something wrong there. Then she met a couple, I still don't know who they are, a Christian couple, who went every week to Cincinnati. And she got very friendly with them. And she went with the two children and the reason was, because she went for his American degree, what he got, no problem. He got his American degree, but when the children are home, he cannot study. And we go there. It's more things to do there. We take them to the zoo and blah, blah, blah. One day they come home, it was probably a year later and the father is asking them, "How was the zoo?" And the big one said, "What kind of zoo?" He says, "You didn't go to the zoo?" She says. "No, we went to the church." So he got very upset that she does it behind his back. Very, very upset. And I don't know whether they knew it… he was married eleven years, but they knew each other five years already from the school. And I don't know the situation, because the grandmother was there with them. But he was traveling a lot. The company was sending him constantly, because they mostly work outside from Lexington. They build big, big factories, not housing. And he was always sent out. One, two years after they were here, she says, "I want to go home for the summer, to visit my mother." I says, "Isn't it easier to bring your mother here?" She says, "No, my mother wouldn't like it here." She packed. And she liked me. She was working in the St. Joseph Hospital, though she was an engineer and she went for courses to… computer courses to the community college. But that job, cleaning job, she took at night, that she should be with the children during the day. What was the job? She was calling me on the phone constantly for hours. She says, "I am cleaning the clean stuff, the offices…" and she says, "It's… in an hour I am ready." Perfect. Salary was perfect, everything was perfect. Two years, right two years after in the summer, it was August. And sometimes I was taking her, I was driving her to work. They didn't live close here, but I picked her up. They lived in, it's Heritage Village, near Henry Clay High School. That's where all the Russians lived at that time. I'm sorry. I picked her up and I took her to work. And she says, "I want to tell you something, because I love you. But you must swear that you won't tell it to Mischa." Mischa, Michael is her husband. I thought, "My God what it could be that I cannot tell it to him?" So, I says, "Okay, I swear." And I am driving. I almost made an accident what I heard. She says, "I'm not coming back. I took a ticket, round trip, but I'm not coming back. I don't want my children to be brought up here. I want them to be brought up as Russians," and it meant… because she never mentioned Jew. She mentioned Americans and Russians. I says, "You are talking about Americans as Jews and Russians," right away I knew, "…as the Russian Orthodox Church?" She says, "No, no. I don't mean that." I says, "Yes you mean it. You mean it." The husband was… I don't know where. And he came home, and it was the little one's birthday. And she made a birthday party and I was there. And they're supposed to leave the following day to New York. And the father, who lived in Boston, was visiting… we have a summer home in the country, in the Catskills and he was with my son there. And he's supposed to go to the airport, help her to go to the airport in New York. So, I said to myself, I just couldn't believe it. I says, "Why are you doing it? How can you look in your husband's eye and pack?" I don't know, everything she took, what she could. Six packages, because they took two, two, two, everyone of them and they were little kids. She says, "If he would be better to me…" I says, "Better? He lives for you. He's such a father and working like unbelievable that you should have everything.

And you say better?" Better was that he didn't let them go to church. That was the worst. And she told it in the hospital that if I don't come back, because my husband is bad to me. So, what shall I do? I swore. I cannot tell it to Mischa. I called my cousin in the country. I says, "Look, I swore that I don't tell it to Mischa, but I didn't swear that I'm not telling it to you. Your daughter won't come back. Please don't help her to go on that plane. At least the children should be saved and taken away, because she kidnapped them." She said, "That's… it's impossible. It's impossible." And when she didn't come back after a month, she went for a month, and I said, I told it to Mischa. She says, "I don't believe you. She's the most honest woman in the world. If you would tell it to me right at that time, I wouldn't believe you, that she is doing it to me." And she did it. She kidnapped the two kids.

Q: Tell me, Mischa was the one who's actually related to you?

A: No. She.

Q: She's the one who's actually related to you.

A: She is my cousin's. But I am… they have no one here. He has a brother, he's in Australia. And he is here now with his mother. He doesn't want to hear about it, to get married, because he lives for his children. I says, "Mischa, you are a smart man. You lost your children." Every week, he is calling them on the phone. And two years ago, she let them come here for a month. They came alone by plane. And she came the last two weeks, because my cousin was begging her from Boston, that "Maybe I see you the last time. I am in not a good condition and please come." She came. Before they came, he bought a house. They lived in an apartment. They bought the house, that the children should have separated rooms. It's a three-bedroom house near Man O'War. A new house. He makes nice money, so he could, he got the mortgage. And the children they have their rooms and they have their beds there what I bought them that time. The mattresses were brand new. And they have their… and even today, it's they name on the door. They put they name on the door. What… where do they have it in Moscow? They have two bathrooms. They give one to the children. And they live like princesses here. They loved it.

Q: Let me ask you a couple of questions, so I can make sure I'm understanding. She converted… did she convert from Judaism to Russian Orthodoxy?

A: She wasn't.

Q: She was raised as a Russian…

A: She was raised nothing, because it was Communism. She couldn't be raised with religion. But when Gorbachev took over they were allowed to go to the church. And when she saw it, she already didn't want to come to America. She was the one who broke, broke, completely broke off the family. She wanted to come. She was the one. And she was telling me that she thought that she wouldn't come anymore, but she said, "That's not the right thing to do. That's not an honest thing to do, that I started it and I should let them go." But that was an honest thing what she did. You know? She wanted it. She wanted to come because of the church, because she

couldn't go to church there. They have here a Greek Orthodox, but that's not good for her. Anyway.

Q: Let's rewind a little bit. We started getting onto this because you were talking about your family that was in Russia. And you didn't know any of that family other than your father's brother? During the war or before?

A: No, I knew before the war about the whole family, because when my father was alive they corresponded constantly. And we, from Czechoslovakia, because I was brought up in Czechoslovakia, we sent them food. So, I knew they exist. And I remember when my grandmother died, my father's mother, because I remember how he was crying. I was about, I don't know, eight years old. And I remember when she died. I don't remember when the father died. And I knew about him very well, because he speaks… no. Then my uncle was writing him constantly…

Q: Your uncle was writing who?

A: Writing to him. My uncle was my father's brother, to whom I wanted to come to America. He was a pharmacist. And he came with the last ship in 1940 to America. And then he was writing him. And after 50 years, 50 years, he went back to visit. And he was telling me about…

Q: I'm sorry, but you're talking about… he was writing to whom? To his father? When you said your uncle was writing to him, who was he writing to?

A: To Izzy, his name is Izzy, my cousin who is the painter. He was writing to him and then he went to visit. And he had two sisters, two sisters alive at the time and him, who was the nephew. He was alive. So, after 50 years. He went back twice, because he went alone and then he took his wife one year. And so, I knew everything about him. And I knew that he was a big artist there, but he worked for the state, Communism. They always had work, but they had to do what they told them to do. So, he was a real artist and then he had a little studio separate from the house. And he painted what he wanted, because his dream… he loves Odessa and he wanted to paint Odessa as he knew it once. And he did it. They didn't know about it, because he did the commercials for everything, for the ships and for operas and everything. His name was everywhere because he did the commercials. So, I knew about him. Now, when my uncle died in 1973, I took over the writing because it was no one else. And I started to write Russian, but it was very hard for me, because I never spoke Russian. But I wrote Russian and I understood Russian. So, with the dictionary, I wrote him Russian. And one day, he said, "Don't struggle, I speak English." And from then on, I was sending him English letters. And then he had an exhibition in Moscow and he was narrating it in English. And he sent us the tape. And we couldn't use the tape here. I had to take it to downtown. I don't know what's the name of the place. Anyway, where they re-did it. It was a beautiful… I gave it to him when he came. I gave it back to him. I says, "I have you, and I have your paintings, and you should have that tape." And I read in the Hadassah paper, last month, that his paintings are still… somebody, you know they have articles about the world, travelers and it was from Odessa and they mentioned his name, that his paintings are still there, but he's not there anymore. So, that was my Russian family.

Q: Okay, tell me your father's full name and…

A: Mikhail, he was Michael, Mikhail Klugman, because we never knew Klegman. Klugman. Mikhail Klugman.

Q: And tell how he came to leave Russia.

A: He was from First World War… it is not on the tape? No.

Q: It is, but I have more questions.

A: In First World War there were two brothers. The older brother was already in the war in 1914, before….1914, yeah. And he was a pharmacist, too. Both of them were pharmacists. And he was captured and they didn't know about him, where is he. And one day, when my father was called in and he was captured in Prague and they took him behind the frontier to a pharmacy and there he meets his brother. And he met his brother and they never separated. They didn't want to go back after the war because there were the biggest pogroms in Kiev and they didn't want to go back there. And it was an international agreement that they can stay in the countries where they were captured. Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia was one, Austro-Hungarian empire. So, after a while when they were there, they took them to Hungary to a chemical factory, both of them, together. I have, I think there's a picture there, too, about them in Russia uniforms. They took them to Hungary and under the war my mother was working there in the office, in that place. And that's how they met and fell in love. And my mother's family was very, very upset. Nothing against him, it was nothing against him, but they were very worried that he's a Russian citizen, what's going to be? From then on, I think it's there. No?

End of Tape 1, Side A

Tape 1, Side B

Q: First actually, can you say what your father's brother's name was?

A: Jacob Klugman.

Q: And so they are living nearby one another and they ended up in Czechoslovakia.

A: Yes, because they had to, because it was Communism in 1919 in Hungary for a little while only and they said that no matter what, every Russian is a Communist, Jew or non-Jew. And they put – oh I have a picture here. It's very interesting. They made a concentration camp. They builded near Russia… near Budapest and they put all the Russians there. My mother was married in 1919, the beginning of 1919. And they put them there. They didn't know what's going to happen to them. My uncle was there. He wasn't married. My mother had a cousin, who was a lawyer and he came there one day. It was already May, middle of 1919, because she was pregnant with me. By the way, she got pregnant. She was pregnant with me. And she said, he said, "You can go out from here only one way, if you sign that you never come back to Hungary." So, my mother, who was Hungarian, she had to sign that she never comes back to Hungary. It was easy to sign it for my father and my uncle, but they had to sign it. So, where should they go? In 1920, Czechoslovakia it was, the Czech map is Czech, Moravia, Slovakia, Carpathan. The Carpathan part, what was Hungary, after the war, the Czechs got it. My mother had a second cousin there and when she heard about it, what happened, she says, "Come to us." They were well-to-do people. "Come to us." So, they went there to Czechoslovakia. It was at that time Czechoslovakia in 1920. When it came to me, to give birth, my mother got permission through that lawyer to go home and I was born in my grandmother's house, but they didn't have an apartment. They did have… they lived with those relatives, so they left me there with my grandmother and my mother's sisters. She had three sisters. One of them was married, two were not married and a brother, who was never married. He was a bachelor. Because my grandmother was a widow when she was 34 years old, and she had five children. The son took over and he was working for the family. And that's why he never got married, until the sisters got married and whatever. He was already 50 years old and he didn't get married. So we lived there and 22 months after I was born, my mother was again – she was pregnant. She gave birth to my sister. The same thing happened. She went home with special papers and she was born there in my grandmother's house. By that time they had already an apartment and they took me together with my little sister back to Czechoslovakia. So.

Q: Okay. What was your sister's name?

A: Anna. But she was two "n's" and she didn't want two "n". My daughter-in-law, she didn't want two "n". Not because of my sister, but she had a grandmother, whom she didn't like, and she was Anna. So, that's why she's with one "n", Ana, but she's named after my sister. And the big one, Ilona. That's a real Hungarian name. She's named after my mother's youngest sister, who saved my life. That's in there, I think. So, Ilona is named after her. And Jacob, the boy is named after my uncle, who was in America. But she has an uncle, too, my daughter-in-law. And she didn't want him to be named Jacob, because she didn't like – she doesn't like her

family. That's the trouble here. She doesn't like her mother. She never got along with the mother. That's the big trouble and that's why she cannot get along with me because she doesn't want to hear mother. Only she's the mother. And that's the problem. So. But we manage to give his, the name Jacob, because she liked my uncle. She knew him and she liked him.

Q: Tell me about your early childhood, and your earliest memories.

A: I remember from kindergarten on. I went right away to Czech school. Kindergarten, elementary school, gymnasium. I wanted to be a pharmacist. And they had two kind of… my father wanted one of us, at least, to be a pharmacist. And we had two kinds of gymnasiums, very strict schools in Czechoslovakia. All the professors were from Prague. And there were two kinds, one where you had to learn Latin, because every prescription was Latin and if you wanted to be a doctor or pharmacist you had to go to that gymnasium. So I went to… both of us went. I don't even know what she wanted to be, because she was unbelievable smart, much smarter than I was. She was always worried about me, my sister, because it was only 22 months between us. And when I went to first class, I got whooping cough for six months. So I had to repeat the first class, so we were always together. We sat together. Here they don't let you do it. We were always together and everybody thought that we were… I don't know. Because we were dressed the same and they thought that we are twins, but we weren't because it was 22 months between us. But we were together always in school. But she was a worrier always about me. I remember when she woke me up in the morning and let me repeat the lesson plan, lesson, what we had to do, you know. She was always worried about me. I was a good student, but to her it came very easy. To me, I had to work for it. And it was a very, very close family. I just, I cannot, cannot tell you. When they met, my father and mother on the street it was always like, you know, they were married yesterday. Very, very close. My mother was like a friend to us. With everything you could go to my mother and ask everything what you wanted and you got the right answer. I was a very, very naïve girl, very naïve. And one girl was once telling me that if you kiss somebody you can get pregnant, that kind of a business. So I always went to my mother. I says, "Is it true?" I don't know what grade was it. But with everything…when I went on a date and I came home, I went to their bedroom, I sat on the bed and I told them everything what happened. That kind of a close family we were. And that's why I cannot understand today's generation, because it was so different. When I said to my granddaughter that I went for, for four years I had a boyfriend, a boy friend, friend, nothing happened between us. And for one year, for one year, he didn't even kiss me, because he said he's very afraid that if he's going to kiss me, I'm going to leave him, because of my personality. He was an unbelievable, very, very beautiful boy and he left a very wealthy girl because of me. He loved me very much, but I was so naïve that I didn't think that I love him. But it was a beautiful, wonderful feeling that every week he came. We met twice a week, Saturday and Sunday. Every week he came and his hands were behind his back and he brought me – because he knew I loved the… what are the little blue flowers?

Q: Forget-me-nots?

A: Very, very little.

Q: Forget-me-nots?

A: They are not forget me… anyway…

Q: Violets?

A: Violets. Winter, summer, always, always when he came, he had the violets. And it was a wonderful feeling to know that you have someone to go out with to the movies. We had five o'clock teas there. It was a very nice place where young people got together. And then he started to be called to the Army. And when he was called to the Army he was somewhere always close, so he eloped. He came home to see me on the weekends. And everybody was telling me that he's looking at me like he loves me. And I was just laughing. I didn't realize it. I didn't realize it. After four years when I met my husband and he was already somewhere in Russia, somewhere in labor camp, him. And he wrote me and I wrote him. And I wrote him that what happened with my family and I'm going to get married, because I need to change my name. And when I wrote that letter I thought I'd die. Then I knew that I loved him. That feeling, I never, never forget. Such a naïvete. Can you imagine that? Then I really…

Q: What was his name?

A: And he died. He died in Russia. He was Nicholas. He was Nicholas, actually it was Nicolash *(ph)* in Hungary. So it's Nicholas. They were a very wealthy family. His father had a pawn shop. And he had a sister, who was teaching piano. And we never spoke about marriage because he always said, he spoke already English at that time. And one day, in 1938, the Hungarians took back that part of Czechoslovakia. So we were in trouble, but we children didn't realize it that we are in trouble, only my parents. And it was terrible. And then he said to me, one day when he came home, he says, "Come with me to Israel." I looked at him. I says, "Without my parents?" And it was no Israel, young people went to Palestine. Maybe he would be alive, if he would gone. He wouldn't go without me. And I says, "I cannot go without my parents." And he came back from some place. And we were always discussing other girls, and who is the cute girl, who is the nice girl. And one day, I was already married, when I heard that he engaged, a year later, he engaged a girl, whom we were discussing, that she is a nice girl. But they never got married, because he died in… they took him to Russia, that transport labor camp. And he died. And he was the only one who died from his family, because he had a brother who survived in England and his parents and sisters survived there in Uzhgorod where we lived. People were hiding them. He was the only one who died from the family.

Q: What was his last name?

A: Gosh, I cannot believe it, that I don't remember.

Q: That's okay, that's okay. How old were you when you started dating him?

A: 18.

Q: So, you started dating him in 1938?

A: Yes, when the Hungarians came in, yes. And 1941, until 1941. In 1941, I met my husband in Budapest and he was already… I don't know which *lagers*. He was in labor camps, but they took them out from that part of Czechoslovakia. They took them out to Russia. In Hungary, they kept them in Hungary in labor camp. But that was part of, you know, that was _____ that time, they took, like over the border and they took them to camps. And when I wrote them that what happened, that I need another name. And he wrote me back a letter and he said, "If you would have told me, I would right away marry you." And his friend was alive, very good friend and I met him once. And he said that for one day he disappeared in the woods and they thought he is committing suicide because of me. But then he came and they took him and all of them died. So, it was a terrible thing, terrible that I was so naïve, that I didn't realize it that I am in love. Because I don't even know. I, I… we just kissed, that's it. And we wouldn't, he wouldn't dare to do nothing, because he said that, "Your personality is requiring such a…" –I cannot say it in English, that word. Respect. That he was afraid to kiss me for a year, because he thought that I am going to leave him if he is going to kiss me. I don't know whether I would leave him, because I was very naïve, after. So it was like Plato… nobody believed us. Because they said when we went to the movies and we were like four couples together and they said, "He doesn't look at the movies, he's just looking at you." It's an unbelievable thing, and when I am telling it to my grand-daughter, she's laughing, "Grandma, those are the nineties." You know? It took me a long, long time to realize that my granddaughter were not seven years with his boyfriend and nothing happened between them. I just… I couldn't imagine that something could happen… you know? I trusted her, because I was that way, so I thought, always I thought that Ilona is ours, from our family. And my husband always said to me, "No matter what, you always can count on Ilona." He was always telling me that. And if you leave something for the children, he said, "Jacob is a boy, he will always make it. Leave more for Ilona." That's what he always said. He was mistaken, too.

Q: Tell me, let's go back a little bit again. You mentioned that you had wanted to be a pharmacist. Did your parents support that? Were they supportive of that?

A: Yes, but I couldn't, in '38 it was finished. I couldn't go anymore to school.

Q: Was it unusual at the time, for a girl?

A: No, I don't think so. It was unusual, I knew one only, in the city, who was a pharmacist. But the Czech girls, I don't know what for, they took Latin. We had all the Czech girls in the gymnasium. And that was only… why would they take Latin? Only if they wanted to be doctors or pharmacists. But we didn't get so far, that's it. And I never knew what my sister, she still went one year to school when I was already in Budapest. Your back hurt you?

Q: I'm okay.

A: So, I just really don't know. I never, I don't know what she wanted to be. It's so interesting. I know she was 22 years younger, 22 months, and it was very hard to me, like, to go for my first ball. It was the medical students' ball. And at that time he was already in the Army and one medical student, who went in Prague to school, to medical school. They didn't have medical school there, now they have medical school there. And he was a short fellow and he knew that I

am going out with that boy, but he was in the Army, so he took me. He came home for vacation and he took me to the Medical Ball. I would never forget that occasion, because it was chaperoned. My mother was there and it was winter and we went on the sled with horses, you know, that kind of it. I would never forget it. And my aunt from Budapest… every year, every summer we went to Budapest, my mother's family, and they always dressed us up, the children. I remember that she gave me-- it was hers, but it fit me beautifully-- a light blue, long, velvet evening gown. And it was open, but it has a pearlerie *(ph)* what I could take off. I will never forget that day. And he never, he didn't let me dance with no one else. Other boys wanted to… no. The whole night he was dancing with me. It's a very interesting story. He became a pediatrician in Prague. And he went, I think that he went to German college. They had two colleges, Czech and German, he or the other one, the dermatologist went… one of them. The dermatologist, I had nothing to do with, because just my friend was marrying him and I know that he went to German college. But he went, I didn't know whether he is alive or not. And when we came to Brooklyn, because that's where we came, to my uncle. And one day I am walking on a street and I see a millinery shop, we had it in Hungary and I see the name. And I went in, and it was, because she had one in Uzhgorod in Czechoslovakia. Can I hold it for you?

Q: No, that's okay.

A: And she, that was his sister. And she says, "My God, you are alive. He's not married. You are married?" I said, "Yes, I am married." And he came to visit his sister from Prague and he wasn't married. And he called me on the phone one day and I didn't see him. My husband was very jealous and I wouldn't even dare to invite him. But my husband was working and I spoke about an hour on the phone with him. And he was asking me, how I am doing and what I am doing and so on and so on. And then he went back and he married a German woman. I heard that he stayed in Germany, but he got divorced, too from that. First time he got married. But he was in love with me. And I knew that, that he was in love with me, but I would never like kiss him or something. No way. [Phone rings.] Doesn't matter. If somebody knows me, they call me on my phone. Ana should be coming home. Maybe she is going, calling me. I don't know.

Q: We have a little more time left on the tape.

A: Okay.

Q: So, can you tell me a little bit more about your early childhood? First of all, were you attending, was this a public school you were attending?

A: Yes, public. We didn't have private schools. It was very interesting under the Czechs. We had religion in the school. Every religion had their own religion. We had the rabbi coming in once or twice a week and the Christians had they priest. And the girls were sitting on his lap, the Czech girls, you know? On the priest's lap. [Laughter.] Now, I know what it meant, but just unbelievable. After school we went to a German-speaking religious school and we learned more about religion. But it's funny that I know my teacher's name and I forgot what was, gosh, what was my boyfriend's name?

Q: You mean Nicholas?

A: I will remember it. No. The interesting thing is it was, what we learned, like praying, prayer, it was from my mother. My mother, she was forcing us, like every Friday night we had to pray and always even if we were crying that it's too much, too much. It was hard. Every week, one more page. And actually we learned to pray from my mother, not in school. We learned about religion from that rabbi. We didn't learn… we learned how to write, but that wasn't Hebrew, that was like Yiddish. But the alphabet was the same and it was a time that they had there a paper, newspaper, a Jewish paper. And I could read it without punctuation. I have no idea about nothing, that's why I never could go up to the Torah and read the Torah, because I have no idea. I have to learn, if I would want to read something, I would break my neck to learn it. You know? Because that's without punctuation, the Torah. But otherwise I read fluently, but I don't know what I'm reading.

Q: What language did you speak at home?

A: We spoke, first of all when they met, it was… my mother didn't speak Russian, he didn't speak Hungarian. Both of them spoke German, so it was German. The starting was German, until my father learned Hungarian. And it was German for a long, long time, because we had two hours of gymnasium, every day two hours German. And the Czechs hated the Hungarians. My mother never learned Czech. She just spoke German and Hungarian, because my grandmother spoke German. When she was a little girl, she came from Slovakia where the part, where German lived and she spoke German. Not the Jewish, German. And when we went on the street and we were walking and we saw a professor coming from the school, because those are professors in gymnasium. It was like, what should I tell you? It was eight gymnasium, so it's equal like four years college. Because after eight, elementary school and then it was a… *plipravka (ph)*, between gymnasium and a year where we were preparing to go to gymnasium. It was a year. So, and we saw some professor coming, so we right away started to pull my mother's skirt. German, speaking German, that they shouldn't know that we speak Hungarian. Because they… we spoke so well Czech, that they didn't believe that we are not Czechs. But then when they found out that we are not Czechs, but they didn't know that we speak Hungarian. [Laughing.] So, we had to speak German on the streets.

Q: This must have gotten very confusing, just trying to…

A: No, it wasn't, when you are a child… and then when we were preparing to come to America. We were preparing after we heard what's happening. My parents are telling us that we are in trouble. And my uncle managed to come to America, so we started to learn English, private.

Q: When was this? What year?

A: It was in 1940. We were preparing. And it was a teacher, who learned in England. He studied in England. He wasn't a young man. And he was so proud of us, me and my sister, that we are so good, that when we went… small town, bigger than here, but it was still… it was the capital of Carpathan. It was a promenade. They builded it up beautifully, the Czechs, that time, near the water. We had a bridge dividing the city, so it was a very nice city. And it was a promenade, banks, sitting people, and he started to speak loud to us, English, that was, you know, his

commercial. We had had English, *Anna Karenina* and everything already. We were very good. So Czech school. Czech I spoke perfect, German I spoke that time perfect, Hungarian and English.

Q: Were you citizens of any…?

A: Czech.

Q: You became Czech citizens.

A: We were Czech citizens. After five years we were, or even earlier, we were Czech citizens. But when the Hungarians came in, we were no citizens, because the Czechs run away. They went to Czechoslovakia. But we couldn't go because we weren't born there. And naturalized citizens couldn't go with them and we were stuck there. And that's how my parents were killed. The very first, because of that. But the other Russians, probably whoever is alive, oh, they are not alive anymore, because they were like my father's age. But they were 46 years old when they killed them. They was the same age, my father and my mother. And my sister was 19. And my sister could escape, but he says, "No way, I go where my mother goes." And I had that guilt feeling that I wanted to commit suicide because of that, too. Because we were so close. And he said, "I go where my mother." And we had no idea, where she went or what happened or where she going. It was terrible, terrible. And that aunt, my mother's youngest sister, who was very well-to-do when she got married, she was… they were very wealthy people. And she had one son. And he's on the picture that I think. His name was George. My George is named after him, because then he became the child of the family who… the two brothers, my uncle, my mother's sister's husband, he was alive and his brother was alive. Because they were in a labor camp in Hungary. And when George was born, then George got his name then, he had a little boy…

End of Tape 1, Side B

Tape 2, Side A

Q: This is tape number two, side A of an interview with Emilie Szekely. I don't think I actually asked for your mother's full name?

A: Maiden name?

Q: Uh huh.

A: Marvina Eichler.

Q: How do you spell her last name?

A: E I C H L E R, that was her name, maiden name.

Q: And her family was from the Budapest area? Or what was their history?

A: The whole family, my grandmother's children, they were born all there, but my grandmother was actually from a place, Zam Plain *(ph)*, it's called, from Slovakia. I told you that there were Germans there. My Grandmother, but all the childrens were born there. And all my grandmother's sisters, who were living there too when she was a child, all their children were all born in Budapest. Everybody was, you know, the cousins and everybody was born in Budapest. And there were plenty of them. All of them, the least, had three children, my grandmother's sisters, and more. And she had, herself, she had five sisters and a brother, but they were all born in Hungary, in Budapest, as far as I know, in Budapest. I don't know no one who was born outside of Budapest. Except for my husband. He was… they were farmers, big farmers, in… I can't even describe you where is it, outside, not in Budapest, of course. It was close to Eger, Eger is a big city. But they lived on a farm when he was a young boy and they were very wealthy people. And the first, I don't know what year was it, when the Romanians came in and they took away the farm. Second time the Russians took away the farm and the Germans, they took away. Three times, everything was taken away and then their lives were taken away from them, too.

Q: When you… when your mother, after your mother and father got married and you were living in Uzhorod *(ph)*.

A: Uzhorod *(ph)*.

Q: Uzhorod. Uzhgorod is another name for it, right?

A: Uzhgorod is *Ungbar* in Hungarian and the Czech. And that was Uzhorod. U Z and then accent over the Z and then *horod*. Uzhorod is, it was in the Carpathian Mountains. It was in a very nice place and a very beautiful city. And to me, every city what is divided with a river, the city itself, it's a beautiful city. [Phone rings.] And that was divided.

Q: Did your mother work, continue to work after she got married?

A: No, she never worked. She was just a *hausfrau*, house mother, but we were struggling. My father was… they were struggling until they… something happened with them. My mother, I remember she made our clothes, everything, she sewed alone by hand. We didn't have even a machine, a sewing machine. But she tried the best and she tried to brought us up that we were really, everybody who spoke about us… and there are only two people in Brooklyn, who knew my parents from my childhood, only two people, two friends I have, who knew them and how they are talking about them. It's terrible. One lived in Prague, she got married and then they came to America and her husband was a dermatologist and then he got Alzheimer's disease. Anyway. So, she, we became, we are still friends, but now telephone friends. We are talking. And she has two very successful children, unbelievable. He's a dentist. Middle of New York, he has an office. But they came after the Czech revolution that was in the sixties. They came with everything, with furniture, with Steinway piano. They brought everything with them. Oriental carpets. Not as we came, because they didn't let us take nothing with us when we came. But only two people. And it's so sad that only two people knew my parents. You know? It's unbelievable. Of course… no, my cousin, he doesn't… in Canada, he doesn't remember. My cousin in Budapest, she remembers my parents. She was younger than my sister. She's younger than my sister was, but she is remembering my parents. But otherwise, no one remembers my parents. It's very sad. And I don't know about my grandchildren. I wrote down everything. They have it on tape and still they are very mixed up when I speak about an aunt, you see, we have somebody by the name of Ilou *(ph)*, what was a sister-in-law of my aunt, but they have the same name. Because that was a second marriage to my uncle's brother. And the name was the same Ilou and Ilia *(ph)*. But the other one, the older one, she is not mixing it up. She knows the difference, who was Ilika *(ph)* to us and who is Ilou, she knows. Ilou she knows, she was here too. She's alive. That was my uncle's sister-in-law by second marriage, because the first wife died with the four year old little boy. And he always wanted children, so he married a younger woman than him and she couldn't have never children. But she has a big family in Israel. She has a brother and she has a sister-in-law in Montreal, because her brother died when they came to Canada. When we came here, they went to Canada. And he was a paper *(ph)* engineer. He wasn't used to Canadian winter, slippery. And he made a car accident and he got a stroke from it. And he didn't die, but he got a second stroke and he died. And he was a young man. He was 42, something like that and he left his wife and his young eight years old son in Canada. And the wife had a German nana. She was a real German, wonderful, wonderful person, from her childhood. Because she had very, very wealthy parents, and she had a sister, she died, too. And her parents died, but that woman, she stayed with her all through her life. And she was bringing up her son, too. And then she died in Canada. She never went back. She was from Vienna. Very nice person. I remember her so well. I met her many times when we went to Canada. First they lived in Montreal and they moved to Toronto when the French started that you had to speak French. He's an engineer, too, my cousin.

Q: Can you say something more… let's talk more about your childhood. Did you have any non-Jewish friends who you played with?

A: I had Czech friends, non-Jewish Czech friends, yes. They were very good friends. They had, they were entirely different… their thinking was different from ours. First of all they were very

loose, the Czech girls, it was unbelievable. There were many, many, even in my class, there were three twins. Can you imagine? There were many twins, girls. And, but they were good friends. And then we had Hungarian friends, Jewish girls friends. We had. We had quite a lot. And we got together, before I went out with the boy. We got together always, every week at somebody's house. During the week it was strictly studying. And we went to movies and as I said… then we belonged to a Jewish organization, Kadima *(ph)*, that's actually, they have it in Israel now, too, Kadima.

Q: Is that a Zionist organization?

A: It is a Zionist organization, yes, and it was a youth organization. And in the summer we made excursions, but only for one day, in the mountains together. It was a very nice life in Czechoslovakia. The Czech people are wonderful people and that was the real democracy. What I lived under, Masaryk and Benes *(ph)*, that was a real democracy. And I am laughing when I am talking here about democracy. I says, "Do those people know what's democracy?" You know, there are castes here and everywhere. And even in the hospital… I worked 27 years in Brooklyn Jewish Hospital. And there were very few people who were really, as you say, *mensch* people. Like it was a old doctor, he was the head of the Pediatrics. He was the only one who went there in the morning and he shook hands with the elevator guy and something like that. You know? It was… it was entirely different. They speak here about democracy, but they don't know what it is. I remember that once before, my husband… my father had many jobs before they had, they bought a… I don't know what year was it. They bought together a drugstore. But drugstore, it means, because they didn't have their diploma or certificate. And I have my own diploma, Russian diploma. So when he came to America, he worked in New York in a pharmacy, in a German pharmacy, and he was the head of the Herbs department. They sell many, many. But he couldn't do a prescription. And that was the situation with my father, too, when they went to Czechoslovakia. So they bought a drugstore, but they had everything but prescription drugs. But they didn't have luncheonettes like here. It was no such a thing. But the trouble was, then they separated and a pharmacist died. And it was a beautiful new pharmacy. And his wife wanted my father to work for her. Okay. He took over and he was substituting outside. He knew pharmacists and when they were for vacation, he was substituting in the pharmacy. He knows, he did everything. And then when he took over that pharmacy and my uncle had the drugstore. And it was a big place and a small place, because everybody knew everybody. So if somebody went to my uncle, they were… they felt bad that they don't go to my father. That kind of a situation, you know? It was very bad. So on the end, he had to leave that pharmacy and he went back with my uncle, together, because, you know, there were lot of Russian people. They were non-Jews, lots. And they knew all each other. And one, oh, especially one, who let me go to the office. He had a very big position and he let me go to the office and learn the Russian typewriter. That's how I knew how to type Russian. But it came very, very good after the war, when I worked for the dictionaries. I was the only one who typed Russian in Hungary. So they were all friends, non-Jews and Jews, the Russians. Of course, they were all educated people. I'm not saying that the others were because probably they were anti-Semitic, like, you know. Like it always was anti-Semitism in Russia. But they were very good friends. I never forget it, that one Christmas night, she said, "You must come to our church." It's very interesting, the Russian Orthodox church." There, it was interesting. No, I don't want to hear about it, what happened with her. And it's different, I see it on the television. That it is

entirely different in Moscow what it was there. It was a church where you didn't have seats, you know? You were all standing and he was like the leader there or whatever. And everybody who came in got three kisses, you know. Three times you kiss. Very friendly, very, very friendly. They were very, very nice people. And then I remember it was a photographer, Kantor *(ph)* was his name. And I don't know how he survived, because he was Jewish. And he survived, I don't know how. They sent him back with the non-Jews. And then my friends from Brooklyn, who knew them too, and they were in California and they met him. He was alive for a long time and he met their sons. So that kind of, you know, friends we had there, in Uzhorod.

Q: How did that, how did that begin to change after the Hungarian takeover of Uzhorod in 1938?

A: It was terrible. 1938. It was terrible because… I don't know whether I say somewhere that my cousin came and wanted to adopt us? Okay. My cousin, who was in Siberia for many years. He lived in Budapest, and one day he came to Uzhorod and he knew about the situation, that they were worried what is going to happen, because they were thrown out from Hungary. He came and he said, "I am going to adopt the children." Under eighteen he could have done it. "And just the name will change. They can't stay with you. Just God forbid something happens that the children should be safe." And I remember the day that they called us and they called us in the bedroom, my father and my mother and him. And they explained it to us and we started to cry. We thought that we are going to be taken away from them. And we couldn't understand it. Why? Why? Why? Though I was 18 years old in 1938. But I just, we just… to take another name, and… they didn't explain it to us, that what can happen. You know? Though we knew the story. We knew the story, but we didn't think about it, that my father was never led back to Hungary. Only my mother and us, every summer. He never was let back to Hungary to go back. And suddenly he's traveling to Hungary, because Hungary is, we are Hungary. And so after big, big discussions, we decided that we won't do it. We children didn't want to do it. And that costed my sister's life. But my sister could be saved, and he didn't want because… originally when they went to that cousin, she wanted to take my sister away, right away when she saw what's going to happen, what's happening. I didn't know. I wasn't there in '41. And my sister didn't want to go. She could have been saved. And then she came, and she came… it was actually my grandmother's side. Somebody I don't know how they were cousins. I don't know. Up to today I don't know. But she wanted, she told me that she wanted to take her, but she is dead, too. She went to the camps, too. So probably my sister, if she would take my sister, she wouldn't be alive anyway. But she says "No. Whatever is going to happen, it's going to happen." But nobody knew, nobody believed it that some thing is going to happen. So, that's it.

Q: You were in Uzhorod in 1938 and then it became…

A: In 1941…

Q: Did you stay there until 1941?

A: My parents, yeah, I went in 1941, the first time, alone, in May to… no. In 1940, Christmastime, I went with my sister, alone, Christmas vacation to my grandmother. And one day, the boy with whom I went out and his friend, they came by car in Hungarian uniforms to see us. And I just, I couldn't believe it. It was very far away. And he was begging me that I should go home. He

felt something. I didn't. I didn't know nothing that time, because I didn't know my husband. But he says, "Come home and come home, and go home." I says, "Okay, we are going to go home." But we had a good time. They took us, I don't know where we went. Don't remember. They stayed there two days they had to go back because they were in the army. And we went back…

Q: To Uzhorod?

A: In 1940 to Uzhorod. We went back home. And in 1941, in 1941, yes, in January, about in January, I had trouble with my rheumatic fever, because I had rheumatic fever when I was young, very bad. I almost died from it. Six months I was in bed, high fever. That's why I have heart trouble. And I went back and my mother said that "Your sister is still in school. Go alone. You are now 21 years old, 1941. You can travel alone," because it was about a day by train from Uzhgorod to Budapest. "And take the cure." I had a doctor there, who every year prescribed me a cure, what I had to take in a bath. And he said that was a precaution. It shouldn't be trouble. "And take your cure." Three weeks it took. "And by the time you finished, we come after you. Your sister will be finished." And that was in May and I went. And I went, and I met my husband, who we met Christmas together when we were with my sister. We went. We saw him once. He was introduced to us once. His aunt and my aunt were very good friends. But he didn't live in Budapest. He didn't live in Budapest.

Q: Where did he live?

A: My husband? Outside in Eger. It's a smaller town. His sister lived there. And he came to his aunt. And I went there with my aunt. They played cards together. And suddenly somebody's opened the gates, I never… and it was him. He had a cousin, who was older than him. And I was expecting that he is going to open the door, but my husband, he opened the door. And I just looked at him. Who is he? I never heard from him. And they introduced us to him, so my sister knew him, only my sister. And he was talking to me. And he was a very good looking guy. And he was seven years older than I was. And he, the next few days we supposed to go back home to Budapest, to Uzhorod. And his aunt, in the morning comes to my grandma's house, I was in bed still. And he says, "Emilie," my nickname was Millie. The whole family knows me, Millie. My name is Emilie, officially. And I didn't know that Millie is in America a name and I just continue being Emilie like in school, when I went to school. But my friends and my family, everybody called me Millie. He says, "Millie." She had a big voice, she says, "Frank fell in love with you and he wants to marry you." I say, "Oh please, don't say me this nonsense, somebody sees somebody and right away they want to marry?" I was not a bad looking girl, that's true, I must tell you. [Laughing.] But still it was very funny to me. And he said, "I know that you are going, you are going out with somebody, but how is it? Is it serious?" I says, "I don't know. We never spoke about marriage." We spoke about marriage, but he always told me that he cannot get married until he is not on his own. He is in his father's business and until then, he cannot get married. He spoke a few languages. He spoke already then very well English. We never spoke about marriage, never. I says, "We never spoke about marriage. I don't know how I stand and whatever. We are friends, we are very good friends." So he says, "No, he's serious." I says, "Okay." Next day we went back to Uzhorod. And I didn't hear from him. Only my aunt, that was my middle sister of my mother and she was a widow at that time.

Q: What was her name?

A: Serena. And she said, "I met Frank" —Ferenz *(ph)*, actually, Feri— "I met him and he's constantly asking me when are you coming back, when are you coming back?" So, one day I wrote to her, to my aunt, that I'm coming back to the bath. Next day he was there, because that time he already lived in Budapest. He had a business in Budapest.

Q: What did he do?

A: He was actually, he will finish business college. He had a business, here they don't have those businesses, because that time was everything, the transportation with horse and carriage. And he was in business, I am always saying we are eating his horse food, because, oat, oat. That's in Hungary horse food. So, he had a business with oat. But through the… it was a big business because he was connected to… I'm sorry, to… Wall Street, what is it? Wall Street business.

Q: Wall Street?

A: It wasn't Wall Street there, but every business, big businesses were… so it was a big business, and he made a lot of money. And he lived there. But I knew about him. They told me, he did tell me that time, that he just left his girlfriend, whom he went out for four years, because… his mother was against it because the girlfriend wasn't Jewish. And his sister already was married to a Catholic. So she said, "It's enough, one person." She was converted, she was married in a Christian church with popes, papers that she can get married. Her daughter was born already as Christian. And he loved his parents and he loved his mother and after four years he left the girl. The girl wanted to commit suicide. It was a country girl. They had a restaurant there. Because when he was living there with the same business in smaller… it was small town and he had his little farm alone and horse and everything. And he lived alone there. And then he wanted to get rid of her because of his mother and he came to Budapest. And once he came, she came after him, but I never met her. But he was telling me that she came after him because she was so in love with him. So anyway, so that was the story that he fell in love with me. You know? She left… so, then I found out the story I says, "Oh, how do I trust him, if that's the story?" Because he left one, then he wants to marry me. Well, anyway. So we went out and it was already, I finished my cure and it was already war. My uncle was already in America with the last ship and in '41 it was already bad. And we went out for a dinner and he brought his friend with him, who was in the same business. And we went to a restaurant and people are looking in the papers for the news. It was no television, radios were, but no televisions. And he took a paper and he's looking in a paper and I am asking him something and he didn't hear me. And this way I did with my hand and I turned to his friend. That he saw, that I waved and he took me home that night and I didn't see him for three weeks. He thought that I did it, that I don't care about him. He was so sensitive, but I didn't know that. For three weeks I didn't see him. The third week, I said, "I'm going home." I said to his aunt, because we were very close, even we lived very close. And I said it to his cousin that I'm going home. And he says, "Why, what happened?" I says, "I don't know what happened. I didn't hear from him and that's it." He went home to his mother, then his mother was telling me… I met his mother, very nice lady, she was very nice. I met his parents. I went to Eger. He took me once. And she was telling me that he came home

next morning and he was crying. He was seven years older than me, that she finally found somebody whom he loves, and she doesn't want me. He was… you know, it was a misunderstanding, the whole thing, but I didn't know that he is such a sensitive guy, that he thinks… so it was a misunderstanding. But he find out that I am going home. Next day, it came a big rose, you know, flowers, and "Please don't go."

End of Tape 2, Side A

Tape 2, Side B

A: …the marriage certificate and then I don't know. I can't remember what happened. Probably… I don't know. Because I remember what my father wrote, that he's giving his crown of his life to him and he should take care of her, that kind of a style, you know. And we agreed that my engagement will be third of July in my grandmother's house. Because we don't have my uncle anymore there and that those relatives were not so close relatives that we should make an engagement. Our family was always, my family, my mother's family was always the family. It was arranged everything, it was a Sunday and the whole family was together, the sisters and everything. I remember a beautiful table was made and my parents, my sister should come up to the engagement and they never came. That story you know. That they were called to the police and I got a telegram from our friends that they called them to the police and they never let them out and "You disappear. Go in hiding."

Q: Who told you to go in hiding?

A: My friends who lived near us in Uzhorod, they were our friends and they lived near us. And they saw when they, they knew that they went to the police and they never came out. And they said, "Probably they are looking for you," because they knew everything, everything who was not a citizen. Because we weren't Hungarian citizens. The papers were at the police. That was the police. And they knew that you were four people and they got only three people, so you better go to hiding. So, I couldn't get married, because he was already in labor camp, too, from 1941 on. But that time he was home still. With the… he was in the Hungarian uniform, he was so gorgeous. He was an officer. And he… we couldn't get married, because in Hungary we couldn't get married. Only when we were 24 years old without the father's consent, at that time. Can you imagine? Today you can get married if you are ten years old, I think. So, he went, short, right after, they stripped him of his uniform and he went to labor camp. And I stayed there with my grandmother and every night, I slept somewhere else. Some other relatives and by his friends, because everything happened during the night, that they were looking for people.

Q: Before we go on, you said something in the other tape I wanted to see if you could tell us more detail about, which was that your father came, was released from jail to come and see you. Can you describe that?

A: Yes, yes. So, we didn't know what happened to them or where they are. And my, the youngest sister of my mother, Illie, Ilona, they found out that they brought up a lot of, a transport from Uzhorod to Budapest and they put them like in a jail. But they were there for two weeks, and they went to visit them. They talked to them and they went to visit them. And my mother told them that I shouldn't come there, because I look like her and it has no sense that I should be there, because they are going to get out from there. And one day they let out my father with a policeman for money to my cousin's house, who was in Siberia. He lived very close to that place and he wasn't home already, just his wife. And nobody was in the apartment and the police brought my father there and he left, the police. And he says, "I come back…" this and that time. I don't know, it was an hour and a half. And I met my father. And first we just couldn't talk, we were just crying and crying and we didn't know what to say to each other. And

he was just constantly questioning me. "Are you sure that that's whom you want to marry?" Because he knew about that I went out with that boy for four years. And he said, "Are you sure, are you sure?" And worried about me. I says, "I am not sure of nothing, but I hope it will be all right." And he said, I said, "Look, my aunt knows his aunt and they know the family, so I hope it will be all right." And he called up from Uzhorod, he called Uzhorod and he called up the senators. They were all Russians. There were many Russians, they were non-Jews in Uzhorod. And he knew everybody. And they told him, "Don't worry, tomorrow you'll be out." And we parted and he says, "I hope we see each other tomorrow." And tomorrow came and my aunt and even my husband, he wasn't my husband at that time, my aunt and her husband, they all went to the train station, because they said the people are going to go home by train to Uzhorod. Everybody went back, who was non-Jew. The Jews went in separate cars to Kamana Spodovski *(ph)*, where they killed them. And my husband, he had a very, very soft heart, like him. And he couldn't even, he couldn't see the scene. Though they went with regular cars, not like with cattle cars, but with police and whatever, soldiers, Hungarian soldiers. He run away. He couldn't see it. He just saw them from a distance. And I think my sister recognized him. I don't know. That was that. And then a few weeks, about two weeks later, I got a card from my sister, in my sister's handwriting, that "We are in Kamana Spodovski *(ph)*. We don't know what are we going to do here. We don't know if we are going to have where to stay, but we are here." And it was a Hungarian stamp on it, so it means that a Hungarian soldier brought it back. And what I know from the museum, that's why I went this Spring to the museum, I told you that. To find out the truth. Because she went first, my daughter-in-law, and asked about it, and met there somebody in the library, who was very nice. And she, he showed her the book and he took out a few pages from the book and he made copies for me. And he sent it to me. He even spoke to me over the phone when my sister, when my daughter-in-law was there. And he said, it wasn't that time that they killed them. I always thought that they killed them when they left in July. When I was there, I looked at the book, but I couldn't buy it. It's such a big book. It was not only about them, because, he said, they said, and it's here and it's terrible, that 38 thousand people were killed in one day, because they didn't know what to do with them. Because they took them to Poland and the Polish people were already in ghettos that time. So they couldn't help them. Nobody could help them. And the Germans didn't know what to do with them, so they let them made their own grave, naked, like us in Auschwitz. They took the clothes away, they put them on one line and on the orders. They made a big, big grave and they had to make the grave. And from the other side, the German soldiers were shooting them in the graves and right away, the tanks were running over them. So I wanted that book, but it was no sense, because it was from… I have the pages what I needed. And I see the pictures how they sit there on the end of the, the forest. And the people… and I saw the… I told you about that 12 series what was on television, The Winds of War? You never heard about The Winds of War? Mitchum played in it. It started only four series. It was a beautiful movie. It was a French-Jewish writer, who was in France and his niece was with him. You don't know that story? It's Winds of War, is the name. It's in the public library. After that they made a 12 series, 12 two hours, 12 times, the whole summer and I saw all of it. It was a Hungarian, originally he was Hungarian, an actor. And his father was amongst those people who were taken and that was his idea to make that movie. You see original pictures what the Germans took. Because it starts out like a colored movie and suddenly it's black and white pictures. And you see the trains what we went in and I couldn't look. I said, "I see myself somewhere there." But when I saw, I saw the whole thing, how they killed them. And then I really couldn't look, because I said, "My God, I am going to

recognize either my sister or somebody I'm going recognize." I couldn't look at it. Everything is in it, from the beginning to the end, with Auschwitz, everything. Twelve series and it is in the public library, everybody can borrow it.

Q: Going back to that time, to 1941. What did you, did you have any idea of what they were doing?

A: Absolutely no idea. No idea what they were doing, what is going to happen. We heard from Slovakia, what was near us, Slovakia, they are taking young girls somewhere, only young girls. And where they are taking them and what they are doing with them, we didn't know. And they were taking them to Auschwitz, because I recognized one of them. Four years later, I recognized one of them. They were taking them there. They were building Auschwitz actually. And many of them they made their lovers, the Germans, because they were all pretty girls they took. And then I knew, that they took them to Auschwitz. And when it was starting to happen, already it started near the, where Elie Wiesel is from… near Romania it started. They started to take people. And they were always saying "It cannot happen in Budapest, it cannot happen." And when I said that it can happen, they always said "You are a pessimist." It cannot happen in Budapest, that was the story.

Q: So at the time, you are a young girl, you're 21 years old. Did you have any sense of the danger?

A: I wanted to commit suicide, I wanted to commit suicide, first of all, because I didn't know whether he will stay with me, my fiancé. He was away. I didn't know what I am waiting for. I knew my parents are somewhere. I don't know where. It cannot be… I even went, it's unbelievable, I even went to a fortune teller. And I let him, show my palm and tell me about my parents. And they said that "They are very far away, don't wait for them." That's what she was telling me. "They are in big danger." I just couldn't understand it. But I had a feeling, that it's something terrible happening, but I never had any idea. No, never. And when we were going to Auschwitz, I didn't know where we are going, but I said, "Ah, maybe we go somewhere, where I can see or meet my parents." If I don't, I didn't know where we are going. Nobody knew where we are going. It was just unbelievable. So when I wanted to commit suicide, my aunt saved me, my mother's younger sister, Illie, Ilona. And she had a 13-year-old boy. And three years, I was, it was terrible. Every night I slept somewhere else. And the third year, that before the Nazis came, she says, "You are not going nowhere. Up to now they did look for you, you are our child, and you stay with us." And I stayed with them. I was like their child, they said. They had a doctor who was, you know, house doctor, and he treated me like they child, and I was with them.

Q: So, you went into hiding in 1941. Who was helping you?

A: Until 1944. Nobody was helping you, that was all family. I went to my grandmothers, sisters, daughters, cousins. And my husband had friends, they knew about it. And I slept every night somewhere else. During the day I stayed with my grandmother. And when I stayed with my grandmother, and I stayed there overnight, we were always in the basement, because they were bombing us. Terrible bombing, the Americans. They were going after the Germans, so they were bombing us. In the morning we got up and we didn't see nothing. It's very interesting that in that neighborhood it was nothing bombed, but my grandmother's sister's house. Only one

house was completely bombed and that's… and everybody is gone from that family. Only there is the girl, who is in Hungary. That was that grandmother, that was that… her grandmother. Only that house was bombed, to the ground, nothing else. And she was the only one survivor from the whole family. And she was holding onto me, me, me, me. She wasn't married. And she survived, because her parents, when they saw what's happening, they put her in a factory, like GE. They made electric, but they worked for the army, and people who worked for the army, they didn't take them to the camps. They kept them in the factory until they finished the work. In six months they were finished, then they throw them out to the streets. So then she standing there, nobody, no parents and nobody, so what is she going to do? So she met her aunt's maid. She was a very nice person and she knew somebody, a lady, whose husband was in… she was not Jewish and her husband was Jewish and he was in labor camp. He died, he never came back. And that lady lived in a separate home. She had a house and she took in a few Jewish people who didn't have where to go, who came out from the factory. And it was a doctor amongst them. And my niece, my cousin was amongst them, whom she took in. And she was hiding them. And then the neighbors went and told on her, that she is buying too much food and she's alone, that it's something going on there. And that was found, that she pulled away the beds and all of them who were there, about eight people, they made a big, big hole in the ground and they slept every night, under the bed, in the ground. And that's how they were saved.

Q: Do you remember her name?

A: No, I never knew her. I never even knew her, no.

Q: What was your, what was your daily life like, during that time? Those years that you were in hiding.

A: Hiding? It was terrible, because I was… where we were hiding… no, the Germans weren't in there, only in 1944… it was terrible. It was frightening, because I never knew that somebody can grab me. And I was afraid to go during the day through the streets, and it was a terrible life, terrible. And I was very, very depressed. And they worked on me very hard, really, that I shouldn't commit suicide, because it was terrible. Then he didn't write to me, I don't know for how long. My fiancé. So I didn't know what was going to happen. His parents were alive still and they lived in Eger, because they took away already the farm. So they lived with the daughter. She had a very big house. A part of the house belonged to my husband, because that was an inherited house. She inherited it. She went, can you imagine that she went to a convent to school, because that was the best school there. And she was the only Jewish girl. At that time she was Jewish. And when she was 18 years old and she came out, she met that guy. She had a lot of Jewish doctors, who wanted to marry her. She met that guy, who was a gorgeous guy and he had three kinds of doctorate, and he had a big, big job with the states. And he fell in love with her. And they were the biggest anti-Semites. His father… I told you that? His father left a will, though his granddaughter was born already Christian, that his granddaughter cannot come to his funeral. That kind of a man she married. And she was going to the Catholic Church and everything. And they lived together there. The parents had a separate part of the house and they lived together. But when everything was happening, he didn't save the parents. He saved his wife and the daughter, but he didn't save the parents, because he, himself, was an anti-Semite. I know. I know, because he made once a remark, that I couldn't believe it. They had my stuff,

because I left it by Christian friends. A lot of personal things. And when my husband was transferred to Budapest, I told him where the stuff is and he took it away and sent it to the sister. So whatever is saved, first they saved it, our friends, but then my sister-in-law saved it. So she had everything what was my dowry, my jewelry and everything. So, he didn't want it, you know, it was his. He didn't want to give it back to me. And they said they don't have it. And one day they weren't home and I go to the closet and I pulled out everything what was mine. That was the story. So it was terrible, terrible, really terrible. And I know that he made anti-Semitic remarks in front of me. And I know that he was an anti-Semite.

Q: What did he say?

A: No, he made remarks about my aunt, who was the loveliest, the best, best person in the world, my aunt. And he said, "That Jewish woman," this way, about my aunt. I don't know what he said. Said this and that. This way to me, he is saying it about my aunt. And I always had a feeling, because he was mad that my husband married me and not a Christian. He was, you know? Until he met me, it took him I don't know how long, when I was once there for a week…he took me a week. He took a chance, because he met my train and at that time already they were looking for, not passports, but identifications. And he took a chance and he took me to meet his parents. And him I met, I don't know. He lived in the same house. And it was a Sunday when we went there and they came home from church, both of them. And he just, he came to the window I remember. And he says, "Hello," through the window, you know? I know that he was mad that he wants to marry me.

Q: When you were in hiding, what did… how did you occupy your time? Did you read books? What did you do?

A: I don't remember. I went to my aunt many times, who had the 13-year-old boy, during the day. Because they lived in an other borough. New Pest, and it was *Rakospolota (ph)*, that was an other borough, they were, you know? And I walked. I remember I walked. I was afraid to go by the street cars that they ask for identification or something. And I walked. I walked a lot. And I walked to her house and I tried to spend with my cousin… he was a lovely, lovely boy. And I really don't know what I did the whole day. I know when I was away my grandmother was very, very upset because she loved me and they were bombing during the day. And once I wasn't there during the bombing and I had to run to a pharmacy to… that was our friends. The woman was my friend and the husband was a gynecologist. And I ran to the pharmacy and I got to their basement. When it was over I went home and my grandmother was out of her mind. She was so upset. She wanted always hold my hands, always. And she almost died in my hands, because she lost her mind in the wagon, that's for sure. Because to say something like that, that "Would you please comb my hair?" She didn't know what's happening. And I didn't know what's happening, but I was very glad that she doesn't know what's happening. Such a smart woman what she was. She didn't even wear glasses and was reading the paper every day. She knew about everything was going on in the world.

Q: Were you following what was going on with the war at that time?

A: Whatever they printed in Hungarian papers, but nothing else. And we knew. We didn't have correspondence with America. It stopped, so I couldn't even write to my uncle. Nothing. I didn't know nothing about him. How is he doing? What is he…? We knew in the beginning. We got a few letters from America. And he said, "I'm trying to get your affidavit, that you should be able to come." And I even have those letters. And we knew that he find a job in that pharmacy, the German pharmacy. And they lived in the Bronx. I know that. And his address was always in my head, that I know, too. All the time. I wrote it in the dirt in Auschwitz, his address, that I shouldn't forget it. In case, sometimes I can write to him. Because it was, it was an unbelievable thing in Auschwitz, that you knew that you cannot get out from here, never. And still something was dictating to you, don't forget that address. It was such a mixture, you know? You knew that you are in a prison. That you cannot get out from here. And never, we never see the end, never saw the end of it, that we can get out from there. And that woman, that Romanian woman, maybe she was a Gypsy, I don't know. She was dark complexion, who was reading there, too. They were reading palms. And I says, "Okay, read my palms." One, it was before that, it was a private person when I went to. But that one, I went and says, "Do it." And she said, "You are going to get out from here, and when you are going to get out from here, you will go for a very long trip overseas. Your husband is alive, but he is in a hospital now. He's sick." And it was everything true what she was telling me. And she said, it was just unbelievable. And she said, "You will have three children." And it was everything true. And you shouldn't believe those things. And it was everything true, because I asked him, "Were you in the hospital?" And he says, "Yes, with terrible tonsillitis." In, near… no, it was already Hungary at that time, in Romania, it was Hungary and there he was near Bucharest. They took it over, too. And he was in the hospital from the labor camp, because he had very high fever and they put him in the hospital. So it was true.

Q: You described earlier on how you had been dating this other young man and then you just met your husband and that it was very quick. And that you realized you were in love with the other young man. Did you at some point realize that you were in love with this man that you were engaged to? And when did that happen?

A: No. I didn't… I, well I saw him, I liked him, because he was very good looking and very lovable. But I was… until he threw it out, I was keeping the other guy's picture always in my pocketbook. That was an interesting thing. Then when I found out that he is gone, then… but still I had it. And once he found it and he was very jealous. And I says, "Don't be jealous, he's not alive anymore." But I don't know. You see, when I came back and I met him, and I knew that he knew that I am alive. Because they knew I am alive. I told them, that they send to everywhere names from Bergen-Belsen. Eisenhower, the United States. So, he knew that I am alive. I didn't know he was alive. And it was a very, to me it was like a very strange thing, that I have a husband, you know? I have to now get to know him. I was two weeks with him. He got two weeks furlough and he had to go back when we got married in 1944. February, when I was 24 years old. We got married and after two weeks… everybody said to him, "You are absolutely out of your mind to get married in those times." But he didn't want to tell the whole story, that I need another name. So he came from Romania and we got married, but the day when I was 24 years old, and…

End of Tape 2, Side B

Tape 3, Side A

Q: This is tape number three, side A of an interview with Emilie Szekely. So, let's backtrack a little bit, you, you needed to get, you wanted to get… was your main motivation to get married because you needed another name?

A: ….a different name.

Q: So it wasn't necessarily that you were in love with your husband at that point?

A: I didn't know him. He was in labor camp and I was with my grandmother. I absolutely didn't know him. I went with him about three weeks, when we got engaged and then they took him away. And he was madly in love with me. And I then I said, God, who knows whether he will stay with me? He will go through that. I don't know what's going to happen with me. He had his parents still then. For three more years he had his parents, because they were killed in 1944. I says what are his parents going to say to it and that kind of a business, you know? I didn't know.

Q: Did you have any kind of false papers at all before you got married?

A: False papers? No. I got the papers late. I have it here, Christian birth certificate. Because when he came to the ghetto, I think somewhere it's there that a day before, when we were in the ghetto, and one day he comes to the ghetto and I almost fainted. I says, "What are you doing here?" He said, "We were just transferred to Budapest. The company was transferred to Budapest and I am not with them because I am driving a horse and carriage. I am in a private house with the horse and you come right away with me and my sister is going to send you a Christian birth certificate and until then you are going to stay with me there. You stay where I stay with the horse. And during the day, I don't know." And I said, "Where is it?" He says, "Not far away from here," he said. I said, "Well if it's not far away from here, why can't you come tomorrow, that I should put something together, some clothes?" And he just didn't want to leave, and he says, "Okay," he said, "but I must tell you something. If somebody wants to get… put you in a train, don't let you do it." They saw it, when they came already, what's happening in the country. I didn't know what he meant. When I learned what he meant, we were pushed by the Nazis with the machine guns, so how can you not let yourself, you know? So he didn't know either how is it, how they do it. But he said, "Don't," anyway. So he left.

Q: Well, let's get to that story a little later, and go chronologically and stay back at the time and tell me about the time, how it happened that you and Ferenz got married.

A: When we got married?

Q: Uh huh.

A: He came home for two weeks…

Q: You were telling it off the tape, but tell it on the tape.

A: Oh, oh, oh. So he came home, he got two weeks furlough and everybody was telling him that he was crazy to get married in those times. But he didn't want to tell the whole story to everybody, that I need another name to survive. We thought that I need another name to survive. And we found a Justice of Peace, who, when I was 24 years old, that day, we got married, because before then I couldn't get married. Only when you are 24 years old without father's consent. And they changed my father's birth certificate to Romania, instead of Russia. And so he was covered. And he married us. And my aunt, we had two witnesses, one was a distant relative and I don't even know who was the other witness. I have to read it from the certificate. I don't know. And we got married. And my aunt made a big dinner for the family. And they send us to the city, to a very nice hotel. And we went to the hotel and I was just very, very afraid because they constantly were checking on people and asking for their identifications. And especially at night when we went down to eat. And I says, "I cannot swallow, I can't. I'm so afraid here," so, but we stayed there overnight. And next day we left and it wasn't too far away from my cousin where I met my father. That hotel wasn't too far away. And I remember that we went to that cousin, to his wife. He didn't know my husband. And they didn't come even to the wedding because it was in Budapest, that was in outskirts and they were already very bad times, so it was no traveling. So I introduced him. I spend there about, we spent a day there. And then we went back to my grandmother's house and we stayed there for two weeks, until he stayed there. And then he left. And I stayed with my grandmother, later, not with my grandmother, but with my aunt, because she had the much bigger house. So, we stayed with my aunt, not with my grandmother when we stayed. It was with my aunt. And I stayed with my aunt, too.

Q: With your aunt Ilona?

A: Ilona, with her. The other one, the other aunt, she was a widow and I don't know. We didn't even go on one train with her. Somehow she went with his aunt, with my husband's aunt, together on a train. She wasn't with us. Only Ilona, my grandmother, my uncle's sister, my uncle's sister's husband, they 13-year-old, two 13-year-old boys, then the four years old boy and my uncle's brother's wife with the four-years-old boy. We were together in one train. That part of the family, but the rest of the family, they were in another wagon, not in that, you know? My grandmother's sisters, because they were all there, but not in the same wagon. We were 80 people in one. So.

Q: But before that you started living, you described how you were moving from house to house and then you started living with your aunt full time?

A: With my aunt.

Q: Can you say something about that?

A: Full time, the third year, my aunt said, "It's enough. It seems they are not looking for you. It was enough, you are our child. You will stay with us." And I stayed with them. Once I was very, very sick, my pulse went up to 160. And they called their doctor. And the treatment was so different that time. I remember that I was in bed and they rented from a medical supply store a big, big bottle what was full with ice-cold water and it had tubes in it. And that tube was put

on my chest, on my heart and the water was circulating in it. That was the treatment. And that was… I thought it was a heart attack, because it didn't want to go out. For three weeks it didn't go down, the pulse. And then I had another thing in 1942, that was terrible too. I had the appendix taken out and I couldn't have it done under my name. I didn't go to the hospital. And I went with my mother's, with my mother's oldest sister, whose son was in Siberia. And I went under her name to the hospital. It was a private hospital. And the doctor was a private doctor, who, he was a gynecologist. Because I was constantly complaining about pain and pain and pain and pain and he just couldn't find out what is it. And one day my husband was there visiting. It wasn't my husband at that time. And I just was like in two, I had such a pain. And his office was in my, my grandmother, where my grandmother lived, in that house was his office. And I went to him and I said, "I tell you the diagnosis. I tell you what I have." He says, "What, what are you talking about?" I said, "That must be appendix." And he says, "God, you are right." And he took me to a private hospital to Budapest and they started to operate on me. And it was under my aunt's name. I was Halas *(ph)*. That's his grandson is Halas, who is in Canada. And I went under that name. And the operation was so long, they didn't know what happened there, that the doctors are running for more anesthesia. And my aunt is standing there and didn't know what happened. My appendix was completely, completely curled up with my colons and it was a very, very long operation. And my heart, it was weak. They took me home by ambulance after. But next morning, six o'clock in the morning, the doctor is there. And he lived, that was in Budapest, in the city, the hospital. And we lived in New Pest, so it was a big distant. I says, "I am so sick that you are here?" He says, "No, no, don't worry. I just wanted to know how you feel." Then I found out what was happening and they had to take me home by ambulance. And it was in '42. And in '44 I have an unusual big cut and that's how I went to Mengele. So I thought that that will matter when he sees that. But you know what was interesting? That I had a friend, she was a woman, who had a mastectomy and she survived. And Mengele saw it and she survived. So they were very odd things. And she came to Canada and she died in Canada. It was a terrible thing. Her son is an engineer. He and my cousin, in Hungary, they went together to the… they started the engineering college together. Her son and my cousin, who is in Canada, that lady's son. And they lived in Montreal. And my cousin lived in Montreal at the beginning. He went to McGill *(ph)* to finish his degree. And we went to visit her, the lady, and she was alive for a few years. And once her son had to go to Paris, to France for business. I don't know what kind of engineer is he, because mine is a chemical engineer. I don't know what kind of engineer he… and while he was away, she got the pneumonia and she died. They had to call him home. She lived together with the son and with daughter-in-law. She married a Hungarian girl. He wasn't Jewish. She was Jewish, the woman. Her husband wasn't Jewish, so the son wasn't Jewish. So she married a Hungarian, non-Jewish girl, who was already in Canada at that time. And she spoke perfect French and she worked for the telephone company. Very nice person. We went there three times to visit her. And for longest time, they couldn't… he retired. They couldn't sell their house. And two years ago they wrote me a letter, "Finally we sold the house and we moved to Kingston." It's Canada, but it's very close to the border. And it's a beautiful place. And they live there. They have two children. And he said, "My son married a French woman with a daughter." The son. A French woman, who has a daughter. And the girl, she was a, they wanted a child very badly and finally she became pregnant and she was a premature baby. And she was very small, so they didn't know that she survive. She survived and she went to college and then she became the hostess on the Canadian Cruise Line, for… I don't know how long she did it. They were always… every Christmas they write me and

I write them. That's how I know about them. But when they lived in Montreal, they went, many times, my cousin and they were friends. But since that time, I know only from Christmas cards what is happening to them. And what's interesting, my cousin's son went to McGill, too. And they live in Toronto. But they stayed there and he went to McGill. And he finished psychiatry. And he wants to… I don't know how they are doing it, it's not a bad idea… be a lawyer and a psych, psychologist, psychologist and a lawyer. So, he's going to law school in Kingston, where they live now. You know. The father's friends. He's going to Kingston, to law school. It's interesting. I don't know whether they see each other. I don't know what he was writing me about it. I have to call them Sunday, I don't know. I call Sundays only because it is cheaper.

Q: Tell me, going back to wartime, where were you on the day, or do you remember the day that the Germans invaded Budapest in March of 1944?

A: Yes, of course, of course.

Q: Can you describe that day?

A: Oh, that was horrible. I was in my grandmother's house and we… we didn't have televisions that time. We just had radios. We didn't have televisions. We just heard it on the radio, and how do we see it? Because we saw them marching in. And I don't remember how did we see it, because we didn't have televisions. But I know and I see with my eyes how they marched into Budapest and where they stopped in the middle where it is divided, the Danube divides the city, you know? Into two parts. And they stop there, and right a way the Hungarian Army, right away, they went to greet them, and cater them, and did whatever they want even more. Because they would never find out nothing if those countries wouldn't help them, what they occupied. Because they, who, which German knew for instance, that my sister-in-law was married, that she was once Jewish? Who knew it? Only the Hungarians who live there and they went and told on them. That here is a couple who was married, converted and who was married to… and then they came, the Germans and the Hungarians together to look for her. They did it themselves, the Hungarians, and they did it, I'm sure, in every country. Otherwise how would the Germans know whom to take, who was the rich man, whom to call to the department, to their offices, whatever, and torture them? How would they know? Because they help them. Because they were anti-Semites. We didn't know.

Q: Let me ask you something kind of funny, question. How did you feel about being Jewish?

A: Klingel *(ph)*.

Q: Oh, the last name?

A: You know, I'm constantly thinking about it, since I'm talking to you. You know the boy's name.

Q: What was it again?

A: Klingel.

Q: And his first name was Nicholas.

A: And he had a nickname, Mitza *(ph)*. Was very, very good looking. I think he was the best-looking Jewish boy in the city. Very nice boy. Very nice, respectful, very, very nice. And the parents, that's interesting, too. That they moved then, after the war they moved to Prague, the parents and the sister. And my friend, who is now in Brooklyn, whose husband was a dermatologist, her children went, she gave them lessons, piano lessons. His sister gave them piano lessons. And they were saying it, I should have known that he would marry me. Can you imagine? That's what they were saying, the parents. And he was telling me, that he cannot talk about marriage, because he is working for his father. He is not on his own. And then they blame me, that I should have known. We never spoke about marriage, only that one time he said that "I'm not talking about marriage, because, until I am not on my own." You know? Probably they were against me. I wasn't a wealthy girl. And she went with a… she left a girl for me, who was a bank director's daughter, very wealthy daughter, very wealthy girl. And he went with her and she left her because of me. And then the parents were saying, my friend was telling me, that they were… the sister was telling it, that I should have known. What did they know what went on? I was introduced to his sister once. I didn't want it. I was, I didn't want… I don't know. And once he went to swim in the summer and there is his sister. And he did it by purpose, that she should know me, the sister. And one day then, before he went away to, I don't know where, the army. And he left a book with me and I didn't finish it. And he said, "You bring it back to my mother." I was shaking, you know? I was never in their house and I was shaking. And I was so clumsy that I went upstairs, and she was very nice to me. And in the hallway and I gave her the book. And she was very nice and I was so nervous that I… she had some kind of a flower pot and I pushed it with my hand. [Laughing.] It broke. It was terrible. It was very uncomfortable to meet them, because I had always a feeling that they are against me. You know? He would never, never say to me that, but I had a feeling that the parents were against me, because I wasn't in their category. And she left that girl, who was wealthy, because of me and that was my feeling about them.

Q: Did you think about him a lot? Afterwards when you were in hiding, for example?

A: When I was hiding? About him? I already knew that he's dead.

Q: When did you find out?

A: 1942. In 1942 I found out through friends from Uzhorod, that all that, I don't know how many friends together there went. They took them to Russia. And that maybe they killed them the same way as my parents. I don't know. They put them on the trains and they were in labor camp and that they were killed in 1942. I really didn't know about to whom first, you know? To think about my parents, to think about him, to think about my husband, my future husband. I really didn't know. I was terribly mixed up, terribly. And always worried, terribly worried. That fear was unbelievable, that now they are going to get me, now they are going to… because I saw what they are doing. If you didn't wear the star, for instance, the Hungarian knew you. And that was only in '44, when we had to start to wear the star, when the Germans came in. But still, if you, I didn't look Jewish, I could have gone wherever, but they knew me and they could tell it to please the Germans.

Q: Did you think about being Jewish?

A: That time? I knew I was Jewish. I couldn't think different way. I knew that I was Jewish. I knew that I am in trouble with all other Jews.

Q: Did you…?

A: I never thought about converting. It wouldn't help me. Conversion. It wouldn't help me. But I found lately, I found that Christian… I don't even know whether I told George, because the last time when my husband went to Hungary—he went many times when he was retired—he went to Hungary because his sister was very sick for years and he said, "I want to see my sister." But his excuse was, because we had two little children buried there, he went to the grave. And I was saying always, "Frank, they are in our hearts, those are only stones." I couldn't say he wants to see the grave. He wants to have it redone, the letters if they were in bad shape or whatever. But his sister, he had that only sister and she was very, very sick, but her son-in-law was a doctor and he kept him alive, her alive. And he was telling me, "If not me, she would be dead ten years ago." I think she had cancer of the liver, because on the end they had to operate on her. And I saw her, the last time I saw her, that summer in '89, and January she died. And we came back in 1990, January. They had to… she became yellow and he couldn't help her anymore. But he was telling me himself, if not me… because my niece was unbelievable. She called him from every meeting and everywhere, "Come right away because mother has fever," and right away the injection. Unbelievable. She was a very good daughter. And I was surprised how he was talking to him over the phone. I says, "Marie," her name is Anna Maria, "everybody can hear you." "I don't care. My mother comes first," and that kind of a thing. So, he kept her alive, really. My husband went to see her every year, and that year when he went, in '82, in '81, February, he had a heart attack, and he lived 17 months. And in '82, June, he says, "I'm going to see my sister." And I spoke, I knew that three-quarter of his heart was gone. And I spoke to his doctor, I says, "What should I do? How shall I tell him that he cannot go?" He says, "You know what, he can go. He has a doctor there. He will be safe. But he cannot go rowing around nowhere in Europe. He goes to one place and he can go. And June 13th is his birthday, but I called him many times. But I called him on his birthday. I'm sorry, June 17th. He was born, 1913, 17. And I called him and he says, "I feel wonderful. I feel very good," and I always gave the report to the doctor, because he was from the same hospital were I worked, the doctor. And he says, "Yes, he has around him more sick people than he is, so he's feeling fine." And he came home and every first of July, we went out to the country house. They were there already, here in 1979. And we met there and I spend one week vacation there, because Ilona was born third of July. And we spend her birthday. And my husband came back end of June to spend the week in the country for her birthday. And after that, we supposed to go to Canada, all of us by car. And he said, "You know what? I came from a big trip. You go with them to Canada." And she was pregnant with Anna that time. She was pregnant with Anna, Ilona. She knew that he wanted, because he always wanted children and the two died. He always wanted children, so at least George should have more children. So she was pregnant with her, and we went to Canada. He said, "You go to Canada and I go home." And he was alone, traveling home. And then I got a call from him in Canada that please bring a present to one of my co-workers. I says, "Why to her?" She says, "Because I was sick and she took me to the hospital." So we packed and we

came right back. He was a few days in Intensive Care or in Coronary Care, I don't know what happened. He didn't feel well. And August 12th, August 12th, he died. And I wasn't home. I was working and after work I went to the dentist and I had to have a tooth pulled. And he was very upset about that and he came with me. I went by bus. They had private buses, because I went to the city periodontist. And he came to the door and he looked so beautiful. He had brown pants and a yellow shirt on. And he said, "Nothing, nothing hurts me," because he had back trouble, too. He had a spine operation. He said, "Nothing, nothing hurts me." And you know, you don't think if it's about your own, that the last day when you live, nothing will hurt you. And that's true. But you just don't think. And I'm so happy that he said it…

End of Tape 3, Side A

Tape 3, Side B

Q: …Szekely, took a little break for a few weeks there. And now I wanted to just ask you, because I was reviewing the interview that we did last time and going over it, I had a couple of questions. And one of them was, right at the beginning you were talking about the cousin of yours, who was the painter, who lived in Odessa. And I wanted to make clear, was it his daughter that came over and stayed with you? It was his daughter? Okay.

A: It was his daughter that came over and stayed with us. We had an apartment here.

Q: You told the whole story, so I don't want you to go through that again. But I just wanted to clarify…

A: It was my cousin's, my father's brother's daughter and her family. And he, himself, lives in Boston.

Q: Okay. Did he come over at the same time as her?

A: No, no. He came over five years ago, six years ago because he is a citizen already, so it has to be five years ago. He became citizen last year, '99. So, five years ago, because he came with his sister and sister's family. Husband only, sister's daughter and husband, because the husband had the parents there. And they always, he and his sister lived always together and a niece and a husband. So he belonged with them. I couldn't bring him, because only you could bring parents or sisters or brothers. So, he went with them because he lived with them and he had his son… it's not brother-in-law actually, because his husband… they had the parents there already, and through them. That's why he didn't come here. But his aim was if his daughter is here and their family is there, everybody to be in Kentucky together. That's what he wanted.

Q: And tell me what his full name is.

A: He is, Isislav *(ph)* Klugman. That was my maiden name.

Q: I see, so he was your father's brother.

A: My father's brother's son.

Q: Okay, and we, last time we were going over mostly some questions about your childhood and some things that weren't covered in the interview that the Shoah Foundation did. And what I wanted to do mostly today is to talk about your experiences after the war, after the war ended. But one of the things that wasn't clear to me from the Shoah Foundation interview was, tell me if I have this right, when you were on the transports from Hungary to Auschwitz, you were with your grandmother and your Aunt Ilona.

A: With my Aunt Ilona and other aunts, too and her son. My mother had four sisters, so I was with three of them. But the closest was to me always Ilona, because when they took my mother and

they killed them in, my parents in 1941. So, she was the one who was unbelievably helping me. And then the last year, before the Nazis came in, she didn't let me go to hiding and she said, "You are our child, no matter what. You stay with us." And so for one year I was with them until they took us all. And after, when she survived and I survived and her husband survived, but not her son. And my son was born. To my son she was like a grandmother. So when we left, we left to Vienna and we left them in Hungary, but we knew that they are coming after us, three weeks. Because they had, they were elderly people already and they had visa to Israel and England and we knew that they are going to come. And the time came then we came to America and we left them there. And my son, he was so blaming me and he was so crying. How can I do it, to leave them there? He was nine years old. He was the only relative whom he knew. Like, she took care of him when I had to go to work. Because under the communism we had to work. And she was everything to him. And my heart was going out and I was explaining to him, "When we get to America and we become citizens we are going to bring…" and that was the plan, that we are going to bring them over. But she died, unfortunately, from a gall bladder operation. But I think that she had already liver cancer, but they don't tell me, because nobody dies from a gall bladder operation. It must have gone to the liver and the operation was okay. She was alive for a few days. And one day my uncle and his brother went to visit her. They went every day, but one day when they went, she was dead. I didn't go, to the funeral. Because we were here in '58 and that was in '63 and in '59 I got a job in the hospital when I was working and I says, "We don't have either the money for the three of us to go," so we couldn't go. But it was in the summertime and George was with some of our friends in the country. They were having a bungalow they rented and we went over on the weekends. We went to Poughkeepsie. And he was there and I was afraid to tell him. I was afraid to tell him. And he wrote to his pediatrician in New York, who was the head of the Pediatrics in the hospital where I worked, and asked him to find out from me the truth, because he thinks that something is very wrong. And he showed me the letter and he said, "You have to tell him." So, I was very, very upset to tell him. And I found it out, my husband did, he got the letter and he didn't want to tell me. And we are driving out to the country and when he told me, we made an accident with the car. I was, you know, so upset, we made… and it was an old car and we had the first car. It was a big Pontiac. But somebody ran into us. It wasn't our fault, and he ran away. The guy ran away. But I was so upset that how I am going to tell him, because it was like the end of the world. He didn't know no one from the family and he was the kid of the family, because his brother, my uncle's brother lost his four-years-old child and the second wife never could have children. So he's named after my, Ilika's son, he was George, too. And he was everybody's child, only child. And when I had the other little boy, he was five months old when he died. I named him after the four-years-old, who died. He was Paul, he was Paul, my little one, who died in one day from the croup.

Q: At one point in Auschwitz, you told in your interview with the Shoah Foundation about how you arrived in Auschwitz and how you were there for, I think two weeks before you were given your tattoo and before you started working. When were you separated from Ilona?

A: Three weeks later. She was, when we went to the barracks, she was put in the next barracks. Because they put 60 people in one and she would be the 61. So she was put in the next barrack. But when I came back from work, they didn't get food, those people who didn't work and I gave them my half of the bread and I dressed them up. I'm saying "them," she was there with one of

her friends, who had two twin sons and they are alive. They went through all the… I told you that, no?

Q: No.

A: No? She had two twin sons, her friend and they went through all, all the experiments with Mengele. They are alive. They are in Israel. One is in high… he has, I don't know what kind of position, but they are not men. They cannot get married, that's what they did to them. And I met them when I was in 1976, I was in Israel. And that was one… we went to restaurant and my uncle's brother was there with his second wife, who is alive and she is in Vienna. She married him when George was born, the second wife. And she was much younger than he was. He wanted children and she couldn't have children. When we went to the restaurant then, I didn't know what's the surprise. My aunt's friend was there with her husband and she said she would never forget it, what I did for them. Because they were naked. I was, but my *aufseren* (*ph)* and the forewoman, she let me take out clothes, because I told her that my aunt is in the next camp. And she let me take out clothes. And I dressed them and I gave them food. And one day when Mengele came to the camp and he was sorting out, because he came every week and sorting out people. We had to get undressed and walk around him. He had a stick in his hand and he's pointing one here, one there and I was one here. I knew I go back. And she was on the other side and I didn't know what happened to her. I thought she goes to gas. I didn't know about nothing else. And I knew that that's gas there. It turned out that they took her to Theresienstadt with her friend. And they were working at an ammunitions factory and at night they stayed at Theresienstadt. And only when I went back, I knew that she is alive. And she was everything to me.

Q: Why don't we jump forward to that time, because you described the rest of that experience in your Shoah Interview. And then you, so after the war eventually you returned to Budapest and you were reunited with your, with your Aunt Ilona and your husband. Talk more about that time, talk about the reunions with those people and how you were feeling and what your thoughts were.

A: I came, I think that's in it, when I came to our station, people were standing there and waiting for people to come, because in whole Europe they were waiting for people to come because they knew who is alive, because Eisenhower… that I said, that he made a list from everybody and send it to the places where they came from. So, they knew I am alive after liberation, but I didn't know about no one. And when we got to our station, I saw there are many people and I didn't know no one. I was shaking and I went to one of them and I says, "Excuse me, do you know someone by the name of Eugene Schwartz?" And he started to scream and he says, "You are Emilie?" I says, "How do you know it?" He says, "Your uncle is waiting for you every day. He was here today, too, but he had to go for some kind of a business." I says, "Business?" It was October fifth, '45, and they were liberated in April already. And he says, "I'm going to phone him." And I says, "Telephones?" You know. So, he came in ten minutes. "He has even a car," she said, he said. And I knew that he doesn't drive. He had a chauffeur. They were very wealthy people before the war. And they started to pull themselves together. And he came and we were just, we couldn't talk. We were crying and crying and crying. He loved me very much and he was just crying. And finally when we stopped crying, didn't stop, but we could talk, he

said, "Your aunt is alive, but not my son." But I knew that 13 years old wouldn't be alive. I had one of my uncles, my mother's brother, that was the only man in the family, who was never married because my grandmother was 35 years old when she was a widow and left with five children. And he didn't get married because he was supporting the family and he wanted the girls to get married and probably… but he was never married. He was 54 years old. And he was in labor camp in Hungary, but at the last minute when the Germans left, they managed to take him and he was in Buchenwald. And he was alive. And they all lived together when I came back. And he came…

Q: Who all lived together? What was the whole group?

A: My… Ilika, her husband…

Q: I'm sorry, say the first one again, because the mike…

A: Illie, Illie, Illie, Ilona, Ilona, Ilona. Ilona, her husband, his brother…

Q: Give everybody's names, if you would please?

A: Laszlo, Laszlo was his name… Laszlo is Vladislav… I don't know what is Laszlo in English. I have no idea.

Q: That's okay.

A: Laszlo. And my uncle, Joseph, they all lived together, because his brother wasn't married yet. He lost his wife and four-years-old child. My uncle's brother wasn't married. And they live, they lived, before the war, it was a beautiful new house. And the two families, my uncle and his brother lived in one house, two exact, the same apartments, the most modern. And the German soldiers were in it when they came back and they ruined the whole house. So they had to re-do it. So, they lived next door, was my uncle's parents' house. And they lived… that was an older house, and they lived in that apartment in his parent's apartment, my uncle's. And then we came, I came back, and my husband. I think it is there how I met my husband when I came back. Okay, so we stayed there, but only for a few days because it was no room for us. So we went to Eger, to his sister, what is another city. It is about, I don't know how many miles away. It was a very nice town. I knew that town before the war, because I went to visit his mother there, his family, his mother and father, who lived already with his sister, who was converted. That story is in there, no?

Q: You mentioned, you talked about the sister last time, last time we were here, his sister.

A: Okay. His parents lived there. And part of the house was my husband's house, because that house was inherited. And there were other relatives there from that part of the family and they wanted the part of the house. And they shouldn't get it. My husband paid it out. So a part, it was a very big house, it was his. So we had like a separate apartment, but together with them. The kitchen was together, but we had two rooms and after the two rooms was the big dining room what separated us. And in that apartment his parents lived, because they took away their

farms. They were big farmers, not in Eger, it was in another city, I mean village. And they took away everything from them. They took away, it's interesting, first the Romanians before, after the first war, they took away, then the Russians took away. The Germans took away. So, they went back and forth and on the end, the Germans. When the Germans took away, they had to leave. And they let them leave and they left to their sister and their daughter. And their son-in-law couldn't save them, but he saved his family, my sister-in-law and his daughter.

Q: I have a few questions about that time. One, did you have any hope at all that your parents and your sister were alive?

A: Hope? No. After Auschwitz, no, but before Auschwitz, I thought that they must be somewhere alive. And when we went to Auschwitz I thought we go somewhere, where I'm going to meet them. I had no idea. I think I said it then, that once I went to a fortune teller, I said it, and they said that my parents are alive, but they are very far away. And it turned out that they were really alive when I found it out from the Museum. Because I thought after I came back that they were killed right away in June, July, when they took them. August 24th they were killed, according to the Museum. And they showed me pictures and where they took them. And they knew about it. 30, what did they say, 130? I don't know how many. How many people, one day they were killed, because they were not only from Czechoslovakia, that part where we lived, but they were from Romania, what belonged once to Hungary, where Elie Wiesel comes from. They were people from there, too. And they were there, too. So they were, I think, 38,000 in one day they killed. Because they took them to Poland first, no, I know from them. And they didn't know what to do with them because all the Polish people were in the ghettos and they didn't know what to do with them. That's why they were killed.

Q: Can you tell me when and how you found out what had actually happened to your parents?

A: Actually I found out in 1948, because one of my first cousins was taken in 1941 to… we didn't know where. They took him from the street in 1941. He was an engineer. And he just disappeared. And in 1948, he came back from Siberia. And when he came back and we met, that was my first cousin, my mother's sister's son, and when he came back, he asked me, "Where are your parents? What happened to your parents?" And I was telling him that I have no idea. I got a card from my sister from Kamenetz Podolski *(ph)* and she's writing, "We are here. We don't know what are we going to do. When do we get an apartment or something to eat. We have no idea." And the card had a Hungarian stamp on it, so I assume that she sent it with a soldier, a Hungarian soldier, back. And from then on I didn't know nothing. And then my cousin was telling me, "My God, I was there when those people were killed. I was on a horse and carriage." He was in… he went to underground with the Russians. And how, I don't know up to today, how he was riding a horse and carriage, and he was there, he said. He saved a lot of people. He put them under the hay. He had no idea that my parents were there. That was the first when I knew how they were killed, in 1948. And I was back 1945 already from concentration camp. And I still didn't know what was happening.

Q: During those three years then, before you found out and after you got back did you make any effort to find out what had happened to them?

A: I didn't know where. We became right away communists. In 1948 we were communists. I didn't know where to ask, no idea. And George was born in 1946 and my mind was… I am not saying that I was happy, but you know, I was happy that I have a family. I always wanted a family and I never knew that I can have a family. I never knew that I can have a child anymore, so I was very happy that I had a child. And I never knew. Never, and I didn't come with no one. Because a lot of people I met from my, from the place where they were home when they took my parents. I have in Brooklyn two friends, only two, who knew my parents, in this whole world, only two. Those people knew my parents and my sister. And they knew what was happening to the non-citizens. Because we were not citizens that time. We were Czech citizens, but the Hungarians took it over, so we were now citizens. And those people were Hungarians. I don't know, yes, they were Hungarians. Hungarians. They weren't Russians. They took only the Russians, no other citizens. And so they knew that they took them somewhere, but they didn't know why, because I was questioning them in Brooklyn. I said, "Did you know what happened to them?" They said they never knew what happened to them, they just knew that the transport went and never came back.

Q: And I wanted to go back again and ask you a little bit more about the time right after the war had ended and you returned to Hungary. You talked about how you wanted to have a family. What else, what were your hopes at that point? Were you thinking about the future? Did you want to stay in Hungary? Did you and your husband talk…?

A: We couldn't go, we couldn't go, we couldn't go nowhere. We had to stay in Hungary. It was no way under the Russians, that we could get… I got in touch with my uncle, here in America. And he wanted us very badly, but it was no way that we… maybe old people got visas already at that time to Israel, but young people didn't. And we were young people, so it was impossible. And then in '49, I had the other boy, so I didn't even think about it that we should go anyplace, to try. And we didn't have a bad life until it was really communism. Because I had a maid, sleep-in maid. I didn't have to work. And in 1948 when it was really communism, I had to let her go, the girl, and I had to go to work. Because everybody had to show what they are living from, because my husband was in private business and he couldn't show how much he is making. And he made nice money. But I had to go to work.

Q: Did your husband lose his business at that time?

A: No, well he lost it after, yes. After he lost it. And he couldn't get a job, because they said he is a Capitalist. It was very hard for him to get a job on his profession, but then later on he got a job. He got a job later on, but it was not a state job. It was again private. He went together with somebody and they had… he was actually, he finished business college, but actually what was his business before the war, he was [laughing], I have to always laugh that we eat the oats, because that they gave to horses in Hungary. And he was in that business, feeding, oat feeding, because everything was horses, not cars. The transportation was horses and it was a big business, the animal food for the horses. And they connected with the, with the… gosh, with the market.

Q: Stock?

A: Stock Market. So he had a big business and he made a lot of money, but whenever he made the money, we bought a Persian rug or we bought silver. I have 40 kilo silver stuff. I had a beautiful case and it was everything silver in it, because we couldn't show the money. We couldn't put it in the bank or something. And then they didn't bother us. They bother us in one way: that we had a big apartment. Because when my aunt's apartment was ready, they renovated it, we moved in, in the old apartment and it was a very big one. I mean large rooms, there were three large rooms. And actually the fourth one was a room, too, the foyer, because we had furniture in there. And we had a kitchen and bathroom and we had a room for the maid from the kitchen. And the third room was a very big, it was so big that George when he was little, he could bicycle in it. That was his room. And they took away from us that room. You know? And they made an apartment from it, a one-bedroom apartment. And they put in a family, only with one son. A family with one son. It was so big that they made kitchen, bedroom, bathroom… I don't know, I never went in, what is it. They were our neighbors. But otherwise, we didn't have trouble. They took away the business of my uncle. He had 40 pairs of horses and two big trucks. They were the first ones, because they were in… in… how do you call it, that business, when people moved. It's a moving, not moving, actually it's not moving. But with the horses, too, they were renting it or whatever, to companies. And very, very big business. 40 pairs. And when it happened, they took my husband and he worked for them. He loved horses, that was his life, the horses, horseback riding actually. He loved it. And so he worked for them. But then they took away the business from them, from my uncle, so he had to… they didn't work anymore because they were elderly people. And when the opportunity came after the Hungarian Revolution, my uncle's brother escaped to Vienna with his wife. And family is supposed to go after them, but we didn't succeed.

Q: You did tell that story. So your husband, what was the name of your uncle, who your husband worked for?

A: That was my uncle Eugene.

Q: Okay, Ilona's husband.

A: Ilona's husband and his brother, they were together. And that was the business what they inherited from their parents. It was a very old business.

Q: And is that the same uncle, your uncle's brother, who got out after the Revolution? Is that the same one?

A: Okay, no. He started to work with them too. He was in an entirely…

End of Tape 3, Side B

Tape 4, Side A

Q: This is tape number four, side A of an interview with Emilie Szekely.

A: My uncle, my mother's brother was in labor camp in Hungary and when the Germans were leaving, they managed to take him to Germany and he was in Buchenwald. And one day I was prescribing, I got always the Smithsonian magazine and it was a picture there, a nice article about the Holocaust. And the picture showed Buchenwald and a part of the bunk beds, a part of the, it was the…

Q: Barracks?

A: Ya, and on the end of one of the beds, on the end was, the picture, they were all looking in the camera because it was after the war, and it was marked, Elie Wiesel. And on the other side there were three men, between them, it was my uncle. I recognized him. It was my mother's brother.

Q: And his name was…?

A: Joseph. And when Elie Wiesel was here about, that's now four, five… Ilona was a senior, that's four years ago. Four years ago, he was here in Lexington and he had a wonderful, wonderful speech. It was the Jewish Federation and the UK, they did it together. And it was in UK, in the Memorial Hall. Before that, they had a dinner in the club, but it was 150 dollars a plate, and I didn't have 150 dollars for a dinner. And people were coming out and they were telling him what a wonderful thing it was just to shake hands with him. And I was very upset that I know that man from my co-worker, who was a very good friend, her father was very good friend, her husband, of Elie Wiesel and I couldn't see him. I couldn't talk to him. So when it was everything over, Ana was telling me, "Wait, wait, maybe you can see it, go to his dressing room." So, a gentleman was standing there from UK, they didn't let nobody to see him. And I went there. It was the rabbi's wife, that time, Rabbi Slaten's *(ph)* wife, and she was talking for me. And she says, "Would you let that lady in only for a few minutes? She is the only survivor here in Lexington and she would like to talk to him, only for a few minutes." So he says, "Yes, I will do it, but she has to wait until the hall is empty, because if people see somebody's going, they want to go, too." So, I was waiting, I says, "I gladly wait." So, I was waiting and he helped me down the steps, because they were wooden steps in the basement. It was the… I couldn't believe it. He says, "Yes, we are hiding people." [Laughing.] And it was nothing to hold onto and they were wooden steps and he was helping me to go down. And suddenly I came and the door is open and he's standing there. He was a very, very attractive man. And my heart was beating, that I couldn't say nothing, so I says, "Hello." He was very friendly. I says, "Hello." He says, "Who are you?" I didn't say even my name, I was so excited. I says, "I am a Holocaust survivor and I am the only one here." He says, "If you are a Holocaust survivor, you must be from Europe." I says, "Yes." He says, "Where are you from?" I says, "Budapest." He says, "Budapest?" And he starts to talk to me, Hungarian. I couldn't believe it. I said, "You speak still Hungarian?" Because he didn't, I mean, I don't know where he learned, because where he was, they were very religious people, his parents. And I think they spoke Yiddish and not Hungarian, but he spoke Hungarian. And he was 15 years old, maybe in school, correct, in school, probably he learned. He spoke wonderful. And he says, "No, I can, because I have no

one to talk to." His wife is French. I says, "Don't tell me, you speak Hungarian." And from then on he spoke Hungarian to me. And he asked me where I know him from. And I mentioned his friend's name. And he says, "Korman! (*ph)*" He says, "I saw him last week!" That's what he's telling me. I says, "Yes, because of you he didn't want to retire to Florida, because he was often…" he lives in New York, actually, and teaches in Boston. And they had from that part of the town, Sighet *(ph)*, they had an organization. And that my friend's husband went always there because he loved him. And she then was telling me what went on in that organization and what happened at that organization [laughing] when they were together, so I knew a lot about him. And I was telling it to him. He says, "Because of you, he didn't want to move to Florida." He says, "You know what? I saw him in Florida." When he was down in Florida, he saw him. So he was very nice, and then he says, what I am doing, and I told him that I am talking in schools, and he says, "Wonderful." He says, "What grade are you starting?" I says, "Sixth." He says, "That's the right grade to start, don't do younger ones." But I did, because they were begging me. Lexington School for five graders. Ana went to SCAPA, they were four graders. They were begging me, especially in SCAPA, they were very smart kids. And here too, in Lexington School, they are very, very… I spoke twice already there. And now I, the teacher was always asking me whether I know a book for children. I am reading now in a magazine that he, Elie Wiesel, wrote his first children's book about the Holocaust with pictures. So, I try to get that book and I try to call that teacher in Lexington School, because she is very intelligent. She is teaching fifth graders. And they understood it. What kind of letters I got from them, from the fifth… I just cannot believe it, how they understood it and how sorry they are for me. And they cannot believe it, that I lived through that. Fifth graders. So I tell you the truth, that I spoke about 150, 160 times since I am here. That if I cannot do it, because I will be the most unhappiest person in the world, because I feel the commitment that I have to do it. I still have to do it, because there are many, many people, who don't know it still and those are adults, mostly adults. The children are starting to know me in schools, because I go back always, because they are different classes, and most of them they know. In the colleges, too. I was all over in every college, Berea, Midway, and the private college, Transylvania, twice, UK three times. Community college. So, they know all ready. But the adults, lot of adults, in churches, they don't know. So, I will be really… and even if they call me to schools, next graders who didn't hear me and I cannot do it, I am depressed and I always think about it. That it give me… I cannot explain it, when I talk, I am very enthusiastic and I live it through again. That's true. And I have to take a tranquilizer, I must take before I go. And I never spoke about my parents, because I couldn't. I was always crying. And lately I am even showing the pictures of my parents. And if they give me enough time to tell them that story on the end, I am including it, what happened to them and I am showing their pictures. And I was so relieved that I did it. Okay, I didn't sleep at night, but I was relieved that I did something good for them who died. You know? I took it in my head that they died and they won't be at peace until the last survivor is going to tell their story. It's… I cannot explain it, what happened to me, because I never spoke. I never spoke.

Q: So, in those years immediately after the war that you were in Hungary, you didn't speak about your experiences at all?

A: I didn't speak, even in New York, never. New York, I didn't have to, because there were so many, I never heard denial. And here I started only because I heard denial. In Hungary I never

spoke about it because the Hungarians are very anti-Semitic. And they told you that "Too many of you came back." It's a Catholic country. I am not saying that the intelligent people, but I heard it from people saying it. So, in Hungary, I even went to a doctor, I wanted to take off my number because it was so uncomfortable when I was holding onto the train. I went to the city. I worked for the book publishers, you know, the dictionaries. And that's where they were telling, they were looking at those numbers like, "I would kill you," you know? Maybe it was in me that I thought it, but no. Even today, even I told you, I was in 1978, in Hungary with Ilona… 1978? What am I talking about? She was born in 1970. 1989 I was with her. I told you that story, no? And we lived there for months?

Q: You mentioned it.

A: We lived, my sister-in-law was still alive at that time, my husband's sister and she took an apartment for us, because they had only a one bedroom apartment. A very beautiful place. And he took us for an apartment, a rental, close to them. And it was a woman, whose husband was a school principal, but they were divorced. And she had a son, an engineer and he didn't live home and she had three rooms, two bedrooms and a living room. One bedroom was separate and then she had a room in Bolotow *(ph)*, near Lake Bolotow *(ph)*, that she went there. If she rented the apartment she went there, that she shouldn't be home. But we were always begging her, that it doesn't bother us, she should stay home. Because she was the only person who spoke English and Ilona could spoke to her English. She was the only person. And she worked for the… she was babysitting in the Canadian Embassy for somebody. So, she spoke English well. We were glad when she stayed home and when she stayed home she went down and she brought us always fresh bread and milk, and she was very nice to us. We didn't speak about religion, absolutely. And the last day, the last day before we left, she came to me and she said, "I didn't sleep the whole night." I says, "Why?" She says, "Because I just find out, I just notice your number that you are Jewish and I am Jewish, too. Nobody knows it in the house." In 1989, nobody knows it in the house. "They are suspicious," she said. But her husband, I don't know. I don't remember already her name. But it was a Hungarian name. But he changed his name because it was a Jewish name. He changed it when he was a school principal. And once, she was telling that she was here in America in Los Angeles for a month and she's mentioning a name, who invited her. And I knew them, those people, that they were Jewish people. In New Pest, you know? But still I just didn't realize it that she's Jewish. And she wouldn't ask me and I wouldn't ask her. But one day, she wasn't home and I see… I took the mail, and a letter came from Israel. And when I gave it to her, she right away put it in her pocket. Because she knew that my sister-in-law was converted and married to a non-Jew and she got that apartment and she thought we are not Jewish. She was afraid to say that she is Jewish. So then… it was unbelievable. And when we came home, I sent her some nylon panty hose because she couldn't get it. And for two or three years I was writing her. And I didn't realize it, she said, "I mentioned to you so many times who took me, who took me, who invited me…" and her son was there too. I don't know how long he was in Los Angeles, in California. And I didn't realize it, he went out once with that man, but he was married. And both of them, he and the wife, invited her, but I didn't… you know? [Laughing.] I didn't know him personally. But I knew, and I knew his name, those people who were in Los Angeles.

Q: Did you…

A: So that's the situation, and even today, they are hiding people, they are Jews. They are… it's no good, it's still no good in Hungary. Under the communism, it was no Jew, we couldn't say, no religion. They were forcing us to work. A Jewish boss, he was forcing us to work on the Jewish holidays and he was a lawyer. And one day, I thought it? I said it? --One day… his secretary was a very nice person. She was Jewish, too. But many people worked there, they were all intellectuals, because they were… whatever we had intellectually, if it's something medical, the doctors that were there and engineers or whatever. It's very interesting. And he, on the biggest holiday, Yom Kippur, he called us to his office, me and his secretary and he made us eat. He was in the Party, the Communist Party because of his job. But who saw it? Why did he have to do it? I couldn't go to the synagogue, so I went home by bus, I remember. Because it was, we lived in New Pest and that was in mid-town. We were passing the street where the synagogue is, I jumped off the bus at that station and after work I went to the synagogue. And in the concentration camp I didn't know that it's holiday or not holiday, but the Polish people knew it. And they were telling us when it's Yom Kippur. They knew it from outside the world. Because people who went to work outside, they somehow got in touch with Polish people. And then they said that tomorrow is like Yom Kippur, so I didn't eat. I was used not to eat, because eat, the food was only bread when we got off from the work, you know? I was fasting there and I go back and I have to eat.

Q: Did you have a sense of faith at the time?

A: At the camp? I lost my faith.

Q: After…

A: In camp, I was always saying, "Where is God? Where is God," when I found out what is going on in camp, that they killed all the little kids. And I says, "Where is God that he let, that he let it do those people? Where is God? Is it a God?" I absolutely didn't believe it. I just… I was saying that too, always, that I was, at night when we couldn't go out after work, when we were already inside, but if we had the chairs just to look outside and look at the stars. And I was unbelievable homesick, unbelievable. And I was just always saying, I says, "My God," –'my God' I didn't say. I just said, "Does Frank," Frank was my husband, "see the same stars what I'm seeing?" Terrible homesick, and never, never thought that I can survive from there. Never. It was so impossible, you know? It was impossible. First of all, I didn't know where is Auschwitz. I didn't know that we are close to Krakow, we are in Poland. I knew that we were in Poland, but I had no idea where we were. And I never thought that it can happen, that the Russians are going to liberate it and we have to go.

Q: So after the war when you went to synagogue, did you just go because of tradition?

A: Oh, no. After the war, no, after the war, we lived under communism and we went to synagogue secretly. And it was a, a nursery, a preschool in the synagogue, and George went there. But it was everything secretly. When he went to school he had no religion. He wasn't allowed to say that he has religion. No religion. When we went to Vienna, for 17 months we lived there. He was the only Jewish kid there. And they were suspicious because they were praying every

morning. And once the teacher called me, "Why does he doesn't pray?" I said, "Because he has no religion. We lived under communism, that's why he doesn't pray." And every day I was dying until he came home from school. I was so afraid what's going to happen, that they find out that he's Jewish. It was terrible, terrible. Hitler came from Vienna. I told you that. That even in 1957, when we went to Vienna, the workers, when they worked, they started with a bottle of beer and "Heil Hitler."

Q: So, when you went, but did you go, you didn't go to synagogue because you had religious faith?

A: No. When I went back and I found Illie, Ilona, when I find her and I find her husband, her husband, they weren't, they weren't religious. They were religious and not religious. We didn't have nothing to eat. So my sister-in-law managed to buy every year a… she was close to the countryside and everybody knew them there where they lived. Her husband had a very big position with the state. And he, himself, was an anti-Semite, my sister-in-law's husband. It's unbelievable. I was telling you about it. Okay. But they managed, somehow, I don't know how… we got every year a pig. Pig! So, and it was a butcher, who came to the house, and they made for us and for Ilona, for them… my uncle wasn't alive at that time, Joseph. Because he was very religious, you wouldn't believe it that he went with a little prayer book to Buchenwald and he managed to bring it back with him. Because that time already, they weren't killing there, in Buchenwald, when he got there. And he brought it back. He was very religious. That's why he stayed with us, and not with Illie, Ilona, because of the pork. But we ate the pork, too. We had it, too. Especially when he died, it was… we ate it because there was nothing else, and we had food for the whole year. George doesn't know it. He doesn't remember it, so I am not telling it to him. And I am not telling it even to the grandchildren. Ana is crazy when she would hear it. She's watching always what you are ordering. She is… yeah. But he was the president of the synagogue, my uncle, and he was helping many, many Jewish, young boys to go to Israel. That time it was secret. Secretly, they went through Czechoslovakia. So, that way he was religious, but, you know? But we couldn't show it that we were religious or not religious. But we ate pork. But I got back my religion. I got my belief. I got it back slowly, slowly I got it back. I was always thinking about my mother, how he taught us, she taught us to pray in Czechoslovakia. And when we went to the synagogue like Friday night or something, I was always thinking about it, how we were crying, but every week we had to read one more page. And it was so hard for us, myself and my sister. And I was thinking about them. And as I was thinking about them always, you know, I got back my religion. And especially when I came to America. When I came to America and my uncle was… he wasn't, he ate everything. I'm not saying that they didn't cook pork, but he was religious. And I remember him and my father when they were together and Passover, when they were together. And every Saturday they went to the synagogue and then they came to us and they were singing after lunch those songs that you are supposed to. And when I thought about those things it came back to me, you know? It's very interesting. And now I love to go to the synagogue, and I am so heartbroken. I wasn't there now three weeks, I think. I am missing it. And I'm missing it. We don't have a rabbi now. He left. I loved him. It's interesting that he's near Cincinnati and Ilona was teaching here Sunday school art for four years. And now he's teaching in his new… she goes down to the new congregation and she's teaching, but only twice a month because it's 40 miles away. So, and it's, but… she sees him. And I cannot see them. I was very good friends with… she's a very young woman. His wife is from Cincinnati. He's from Minnesota, the rabbi. And his parents

were Czechoslovakians, Czechs. His father, I met his father many times, he's an optometrist. When he came visit he still speak Czech.

Q: What was his name? The Rabbi.

A: The Rabbi? Slaten *(ph)*.

Q: And he was at the Orthodox, no it's …

A: Conservative.

Q: Conservative.

A: Conservative. Slaten. He has three sons and he was here 11 years. My grandson was the first Bar Mitzvah with him.

Q: About the question where was God, did you just stop asking it or did you come up with some kind of answer?

A: No, I didn't get no answer because I knew what was happening. I didn't get no answer. But I was just always questioning, "Where is God? Is there a God," that's what I was saying. "Is there a God, does he see what's happening? Why, why is it happening?"

Q: Do you ask yourself those questions anymore?

A: Yes I am. Why did it happen, actually? Why did it happen? For those innocent little kids, what could they do? What kind of sins they had? Babies. What kind of sins they had that it happened? And then I am going back to Spanish Inquisition. [Laughing.] So what was there? They killed the Jews all over. Always. The Jews are always the [laughing]… for everywhere and everything they are blaming the Jews. So, it's no answer. It's no answer. First the Blacks came and after that the Jews. Some places they… when they are no Blacks, there are no Blacks, then there are the Jews the first who are blamed for everything. Why? Does anybody knows why? I lived under democracy in Czechoslovakia. It was a real, real democracy. Nobody knows what's democracy. Only if somebody lived under that time Masaryk and Benes. They always said, "We cannot be anti-Semitic, never. Because we have the brain, and we are businessmen and we are everything what the Jews are." So I was thinking about it, that it's jealousy. It was jealousy from Hitler that they, he took it from… they were supporting him, the Jews in Germany. They made him big. And then when he knew what they are doing and why, then they killed them and he wanted to have it. Why are they anti, I don't know, anti-Semitic here, I don't know. I never heard it from no one, but I can imagine that the Southern Baptist are anti-Semitic. I am thinking it only because I was invited [laughing] to every church, every denomination, but never to a Baptist church. So it must be something against the Jews. They won't say it to your face, but it must be. They know it. They saw me in the paper. They know it. And I was never, never, and I was on every Christian church. What is that? How do you call it? What is it? And I'm telling it to the children. I'm finishing my speech, and I'm saying it to them that why I am doing it, I'm doing it that you should learn not to hate and you should teach

your parents not to hate, because I don't think so that a little kid knows what is to hate. It's coming from somewhere, from the adults. Correct?

Q: Can you remember and describe the events of the 1956 Uprising?

A: Yes. In 1956…

Q: From your perspective.

A: …Nixon was in Hungary at that time. And the students from university, they got in touch with him. And what was discussed, what wasn't discussed, I don't know between them, but when Nixon left, next day, it was the Uprising. The students, the college students, they took over the radio station. That was the first. We didn't have televisions. That was the first. And the Russians actually never left Hungary and they were all over scattered in the woods and around. But we didn't see them in the cities, but they were there. And it was communism. And Nixon was telling them, "Do it." How do we know that? Because the last Prime minister, Nagy, Imre Nagy, who was killed by the Russians. He was on the radio and he was begging, he was begging America and he was begging Nixon, he was telling him, "Okay, do it." He thought that we get some help. So they came in with their tanks and with their soldiers. It was a war. They bombed…

End of Tape 4, Side A

Tape 4, Side B

A: …the apartment that we lived in Budapest, yes. We lived there. And so when they came in in 19… no that was 1956, the uprising. Up to that point it was all right. We worked and we were communist, but we worked. I mean, the wealthy people were very afraid and we were very afraid with my uncle, that they are going to take them. Because they came at night. They knocked on the doors, and taked people on they, on their cars, on their… the Russians, with machine guns. And they took them to villages, and they took them to villages and they left them. There were certain villages where they were designated where they took the wealthy people. And they couldn't come back to Budapest. But thank God, thank God it never happened. Because that was against… again, it was somebody had to tell them who are the wealthy people. And they were in very good friendship with everybody from the higher-ups there. Because that was a borough, New Pest, where we lived. And like New York has five boroughs, the same thing Budapest has. And so they knew everybody, and they were friends with everybody, and so nobody told on them, so they weren't taken away. Their business was taken away, but they didn't. They weren't taken away. What was done to them, they had to move together, the two families, in one apartment, because it was too big for two people. Gorgeous apartment. House. And they took away they apartment and they had to live together, the sister-in-laws and brother-in-law, two brothers. And they had to rent the upstairs apartment. They decided that they'd take the first floor and the second floor, it was a doctor, a gynecologist with his family. But they didn't take them out. And from that, that they take out many wealthy people, many wealthy people married non-Jews, but not that non-Jews, but it wasn't a match. Just only because those people were giving them stay, somewhere to stay. Because it is an example, my cousin, I have a second cousin in Budapest, my mother and her mother were sisters, cousins. I'm sorry, first cousins. And she is the only one who survived from that family, nobody. She had two uncles and the grandmothers were sisters, my grandmother and her grandmother were sisters and that's how the mothers were first cousins, my mother and her mother. And she was an only child and the only survivor. She survived. Her parents put her in a factory. I didn't tell you all that? I don't know. To a factory where they were making like General Electric. They were making light bulbs. It was Tungsraum *(ph)*, it was a very well known company. I think, in fact, now after the war, they are together, Tungsraum and General Electric. Something, I don't know. But young girls, they worked there. And when they took her parents, she was working there and they slept there and everything. So they worked for the army and when they finished with the work, when the work was finished, they let them go. But they didn't have where to go, because they were, nobody was there already, we were all gone. And that's… I think I, somewhere I said that story, that she was hiding. One of her aunts had a maid and she recommended where to go, to a woman, who was non-Jewish and her husband was Jewish and he was in labor camp. And she had a house. And she took in about eight people, Jewish people. It was a doctor, it was my cousins and her boyfriend and I don't know, about eight people. And she was hiding them. I told that story?

A: You did mention that story.

Q: Okay. So why did we say that?

Q: So, going back to the 1956 uprising… remembering the events of the uprising.

A: …1956, okay. They came in with their tanks and they were horrible. They were raping girls, the soldiers, the Russian soldiers.

Q: Did you see that happening?

A: No, no, but we were very worried, because we had a maid at that time. We were very close to her. And it was terrible. I remember that it was George's birthday and he wanted a car. Before that he knew what he wants in the toy store and we went, we went there and stood on line to get him the car. And the tanks were turned towards us. The end was so close to us. Every minute, or when we are standing for bread, the tanks were turned always to shoot us. It was terrible. Then, one day, I don't know what happened… not one day, they did it many times. But they were very close to us and they were shooting during the night. And we were in the apartment and basements were on the other side of the building, the basements, and we had to run to the other side with the children. I had at that time my cousin's, who was in Russia, his two daughters. They were with us because they went somewhere for vacation and it happened under the vacation. And they lived far, very far from us. They lived in Buda, what was very far from us and they couldn't pick up the children. And they stayed with us, two little girls. We had to go to the basement because they were shelling in the backyard. Terrible. I don't know how many nights we spent in the basement. When it stopped, when they already were in control, I don't know how long it took them. It took them a long time, and they were in control. Then Austria opened the borders, their borders and people who lived close, they could just walk over to Austria. And thousands and thousands, and mostly the peasants, because they were all farmlands around the border, you know? They went all over to Austria and in Austria they put up camps for them and America was sending money for it. We were far away, we couldn't go, because we were 400 miles away from the border, in Budapest. So we couldn't go. That story is in. How did I get out, and the Russians. That's in.

Q: I wanted to ask you… we'll go on to Vienna and then talk about your journey to the United States. But I wanted to ask you whether you wanted to say anything about your husband and your relationship with him, because last time we talked you said he was a stranger to you and then all of sudden you met him after the war.

A: He was a stranger to me in that way, that I knew him for three weeks, when he wanted to marry me. And then he couldn't marry me because I was underage. And then they took him in labor camp. He was away, and I don't know, a few times he wrote me cards. But I didn't know what's going to happen, whether he stays with me whether he will wait for me. And he was four years in labor camps, so I didn't know what's going to happen. But I really… that's why I say that I really didn't know him. I told you about the other boy, whom I went with somebody for four years. So, I was very mixed up. I was very mixed up. I don't know whether I fell in love with my husband right away. But my heart was broken when the other one find out and then wrote me a letter, "Why did I do it?" If he would know that I need a name, he would marry me right away. And… but it was late already, everything was arranged that he fell in love with me, my husband. So… he was seven years older, and I knew he was very good looking. And I knew who was the family, first of all, because my aunt and his aunt were very good friends. So, I

knew the family from my own… and I didn't know what's going to be, and when I met him, you know, when we came back, I was terribly crying and he was crying, too. But he knew I'm alive. He knew, because he knew months ago already when they got the notice. But he was waiting for me. But I wasn't sure whether he has somebody in between or not, though we got married. We were married in 1944, in February, when we got married. For two weeks we were together and that was that. And I was always, you know, afraid that they are going to take me still. I am married, but we went to a hotel, I remember on the marriage night. It was unbelievable. We went down to eat. It was in the city, a beautiful hotel. And everybody constantly was afraid that they are coming and asking for identification and that kind of a thing. It was horrible. So I said, "Let's check out. I don't want to stay here." We went back. We went back, and we stayed with my grandmother, and then we stayed with Ilika, too, with Ilona. Ilika is a, in Hungarian, I don't know what it is in any language. If somebody has a name, they make it like softer. Ilika is softer than Ilona. You know? But that's from Ilona, so we called her Ilika. And I was Milika, my name was Millie, I mean my nickname is Millie. Nobody knew me as Emilie, only in school, and at work. But otherwise, the whole family and my friends… and then we came to America, I didn't know that it's an American name, too. And I never mentioned it. It was always Emilie and that was it. But my friends are still calling me Millie on the phone and my cousin and everybody is calling me. I have a cousin in Canada. My cousin who was eight years in Siberia, seven years, from '41 to '48. He has a son. And he escaped after '56, they sent him, the parents. He went to University at that time already, two years as an engineer. And he was, when he came back he was a communist. He wasn't a communist, he was in the party and because of that, that he was in Russia and spoke already Russian, he got a very big job in the Ministry. He was… as an engineer. He knew that he never can come to America, because he was in the Communist Party. So when it was finished, the communism, when the… I mean, when they opened the borders, he sent his son alone to Vienna. But he had to go to Israel, because the plan was that the parents are going to come after him to Israel. They knew that he cannot come to America. We weren't here. And so he went alone to Israel, but the mother had there a lot of friends, his mother, and he stayed with the friends. And he went to the Israeli Army and he was an officer, too. And the parents went after him, they got passport. Parents and two sisters, who were born after he came home, the two sisters. But he escaped with his mother's mother—grandmother, grandfather and he—they escaped the middle of Budapest. I don't know whether you heard about Wallenberg, that Swedish man? He was hiding them. He was from that group and his mother, and his grandmother and grandfather. Grandmother. Grandfather died before they went to Israel. The grandmother went with them to Israel and she died in Israel. My cousin went with them. I mean of course he went with them. He died in Israel. And it is very interesting that his father was in the First World War and he got… he was in Siberia, too, his father. And he got a nerve disease, nerves. It was terrible. I remember him very well. That was my mother's sister's husband. And he got the same disease in Israel. He was a young man. He was 60, 62 when he died. And he got a job as an engineer, but in a different field. It was a margarine factory where he was in engineering, like making colognes and that kind of, you know? Entirely different. But they were okay. Her father gave a lot of money to Israel, so they were okay in Israel. The two sisters, my cousin's two sisters were in Israel, the two sisters. And the mother, she was here. When she was 75 years old, she came to Canada and she came to me here and it was winter and she says, "God, I love to see the snow. I never snow since I am in Israel." It was a big snow when she was here. And she spent her 75th birthday here. And two years later she died. She had

diabetes and she didn't take care of herself. She ate everything in the world, but she lived well. I spoke to her daughter and she said, "That's the only thing, we are happy that she lived well."

Q: Let's go back, because we got off the subject, you were talking about your relationship with your husband.

A: So again. So, I wasn't, when I came back. So I said, this was a long, long time. I don't know, maybe he find somebody. I don't know. I was two weeks his wife, that's it. I got back. I met him before they came, before they took us, he came to the ghetto. I told you that. But it was just that, nothing, no relationship, we just met. [Laughing.] And then he left the ghetto and five minutes later we were surrounded. But he was telling me that, "Don't let you take them to the wagons." I didn't know what he's talking about. He saw it on the way from Romania, of course, Romania, it was near the border there where they were. What they are doing, they're putting people… and when the wagons came, I remembered his words, I says, "Don't let you put yourself …" Does he know that there are guns involved here? He didn't know that it was done with machine guns. But he told me that "You are going to get a Christian birth certificate and you come with me." It was true, everything. I told you that I find the birth certificate here. I didn't know about it. Last time when he was in Hungary he brought everything. His sister was very sick for ten years, but her son-in-law is a doctor and he kept her alive. Because he was telling me when we were there, if not me, she wouldn't be alive anymore. Because the daughter was always hysterical and even from meetings she called him. He was in a hospital like here, Walter Reed. He was there, a pathologist, under the Communism. So, he had a big job. And she called him, "Right away come and give mother injections," she yelled. And I was there when she did it. And he right away left everything, came and gave her injections. I think that she had liver cancer, that's what I think. Because she had diabetes, diabetes, I don't know whether it counts for me, that that family had diabetes, but my father's sister had diabetes in Russia. So it was in the family. I always forgot about it and when they were asking me, "Did anybody have it in the family?" And I always say, "I don't know, they were killed when they were 45 years old." And I know my grandmother didn't have it. I know the other sister didn't have it. At that time I probably… I didn't know even that his sister had it, because she was writing, my father, always to his sister. And he translated the letters to us, but I didn't think about it, you know, that she had it. And now he was telling me, my cousin, that she had even a leg amputated because of diabetes. So it is in my family. But I don't know whether I got it. I don't know. Because it was really, I had such a good doctor for 27 years and he never said that's diabetes. Only my periodontist always said that I have diabetes because of my gums. It was always, he said, "What are they talking about, you have diabetes?" And he always said, "No, you don't have diabetes, it's just elevated because of the medications what you are taking." Here the urologist was arguing with me, that I don't have… I had urinary tract infection. And he said, "You don't have diabetes. What are they talking about? Because it's not in your urine." Would you believe that? Well, anyway. So then, when we lived in Eger, and we started to know each other. And right away, I got pregnant, a month later I got pregnant. We got very close and he was a very, very good man. Very good. He had such a heart. He was so good. He never said, like George, he never said nothing bad about nobody. And he tried to help people and he was a person like, he worked in a hospital, and he… like nobody, you know… even in New York they don't care about the Blacks. He shook hands with the elevator man or whatever. You know? He was unbelievable good. Unbelievable. And when he retired, even before he retired, he went

without me to Hungary, because I right away had four weeks vacation with the hospital. And when he retired, he went every year back to Hungary to see his sister. But the main thing to see the children's grave. And one day I told him, "Listen Frank, you see I am the mother. You think that I don't think about them?" I says, "You go only to the stones. You must realize it, that you go only to the stones." He says, "Yes, but at least I can fix up the letters if they are, you know, not in shape." They are not buried separate. They are buried with my Uncle Joseph, in the same grave, the two little kids. And then that was that reason, that he has an only sister and she's very sick. And then when he was very sick, he had a terrible heart attack in '81 and in '82, 17 months he lived. And in between that he went to Hungary. I said to the doctor, "What shall I tell him, that he cannot go?" He says, "No, he can go, but he cannot go around nowhere else, just to Hungary. And he'll be all right there because his nephew is a doctor and he will be very safe there." And I called him every week on the phone. And he said, "I'm fine, I'm fine." Three-quarters of his heart was gone. "I am fine," he said. And I always gave the report to the doctor. And he says, "He's fine because probably he sees sicker people around him, and then he has the nephew there". And that was the reason, because when he came back in July, end of June… every July we were in the country for Ilona's, Ilona was born July 3rd, and I left a week vacation for that, and we went to the country house, and he came back before that and he came with us and he was fine. We wanted to go, all of us, to Canada after. It's not close, but it's on the same highway to go to Toronto, where it's close, like a country house. It was a long ride, but still it was… I don't know about four, 500 hundred miles, through Niagara Falls. We wanted to all of us go, and he said, "You know what? I came from a long trip now, I go home myself. I drive home myself. And you go with them." Laura was pregnant with Ana. And he was so happy, because he always wanted a lot of children. He was crazy for children. And George was an only child, because the two others died. And he always, he was very happy. He loved them so much. That's the last picture from them before he left. That was only Jacob and Ilona. And he… it was in April. No. No, because George took him to the airport. It was before he left. He died in '82. While we were in Canada, he got sick and he went himself to the hospital. They took him in Intensive Care, Coronary Care, I don't even know. But I called him when he was already home. And he said, "Bring a present to so and so." I says, "Why?" He said, "Because he helped me. I was in the hospital." So right away I packed and I went back. And in August he died. I wasn't even around. You know that story? It was terrible. He was so good. And he was so worried about me, because when I was sick, he didn't get undressed. He was… the whole… because I had two heart attacks, in '67 and in '70. So, it was always me they were worried about. So, he was always, he didn't get undressed and he was… unbelievable nurse, you know? He was very, very good. And with the children, everything they… what we had, and every vacation they were always for those two children, because they lived upstairs. They lived in the same house. He loved them. He loved George. He loved them. He was very upset that he's an artist, because he thought that, he always of the Hungarian artist, and he was always telling them, "You know how the artists are living? They are going barefoot because they don't have money for they…" [Laughing.] You know, he was always worried. But when he said that "Don't worry, I am going to teach." Then he was very happy, and he was always the first one whom George called. That "I got tenure, I got even…" no, he wasn't alive when he got full professor, only when he got tenure. He was alive. And he was very happy, and with every exhibition, though he didn't like his paintings. But he said he loves it, because he went from that kind of a, ultra-modern. But he was supporting him. And that was everything for him, George was everything. That's why we bought the house there, that he should have a studio. But he always said to him, "If you want to

be a real artist, don't get married." But he wanted to be an artist, but he… I mean, he didn't have no one else but us, that was a family, so he wanted a family. So he got married. And he loves his children. He's a very good father, and he's very good to me, unbelievable good to me. And nobody can understand it.

Q: Why is that?

A: His wife cannot understand it. And I, I… because they don't know what is it… we went once to a psychiatrist, because she was very jealous of his love towards me. She cannot, she cannot understand it that somebody can love two people different way. And the psychiatrist explained it to me. She would never understand it, because she never got along with her mother. She loved her father, and the minute her father died, she left home. So, she would never understand it. So, I said to him, "So I am here, why I am here? You won't understand me either." It was an Italian guy. I said, "You wouldn't understand me. What is it to be in the world alone? Two of us, nobody, no family, just two of us. Would you understand that?" So he says, "I didn't know that, she didn't tell that." The trouble was, I walked in, he said… walked in. I was in wheelchair, because I fell on the steps here. 18 steps, and in the wheelchair I was forced to go to the psychiatrist. And he said to me, when I walked in, he says… Laura wasn't there, we went together and separate. And he says, "How many times your son called you when you were in New York?" I says, "That's the complaint?" I says, "If you are a good son…" You. That's how I talked to him, "and your father would die, and your mother is alone in the world, you wouldn't call her every night? And I paid the telephone bills." So, that she was complaining that he's calling me every night when the father died. And sometimes saying, and it was something, no, between us and Ilona, which I thank God, Ilona… he always told me, "You can always count on Ilona." He loved Ilona. Jacob was very little. He loved Jacob, but Ilona was six… '82 and she was born '76, six years old. So Ilona was already a bigger girl. And she always said, "You always can count on Ilona." And I must tell you, he was always teaching me if he dies, what is going to happen and how much I should divulge. I says, "Frank, please don't talk about that." He says, "I know I am going to die when I am 69." I says, "What are you talking about?" He says, "Because my uncle came home from hunting, he was fine, too. And he dropped dead when he was 69. And he had a heart attack," so every night—I didn't sleep many nights with him—every night he got shaved, he got dressed, and he was sleeping in that chair. He was always prepared that he has to go to the hospital or something, after the heart attack. It was terrible. And he was always teaching me what to do and how to do it. "And I leave you enough," he said, "that you can live like a princess if you want to, but if you want to live with your daughter-in-law…"

End of Tape 4, Side B

Tape 5, Side A

Q: Okay, tape number five, side A of an interview with Emilie Szekely. And you told on the other tape about your… how you got out of Hungary. And then you went to Vienna? Can you talk about what you did in Vienna?

A: You know how we got out from Hungary? That you know? Okay. In Vienna I worked for International Rescue Committee. Their office was in New York, and it was there a boarding school in the Vienna woods. A Hungarian teacher was in Vienna from New York, who came there, he had his mother and sister in Hungary, and he wanted to help them to come over. And his idea was to make a boarding school for the Hungarian refugee children. Those were all peasants' children. The parents got… is it on the tape once already? No. The peasants who came over and they got a contract in Santo Domingo, I don't know how many hundreds, that they get land there and they can work there and they get everything. Food and everything. And somehow, somehow, they couldn't get in touch with nobody, but somehow the International Rescue Committee find out that they didn't get nothing. They put them on the fields and they didn't give them nothing. So they managed to bring them back. So, they brought them back to Vienna and the parents, they put to the two camps. And the children, for the children, who were young, school kids, young, elementary school kids, and there were some bigger ones, they made that boarding school. It was a beautiful, beautiful place and it was like a palace in the woods. And he talked them into it, that he will be head of the school. And because they helped them anyway, the International Rescue Committee. This way they can go to school. So we had seven Hungarian teachers there. And the young ones had school there. And the older ones he took to the village, the first time I saw the… the Volkswagen bus. He had a Volkswagen bus. He took them by bus to German schools. And they were looking for a person for the office, one person does everything. And my… Ilona's sister-in-law, who was already in Vienna—she's Ilona, too, both of them—she spoke and was always corresponding, that's what she did, in German, French, English, Hungarian. And she worked for his very, very… her very, very, very, very rich cousin, who… he was so rich that he lived in an apartment in the middle of Vienna with his wife and two children near the opera house where Franz Josef, Franz Josef's girl friend lived. And unbelievable, unbelievable, the whole first floor with the same furniture. And he was in a business that time that started, I don't know what kind of electronics they started to make. And he was a big businessman. He was in Hungary, too, but in time he went to Vienna. And he worked in his office, she worked in his office. And she didn't get enough, she thought that she didn't get enough pay, then she went to American Embassy, asked for a job. Because she has those, wonderful, wonderful really, she was wonderful typist, too. And they recommended her to that job for International Rescue Committee. Because the International Rescue Committee was in connection with the… they were connected to the embassy, American Embassy. And she got that job. And when she said it to the cousin that she's leaving because she can get more money, the cousin said, "I give you the same money." So then she wanted to stay, because she didn't have to travel. I had to travel by bus out of Vienna and then from the bus I had to walk in the woods. And in the winter it was terrible, big snow and I had to walk to work. But anyway. So, she said, "Look, go there and tell him that you are my relative, and I have to give two weeks notice. I cannot leave right away, I have to give note and I can fill it in for her." So right away he says, "Okay." He gives me a petty cash box with money. That was so funny because I wasn't used to that kind of a thing. And he told me what is the job, that I have to do the payroll. I have

to pay the people. I have to, I don't know. I had to do the bookkeeping, but I never did. I took it home for my husband, because that was his job. I hated bookkeeping. And I never knew how to do it, but he graduated business school. He was a wonderful bookkeeper, so he did the bookkeeping. He didn't know. But when it came… he didn't know that I am taking it home. But when it came that I had to go with the German… not accountant, who was he? Gosh… he was an accountant, yes he was an accountant. And I had to give, where, what office, somewhere I had to go at the end of the year. Because it's the same thing, taxes. He says, "What about?" I couldn't answer and I told him, "I am not doing it, my husband is doing it." [Laughing] I told him. He didn't care about it. But anyway two weeks later when it was two weeks, he says, "Where is Mrs. Schwartz?" Her name… I says, "She decided to stay. If you want to keep me, okay. If not, thank you that you kept me." She says, "Yes, I want to keep you." That's how I got the job and they paid me in American money. I got the… oh, the Germans didn't want me. They didn't want to give me the… you had to have a certification that you can work there. I was no citizen. And they wanted the job. So in the kitchen it was a German woman, who was the everything, you know, she was overlooking and buying and everything. She was a German woman, but I was in the office. And then he got it. He got in touch with the Embassy and whatever and I got it. I still have it, the okay that I can work. And I got paid in American money. It was… I don't know, to me it seemed very much, because it was… I don't remember how much I got. But we didn't live in a camp, we didn't. We lived in an apartment, we lived together with Ilona and her husband. We had together an apartment. And George went to school and she took care of George. And she took back and forth him to school. And then in summer, George came with me there, when it was summer vacation. And they brought out there… they did everything for those kids. Unbelievable. And they brought a German artist there to teach them art in the summer. And George was, my George was in the group. And the first time he painted a head on a piece of wood. A piece of wood what was cut out from a tree. And he painted it, oil painting. And the guy came to me and he says, "Do you know whom you have here?" I says, "What do you mean?" He said, "He'll be a great artist." Can you imagine that? And then in New York, too, in elementary… he came to middle school. He didn't lose nothing. He was in middle school, and there too the teacher came to the house. And he said, "Do you know…" the same words. I said, "What are you talking about?" He says, "You must come to the principal with me." I went to the principal, and they showed me his work, what is he doing. So, he wanted him to go to an art school in Manhattan, a high school. I don't know what was the name of it. And we misunderstood it. We thought it was music and art high school. And we took him to music and art high school. And it was, oh God, he was traveling on the subways, and that was, you know, it was so far away. Were you in New York? Yeah? It was near the City University, behind City University, behind Columbia University. And he was traveling for four years, because he had a portfolio and they took him. So he went already to music and art high school. And he was really good. And after that he went to Cooper Union, where they take only 50 kids from 500, he was amongst them. And Cooper Union is free, you know, that's a Foundation. And we just had to pay for the materials, but we didn't have to pay for his college. 50 took, about 50 from 500 applicants. He was amongst them. So we finished that. He never wanted to go out-of-town college. He was accepted to Penn State University, and I don't know where else he applied in case he cannot get to Cooper. But he never wanted to leave us. He said, "We didn't come to America to be separated." We were three of us, that's it. My uncle was still alive, but we were three of us.

Q: Tell me something, did you talk to George about your family history, and what had happened to your family during the Holocaust, and what had happened to you, from the time he was a child?

A: He knows. Everything. First of all he knows, he listened to the tape. I always talked about it. And he… sometimes I am mixing it up, that it was my husband to whom I talked or to him. But he knows it. He knows it. And I have written down everything, but unfortunately I wrote it Hungarian and he cannot read it anymore, Hungarian. And I really have to write it over in English, though I have tapes and for every kids. I think my whole lifetime is in the tapes, so I don't know whether it's important to write it down. But no, Ana gave me a batch that I have to put down the whole family history because they are making family trees, and for me, for my husband, for my husband's sisters and everything, in the school. She's asking. They are not aware of it, the grandchildren, just about the Holocaust. He knew my husband, they knew, all of them knew my husband. Not all of them. Ana didn't know. Anna just always saying that "That chair was grandpa's and I want to save it." They didn't have really… they don't know.

Q: When you were in Vienna were you waiting for a visa?

A: Okay, that we didn't know. It was a quota was over. Closed. They let in so many people everywhere, that it was no open quota. That's why we had to stay in Vienna. And we stayed 17 months. After 17 months they give for 1,000 people, and we were amongst the first ones because the International Rescue Committee took us. I had my uncle and he sent an affidavit, but we didn't need it because they paid for us and they took us, the International Rescue Committee. And we were the very first ones. The interesting thing was that by that time, maybe half a year before, we had a Baroness, a real Baroness Reitzes *(ph)* was her name, working as a… over the housekeeping. She didn't do nothing actually. She lived in the middle of Vienna and she had a beautiful apartment, because we were there. She invited us. And she had a car, she came every, she wanted a job. Her husband was Jewish, and he was killed somewhere in labor camp. And she lived alone. She was a fat woman. And she had… her mother lived here, in New York. But she stayed in Vienna and she lived a big life. She had a big dog, I remember. And she had a housekeeper, but she wanted a job. She wanted a job. And she had a car and when she came, she picked me up every day by car and took me home by car, so it was much easier on me. But the interesting thing was that I never told her that I was in concentration camp. I never told her. I somehow, I don't know, they didn't see the number and… I don't know. I never say, never told even that I was Jewish, to her. He knew probably, he knew, of course he knew. Haber was his name. He was a school teacher in New York. That was his idea. And I don't know what happened to him, and to the school, too. Of course it's not there anymore. Habdersdorf *(ph)* was the name of the village. And she, when we got the okay to come, we had to go to Salzburg, to the Embassy. There was the American Embassy was in Salzburg, yes. And so she took us by car, three of us, to Salzburg. It was a beautiful, beautiful road. Unbelievable scenery. And then when we parted, I told her that I am Jewish. [Laughing.] She knew that I was in concentration camp. She didn't know up to that point and she was very upset that I didn't tell her before that I was in concentration camp. I never told anybody.

Q: Did you not tell anybody because you were afraid or…?

A: I never… I was very uncomfortable in Vienna. When we first, it was May when we got there and beautiful and we had… already it was arranged for us an apartment when we came. My uncle's brother arranged. And he was a Jewish man, who was saved in Singapore. He went with his son to Singapore. A very interesting man and he lived alone, an elderly man. And he had a pretty nice big apartment. And he had only one room for himself, and he gave two rooms and the kitchen to us. And so we were there and the windows were open. And when I got up in the morning and I heard the German language under the window, I got so crazy. I went crazy. My husband couldn't get a job. He didn't speak German. He couldn't get a job, but they gave him some kind of a… oh, no. When we left I got a letter from the International Rescue Committee that when we arrive we should go to New York, to their main office and show them the letter that I work for them. And we got a counselor there, and we went in and I give him the letter. I didn't say nowhere, it doesn't say nowhere that story? I gave him the letter, and he looks at me and says, "I don't believe it that you don't remember me." I says, "I'm so sorry, how do you know me?" She says, "I was in the school there. They came some, observe the school from New York, the International Rescue Committee. Don't you remember I was there with my wife and I was in one car with you going back to Vienna?" Then I remembered. I didn't even think about it, you know, that is somebody. So, he was very nice. He said, "You don't have to show me the letter, I know what you did there, but I must tell you, you did there everything. But in America you have to do one thing, and good, not so many things what you did there in the office. I'm going to send you to NCR school." When I heard bookkeeping, I just didn't… you know? I didn't say no, but I didn't go, when he told me to go to. What happened, I didn't know that, I got pregnant. And I know it's that I got pregnant in Salzburg. I remember it, but I didn't know that I got pregnant. I didn't know. I had my period every month and I didn't know that I'm pregnant. And three months later I started to bleed like terribly and I didn't know that I'm pregnant. And I went to the doctor and he said you are pregnant, but you are going to have a miscarriage, because you have fibroids. So, I didn't go to International School. And he called me on the phone and he called me when I came back from the hospital. And I says, "I was sick, and that's what happened. I had a miscarriage," I told him. "And I couldn't go." But when I was better, they kept me, I was in the fourth month, and they kept me there five days. They thought every day the babies, four months. I was dying there. I lost so much blood. But then finally they did it. And they said that "You have to come back in six weeks and you have to have a hysterectomy." And six weeks later I went back and they said, "No you don't need it. It was so big, everything because you were pregnant. You don't need a hysterectomy." So then I went back. When he called me, I said, "No, I can't go now." So he sent me to NCR school. NCR was not the cashier machines, they were NCR machines, the cashier, you know. They had big, big bookkeeping machines, before the computers. Big bars, rechangeable that you could do everything. You could go, big papers with monthly statements and you could go checks. Other side I could put the vendor's card and put down to whom I am paying. And I went there and I learned it in one week. Oh, he asked whether I can type, I says, "Yes, I can type." So they taught me for the machine in one week and they gave me a job after one week. I didn't have any experience, but I knew how to do the machine. And they gave me a job in a publishing company in Manhattan, Columbus Square or Circle or what was it. And I had to travel from Brooklyn. I was so sick on the subways that I was more in the doctor's office than at home. It was terrible. I cannot, even in Hungary what is above the ground I was always standing outside on the air. I couldn't travel. And that was underground and was going on in New York subways. It was terrible. And that was a publisher, who made some kind of a… I don't know whether it was comic books or what it

was, I have no… Publishing company. And they were two machines, it was a receivable and a payable. And I was the payable and the other guy, a guy, a young guy, who was very helpful. And he tried to teach me, because I knew the machine, but I didn't have experience. I didn't have the speed, first of all, and if I made a mistake, I didn't know how to correct it. And he was very, very helpful. But the comptroller… not comptroller, liked me very much, the comptroller, but the bookkeeper, who was from Massachusetts, I didn't know from my life. I didn't know where is Massachusetts [laughing], and he was so proud of it, that he is from Massachusetts. He was a misery. And he was a Jew. And he made my life, he got back the checks from the bank, what I was typing. And he found mistakes. He was so miserable and he said to me, "You just came. You are a refugee, and you right away have to sit in an office?" Can you imagine? A Jew. I was very miserable. It was 60 dollars a week, what was a nice pay at that time. And they gave me even commissions. I don't know what was it, from sale or something. I was there for three months and I was constantly looking for another job. And one day from New York Times, I see a job, Brooklyn Jewish Hospital is looking for an NCR operator. They were on strike because they were already… the half, not the office, but the kitchen and the… I don't know, cleaning people, they were in the Union. And they had a strike. The office, too, because nobody could, they had a black man working years on that machine, and he left because he got a better job under the strike. And they didn't have no one for three months. They had young girls, but they left. Young people don't want to sit and work. You had to sit at the machine. So, when I saw that, it was in walking distance from us, the hospital, and I had to pass by, every morning, my uncle's pharmacy. So he came always earlier to open that he should see me in the morning when I go to work or when I go home, because it was in a walking distance. And I never thought that I stay there. And the comptroller wasn't… was out of town or I don't know where. He wasn't there when I got the job. So the personnel, she gave me the job. And I was working, it was a big office and we had two machines like there, accounts payable and receivable. The receivable was another woman working. And the comptroller came back and he called me to the office and he greeted me and he was very, very nice to me. And he said, "I must tell you one thing, if you do the job by Christmas…" they were behind three months with bills. Well I saw those bins with bills. "If you do it by Christmas, the job is yours." So I started to do it and I started to be very fast on the machine, very fast. And I did it day before Christmas. So, but women there, they were Jewish women, they were very jealous. One of them, first of all I never spoke about concentration camp. Never. It was mixed, they were non-Jews and Jews there, and I never spoke to them about it. And one woman, a Jewish woman, she said to me, "Why did you come to America?" This way. I says, "What do you mean?" He says, "Why, the communism is not enough good?" I says, "Maybe it is good for you because you have a house, every child of you has a car and you have a nice job. You could change place with me," I said. [Laughing] Can you imagine that? She was a Leftist. And she didn't work on a machine, but she worked in the office. That time it was everything together, the billing. We had a big, big office and machine and no machine. The machines were in the back. And then there was another woman, who was like that man there, who was controlling me and she was miserable, too. If I made a mistake, she was miserable. And I was crying, and I went to the Comptroller and I says, "I just don't know what to do." She says, "What's happening?" And I told him what's happening. He says, "You come to me, you don't go to them. If you don't know something you come to me." It was a man. And from then on, I was all right. I had trouble because I had to answer the telephone. I was payable and the vendors were calling me. So, in the beginning I had big trouble. I spoke English, but I spoke English, not Yankee. Because I learned English from an

English teacher in Czechoslovakia when it was Hungary already and we thought that we come to America. We had private lessons. And my sister was very, very smart. And we were reading Anna Karenina in English and… I told you, no? That story. So we learned English. And we didn't understand each other on the phone, you know? [Laughing.] So in the beginning I had problems, but then it was okay. Even the Americans came to me, how do you spell that, how do you spell this? You know? That was the end. But I never thought that I stay there 27 years. I stayed there 27 years. I went through many comptrollers. [Laughing.] He left, but he was a long time there. But he left. And then one day the Personnel Director comes in, closes the door and he says, "Attention, please." Everybody looks up, "What is it?" He says, "I must announce it, that from yesterday on, everybody is in the Union." So I didn't know what does it mean and why is it good or bad, just in the Union. Fine. I don't care where we are. And it was an unbelievable advantage. I was the highest paid because of the machines. So, if somebody got three dollars pay and raise, I got five dollars raise. From 60 dollars in one year, because I started with 60 back there in the other place, I went up to 125 dollars because of the Union. And thank God, because of the Union, I have a pension today from the Union, and I have free medication. My medication bills are 4,000 dollars a year, because they are sending me the company's and that's another pension, 4,000 dollars. And I am getting pension. And because… oh, that's the story. Before I… a year before I left, it was another strike. And I didn't go to work, because I was afraid. You know? Crossing the picket lines. But I never picketed, never. I was in the country for a month, it was a month strike. And I was in touch with them. I called always Personnel. Personnel was begging me, "Please come back." Because by that time we had only one machine, it was no more receivable because they gave it out to computers. So, I was the only machine and the only person who knew the machine. They were typing checks, the people who were non-Union. And it was horrible, horrible, they were behind, and terrible. And he was begging me, "Please come back. Come back, don't worry, nobody is picketing anymore." And they were in the country and one day he calls me and he says, "Come back. We are going to send you a Black girl down for you if you are afraid. We are watching you when you when you are coming. And please come back." And they went to the country and they dropped me off and they are watching it whether I go in. It was no picketing. It was no picket line anymore. And I went in and then everybody was shocked, because nobody knew that I am not in the Union. I couldn't have, I couldn't, I don't know. It was… they just didn't believe it that I am, you know, in the Union, in the Union, the people. Because that was a job what was a confidential job, with the payroll and everything. So they didn't believe it that I am in the Union. So, what happened, the person…

End of Tape 5, Side A

Tape 5, Side B

A: …you get out from the Union. They didn't know that I am close to retirement. That I wanted to retire. I didn't know either. If you get out from a union and you get the hospital pension and you get medication from the hospital, doctors from the hospital and they give you 25,000 a year. I said, "How do I do that?" He says, "I'm going to send a telegram," because the Union was threatening us, that if we are still on strike they are not going to cover us medically. Because they had very good medical coverage. Every doctor wanted you if you were in the Union. I says, "I cannot live without medical coverage." She says, "Okay so I'm going to tell them that you cannot be without coverage and you are out from the Union." So, for one year, I went out from the Union. Then after a year, I wanted to retire. I worked one year more than 65, 66 I was when I left. And I says, "Can you put me back to the Union?" Because they would have to give me a pension from the hospital if I am not in the Union. So the personnel, the secretary, his secretary, arranged it that they paid me for one year dues, for one year everything, because they paid for medical for us, the Union. And they paid for pension. I paid the bills, hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Union. I was paying them. And they said that it was a mistake and they got me back to the Union. Can you imagine? It was such a luck because I wouldn't have the Union. I wouldn't have the pension because they say to me… I'm talking to some people from the hospital, "It's terrible, it's almost bankrupt." We were bankrupt after ten years, we went to Chapter 11. I went to, through with them, voided thousands and thousands of checks and everything after ten years. And they had to merge with another hospital. It was St. Joseph… St. John's. Here is St. Joseph's. St. John's Hospital. And then we got more, we were the main hospital. We got more employees. It was 3,000 people. And we paid everything. We paid they bills, too, for medication, for the pharmacy tech, everything. It was everything through us. So it was a very big job. But I had a separate room because the machine was very noisy. And I was alone in the room, so that was very good. And they always wanted me to be a manager and I didn't want to because I knew that I am out of the Union if I am a manager. I says, "I do the job. I am not a manager." So, I was lucky.

Q: Let me ask you a couple of questions before we go on because we skipped your journey to the United States.

A: My journey to the United States? We came in 1958. The International Rescue Committee from Salzburg brought us… Oh. That was a very terrible thing, too. They send us for x-rays, chest x-rays before you come. And they didn't want me let through. I'm sorry, stomach. They didn't let me go through because they said that I have something on my lungs. It turned out that I had pneumonia in the camp and I didn't know about it and it showed. And they said, "They can go, your husband and your son, but you have to go on another plane, because it's something." I went crazy. They didn't want to go without me, but luckily they called me for a second x-ray and that was all well. That was okay, so we came together. But we came on a military plane. I don't know how many hundreds of people, and so uncomfortable, and we were sitting in the last row, near the toilet. And they were only two seats, so we always changed. One sits with George and then the other one was sitting alone, you know? But we were sitting in the same row, but between us the aisle. Very uncomfortable, very. I think we were 24 hours in the air. It was just terrible. And we stopped at Newfoundland, Newfoundland. And then they give us there the first

meal, a dinner. And from that I got so sick, that the whole journey to New York, it was just unbelievable. I was so sick. But I was pregnant and I didn't know, maybe that's why I was sick from the food. So when we arrived, it was that time Kennedy Airport… no, La Guardia, I'm sorry. La Guardia, not Kennedy Airport. And we saw my uncle and my aunt up there waiting for us and waving. And we saw the first Black man in our lives. They had a postman, who delivered the mail and he had a car. And my uncle, he came always… he had like here in pharmacies they have a counter where you have food, too. It was so strange to me, because there is no such a thing in Europe in pharmacies. Pharmacy is pharmacy. And he was telling him that if he has a free day, that he is going to pay him take him to the airport and wait for us. So he was a fat man and it was the first time in my life that I saw a black man. And he was taking us home to my uncle. They lived not very far from the pharmacy. Though the house was theirs, the pharmacy was one day apartments. They lived in a separate apartment. And he had a partner because his diploma… I have still his Russian diploma, was not certificated, so he had an American partner. Very nice people. They lived in the house, in the upstairs in the house. They were very good friends. They didn't have children, and they didn't have children. They were very good friends. He was a very nice man. And so we were three days in our uncle's house. It was only, what they had, the living room is a big, big. Bedroom they had, and a living room, a kitchen. It was a private, private house. I don't know, bathroom, nothing else. They had two in the house, two apartments in the house, the landlord and them. And they rented for us, in that kind of a house, but in another street, an apartment, upstairs. But it was small. It was just a bedroom and a little living room and at the end of the living room was the kitchen, a small kitchen with a small frigidaire. So, that was our first apartment. And that was our street where George went to middle school.

Q: What were your first impressions of the United States, and what did you expect?

A: I was very upset when they showed us pictures from New York at the Embassy. I says, "My God, stones and stones and stones. It's no green nowhere." They showed us New York in the embassy. It was very frightening. When I went very, very first time to Manhattan, I couldn't believe it. I couldn't look up because I was dizzy from the tall houses, but I loved it. I love New York and that's the place where I lived most of my life. When I added up one day where I lived the longest, it was New York. And I love New York. I loved it. We lived in Brooklyn, near the ocean. I love the ocean. I love the ocean in the Spring and in the Fall. I don't like to go in because the mob was there, it's unbelievable. But to walk on the Boardwalk, the sundown, the sunset, it was so relaxing. It was wonderful. And they were benches, you know, and we were sitting on it. It was unbelievable, and I missed it here very, very much when I came here. When I came here I knew Lexington, because he's here for '79, 1979. And three times a year I was here. I had four weeks vacation, three weeks here and one week in the country house, that country house in the Catskills. My husband loved it because he loved the country. He loved it. He loved it here. When he saw the horses, and we wanted to retire here. We came here and always looking for places where… we wanted a duplex. We always thought it's enough, we are together and separate. But for them it was never enough, the duplex. For us it would be, they are small apartments. But anyway it didn't come to it, because he died. But he wanted to live here. I loved the big cities. I never lived in a small town, because where we lived in Czechoslovakia, that was the capital of that part. And Budapest is beautiful. So I couldn't

imagine to live… and they was always questioning where is the city here? Where is the city? [Laughing]

Q: You mean in Lexington?

A: Here, yeah, but you go to… then they showed me downtown. I says, "Oh my God." [Laughing.] Okay. But I knew where I'm coming. But still when I came here really, that this is now real, I thought I go to the nuthouse.

Q: When you came to Lexington?

A: When I moved here. When I moved here in November of '86. And I was very upset. I was homesick. So the first year, they went every year back to the summer house. Every year they spent there and I went with them. It's half of mine, from the summer house. My husband bought it for me and them, half. But we paid their half with cash because they didn't have money at that time, they just started teaching and they gave us the credit. So we paid they half cash and they paid the other half out in ten years. And it's in the Catskills. It's a beautiful place. It's a small house, but it was very nice. We have two bedrooms and in between us was the bathroom and the living room and upstairs it was a big, big attic and it was made up for a bedroom, but we didn't need it. Because we were four only. They didn't have even children at that time, '73. And even in the winter we went up. It was beautiful. It was very close to all the skiing place, all the people. It's very nice. And he wouldn't sell it, because he's very sentimental, because Daddy loved it. He would never sell it, and he loves it because he is away from here and he is going up four or five, it's three acres, hill. And underneath there is a big, big library, that's our neighbor. It's a library for four, five towns, five little towns. A big library. And…

Q: Let me ask you something before we go on. You described how when you arrived in New York and there were some people who, some even Jewish people who were not very respectful of you. Did you find that to be common? That American Jews did not treat you respectfully because you were a refugee and because you were a survivor?

A: Yes, correct.

Q: Can you say more about that?

A: Especially here, here never were refugees in Lexington. Not Jewish, or Jewish or not Jewish. They never were refugees here in Lexington. And then up to today, I must tell you. You are friends with the people in the synagogue. They are not real friends. You are friends in the synagogue. There we socialize, but they wouldn't invite you to their houses, even here. Yes. And what I found out, I found out that almost everybody's fathers came from Europe. Those people who are here 30 years or whatever… everybody's, but still they are Lexingtonians. And it's very interesting. I don't care, because just now I have only two friends, a lawyer and his wife, and from Winchester, Sylvia. But she is again from the synagogue, because I don't go to Winchester. And I went when her husband died, I went to see her a few times, but otherwise I'm not driving outside of Lexington. I'm glad I find my way here. And so, she calls when they

know that I'm sick. But I really don't have friends here. And another couple, who is a Polish couple, the Habers. You've were there? No.

Q: I've spoken with them.

A: But they are very nice. Last week she made a party, it was her birthday. And I couldn't make it, I was so sick. Because in the beginning we made, we went to each other's houses and we had a book club. Everybody read the same book and we discussed it, book discussion club. That woman died. That was a pharmacologist's wife. And since she died, I am not going. I am not going. I could. It's the Haddassah. You know what's the Haddassah? They have it, but I don't like those people because they… I don't like them because they went away from the synagogue and they have their own congregation, the Havarah. And I cannot see that. And in the beginning, when George moved here, they were so friendly to him. They wanted to get him there. And he would never go. Because they have here a rabbi, who was blind. He was a very nice man. He died from diabetes, fairly young. And he… I don't like those people, because when they found out that George doesn't want to belong there, it was finished with the friendship. You know? But when they come sometimes to the synagogue or whatever, they are nice to you. You know? But they have their own clique, only Havarah, but they are none of them from Lexington. They are everybody from somewheres else. And they feel that they are together and they help each other. And it's a bigger, there are 80 families now there. They are always bigger and bigger. They don't have a place where to pray. They pray, I think, once a month or twice a month, I don't know and always someplace else. In the Christian church basement or someplace. They don't have a steady place. Sometimes they pray here, too. Pray here in the club. But I really don't have no friends. Besides the three people and the librarian from the synagogue, she's very nice. But we don't go to each other's houses.

Q: So, you think that people are prejudiced?

A: Yes, they are, they are, definitely they are. They are very nice to you in the synagogue, you know. But nobody would say, "Come." And the rabbi was different. We were always over. I was always invited, because they used to go too, and I didn't want to go with them, like for Passover, to Indiana. His best friend is there, from New York, best friend. And I didn't want to go, so I was always invited to Rabbi. Sometimes with Ilona when she was here for Passover, but not to other people's. So it is. They are. I think they are. It's unbelievable. In the beginning we had here big parties, because they came here, like guest speakers and they wanted to take them to homes. I don't know why they choosed us about two or three times and they met here. And we contributed. We made the cookies and cakes and everything. And one couple came, he is very wealthy. And he's a nice guy. He's nice to me, very nice, in the synagogue, but they came and they looked around. And I see that they are looking around themselves, you know? They were away from the other people. And I said, "Do you want to see the house?" And she says, "Oh, you are acting like it would be your house," she said, he said. I says, "Yes, my money's in that house." They thought that it's… because it's on their name. Me idiot. [Laughing] My friend, I have a pediatrician friend, a woman. She doesn't know up to today, that it's _____. She said to me, "Don't you dare to do it, that it's not only your name and George's. You made the money for it." That I put it on their name. I trusted them.

Q: Tell me something else, have you…

A: And that's what I think, you know? That's how they are. That's the first and last time they were here, because it was a party for somebody. And on the rabbi's wife's birthday, not this rabbi. Another. We had a rabbi who is from England. Rabbi Smith *(ph)*, he's still here. He works for the State Department now. Because they… he was three years rabbi. He couldn't handle children. He doesn't have children. And he is so smart that he is too smart for them. Very, very smart man. So…

Q: Coming back to when you first arrived in America and you're getting settled, did you consider yourself…what did it take to become an American for you?

A: No, no, no, no. I right away, when we were, right away, five years later, we were citizens, because you have to be five years. No, I felt at home. I felt at home, and we had our friends. We had our friends. We had a lot of friends. We had friends, Hungarian friends, of course, they were Hungarians. Some of them came here from, from Australia and then we met here. And then we an association, Budapest. Every city had an association and we got once a month together in Manhattan. They had five o'clock teas. And of course, the end was always the Holocaust, talking about the Holocaust, because almost all of them were in Holocaust, you know, there. So, I felt very well. I felt… yeah. The last six months when I left, when I was alone there, my husband died, I was there four more years alone and then they… _____… "George, when are you coming?" I met a woman, who was my age exactly and he worked… I told you that too? He worked, she worked in Manhattan in the jewelry section. She was an American. And she didn't live very far from us. And I went every week, I went to the theater. I said it? I told that story? But we had private buses and they went certain hours, because I didn't want to go by train. And I didn't drive to Manhattan. She was going to the same beauty parlor as me and she was sitting near me. And one day I hear that she's talking about it that she was in Alaska and whatever, but still I didn't talk to her. Maybe I am not friendly. I am not talking to people whom I don't know, but I overheard everything. But she noticed… yeah, I go to the bus and I am waiting on the bus. And she lived in that street where the bus stop was and she went to Manhattan, too. And she said to me, "Where are you going?" It's first time she spoke to me. I said, "I am going to the theater." She says, "Alone?" I says, "Yes, my husband died and I'm going alone." She said, "My God, would you get me a ticket, too? For next performance?" I says, "Why not?" She said, "Because I am alone, too. My husband died." And I said, "Where do I leave the ticket?" She said, leave it with my beautician when you go the beauty parlor. And I left the ticket, and from then on we became good friends. And every week we went together, but not by bus. I was driving. I know how to drive, but she didn't have a car. She knew where to go, but I knew how. And we went by car. And there was the parking under the theater and it paid. Because it was $3.50 a trip, you know, it's seven dollars, fourteen from ten dollars, parking under the theater. And after that we went always to Marriott Hotel, up, they had a wonderful, wonderful, like Viennese Bakery, a garden restaurant, where they had coffee and cake. After that we went up, and we were very good friends, but it was only six months because six months later I came. And her son was a manager of the Days Inn Hotel in Manhattan. And when we went, first time when we went to the country, first year, and I was very, very homesick for New York and I was depressed and I was crying in the country. And George said, "Do you want to go to the city?" I says "Yes." So, I called her up and her son gave us a suite for 25

dollars and we stayed there for three days. And he went to the museum right away. And I went, I think, with Laura to Fifth Avenue. I don't know. And I think that Ilona went with him, yes, to the museum. And we stayed there three days. And then again, one time I went only with Ilona. I stayed there a week. And I included her always, the woman for the theater, and they gave us a dinner there, for the… I remember before we left and she was there too, you know, in the hotel. And we had a very good time, but it was only for six months. I met her late. I mean I saw her, but I didn't know who she was and because I was there four years alone. And she was alone four years, too. And she was retiring, too, the same time. She worked 20, 27 years, too. Can you imagine that? So it was late.

Q: Tell me something else, you mentioned early on that soon after you arrived you saw your first black man. And that was near the time, just around the time when the Civil Rights movement was starting. But tell me, were you surprised about the way that blacks were treated in this country?

A: In New York weren't treated bad, but here, when he came here, the blacks were sitting in the back of the bus. That I couldn't imagine. It was no sales ladies black, no one. I didn't see no one black, they were all separate. It was unbelievable. And what was the most unbelievable thing, everybody wore sneakers. In the subways, too. And we said, "They don't have shoes here? Everybody's wearing sneakers." We couldn't understand that. Everybody in the morning. And then we saw people who went to bigger offices to work. They had they shoes in they bags, because if you have to wait for a bus and, many times I was waiting with high heels and I said, "My God, I wish I would wear sneakers," you know? When I went to the city I was wearing always high heels. Because in the office I was wearing always high heels. And that was the custom. We couldn't understand. That was the most unbelievable thing when we went on the subway that everybody is in white sneakers. We didn't know about the segregation. We didn't know in Hungary about it. We didn't, we didn't have blacks. We didn't. Oh, I'm sorry. I saw the first black man in the English Army. I saw a soldier. And it wasn't even… I don't know whether he was in the English army. It's interesting, they were taking us by jeep to Nuremberg from Bergen-Belsen. And another jeep came and they were throwing to us from their jeep, oranges. And it was a black soldier. That was the first one. Not the first one. Yes, that was the first one. But I just didn't notice it, color, color… it was no difference to me.

Q: I just wondered if, because you had come from a situation where the discrimination was, was, had such an effect. Whether you expected something different in this country?

A: I didn't know what to expect here. I knew just I have an uncle here. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't. The very, very bad experience was the very, very first time when we had a bigger apartment and George with the school was supposed to go to the Shakespearean play with the school to Connecticut. And he comes home and he had a friend, who was a very tough guy. He was Hungarian. And he was with him, probably, I don't know. And a black boy started to hit George. And he hit him in his mouth. He lost a tooth and he was bleeding and he couldn't go to the show. That was the very, very first time when I said, "Oh my God, what is going on here?" In Brooklyn. It was on the corner where we lived. So then I said, "Oh my God." You know? I didn't know nothing about it. It was a very strange thing.

Q: Did you understand the reason why it had happened?

A: I think that they wanted the other boy, because he was a very tough guy. He was wearing always boots and he had a knife in his boot. So, he was his bodyguard. [Laughing.] After that when it happened, he was always with him. Because I didn't know why it happened, because he is white. I didn't know. But then I knew, you know, when it happened then I knew that maybe… but maybe they knew the other guy and they wanted him and they… he was weak. I don't know. I don't know, but I felt terrible. I felt terrible.

Q: Did you feel a little bit, was it, did you feel a little bit of prejudice after that?

A: No, I didn't. I tell you why, because I worked with blacks in the hospital. My best friends were blacks, who are still calling me. But not New Yorkers. They were from Barbados, from Jamaica and they are different. They are entirely different. New York blacks are no good. They are no good. They are. They are no good. But those people, I don't know whether they are more educated or why, but they were entirely different. And we had… oh, that story is interesting, too. We had New Yorkers, too, there and they hated each other. The Jamaicans and the Barbadians, they hated the New York blacks in the office. In the big accounting office. So it was a big hatred between them. And oh gosh, one had two daughters and one daughter married a New Yorker. She is divorced. She divorced him. But they were very against him. They feel that they are more. They are. They are more educated. And one of them was going to school in England and her husband was an engineer. And unfortunately they are different. I didn't come across a New Yorker black who was so nice as those. You know what I mean? I'm not talking about Harlem. I don't know. But what was around me, that was my opinion and that's how I felt, that they were different.

End of Tape 5, Side B

Tape 6, Side A

Q: This is tape number six, side A of an interview with Emilie Szekely. When did you start speaking about your Holocaust experiences?

A: In 1986, when I came here, and I went to the beauty parlor and I had a short sleeve shirt on and the beautician said, "What is that?" I said, "This is the Holocaust." "The Holocaust? My daughter was just taught in Tates Creek High that she shouldn't believe it. That they shouldn't believe it, it was a Holocaust. It was made up by the Jews." I thought I faint. I says, "What?" She says, "Yes, she was just taught. And I very surprised to see you. I never saw a survivor." Then a woman came here—I came here the first time alone when we didn't move in yet and they had blinds made in the family room—and she was from McAlpins. And I'm sitting in the chair and she sits near me, this way, and she noticed the number. And she jumps up and she starts to scream. I says, "What happened?" She says, "I never saw somebody, I never saw nobody, who came back from there. Let me have a, let me, can I make a prayer for you?" And she kneels down and she starts to pray like I would come, you know, from somewhere, an alien. It was unbelievable experience. But after that when it happened, that she said they were teaching it. She was teaching in Nicholasville, Laura, at that time. And I told her, I says, "Where did you bring me? That's what they teach here? I never heard it in my life." And she was very upset, and she spoke to the high school teacher there and she said, "How about if she would come to school?" I says, "I cannot talk. I never spoke in my life." She says, "How about if I come to your house?" She said. So she came, and I spoke to the microphone for two hours. And from that moment on, she [phone rings] …She came from the high school. I spoke two hours in the microphone. And it was no stop. They came to the house and they were begging me to come to speak in the high school there. And it was a pretty bad experience, the very first one. That was the first time when I spoke.

Q: What was the high school where you spoke? Which one?

A: I don't know whether, yeah, they have more. I spoke at other high schools, too. It was a regular high school, but I spoke at the high school there, when there were women who were pregnant and they were going to school. That was another high school, but that was regular high school. I don't know what was the name, in Nicholasville, Jessamine County. And they were, it was a man teacher, who was very, very nice. He was a history teacher. But it was a… they sat like around the wall in circle they put the chairs. And on that side, on the left side, it was a circle with about ten boys, who were shaved, their heads and they didn't look at me. Because at that time I was beginner speaker and I started to speak and I asked them who believes in the Holocaust, that the Holocaust is true, they should put their hands up. They didn't. And the whole time I was talking and they didn't look at me. So when I finished, and I was pretty nervous, that was my first speech. But it was good because the teacher was absolutely wonderful. And he was embracing me and "Thank God for you, that you are here," and that kind of a thing. And I says, "And do you know whom you have here?" He says, "Unfortunately, yes." So, that was a bad experience for me, you know, that there are skinheads there. It was in Nicholasville. But then I spoke many, many times in Nicholasville middle school, and when Laura was teaching, that was middle school. And that high school. I don't know what was the name of that high school. They were all girls, women, I mean, and one of them came to me.

They came after me and she said that, "I thank you very much for coming because my father is German and he is telling an entirely different story and I knew that it's something wrong how he is telling it to us." So I had that kind of an experiences. Then it was non-stop, one school after the other. Then it was in Paris, Kentucky. In Paris, Kentucky it was a professor in education. That was George's department, education, I mean he was in Art and Education, two appointments. A very nice, very nice professor. And he had student teachers in Paris, Kentucky, and he took me to Paris, Kentucky. And some, they took videos there that day, but it was a very big wind and the windows were open. They didn't have air conditioners. And the videos didn't came out. Well, so he took me the second time and he took with him a professional videotaper from U.K. And I didn't know nothing, who else is there, but I saw that they are women there and they are taking pictures, too, from me. And they are writing. I had no idea that the paper is there. He called The Herald. And that was the first time when I was in The Herald-Leader. And when I was in The Herald Leader, it was no stop. People were calling me. Schools were calling me, and I can tell you that I spoke in every school in Lexington, not once, because I spoke 160 times already. Because usually I, they put together six, seven, eight grades usually in the auditorium. And if the next bunch of kids comes, they call me back again. And in every high school I spoke, too. In every high school. I spoke twice in Dunbar. In… what is that station? Bryan Station, Bryan Station, they were very nice there. I spoke in Lafayette. Now I have to go again. Because I spoke when Ilona was there and still the teacher is there and now Anna has the teacher. And she, he was asking whether your grandmother still does it. And Henry Clay, I spoke at Henry Clay. Twice I spoke already at the Community College. Three times at U.K. I spoke in the nurse's department, Psychiatric Nurses' department. And then the other was the Middle Eastern studies, both of them twice. And…

Q: Have people been receptive mostly?

A: Very nice. Very, very nice. Very nice. Very, very nice. I cannot tell you, I have a whole drawer, from letters, what they are doing, Montessori school. All the Montessori schools I spoke. There are three of them here. I spoke in Scapa, I don't know how many times. And what they do, the Scapa… oh, I spoke, lately I spoke in the Adult Education at night. That's education at U.K. I have a series for the concerts, five tickets for the U.K… not U.K., concerts what they are doing, gosh, five a year. Five concerts, from all over the world they are coming. And the teacher, the professor that sits in front of me, she is a woman, but is George's colleague actually. So, she never… I don't know, she was always afraid to ask me and we always talk to her. And a few weeks ago, it was a concert and she turns around and she says, "Are you alright?" And I says, "Yes, why?" I wasn't all right the week before and George was there with Ana. And she says, "Oh, can I ask you to talk?" I says, "Of course." And one of her students, they are all for Masters, teachers who are going for Masters. And one of her students is from Scapa. And she's her best friend. And that woman, she is a pastor's wife from the Lutheran church, Mrs. Gross. Wonderful, wonderful person. I don't know how many times I spoke. And what she is doing, she binds the books what the children are writing. The letters, and it's unbelievable what they are doing. And flowers they are giving me. And that professor, Dr. Backner, I don't know how many times he took me. He was, unfortunately he didn't get tenure at U.K. because he wasn't writing. But he said he didn't want the tenure. He was there six years. And then he was principal in Georgetown. And he called me there, too. I spoke in Georgetown for him, and he picks me up, and he takes me home, and in-between he takes me to a restaurant when he takes

me home, to the nicest restaurants to eat. And it was an opening here in Lexington, what's it, Lexington Traditional. It's on Nicholasville Road. And I asked him when he was in… because I spoke there two or three times and I knew it was an opening there for principal. And I ask him in Georgetown whether he wants to come to Lexington. He lives here. And he says, "Why?" I says, "Because I know it's, I don't know the principal who is there, just in between." He lives, she was, he was Laura's principal in Jesse Clark. He lives in our corner. And I said, "Is Mr. Mossgrave there?" And he says, "Oh, not a bad idea." And then I spoke to Mossgrave. I says, "Would you please call him because you are here only for a few months." [Laughing] Because he is retired, and he works a few months only because of the Social Security probably. And he got the job. He got the job. So I already spoke twice to him here, in _____. And last time his wife picked me up, and we met in the restaurant, Chaise *(ph)*. And he came there from school and his daughter came, too. It's very interesting. His daughter was for a whole year in Belarus. Very interesting. She said, she loves the people there and she wants to learn the language. Very nice person. And both of them came to listen to me, too. The wife and the daughter, last time that I spoke. It was the end of the year.

Q: When you started speaking about your experiences, did you find that memories were coming up that you hadn't thought of?

A: Everything is coming up. I don't… if they give me enough time, I am telling them from beginning to the end, everything. Memories are always with me, not coming up, they are always with me. And I don't try to forget it. Sylvia tries to forget it. That's the difference between me and Sylvia. And it's a big difference, because she married an American man and she never had to talk about it. So it's a big difference. But she doesn't want to talk about it with me either. And she was in the same place. She was in Bergen-Belsen. And she doesn't want, she says what she has left over, life, she wants to make it happy. I cannot forget it. I cannot erase it that they killed my parents. I can't. And the six million people and everybody and big, big family from my grandmother's side. I can't. I can't forget it, no one day. And I am dreaming about it, especially when I'm talking, I'm dreaming. I said once to my heart doctor, I says, "I just don't know, I cannot sleep. Maybe I shouldn't talk anymore." He said, "You just take your pill and talk." [Laughing] That's what he said. They are so funny the doctors. They have my pictures, when I am in the newspaper, they put it in they files. So, when they bring the files, here you are. It's interesting. Yeah, lot of them.

Q: You talked earlier, I guess it was the last time, about how you had such guilt feelings after your parents and your sister were killed. And I wondered if you ever got over guilt feelings? If you ever got over that?

A: I, look, I have a guilt feeling always about my sister, yes. How is it that she said… it's fate. I don't know. I have to come… I have to forget that guilt feeling, because I wasn't there. I wasn't there. And I am sure that if I would be there, I would do the same thing. Because she had an opportunity to escape and she says, "I go where my mother goes." And if I would be there, I would do the same thing. I wasn't there. It was a coincidence. I had problem with my rheumatic fever that year and I had to go… my mother send me first. Every summer we spent there in Budapest at my grandmother's house. And I took every year a cure for my rheumatic fever. When it was nothing wrong with me. The doctor said we should do it that it shouldn't

come back. And I had a doctor there, in one of those baths that they have. It's wonderful waters they have. And he gave me a cure for three weeks. And it wasn't my fault that I wasn't there. I was thinking about it many times. That I should make, I shouldn't be so guilty because it wasn't my fault. First time in my life, I was 21, and first time in my life I was traveling alone. It was 400 miles on the train to my grandmother. Because I finished school and my sister was still in school, otherwise we would go together. The year before, Christmas, we went together with my sister. So it wasn't my fault. It was fate. It was fate. And when I was telling it in some schools and I says… children were asking me, how come that you survive? I says, "That's the only question I cannot answer you." And the principal, not principal, the Superintendent, I didn't know that he was there. He said… he was sitting in the corner. "I tell you why," he said. "That she should spread it to the people." I says, "Thank you very much for helping me out, but I think my sister could have spread it, too. So, it is nice that you think about it this way."

Q: Do you feel safe and at home in this country, and in Lexington?

A: I'm every year alone in this house, now I don't go with them in the country. And this year I am thinking about it. That they really shouldn't do it, that they leave me alone here. I went with them every year, but I don't know how many years now, about four years, I don't go because Laura wants to be alone with George. And he says we are here together the whole year, we are together. Though it's my house, I cannot go there. So, I went there three years ago. She went to Hungary with Ana, because she was never in Hungary, Ana. She was never in Hungary. Ilona was with me. I took Ilona. '89, after her, that was my Bat Mitzvah present to her in '89. I took her to Hungary for three weeks and one week in Vienna we were. And so, she went with Ana. I gave Ana her Bat Mitzvah present, the ticket, to go to Hungary. So Laura had a free ticket that she's collecting, you know, the free flights. So they went to Hungary. And then I went for three weeks to the country and stayed with George. I had a great time. I had a great time. What should I tell you. So, that's the situation. I won't go there now, sick as I am. See we have always only one car there, and I am depending on them. And it's not comfortable anymore. I took now, when the children are there, upstairs the bedroom, because it's a… they made a window, you know, the skylight there. And they have air conditioner up there. I cannot go steps up again, and up and down. And they made a half bathroom there, I made. I had to pay half for it, the time that I am up there. And that's only half bathroom. If I want to take a bath, I have to go downstairs. It's no more comfortable for me. It came to a point that it's no more comfortable.

Q: I just was wondering if you felt that America had become home to you and that you, also whether you felt like…

A: It was my home. New York was my home. It was my home. I never, when I went even to Hungary, I never said I'm going home. That I can erase because of what they did to us. You know? I was born there. And all the relatives there. But I never, never said "I am going home. I am going to Hungary." New York was my home. I felt at home.

Q: Do you think that people in this country and in this day and age are, are paying attention enough to the dangers of what happened during the Holocaust and making sure that it couldn't happen again?

A: No, no. The people are so far away from it. Even then, when it happened, I think, they were so far away from it, that it's only me that I am afraid that it can happen and what can happen. It's only me who went through. They are laughing when I am saying it, that I am afraid from everything. I am afraid of my shadow, you know, that kind of a situation. But no. When we went to Hungary and they were asking us, "How could you live there? This is a jungle there, in New York." You know? They have a very bad opinion of what's happening in New York. It's happening here, too. This is much smaller and what's happening here, when you open the television, they start the killing. Okay, it's a family killing or whatever but it's happening. It's happening here, too. And it's always worse for the people who don't live in a place. You know, it seems much worse. I don't know. I wasn't afraid in New York where I lived. Once I was very afraid, when I sold my house and I sold it to a Chinese guy, who, they knew that they have to give back Hong Kong, and they were coming. And he said that he wants it for his family. Baloney. He made a business from it. He made from a two-family house, four families. For money, he's getting rent. Unbelievable. From the basement he made two apartments and two apartments what we had upstairs. I went to see it when… there's no garage. From the garage he made an apartment. It's unbelievable. And he wanted to get out from it, the last minute. But he had 25 thousand dollar, 25 put down? How much? I don't know how many thousands he had to put down when we made the agreement. It was in the lawyers, collateral, you know. And he wanted to, if he doesn't get the mortgage what he wants, that he can get out from it, but he got the mortgage what he wanted. The lawyer find out he got the mortgage what he wanted. But he wanted a cheaper mortgage and he wanted to get out. But then he would lose that money. I think it was 25. I don't remember. Anyway. And I was getting phone calls and it was a strange, strange accent, that I am going to come and kill you. So then I said, "My God, I want to get out as early as can from here." You know? I think they were those people, those Chinese, I don't know. Then I was very afraid. Though in the beginning I was very afraid, we were robbed. So I slept, not in our house, we lived in an apartment and we were one apartment, second apartment, we were robbed. But that's why we bought the house, we went out from that neighborhood. But otherwise, otherwise I didn't have that fear. I didn't go on the subways, I was driving. And it was very dangerous already, in the hospital, too. So it was a parking lot across the street where I paid parking. And I just ran to the building. It was very dangerous. I got out at the last minute really, because if you walked in the hospital itself, in the lobby, and you had a necklace on or something, people from outside came and they took it off. So it was a very dangerous place. And it is very interesting that every hospital in New York, it is in a bad place now. It is very interesting. Even Flowers *(ph)*, Fifth Avenue, my God, my husband was operated, spine operation and I went to visit him with George. Behind it there were big buildings and we had to get off the subway. And they were throwing bottles against us. That was the best hospital, the name Flower, Fifth Avenue. Can you imagine? That was years ago. Stay in Harlem, or no. So, we came here. What I was seeing today on the television show, it's really scary, about five black guys, who are thieves. And that show is from New York, and how they are stealing cars and how they are just bumping into people's cars. And then innocent women, they get out, what happened. And they get out too, behind them and they grab their necks, put them in the other car behind them and they take that car because it's a better car than theirs. There were five of them. Can you imagine that? I don't know how they can say it on the television this way. And there was a detective there, too. And they were saying it, how they are show it how they are doing it and they are selling it. And she said, "How much you get for that car?" She says, "We sell it for

parts, 500 dollars. And if it's a Mercedes, a nice, new one, sometimes 5,000 dollars." This is, this is, now again a more dangerous life since I came. They were stealing cars, of course they were stealing cars, but that way I didn't hear it, never, when I was living there. So it's now 13 years.

Q: What about anti-Semitism?

A: In New York?

Q: Living in Lexington, have you experienced anti-Semitism?

A: Actually no, because I am not… I think in this neighborhood, yes. I didn't experience it, but I have a friend, who is married to a Chinese man. She's from Canada. And she, nobody was her friend, only I. [Laughing.] But she lives here a long, long time, and her mother was Russian. And she was born in Canada. And she's telling me that this neighborhood, when she… they builded the house. They didn't allow Jews in this neighborhood. That was what she was telling me. And then I had a remark. Somebody came, I don't know who was it, those guys who are, you know, trying to convert you. I don't know which religion was it. And I said, "I am not interested. I am Jewish." And he said, "What is it, everybody is Jewish in this neighborhood?" I says, "No, minority." They are all Baptist here, in this neighborhood. But now there are a few Jewish families. But she said that they weren't allowed here in this neighborhood, Jews. I didn't, as I said, I don't know. I didn't know about it. And she, she was unbelievable, they didn't want to take her nowhere between them, because she was marrying to a Chinese. He is a genius. He is now 70, I don't know, something. He got tenure. He was with IBM originally. And then he was teaching at UK. And now he is teaching in Frankfort in state university. And at age 70 they gave him tenure. He is such a genius. But he is Chinese. And she has two Chinese, he has two daughters, a daughter and a son, both of them are doctors. And they were really suffering in this neighborhood, she said, because they were Chinese kids. She was always telling me what they went through. So, it's any difference, Chinese or Jew? If they don't, if it's not their own, then they don't like you. I don't know. We are friends. With this building now. Those people lived before them a very long time here, 20 years. He was a pathologist and she was Head of Pathology at UK. And we didn't go to each other's houses, but when we spoke we were very nice. And her daughter, Jenna's daughter, when she got married in Louisville all the neighbors got together, five of us and we went all to the wedding, to her daughter's wedding, because she didn't have any family here. She doesn't have any family here. And because I am Jewish and she is married to a Chinese [laughing] so we are very good friends. We are going together, she helps me enormously. She is a very good person. Now she was, she was nurse, actually. She went for nursing in Case Western, in Cleveland. She met him there somewhere, I don't know, in Ohio. She… really, she felt it at UK. She was in the Nursing department and she was the head of the private nurses at that time they had. And she had to give the patients the nurses. And she is absolutely, you know, she didn't know about discrimination. And she gave once a black nurse to a white person. She was fired. And then when she was fired from there she started to tutor. She is very good in math. And she tutored all the kids from this neighborhood. She knows everybody because she was a tutor. And from that, because it was not enough what her husband made, they send the two children to medical school. The daughter is a psychiatrist and she is having now the first baby, she is waiting every minute, though she is 35

years old. Yeah, she is. And she lives in Louisville. And the son is in Louisville, too. He is a general practitioner, but he wanted to be a surgeon.

End of Tape 6, Side A

Tape 6, Side B

A: …here that I am accepted. I think because of the speeches, that's why. Many people know me, and many people want me, and many people are very grateful that I am teaching and I am teaching the children about history, what is not, unfortunately, not in history books. It's only a few words about the Second World War, the Holocaust. And I don't know whether it ever will be. And they are very grateful and gracious. And really they do everything for me. They pick me up, they take me home, they take me to eat. They give me presents. It's unbelievable what they are doing, those people. And I think that it's sincere. Those people who, you know, who are calling me and I am talking… so it's many people. 150 times I talk, it's many people. They are sincere. And they are not anti-Semitic. They are not. I'm convinced 100 percent about many, many of them, they are not.

Q: Anything else you'd like to say before we close?

A: Before we close? You are a nice person. [Laughing.] I like you.

Q: You're a nice person, too.

A: Thank you. [Laughter.]

Q: I thank you very much for spending all of this time with me.

A: You are very welcome.

Conclusion of Interview