

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Wanda Luos Lorenc
May 7, 2013
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PREFACE

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WANDA LUOS LORENC

May 7, 2013

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Wanda Paulina Luos Lorenc**, on May 7th, 2013 at the **Kosciuszko** Foundation in **New York City**. And I'd like to start, Mrs. **Lorenc**, by thanking you for coming to speak with us today. We very, very much appreciate your willingness to tell you story.

Answer: I'm very happy to come and tell you what could – happened during the second war.

Q: Thank you, thank you.

A: Not everybody, even has idea how – how people spent this time, in concentration camp, or even occupation during second war in **Poland**.

Q: Okay, well we – we want to hear about it.

A: Yes. I start maybe when I was born.

Q: Yes, I'd like to know the date that you were born, the place that you were born –

A: Yes.

Q: – and tell me a little bit about your family, your parents, if you had brothers and sisters.

A: Yes. I bor – I was born in **Warsaw, Poland** i-in 6-22-20 – 1928.

Q: So June 26 –

A: Yes.

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Q: June 22nd, 1928.

A: Yes. I was born in **Poland** in be – I was the youngest from four children. My parents were living all the time in **Warsaw**, and I was last child. Very happy. My life and family, it was paradise. It was so, so nice, so happy. My parents were very good Catholic and also they love so much **Poland**, and they tried to raise us as good people, honest people, very good Catholic, and of course good paish – person for **Poland**.

Q: Tell me, did you have brothers or sisters?

A: Yes, I have – I had a brother eight years older as I was. Later, my sister **Irene**, and third was my brother **Odon Yaizhy(ph)**, **Luos**, of course.

Q: **Yaizhy(ph)** was his name?

A: **Y-Yaizhy(ph)**. **Yaizhy(ph)**.

Q: **Yaizhy(ph)**

A: And I was in '28 year one, last one. Very happy family, very honest, very – I can't tell you, never forget – never – I can't even tell you how I was so happy.

Q: Let me ask you some questions. First, a few factual questions. To finish with your – your brothers and sisters, your oldest sibling was **Yaizhy(ph)**, and he was –

A: First – first was **Zenon Paul**.

Q: **Zenon(ph)**.

A: **Zenon(ph) Paul**.

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Q: **Zenon(ph) Paul**. Then came who?

A: **Irina(ph)**.

Q: **Irina(ph)**. Then?

A: **Odon(ph) Yaizhy(ph)**.

Q: **Odon(ph) Yaizhy(ph)**.

A: And me, **Wanda Paulina**.

Q: And then **Wanda Paulina**. So you were four, or five?

A: Yes. Four – four.

Q: Four.

A: Two boys and two girls.

Q: Okay. And your – what was your mother's name?

A: My mother's name, maiden name is **Chehowska(ph)**, very difficult to spell even.

Anna Chehowska(ph).

Q: **Anna Chehowska(ph)**.

A: Yes, and my father, **Pawel(ph) [indecipherable] Luos**.

Q: **Luos**. And were they also born in **Warsaw**?

A: No. I know that my mother was from north of **Poland**, **Votswavek(ph)** or something, big town. And my father was born in – very close to **Lublin**.

Q: To **Lublin**.

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A: Yes. And during first w-war, they were transferred to the north of **Poland**. In this time people were taken from own houses, and it was very, very bad time, and the [indecipherable]

Q: Who transported them? During the first World War, who –

A: Pro-Probably it was – I – I tell you, I can't say to you, exactly.

Q: Okay, you don't know, okay.

A: They s – they met in this com – place, my mother and my father, and they were married and they came at – after married in twen – first war was finished, they came to **Warsaw**. And since then, we were born.

Q: Then, another question. Wha-What was your father's profession? What did he do to make a living and support his family?

A: He was a specialist for special – for machine in – I can't tell you exactly. Machine in [indecipherable] I can't tell you.

Q: Okay, but was he a mechanic, a machine mechanic, or –

A: Something like that –

Q: I see.

A: But later he start to wor – oh – he open own place, small factory, and later was made bigger and bigger, factory where it was done everything for dre – not dresses, but from wool.

Q: Okay. So it was a factory that made clothing from wool?

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A: Yes, yes, from wool, and later was silk also. And each year it was bigger and bigger. When I was 11 years old and when we start second war, they – they have problem because they wanted to have mo-model for the German people, for the army, to – to make for them – for me it was – I was not interested in th – in this problem, for – I was too young. I know only that Mother and Father, they working very hard, because they lost – my grandparents lost everything what they had. They had **barka**, that's in – transport through the river.

Q: Barges, barges.

A: Yes, very big and they had two or three. Therefore – therefore, my parents start from zero. They lost everything.

Q: The – the – your grandparents lost these things during World War II, or during World War I?

A: One.

Q: One. I see.

A: Then my parents met each other, and they start to have family, and start to make business.

Q: I see. Did your mother help your father in the business?

A: Of course, my mother also helped some problem – some work, not for – for herself. She – she always had ambition to have own place.

Q: Did she – would you say that your family was o – was well-to-do?

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A: Yes, you know, they very smart and very majestic people. Very Catholic, and they were very happy, and lucky.

Q: Tell me, what do you – when you say they were very Catholic, in what way did they –

A: Which way?

Q: Yeah.

A: Because in – they raise us with like usually you should go to co – to communion, to everything what is in our religion. And later, life was good. What life and never – never be bad, or lie or – or an – not –

Q: Unethical, in some –

A: Unethical.

Q: Yeah.

A: Was good ethical. Therefore we are very happy and very close family.

Q: When you said your growing up years were like paradise –

A: Yes?

Q: – explain a little bit what your earliest memories were. What – what – yeah.

A: You know, for th – me, it's something was very happy, because after going to church for mass, my father took us for the walk, you know, also, explaining every – almost everything what was interesting. A-And he talk with us and specially for me, in my memories will be all the vacation, when I was in school, and everybody was

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taken to – with father or mother, because one was staying in – in business, and we spent terrific vacation in the country.

Q: Where did you go in the country? Everywhere?

A: Different – different places. To – to be close with – even Father told us about how is working on – in the country, and about animals, about even flowers or fruits. He – he explained to us everything what was interesting. And I remember that I – because I was the youngest, my father took me on here.

Q: On his shoulders.

A: Yes, yes, that's very lucky and nice time, which finished with war.

Q: I understand.

A: Yeah.

Q: I want to ask a little bit more about pre-war life. Which one were you closer to, your par – of your parents?

A: My mother was very strong person, and should be order always, and no question what she said should be done. But Father was so sweet, so close with us. He – I don't remember even one time that he could beat us or – never.

Q: Or yell at you or something.

A: No, no never.

Q: Okay.

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A: When he came home for dinner, usually I was sitting on one leg, and my sister on other, and I remember how I was making nice hair of my father.

Q: That's a lovely thought.

A: This is beautiful time. And also had plenty animals; cat, dog and if – birds. And sometimes some – something like – I don't remember even name of this animal. We love animal, and –

Q: Did you have a big house?

A: No. On the beginning was smaller, but later – later we luf – in center of old hou – old town, i-it was salon very big like half of this room, and three big rooms; kitchen for – from help – helper, one small room, very big corridor, and then

[indecipherable] also big.

Q: So you had a huge apartment.

A: Yes, yes, it – we had apartment in house which belonged to shi – to priest. Not Catholic – they Catholic, but they are from **Ukraine** and because my father and this priest, they know each other.

Q: So this was a Ukrainian Catholic.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

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A: And from our room – from our dining room we can see even inside what's happened in the church [indecipherable]. This church was built like, together with this house. It was very nice and special and very safe, beca-because everything –

Q: Was locked, yeah.

A: – was [indecipherable] yes. I remember when I was not too good, because when one – be-be-before, one step lower – sometimes this pr-priest was looking through the window and I put some waters. And later he said no, no, no. I learned in this time, many things happened. That's life.

Q: So – so tell me, did you go to school?

A: Of course.

Q: What kind of school did you go to?

A: I – I was very close school e – my father usually took me to school, and it was fer – first, second and third class, and it was in name of **Marie Curie Sklodowska**, very ne – **Marie Curie Sklodowska**. You know who is, no? She's **Nobel** prize chemist, Polish. She de – she – she found very – **Po-Poland** – no – difficult to explain here.

A-Anyway –

Q: Just repeat her name slowly, **Marie** –

A: **Marie Curie**.

Q: Ah, Madame **Curie**, okay.

A: Yes.

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Q: Yes, of course. Mada –

A: Yes, and we had sometimes her doctor was visiting us, and it was big –

Q: Big deal.

A: Yeah, yes, yes.

Q: Okay. Was this a public school, or a religious –

A: It was public school. Very good, very nice, and new.

Q: Okay. Did there – were there children – was it a big school?

A: Very big. Three – three – I think at first, very good, nice and beautiful place, close to center of **Warsaw** and was very, very good schooling.

Q: Who were your closest friends in the school?

A: You see, I had too many friends, and last year I was sitting with one girl who was Jewish wi – and she had so big hair, black, and I had white. And it was so funny, because they said, one in the dark.

Q: Yeah.

A: But very nice school, and nice – they had very good opinion. But I only pass three – three years.

Q: I understand. About the children in the school, were they – you mentioned that there was a Jewish girl who sat next to you.

A: Yeah.

Q: Were there many Jewish kids in the class?

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A: Maybe 15 – 10 or 15 percent of class, but it was so mixed that n-never problem ha – was.

Q: Were you friends with each other, or did –

A: You see, in – with school, n-no, but my parents, because he had a factory with this kind of business, he is – was working very often with Jewish people. And between Jewish and our ha – family, was like friendship.

Q: I see.

A: And sometimes they come for us for the Christmas, and we came for Passover.

Q: Did – were they anybody in particular? A family that you were friends with?

A: Yes. It was this family which my parents save life 12 people.

Q: What is the name of the family?

A: **Mawamid(ph)**. **Malamid(ph)** or **Melamid(ph)**.

Q: Uh-huh, **Melamid(ph)**.

A: Yes, and it was tragedy, because these people were very honest, very good friend, because when my father, in moment when **Germany** wants to finished with **[indecipherable]** he propose to hi-hi – help, especially this girl which was my age, beautiful girl, to take as child. But parents **[indecipherable]** grandmother didn't want to be divided all from – from grand-daughter. And they passed away in **Treblinka**, and they lost life. But parents with sons and other friend and family, they agree, and my father, my mother and my brother, the oldest, because he was about 20 years or

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something, they helped during occupation, German occupation to transfer them in [indecipherable] to some safe place. And therefore they still were alive. And today – came a day they found us and they sent, during the occupation of Russian, they sent us sometimes [indecipherable] some fruits from inta – **Israel**.

Q: Okay.

A: It has been – is this friendship from both side. It was very nice.

Q: So let's go back to when you are in school and you're 11 years old, and I've gotten a sense that you have a happy family, that you have older brothers and sisters, that your – your father's gentle with you.

A: Very – he is.

Q: And your mother is the one who is stricter. That they work hard and they're trying to raise you in a very ethical way, very religious way. And that you – that you – your family wasn't associating only with other people who were Polish Catholics, but that there was a Greek – not a Greek, excuse me, Ukrainian priest, there was a Jewish family through the business, and so on. Is there anything else about your childhood that is particularly precious to you, that you would like to remember?

A: You n – you know, first I was always so happy pi – for my mother, she was hard, sometimes very strong, but she was so religious that sometimes I didn't like to go to s – s – to –

Q: Church.

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A: – to church too much. But you know, she required always to pray, to go to school, to be honest, never lie – liar, or something like that. And she had heart, I don't matter how you can divide everything what we have with other people. And especially it happens when **Germany** came to **Warsaw**, and Polish soldiers were going so unhappy, hu – very hungry. Mother took everything what was supposed to be to –

Q: And gave it to them?

A: Yes. Even dresses or something. She was a very strong person, but I would like to be so strong like her, but I am not.

Q: Let's start now with the war. September first. Had your family ever talked about what was going on politically in the world?

A: Yes. Sorry, I have to –

Q: Yes please, have a drink, be fine.

A: You see, I he-hear in my family, the parent talking about something what could happened about war. And my parents, especially my father brought to house lot of food: meat and f-flour and rice and – and no – milk in –

Q: Powder?

A: – powder and – and very good, because when s-start in first of September. many people came to us, and everybody was in cellar and my mother prepared food for maybe 20 people, and for us. Bombarding was so heavy, that nobody could do – be outside or in own apartment.

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Q: Do you remember the bombs falling?

A: Oh yes, all the time. Can you imagine that I was so unhappy. Five years occupation when bombarding was from – I don't know who was bombarding, but so many houses are destroyed completely. And later, when I was in concentration camp, very close to **Berlin**, 70 kilometer only, was two times daily –

Q: Bombarding.

A: – bombarding, but this – you could see like s-silver s – very high, and this bombarding, and in this place where we were was completely dancing. My sister in this time, usually sh-she was so tired after work in factory, that even she fall down from the ted – bed, it was so –

Q: She would fall down from the bunk bed –

A: Yeah.

Q: – because – from the bombardment.

A: Yes, and everything was dancing. I – I don't know how it could be, only – but **Berlin** in this time was destroyed completely. Yes, but I –

Q: Let's go back to the beginning –

A: Yeah.

Q: – of the war. So – so September first happens, and do you remember when you learned that the war is starting? Was it through the bombs falling, was it through a radio broadcast? How did you find out?

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A: Of course, radio. We had, and it was all government left **Poland**, but what to do? **Poland** was not prepared for war, because we had only two – 20 years to start to be alone, not divided between our friends, **Germany** and **Russia**. Therefore, it was completely too hard even understand why, because **Russia** is so big [indecipherable] they came first of September came **Germany**, without telling that we start to – to fight and this is beginning of war. They came, killing as much as possible, bombarding us – it was a really very hard time. But 17 days later, our friend from **Russia** came to divide some part for themselves. On the beginning they said that, we brought you freedom, we have to help Polish people against us – **Germany**. But after a couple – couple months later, they transfer all Polish people to **Siberia**.

Q: So, but was this in **Warsaw**, or was this outside of **Warsaw**?

A: In **Warsaw**.

Q: The Russians were in **Warsaw**?

A: No, no, no, you asking about Russian, no, no, they had some part divided between **Germany** and government – **guber – guber – gubern-nament**(ph). It was only in a small piece. Some part belongs to **Germany**, and eastern part to **Russia**.

Q: Okay. But I want to find out more about what happened to your family and to you, as the war started. So you told me there were bombs falling, and you were in the basement, and that first day your mother fed 20 people with the food that your father had brought. What happened after that, to your family?

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A: It was very difficult to find bread, because even this places was bombarding them, people couldn't do nothing, and they didn't have even flour. Therefore, I remember that my sister – my brother, the oldest, was in an organization which prepared for, from school, after finishing school, high school, and they start to – they send them to – to Lithuanian, I think. These young people. It was very difficult to be there because they wanted to take Polish boys to **Russia**. And he came v-very – without permission of course, he came back to **Warsaw**. But my sister was very busy with young people, looking for bomb – bomb – for – they have the j – left bomb – bombing this – for sh – for fl – for – for fire, to –

Q: She wanted to help take out the fires?

A: Yes, and they –

Q: Put out the fires?

A: – they put this bomb outside because in – in place if the bomb start to make fire, that all houses would be –

Q: So your f – your sister, if I understand –

A: She was working with this.

Q: She was unders – she was involved in finding unexploded bombs?

A: Yes.

Q: And trying to – trying to deactivate them?

A: Yes. It was – it was group of young people like –

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Q: That's very dangerous work.

A: Of course, but you see, if necessary, everybody can find some energy and to help, because this is pra –

Q: When was the first time you saw a German soldier?

A: Oh, when I saw first time, I was shocked, because these people looked for me like – because I romantic and I suppose it – like **[indecipherable]** coming on

[indecipherable] with an **[indecipherable]** and with – and these faces was for me it was terrible shock. But these people who were just sitting in our cellar, everybody was very unhappy because they couldn't go even to family, because on the street, **Germany** was ba – very bad to everybody.

Q: Did you see, at that time, any people who were killed? Did you see any dead bodies on the streets?

A: You see, yes, I saw. One part of this house where we were living was bombarding and couple people were dead. But everybody was so shocked and unhappy and afraid of life.

Q: Was this the first time you had seen somebody who was dead?

A: You see –

Q: Or was killed, actually?

A: Yes. They usually were many people pay – after bombarding they lost life in houses. But I don't remember – for example, for me it was very painful to see how

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parl – **parlay**(ph) of our – our king was in fire, and falling down, and I was crying, because I was – my first years I spent so often in this – this park, across the **zarek**(ph). This is like the mi – nicest Polish –

Q: Well, I'm trying to imagine what it is like for an 11 year old child to have all these things happening around her.

A: Everything fo – was tense, everybody was without an idea what to do. Not food, and no – and people hungry, without families. Everybody lost some – some other people.

Q: What were you most frightened of?

A: I believe I was so close with family that I tr – I – thing that my parents do everything for us. I wasn't st – in this time I was not conscious even what does it mean? But for me i-is very hurt by to see **[indecipherable]** mother, how my father were hol – helping other.

Q: How did things develop? You mentioned earlier that your father's factory had to make something for the Germans. What was it?

A: It was ni – necessary, if s – some factories do something, then government didn't – government wanted to take some part for them.

Q: Okay.

A: And it was very difficult to do that.

Q: So, if I understand it properly, your father still was able to keep his business.

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A: Still, but that is it was not so good as before.

Q: Okay, and – and yet, he had to probably pay either heavy taxes, or give many of the goods up to the Germans.

A: Of course.

Q: Okay, okay. How did life develop for your family, for you and your family, how did life change?

A: A – you see this five – five years was very, very difficult, because was very short of food. Light was only for a couple hours and other place, and then **[indecipherable]** and we h-have use **[indecipherable]**. It – it was very, very, very smell – smelling, but instead of light, because light. And food was for people, for example, we can buy, but bread was like greener, like something old, some ny – not – not good, of course. And it – food was only **[indecipherable]** for eat. If somebody wants to eat, should buy from other people who brought from the country. They kill animal and they bring in. But it was very expensive. Some people really almost dying from hunger. But still, for us, my mother had a difficult to – to get it. And especially giving us lot of sa-salad, green salad, and sauerkraut we made at home, is also – and each Sunday, ea-each morning it was make place with **cebula**.

Q: With onions?

A: Onion, onion.

Q: With onions, mm-hm.

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A: Cut onion in oil, and it was very good against [indecipherable] or something.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I can tell that she tried to keep us –

Q: Fed.

A: – good, and very good, because if not – if she could not do that, we couldn't be alive in concentration camp.

Q: Yes, but let's go – I – I – I'd like to understand how life developed, and what happened in your family, where you eventually ended up in concentration camp.

Explain this to me. How did things happen, how long were you still in **Warsaw**?

What were you most afraid of, you see.

A: I tell you. In **Warsaw** was very dangerous, because they keep people from the street, take to concentration camp or to work in **Germany**, because a soldier were fighting, therefore, for work, they took lot of Polish people. And a lack – lack of food st-stress, because everybody was afraid that they could take me in any minute.

Schools was closed. [indecipherable] Only they let – they let to have school for – to – to – maybe for – for class, and that's it. The idea was to keep Polish people as – only to work, like – no.

Q: Okay, I –

A: You understand?

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Q: So – I hope I do, if I will say it in this way, that only children up to fourth – four classes were allowed to go to school, and otherwise all the schools in the country were closed.

A: Yes.

Q: And it was considered that they're not necessary because all the Poles are good for is going to be to work for the Germans.

A: Yes, it – therefore we had, always living afraid that somebody come, go, and arrest for nothing. In – since this operation start, underground start to work

[indecipherable] people start to fight for freedom. And regarding me, I tell you that I lost my childhood, because all the time I was thinking, what I can do for my country. I was 12 - 13 - 14 - 15. But I was too young. I suppose that my older siblings, they probably were in organization, therefore I do what is possible and thank God that my girlfriend was also of the same kind of family **[indecipherable]**

Q: Which girlfriend is this? Which girlfriend is this?

A: Is – **Mishka**(ph), like mouse. And she was – she lost a father who was dentist, because he was in an underground and they dis-dissolved this, they **keeped**, and he's – he killed him. And so many people was killing without – probably maybe they do something against Nazis.

Q: Mm-hm, the Nazis.

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A: Yes, of course, and we're afraid because we – it was seven o'clock, everybody has to be at home. Light very – not always, food very poor, and only I – we couldn't have radio. Everybody, if ki – kept radio, could be killed because they afraid of trouble, and so many people was without food, without place for live, taking – seeing something on the street, and asking for money.

Q: How did –

A: This fight –

Q: Yeah.

A: This five years was depression, and so many people so unhappy and dying, and sort of – we had always this – somebody sending to concentration camp.

Q: All right, so explain now.

A: And you know, this situation, wha-what's happened with me? I was ma – dreaming to kill, in this age to kill German. I was hoping that is comes today that we can – they have to go to own. And in the – my friend, I – I told you, **Mishka**(ph), she took – she tried to take me to organization, and it was organization I didn't know even what kind organization, but somebody – I'm looking all who can fight with **Germany**. I suppose it's my part – my – my parents helped German – Jewish people, but my brother oldest, second brother was in – ah, sorry, it's too, too far. Everybody else supposedly is helping and is belongings to – to some organization.

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Q: But your family – you – you didn't know if your parents were, or if your brothers were, or your sister –

A: No, because this is – I oath never talk, and even save – give my life for freedom of **Poland**. And everybody was –

Q: So this was – so this was an oath that you took?

A: Yes, of course.

Q: And what was **Mishka's**(ph) last name?

A: **Bidderman**(ph).

Q: **Bidderman**(ph).

A: Yeah.

Q: Was she Jewish?

A: **Nie**. No, no, no. She – she was not Jewish. I think that this German.

Q: Uh-huh, okay, a German name, but she was Polish.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And do you know, when I was 15 years old, maybe not completely, not – just before 15, I oath.

Q: You gave the oath?

A: Yes.

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Q: I have a question. Did your parents ever talk to you in general terms, not in specific terms, that they wanted or did not want you to join the resistance, or the underground?

A: Never.

Q: They never said?

A: They – they knew, because Mother and Father, they knew, they can understand that what we dreaming, what about we dreaming. And they – they didn't tell us don't go, **nie**, that's –

Q: Okay.

A: You know, idea for my parents was God, love for country and freedom for **Poland**. They – they raised us this way, and therefore never ask us. And I knew that everybody was somewhere. In this time, they organize small group. It was three girls in my age, and one older person, and they teach us helping for wounded people, or to be connection, to make connection with other places. And later, in the future, they started to sh – look and t-to use pistols and –

Q: Excuse me? To use pistols?

A: Yeah. But in this time when we finished these courses, it was maybe half year, is that first **[indecipherable]** uprising. Then my son – my brother, this – yeah, yeah, this **[indecipherable]** on –

Q: What's his name?

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A: **Yaizhy(ph) Odon – Odon Yaizhy(ph).**

Q: **Odon Yaizhy(ph).**

A: He was working – he was fighting in middle – middle **Warsaw**, but our house was in old town, and thi-this organization, this is Polish **[speaks Polish]**

Q: Say it in Polish. Say it in Polish.

A: **[speaks Polish here]** I can't explain.

Q: It's okay.

A: Anyway, I was in this organization, but between organization was also not good connection, and they didn't prepare propap – proba –

Q: Properly.

A: – eb – pro – yes, they didn't prepare everything perfect. **Armia Krajowa** **[indecipherable]** underground army was very big, but **[indecipherable]** where I was smaller. But this was start impossible to go, because all street was on – **Germany** was –

Q: Blocked?

A: Yes, closed. And first we had to make, oh how – pla – took to put something against army – Germans, they come t – come –

Q: You mean a barricade?

A: Barricade, yes. And everybody who – who was alive go to bra – barricade against **Germany**.

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Q: That's right.

A: But each time was more, more and more fighting and bomb – bomba – bombarding. And we start – we lost water, even, we didn't have water. We were looking where a pump from other place, and this bombarding was so hard. And **Germany**, they tried from higher houses to – to have –

Q: Shoot?

A: Shoot to – if somebody was – but our boys, our soldiers who was fighting was heroes. They la – they lost life, but they fight t-to last one ammunition. Why? Because we do it for freedom of **Poland**. We – we can lose life if we can help. You see and it was [indecipherable] everybody was so happy, so excited. We put flags and very – e-everybody was very happy that good something happened, at least. And specially because **Vistula** –

Q: River.

A: – our river, divided **War-Warsaw**, and on other side of **Warsaw**, after r-r-river, army of **Russia** came and stop. They didn't want to help. **Stalin** probably said, I don't know what's the bandits want do then, and we're not interested in this. And we supposed – we were in ma – dreaming that they will come and we can be helped. But **Stalin** was first – and this was first person who were the same kind as **Hitler**, maybe worse.

Q: Tell me – so you were helping with putting up barricades?

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A: Yes, of course.

Q: And you were trying to help wounded soldiers?

A: Yes, and you know what I used?

Q: What?

A: My **tornister** for book when I was going to school, I used for books. On this I put a red –

Q: Cross?

A: – cross, and I took everything what was possible from my mother. If was not enough, she was cutting linen as bandages, and I was taking this bo – this **tornister**, and I was going – I tell you how – how, it was smart. Between houses, when house and house were together, they make in the cellar, opening, because it was impossible go to the street.

Q: Right.

A: And people can go to this opening to big party of houses. And I was going with I – there was – whatever I could have, and I was going to private people, because many pri – [**indecipherable**] was wounded. Therefore – and later when start be fight was very, very strong, and so many boys they brought from fight, therefore I was sitting with this boys and helping, you know, as much as possible. My sister did something else, and you see, for me to start to see dying people, I was 16 years old, very young and very still romantic in this time, but I – I lost this five years of my life;

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was not sport, no pleasure, not food, no friends, no – you know, it was very hard, and I was too young for what I found in my life in this time. And especially when I saw that boy, I remember he calling, Mama, Mama, help me. He died, yeah. Sorry.

Q: That's okay. It's okay.

A: And it was not first time. Later it was more, I was start to be more stronger, but on the beginning I remember first man who was ki – here was, and other place –

Q: You mean he was wounded –

A: The wounded, and I put something, and I – I remember how I was –

Q: Shaking.

A: – shaking. For 16 years old, it was too much. But I was happy that I can do something.

Q: Yeah.

A: You see, that – this church what I told you that in this beginning we were – we had apartment. Under this church was place where this wounded people that boys, they brought. It was lot of work, but it comes the day when all the town – old – old town for – was taken by German people, they came, SS with plenty other people who's different – different –

Q: Uniforms?

A: No, not uniforms, but faces. Not like – I can't – I can't tell you even

Q: Were they hard? Were they angry faces? Were they –

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A: Yes, and every – especially German, they something probably like after alcohol or something completely th-this – eyes was like not normal people. Probably they – they gave him to be strong and – and this house – this voices, **raus, raus**, and you see, everybody, they came with – if somebody was too slow, they kill immediately. And this all group took Polish people out. And they, on the street they put six people here. But my mother was very smart, she – she supposed that in this situation, especially young years are very danger.

Q: In danger.

A: In danger, yes, and she – she gave us old yi – dresses, something very cover, very dead on the face, something close –

Q: Okay.

A: – and they look like old **babushka**, you know and thank God that she did it because when this group was going to **Pruszków**, there is one place where is – from **Pruszków**, people were taken to concentration camp. On the – on the way, couple kilometers, many soldiers, this I don't know who was, and **Germany** not, but the – the [indecipherable] people, they took young girls to ruin. They rape and killed immediately.

Q: Which – who did this?

A: Excuse me?

Q: You said not Germans, but somebody else.

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A: Yes, they looked like, with hair. Sometimes they tell that they are Lithuanian, but not this, but from **Asia**, something like. Th – I'd – I can't tell you who was, but the –

Q: But they were helpers of the Germans?

A: Mm-hm, yes, it was –

Q: But they didn't have –

A: Part – part of German people, because German, usually they were as – they were – no, first, and the other going after. And they took everything if somebody's – if they s-see you, the watches or **bizuteria** –

Q: Jewelry.

A: Yeah, and jewelry they took. And especially they kill young girls. I saw it. It was unbelievable. But I was so unhappy that I – second time I saw the same when liberation was by Russian, it was unbelievable what they did it. Y – but is another part. You can't believe if I tell you that I was look – there is somebody want – I was very sick, very sick, yellow color, temporary too – but is long story. And one soldier, Russian, wanted from my mother take me. And he came, he was very s – very drunk and I was very sick, sitting this way. And I – soo – start to – a little darker, and he came to this place, and he take pistol and to – I heard it is –

Q: Clicking.

A: Yes. Then I fall down on the floor and I start which – no –

Q: To crawl.

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A: You know who save me? The so big horse.

Q: A horse?

A: Yeah. He had probably the ti – he start to – to kill me, he wanted, but I was going –

Q: Crawling away.

A: I didn't know that I was un – but – but – under this –

Q: Horse.

A: – horse. And he fall – lie down on me. This big belly, so big where the ho -- specially horses, and he – I was so sick with temperature, and he cover me.

Q: Did the soldier shoot the horse?

A: No, he went, because he was so upset that I was going from him, therefore he brought many soldiers to look for me. And I was lying down on the – and I saw these shoes. They even – the place where they – this horse was eating, they open, looking for me. And I sit – saw these shoes. And they were so drunk, they left.

Q: This is after the liberation, and this was Russian soldiers?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So this happened in **Germany**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So that's sort of at the end of our story.

A: At – yes, but I – I only –

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Q: But you wanted to say that you made a comparison between when the Germans were taking you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and you saw these young girls being taken to be raped and killed.

A: Yes, but between – between this, what I told you now, it happens much, much more. And do you see a in – regarding concentration camp, probably you know how it looks, food, what we ate.

Q: What I care is to find out – I want to just understand. You were part of the **Warsaw** ghetto uprising. You're taking care of wounded soldiers in the cellar of the church that was next to your house.

A: Yes.

Q: You see them dying on your arms, and then at some point, the German army blocks off the old town, and the s – German soldiers come in with guns, and they are ta – they're chasing everybody out onto the street. What I didn't understand is did they find you in that cellar with the soldiers, or were you at home with your parents in your own house when the soldiers came to chase you in the street?

A: You know, because we know that we lost fight, then I was very close in the same place where we left, and they came. We know that they will kill us or taking us. And I don't know what's happened to this wounded people.

Q: So where did you go?

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A: To [indecipherable]

Q: No, no, no, where were you when the soldiers found you?

A: With parents.

Q: In your own home?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So did they take the whole family?

A: Not only – everybody who was there. And –

Q: Okay, so everyone in the building.

A: No, no – you see, my older brother was in lithua –

Q: **Lithuania**, mm-hm.

A: And the – my sister was with me and with parents, but other brother, this

Yaizhy(ph) Odon was fighting in middle **Warsaw**. He was separate completely.

Q: Okay.

A: Therefore, two person was – two ba – brothers was –

Q: Gone?

A: Gone, and we are – we're taken with group, big group of people.

Q: Okay. So you were together with – with everyone in your family except your two brothers?

A: Yes, but also was my aunt. And it was – was also one lady who was working in factory wi – with my father, and her son was lost because she was going from factory

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to home for the – after vist – **Vistula**, but when start uprising, it was impossible to go even there.

Q: I see.

A: Therefore, she start to be with us.

Q: Okay.

A: And also our help –

Q: Your a – your maids, or servants?

A: Right.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you're on the road to **Pruszków**, you say?

A: **Pru-Pruszków**.

Q: **Pruszków**.

A: **Pruszków**.

Q: Is that a train station?

A: No, this is rightly behind **Warsaw**

Q: It's a small suburb?

A: Yes, yes, yes. And they – train is going there, and they put us to big – big place, everybody was waiting. My father tried to go to doctor, because always found him,

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and to pay him everything what was what, because I – my father was – had a lot of money to go –

Q: Take you away.

A: Yes, but doctor said yes, okay, tomorrow morning. But after that, after two hours or three hours came big group of SS men, very hostility, and said oh, bandits, they kill so many in old town, they destroyed old town completely. They destroyed German people, and to concentration camp. And therefore, they put us to – to this wagon which usually animal, they –

Q: Yes.

A: – transport. And was very, very difficult, no water hot, was no water, no food. And couple, I don't remember how long it was, but very – standing this way, like sardines. And we came to **Flossenbürg** concentration camp, where is famous because they make stones, cut stones. And this – I don't know why, but when we see first **arbeit macht frei**, always in my head is, three times I turned, **arbeit macht frei**. And they took us to concentration camp, small houses, people in this dresses. First put everybody to wash – to shower, cold water of course, and everybody took from us whatever we had in our hand. Naked, shower and later next room, big room, all bish – very big place with old dresses, probably from di – from Jewish people who were for – dead, and they gave to us. Each dress was on the back, 1X, you know why? Color, very all, very strong color, all – should be – if, for example, somebody

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can go to leave, it's impossible because everybody could know that is from concentration camp. Each one was not [indecipherable] because was too expensive and too many people. And in this concentration camp, they kept us couple days. They took everything from us, and couple days my father and brother, they were – because it was concentration camp only for men, and na – after a couple days all women, they transport away. It was in – in mountains, again, down and big trip, long trip to train, and they took us to **Ravensbrück**, very famous. I heard, in **Ravensbrück**, couple from my family, that – out and my cousins. I'm – I suppose that I can find them. Impossible. You know why they took us? Because was no place. Each concentration camp was full of people.

Q: So, if I understand, your family was split.

A: Split, yes. And we didn't know what – I was lucky because I found – I cut something, my leg, and was a – not doctor, but somebody who came, helped me, and it was Polish boy who was taken from pos – **Poznan** to concentration camp and he first saw Polish girl and he said, you from **Warsaw**, I heard you. And I begged him, do something for my father and my brother, because I was sure that in this place, everybody who was working never – they le-left, but through the –

Q: Chimney.

A: Chimney. And he heard them early, they therefore he – my father and brother were alive. And – but we didn't know what's happened after this next trip to

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Ravensbrück, it was also no place, full concentration camp, it was no place to – even to lie down. And they put us first to shower, the same, but it starts to do something very bad, because they tried to make gynecologist examination because some – sometimes maybe looking for gold or something. Later, hair. In this time I had long hair and a little reddish, but curly, because I have not [indecipherable]. And she was from a si – speaking of Polish, German SS man, and they examine me. Can you imagine, si – 16 years old, and to be examine in this way? It was shocking. Anyway, she took my hair and said, you bastard Polish, I – you see how you [indecipherable] I lost my hair, because [indecipherable]. An-And you see again wi – they tent za – to ta – they took our dresses, smelling terribly, and we found something else. Of course, I found only skirt, and some blouse, but not underwear, not nothing, only – no shoes, but not normal [indecipherable].

Q: Were they like – oh, were they wooden shoes?

A: Oh, the wooden shoes, yeah.

Q: Clogs.

A: Clogs, yeah, yeah. And you see, this was the – that wood, that was not so cold yet.

But I start to be very weak. I was – I never was so strong. Sixteen years old and five years – but life in **Warsaw**.

Q: Yeah.

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A: And you see, I is – I lost my conscious, because this call was at five o'clock in the morning. It was usually two hours standing in the night almost. They tried to count if everybody is one place. When I lost conscious, [indecipherable] people said, let us put her to – to barrack. No. She can lie down here. This is normal. You see, tom – and what they put us, after this shower, they [indecipherable] on this place where was terrible smell. Like a little higher and the smell was very difficult to stand up. We were lying down all night, and I ask somebody, tell me what is it? Oh, don't worry, is people dead – is crematorium. And this smell was – I und – you s – can you imagine how we found – how we felt, sleeping on this place? Anyway, they next day took us to barracks, but was so crowded that we lying down for th – at least two people, sometime more. We left – we had only something very dark and – and smelling, and – but this is only concentration camp. And also the same food, the same dresses, the same work. They wanted us to make depressed, to not to talk too much, not to do something. You see, it was prison.

Q: I want to establish a few dates. The **Warsaw** uprising started in August '44, is that right?

A: No, first.

Q: August first?

A: Yeah.

Q: '44?

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A: '44, yes.

Q: Yes, okay. And it ended when?

A: You see, after – it ended after 63 days. But fa – this part, old town –

Q: Yeah.

A: – was one week before, because **Germany** they took par-part at making smaller and smaller place for uprising.

Q: So you were arrested, let's say around September, October –

A: Yes.

Q: – end of September, beginning of October.

A: Yes.

Q: Something.

A: And we didn't know what's happened to as yet, one brother and another.

Therefore, I'll bet – I know that my brother came from **Lithuania**, he came before uprising [**indecipherable**] mean one brother only stay in **Warsaw**.

Q: Okay.

A: And you – what do you want to know how it was in the concentration camp? I think it's difficult even to –

Q: Imagine.

A: Imagine, yes. People depressed, crying, were very sick. Some –

Q: Was your mother with you?

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A: Yes, mother and sister.

Q: And sister.

A: And my mother when they was taken to concentration camp, she was 83 or five.

Q: Thirty-eight.

A: No, no, she was [indecipherable] 80 something kilo –

Q: Kilos.

A: – kilo. But you know when she was return to **Poland**, was 40.

Q: Oh my.

A: But you know what she did? What she receive, for example? Small one – once every two weeks, a little sugar. She divide for three; for me, for my sister and for – when I ask, Mama, you – you have to eat. Oh, I can't, I don't like it. That's mother.

Q: Yeah.

A: The same it was with bread. Small piece, so small like two pieces divided for three. So it was depressing for me, very, very depressing to see that I can't help her.

How –

Q: Yeah.

A: Sorry.

Q: It's okay. So – so when you were arrested in the fall, they took you first to

Flossenbürg –

A: Yes.

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Q: – where you stayed a little bit, not very long.

A: Not too long.

Q: And then ravens –

A: Then – yes, and someday, I don't remember how it was, I have in my –

Q: Yeah.

A: – paper how long I was, but ri-right now I star-start to forge-forget let – a little.

But you know what's happened is what's overcrowd.

Q: Yeah.

A: And someday the – was – they took us to big place, a round place, and each woman from uprising, you have to take all dresses, naked.

Q: This is in **Ravensbrück**?

A: Yeah, and in the middle was couple chairs, in the – which sitting **SS** and couple men in dark suit, very elegant. Men from **IG Farben** industry. They – this industry was making ani – ammunition. We didn't know about it, but they said this way was – now that's funny, but we didn't know why – why each one was shamed to be naked.

This old lady, young lady, children almost. Yeah, I look like chi-child, 16 years old.

And you know what's the – said, now, very fast, lau – lau –

Q: **Lauf**.

A: Yes, don't sit, don't stop. You have –

Q: To run.

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A: – to run. You know, yi – and later one SS man said oh, oh, oh. [indecipherable]
He took only – he choose only younger girls, and looking stronger. Many old women
sometimes un – looking very bad, they said to – they stayed in **Ravensbrück** and this
group was also th-they divide my mother to older. But then my mother spell – she
was speaking German and she let him take me with my children. And something
happened [indecipherable] this animal understood that, said okay. And what's
happened. We didn't know, they took us to ammunition factory, which was very
close to **Berlin**, and next day this shi – this woman was start to go to factory to work.
We were – we were political prisoner, but against this, they took us to work. For 12
years – 12 hours daily, c-call – call was each day at five o'clock, at se – at five
o'clock, at seven o'clock we start to work. And then SS men with dogs took us, not
one, couple, because it was big – big group. And he took us to factory. Factory, it
was very big, dark, only small light on – over – over this machine, and they show us
what to do. And the – I – I hold – I had to make so big and burs – no, **amunicja** –
ammunition, and do you know this – this – beginning of this should be regulation
[indecipherable] special – special cutting this metal and this metal was very hot, red.
And I – I did it, but behind us, standing not too close, all the time SS woman, who is
big **wbić**, you know, **wbić** –

Q: Sticks?

A: Sticks. Taking –

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Q: Hitting you?

A: Yeah. If somebody wasn't working so fast. And the – you see, each day for 12 hours I had to move from one place to other place about two – no, half ton of [indecipherable] change place and make this –

Q: Weapon.

A: Yes, it was very hard. And you know, in the meantime it starts to be very cold, and I didn't have underwear. I start to have problem with my s – s – no, urine. It doesn't mean – I start to lose urine without know about it. But you see, this sleeping with dirt, it was never water warm [indecipherable]

Q: Lice?

A: Lice was plenty. Everybody has – it's impossible was to avoid. Therefore, I had very short hair. It was always cold here and here. My dress in this place was frost, y- you see, because –

Q: Cold.

A: Cold, and not pants, or not nothing. And open with [indecipherable] and even necessary tr – everybody has to still be alive. You know how we keep hair?

Q: How?

A: We took this oil from machine, and put together a little, from wooden small pieces, sometimes after –

Q: Mm-hm, sawdust.

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A: Yes. And it, together [indecipherable] cold water.

Q: Oh my.

A: I – i-if water was not in, then we take to – to miss – to something, we took snow and when was couple hours, would then [indecipherable]. Can you imagine? And open – for me it was killing me that toilet was open and not divided. You see, s-some women was very difficult to. And one day, going to – to f – to this factory to work, I forgot everyone [indecipherable] direc – director, this SS man was shouting, **raus**, **raus**. He was without one, but still **wbić** keeping in the hand. And I forgot that I left small piece of bread to take to the factory, because this – everything what I heard. And I return la – something very quickly. And he saw what's happened. He let order to his dog, give – take her. And he jump on me. He took – he took me here, here I – yeah, I tried – I remember I tried –

Q: To save your face.

A: – save my face, but he, of course, crave – blood was –

Q: Fu – pouring from you.

A: – here and I didn't have nothing in the – to factory, they wait with other dogs. And then – then this – the – this SS man had just call him back. But I had open wound. I didn't have even what to do. I didn't know what was, but I put something – I – I remem – I remember something like a **szmata**, I guess, something –

Q: Some rag, yeah.

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A: For 12 hours work. When I came back in the evening, and then in one nurse who was also a [indecipherable] and she had an – someplace small, if necessary she could make something to stop bleeding. And you know, it was okay. After a couple days I start to have some – I didn't know what – what was – I lost conscious, and I was completely in this place, it was like [indecipherable] house. Small wa – one or two beds for people who –

Q: Were sick.

A: – were sick. And then this nurse, and one doctor who was also –

Q: They were prisoners too?

A: Prisoner, of course. And she got some medication, I forgot this name cren – and anyway, it was very helpful. And one day SS man – SS woman, who was taking care from this place, she said, I have to see, maybe somebody sh-should go to work, not – not to lie down. And I was very, very weak. And she came in to me and asking me so – and asking me, and I said in German that I feel not good. And she said, how you can talk in German? I said, because I was in the school, because when school in **Poland** during these five years, I – we had [indecipherable] mean without permission, we had program of school, because we didn't want to do what we want to make from us [indecipherable]

Q: Only workers.

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A: Oh yes, of course. And you know, she – she said, yeah, when you talk, s-speaking German, tomorrow you go to **[indecipherable]** place where they kept the food for SS, for this soldier who –

Q: For the guards.

A: Yes. And the – for 12 hours also, s – very ca – some big **[indecipherable]** for me it was up to here, therefore I have to ma – bend with – not to fall down, because I couldn't go out. You see, I don't know how I still was alive. Very difficult, I suppose **[indecipherable]**

Q: Floors?

A: Yes. But ye – one thing was very good. Cleaning and keeping in order, I could sometimes couple to put to –

Q: Couple what?

A: Sugar or something food. Not for me, for my mother. But I was always observed by the – keeping **[indecipherable]** then you see –

Q: So you didn't work at **EG Farben** any more?

A: Yes, yes, but I had worst work in this **bakamarra(ph)**. It was –

Q: **Bak-kamarra(ph)**?

A: Is – didn't –

Q: Is it a bakery?

A: No bakery, this is place where the magazine.

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Q: In a store.

A: Yes.

Q: You were working –

A: N-Not in store, but magazine for food for SS people.

Q: Oh, okay, so it was a supply shop?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: It's not shop [indecipherable] and do you know, someday they brought bread and I had to take through the window and put this bread on the shelves. And in this time, where was this car with bread, they walking big group of Jewish gir – women. And do you know, I never forget this what I saw, this begging me [indecipherable] because they saw that I have bread in my [indecipherable]

Q: What did they say?

A: I don't under – I didn't understand.

Q: It wasn't in Polish?

A: No, jew – Jewish from **Hungary. Hungary.**

Q: So they were begging you in –in Hungarian.

A: Yes, and so you see and [indecipherable] this – I – and I didn't – this is my feelings, I put a small piece, I throw to her. In this meantime, other SS woman,

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young, maybe was 18 years old, strong woman and [indecipherable] she upset me how I'm working. You see, she took wood, and sh – I'm sorry.

Q: It's okay.

A: And she start to kick me, beat tooth – teeth. She kick me with [indecipherable].

Oh, sorry.

Q: It's okay.

A: You see, that's old time ago, but still is very –

Q: It's hard. It's hard.

A: Yeah. But I think is my rule, I have to talk. You know, I – sometimes my – my friend will – they tell, oh, don't be so s-silly. Don't talk, don't go, don't do that, don't write. I said no, it could be again something like that. If we will not work on it, maybe next generation can do something [indecipherable] fight, and then war. And you know, when she is start to beat me, when I return after the work, when I finish to block – to barracks, nobody can recognize me. We – you see, that's interesting how people could be so cruel. I – I ne – I don't know. But I'm very happy that I could something – something still. Because I know that for my mother it will be life – one day even, it wa – is what happened. Even when I'm going to barrack, always SS woman looking for what will – can take, even for tomato, if somebody took from – not tomato, potato.

Q: Potato.

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A: Some these pieces, they kill you, almost. And you know, one day I took some small piece of bread and I put here. I had – had ja – something like jacket and I kept to going through this place, and you see my heart right here. And I – I was afraid, because he could hurt – killing me. See, I had to be smiled, but looking at [indecipherable]. You see, th-that – I think that was the worst to be together with sister and mother.

Q: Why?

A: [indecipherable] because, you see, I knew that I – I can tha – be alive, but I was not sure if they can.

Q: How long –

A: You see, this is what – this is proof how together be in family and love each other, how it's important in some moment is good or bad.

Q: Well, how do you answer that?

A: Excuse me?

Q: How do you answer that?

A: For me, you see, I was – what kept me, my belief [indecipherable] only, it kept me alive. But a little I was in depression. I stopped to talk.

Q: How long did all this last?

A: My – my – I think it was second my – when army – Russian army was coming closer and closer, therefore all the concentration camp, they is trying to go to west.

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You know why? Because this is proof what they did to people/ Therefore, they afraid opinion of all world [indecipherable]. Better to kill them, or to transport to west. Of course, it was good, because everybody know that, better be o-on the side of west people, not east, because we knew is different, different kind – kind of people.

Anyway, one day they give us pol – small piece of – bigger piece of bread, and at five o'clock in the morning, everybody could take [indecipherable] something before one place, because was rain this day, and we start to go. First day you can't believe, we went twent – 49 kilometers. First day. You know why? Because to – to go very fast, they la – rain was terrible. On the end was two, no thr-three soldiers with this shepherd, these dogs.

Q: German Shepherds.

A: Mm-hm. And if somebody could – can't go, it was on the place, killed. He went – therefore everybody tried to be on the –

Q: Front.

A: – front. Can you imagine that without drink water, only thi-this rain and 49 –

End of File One

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Beginning File Two

A: – it was – I can't – I couldn't believe if God – somebody could tell me. And do you know, sas – but so many people was killed on the way. It was that death march.

Q: Yeah.

A: They have for – for prisoner, they took us some food, because they have to give us. But next day was little better. On the way out, if was not were no place with water, we start to drink water from –

Q: From the street.

A: Yes. Therefore, probably, I took bacteria with – during this, and I start to have temperature and to be a little yellow. So [indecipherable] one after other. N-Next day, with [indecipherable] were sleeping in some barn and around in the morning, nobody – no German. They disappeared. They took food and they left. They lost – they left us without food, without anything, and we don't know if any – where we are. And then make some groups, and we – we was thinking that the best way, go to west for – because we knew that is is over there army American or French and other. But as far as w – possible, not to go to –

Q: East.

A: – east. But in the ma – in this running, going on di – bi – we – we left some – some night, left in this small piece for instrument for – in the country, what they used, shovel and everything.

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Q: You mean you – you – you left a shovel.

A: Mm.

Q: And you use – that you use in the countryside? No.

A: Yes, is a – it was on the place where – not to – a little far not in the village.

Q: My question is, what was the significance of the thing that you left? Why was –
[break] Okay.

A: I am tired already.

Q: I know. We're close to the end. We're close to the end.

A: Yes, yes. And do you know what's happened? One day I fall down running, but I was very, very sick.

Q: Weak, yeah.

A: Weak, weak and sick. And I fall down to water – not water, but –

Q: Mud?

A: – uh-huh, yes [indecipherable] up to here, I was on. And I start to shout and my mother and sister, they return. Because this was place where **Russia** was bombarding and American. Between this place, and we were all the time wi – running. You see, this was the – the worst because you – you was not sure maybe [sirens] And then I was in water, was cold, it was ketchin – the – still cold, and they were left and this day I was with [indecipherable] and I said, Mother, I can't go, because it's step, I have very bad –

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Q: Pain.

A: – pain. And then we saw a village. I was sitting in this position, like frozen completely. And I was sitting, they put a fire, a little. And then I was hearing that someone just food – food [indecipherable] horses. And I was looking that soldiers, Russian soldiers are first this part ask in [indecipherable] start this with alcohol. They rape all women in this barn.

Q: These were former prisoners?

A: Yeah.

Q: All of these were former prisoners?

A: No, not – they said to us, we brought you freedom.

Q: Okay.

A: But we didn't want be – we were very hungry, but not to eat because it – troi – it's very easy to die when you eat too much. And then I was safe, thank God, I don't know how it happened, that this –

Q: Horse.

A: – horse save me.

Q: But my question is is that, did he – did the soldiers know that you were former prisoners?

A: Yes.

Q: They knew this?

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A: Yeah.

Q: And it didn't matter.

A: I don't know what's happened to people, they are worst as animals sometimes.

Animal ma – they have more feelings. But I heard – I was very sick, but I heard this crying, this begging, th-this German woman, because they also afraid to be in

Russia. They preferred to be on other side. And do you know then who start next when start to be a little light, I heard a voice of my mother, and she said, **Walina**(ph) you know why? Because this soldier, he knew that my name is **Wanda**, and she afraid to si –

Q: Call you **Wanda**.

A: Yes, because he – maybe he's somewhere. And **Walina**(ph) this is my second name, pa -- **Walina**(ph). And when I was si – before **skuol** – school time, they call me only **Walinka**(ph). Therefore, I understood that –

Q: That your –

A: – Mother talk, and we slowly left this place and going, only decide to go back to **Poland** because it's only one way.

Q: So –

A: I was so – so s-sick, that I wanted even to hide somewhere and to die, because pain. But you – you know. Then we start to hidden only through places not on roads, because we afraid of –

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Q: Soldiers.

A: – soldiers.

Q: A question. It was you and your sister and your mother?

A: Yes.

Q: Nobody else?

A: There were also the maid, one, and one – I think this lady who was working also.

One group.

Q: Group.

A: And we came to about 700 kilometer.

Q: Oh my.

A: And sometimes –

Q: Hang on. What – before you go – I'm sorry, did the soldiers do anything to any of the women in this group?

A: I don't know.

Q: So you don't know if they did anything to your mother or your sister?

A: Sis – my sister was in the field

Q: Hiding?

A: Hiding.

Q: Hiding.

A: My mother was old person, but mostly they raped young people, young girl.

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Q: Young women, young women, young girls. Okay.

A: And you know, we – we left, going to east. When we came to **Poznan**, and then my mother took me to doctor, and doctor said, you're much – she is too – too sick, she can die any min-minute. But Mother is Mother. She took me with sister to a – to – what was in **Poznan**? Waiting for a train to **Warsaw**. And as it was just long time, but at least when – this time it wasn't very difficult, just after freed – not freedom, but anyway –

Q: Liberation.

A: [**indecipherable**] liberation. And they take me to post wagon, because I can lie down. And when we came to po – to **Warsaw**, nothing.

Q: The city is completely –

A: And I was sleeping in Polish station, on the – on the floor was many people, and I was di – and [**indecipherable**] somebody is walking down between these people, and said, **Wanda**? I was fr – our neighbor son, who was also almost killed, but he is – was okay. And he said, so why [**indecipherable**] you have to go, I have room with my mother. And he brought me bread with ham. I was eating and crying. And that's finished. But not – not perfect. When we came it was no place, and my par-parents had house, summer house –

Q: Outside **Warsaw**?

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A: Yes. Out a little far-er. And everything was taken by other people, we had only the place where was nothing. And I was looking for squir – but long time I was very sick and for I went to [indecipherable] **Gdynia**, because in **Gdynia** it was everything very good, not – not dreams, and I start to go to – return to school. And you know what's happened? When I re-regulated well, I start to go a-again, for what? To fight against **Russia**. Communists, **Russia** – yeah, communists. Because I was so unhappy looking what – what happened to and how they treat a lot Polish. And I was in underground against **Russia**, when I was 17.

Q: My goodness.

A: Fighting. I said, it's difficult to kill me.

Q: What were you doing there? What was your job there?

A: Well, I was like courier between the people. I did a little.

Q: How long did you stay in **Poland**?

A: And do you know, when I return, because this part, this organization was –

Q: Kaput.

A: Kaput, because communists they had special people who can destroy stuff.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I return to **Warsaw** when my parents bought some apartment. I finish school, but you see – what did you ask about?

Q: I asked, when did you leave **Poland**.

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A: In d – I – after – after two years, I get married to Dr. **Lorenc**, and he – I start to have four children, but never receive passport, because I wrong person. I don't like communists, not in this **[indecipherable]**. Very, very understanding.

Q: Yeah, very understandable.

A: That's not for me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Therefore I tried to even go to **Szwecja**, to **Sweden** to try receive passport **[indecipherable]**. And at least we decide with my husband, we receive only, we can go to **Yugoslavia**, okay, because this is half and half of **[indecipherable]**. And we went with four children to **Yugoslavia**, and without permission, we left nice **Europe**.

Q: What year was this?

A: What I – we went through the forest without permission, with four children to **Austria** and after a couple days, to **America**.

Q: What year was this? What year?

A: 19 – 1967.

Q: So you lived in **Poland** another 20 years – another 22 years after the war.

A: And you know, government, communist government took everything what was possible. My father passed away because was taken everything from him. I lost my apartment in the center of **Warsaw**, I lost summer house. I lost na – my – my parents

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and my chil – my siblings, and we lost beautiful big place for building in **Warsaw**, in center. Therefore, very – without money, we left. I left everything.

Q: Amazing.

A: No, I start to **[indecipherable]** very hard. My husband is start to work in a hospital. They paid him 6,000 for a year on **[indecipherable]**. Very, very si –

Q: Difficult.

A: Difficult. Good that my brothers he-help me.

Q: Were they in **America**?

A: Yes.

Q: So they – after the war they came to the **United States**?

A: Ye – they want – it was couple months only possibility to go to **America** and he went to his family, but other brother went to for – **France**, and ask for –

Q: Asylum.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And he left, and we also came through **Austria**.

Q: Okay.

A: And thank God, I wasn't visiting I'm Polish, but – **Poland**, but I – I don't want to have even think about it, I never **[indecipherable]** you know why? Because still is so

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many people which were before in communist party. I-It is always very strong influence of communist [indecipherable]

Q: Mrs. – Mrs. **Wanda**?

A: Yeah?

Q: Is there something else you'd like to add to the interview that we've just had? Any final thoughts?

A: Yes, anyway, I tell you what. I would like to be maybe, if what I'm doing that can open mind of people, what does it mean? Communist and freedom and to have – to have what I want to have, not what they – they give me. It was not – not treating people normally. I was second – second kind of people in **Poland**.

Q: And that was because?

A: Because I didn't agree with it.

Q: Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

A: I-I – I'm sorry that I couldn't read you, because if I read, you could understand much better [indecipherable] I'm asking, that reading could be much, much better as I'm talking.

Q: But – I understand, but thank you for having spoken. Thank you for having told.

A: Yi – I – couple times I read in interview [indecipherable] Jewish organization. I forgot. And also [indecipherable] even I have this film.

Q: Mm-hm, you have a film?

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A: Yes, but this film was done maybe 30 years ago. Anyway, I think that it is enough for today.

Q: Yes. Well, thank you so much, and –

A: And you see it's very important maybe to – how to do, because we – I'm still working, not for money, I'm voluntary –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in Polish national home, yes, a-and Polish nation – Po-Polish American po – Polish American museum. I am working voluntary, and also I'm very often with my brother-in-law, because he was fight – he was soldier in uprising, with asking to bring to museum, children, and we're talking. Not – of course not like I'm talking openly with you. But what – what does it mean war? What – what we have to work to stop not never again the same.

Q: Yeah, to stop – to stop hatred.

A: Yes, and therefore I'm very happy. I'm 85, on June it will be for 85.

Q: Happy birthday in advance.

A: Yes. And you – I hope that maybe is good to – to talk about it.

Q: Thank you. I'm glad you did.

A: But e – but, I tell you, it cost me a lot.

Q: I know.

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A: I have open heart operation, but is most important my feeling that everybody who is alive should do something for good. Not only to have. Okay.

Q: Thank you. Thank you very much. And this concludes the **United States**

Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. **Wanda I – Paulina –Los-Luos Lorenc**.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes. Thank you.

End of File Two

Conclusion of Interview