

Transcript:

INTERVIEWER: Tell me where you grew up. What country?

RUTH DIAMOND: Well, I grew up in Poland.

INTERVIEWER: OK. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

RUTH DIAMOND: Two sisters and a brother.

INTERVIEWER: And a brother, OK. So, there were four of you?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. You lived in Poland?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What did your father do?

RUTH DIAMOND: My father was a...

INTERVIEWER: Here you go.

RUTH DIAMOND: He...he was a...I forgot.

FEMALE: A grocery store owner?

INTERVIEWER: He owned a grocery store?

RUTH DIAMOND: No. A furrier.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

FEMALE: A furrier, a furrier.

INTERVIEWER: A furrier. OK. You had a happy childhood?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And what year were you born?

RUTH DIAMOND: 19...56. 1956.

INTERVIEWER: 1926.

RUTH DIAMOND: '26.

INTERVIEWER: '26, OK. So, you were about--

RUTH DIAMOND: 18 years old.

INTERVIEWER: 18 years old.

RUTH DIAMOND: [unintelligible] my husband is sick. He cannot talk.

INTERVIEWER: OK, OK. Would you like to take a little break?

RUTH DIAMOND: No [unintelligible].

FEMALE: [unintelligible] with a sister named Kelly [unintelligible].

RUTH DIAMOND: [unintelligible] he had a stroke. That's why he couldn't speak.

FEMALE: --he had a stroke.

INTERVIEWER: OK. He had a stroke. That's OK. I understand you perfectly. OK. Tell me about Helen.

RUTH DIAMOND: About Helen?

INTERVIEWER: Your sister?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah. She was...survived with me.

INTERVIEWER: She survived with you.

RUTH DIAMOND: Four years ago, she passed away.

INTERVIEWER: She passed away?

RUTH DIAMOND: She [unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: But she survived the war with you?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah, together.

INTERVIEWER: She's in Tokyo? You were both in camps together?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember what camps you were in?

RUTH DIAMOND: I was in Blizyn.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

RUTH DIAMOND: [unintelligible] and I was in Bergen-Belsen.

INTERVIEWER: Bergen-Belsen.

RUTH DIAMOND: Bergen-Belsen. And I was in [unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: OK.

RUTH DIAMOND: And I was in Bergen-Belsen.

INTERVIEWER: OK. You want to tell me a little bit about the camp?

RUTH DIAMOND: I [unintelligible] camp. I was working.

INTERVIEWER: You were working?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

FEMALE: --sewing.

INTERVIEWER: You were sewing?

RUTH DIAMOND: No, I was in...it was a factory.

INTERVIEWER: You worked in a factory?

RUTH DIAMOND: --factory for...airplanes, airplanes.

INTERVIEWER: Airplanes.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah. Parts.

INTERVIEWER: You did airplane parts?

RUTH DIAMOND: Parts.

INTERVIEWER: OK. You and Helen together.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Where were your parents?

RUTH DIAMOND: Lost.

INTERVIEWER: You don't know. And your other brother and sister, you don't know? Was Helen the only one that survived with you?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Do you remember you and Helen doing any sewing?

RUTH DIAMOND: Sewing?

INTERVIEWER: Making things, making uniforms? Were you sewing uniforms with Helen?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No?

RUTH DIAMOND: I was in, in bleaching. We was in...They make it...I don't know what do you call it. They made for the army.

INTERVIEWER: For the army?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah, for the army.

INTERVIEWER: So, you sewed for the army?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK, OK. How did you and Helen...were you able to be together through all the camps?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah. All of that.

INTERVIEWER: That was a blessing that you could be together.

RUTH DIAMOND: She was older [unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: She was older.

RUTH DIAMOND: In the family.

INTERVIEWER: You were younger? OK. Do you remember the day that you were liberated?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You want to tell me about that day? You were at Bergen-Belsen?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And the soldiers came in?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And what do you remember happening? Were you with Helen at that time?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You were with her, huh? Did you know that you were about to be free?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah. They came and they opened the gate.

INTERVIEWER: They opened the gates. What did you do? Do you remember?

RUTH DIAMOND: Nothing. I mean we're happy.

INTERVIEWER: Were you able to have something to eat then?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. OK. Do you remember any conversations you'd had with Helen while you were in the camp?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember meeting anybody else in the camps that you can still remember?

RUTH DIAMOND: The survivors.

INTERVIEWER: Other survivors. Do you think it was Helen?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That got you through the camp?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Being together and staying alive together.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you do anything else to survive? Did you pray or do things a certain way that you think helped you survive over anything else?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: Nothing? When you were liberated, do you remember where you went after that? You and Helen?

RUTH DIAMOND: Helen...We went to the American zone.

INTERVIEWER: You went to the American soil?

RUTH DIAMOND: Zone.

INTERVIEWER: Oh OK. The American zone. OK. And there, did you need any medical assistance? Did you need any help from a doctor?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. OK. And from there, were you sent to a displaced persons camp?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And where was that?

RUTH DIAMOND: [Unintelligible]

INTERVIEWER: OK. And so, you were there with Helen?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And then, where did you go?

RUTH DIAMOND: We stayed there.

INTERVIEWER: You stayed there?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Were you ever able to go back to Poland?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: Never went back to Poland. So, you were never able--

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: When did you find out that you weren't going to see your family again?

RUTH DIAMOND: In the beginning.

INTERVIEWER: In the beginning.

RUTH DIAMOND: [Unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: So, what country were you living in with Helen now? You didn't go back to Poland.

RUTH DIAMOND: Bialystok.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

FEMALE: Bialystok was the original place they're from. They're born in Bialystok.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So, you were in Bialystok. And you were now how old? Do you remember?

RUTH DIAMOND: How old I am?

INTERVIEWER: No, how old you were then? Maybe 20, 21?

RUTH DIAMOND: 21.

INTERVIEWER: And did you stay there and live there? For how long? Do you remember?

RUTH DIAMOND: Two years.

INTERVIEWER: Two years, OK. Is that when you got married? OK. And then, you moved to the United States? Do you remember why you moved?

RUTH DIAMOND: We...I had my family here.

INTERVIEWER: You had family here? So, you moved here to be with your family. Did Helen come with you?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. And you moved to Tennessee?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So, you came straight to Memphis?

RUTH DIAMOND: And stayed in Memphis.

INTERVIEWER: OK. When you got here, were you able to meet with other survivors?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you talk about it over the years? Do you talk about what happened?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember why you didn't talk about it?

RUTH DIAMOND: Couldn't.

INTERVIEWER: You couldn't.

RUTH DIAMOND: It was painful [unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: I know.

RUTH DIAMOND: I'm a crybaby.

INTERVIEWER: No, you're not. No, you're not. You're married now to the same man, Karl?

RUTH DIAMOND: 55 years.

INTERVIEWER: 55 years. And you had children?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: There's one.

RUTH DIAMOND: They were old to know that. And a younger one.

INTERVIEWER: And a younger daughter.

RUTH DIAMOND: [Unintelligible]

INTERVIEWER: You have three girls and a boy. And they all live here?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. Just your daughter?

RUTH DIAMOND: No, [unintelligible] live either.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

RUTH DIAMOND: The one daughter lives in Memphis.

INTERVIEWER: One daughter lives in Memphis. Everybody else moved.

RUTH DIAMOND: One lived in [unintelligible]. And one niece [unintelligible]. My son in Boston.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever tell your children about what happened when they were growing up?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RUTH DIAMOND: Never told them.

INTERVIEWER: When do you remember finding out? Do you ever remember sharing with Karl what happened? Do you ever remember telling him about what you and Helen went through?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. Too painful. Do you know it's a real honor for us to share this with you today? Is there anything you'd like to add?

RUTH DIAMOND: Uh-uh. [Unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: Do you want to tell me a little bit about your childhood in Bialystok? A happy childhood?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You want to tell me a little bit about that?

RUTH DIAMOND: What should I tell you? I was so young. We have a nice house and I went to school and everything was fine.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember being happy?

RUTH DIAMOND: Being what?

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember being happy?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Living...Your parents?

RUTH DIAMOND: My parents were very happy.

INTERVIEWER: Your father was a furrier.

RUTH DIAMOND: Furrier.

INTERVIEWER: Furrier.

RUTH DIAMOND: My mother was in the home.

INTERVIEWER: Was in the home.

RUTH DIAMOND: We had a maid in the house.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember them telling you anything about the war or what was happening? Do you remember them talking to you about what was going to happen?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No?

RUTH DIAMOND: No, never.

INTERVIEWER: So, you never knew what was happening until it happened? Is there anything else you want to talk about?

RUTH DIAMOND: No, [unintelligible].

INTERVIEWER: You and Helen were sent together to camp. Do you remember where your other brothers and sisters went? Do you know why you and Helen were put together? Is it because of your age?

RUTH DIAMOND: No, it just happens.

INTERVIEWER: It just happened that way?

RUTH DIAMOND: They didn't know that we're sisters.

INTERVIEWER: They didn't know you were sisters?

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: But you stayed together.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the last day you saw your parents? What do you remember most?

RUTH DIAMOND: When they separated us.

INTERVIEWER: When they separated you?

RUTH DIAMOND: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: And that was the last time you saw them? Is that when you knew you wouldn't see them again?

RUTH DIAMOND: [Unintelligible]

INTERVIEWER: You didn't know? OK. So, after you were liberated, you met Karl. What was he like?

RUTH DIAMOND: He is a very hard man, work...

INTERVIEWER: Hardworking? Yeah.

RUTH DIAMOND: He's workaholic.

INTERVIEWER: Workaholic.

RUTH DIAMOND: And...

INTERVIEWER: He was actually in charge of the displaced persons camp?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So, he was helping people.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah. He helped me register.

INTERVIEWER: He helped you register--

RUTH DIAMOND: I came in the zone, the American zone, he registered me.

INTERVIEWER: He registered you. Is that where you met him?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you were 21, 22?

RUTH DIAMOND: 22.

INTERVIEWER: 22. And how soon after that were you married?

RUTH DIAMOND: Maybe, a year later.

INTERVIEWER: About a year later? And you came here because of family?

RUTH DIAMOND: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: And what does he do? Or what did he do?

RUTH DIAMOND: He owns Diamond's Appliance Center, appliances.

INTERVIEWER: Appliances, OK. So, he was in the appliance business.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You stayed home and raised--

RUTH DIAMOND: Four children.

INTERVIEWER: Four children. She's a beautiful daughter. She's another redhead. How can I not love her?

RUTH DIAMOND: And--

INTERVIEWER: Helen was a redhead.

RUTH DIAMOND: No.

INTERVIEWER: No?

FEMALE: I remember Auntie Helen lived here.

RUTH DIAMOND: Aunt, aunt. I got an aunt.

INTERVIEWER: Oh a rent?

RUTH DIAMOND: Aunt.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, you have an aunt that has red hair.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I have an aunt, too. I think it skips a generation. That's what I heard about redheads. We're a special bunch.

FEMALE: She's got a grandson that has--

INTERVIEWER: And you have a grandson that has red hair, too.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

FEMALE: You're not going to tell her about all your grandchildren?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Tell me about your grandchildren.

RUTH DIAMOND: I have sense grandchildren.

INTERVIEWER: You have seven.

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. That's busy.

RUTH DIAMOND: I don't see them.

INTERVIEWER: You don't get to see them, but do you get to talk to them?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RUTH DIAMOND: Once in a while.

INTERVIEWER: Boys, girls...

RUTH DIAMOND: Three girls and four boys.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. They're all over the country?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

FEMALE: All over the world.

INTERVIEWER: All over the world. Some in Israel, right? That sounds wonderful.

RUTH DIAMOND: I would like them here.

FEMALE: She has one here, one here.

INTERVIEWER: You have one here?

RUTH DIAMOND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RUTH DIAMOND: Just one.