

Transcript:

Freda Weinreich

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Interviewer: You were in the ghetto? You were in a camp?

Freda Weinreich: Yeah.

Interviewer: We'll talk a little bit about the camps and the ghetto, then we're going to talk about liberation and then we're going to talk about what brought you to Tennessee.

Freda Weinreich: OK.

Interviewer: Feel free to stop at anytime. Feel free to take all the time you need.

Freda Weinreich: OK.

Interviewer: And I'll just ask you a couple of questions.

Freda Weinreich: All right, [a lot of question 0:25].

Interviewer: Anything you want me to know, you feel free to...you don't have to only wait to be asked, you can offer anything but let's just start a little bit telling me a little bit about your family and what you remember growing up in Poland before the war.

Freda Weinreich: Before the war. We lived in a Lodz Poland. This is the second largest city of Poland. I was 15 years when the war started. I did attend public school. My parents were very pious. We were not well-off. We lived moderately. I had five siblings, three sisters and two brothers. Nobody survived. We lived a normal life, I cannot explain, before the war. But then in 1939, we started to talk about... It was our teacher in school, the principal, she was from Austria. And in 1937, she went back home to visit her parents and at over there, Hitler was already there and then over there, the life of the Jews was already miserable. She came back and told us, we were at that time, 13-year-old children. She hopes that Hitler will never come to Poland. Well, he came two years later. When we started to talk about war, my mother started to cry. She said, she remembers the First World War, how bad it was but it was not in comparison to the First World War. The First World War was a war which people suffered but not because they were Jews. Here, we suffered right when Hitler...when they came in to Lodz, the first day, they'd find the Jews, then called them to work, caught them and beat them up. Schools were not permitted for Jews. So, it was a different war, it was a war against Jews. Besides you had the war going on between countries, it was a war against Jews.

Interviewer: Tell me about your earlier memories of antisemitism?

Freda Weinreich: I really...personally, but Poland was a very antisemitic country. In Poland antisemitism... This was especially because the church did preach antisemitism. When they did go out, Easter time, it was the time Jews were trying not to be in the way because they did yet...at the preaching, they could hit Jews. So personally, we lived in a street, in a house where only Jewish lived. I did go in Poland, in Lodz, the public school was only Jewish. There were separate Jewish and separate gentile. So, I did go...and separate girls and separate boys. This was the public school. It's not all, not everywhere but in Lodz, it was a big city. So, I really did not encounter it especially, personally.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm. Tell me about what you remember about the invasion.

Freda Weinreich: The invasion, we heard...it was September 1st. We heard they're starting the war. They came to Lodz in September 3rd, after two days. They came in very fast because Poland was really sold out, while the Germans, Polish-Germans were in the government and it was sold out. So, they came in right to Lodz and Lodz was not on the boundary. Lodz was in the middle of the country. They came in September 3rd, they just walked through. The only opposition they had was in Warsaw, a little bit but still didn't take more than two weeks to fall. And they had some kind of opposition in [Stettin] but otherwise, they just walked

through. The army was disorganized, the army wasn't organized, the Polish. Poland was a young country. Poland was in existence only 31 years or something like that. Poland was liberated 1918, they were occupied for 100 years. I'm going to give you a history lesson which I still remember from school. So, Poland was really a very young country. They didn't...they were a...in '39, so they were 21 years old. So this is young for a country to be organized. So, when they walked in, the Jews were already cutting to work. My husband had a beard, he had to either cut it off or tie it up, cover it up because otherwise they tear it off.

Interviewer: You said your husband?

Freda Weinreich: No, my father.

Interviewer: Oh your father.

Freda Weinreich: My father not my husband. I was 15 years old.

Interviewer: Oh, that's what I was going to ask you.

Freda Weinreich: Yeah, my father. And so in large, the ghetto start...they started right away. First of all, they burned the synagogues. After six weeks being in the country, in their country, they burned the synagogue. We lived across the street, a big nice synagogue. They burned it during the night. It was frightening to see the fire and they tried to protect the houses next but they didn't protect the shul, beautiful synagogue. Two days later, they burned another big synagogue. This was the beginning. And right in December, they came in September, around beginning of December, they already started to talk about the ghetto, they already started to move people from the other side to the ghetto. By May 1st, 1940, Lodz ghetto was closed. So we were the longest ghetto, we were in the ghetto for four and a half years, since 1940 until '44.

Interviewer: Tell me about the life in the ghetto.

Freda Weinreich: Life in ghetto, it was cramped, it was cold. We did not have no coal to heat the houses. It was hard work. They did organize the healthy stuff, the Juden, the

Romkowski (sp), he said the ghetto will tick like a clock. It will be organized so they organized factories to work. Different kind of factories. I did work, we made straw shoes. At that time, they invaded Russia and it was cold in Siberia, they needed straw shoes to cover their leg...their feet. So I made shoes. There was a factory which made the...they made straw...from straw, they made tails, like pigtails.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Freda Weinreich: And then we sewed them together. This was a hard work with a hard hand. There were factories of different kind of a...they would...they made clothes, shirts, things. There was hunger. We got a limited amount of food. We got a quarter of a bread for a whole week. You can imagine, one was hungry, when you get the bread, so you start to cut it. You cut one side, you cut the other, it lasted three days and the rest, we didn't have anything. So, there were kitchens, they gave you one soup a day at work. There was...well, some people tried to make... You experiment when you...yeah, they had some kind of coffee we made which I don't know what it was. It was not real coffee. So when you did strain it, from the leftover, you make some kind of cakes, pancakes, so you had something to put in your stomach. People died from hunger, so did my father. My father died in '41 from hunger.

Interviewer: He starved to death?

Freda Weinreich: Huh?

Interviewer: He starved to death?

Freda Weinreich: Hm?

Interviewer: Did he starve to death or was it long...

Freda Weinreich: Well, he got sick from hunger. You...first, you lost weight and then he got diarrhea from the hunger and then he died. I have, the little cousin, he was younger than me. He must have been about 13. He was growing and all of a sudden, he got...he didn't have no food, then he got a high fever, got TB. From

the high fever, he got blind, he couldn't eat. There was no medication. There's nothing. He once talked to my mother and I think you can live being blind, too, he couldn't see. Two days later, he died. Another cousin, he wasn't but five years old. From hunger-- everything was from hunger. Children growing and didn't have enough nourishment. So, I was a little chubby so it took me a long time until I lost it, so this way, I survived. They said if you have a little bit fat, it takes you a little while when you lose it so you survived. And so this is what I remember, it was cold, bitter cold, we had to stay in bed with...we put out an arm, it froze. When we didn't go to work, it was hunger, and death. Then, I was left with my mother since '41. My mother...

Interviewer: Let me ask you a couple of questions.

Freda Weinreich: Yeah.

Interviewer: Some of the ghettos formed had, as best as they could, a Shabbat service.

Freda Weinreich: Hm?

Interviewer: Some kind of Shabbat service?

Freda Weinreich: No.

Interviewer: Some kind of organized educational...

Freda Weinreich: No.

Interviewer: So you weren't able to do anything?

Freda Weinreich: No. I was...when I...when the ghetto started, I had finished public school. I was...in Poland, public school was free. High school was private, if you could afford it. Public school was really...when you finished public school, 7th grade was like two years high school here and I was...I finished school but it was not allowed. Jews, they didn't allow to get education. I wanted to go to business

school but the war broke out, I couldn't go. And Shabbat services, if you made them, it was very...not allowed. You had to close the door and somebody had to watch for the Germans.

Interviewer: Right, that's what I was going to ask you. I know some of these were done privately and secretly and I didn't know if you remembered any.

Freda Weinreich: Yes, yes, especially, a holiday service is privately and secretly and we watch out if nobody is coming. God forbid if they would catch you.

Interviewer: What do you think kept people praying, worshiping at a time of difficulty such as that or was it the time of difficulty that kept them do it?

Freda Weinreich: It was very difficult but some people did not...some people did lose faith, some people did not. I was raised in a family which we did not lose faith. We still did hope. We still hoped, we still tried to keep as much as we could. My mother used to wear a wig, she put that scarf on but my father died in '41. The rations, what they gave, they gave horse meat. Horse meat is not allowed to eat, if you got it, if you stayed in line for two days to get it. My father did never eat it. He didn't let me go to get it.

Interviewer: Even starving?

Freda Weinreich: Yeah.

Interviewer: They wouldn't...he wouldn't...

Freda Weinreich: He would not, no. No, he didn't let us go even to the line to get it.

Interviewer: I remember, there were some survivors who talked about being in the ghetto over Pesach in Yom Kippur.

Freda Weinreich: Yes.

Interviewer: And struggling with the guilt of actually eating on Yom Kippur when they were starving and eating bread over Passover.

Freda Weinreich: No, we did not eat bread.

Interviewer: You didn't eat bread?

Freda Weinreich: No. Me and my mother, we did not eat bread. Yom Kippur, they had, I remember, at the work place, they had a service and we did try to attend it behind closed doors. And Pesach, we saved the little potatoes, what we had. We did take out just a few Pesach dishes, we did not take out everything, just to eat some but we did not eat bread. And I don't remember even in concentration camp, we ate potatoes they gave us. One Passover, I was in concentration camp.

Interviewer: And they gave you bread or you did not eat it?

Freda Weinreich: They did give us but we didn't eat it. No, we still had a little bit of the upbringing. It still stayed with us. Some people maybe did eat it, but I did not eat it because it just stayed with me with, my upbringing. In memory of my parents, of my...I just couldn't do it.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about, you were in the ghetto from 1940 to '44.

Freda Weinreich: Yeah.

Interviewer: From there, what happened?

Freda Weinreich: Hm?

Interviewer: What happened in 1944?

Freda Weinreich: 1944, when the war started to hit them, they liquidated the ghetto. So they told us they're transferring us to another ghetto, that here will be bad, there would be war. I think Warsaw uprising was over and some...we didn't really know anything what's going on. We didn't have no radio, no newspaper. There was one person in the ghetto, a doctor, which had a radio and sometimes, he let know some people and it just got around. But we didn't know anything that was going on. Sometime, we thought that this is going to last forever. Sometime, we did think this and by '44, they started to...first they made a list. Certain people. They had liquidations all the time. They had selections all the time. I usually did hide my mother and I did go to the selection. I said I'm young and look good, they're not going to take me. I was lucky with that because they took somebody. Then there was a list and it so happened that my mother was on the list. I found out she was on the list, so I tried to do what I could. The factory where I worked, the leader, the principal, whatever you call him, I know, I knew him and I was young and I tried to do my best so I went to him. He was between five people which had a power to take off – somebody told me that – so I went to him and I told him and I asked him to...he did take my mother off the list.

Interviewer: What was the list for?

Freda Weinreich: The list was to send away to a death camp. I don't know which one. It wasn't Auschwitz then. Auschwitz was when they liquidated the ghetto. In fact, there were other death camps too. People who left never came back. That's what we know. My mother used to work at art material they called it. I [have cards 18:32] written on it.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Freda Weinreich: And over there, when they send away a transport, the clothes came back and they selected the clothes. I don't know what they selected for. Sometimes, my mother found some money in them, some dollars. So I remember, she took, you know what, she took the dollars and said, maybe we will have, after the war, we'll have something, maybe \$2.00. Dollars was a big thing at that time. But money, the clothes came back, we didn't know...the people didn't but the clothes came back. So, then they started to look...they told us that we're going to another ghetto and it got so bad, the ghetto was divided in two parts. So from one part, they moved them to the one part so they...to be easier to congregate. Then they started to send away to get people. They wanted people to go from free will but not everybody did so they started to catch

people. One time, I was in a line to get bread and I got...I knew the guy so he said, wait here a little bit and I'll give you a bread. So I was waiting, in the meantime, the Germans came and we had to run away. I ran to the cemetery. We were afraid and we just didn't know where to run. And finally, my mother was home and she was screaming because she knew what's going on. When I came back, we just couldn't take it any longer so we went to the transport. They said, they'll send us to another ghetto. They gave us a bread. They told us to take some things with us and we did. But we came to Auschwitz, we didn't even know what Auschwitz was but on the road, I said, I think we're going to south Poland. What I knew from social studies maybe, I saw trains and we came there in the middle of the night. Previous...I left in August but this was going on for several weeks already. So we came in the middle of the night, it was so frightening when we did get out off the train. They said, right away they said, left-right, the men left, the women separate. Then they started to go to a selection. We left with a neighbor, she had a small child. She was married about 14 years and never had children. In the ghetto, she had a child. And with that child I went and she said when my... When we came to the selection... this is my mother, my mother was very friendly, helped her. So they sent my mother together with her but those with children they sent right away to the crematorium. I begged them. I said this is my mother and I begged them to...and then he looked at me, he looked at me. Then they were working, by the transports, some prisoners were working. They knew where the other people are going and I...these two prisoners claim I was arguing with them to go together with my mother. They just took and dragged me away. This was my ticket to live. I begged them and I cried and I told them I was older than I was but it still was young and they just dragged and took me to the other side and this was the last time I saw my mother.

Interviewer: Your mother was taken to the crematorium?

Freda Weinreich: Yeah.

Interviewer: With her friend?

Freda Weinreich: With our neighbor, with the child, and another neighbor.

Interviewer: How old was the child?

Freda Weinreich: The child was not a year old. As I said, 14 years she was married and never had a child. In the ghetto, she had one. And another neighbor, she had a little bit of hunchback something so they took her right over there to the other side too.

Interviewer: What was going on in your head at this time? What...did you think you were in hell? What was happening?

Freda Weinreich: You know what, we were in such a daze, we didn't know what was happening, we were crying. Then it was the middle of the night so some prisoners which came before us came out and they knew we are from Lodz, they were from the same...they had shaved heads and they wear clothes...they didn't give you the [pashat (sp) 0:23:13.6] but they gave you clothes, ill-fitting. For a short one, they gave a long, for the tall ones, they gave...whatever they had they gave. And those people came out and screamed give us the bread because they will take it away anyway. They lied to us, it is not another ghetto. I looked at those people and they looked at me like crazy. I have once seen an insane asylum not far from Lodz and I saw insane people running around. I said, oh my God, those people look like they are insane. We didn't know what to think. We didn't know what to think. Then they started to lead us to our block where they gave us...undressed, shaved the head, everywhere shaved and then send us to a bath, this was a bath. This wasn't a crematory, this was a bath. They send us to a bath. We did get out of the bath. Then our clothes was gone, the shoes are gone, they gave us clothes. It was in August, I got a long skirt, a wool skirt with a velvet jacket, that's it. And this we wore, no shoes, barefoot. Then they took us to the camp, the block three, to the block. We came to the block, they put 10 like monkeys, 10 people in a...like, I just can't describe how it was. On the bottom 10, on the top 10. On the bottom and one I recognize...no, once we walked out, we couldn't recognize each other after the shaved head. I recognized a teacher of mine from school and in the middle was something and that's it, we laid there. Once a day, they took us to the restroom – it was holes – once a day. They went out to appeal, they gave us food. They put us in line, five people. They gave one soup for five people. Each one got a little sip off it. When it came to the last one, there was nothing left. I was there three days in Auschwitz. Afterward, I met some people which were there a long time from Lodz and they work. They asked us what was going on with their parents. We told them what we knew. After three days, they did send us to transfer to another...to a camp, a working camp. So again, we went to...

Interviewer: Were you tattooed?

Freda Weinreich: Hm?

Interviewer: Were you tattooed? Do you remember?

Freda Weinreich: No.

Interviewer: No.

Freda Weinreich: At that time, they were...too many transport came in. they came in from Hungary and from Lodz. They gave us a dog tag.

Interviewer: Dog tag.

Freda Weinreich: It came back with...the dog tag came to the other camp. They didn't have time. Three days just...and we went again to a shower, they gave us now clothes, they gave us a flannel slip I got, a long one with a dress, a pink dress, a wool and at that time, they gave us wooden shoes and we were waiting for a train to go on the transport outside. They gave us to eat bread and honey on it. Well, I couldn't eat. I really wasn't...I couldn't...I held the bread and the honey in my hand a long time until the honey stuck to me and I was sticky. So while we're staying in a lot...

Interviewer: Why couldn't you eat?

Freda Weinreich: What?

Interviewer: Why couldn't you eat?

Freda Weinreich: We were overwhelmed. We didn't know what's going on. We couldn't...we just...we knew it's not good but we didn't...I just couldn't eat. I knew I don't have my mother, I just couldn't eat. And so I saw a bucket of dirty water so I ran to it at least to rinse down my honey and they ran after me, I was lucky I just got into the group, that they didn't shoot me. Then we stayed there for two days and a night to wait for the train.

Interviewer: Excuse me one second.

Freda Weinreich: They're vacuuming.

Interviewer: A little noise interference going.

Freda Weinreich: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Sorry, I want be able to hear you and I couldn't hear you.

Freda Weinreich: It's okay.

Interviewer: Okay.

Freda Weinreich: So we stayed overnight. Daytime was very hot – it was August. The nights were very cold and in Poland, the climate was like this. The nights were cooler. It was very cold. We laid down 15 people so the watchman was sitting on top and he wanted to have fun so he threw down a blanket to people...and 15 people kept on pulling on one blanket. They had fun with it. So this was the night. The next day, a train came and they put us again on a train. We didn't know where we're going and they send us away. The people, the Germans, it was soldiers, they tried to avoid maybe to go on the front so they did service this way. They didn't know. They asked if they have men or women. They didn't know whom they had. We looked with the shaved heads. They drove us, I don't remember how long but we went to a camp in Kristianstad, this was in Germany. Kristianstad was a camp where there already were a thousand girls, 500 from Czechoslovakia, 500 from Hungary, and here came 500 from Poland. Over there was a camp, they put us in a room, they put about 30 or 40 people in a room. There were two...they are bunk beds. It was not really bad, it was bunks, the bottom two and the top two, there was just straw on it. I was then young. I said I wanted the top, not the straw with the [unintelligible 0:30:47.0] because I rather be on the top. I could climb then. So I went on and I slept on the top with somebody else then I had a friend of mine which I...from before the war, a friend. And then the next day, we went out, they selected people for work. Me, I was maybe a little on the lucky side again. They selected me to be a brick layer so that I did stay in the camp and they taught us how to lay brick. I still remember a little bit. They taught us how to lay brick. So, there was about, I

don't remember how many girls did it. We worked in the morning until at night. Over there, we did get some kind of ...the only part, the worst thing is 5:00 was [unintelligible 0:31:46.5]. They woke us up 5:00 at night and knocked at the door and they say, "Get up, [unintelligible 0:31:56.0]. So we got up, we went out, we had to be out, they counted us. Some time, maybe somebody didn't get up so fast or sometimes they miscounted. So they found us to stay uphill all day long on a Sunday and not to get food so this was the punishment. Sometimes they could make the mistake and then they went out to work. Different people did go to different places, different factories. I stayed in the camp. I don't know, they put something in the food, a lot of people did get sick. They get convulsions during the night. I don't know why but there was something in the food. People said not to drink the coffee. They put something in the coffee that we might be sterile, not to have children, just in case they got married, people tried, see if it works and in our room, one girl did get the convulsion, it was so frightening but in the morning she didn't know anything. I don't know, it was frightening and there was nothing you could do. And you know what, by the way, one lady did get through [Mengele (sp) 0:33:19.4] and she was pregnant. She...and she had the baby in Kristianstad and they did keep her and the baby in the infirmary but the Germans didn't know about it. They tried to and they did hide the baby a long time. So, and by the end, it didn't survive anyway because they...

Interviewer: Who hid the baby?

Freda Weinreich: Hm?

Interviewer: Who hid baby?

Freda Weinreich: A lady, she did...I don't know how she did get through [Mengele (sp) 0:33:52.2] because we had to go naked through and I don't know how she got through that it didn't show her pregnancy and she was pregnant.

Interviewer: But the baby died?

Freda Weinreich: No, the baby did survive. They delivered it in Kristianstad and they kept it in the infirmary and they kept her in the infirmary. So, the baby did survive but at the end...I'll come to that. Then, we were in the ghetto, in the camp until November. Then again, it was a bad camp. It was not far from a city. If the weather was bad, the bus couldn't get through with food so we didn't have

food. One time, a bus came with potatoes and a potato fell down, I happen to be out so I did find, grabbed the potato while the German which watched us noticed it. I don't know what I'll do with it, probably eat it raw because we didn't have where to cook it but she caught me and they made me stay uphill because of the potato for several hours. Then they took my name and that's it. After a few weeks, not two or three weeks, they sent 20 people to a different camp and I was with them on the list. This again was my luck. They said they're sending us to Parschnitz, I thought they'd send us to Auschwitz, but it didn't make a difference really to me then. So they sent us in a different camp and I...this was then in Czechoslovakia. That other camp, we did go with a normal train, we did ride and we sat in the back, they gave us a coat and put a yellow cross in the back so we couldn't run away and two Germans did go with us. We had to wait a whole night for a transfer, we had to change trains and the Germans were traveling, the train station was full and they looked at us, some threw a piece of bread like you throw it to an animal. I think it did feel a little degraded, we did feel a little degraded then.

Interviewer: Let me move you—

Freda Weinreich: Yeah.

Interviewer: --to talk about the liberation. I want to hear about that day.

Freda Weinreich: Let me get in a minute to it.

Interviewer: Sure. I'm afraid you're going to be late.

Freda Weinreich: We came to Parschnitz, this was another camp and this was not such...we didn't have no [unintelligible 0:36:57.4] we worked in a different way and that camp was liberated from the Russians May 9th. May 9th, day after the capitulation. The Germans didn't know who are coming. They thought the Americans. They were less afraid of the Americans than of the Russians. They knew they will be worse treated from the Russians than from the Americans. So they stayed out, lined up to run away if they'll find out who is coming. One afternoon, it was quiet, they found out that the Russians are coming, they did run away and the city was quiet. Only we the prisoners were roaming around and we were waiting and then the Russians came. We were so excited. We couldn't believe that we were liberated. We could not believe that we outlived them. But then,

a lot of people died after the war. They were sick already, they started to give us food which did not agree so a lot of people did die after...

Interviewer: The average life expectancy in the concentration camp was 90 days. How do you attribute your ability to live past that?

Freda Weinreich: 90 days? Some people lived in the concent...you'll be surprised what people can stand especially when you're young.

Interviewer: What do you think kept you alive?

Freda Weinreich: I don't know. I don't know.

Interviewer: When you look back on it, what do you want people to know about it?

Freda Weinreich: What I want them to know, that people can be very cruel and if people will forget, it can happen again. Germany was a very cultural country. The Jews in Germany said they are Germans first and Jews second. They felt very free. There was integration, there was inter-marriage, there was...so, if it could happen in Germany, it can happen any place. If one crazy person...and anybody can get elected if he has some kind of name, if he can get off with some kind of idea. He got elected on the idea maybe it was the economy was bad.

Interviewer: It has been said that the Nazis could not have done it without the help of the neighbors and teachers and countrymen.

Freda Weinreich: In some cases probably. The Polish were very anti-Semitic and they were very helpful. Of course there were some people, you cannot categorize, some people did help, some people did hide and they did take their life in their hand so we...but mostly did not, especially in the big cities. In the smaller cities, there were more help from the Poles than in the big city. So, this is what I want people to know.

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to add?

Freda Weinreich: Hm?

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to add?

Freda Weinreich: I don't know.

Interviewer: You can think about it if you'd like.

Freda Weinreich: We were excited when we came to the United States.

Interviewer: What brought you to Memphis?

Freda Weinreich: To Memphis, they just assigned us to Memphis.

Interviewer: Through the DP camp?

Freda Weinreich: Yeah, in the DP camp...

Interviewer: Assigned you to Memphis?

Freda Weinreich: Yeah. They just assigned us because...I'll tell you how we came to Memphis. We had a friend, my husband had a friend who went to the United States and he said...my husband really wanted to go to Israel. I told—

Interviewer: You met Sam in the DP camp right?

Freda Weinreich: Yeah, after the war. We are from the same city.

Interviewer: Right, but you didn't meet until the DP?

Freda Weinreich: No, he lived in a different part of the city. I lived in a different part of the city so we didn't know each other. We met after the war. When we came...how we came here, a friend told him there will be a registration to go to the United States so let's register. So I told him go ahead and register, there was a registration. And we will forgot about it, I didn't even think about it, we thought we'll go to Israel but I told him in Israel, the life is so hard and I've been through so much, I really can't take it anymore. So, then one day, they called us, they called him to come to Munich and we lived about 60 miles from Munich and this friend, they came, they joined. They came to ask him if he can sponsor it, he said no, he can't. He can't afford to sponsor it so they said, OK, they bring us over. So they called him and he told him that he is a furniture finisher. They had furniture stores so they brought him to Memphis. Here was the [unintelligible 0:42:34.2] there was a furniture factory so this is why they assigned us to Memphis. We didn't even know where Memphis was. We knew New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, but Memphis, everybody felt sorry for me that we're going to Memphis. It's somewhere on the Mississippi. We looked it up on the map.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm.

Freda Weinreich: So this is how we came to Memphis. We came in the middle of the night, somebody picked us up, still today, I don't know who it is and he didn't speak...he speak English and French and I said, I speak Yiddish, Polish, and a little German but...so we couldn't even talk. They took us to hotel Tennessee in a taxi and that's it. Then I walked in, they put us on the 13th floor on the hotel, they expected us, they knew we're coming. And I look out, across the street was The Peabody Hotel and next to The Peabody Hotel was a Dobbs car dealer and I saw some cars on the roof. I said, oh my God, how does a car get on the roof? This I could not understand. We looked down...now I know how that happens, but I couldn't understand how does a car get on a roof. This was...we were very excited, we went to sleep, we were very tired, we're excited and tired. The next morning, the telephone rings and I said I'm not picking it up, I don't speak English, I don't know what to say. So my husband had to pick it up. They called from the Federation. She's coming over. She didn't speak Yiddish, she spoke English. We couldn't speak...we couldn't communicate again but we managed the hard way. If you have to, you learn.

Interviewer: Hmm-hmm. Well I'm going to turn you over to Paul. He's going to take your portrait.

