

Permanent traces

Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

The research paper serves as a base for understanding the memories on a case of a person with dementia and their connections to the medium of photography. Photography is used as an attempt to retrieve my grandmother's autobiographical memories which are often hard to retrieve. It is based on the assumption that every memory, no matter how vague, is still accessible by restoring to a proper process, similar to the latent image on the photographic film that becomes visible only after appropriate processing. Based on existing experimental memory research I constructed a method of finding a cue that can trigger specific memories in a conversation. Photographic images from the past were used as a base of the conversation. In most cases, they didn't directly trigger involuntary memory, but they served as a starting point for a conversation, allowing my grandmother to start actively thinking about a period of her life. Due to dementia, the responses within one conversation were often repeated, yet after some time, the chain reaction of retrieving memories allowed her to remember some specific details. Her understanding of the fragility of memories was constantly present. On multiple occasions, she expressed that an artificial device, such as photography or writing, should be used to preserve them. The research doesn't give a complete understanding of how memories and their retrieval work in general, but it gives a better understanding of how it can efficiently be done with my grandmother. The process I developed can be applied to other people if properly adjusted to them. I believe that essentially what counts is not what kind of cue we choose, but that we patiently take time to listen and guide conversations with some previous knowledge about their past.

Keywords: memory, dementia, memory retrieval, photography, photo-elicitation

TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT	2
INTRODUCTION	4
EXPERIMENTAL MEMORY RESEARCH.....	6
MEMORY RETRIEVAL	8
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY.....	11
METAPHORS OF MEMORY	13
NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL MEMORY	16
VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY MEMORY.....	18
PHOTO ELICITATION	19
FIELD RESEARCH	21
REFLECTIONS ON FIELD RESEARCH	22
CONCLUSION	23
REFERENCES	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	27
APPENDICES.....	31

INTRODUCTION

I have been in contact with dementia since I was born. My grandfather suffered from severe Alzheimer's disease for the last 20 years of his life. A few years after his death, my grandmother, who took care of him, started to show the first signs of dementia. Today she is in a moderate stage of mixed vascular dementia and Parkinson's disease. This paper will not focus on dementia directly, but rather it will be an exploration of memories and their connections to the medium of photography on the example of a person with memory deficits.

It consists of two contrasting parts, and it is research without a specific goal of proving something or finding the ultimate truth. It is an exploration of memories which vary from individual to individual and are often closer to the imagination than reality. Despite that, memories have been explored scientifically within various domains. In the first part of the paper, I will focus on the theoretical aspects of memories, relying on the existing texts. The second, experimental part will consist of conversations with my grandmother and will be mainly left open for an interpretation to each reader. The theoretical part will help me to develop my own method of field research and will serve as a guide to pinpoint some essential parts of my results.

In the chapter Experimental Memory Research, you can find an overview of experimental memory research in the psychological domain. It explains the development of methods over time, starting with Hermann Ebbinghaus' nonsense syllables. In the next chapter (Memory retrieval) I will focus on some specific examples of experiments that use different stimuli to retrieve memories.

Understanding how different stimuli work, is especially important for me, when developing my method for exploring my grandmother's memories. This chapter also explains distinct types of memory retrieval, for example comparing direct and generative retrieval.

While working with my grandmother the main focus will be on her autobiographical memories. What are they, how are they structured and how short-term memories enter the long-term memory system will be explained in the chapter Autobiographical Memories.

The next chapter Metaphors of Memory will take a step back from a psychological point of view and will demonstrate different metaphors used to represent memories. The most essential one for us is their comparison to photography, to which a substantial part of the chapter will be dedicated. The connections between memory in photography will be further explored in the next chapter, with a focus on how people use artificial devices to substitute and/or support their natural memory. In the

chapter Voluntary and Involuntary Memory, we will look at their relation to Barthes' well-known theory of stadium and punctum.

The method of photo-elicitation is usually applied in sociological research and will be now used in the context of memory research on the example of dementia. The method of using interviews based on photographs will be explained in the last two chapters. First, a general introduction with its origins, and second, the variation I will be using with my grandmother. The interviews with her, or rather conversations, will aim to find the often invisible, permanent traces within her that construct her wholeness and her personhood. They will be presented in the form of transcriptions of conversations, including the photographs they were based on. Keep in mind that the memories might not always be expressed verbally, therefore the silence between words will be visually included.

EXPERIMENTAL MEMORY RESEARCH

Memory research dates back to the year 1885 when Hermann Ebbinghaus conducted a series of experiments and became the founder of an experimental study of memory. (Draaisma, 2000) Before him, the methods used in psychology laboratories were relatively limited. Progress was made mainly in designing the apparatus to control the systematic presentation of stimuli, measuring the time of the observer's reaction or its strength, and recording the response duration or progression for future analysis. Generally, the use of this apparatus was restricted to the study of sense perception and reaction time. The stimuli used were relatively simple, for example flash of light, a sound of specific frequency or amplitude, pressure of a weight, two pints at varying distances from one another or chemical odours. The observer's response usually consisted of simple judgement or movement accompanied by the introspection of their experience. (*Classics in the History of Psychology -- Introduction to Ebbinghaus (1885/1913) by R. H. Wozniak, n.d.*) Ebbinghaus' research was an attempt to exclude the effects of prior learning from memory study. He constructed and grouped nonsense syllables that he tried to memorize afterwards. He used a metronome to pace himself and measured how long the memorization took. In the 1990s researchers substituted his nonsense syllables with word lists. (Ball, 2010) There are concerns around his work, mainly connected to the lack of relevance to everyday, personal memories. His methods and materials were soon labelled as "pre-scientific" and therefore irrelevant. Despite that, he inspired later researchers to design more accurate experiments, construct apparatus for standardized application of stimuli and develop quantifying schemes for processing results. (Draaisma, 2000) "...it provided a concrete and compelling illustration of what the new psychology could and should do." (Postman, 1968)

Memory experiments and other psychological experiments follow a basic scheme or procedural pattern. It includes formulating hypotheses, selecting participants, assigning participants to groups and determining experimental variables. The stimulus variables and/or organismic variables as independent variables are manipulated in relation to the research question and hypothesis. They measure specific responses and behaviour which are considered as a dependent variable. Other factors that can affect dependent variables are called extraneous variables, which should be controlled to avoid their impact on measured performance. They can be a threat to validity. To control them researchers, use the following techniques: elimination, consistency of conditions, balancing, counterbalancing and randomization. (Shimizu, 2017)

In 1979 James J. Jenkins proposed a tetrahedral model of memory experiments which can be a basic framework for understanding experimental variables in memory research. Shimizu illustrates it with a modified version of the model where all variables related to the memory research are divided into four sets of variables, corresponding to four vertices forming a three-dimensional structure. It

consists of types of participants being tested, types of materials being studied and tested, orienting tasks instructed to the participants in an encoding phase, and criterial tasks (tests) given to the participants in a retrieval phase. (Shimizu, 2017) In Jenkins's words, in this model, "the memory phenomena that we see depend on what kinds of subjects we study, what kinds of acquisition conditions we provide, what kinds of materials we choose to work with, and what kinds of criterial measures we obtain. Furthermore, the dependencies themselves are complex; the variables interact vigorously with one another" (Jenkins, 1979, as cited in Shimizu, 2017).

Today's concerns regarding memory research have been expanded from laboratory settings to everyday settings, therefore the employment of ecologically valid materials such as faces and scenes is currently obvious. There are various archives and databases with rated and standardized sets of syllables, words, sentences, texts, pictures, videos, etc. that can be useful as stimuli or materials in memory research. According to Shimizu "to establish generalizable truths of human memory, experimental methods are essential for clarifying the causal relationships of variables in memory phenomena." Additionally, he suggests that they should be combined with the recent developments in methods, such as questionnaires, interviews, neuropsychology and neuroimaging. (Shimizu, 2017)

MEMORY RETRIEVAL

In psychology, recall refers to the act of retrieving information or events from the past without a specific cue to help in retrieving the information. (*Recall | Retrieval, Encoding & Consolidation | Britannica*, 2023)

Remembering can be either voluntary or involuntary, where the first one is a deliberate recollection of the past and the second one is a spontaneous recollection of the past. (Mace, 2010b) Mace divides involuntary remembering into three categories caused by different sets of encoding or retrieval circumstances: direct involuntary remembering, chained involuntary remembering, and traumatic involuntary remembering. Direct involuntary remembering refers to everyday situations where for example cues from the environment lead to memories of the past. It is the most common and familiar type of involuntary remembering. Less common and known is chained involuntary memory, where memories are triggered by other involuntary memories or voluntary memories. The last category is connected to the production of traumatic memories. Individuals experience traumatic involuntary memories based on past traumatic experiences. They occur repetitively and are defining a central feature of post-traumatic stress disorder. (Mace, 2010a)

Following a cognitive psychology approach, retrieval performance can be measured by the speed of memory retrieval and by the ratings provided by the participant of the memory's emotional content. While researching memories there is always an issue of validity of retrieved memories. One of the early approaches to verifying the validity of the events was the use of diaries. Linton (1975, 1978) and Wagenaar (1986) recorded daily personal events that happened to them for multiple years. Wagenaar, interested in the role of the retrieval cues when remembering past experiences recorded four descriptive aspects of memory: who he was with, what he was doing, where he was, and when did it happen. In addition to that he provided a rating of each event on three phenomenological dimensions: event, salience, emotional involvement, and pleasantness of event. Later when his recall was tested, he was provided with one descriptive cue at a time to evaluate which retrieval cues work best for retrieving autobiographical memory. (Ball, 2010)

One of the recent technological developments that function similarly to diaries is a random sampling of everyday real-world events with a wearable digital camera with a wide-angle lens. The camera includes several sensors, for example, light, body temperature, accelerometer, and colour. Any changes in those sensors will trigger the camera to take an image. (Ball, 2010)

Another example of memory research is experiments using cue prompts. Words, phrases, or categories are presented to a participant which must retrieve an autobiographical memory relating to the cue. This type of research is well suited for collecting behavioural measurements by keeping track

of retrieval time and memory rating. It has important clinical implications for studying patients with memory loss. In 2007 Williams and colleagues developed the Autobiographical Memory Test (AMT). It uses ten cue words that relate to either negative or positive affect (happy, sad, etc.) They were examining specific personal events reported by the participants based on the cue words. Not only words can be used as cues in research. Goddard, Pring, and Felmingham (2008) used 3 types of cues: a photograph or a drawing, a word that described the cue or an odour cue. What is in the mind of the participant during the retrieval process was explored by Haque and Conway (2001), who interrupted the participant at random times, to report what was on their mind at that point. (Ball, 2010)

Most of the methodologies mentioned above rely on the characteristics recorded from the participants as ratings on a scale. Other researchers have tried to supply better measurement tools for those characteristics in the form of multi-item questionnaires. Autobiographical Memory Questionnaire (AMQ) was developed by Robin and colleagues (2003, 2004) to measure recognition and sensory aspects of autobiographical memories. AMQ consists of 19 items that measure three broad aspects of autobiographical memory and its retrieval phenomenology: recollection and belief in the accuracy of the memory, component process, and reported properties of events and memories. In 2007 Sutin and Robins created the Memory Experience Questionnaire (MEQ) which consists of 63 items which measure ten phenomenological dimensions: vividness, coherence, accessibility, sensory detail, emotional intensity, visual perspective, sharing, distancing and valence. (Ball, 2010)

An alternative approach to the methods using recalling of personal memories is the use of archival data. To test an individual's memory, they use extensively documented public-domain events. The accuracy of those recalls is easier to verify than personal events, where the researcher was not present. (Ball, 2010)

Intentionally retrieving memories is an effortful cognitive process. It takes seconds, sometimes even 10s of seconds which is in terms of natural processing a long time. It can be faster when the brain is in a retrieval mode, for example, an extended conversation about shared experiences. On the other side, autobiographical memories are generated from an underlying knowledge base and are constructed in consciousness therefore their retrieval is even slower. To access memory, some information is needed in the search process that corresponds to or indexes information in the sought-for memory. The needed information is a cue. It causes activation in long-term memory of some specific item of knowledge which is not within conscious control. The information available to consciousness may be what was expected, searched for or it may not be. It can be consciously and intentionally controlled in the cue-generation process and cue elaboration. Any given number of

available memories can be accessed with an effective cue. They might emerge during the process of generative retrieval. (Conway & Loveday, 2010)

Generative retrieval is the intentional, effortful construction of a memory in consciousness. Through cue-elaboration, the knowledge is activated in a long-term memory. The memory it activates is used to elaborate and shape the cue for a further cycle of knowledge access. The process is repeated until the sought-for memory is accessed or until the generative retrieval fails. If successful, it ends with direct retrieval where a cue emerges that accesses the sought-for knowledge. Direct retrieval is involuntary recollection in which the cue directly activates episodic memories and related conceptual knowledge. It is a process outside executive control and conscious awareness. The cue can be endogenous, for example emotional, or external, for example, something in the environment. Accessibility of memories can be controlled in multiple ways by the control process. On the other hand, availability is determined by direct retrieval and cue effectiveness. (Conway & Loveday, 2010)

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY

Autobiographical memories are “personal memories of past experiences that have self-relevance and that combine to form our life history”. (Ball, 2010) They encompass discrete forms of abstract knowledge about the self (e.g., knowing where one used to live while growing up), general or summary (e.g., repeated events), forms of personal knowledge (e.g., remembering a specific trip) and memories for discrete, specific experiences (e.g., what one saw on a specific trip). Different forms of personal knowledge are organized hierarchically in a network called a self-memory system. The most abstract forms (themes and lifetime periods) of the knowledge are on the top of the system. The more you move down the hierarchy the less abstract the memories (more sensory and perceptual in detail). In other words, the hierarchy moves from the most general memories to the most specific ones (episodic memories). (Mace, 2010b)

Autobiographical memories are a construction of fragments of experience combined with the knowledge of such experience and the knowledge about ourselves. It has three functions: social communication and sharing past experiences with others, problem-solving (using past experiences to solve new problems) and it provides a life story that guides our self-goals (Williams, Conway, and Cohen, 2008, as cited in Ball, 2010). The issue that arises while researching them is not knowing if the provided autobiographical memories are true. For example, the experimenter might not be able to distinguish true retrievals from false ones, they can consist of things we have done, said, seen, heard, smelt, tasted, dreamt or even just thought. They vary in distinctiveness and vividness, some of them are emotionally charged, while others have little emotional significance. They can be experienced over extended periods or multiple experiences combined into one categorical representation. Older memories are harder to rely on than more recent ones. Memories can also be highly rehearsed experiences or experiences rarely recalled. (Ball, 2010)

Autobiographical memories are mental constructions or patterns of activation across knowledge structures in a long-term memory. Those structures can be highly specific sensory-perceptual-affective-conceptual (SPAC) experience-near representations (Conway, 2009, as cited in Conway & Loveday, 2010), or they can be more abstract representations of personal knowledge about ourselves, our history and the history of the time in which we live. There are three types of highly specific representations of experience: episodic elements (EEs), simple episodic elements (SEMs) and complex episodic elements (CEMs). EEs are the most event-specific and most experience-near representations of long-term memory. SPAC information they contain is not a literal record of previous online processing, but a summary of it. They are usually in a frame; a frame is a conceptual contextualizing knowledge that organizes EE or a set of EEs). Therefore, EE with conceptual context is SEM. There are two ways to access SEMs: by the cue that corresponds to the content of EE or by the

cue that accesses the frame. Intentional access usually goes through the frame, while incidental access is through EEs. SEMs present short-time slices and feature a limited number of EEs. They may be organized in CEM, which is one or more SEMs associated with a common higher-order conceptual frame. For example, an everyday event (day at work) can be represented by several SEMs (images of a meeting, lunch, coffee break etc.). The conceptual frame provides an interpretation of EEs which locates the EEs in a person and gives them meanings. (Conway & Loveday, 2010)

Retrieval can help shape episodic memories and influence their integration with long-term memory knowledge structures. Accessing SEMs and CEMs may increase their accessibility and make some details more accessible than others. SEMs may also be shaped by retrieval or rehearsal. Episodic memories and autobiographical knowledge can be shaped into a pattern of accessibility, from highly accessible to inaccessible, but still available. Episodic knowledge can also be integrated into autobiographical memory if intentionally driven access to it is established and subsequently maintained. The ones that don't integrate can only be accessed by a cue that responds to the content or features of episodic knowledge. Autobiographical knowledge forms a conceptual context for episodic memories. SEMs and CEMS are at first a record of short-term goal processing or rather outcomes of short-term goal processing. During the consolidation, perhaps stimulated by retrieval, some episodic memories become integrated with autobiographical memory knowledge structures and access to them becomes long-term. (Conway & Loveday, 2010)

METAPHORS OF MEMORY

There are many diverse metaphors used to present and understand what memory is. The iconography of memory in the 19th century presented it in the following ways. Phrenologists saw it as a cell on the cranial maps, romantic writers described it as a landscape or a labyrinth, it was described as a mineshaft in papers of the unconscious, as the depths of the ocean in poetry, manuals of brain anatomists presented it as neurological process and theories on the visual memory compared it to a photographic plate in a camera. (Draaisma, 2000)

Similarly, to how camera obscura developed into a metaphor for an eye, the photography developed into a metaphor for memory. The first articles on photography described a photographic plate as a “mirror with a memory”. In that way, the brain was represented as a neuronal equivalent of a light-sensitive place, an organic medium that perseveres a latent trace of light stimuli and reproduces it. Memory is represented as a mechanism for storing and reproducing information. This view was investigated by mechanical theories that most notably come from the 17th-century ideas of Hooke and the 19th-century views of Descartes. Mechanical theories believe that science models reality in accordance with the deterministic structure of a machine. In between the mentioned mechanic movements was a period of romanticism, which saw mechanical metaphors for memory as insulting. They believed that our thinking, feeling and knowledge can only be described by organic metaphors. They were inspired by the imagery of nature, growth and change. (Draaisma, 2000)

Descartes developed his theory called “bête machine” which saw animals as pure automatons and their movement as a machine-like process. Next to that memory was believed to be part of the mechanization of the animal’s soul. “What looked from the outside like the operation of a memory, as in reality a question of mechanics” (Draaisma, 2000). Henry Cavendish, part of the romanticism movement, objected to him with the statement that swallows come back to their nest every spring, therefore they must have memory. Descartes responded that the clock does not remember when to strike; the behaviour of a swallow is determined by design and automation. He saw birds as carefully adapted automatons: “Doubtless when the swallows come in spring, they operate like clocks” (Descartes, 1646, as cited in Draaisma, 2000). Machine-based theories developed the point that they were still compatible with the Christian views of the time; the human soul was still seen as non-material. Only later theoretics described the human soul as a machine. Julien de Lamettrie saw a man as a machine that winds its own spring and Julien Leroy saw a human memory as a piece of apparatus that works purely mechanically, with springs and cogwheels adjusted to make the appropriate movement at the right time. (Draaisma, 2000)

The contrasting views of the Romanticism period saw a soul as an element of nature and that it is played upon by nature. In nature, everything develops according to four stages: growth, completion, decline and destruction. They were looking at a soul in the same way. Sensory representations are projected into our mind like rays of light onto a mirror. The memory was compared to a living magnet behind a constantly shifting surface that preserves them. Its power depends on the clarity of the stimulus being reflected in our soul. Consciousness is set above memory in a similar way as the sun is above the landscape; the fiercer the sun, the greater the surface that can be overseen. (Draaisma, 2000)

When photography was developed as a new technique for preserving images the metaphors were “gradually changing the human brain into a light-sensitive plate, memory into an album full of silent snapshots, consciousness into a gallery, its walls covered with long rows of daguerreotypes and talbotypes, ambrotypes and kalotypes” (Draaisma, 2000). Camera obscura was developing into an analogy of the eye while it was still lacking durability and had no memory. It was associated with the changeability and manipulability of images in the memory. “Whatever falls onto the screen of our soul through the opening of the senses, is out of focus, vague, they are outlines and contours which allow themselves to be recoloured and ordered by memory” (Draaisma, 2000). Optical apparatus that offered a physical model for the visual process of the eye illustrated change and variation and not the permanent recording of images. What happens with visual stimuli after the projection on the retina, processing by the brain and absorption into memory can be compared to the chemical process of photography. Draper's (1856, as cited in Draaisma, 2000) idea was that the human nerve system has the ability to retrain “relics or traces of impressions”. Nerve cells which gather and integrate the stimuli from a larger number of neurones (ganglion cells) can store and compare the impressions – this is the beginning of a memory. He believed that nothing is ever erased from this memory, that every stimulus leaves a trace, however faint the impression. “I believe that a shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon its permanent trace - a trace which might be made visible by resorting to proper processes” (Draper, 1856, as cited in Draaisma, 2000). Memory traces located in our brain have no similarity to what has been seen since they are stored in a form of a code. All sensory impressions we receive have a permanent trace. “Thus I have seen landscapes and architectural views taken in Mexico, developed, as artists say, months subsequently in New York - the images coming out, after the long voyage, in all their proper forms and all their proper contrast of light and shade. The photograph had forgotten nothing” (Draper, 1878, as cited in Draaisma, 2000). Photography is a type of non-forgetting memory that contains a perfect, permanent record of our visual experience. An exposed photographic plate carries a latent image which after develops a memory of an absent subject. The same qualities can be found in our nervous system where sensory

impressions are stored in the form of vibrations and are later reproduced. Additionally, to Draper's views, Carpenter believed that photography shows that memories that sometimes seem to disappear from our memory can reappear under certain circumstances. "Just as the invisible impression left upon the sensitive paper of the Photographer, is developed into a picture by the application of particular chemical re-agents" (Carpenter as cited in Draaisma, 2000). Theodule Ribot, critical to those comparisons, believed that "bases of memory must be looked for in the properties of organic matter, and nowhere else" (Ribot as cited in Draaisma, 2000).

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL MEMORY

In *The Mystic Writing-pad* Sigmund Freud was describing an instrument to supplement and guarantee the proper working of the distrusting memory. He was talking about writing a note. Paper, where the note is preserved, becomes a materialized part of the mnemonic apparatus which can be reproduced at any time. There is certainty that it will remain unaltered and that no possible distortions will happen as with the actual memory. Natural memory is a normal human capacity of recollection, while artificial memory is an array of technical devices invented by humans to support their natural, mnemonic ability to inscribe things in memory. They are modelled on the base of human sensory functions and designed to supplement it. Humans attempt to perfect their own organs or remove the limits of their functioning. "In the photographic camera he has created an instrument which retains the fleeting visual impressions, just as a gramophone disc retains the equally fleeting auditory ones; both are at bottom materializations of the power he possessed of recollection, his memory" (Freud, 1925, as cited in Bate, 2010). (Bate, 2010)

Jacques Derrida in his book *Archive Fever* (1996, as cited in Bate, 2010) is interested in the impact of technological devices on the human psyche, more precisely he is questioning the changing status of the mind under technological development. He asks if the mind "resists the evolution of archival technoscience or not. Is the psychic apparatus better represented or is it affected differently by all the technical mechanisms for archivization and reproduction, for prostheses of so-called live memory, for simulacra of living things which already are, and will increasingly be, more refined, complicated, and powerful than the "mystic pad" ...". He wonders whether the mind resists or is it affected by the advancements of archival technoscience. He suggests that the way information is achieved influences the internal structures of the psychic apparatus. Technological changes may impact the spatial architecture, speed, spacing and temporalization of the mind. The "archive" is considered as a "prosthetics of the inside" indicating that it is a tool or mechanism influencing the internal mental space. Already in the 1930s Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer discussed earlier technological transformation of the psyche. Benjamin reflects on the significance and impact of mechanical reproduction imaging technology on spectatorship, while Kracauer (1994, as cited in Bate, 2010) compares photography and film to the work of historiography. He argues that these practices all have historical narratives as a common denominator and that they bond their respective aims together. Those kinds of thinking about photography as memory go beyond the memory of an individual. They are seen as instruments for collective cultural memory.

Memory institutions, such as archives, libraries and museums appeared already in the second millennium before Christ. Writing and printing made a shift in how people engage with information. Instead of solely relying on memorizing, writing and printing gave space to reading. Since the 18th

century museums, civic libraries and public institutions have been developed as archives for memories. The ability to preserve collective memory also offers an opportunity to delete specific events from the popular memory. (Le Goff, 1992, as cited in Bate, 2010) In that way “remembering also institutes a kind of forgetting” (Bate, 2010). Another form of storing collective memory in photography. According to Le Goff (1992) “Photography, which revolutionizes memory: it multiplies and democratized it, gives it a precision and a truth never before attained in visual memory, and makes it possible to preserve the memory of time and of chronological evolution.” Pierre Bourdieu saw family albums as the expressed truth of social remembrance (Le Goff, 1992, as cited in Bate, 2010).

Michel Foucault (1974, as cited in Bate, 2010) complained that popular memory was being obstructed by the whole array of apparatuses being set up (literature, cheap books, stuff taught in schools etc.) to obstruct the flow of popular memory. Based on Louis Althusser’s work he argues that ideological apparatuses have been “reprogramming popular memory, which existed but had no way of expressing itself. So, people are shown not what they were, but what they must remember having been”. The argument says that the presence of those images suppresses human memory. The accumulation of visual material in visual banks can raise questions about the singular truth. Most ideas on archives indicate that they are never fully accurate, only partial truths. They can be an object to the manipulation of facts, or they enter the realms of degrees of fiction. Connecting those types of photographic practices in public memory raises questions such as whether artificial memory creates uncertainty for the human memory, since they are memories, we did not experience or we experienced them differently. Does it mean that when the human faculty of memory internalizes photographic images, we no longer trust our memory as our own? (Bate, 2010)

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY MEMORY

As already described above, involuntary memories are “past experiences that come to mind spontaneously without a deliberate, conscious attempt by the individual to retrieve the experiences from memory” (Ball, 2010). They occur without forewarning; therefore, they are difficult to study. There is an assumption that they are more likely to happen when performing a mundane cognitive task that encourages a diffuse attention state (Schlagman & Kvavilashvili, 2008, as cited in Ball, 2010). Bate (2010) finds comparisons between them and Barthes’ theory of “punctum” and “studium”. For Barthes (1981), studium refers to the cultural, linguistic and political meaning that comes across in a photograph. Photograph in that sense serves as a body of information in which we have a general and polite interest. We encounter the photographer’s intentions in order to understand them. That reading intends to inform, to represent, to surprise, to cause, to signify, to provoke desire. When people read photographs on that level, they are conditioned by their previous knowledge. On the other hand, punctum is something we don’t look for in a photograph. It surprises and “pierces” us. It is more personal, emotional and subjective impact of a photograph, therefore also harder to identify and explain. Usually, it is evoked by a small, possibly insignificant, detail that triggers something in us. It is unique to every individual.

Punctum can be compared to Proust’s involuntary memory evoked by the smell of madeleines. It is an involuntary response to a photograph that makes us react because it surprises us. Studium can therefore be compared to voluntary memory since it is a construct of a public and cultural response to a photograph. “If we follow an associative path for the image to our memory it can lead to other memories, even a suppressed memory and, with critical work, an essential repressed memory-trace ” (Bate, 2010). With human memory we cannot verify the original experience and sensation of the photograph, but the image provides us with a scene that might evoke voluntary (studium) or involuntary (punctum) memories to bear upon it. (Bate, 2010)

PHOTO ELICITATION

“Memory is a strange faculty. The sharper and more isolated the stimulus memory receives, the more it remembers; the more comprehensive the stimulus, the less it remembers. This is perhaps why black-and-white photography is paradoxically more evocative than colour photography. It stimulates a faster onrush of memories because less has been given, more has been left out...” (Berger, 1992, as cited in Harper, 2002).

Photo elicitation is based on the idea of using a photograph in a research interview. Its difference from the words only interviews lays in the ways we respond to those two different symbolic representations. Parts of the brain responsible for processing visual information in evolutionarily older than part for processing verbal information. Images can therefore evoke deeper elements of human consciousness. Exchanges based on images utilize more of the brain’s capacity than exchanges based on words. These types of interviews may not necessarily elicit more information but rather evoke a different kind of information. Photo elicitation can evoke information, feelings and memories due to the particular representation that is offered by the medium of photography. (Harper, 2002)

The photographs used in photo elicitation can be visual inventories of objects, people and artefacts. Those images are considered the most scientific and are a type of anthropological field study. The second type of images can be images depicting events that are part of the collective or institutional past. The images may connect to an individual's experiences or eras even though they do not reflect on subject’s actual life. The third type of images are intimate portrayals, for example, images of a family, other intimate social groups or one’s own body. Elicitation interviews connect definitions of the self to society, culture and history. (Harper, 2002)

Photo elicitation was first mentioned in a paper by the photographer and researcher John Collier (1957) who proposed photo interviewing as the solution to a practical problem of research teams having difficulty agreeing on categories of the quality housing in the research area. The first time the method was put in use was when examining how families adapted to residence with a question about the environmental basis of psychological stress. The researchers felt that the new method sharpened informants’ memory and reduced the areas of misunderstanding. Collier (1957, as cited in Harper, 2002) concluded that “The pictures elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews but at the same time helped subjects overcome the fatigue and repetition of conventional interviews.” The new method had a “compelling effect upon the informant, its ability to prod latent memory, to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant’s life...”. (Harper, 2002)

The remembering can be enlarged by photographs and partly by the quality of the photograph itself. Photographs can capture what seems impossible, it can be a person gone or a past event. The sense

of seeming to retrieve something that has disappeared belongs only to the photographs, which is a reason it leads to deep and interesting talks. (Harper, 2002)

FIELD RESEARCH

Photo elicitation will be similarly used in my field research where I will use different types of photographs to evoke conversations with my grandmother. Or rather to be used as a supplement in conversations about her past. The initial idea was to use both archival images and images taken by me at locations based on her past. Later I decided to only use the archival images, since photographs taken by me would be too much bound to my personal interpretation of the location and my interpretation of her memories/her past, hence excluding potential details that can evoke memories. Using archival images only will also contribute to the consistency of the research.

During the first experiments, I realized that an essential part of retrieving her memories is knowing her past in detail with some very specific details. Therefore, I also engaged in conversations with other family members to discuss certain parts of her life. This will allow me to ask more specific questions and guide the conversation better. I will explore both the spontaneous reactions when solely seeing the photographs and answers that appear later in conversations. Not only verbal responses will be considered but also her body language and the way of talking. The silence between answers will be treated as a non-verbal response since not every memory can be expressed verbally.

Some conversations with her will be conducted prior, without a photograph present. In that way, I can already indicate which memories can be evoked. At that stage, the questions will be more specific and conversation more guided. I can expect answers that are limited to confirmation only, for example: Yes, that happened/repeating my keywords, or I don't know/I don't remember. Depending on her current state the answers will vary, therefore conversations about the same topic must be repeated on multiple occasions. In that way, I will slowly be getting closer to the whole image of her retrievable memories or snippets of memories. In the later stage, I will hand her the photographs and wait for her response. The answers based on solely looking at the photograph will be recorded. Later I will engage in the conversation based on details of the photograph or information about the past as I heard it before (from her or other family members).

To further explore the implications of using photography to stimulate her memories, I also decided to select images from public archives based on memories she mentioned in previous conversations. For example, using a photograph of a woman working the same tasks at the same factory she used to work. In that way, I will also be referring to the theory that collective history can be told through autobiographical memories and vice versa.

REFLECTIONS ON FIELD RESEARCH

The theoretical research into the history of memory research gave me a basis for constructing my own method for researching my grandmother's memories. Working with a person with dementia makes the research a bit more complex, therefore the standardization of the results was given less importance than in other memory researches. The accuracy of answers was not the main goal, but rather the type of response and behaviour that comes with it. The main goal was to evoke memories from my grandmother by finding an appropriate stimulus to achieve that. The method of only relying on photographs to evoke had a problem, since responses were often limited to shallow memories, for example remembering the names of family members in the photographs. While engaging in conversation with my grandmother on different topics I realized that there is much more to be evoked if asked precise questions, based on my previous knowledge. It might not work the same way every time but, for example, asking her about her work will after a few short and vague responses give a precise description of how the workplace looked like and what was her task there: "All kinds. There were these long shelves and each of us had our own chair with materials ready. And then we worked... We had these kinds of machines and we put materials in and pressed the button." It seems that some memories if accessed correctly, appear in her head very visually. Memory mentioned above doesn't necessarily have a high emotional valence, therefore it's harder to access and more guidance is needed. Meanwhile, while talking about her family members or showing her the photograph including her father, she instantly tells the story of how he died during WW2. Here her memories are not visually specific but rather emotionally powerful. Even though she was not present during those events, the negative emotional strength, or rather traumatic experience, made those memories very easily accessible. Other memories were not expressed verbally in such detail but nevertheless evoked strong emotional reactions. For example, her first reaction when seeing a group family photograph, when she was still a child, was: "Oh, mom...". Saying it in a childlike way, almost as if she was transformed into the time when it was taken. Later in the conversation she notices their garden and says: "Here is our garden, right, Mommy?", addressing her directly, she engages in a conversation with a photograph of her mother.

Photographs may seem to have a limited ability to retrieve specific memories, yet the memories with a high emotional valence can evoke strong reactions that can be seen through her body language, tone of her voice and silence between answers. Not everything in her mind can be expressed verbally, which does not mean that nothing was evoked. Furthermore, those responses can hold even greater emotional value than verbal responses. I believe that seeing her mom smiling in the photograph triggered involuntary memory, therefore the smile could be her punctum of that specific photograph. "Mom is smiling so beautifully.

CONCLUSION

Throughout history, different metaphors have been used to understand what memory is. Theories on visual memory compared it to a photographic plate in a camera, which was described as “a mirror with a memory”. The brain was presented as an organic medium that preserves a latent trace of light stimuli and reproduces it; therefore, memory becomes a mechanism for storing and reproducing information. Draper believed that every stimulus leaves a trace and can never be erased from memory. When talking about dementia this might seem absurd, yet when retrieving my grandmother’s memories, I was amazed with the detailed descriptions of specific scenes she never mentioned before. I started to believe that Draper’s statement might be true, or at least I like the idea of all traces being permanent. A lot more can be retrieved than we think by finding a proper process. Yet, the process of retrieval, especially with a person with dementia, is very unpredictable and hard to generalize.

Early memory research was mainly focused on the aspect of memorization, by either using non-sense syllabus to exclude prior learning or using word lists. In my research, the capability of memorization was not in focus, but rather the responses to specific stimuli connected to my grandmother's past. I constructed my methodology based on pre-existing methods using cues or stimuli to retrieve memories, which was also my main goal. To access memory, some information is needed in the search process that corresponds to sought-for memory. That information (cue) can vary from words, phrases, categories, photographs, drawings or even odor. Some alternative approaches use archival data to retrieve personal memories. I focused on using photography, from personal and public archives to figure out what can be evoked by different types of photographs and even more importantly, to measure her responses and behaviour. While constructing my research method I had to accept that due to my grandmother’s condition, the results are highly dependent on extraneous variables such as the time of conducting conversations, her level of tiredness and so on. Instead of trying to exclude those factors I took them into consideration, allowing me to further illustrate how memories work with people with dementia. As Jenkins pointed out, memory phenomena are highly dependent on the complex dependency of the type of subject, conditions, material we provide and criterial measures we obtain. Therefore, in the results of the experiments I didn’t focus solely on the effect of photographs, but also on retrieved memories itself. For example, which memories are easier to retrieve, how vivid they are, their sensory detail, emotional intensity, and visual perspective. The results are not solely dependent on the chosen cue, but also on the emotional strength of the memory, how memories are integrated into her long-term memory, how often they are recalled and how rehearsed they are. While reviewing results I was focusing more on the retrieval performance and less on the validity of retrieved memories. Validity could partly be verified by comparing her

memories to memories of other family members, yet as all memories are partly an imagination, I decided to treat them as such. I used the conversations with other family members to construct questions and use them to guide conversations, increasing the possibility of retrieving memories. For example, when a person engages in an extended conversation their brain can go into retrieval mode, allowing faster processing. Talking about a specific image often gave me repetitive responses in the first few minutes of the conversation, yet later on those responses started to evoke new pieces of information. Combining those pieces together can bring us closer to the bigger image of her memory.

Due to the unpredictability of memory and its distortions, humans developed artificial devices to supplement it and guarantee its proper working. They can be as simple as writing a note on paper, or they can be using more advanced apparatuses such as a camera. Even my grandmother showed her awareness of the importance of these devices. On multiple occasions when not able to recall a specific event or a person, she said that she doesn't know because she doesn't have it written down or that they didn't have a camera during that time. Furthermore, after finishing the conversation she said that I should save the photograph, for memory. Relying on artificial apparatus can come to the point where we trust them more than our own memories while forgetting that artificial memories can be as fictional as our natural memories. An issue can arise when public institutions, such as archives, can curate what is preserved/exhibited and guide public opinion. Pointing out one perspective and excluding another, deciding on the one ultimate truth of the past. Photography is a very efficient way of storing information, yet I believe we should not treat it as a representation, but as an interpretation. Furthermore, while reading a photograph we interpret what we see and connect it to our interpretation of the past, creating a complex multilayered web of interpretations bringing us far away from reality, yet closer to the essence of who we are and what we see. I believe there is no point in striving for objectivity, instead, we should embrace the subjectivity of memories. How my grandmother perceives her past, even though it might be flawed, tells us more about who she was/who she is than pure facts that lack emotional content. In the end, we need to choose which reality is the most important for us. Regarding my grandmother's past, the most important reality for me is her perception of it.

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APPENDICES

DAD



A group photograph of my grandmother's family. She is standing far right. (around 1942)

Source: family archive

Oh, mom...

Which one is your mom?

points with her finger

And this is my aunt and grandmother. And this is Ivanka.

And me, and Marica, I think.

Which one are you?

Or is this Francka?

That's me.

Which in is Francka then?

This one. Is it this one?

Wasn't Francka younger?

Yes, this one, the younger one.

And who is the kid?

That I don't know... Is it...

What about the baby?

Where is your dad?

The baby, right. Yes, right.

Yes, the baby, there is also a baby here.

I don't know who that is then.

Probably Francka, right?

Yes, probably Francka.

How younger is she than you?

Oh, quite a lot.

The other two are quite similar age, right?

Yes.

Mom is smiling beautifully.

This is probably Marica, aunt's daughter.

Yes.

What's your aunt's name?

Francka.

And which one is Ivanka?

Ivanka is not here.

Which one is here on the left?

This one?

Next to the grandmother.

Yes, this is Ivanka.

And me, and Marica.

Yes, probably.

Too bad it's not written down.

We can write it down one day.

Yes.

Who else is here, your dad?

This is Francka, probably. Right?

Probably, she was around that age.

And me. Ivanka. Francka. And Marica.

And mom and dad.

And aunt. And grandmother, and...

Where was this?

I don't know. Our garden.

There is a garden.

Do you see it?

There is some fence.

There is a fence, yes.

But I don't know where.

And there are some mountains in the back.

What?

You can see a mountain in the back.

Yes, also that.

Did you use to have a garden?

What?

Did you have a garden?

Did you have a garden in Srednja Bela?

What?

If you had a garden in Srednja Bela?

A garden? Yes, I think so.

Was the picture taken there, then?

Probably.

And there is a pine tree, or what is that.

Probably, probably it is.

Where was it? Next to the water?

I think where there is a house now, the new one.

Do you know?

Yes, so right next to your house?

Yes.

Oh, where are we today. Where are we today already.

Where?

Did you grow up a bit since then?
 Haha.
 And they killed my dad somewhere in Štajerska.
 Oh, yes, yes...
But your mom lived for quite a long time.
 Yes, a long time.
 She could live even longer.
 And aunt Marica...
 And they hanged my dad to the tree and killed him.
Where is your grandmother coming from?
 This one is my grandmother.
Whas she from Dolenjska?
 Aha.
 She is the mom of my mom and my aunt.
When did you go to Dolenjska last time?
 Me?
Yes, did you ever go?
 Oh Mary, this is already... I don't even remember.
 I don't know... I don't know... I don't know... I can't tell.
 I don't know, I don't remember.
Was it long time ago?
 Yes, long time ago.
Did you visit it often?
 What?
Did you visit it often?
 Yes, quite often.
Was someone still living there at that time?
 What?
Do you still have some relatives there?
 Our relatives? Yes?
 Yes, none.
 I think, none.
 Aunt Urška was...
 I don't even remember anymore...
It doesn't matter.
 And when my dad...
 Went from work...
 Towards home they waited for him in the forest and grabbed him.
 And they dragged him somewhere, to Štajerska.
 Oh, where are those times.
 This is my grandmother.
 Yes.
What was her name?
Was it Francka?
Was it Angelca?
 No...
 I don't know, I don't know...
 Here is our garden, I think.
 Right, mommy?
 You can't believe all this happened.
 Let's go work, Matevž.
 Let's draw.
You want to draw?

No if you want to take the picture or what?

I already did.

Already?

Yes.

Oh, already?

Oh, I don't know when this broke.

It's just a glass.

What do you remember the most from that time?

What?

What do you remember the most from that time?

Everybody, I can see my mom how they are smiling, and me and my dad. I also remember my dad.

When he went from work, they just grabbed him in the forest, and he was gone.

Aren't they handsome mom and dad, right?

Yes.

You also, look.

Oh, yes.

And Ivanka and Marica.

Oh, Matevž store it somewhere.

For memory.

I take the photograph away

And they killed my dad in Štajerska.

And hanged him on a tree and killed him.

We buried him here.

That's life... right, Matevž?

HER OLD GARDEN



*My grandmother standing in her old garden.
Source: family archive*

Who is that?

Me, right?

Really?

Well, look there are also two carnations. Three flowers.

What kind of flowers?

Right?

Yes.

Where is this?

I don't know where this is. Well, at our home, at... In front of our garden.

I think.

The garden is here. I don't know.

Did you have a fence like this?

Yes.

Back then.

Who took the photo of you?
 Am I standing so widely?
Widely?
 Yes, haha.
Is it not the skirt that is wide?
 What?
Is it not the skirt that is wide?
 No, I don't think so.
 There is a tree in the back.
 Or what?
Where?
 Here.
Oh, this is some flower you have in front of your legs.
 Oh, some flowers haha.
 I'm blind already.
 Yes...
So this in Srednja Bela then?
 Srednja Bela, yes.
 Srednja Bela, but I don't know where this could be.
 Those are some flowers, right?
 Yes.
 And here are some flowers and here are some flowers.
 Ah, store it.
Did you have flowers in the garden?
 I didn't.
What did you have in the garden back then?
 I don't know.
 You can see inside, but I don't know what's planted there.
And the fence looked like that?
 Yes, the fence looked like that. Approximately. If not even worse.
It is not yours?
 I don't know.
 I don't know, I don't know. I think so. I don't know, I don't know.
 I don't want to say anything.
 indicates throwing the image away
Who took the photo?
You don't like the photo?
 What?
You don't like the photo?
 Well, no. I don't like myself.
Why not.
 Because not.
Look how handsome you are.
 Bullshit.
 I don't know anything and here there is a house now.
 I don't know, is it Bahnk's.
 I don't know, I don't know.
 Just store it, take it away.
 Oh, Mary where did we used to be.
 It would be the best if I tear it.
Why?
 Because.
Why don't you like it?

Because I don't like myself.
Were you not handsome when you were younger?
 I don't know.
 How I was.
 Ugly.
Why?
 I don't know.
Were you kind?
 What?
Were you kind?
 That I think I was, yes.
And diligent?
 And I was diligent, yes.
And looks like you were also handsome.
 What?
Also handsome.
 A?
You were also handsome.
 Also handsome?
 Yes.
 Right, right haha you know that better.
I don't know.
 Did you look at me?
Otherwise, Francelj wouldn't marry you.
 Right, haha, right, right, right, Francelj was also here with us.
Not here, but...
 Oh, dear Mary.
 What are they...
 Where already...
 Where were we already...
 A long time ago.
Did a lot of nice things happen?
 What?
Did a lot of nice things happen?
 A?
Did a lot of nice things happen?
 Yes, yes, it did. We danced a lot.
You danced?
 Mhm.
 We danced a lot in the granaries.
Were there village fetes in the granaries?
Well, n, n, no, one accordion player was there playing and we danced.
Really?
 In the granary.
Did it happen often?
 Often, yes.
 And then we appeared there, and we found each other.
You found each other there?
 Yes, we were dancing there.
 In pairs.
 And we kissed a bit and a bit huhuhh.
 And we stretched a bit and...
 Dear Mary, where were we already.

I don't know.
Where were you going then? Around different farms?
Where were the fetes?
Fetes?
Oh, we did go to village fetes.
No?
Where did you dance then?
We did it in some granary. At Ahc's farm.
At Ahc's?
Mhm.
Most often it was there?
There was, there was the most space.
And we danced there.
And there was an accordion?
And there was an accordion.
I still have a bit in my head.
Do you still know how to dance?
Pfff, no way haha, I would knock you on the floor right away.
Haha, no, no, no.
Too clumsy legs.

COWORKERS



My grandmother sitting together with her coworkers.

Source: family archive

What are you doing here?

Those are our photos.

Oh, wait.

You will tell me who they are.

Will you?

I will.

If I will know... if I will know.

I will bring you glasses.

I don't know where they are.

Did you find them?

I did.

Will you put them on?

The correct ones.

Do you see it now?

Where is this from?

Is it familiar?

Yes, yes, this one is Ivanka.

This is me.

It's hard to see, right?

Umm, and here is...

is it Tilen?

or is it Matevž?

No.

I don't know and I don't know.

Here is our Ivanka, I think, in the back.
Is it too dark?
 Here is Ančka from Olševек, I think.
 No, not from Olševек.
Can you see it better now?
 Yes, better.
 This one is Ančka.
 Ančka.
 This one is Brenčur's Francka.
 This one is, this one is...
 What's her name already...
 I know her name, but I can't figure it out.
 This one is Janežič's Tončka.
 This one is Markuč's...
 Oh, c'mon who is she already...
 Kračman's Francka.
 And this one is...
 This one is from Mače.
 From Mače.
 I already said it for this one, right?
I think so.
 Oh, I don't know what is it called.
And where are you?
 Is that me?
Are you?
 Well, I don't know.
 Am I really?
Well, I don't know.
 So bald?
Not bald, just combed that way.
And who is this?
 I don't know.
 Do you know?
I don't.
 Me neither.
Where are they from?
What are you having?
 I don't know what is this.
Why are you having dinner?
 This is Janežič's.
 This one is Krančman's, I think.
 This one is from, from, from Nova vas.
 This one is Brenčur's Francka.
 This one...
 ...is one fancy lady.
Fancy?
 Yes.
Why?
 Well, she was like that... we used to work together.
Why was she fancy?
 She was so well-dressed.
 Look how well-dressed she is.
Yes.

Always?
 Always.
Also at work?
 Also.
 Come sit down.
I'm sitting.
 Um, and this is...
 Oh, who is she already, from Srednja Bela.
What were you doing together?
 I don't know what were we doing together, we did some bullshit like that.
Did you work together?
 What?
Did you work together?
 Also.
Where?
 In Kranj.
In Kranj?
Where in Kranj?
 In Kranj, in Kranj, in Kranj, in Kranj...
 Well, in Iskra.
Yes.
What did you do there?
 All kinds, there was a whole conveyor belt.
 This one is Janežič's girl.
 And this one I don't know where she is from.
 This is Brenčur's Francka.
 I don't know her name.
 I don't know.
Did you all work the same job?
 On the conveyor belt.
All of you?
 Aha.
 We were sitting behind the conveyor belt.
And doing what?
 This one I think is Kračman's Francka.
 Yes, she has glasses.
 This one is from Mače.
 This one is also Kračman's.
 This one I don't know.
 Is it me?
 Bold.
 Or who.
I think you have your hair combed that way.
 I don't know how, with what I have.
 Well, nice.
Did you meet often like that?
 What?
Did you meet often like that?
 Often, yes.
Was it a party?
 A little bit.
 You can see a little bit of wine.
Haha, a little bit.

And cigarettes.
 And I don't know what else.
Did you often drink like this?
 Well, I don't know how often we drank.
 I don't even know where we were.
 There are some doors.
 Yes.
A restaurant, right?
 I think so.
And what is this?
 Iskra, Iskra.
 Iskra.
What does that mean?
 Well, Iskra, our company.
Yes, did the company pay?
 I don't know that, I don't know at all.
 This one is Brenčur's Francka.
 This is... Janežič's Ton...
 Not Tončka.
 Janežič's... Oh, I don't even know, I don't remember.
Are they all coming from around here?
 All.
 They are not around anymore, they went away.
 Their own way.
Did they move away?
 What?
Where did they go?
 I don't know where they went, I don't know that.
Did you get along well?
 Yes, of course.
 This is Kračman's Francka, I think.
 This one.
 And this one...
 Is from Nova vas.
 Oh Mary, how is it called already...
 This one I know is Brenčur's Francka.
 This one I know is Ančka from Cerklje.
 The amount of drinks they have...
 Oh, here are some doors, right?
I don't know, or are they windows?
 It is what it is.
 That's how we were.
 And this is Krančman's Francka.
 Yes.
Your neighbor?
 Yes, at Kračman's.
 Yes.
 Oh, dear Mary.
How did you go to work, together?
 Am, not together.
 This one is Brenčur's, from Zgornja Bela.
 This one was from Cerklje.
 Ančka.

This one was am...
 From Srednja Bela.
 Uh, I can't say it...
 Here is me, no, this is me, right?
Mhm.
 Here is Kračman's Francka.
 And this one is from up there...
 From where...
 From where is she...
 Ah well...
 And this is...
 Look how crazy I am... my head hurts already.
How did it look like at work?
 What?
How did it look like at work?
 I don't even know, I don't remember, I'm not even here.
 Right, I'm not here?
Here.
 Oh, here I am.
 Bold.
This is not at your work?
 I don't know.
 I think not.
 No, no, we had this somewhere else.
 Look how many closed bottles we still have.
Haha.
 This is Brenčur's Francka.
 And Tonč...
 Am, who is she already...
 Tončka, no...
 I don't know.
 This is Krančman's Francka, I think, right?
With whom did you get along the best?
 Is this our Tomaž, no Mat... no Matevž?
 No, Tilen.
Have a good look at it, who is it?
 Well, I don't know, I can't tell.
Is it not you?
 It's me?
 Oh, horrible.
 Did I just have a haircut or what?
No, it's just combed that way.
 And this is Krančman's Francka.
 This is... um... where is she from already...
 From Mače, I think, from Mače.
 Good that it's not written... I mean, too bad that's now written down.
 Look how many closed bottles they still have.
With whom did you get along the most?
 What?
With whom did you get along the most?
 With everybody.
 Well, her.
 This is...

What is her name already?
Oh, I don't even know.
This is Brenčur's.
This one is from I don't know where.
This one is, oh dear Mary...
I don't know who.
This is Krančman's Francka.
Yes.
Everybody was so well dressed.



*My grandmother sitting together with her coworkers.
Source: family archive*

And who are they?
Where did you get this?
Who are they? Also coworkers?
Also, yes.
I recognize myself.
Which one?
This one.
Yes, she was also...
We worked together on the conveyor belt.
Yes? Next to each other?
Yes.
And also her.
This one is from Cerklje.
And this one I don't know her name.
Right, you, girl?
Well eat something, eat!

I don't know where we were.
Probably a work party?
Yes.
I'm even wearing this dress.
Do you remember it?
Yes.
Where did you get it?
I don't know where.
Somebody made it for me.
What are you eating?
This one has a potica cake.
Haha looks like it.
This one has bread.
Right, you? Špela.
Špela?
No, not Špela, I don't know what her name was.
Not Špela.
Dear Mary, I... I forgot them already...
I don't know where we were.
All of them with such nice hair.
Right?
Yes.
We were eating bread.
Bread with a spread or what?
Oh, dear Mary.
Where are those times...



*My grandmother sitting together with her coworkers.
Source: family archive*

And this is even older.

Can you see it?

I'm here.

Right?

Yes.

Here is Minka from Bašelj.

Organs.

Well, she used to play organs.

She used to play organs.

Here is Kozel's Kristina.

This is our Irma, right?

Is she?

I don't know, you tell me.

Yes, she is, she is.

Where are you?

I don't know, I'm not even here.

Irma is here?

No.

I don't know.

This is Kozel's Kristina.

What about this one?

And this one is mine, mine. (points at her nose)

And this one is mine.

Haha, this nose.

This nose girl.

Well, I don't even know where we were at that time.

This is Kozel's Kristina.

This is, um...
 Our Angelca (her).
 This is...
 This is a man, right?
It's a woman.
 A woman?
She just looks a bit older.
 She has a tie.
She has what?
 Or what is that?
Oh, I think it's just her collar.
 And this one is Kračman's Francka.
 And this is our Irma.
 Is it?
I don't know, I think Irma was not born yet at that time.
 She was not?
But she looks a bit similar.
 I don't even know where we were.
But you had good food, right?
 Yes, and drinks.
Are they coworkers?
 Yes, coworkers.
 And this are... this one is from Bašelj.
 Oh, what is your name...
 C'mon, tell me.
 I don't know.
 And I know, I know this one, I just can't tell.
 This is our Mari... Mom, is she?
I don't think so.
 No?
She just looks a bit similar.
 Similar.
 I don't even know where we were.
 This is Šišenk's Mimi.
 And now I don't know more.
 Keep smiling.
 This one is Kozel's Kristina, I think.
 And Kračman's Francka.
 And, and, um...
 This one is...
 Who is it already...
 Oh Mary, too bad it's not written down.
 This one is Kračman's Francka, I said it already, right?
 This is out Irma, right?
Wait, now I need to check.
No, she isn't.
Just looks a bit similar.
But I think...
 I think she isn't.
She was not that old yet at the time.

Here is me, right?
 Here is some man, right?

I think it is the collar that looks like a tie.
 Oh and here is...
 Bošt...
 Who is this already?
 Oh, I can't say.
 This is Šišenk's Mimi.
 This one is from Potoče.
 No, not Potoče.
 I don't know from where, but I know her.
 Is that our mom?
I think not.
 No?
No.
 And here is some man, right?
Is it a man?
 I think so because he is wearing a tie.
 Is here your mom?
I think not.
 No?
 Here is Šišenk's.
 We have had enough of you!
 Eat, drink!
Haha, we should let them eat in peace.
 Haha, yes.
Do you want to see more?
 Let's do it if you have more.
No, that's it for now.
 Do you have more?
Not now.
 Well then you... C'mon, tuck your shirt in, you...

without a photograph

What else do you remember from your work?
 Oh, Mary, we were there behind the conveyor belt one after another.
 You know?
 You looked one in the back, and you couldn't look back.
 It was in two rows and the conveyor belt was along with us.
 Oh, I don't know.
Why couldn't you look back?
 What?
Why couldn't you look back?
 Because we had to work.
 Was somebody supervising you?
 Oh, probably.
 Probably the master, walking up and down.
What else was there?
 Oh, what else was there.
 I don't know.
Did you go every day?
 Yes, every day.
Early?
 Yes, early.

We went early.
 On the bus.
Ever by bike?
 No, never by bike.
Not even at the beginning?
 Yes, at the beginning we went by bike.
 And then we...
 I don't even know, I don't...
 Too bad that a man can't remember...
 And then I don't even know where we went.
 I know some of them.
 But not all of them
Were they all from villages?
 What?
Were they all from villages?
 All of them.
Where did you find a job? Or did they find you?
 In Iskra.
 You know?
 Yes.
 Iskra.
Did you go there to ask for a job?
Or did somebody call you to go work there?
 I don't know how it was, or did they take photos of us, you know, or something.
 I don't know, I don't know.
 I think they took photos of us.
 And then we gave them.
 The photos.
When you started working?
 I still remember them well.
When did you start working?
 What?
Were you young when you started?
 Young, young.
Who told you to go to work?
Or did you want to work?
 I went to work alone.
 Alone, alone.
 By bus.
 We drove.
 I don't even know.
 Did we go?
 Were we already going down there?
 Iskra.
The lower one?
 The lower one, I think.
 Oh, well.
Later you went working at the upper one?
 Yes.
And who got you this job?
 I really don't know that.
 Was it.
 Her.

Ana.
 Jerman's Ana.
 She got me the job.
Has she worked there before?
 Yes, yes.
 And she was older.
 Oh, I don't see them anymore now.
 And I still don't have my teeth in.
We don't need them now.
 No.
We will put them in for dinner. Is that fine?
 Yes.
 This goat keeps shaking (her jaw), I have to hold it like that and then it's better.
 Haha.
Nothing wrong with that.
 ...
 It was like that, yes.
 Oh, dear Mary.
Like what?
 And we used to work.
 There were those long.
 Long...
 Tables.
 We were sitting there and working.
What did you have to do?
 What?
What did you have to do?
 What did I have to do?
 I don't even know that...
 I don't remember that I don't know what we did.
 I don't know.
 Oh, it doesn't matter.
 I don't know how many of them are still alive.
 Oh, yes, yes...
 And we had to walk.
 From the bus.
Where did you walk?
 What?
Where did you walk?
 Walk?
 Well, down to Iskra,
From where?
 What?
From where? From the station?
 Yes.
Main station?
 Yes, yes.
 Yes, yes, yes.
 There was our stop.
And then walking down this hill?
 All kinds of things happened, but a man doesn't remember.
What happened?
 What?

With a bus?
 Well, we went by bus to Iskra.
 To Iskra and then we went inside.
 To work.
 I know I was working somewhere at a very long table.
 It was a long, long trail, you know, and we were in pairs.
 Down at the end, there was me.
 And I don't know next to who.
 Oh, dear Mary.
 I don't know anything.
You always sat together with the same people?
 What?
You always sat together with the same people?
 Yes.
 We always had our own chair.
 Oh, yes, yes.
 A man can't remember that... I don't know.
 This Ančka is still alive, I think.
 She is there...
 Where is she already...
 Ančka, Ančka.
 We were good friends.
 I don't even know where is she from.
 Oh, what do you know what kind of bullshit we did.
 It was very annoying when we had to go down to the toilet.
 Down the stairs and they also lead inside.
 Upstairs.
 Then there was a long conveyor belt and two by two we were packed together and sitting down.
 And then we started working.
 Oh, dear Mary good that it ended.
 It was fine.
 It was quite fine.
 It was quite fine.
 Oh, man remember these kinds of things.
 I'm just not thinking about them often, you know?
 This Ančka I'm going to see, I'm going to visit sometimes.
 I don't know where.
 Ančka, Ančka, Ančka.
 What was her last name... I don't know.
 Probably she is still alive.
 And we were going on a bus.
 All kinds...
 Do you think it's still raining?
Still.
 Still?
 Really, really?
 Will it also rain tomorrow?
I think so.
We will see.
 Oh, yes it was like that.
 Oh, Mary did we go on the bus.
 And you can't do anything about it, you must push through.
 Suffer through it.

Was it difficult?

No.

We found our sits fast.

So we could sit.

Yes, that's how it was.

I wouldn't go through it again.

No, I wouldn't.

What is the time already?

Half past six.

VILLAGE FRIENDS



*My grandmother together with other young girls from the village.
Source: family archive*

And who are they?

This is Tonet's, Tonet's, this is...

And this one is...

Dear Mary, I mustn't remember.

This is our Marica.

This is me.

Which one are you?

This one.

Are you?

I think so, I think...

And who is she?

Or is it me?

I don't know her.

Well, too bad it's not written down.

Are they all from Bela?

From Bela.

What were you doing?

I don't know what were we playing.

You were playing? You were still young?
 Yes, of course.
 This is Marica.
 Marica.
 You know.
 Now she already died.
 She was there on...
 I think it's her. Too bad it's not written.
Where was she?
 This is Ivanka.
 This is me, I think, with messy hair.
 And there is another one in the back.
 This one I don't know who she is.
 Mavc's.
 This one is Tonet's.
How did you play back then?
 What?
How did you play back then?
 I don't know how.
Were you only the girls playing together?
 Only girls, yes.
Did you even have a ball?
 No.
Look, what is in her hands?
 Oh, she has something.
Did you play with the ball?
 Probably, yes.
 And this one I don't know. That's not me.
 I'm back here.
 And I don't know who this is.
 This is Prah's.
 This is Mavc's.
 This is Tone's.
 This is our Marica.
And what is here in the corner?
 Where?
Here next to the legs.
 Oh, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know...
 I don't know that.
Do you see it?
 I don't.
 With glasses... and I don't see.
 Is it a cat?
Is it not a deer?
 A deer would run away.
 I think it's a cat.
 I don't know.
 And here is another cat.
 Is it not?
I don't know, it looks like a small deer to me.
Did you find it sometimes?
 And it waited like that...
Did you play with it?

Of course, it was so happy.
 When she got so many people.
The deer?
 The deer.
 Yes.
 The deer, right?
Did you ever see it when playing?
 I don't know, I don't remember.
 It's lying here on the floor, right?
 Yes.
 Oh, possibly.
 Look this is Mauc's Micka.
 This is Tonet's Tončka.
 I don't know half of them.
 This is our Marica.
 This is Ivanka.
 Here is me, I think.
 And this is Mauc's Micka.
 This is Tonet's Tončka.
 And I don't know this one.
 This is Marica, ours.
 Oh, where were we already?
What did you use to do back then?
 What did we do?
 I don't know.
 I don't know, I don't know.
Did you spend a lot of time together outside?
 What?
Did you spend a lot of time outside?
 A lot.
 If the weather was good, you know?
 And this one is Marica, yes. She is also already gone.
 This one I don't know who she is.
 This is Ivanka.
 This is me.
 This one is smiling, but I don't know who she is.
 Too bad it's not written down.
 She is Tonet's.
 Oh, store them.
Do you remember anything else from them?
 What?
What did you do together?
 What did we do together?
 I was never with them.
 They were playing alone.
Why were you not with them?
 Was I with them?
You are here in the photo.
 Am I?
You never played with them?
 They were much younger... I don't know.
Were you younger?
 No, older.

Oh, then you didn't play with them.
 What?
How much older were you?
 I don't know how much.
 Oh, I don't know, I don't know.
 I don't know, I don't know.
 This one is Prah's, I think.
 This one is Mavc's.
 Mavc's Francka.
 And Tonet's Tončka.
 This is me.
 Beside there is Tomaž. (her son)
 This one, next to Marica, I don't know who she is.
Where is Tomaž?
 Here, I think.
Or is that you?
 Is that me? I don't know.
 I think this is me.
That's you, yes.
 Mhm.
 Yes, keep smiling. (to girls)
 Yes, yes.
 This one I think is Prah's.
 Prah's, Prah's.
 This one I don't know, is she Ciril's?
 Aha.
Neighbors'?
 Mhm.
 Mavc's Micka.
 Prah's Angelca.
 Is that me back there?
 Oh, Mary, I don't like to look at that, I'm so sad.
Why are you sad?
 I don't know.
 Because they are gone.
Oh...
 Put these glasses over there.
 And let's go do... I don't know what.
 What did we want to do?
 I need to find my teeth.
You don't need them now.
 Then the bed can stay here.

THE OLD HOUSE



*My grandmother standing in front of her house.
Source: family archive*

Oh, our mom.

Which mom.

Yours.

Is that her?

She is, right?

Is she?

For sure she is.

And where is she?

This is next to our old... house in Srednja Bela.

Do you believe it?

Really?

I recognized it immediately.

Where did you get this?

I found it somewhere.

And she has a very cute bike.

Cute hair.

Old house.
 Sit down.
 Are you hungry?
I'm not.
 Are you sure?
Sure.
Where is mom? Where is this house?
 This is in Srednja Bela.
 In Srednja Bela. Kovač's house.
It's quite big, right?
 Aha.
 She has a cute bike.
 Even a light.
Haha, so she can ride it at night.
 What?
So she can ride it at night.
 Yes.
From which side is this photo taken?
 This one?
Yes.
 I have no idea.
 I don't know.
Do you remember the house?
 I remember the house.
 That...
 It immediately...
 came to my mind.
And what was there? Was there a barn?
 Yes, a house and a barn.
 I think.
And what was in the barn?
 No, here was the house.
 And the barn was here, I think.
 What was also there? Anything else?
 Was there a granary? Did you also have a granary?
 Also.
What were you doing in the granary?
 What?
What were you doing in the granary?
 In the granary?
 Ahh, I don't know.
 What did we do there...
 Threshing.
 We were threshing.
Did you also do that?
 What?
Did you also do that?
 Also.
 And I don't know what else.
 All sorts of bullshit.
Haha, what kind of bullshit?
 Well, where did you get this?
I found it.

Nice.
And where was the blacksmith workshop?
 Blacksmith workshop was... I don't know where it was.
Was it also in the house?
Or was it next to it?
 I don't know.
 I can't tell you.
 Here there are two windows.
 Maybe you can't see it.
 Yes.
And what was downhill, towards the Belca stream?
 Towards Belca.
 Oh, towards Belca.
What was there?
 Water.
Water?
 Mhm.
And it was downhill?
 Yes, yes.
 There was a decline.
 Well, you are cute, mom.
Was there any other workshop?
 Uhh, maybe my dad had something.
Was he working with wood?
 You know, I don't know that. I can't tell.
 She looks exactly as she looked here.
 Same, but with a different bike.
 And she even has a light.
 How old was she here? Still a kid, right?
Was she good back then?
 Good, good.
Was she studying?
 Aha.
 Look how big she is.
 Yes.
 And she is riding a bike already.
Looks like it, she is big enough already.
 I don't know whose house is that... also our in the back?
 It is, right?
Yes, I think so.
Where did you sleep in the house?
Upstairs or downstairs?
 Not upstairs.
And what was upstairs?
 I don't know what was there.
 I don't know what was there, nothing.
 We slept downstairs in the bedroom.
 In beds.
 And downstairs is... here are... some windows and doors downstairs.
Yes, there are.
 What a cute bike she has.
And how was the kitchen?
 Do you think I know?

Was it black?
 Bl... No.
 It wasn't?
 It wasn't black.
 But there was a stow.
 A big one.
 How could I know?
 Man forgets everything...
 And we didn't have for photographing.
How much do you remember the house?
 How much do I remember it?
 Well, I don't know.
 I think it was as big as this one.
 And here in the back, I don't know what was here.
 Is there another house in the back?
Or is it together?
 Yes.
 Are you hungry?
I'm not, I'm not.
I just ate.
 Just now?
 ...
And what did you have in a barn?
Is there a barn in the photo?
 No, the barn was down there.
 From Mauc's house...
 We were walking across the Mauc's courtyard.
 Down there was the barn.
What did you have in the barn?
 A cow.
One?
 Yes, I think there was one.
And what did you do with it?
 She had a calf.
 Then I don't know what we did.
 Did we sell it or...
Sell the calf?
 Yes.
 There was something.
 This house I really don't know what is here.
The one on the left?
 Yes.
I think it is part of the house.
 Is it?
I think so.
 It looks like it.
Were there multiple parts of the house?
 I don't know. I don't even know.
 I was enough.
 And she even has a cute bike, Irma.
 I don't how old was she here.
 She looks exactly like today, right?
Just having 50 years less.

Yes, it is... it is like that.
 Did Mom find this?
 Yes.
 And what a bike.
 Even has a light.
 Who knows how old she was here.
I don't know, how old does she look?
 12, 13?
 Yes.
 And that she already knew how to ride a bike.
 ...
Did you often go to Srednja Bela?
 Often, yes.
 Every week.
 I don't know.
 We didn't live here yet.
 Or how was it, I don't know.
 I don't know.
When mom was a kid?
Where did you live?
Were you here already?
 I don't think so.
 I don't think so.
When did you move together with Grandpa?
 H, h, here moved, together?
 Yes.
 Oh, later, later.
Was it when you two married?
 At that time, yes.
Did Grandpa already have a house?
 Yes, already, already. An old house.
 You know, that's an old house.
 You know?
 And now it's gone.
Did they demolish it?
 Yes.
A long time ago?
 And there was a balcony and a toilet, there toward the end.
 Oh, dear Mary.
 If a man could...
 Remember.
Where was the balcony? Towards the road?
 Here, towards Mauc's house.
 There was the balcony.
A big one?
 Yes, a big one.
 And down there were vines.
 Willows...
 Vines...
 No, willows.
 There were willows along the water.
 ...
 That house I don't even know whose it was.

Was it ours?
Where was the toilet?
 There was a pit toilet somewhere.
Towards the water?
 Yes.
 Then it seems it was.
 Kind of a house with doors.
 It's also here.
 It (the house) looks nice here, but it wasn't.
Why not.
 I don't know, everything was...
 Dirty.
Dirty from what? From the farm?
 Not, the house.
 It looks nice here, doesn't it?
Yes. But was it dirty?
You didn't clean it?
 What?
You didn't clean it?
 Of course not.
Why not?
 Because we didn't know how to paint the walls.
Oh, that.
But inside it was clean?
 Yes, inside it was good.
 Mary, I don't even remember.
 I start to tremble.
What else was there?
 One door down there and one door here.
 We were going down there.
 ...
 Look at this.
 Here there was another house.
 It was stuck together with ours... I don't know, I don't know...
Where was the barn?
 The barn was... I don't know where it was.
 It was somewhere.
Was it holding together with the house?
 No, no, no, maybe it was here, do you see?
 Yes, you can't see it very well.
 I don't know and I don't know, I don't know, I don't know.
 Oh, dear Mary.
 Here there was a door inside.
Where did they lead?
 I don't know what was inside here.
 Nothing, nothing haha.
Empty rooms?
 Empty rooms.
 And some stuff.
Did you store stuff there?
 Yes.
 How old was Irma here?
I don't know, how old? Around 10, or 12?

She looks exactly as she looks today.
Yes, almost.
And the bike and we go.
Where did she find it?
I don't know. They are gathered somewhere.
Here is another house and I don't know if it's ours.
Is it stuck together?
Yes.
Well as it wants...
What else was beside the house?
I don't know.
C, c, chickens, and pigs.
Also?
Where were they?
In the barn?
Who?
Chickens.
In a barn, yes.
They didn't run around the house?
No.
You can see a window and a door here.
And here is a double door.
Where was the main entrance, where did you enter the house?
What?
Where did you go into the house?
I don't know where the main entrance was.
It was somewhere.
Was it from the road?
From the road probably.
Well, I forgot completely.
Dear Mary.
What a nice skirt she has.
I don't know how old she was here.
What do you say?
I don't know, 12, 13?
12
Possibly.
...



A photograph of a house where my grandmother grew up taken just before it was demolished.

Source: family archive

And what is this?

Yes.

This is, this is, this is, this is, this is...

This is another old house.

Which one?

This one.

This was the house.

And up here, up there.

Here there is a shed.

Here it was a balcony, I think.

Oh, here on this side?

Do you see it?

Yes.

Oh, Mary and the trees and all kinds...

I don't know what is here, here is some ivy.

Or is it a pine tree?

Is it a pine tree?

Did your mom give you this?

Yes, I found it at home.

Here there was a shed, I think.

Here inside into the basement.

Did you go to the basement from this side?

What?

Did you go to the basement from this side?

Yes, I think so.

From the water up?
 I don't know, I think so, I don't know.
 I don't even know.
Where is the water?
 I don't know where the water is.
 I think the water was here.
 And this tree I don't know what it was.
An apple tree?
 A crooked apple tree.
Was the land yours on the other side of the water?
 I don't know, I think so.
 I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know ...
 I see something like an ivy here.
 Yes.
 Upwards.
 Growing.
Yes, I think that's on the other side.
 Yes, yes.
 Oh, Mary, it's interesting to look at this.
 Do you believe me?
 Yes.
What else was next to the house?
 In front of the house?
In front, behind... what else did you have?
 Behind the house, I don't know.
Where was the toilet?
 What?
Was the toilet on this side?
 There was something else on the other side.
Why is the house called at Blacksmith's?
 Yes.
 The blacksmith workshop.
 They were working, I think.
 Blacksmith.
 Blacksmith, blacksmith, blacksmith workshop was here.
In the same house?
 Yes.
Where?
 I think down here.
 There are some doors here, right?
 But I don't know.
In the basement?
 Yes.
 But I don't know.
 But I don't know, oh Mary, you can't believe it, you can't believe that it was like that.
 Here along the water and these trees, this one over there, here you went into the barn.
Did you go into the barn here?
 Yes, no, not into the barn.
Into the basement?
 Into the basement.
 Oh, how can a man remember?
 And how it looks there now, I don't know.
There is a new house there now, right?

Yes.
 Look at that apple tree.
 Yes.
 And here we were going into the basement.
 I think.
From this side?
 What?
From this side?
From water up?
 Here, here is water, it was running down here and here is one house.
A shed.
 A shed, yes.
You can't see the barn?
 What?
Can you also see the barn?
 No.
 I can't see it.
What did it look like?
 Do you think I know?
Was it big?
 No.
Small?
 Mhm.
 We only had one cow, or what, I don't know.
Any pigs?
 Also, a pig, also.
And chickens?
 Also chickens.
 Here there was a balcony, you know.
 Yes.
 Here where it's wooden.
 Yes.
 We still have something hanging there.
Or is it a roof?
 I don't know what's hanging there.
What did you usually hang out there?
 Laundry.
Were you drying it there?
 Yes.
 Laundry, laundry, laundry.
 Here there were windows from the bedroom.
Ah, was the bedroom here?
 Oh, Mary...
And what was on this side of the house?
Because here is the bedroom and what was here then?
 I don't know what.
 There is some laundry hanging up there.
 On the balcony.
 Yes.
 Down here is a shed, it seems.
 Yes.
 And the doors are here.
 To go inside.

Where are those doors leading?
 I don't know.
 Where was the granary?
 I don't know where the granary was.
 Where were we going...
 Oh, who knows...
 Oh, we had all kinds...
 You mustn't even remember.
 All kinds...
 Like that...
Was it difficult?
 Yes, it was not easy.
 Are there some windows here or what?
 Also here right?
I think it's on the other side.
 On the other side, yes.
And what was on the other side of the road? Was there somebody's house?
 I don't know whose it was, I don't know.
 I know that there was a bedroom here, it was here.
 Here there were doors inside.
 But I don't really know.
 Yes, that's how it was.
 Interesting, right?
 Good that you found it.
 Yes.
Where did you play as a kid?
 Yes.
Where did you play?
 Oh, up there under the pear tree.
Pear tree?
 Yes.
Which pear tree?
 Where the garden is now.
 I think there was one pear tree there.
 Next to the house.
 I think so.
 Nothing, nothing, I don't know anything...
 And we didn't take any photos.
So basically, where the garden was?
 Yes.
And what did you do there?
 In the garden?
How did you play next to the pear tree?
 I don't know what we played.
 Running around a bit and I don't know what.
 My head is not big enough.
 You can't believe it.
 And I don't know what we had here.
Was it a shed?
 Probably a shed.
Did you use it to store tools or what?
 Probably.
 Or for the firewood, who knows...

And here you went inside the barn, under the living room.
There was a door do you see it?
Good that you have them.
Right, at least that we have some.
This apple tree is completely fallen already.
It's already old.
Who knows.
Here, store it.
Should we store it?
Yes.
We will look at it another time.

WEDDING



*My grandparent's wedding photograph (1961).
Source: family archive*

Oh, where did you find this?

I found it.

Where? At your place?

Yes, they are gathered together.

What do you say?

What do you say? Nothing to say.

I can't believe it.

Look how nicely you are posing.

Yes.

How nicely you had an image taken of.

Yes, nicely.

I already have a baby in my arms.

Is it a baby?

Or is it a baby girl?

Then it's a baby girl, right?

Or are those flowers?

I don't know.

Dad has flowers on, on...

Well, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know.

Wait you will see it better like this.

And then tell me what it is.

I know Francelj.

This one.
 But baby I don't know.
Are they not flowers?
 What?
Are they not flowers?
 These ones?
 Then they must be.
 And also over here next to it.
Do you also have them in your hands?
 What?
Do you also have flowers in your hands?
 Where?
Do you have a bouquet?
On the photo.
 Oh, on the photo, also yes.
 Then it must be like that.
Where was that?
 I don't know where we took this picture.
 This is not a kid, this is not a kid.
When did you take this picture?
 When we got married.
In Kranj?
 Oh, Mary, I really don't know...
 In Kranj, I think.
 Was there a civil marriage?
 You know, I don't remember that.
 This is, I don't know what is this.
 This cup.
I think they are some flowers.
 Some flowers, right?
 Covered.
Did you also marry in the church?
 Also, yes.
Where was that?
 In Preddvor.
In Preddvor?
 Right mommy? (to herself in the photo)
 Right daddy?
Are you talking to yourself?
 What?
Are you talking to yourself?
 Haha, yes.
 But she doesn't reply.
 No.



My grandparents during the wedding ceremony.

Source: family archive

And what is that?

When was that?

Right, that was, that was at that time.

Look here is Francka.

Francka, right?

Is it?

I think it is.

Or is it Ivanka?

Then it must be Ivanka.

Then it was Ivanka, yes.

And who was Dad's best man?

What? Who was Dad's best man?

This one, brother.

Urban.

That's Urban?

Mhm.

How handsome you still are here.

Oh, dear Mary.

Where did you find each other?

Oh, I don't know. Probably at some village fete.

Yes.

For sure.

In Preddvor or in Bela?

In Preddvor, nothing was happening in Bela.

Village fetes.

And what happened there? Did you dance?
 Yes.
 We did that.
 We did dance, right Dad?
 And you took me home then.
When did he take you home?
 What?
When did he take you home?
 When we went away from there.
 From them.
Did it rain?
 No, it didn't.
 I think not.
How was... Did he speak to you first? Or who did it?
 What?
 Who came to speak to whom?
 I don't... I don't know. I don't know that.
 I don't know how we did it.
 Or we just held our hands and we went.
 Right, dad?
When was the wedding?
In the summer or in the winter?
 In the summer.
Summer?
 Mhm.
 Well, or in the autumn.
 I have a nice bouquet.
 Ivanka has it.
 Ivanka is holding it.
 Urban is looking so...
 Sadly, right?
Why is he sad?
 Haha, I don't know, look.
Where was the wedding reception?
 A?
Did you have a wedding reception after?
 We had a wedding reception...
 Dear Mary.
 Was it at Bizjak's?
 I don't know, I can't tell you.
 I don't remember.
 Did we even have it?
 Was it at Mlinar's?
 Was it...
 It wasn't at ours'.
 I don't know.
When did he ask you to marry him?
Did he ask you?
 What?
Did he ask you to marry him?
 Yes, of course.
Did he come to your house? Or how?
 Yes, of course.

Of course.
Every Sunday.
Even before marrying?
Keep smiling you, keep listening (addressing him).
Urban was more like, like that.
More calm.
Calm? Serious?
Yes.
And Ivanka.
With the bouquet.
And Francelj, was he also calm?
Francelj is smiling.
Only in the image or also in reality?
I don... also... All kinds, I don't know...
I don't how I could tell you.
He, he was good.
Why did you like him?
What?
Why did you like him?
I don't know.
I like him now, this moment.
I don't know what is here in the back?
I don't know.
Urban is really sad.
No, he is not sad.
He is not?
This one?
I think it's just the photo.
Francelj is smiling a bit.
And Irma. (her daughter)



*My grandparents with their wedding witnesses, also their siblings.
Source: family archive*

And here is he smiling more?

Oh, you have more.

Where did you find this?

You have it stored.

Where?

And Tomaž has some.

Oh.

Yes, we were like this, we were like this, and how are we now...

Well, here you look a bit better.

There he didn't know that they were photographing him and here he knows.

Yes, yes.

Right mommy?

Are we together?

You still have all your teeth.

I don't have them.

Yes, just like that, it goes...

Yes.

What about after you married? Where did you move after marrying?

What?

When did you move in together?

When did we move in together?

Yes.

In here?

Yes.

Oh, Mary, I don't know when.

Right after marrying?

No.

Yes, I think not.

I don't know, I don't know.

You were probably living together after?

Yes.

Dad, tell us.

Mom doesn't know anything.

You know, you know.

He already had a house built before?

Yes, yes.

Already, except upstairs there was nothing yes.

Mhm.

Keep smiling, yes.

It is what it is.

And it's already I don't know how long since he died...



*My grandparents while working in front of their house together with their children Irma and Tomaž.
Source: family archive*

And what is this?

What?

What is this?

What are you doing here?

Here we are raking.

Look, Dad is cutting grass.

Where is that?

Well...

Here, at ours', I think.

Is it?

Mhm.

Did you have nice flowers?

Yes.

Who took care of them?

Who drew them?

Took care of them.

Erasing?

Took care of them.

Oh, took care of them.

Oh, I don't know.

Mom probably, or I don't know.

And here is another image.

What does it say?

Oh, I don't know what it says.

There are also carnations up there.

Flowers everywhere, right?

Yes, there are also here in front of the house.

And this tree I don't know when did we...
 So it's not there anymore.
I don't know. Was it an apple tree?
 Oh, it's an apple tree, yes.
And did you have a fence or what is that red door there?
 Yes, yes we had to close it.
Why?
 I don't know. So the kids wouldn't run out.
 To the road, you know.
 Oh, Mary.
Which kids are here?
 What?
Do you know these kids?
 These ones?
 Yes, this is Matevž.
 This is Irma.
 Right?
I don't know, Irma and who?
 And, and, and...
Is it Tomaž?
 Is it Tomaž, right?
 I don't know.
 Irma and...
 It's Tomaž, right?
 I think it's Tomaž, yes.
How much younger? One year younger than Irma, right?
 Yes.
 Mom, you just keep smiling.
Is that you or is it Francka?
 It's me.
 And Dad is cutting grass.
Yes.
What does it say here?
 I don't know, I think, I was just looking.
You had a sign?
 Yes, we had a sign, I think.
Why did you have a sign?
 I don't even know.
 Did we...
 Oh, I'm completely forgetful.
It says foreign rooms.
 What?
It says foreign rooms.
 Those rooms?
Foreign.
 Foreign? Oh, foreign.
Why did you have that sign?
 Well, foreign... so they were sleeping and going out.
Who?
 I don't know.
Did you host tourists?
 Tourists yes.
 Tourists, tourists.

Store it.
How come you had tourists?
 Well, I don't know.
 There was enough room, you know.
Because you had a big house?
 Yes.
Did they come often?
 What?
Were they here all the time?
 Yes, all the time.
 And I don't know where they were from, not from here.
Slovenians?
 Yes.
 From far away, but I don't know where.
 It's interesting to look at this.
Was it cold in the house when you moved in?
 What?
Was it cold in the house when you moved in?
 No, not here.
 It was upstairs.
 Upstairs it was very fresh.
 There was a brick oven in the bedroom, so it was warm there.
What are you thinking about?
 What?
What are you thinking about?
 Haha, I'm looking at how are they raking.
Were they diligent kids?
 Yes.
 Francelj is holding one's hand, I think.
 No, no, it's a scythe.
 This I don't know, is it a birch or what?
 Yes, oh, it was a birch, yes.
 Poor thing.
 There were doors here, yes.
 So the kids didn't run away.
 Right mommy?
 Rake, rake, rake!
 Haha.
Were you diligent or what?
 Yes, good, she was good...
 Diligent, diligent.
 We were in good relations, thank God.
 Too bad Francelj died.
 I can't do much about it.
 I don't even know what was wrong with him...
 I don't even know what was wrong with him, so he died.
 And now he is buried in the graveyard.
And those are carnations or what flowers are they?
 Which flowers?
On the windows.
 Yes, those are ours.
 Are they carnations?
 Carnations, yes.

Carnations.

And which ones are in front of the house?

Where in front of the house?

Here you also have some pink ones.

Oh, yes, they were on the grass.

Really? A whole row?

Yes, yes. I don't know, yes.

Almost.

A whole row, yes.

We were just planting them like that.

Right, dad?

So it looked nice, right?

Yes.

Nice that you brought this.

Do you like it?

I do.

Then I will find more.

Yes.

Will you, will you?

But don't look too much.

I won't, if I find it, I find it.

Yes, yes.

It is what it is.

Are you cold?



My grandparent's wedding photograph (1961).

Source: family archive

Were you two happy on that day?

Yes, of course.

You know we were happy.

Yes.

He was a bit bald already here.
Haha, and it didn't bother you?
What?
It didn't bother you?
He is smiling.
That's what mattered to you? That he was smiling? That he was happy?
Happy.
And leaning on the mom.
Right, dad?
Oh, Mary how this comes, right?
Yes.
And you can't do anything about it.
...

SCHOOL



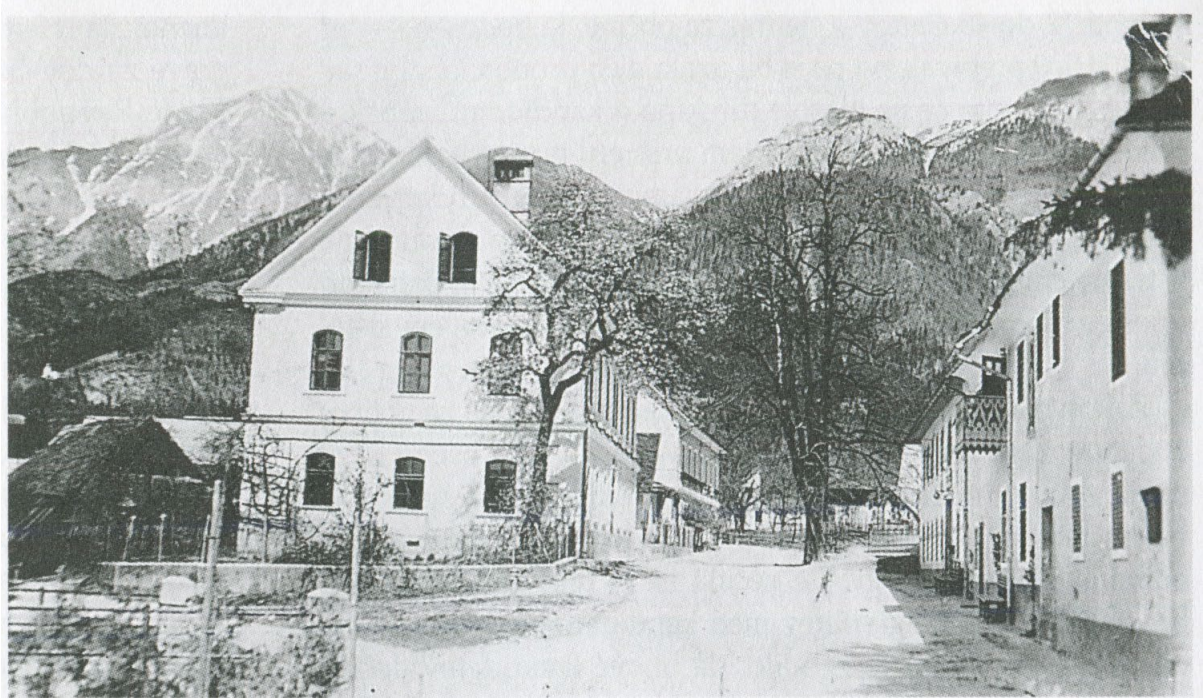
*The former school in Preddvor (1967), today a municipality house.
Source: Preddvor v času in prostoru: zbornik občine Preddvor, 1991*

School in Preddvor.

Is it?
Which school?
 We were going to school here.
Did it look like this?
 Yes.
What did you do in school?
 Oh, we learned all sorts.
 German and everything.
German?
 Mhm.
 Where did you find this?
Was it also in Slovenian or only in German?
 Yes, it was.
 I don't know, I don't know, probably it was.
Do you still know some German?
 No not anymore.
Nothing?
How do you say one?
 One, one, one...
How do you count in German?
 I don't know.
 Do you know?
Ein, zwei, drei.
 Yes, yes.
Did you learn that?
 Oh, yes, yes, ein, zwei, drei, fünf, funf, fink, füngl...
Haha.
Was it interesting?
 Haha yes.
 It was.
 We went inside the school.
Yes? Was the entrance here?
 Yes.
Did you have many classmates?
 Mhm.
How many were you in class?
 Quite a lot.
 Good that you have these images.
Where did you all come from? Preddvor, Bela? From everywhere around there?
 Hmm...
What do you remember?
 I don't know.
 We were going to Preddvor to school, yes.
 We were going to Preddvor to school.
 This is Preddvor, right?
Is it? This is the school, right?
 Mhm.
How did you get to Preddvor?
 Walking.
Walking? There was no bus back then?
 No, no, no...
 No, no, no, no, no...
Did you enjoy going there?

In school? Ah, we had to go.
 We had no choice.
 And there was even snow and all kinds...
 And rain and... Oh, good that we survived.
And how was it in school?
 What?
Was it nice in school?
 Well, it was in German.
 Yes.
 Well, it was in German.
 Him.
 What was he already...
Was he a teacher?
 Yes.
Was he German?
 Yes.
But did you understand him?
 Not too much.
Was he strict?
 No, he wasn't strict.
 We were even a bit afraid of him.
 Oh, good, good that it passed...
 Good that it passed.
And what about later on?
 What?
Did you have a Slovenian teacher later on?
 Yes, yes. And then it was different.
 Then it was better when there was a Slovenian teacher.
 At least we understood her. We couldn't understand him at all.
How did he teach you something?
I don't know.
 We had such a fright that you can't even understand.
You know?
 sighs
 And now we have different problems...
What problems?
 That we can't go anywhere without a wheelchair.
You have us to help.
 Yes.
 I also remember this, but...
 The stairs were up here and here...
 Yes, in school we were inside.
What did the classroom look like?
 What?
 Was there a big classroom?
 Yes, quite big, look?
 Big, right?
Quite..
 Oh, Mary, better not to remember.
 Store it.
What about the classmates? Were they nice?
 Yes. Yes, yes.
 We went...

We went there on foot.
 Yes.
With the ones from Bela, did you go together?
 Yes, yes.
 We went together.
 There was no bus, you know.
 We were walking, and the snow, oh Mary...
 And icy and all, all kinds.
 And you can't do much about it, you must go.
 You can't turn back.
 Oh, good that we survived.
 I hope we will also survive this...
 Oh, yes, yes...
Did you like doing math?
 What?
Did you like doing math?
 Haha, no.
What about the Slovene language, did you like that?
 Yes.
Did you like that?
 I liked that.
Did you read something?
 Also.
 Slovene.
 But the other one, no. The other one, no.
 I don't even know how we did it.
 I don't even know.
 I don't know what we were learning at that time.
 I don't know.
Did you learn the language more than anything else?
 Oh, I don't even remember.
 We didn't even understand them.
You just sat there?
 Yes.
 Good that we survived.
When you started it was in German?
 Yes.
And later it changed?
 Yes.
 Later it was completely different.



*Town center of Preddvor with the school after the WWI.
Source: Preddvor v času in prostoru: zbornik občine Preddvor, 1991*

And where is this?
 Mount Storžič is in the back.
And what is this building?
 What?
What is this building?
 I don't know.
Is it not the school?
 School. I think it is a school.
 And here I don't know what was.
 I remember this tree.
 Oh, Mary.
 We went through a lot already...
 And we still will...
 And here I don't even know what was.
 Right?
Another building, where the store was.
 Oh, another building.
Here is a farm, right? In the back?
 Yes, I think so.
 But I don't know whose.
 And mount Storžič in the back.
 And also, nothing is written.
That's why I'm asking you.
 Haha.
And then we will write it down.
 What will we do?
We will write down what you tell me.
 Oh, haha.
 Are you hungry?

I'm not.
 We had to bring food with us.
 Bread.
 Well, very interesting pictures.
 Good that you have them.
 You can see the Mount Storžič.
 And one house, but I don't know whose.
 It's not written.



*A side view of a former school in Preddvor; with a monument for the victims of the WW2 in front of it (1955).
 Source: Gorenjski Muzej*

And what is that? Is it the same?
 This one is a bit bigger.
Is it also the school?
 Also, yes.
 There are no leaves on the tree.
Then it was autumn?
 Yes.
 Here there is a car.
 I don't know anything, you know.
What do you remember from school?
 What do I remember?
 Yes.
 Oh, dear Mary.
 We were trembling like kittens, like kittens...
Why?

We were frightened of the teachers.
 You know?
 Oh...
Were you diligent?
 I don't know.
 I was more despondent, I think.
There was no time to study?
 What?
You didn't have much time to study?
 That also. There was a lot of work at home, you know.
 We preferred working to studying.
Because you had to work, right?
 Yes, but not in the winter.
 In the winter we sledged.
Where were you sledging?
 Where did we sledge?
 Yes.
 Here down our hill.
 In Srednja Bela.
On the road?
 On the road, yes.
 Oh.
 The sledges. And then two or three of us on it...
 And we went.
Where did you get the sledges?
 My dad made them.
Really?
 Mhm.
 Down until Tonet's house, you know.
 That was quite...
 That a man can...
 This is a school.
Is it yours?
 I don't know.
Is it in Preddvor?
 Here there's another house.
 And I don't remember that.
 How can I remember...
 We were trembling like...
 Store it.



The former school in Preddvor (1967), today a municipality house.

Source: Preddvor v času in prostoru: zbornik občine Preddvor, 1991

Do you remember this one more?

Yes, this was our school.

Yes.

Mhm.

Up there, there were probably apartments.

I don't know.

We never went up there, you know.

We were downstairs.

Here up these stairs.

And there was a fence, yes.

Up here there were probably some teachers.

Did they live up there?

What?

Did they live up there?

Yes.

I don't know what is this spike here.

Is it a flag?

Probably a flag, yes.

Probably a flag, yes. A flag.

I think from a flag.

What kind of flag did you have back then?

Oh, a German one.

Yes?

What else... Not a Slovenian one.

There was no Slovenian flag yet back then, right?

What about the Yugoslavian one later?

What?

What about the Yugoslavian one?

I don't know about that.

Do you remember the German one?

Yes.

We were trembling like sparrows.

That German teacher, you know.

Were they man or woman?

We were not trembling at home; at home we didn't speak any German or something.

I still remember these doors.

Where did you find this?

I found it.

Where did you find it?

In a book.

Oh, you found it in a book.

Well, see, good.

Here there is ivy.

Are you hungry?

No.

Good that you have these stored.

You are good.

What else was at that time?

What?

What else was at that time? What was happening in school?

What was in school?

Yes.

We were trembling like kittens.

All of you?

All of us, you know... He was a German.

They were Germans.

Ohh...

And they were beating us on our hands if we didn't know something.

I mustn't remember these things. My head starts hurting.

Did you get along well with your classmates?

That we did.

They were all Slovenians, all Slovenians.

And from Bela and Preddvor, right?

And from Bela.

I don't know if from Preddvor.

We went to Preddvor to school.

Yes.

And we had German teachers.

Oh, Mary.

I don't even know how we put up with it.

Good that it passed.

Today it's not nice, but then...

It's quite nice for us.

Nice.

It's really nice for us, yes, yes.

Is it not?

Nice, really, nice.

You can walk up and down the road.

And wherever you want.

Right? And enjoy yourself.

That is a lot already.
You couldn't do that in the past?
 What?
You couldn't do that in the past?
 No chance.
 But we were walking to school.
Where did walk?
 What?
Where did walk?
 Along, along the road.
Not through the forest?
 No, no.
You didn't take a shortcut?
 Not the shortcut.
 No, no.
Was there no shortcut?
 None, none, none.
 Just there was so much snow we could barely walk.
 A man should take a photo of that, at that time.
 And with bad clothes.
 Oh, Mary.
 And the shoes too small.
 All kinds...
 We were through all kinds...
 ...
 //VIDEO ŠOLA 2
 We were going up those stairs.
 Where did you find this?
In a book.
 What?
I found them in a book.
 Really, who saved them...
 And those are some bushes.
 Oh, it was so horrible.
 sights
 I mustn't remember.
What happened after you finished school?
 After school, it was in Slovenian.
 You know?
 And we understand those people.
 How can you, first grader and second grader...
 How can you... how can you remember anything?
Was later everything in Slovenian?
 Yes.
 Then we could understand.
 And then it was fine.
Did you enjoy going there more?
 More.
 More.
 ...
 Yes, it was like that.
 Good that we survived, that we survived.
 And walking to school.

And...
 Uh...
 No but, and no...
 Ah, good that we went through it.
What happened after you finished school?
 What?
Did you start working immediately after finishing school?
 Yes.
Yes? Right away?
How long did you go to school?
 To school?
Yes, it was a few years, right?
 Yes.
 And after in Slovene.
 And then it was different.
Did you sometimes sing in school?
 Nothing.
 I think so... I think nothing.
 I don't know if we...
 Not in Slovenian.
And after?
 And after...
 What did...
 I don't know what we sang, all sorts.
 In the mountains, the sun is shining.
Do you still know it?
 Still.
 Starts singing
 ...
 Oh, I mustn't remember.
But did you like to sing, right?
 What?
Did you like to sing?
 I did.
 ...
 //ŠOLA 3
 ...
What was your favourite song to sing?
 My favourite?
 A German one?
 No, Slovenian one.
 I don't know what we used to sing.
 *Starts singing *My Daddy*... *
 ...
 We sang that, and the German one I don't even know what we sang.
 ...
 Good that we suffered through it.
 And walking home and the snow and the rain and everything!
 And nothing, road like that...
Was it a macadam road?
 Mhm.
 School was here I think, what is it here now?
The municipality.

The municipality, yes.
 There used to be a school there.
 And walking to Preddvor to school and walking back home...
 Oh...
 Better not to think about it.
 Mary, I don't know what would happen if those Germans would stay...
 What, what would happen...
 I hope it stays as it is now.
Yes, it's quite nice now.
 Dear Mary, yes.
How was it to live in Yugoslavia?
 What?
How was it in Yugoslavia?
 In Yugoslavia?
 That I don't remember.
 Mom probably does.
 I don't know and I don't...
 Starts singing
 I don't even know if we spoke in Slovenian, or if we had to speak German.
 I don't even know.
 They probably didn't speak Slovenian, right?
 I don't know...
And what did they teach you?
 What?
What did they teach you?
 Uh, I don't know, I don't know...
Math?
 What?
Math?
 Math?
Did they?
 shrugs
History?
 Yes, history, yes. I think history, yes.
Geography?
 What?
Geography?
 I don't know.
 Oh well...
You learned enough to get a job after, right?
That's what matters.
 That's what matters.
 And the teachers were so strict...
 Why did we come here?
 ...
 I didn't even know for how long I was going to German school.
 I don't know.
 It's better not to know, it's better not to know, it's better not to know...
It was for a few years, right?
 Yes.
 And walking home...
 In torn shoes...
 And the snow...

And we survived.
 And there were no cars at that time, you know?
 Walking along the road, you know?
 And now they are driving to school, right?
Buses and cars.
 Yes.
 And if you were a first grader, you know what a poor thing you were...
 Oh...bbb... *shivers*
 I mustn't remember.
 Too bad I didn't save some notebooks.
From school?
 Yes.
Did you throw them away?
 I don't know.
 It has to be at home, in Srednja Bela. (at the house where she grew up)
 We have quite good times now.
 I don't even know where the Germans were staying.
 I don't know where the birds are.
Birds?
 Birds.
I don't know, is it still winter?
 They were there for some time.
 Are they in the forest, probably?
Probably in some trees. There are not a lot of trees here anymore, right?
 Yes.
Now you are singing instead of them.
 What?
Now you are singing instead of them.
 Haha.
 Oh, Mary, we've been through a lot...
 Haha.
 And walking to school.
 And in the low shoes... All kinds...
 And first grade... you didn't understand anything, you know?
 I don't know how we wrote and nothing...
 Too bad there are no notebooks left.
 Today it's completely different, right?
Probably.
 Oh, Mary.
 Walking to school and back...
 And the snow...
 And icy... and all kinds, all kinds...
 There was no bus so we could go by bus, no chance...
 Everything on foot...
 And the teachers had, had...
 Those...
 Sticks.
 Stick.
 Hitting our hands...
 You know you were afraid.
 Yes.
 And trembling.
 And in first grade.

Yes, good. Good that we withstood.
 Oh, yes, yes...
 We were in school here in Preddvor.
Where the municipality is?
 Yes.
 We were there.
 ...
 //ŠOLA 4
 We were going to school there... where today...
Where the municipality is?
 Yes.
 I don't even know how did, how did we write, and how did we...
 I don't know anything...
 And walking home...
 Oh, dear Mary.
 Today it's completely different.
 Yes, yes.
 ...
 Oh, dear Mary, yes... Good that we withstood...
Who told you that you must go to school?
 Well, it was a must.
Did they come to get you?
 Yes.
 No, they didn't come to get us.
Did they just say that you must come?
 They drove us there, they goaded us.
 To school.
 And we walked back, I think.
 Oh, oh. My head is starting to hurt.
Then, it's enough of that.
 God save us from something like that happening again.
 ...
 I don't even know what we studied.
 Did we even know anything?
 They spoke in German and us nothing...
 Too bad I don't have some notebooks.
Yes, it would be nice to see, it would be interesting.
 We would know how to read it. The German... thingy.
But you wrote in German?
 What?
Did you write in German?
 I don't know to whom we wrote.
 And they always had the sticks ready... if somebody was naughty he was beaten and yes...
 Oh, dear god we trembled.
 Oh, good that it passed.
 God save us from something like that happening again.
 What shall we do now?