

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Janine Oberrotman**  
**March 30, 2004**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Janine Oberrotman, conducted by Joan Ringelheim on March 30, 2004, on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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**Interview with Janine Oberrotman  
March 30, 2004**

**Beginning Tape One**

Question: Good morning.

Answer: Hi. Good morning.

Q: It's nice to have you here.

A: Thank you.

Q: Can you tell us the name that you were born with?

A: The name I was born with, pronounced in Polish would be **Janina Binder**.

Q: **Janina**. And they don't call you **Janina** now?

A: No, and they never did, s -- even then, because we have all kinds of diminutives. So they would call me **Anetchka, Janusha, Janinka, Janka**. I like best **Janka**.

Q: **Janka**?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And what do people call you now?

A: Well, they call me **Janine**.

Q: **Janine**.

A: Right, right.

Q: But -- but spelled in a different way than --

A: Actually, the only difference is the last vowel. Before, it was -- ended with an **A**, and now it's end -- it ends with an **E**.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, it's a very small change.

Q: And what is your full name now?

A: My full name is **Janine Oberrotman**.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in October first, 1925, in --

Q: And where were you born?

A: In **Lwów**, or actually in Polish would be **Lwów, Poland**, by many names, as we know, by name of -- in French name is **Leopold**, German **Lemberg**, Latin, **Leopolis**, and Ukrainian **L'viv**, and this is what it is now, **L'viv**, because it's in **Ukraine**.

Q: And I -- I understand you know the street where you were born?

A: Yes, I was, and also the number. **Szepticki 22**, that was called, the street, **Szepticki 22**. In Polish, that is.

Q: And this is where your parents were living at the time?

A: In that time, yeah, that was their first apartment after they got married. They got married a year before my birth, 1924, right.

Q: So let's talk a little bit about your childhood. So first tell me what your father did for a living.

A: It's very hard for me to actually translate it. He had a transportation business, and in those days I guess people were importing many goods, and the goods were going to different destinations. So he was transporting the good from different countries, sometimes even from **China**, and from western countries, to different destinations. And he was in charge of warehousing them, so he had a warehouse, and he was char -- in charge of transport, and he had the -- actually, he didn't own them, but he -- he --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: [indecipherable] no, he -- he rented horses and carriages and so on. We didn't have trucks, yet, in those days.

Q: You didn't have trucks.

A: I mean, well there must have been trucks, but my father didn't use trucks.

Q: So he owned this business?

A: He owned his business.

Q: Right.

A: Yes, it was his business, and it was located initially in -- on the **Place Halicki**, I s -- think the number five, yes. And it was a wonderful location because every time there were parades, you could go on balcony and right in front of you, you could see all the -- the best -- you had the best view of parades coming through, military parades, you know, on holidays, such May third. In **Poland** it's a very great holiday.

Q: And what is that --

A: It's on --

Q: -- what is that holiday, May third, in **Poland**?

A: I think May third is independence.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, right. A -- a -- Constitution day. I don't even know if I recall correctly. I hope I -- I recall correctly, right.

Q: How do you remember your father when you were a kid? What kind of a person was he, do you remember?

A: Well, my father, I -- I remember him first always as a very impeccably dressed. He -- his shirts were s -- spic-and-span, his ties was tied properly. He had wonderful suits, always well pressed. And he -- oo -- in the fashion of the day, he wore a ca -- cane.

Q: Really?

A: That's what the gentlemen wore.

Q: A hat, too?

A: And a hat, too, of course.

Q: Yes.

A: I mean, of course a hat. But I don't know, I re -- re -- when I look at him I see him without a hat, but definitely a hat. If you went out, he had to have a hat, right, yeah.

Q: Did you eat lunch and dinner together?

A: Yes, we did. It was splendid. It was a wonderful thing to remember. My father would come for lunch, at about 1:30, and so would I from school. And the table was set in the dining room, and usually very nicely set. It was linen, and linen napkins, and a -- and s --

and sterling silver, because my mother loved to use it every day, and beautiful Czechoslovakian china. And -- and we had a maid, so my moth -- the maid would bring [indecipherable] and my mother would -- there was a tureen, usually. The big meal was at noon -- not at noon, at 1:30 actually. So we had several -- several dishes. And so the first usually was appetizers, and I didn't eat those. And then we had soup, and the maid would bring in the tureen, and my mother would pour -- it was very s -- pouring the soup, it was very civilized, yeah. And -- but one thing happened during the meal, my father used to read. So we didn't talk, we just read. So he could read his paper, and I could read my book.

Q: So everybody around the table would read?

A: Just most of a -- more or less, right. Because when I was little my mother used to read to me to encourage me to eat, right?

Q: Encourage you to eat?

A: Eat, right. And -- I didn't want to eat, so my mother would read to me, and then I would eat, you see? I'm sorry, I was a spoiled brat, I guess.

Q: You were spoiled?

A: Yes, yes. I was an only child and not only an only child in my family, but in all extended family, there were no other small children, so I was very doted upon, if I may say so, right.

Q: By everybody.

A: Right.

Q: Now, I would gather that your mother did not work?

A: No, no, of course not. In those days ladies did not work.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: And what was she like?

A: Well, my mother is very sweet, if I can say. She was a very kind person. She -- she always told me to think of other people before I think of myself. Well -- and she was very kind, and she wouldn't kill a fly. Really, literally, she wouldn't kill a fly. She would open a window and let the fly go free.

Q: You were very close to her, weren't you?

A: Well, I was her confidant, and her only child, and I was the apple of her eye. And I never e -- imagined I could live without her [indecipherable] right. Yeah. Such is fate.

Q: Did you -- did you spend a lot of time with your mother and your father, or more time with your mother as you remember?

A: More -- more time with my mother, because my father had -- had to go to work.

Actually, after lunch he would take a siesta. Everybody took a siesta, little nap. And that was very nice memory also. He would lie down on the couch with his paper, which was called "**Moment**" in English and "**Chwila**" in Polish. And it was very good Polish paper. Polish Jewish paper, was very good paper. And I cou -- had to lie down too, my mother want me -- wanted me to take a nap, but I wouldn't, so I would read, and my mother would prepare -- either she would prepare or we would go shopping to buy sweets. And I



could lie down with my book and my sweets, my chocolate, or my -- or the dates, or whatever. Whatever there was on the menu, and that was very nice, very pleasant kind of memory, right.

Q: Did you spend some time with your father alone? Did he -- did he talk with --

A: Initially, as a child, I did. My father was not necessar -- he was -- he was kind of critical, you know. He -- I -- a -- a -- I -- when I finally learned how to read I read so much and he felt that I didn't read the right stuff.

Q: Oh.

A: Well, y -- I -- I read right stuff, and I read the wrong stuff, I guess. You know, like all the young people do, right? Well anyway, I read a lot, too much.

Q: What's the wrong stuff?

A: The wrong stuff would be some kind of romances, or whatever, you know.

Q: Uh-huh. You weren't -- it wasn't serious enough.

A: Yeah, but I -- you know, I a -- I wrote -- I read serious too. I read **Pascal** at age 13, showed I was serious. And zit -- oh, as a child, I inherited a library. I really -- there was a library for me from my uncle, my mother's brother. And he kept the books for me, so when I was born I inherited hundred children's books.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. So I had those children's books and the books were **onert** because they were being housed in a china cabinet. There was a china cabinet and that was meant for my books. So I had books, yeah [**indecipherable**]

Q: That's very special.

A: It was -- it was very special, right. So anyway -- so -- so I read a lot, I guess. And I was an only child, I had nobody to play with, so what else was there to do?

Q: When you went to school, didn't you have playmates at school?

A: Well, even before I went to school, my mother decided that I couldn't be brought up without children's influence, so she hired, actually, a little girl -- a little Jewish girl who would come to me to do -- who would come to visit us, and I would play with her and we would -- sometimes she would bring her sister. And we would play cards, oh we played cards forever and ever. And my mi -- my -- but I knew that she paid for it so I kind of felt I -- you know, I had mi-mixed feelings about this. But later on she -- we became friends and we stayed friends until I went to high school. Well no, until I went to school, because that was be-before I --

Q: Before you went to school.

A: Right.

Q: What did that feel like, that -- I mean that your mother would pay somebody to do that --

A: Well, it felt bizarre, I would say. It still feels bizarre.

Q: Yeah.

A: But on the other hand, when I look at it, I see my mother was a very modern thinking woman. She decided a child needs to have a playmate, and it wasn't healthy for me to be surrounded forever with a bunch of adults.

Q: Right.

A: And that's why she -- she wanted me to have companionship.

Q: So there were no children even in the neighborhood?

A: There were children in the neighborhood, but I was not allowed to play in the street. I could not play in the street, and I could not play in the courtyard.

Q: Only in the house?

A: Only in the house, because there could have been some negative influences, whatever they were, because there were all kinds of street children, you know. I never played out -- outside.

Q: So you didn't play sports?

A: No, my mother was so happy. I wasn't -- I wasn't very good in s -- well, not that I wasn't for -- my own mother discourage it, actually. She was -- she was -- and we had no river, and -- because our river was buried underground. The river was called **Peltew**. And it was buried underground, my mother wasn't very happy about that. So I didn't swim, right. And the next thing is that I never went how to ride a bicycle, so I didn't know how to ride it. I think my mother was very concerned about my safety.

Q: I guess.

A: Right.

Q: Right.

A: Well, yeah.

Q: Did you -- when you went to school, did -- was there, wa -- as they do in the **United States** have gym classes, or a play time so you play?

A: Oh yeah, yes, oh definitely, oh yeah. We had recreation times. That was all girl's school, by the way.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Because those times the schools were segregated. As a matter of fact there were -- was on one side was a girl's school, on the other side was a boy's school, but we never met during recreation. The recreation time was at different times. And yeah, we had gym classes, and we had the religion classes. Catholic girls went to -- went to be taught by a priest, and we had the religious teacher, we had the man who taught us religion, Hebrew.

I was very bad student, I have to confess, yeah. Excuse me.

Q: Was this a public school?

A: That was a public school --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- absolutely, yeah. **[indecipherable]**

Q: So did you feel comfortable going to a school wi -- being with all these kids, when you had been with so few children?

A: Oh yeah, I didn't feel uncomfortable. Once I learned how to read I became the best student, and I was very well liked. But don't -- you mustn't forget, it was a Catholic school -- i-it wasn't Catholic, actually, it was a public school, but since the country was Catholic, then there were, of course, images of -- religious images on the wall. And -- and

there was -- you felt you were not pop -- you were a minority right from the beginning.

There was -- yeah. I remember, I had one -- well, there was the -- the issue came up -- I don't know if you are interested in that at all, but the issue came up of killing **Christ**, and the Jews killed **Christ**. And I was in second grade, and I had the temerity to get up and say, "But I thought the Romans killed **Christ**." And the teacher said absolutely not. And I went back to my father, and I told him she said that, and he scolded me too. She scolded me, he scolded me. You know, because I shouldn't have spoken up, right? But on the same -- by the same token, I was very well treated by the teachers. I remember I had a favorite teacher and she -- I think I must have been one of her favorite students, too.

When -- and a time came when we had to join the Girl Scouts. And since it was again, a religious group, we Jewish gir -- children could not participate in that. So she -- she kind of felt bad about me, and once she said, "Wouldn't you -- wouldn't you rather be Catholic?" That was a heavy question, you know, and I didn't want to offend her because I really liked and respected her. And it took me a long time to answer, and I remember that, I remember and I -- the row I stood in, and I looked at the -- I looked like this at the window in those ton -- to the left of me, and I stood there for quite awhile, and I said -- I said, "I want to be what God made me." And she accepted that, and she didn't question me after that at all, ever. And it was -- yeah. I -- i -- i -- yeah, I ha -- I -- I told her the truth, I guess. I t --

Q: Right. Now let me ask you something. In the second grade you knew enough about the Christian religion to know that the Romans had killed **Jesus**? Or di --

A: Well, I didn't know -- Christian religions does not accept the fact that the Roman -- that they just -- at that time, don't forget. Those times was different world --

Q: Right.

A: -- and in **Poland**, in ec -- so in those times that was -- that was the belief. And I knew about it because I -- I was concerned about it before. I developed a friendship with a Catholic girl. That girl was **Jadzia**. And we discussed in very often the catechism, because she studied the **catechis**. And she told me that first, so I went to my father, and I asked him. And -- and my father said this -- you know, I -- as far I know, i -- Romans crucified **Christ**.

Q: Mm-hm. I see. So did you --

A: So --

Q: -- did you go back and tell your little friend?

A: I -- I might have, but I don't recall that.

Q: Oh.

A: I -- w-we were very open with one another. For one thing she could never read the books that were indexed, because many books like **Dumas, Alexander Dumas**, those were indexed books. And I read them freely, I mean later on, in -- in -- in -- in --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- grammar school I read them. So, you know, there were "**Three Musketeers**," and there was everything that came after, and "**La Reine Margot**," and all -- and the story of -- of Saint -- of the massacre of **Saint Bartholomew**, and all that. I -- you know?

Q: Right.

A: It's i -- in -- in -- those were fiction books, but there was a lot of history in them.

Q: Right.

A: So we discussed them. And there were other books by **Sabatini** that dealt with popes.

There was **Alexander Borga** and so on and so forth. So we -- we discussed that. We were good friends, but we were still good friends.

Q: Right.

A: We never fought over religion or anything. We just accepted one another as we were.

Q: So did you feel anti-Semitism, or just feel as a minority?

A: Well, i-it was -- the air was imbued with anti-Semitism, because we were a minority, and the other minority was the Ukrainians, and they were not liked either, but the times have been changing. In 19 -- there was the **Treaty of Versailles**, and according to the **Treaty of Versailles**, all the minorities have to be -- you had to have rights. I don't know if equal rights, but rights, pr-privileges. And that was not always maintained. And it actually was completely curtailed in 1934, or 1935. Anyway, it changed completely with the death of **Marshal Pilsudski**, who -- who was kind of protecting the -- the -- I mean, he was kind of protecting Jewish interests in -- not Jewish interests, but the Jews in general, I think. It -- it -- actually, he wanted to live more up to this treaty, and -- that was instituted by **Wilson**, if I recall my history correctly. So -- so the minori -- the minor -- ra -- the -- a-a-as the time went on, the fascistic propaganda became overwhelming, and

there were instituted -- there were pogroms, and there were -- what should I say? Sabo -- not sabotages, but boycotts of Jewish -- of Jewish businesses and so on and so forth.

Q: You're talking now about before 1939, before the war --

A: Oh, that's before '39.

Q: [indecipherable] context.

A: -- at beginning 1935.

Q: Right, right.

A: '34 - '35, right, right.

Q: Now did th -- did the depression affect your father's business?

A: Goodness, yeah.

Q: It did?

A: Oh terribly. My father was in horrendous financial pro -- I mean, he had a horrendous financial problems. Number one, if he had some money in dollars, he lost half of it, because the dollar, until the fall of **Wall Street**, the dollar was 10 **zlotys**. And when the crash happened, he land -- lost the hat. The value of dollar wer -- went down to five. So if he had any holdings in dollars, that was the end. And he -- he had the ongoing financial problems, which actually contributed to the fact that by the time the Nazi's came, we were completely depleted financially already. So depleted -- even the Russians when they came, yeah. And during the Russians, because when the Russians came, it was -- only my father worked at that time.



Q: Right. So how did that affect you in the household, as you were four years old at the time of the depression, but then though the next years --

A: Well, it is -- is slowly -- well, it did -- it didn't happen right away, I think, you know, depression didn't happen right away, took a little while.

Q: Right, yeah.

A: So by the time 19 -- I-I think it did -- by us it was also gradual. So -- but we still maintain a certain level of living, i-in spite of it. So my father w-was getting further in debt.

Q: I see.

A: We still went on vacation every year to -- to a spa, you know? That was the fashion, that's what you did, no matter what, right? And so we did.

Q: And it's expensive.

A: And it was expensive, and it was -- yeah, but we [indecipherable]

Q: You were -- w-where did you go?

A: So we -- we had sever -- I -- I remember, in the beginning we went very close by, and this is because they had this special kind of bath there, and the -- the mud bath, for my father. He had arthritis, so he felt the -- it was called **Lubien Wielki**, and it was a very interesting spa. I was four years old when I remember that. And -- and they had a little park, a la parks in **Vienna**, and -- only miniscule, miniscule, very small, mini-park. And then they would import operetta singers, and -- and they -- they -- and they would -- they had special pavilions, and they would sing all their famous operettas by **Strauss**, or by

**Laihag**, or by co -- **Kohlman**. Oh I -- I don't recall exactly the name, yeah. No, not

**Kohlman**. There's another name starting with a **K**. I don't -- I don't recall. Anyway, so there -- I had very fond memories in that place, right.

Q: That was nice for kids, were there other kids there? Was --

A: There probably were, but I was always with my parents.

Q: Right.

A: They ke -- I remember one time I went to the park in the morning with the maid, and -  
- and my mother didn't know what I -- where I was, so when I came back, I got my beating, my one and only beating. My mother slapped me. Yeah, can you imagine? For being independent.

Q: And how -- you were four years old there?

A: Four years old. I remember that. That's -- that was the only time.

Q: Right.

A: Never -- never after.

Q: And did the maid stay with you, independent of this loss of money, or did -- at one point did she go?

A: Well, I -- th -- there was -- th-the maid stayed until s -- maybe '38.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Right.

Q: Right.

A: Right, right. Yeah, in spite of the loss of money, right.

Q: Were you a religious family?

A: No, not at all.

Q: Not at all.

A: We were very assimilated. But there we -- I knew, apparently, who I was. But up to six years I had a Christmas tree.

Q: Really?

A: Right.

Q: And then what happened at six years?

A: They decide I was too old for a Christmas tree, apparently.

Q: You were too old?

A: Right.

Q: So that was -- that was --

A: So that was the end of it, no more Christmas tree.

Q: -- so then there was nothing, there was no religious celebration?

A: Oh no, no, there was, too. Now -- I can't say. We cele -- celebrated Passover. I -- when I said we were non-religious, I meant we were non-Orthodox.

Q: Okay.

A: All right. So not -- not religious. We respected all the holidays. In other words we had the -- I never -- I tried to eat only matzoh on Passover -- during Passover, right? My mother religiously lit candles every Friday night.

Q: Really?

A: That was a present she got from her mother-in-law.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: With the promise that she would light the candles, and she did. Every Friday until the last Friday before the round up of August 1942.

Q: Still?

A: Oh, all the way through --

Q: Really?

A: -- until the August 1942.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. Cause my mother always kept her promises. She was -- I told you, she was very kind person, and she was very honorable.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: Did you go to synagogue also?

A: You know, women didn't go to synagogue much. My mother took me to the synagogue because I remember my father couldn't fast all day on **Yom Kippur**, so she -- my mother would take me to the synagogue to make the offering of candles, because she couldn't fast. And -- yeah, it -- i-it's ironic, because we fasted plenty afterwards.

Q: Years.

A: Right. And then I remember going one to the famous synagogue of that was cours -- called the **Rose** synagogue, but just one time. And -- and then, of course, the -- it was completely destroyed by the Germans.

Q: When you say you knew who you were, you knew that you had been born Jewish?

A: Yeah, I knew who I was because remember -- ah, of course you don't remember, sorry. When I was -- when we had to -- when I went to school, on the first day, they made us line up, the Jewish girls in one -- in one -- what would you call it?

Q: A row?

A: One row, and in one -- and the Catholics girls in the -- in the other. So I knew th -- apparently I wasn't hundred percent sure then, it was at the age of seven, I wa -- I wasn't hundred percent sure then, but I -- I joined the right row. So my -- I -- I had my identity, I guess.

Q: Did you feel religious? Did you feel like --

A: I didn't feel religious, but I had the -- I had the need for God.

Q: Even at a young age?

A: Very young age. Very young age, yes.

Q: And do you know what that need was about? Did you pray, did you talk to God?

A: Yes, I guess I did, and -- because I remember I was even -- I was very scared to go to the bedroom. I shared the bedroom with my parents at that time. And of course it was so dark. When they put me to sleep it was dark and there was no light. So I was practicing,

and I said -- and I couldn't go in the room all by myself, it was so dark. So I said, I -- I do it for God. And that's how I went to the dark room.

Q: And so you felt safer.

A: Not that I felt safer, no, no, not that -- I didn't fa -- I go in there for to -- a couple seconds. And -- but I did it -- to make myself do it, I had to make a sacrifice to God.

Q: I see. I see.

A: I-I hope I am not telling too much.

Q: No, it's very interesting to hear how you put this all together.

A: Well, as a child, the -- I'm not responsible.

Q: Yeah, right. Did you enjoy the holidays?

A: I -- I did, more or less. Yes, with a little -- they not special, e -- I don't know, we didn't have company or anything, so I -- I don't recall, as a company s -- thing. I -- I -- I have no recollection.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: Now, I know you were very interested in books, and you were a very good student.

Were there other --

A: I was only very good student in hi -- in grammar school, I --

Q: After that sh --

A: Once I got into high school I had -- I had my demons. And one of them was my math teacher. It so happened she was my mother's math teacher previously, so -- and my

mother said, "Oh, I just hoping you don't get her." And I did. So I was scared of her out -  
- out of my wits.

Q: Really?

A: Right, right.

Q: And math was difficult?

A: And one -- math became difficult, yes.

Q: I see.

A: Right. But I liked the other subjects. I was good in other subjects, yeah.

Q: Like what?

A: Oh, like Latin.

Q: Really?

A: In French I was pretty bad in the beginning, but then my aunt, who spoke French, tutored me, so I became good in French, and in English -- in -- not in English, but in Polish I was pretty good. What else did we have? In history I was really good. I --

Q: Really?

A: Oh yeah. I tutored the other students.

Q: Did you?

A: Yeah, right. We had a very bad teacher for that, too, but she was not bad for me because I knew my history inside out.

Q: Right. Before -- we have to stop the tape, but before we stop the tape, what's your first name of your father and the first name of your mother?

A: My mother's name was **Maria**.

Q: **Maria**?

A: Right.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And my father's name was **Moritz**. In Polish would be **Maurycy**, and in Yiddish it was **Moshe**. And I mentioned that my mother's name in Yiddish must have been **Miriam**.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: Okay, we're going to have to change the tape.

A: Okay, all right. I --

**End of Tape One**



## Beginning Tape Two

Q: Okay. I wanted to ask you a couple of more questions before we get to the war, and the uncomfortable parts.

A: Okay.

Q: Let's talk a little bit more about these vacations that you took.

A: Well, one time my father won a stay in a fancy spa in a place called **Iwonicze**, and -- for a whole month. So we all went there, my mother and I, and probably cost my father much more than he anticipated, e-even with his winnings. And over there, I -- we made an acquaintance of a very nice family. Most of the people in this particular spa were Jewish, but this family was not. And it consisted of, I think, mother, and -- and a son. And the so -- i-if I was 11, he was probably 13. He -- and we usually walked together, and my -- the parents walked in the back, and we walked in the front, and we talked, and everything was fine. And one day -- and it was Sunday, I went out o-on the porch, and th-that young boy was there, and I had my new dress on. So he asked me, "Are you ready for church?" And I said, "No, I'm Jewish." And that was the end of our acquaintance.

Q: Really?

A: Right. That was the end of our acquaintance.

Q: Is that shocking to you?

A: No, not at all. It was not shocking me because it was to be anticipated. Shortly before that, maybe day before, I -- I felt it coming, because he referred to our -- our place with a play on words, and I don't know if I can translate it. This was like a **pension, pensionne**

in French, **pensionne**, or a hotel. In Polish it's called **pensjonat**. So he made a -- a pretty good, witty play on words by saying it was **peysonat**. A **payess** means the curls that the Orthodox Jews wear. And when -- I didn't say anything when he said that, I didn't -- I didn't comment on it at all, but maybe two days after this inc -- incident happened, and that was -- and that's why I kind of anticipated it.

Q: Right. And what was the play on words? In -- in Polish -- **payasot**?

A: You see -- you see, what he meant by -- **pensjonat** is the word that describes the place where we were staying. And **peysonat** is a word that has no sense except of the sense of the -- of the **payess**.

Q: Right.

A: Th-the place where the Jews stay.

Q: Jews, right.

A: But it was derogatory of course --

Q: Right.

A: -- in -- in its meaning. But this was the -- this was the climate of the times. And that was 1935, probably. Yeah, I had to be maybe -- I was -- I was -- no, maybe 1936. I had --

Q: So its a little later.

A: A little later, right.

Q: Now, one place where you went, you learned to love plants a lot. What was -- was that this first place that you described?

A: Yeah, that was the first place where I describe that, because the -- the owner of the hut that my mother rented -- I say hut because it was a peasant's hut, and -- which was very comfortable, by the way. We had a wonderful garden, and -- and th-the alley leading to the garden was planted with dahlias, but the huge dahlias, the tall dahlias, so they were, of course, all taller than I am, and they were full of flowers, and the flowers were every color of -- you can imagine. Black, and mixed colors, and red and white. One flower could have been red and white, the other could have been pink and yellow and so on and so forth. Maybe not pink and yellow, but pink and white, a-and so on and so forth. They were just magnificent. So I was --

Q: And the name of this spa? Where was this?

A: In the -- it was called **Lubien Wielki**, and it had a separate park where the baths were, and where you get your -- where you went to take your waters. And also where you attended the concerts in the evenings. Was very, very civilized, right.

Q: Now usually when you went on vacation, it wasn't for a month, the way you were at the spas --

A: Oh yes --

Q: It was?

A: -- it was for two months, usually.

Q: Two months?

A: Yes. Initially you went for vacation and -- for two months.

Q: Really?

A: Right. You -- you rented a place, and then you stayed there, and you could a - eat in different -- not restaurants, but establishments. Yeah, usually it was two months. We even went in 1938, but we went just for one month, because that was -- the writing was on the wall already, and -- right. I-It -- yeah.

Q: And did your father stay with you for the two weeks, or he went back and forth?

A: No, no, my father never stayed with us. He always came maybe for a week or two, that was the most. We stayed all -- all summer, right. That was a big production, right. Every year we went by train, a -- a -- a carriage would come to the house, ho -- horse and carriage, take all our valises. And sometimes beddings, too, I -- I -- depended, I don't know. I -- in the beginning, in the beginning. Later on, it was less and less, yes. That was the lifestyle, even for the poor pe -- we weren't poor, but -- because we lived above our means, but that's -- that was the lifestyle.

Q: Was that true for the rest of your family? Extended family?

A: That was certainly true for my immediate fami -- yeah, it was certainly true for my grandmother's family, yes. My grandmother's family in **Lwów**. Certainly not for my grandmother in **Przemysl**, because my grandmother in **Przemysl** lived in dire penury, because she lost her husband very young, and I think her daughter, who got married, also lost her husband very young. So they -- she was left with the progeny of I don't know how many daughters, and the granddaughters. And -- and the -- they -- they eked out a very precarious living. I think they had a bakery and it was very hard to maintain. And my father send them money, and so did the family out of **America**, because she -- my

grandmother in **Przemysl** had three children in **America**. She had three -- two daughters, and one son in **New York**, and two daughters -- no, three daughters in **Chicago**.

Q: Hm.

A: And my father pay -- send my grandmother 25 **zlotys** every month, as long as he -- he could.

Q: So this was your father's mother in **Przemysl**?

A: That was my father's mother.

Q: Right.

A: She came only twice to visit us. I remember I think twice, or maybe just once. One time I remember she came with her grandchildren, who were slightly older than I am, and they were very beautiful. I used to look at them, and I admired them. And they had such beautiful complexions, and -- and they -- they looked completely different from me. They had dark hair, dark straight hair, cut more or less like I have it now. And they had those pretty faces, regular features. They were beautiful, right.

Q: Why do you think that there was such a distance that you didn't -- you didn't see them, and your -- did your father go and visit them, that when **[indecipherable]**

A: I -- I -- he might have, I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't know.

Q: So you don't know what went on?

A: No. I never -- I never went there, yeah. I have no idea, I never questioned that.

Q: Seems odd that -- uh-huh.

A: It might seem odd today, but those days I never questioned it. I never --

Q: Cause **Przemysl** wasn't that far.

A: Well, i-it -- y -- I guess it wasn't, but we didn't --

Q: Right.

A: -- we never visited.

Q: So it was your mother's mother who was in **Lwów** with -- with the grandf -- the grandmother and grandfather was --

A: Yeah, yeah, my mother was the oldest of three siblings. She had a younger sister, extremely gifted, and a younger brother, who was of course the apple of the eye of my grandmother, because he was a boy. And my father wanted to have a boy, too, because of course, in those days you wanted to have somebody to say **Kaddish**. In those days, and today too, I guess. And not necessarily only je -- only Jewish families, in all families you want a boy.

Q: Right. But your parents didn't have another child.

A: No.

Q: Right?

A: No. I guess my mother decided that it was too hard. I -- I don't know what is the reason, I would speculate.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: Maybe one was enough.

A: Oh, ye -- one was enough. I think it's because she was the oldest child, and she had the responsibility of taking care of the -- her youngest brother, who was very naughty, and she had to run after him, and I guess she didn't want to do that any more. No, she didn't want to do it for me. Let's put it this way.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, that I should have a sibling to compete with --

Q: Right.

A: -- my status in my family.

Q: Was your father older than your mother by some years?

A: Much older. 14 years older. I was --

Q: 14 years?

A: Yeah, by 14 years older.

Q: So that's pretty big difference --

A: That was.

Q: -- in those days.

A: Yeah, I -- I said that I -- and -- and -- and I said he never played with me because he was so much older, but that -- that really didn't have anything to do with it, because my grandfather used to play with me.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, he used to play with me, put me on -- well, actually, my father, when I was little, he would play with me too, and then I got too big, so he didn't.

Q: Right. Now, is it your mother's sister who converted to Catholicism --

A: Yes.

Q: -- before the war.

A: Before the war.

Q: Do you know -- do you know anything about this?

A: Well, it was hushed -- hush-hush.

Q: I bet.

A: Yeah. I think she con -- I don't know why she converted. Number one, she was extremely depressed because she went through a divorce. Number two, she couldn't get a job, and she had to be independent because -- she couldn't get a job because the Jews were not allowed to -- to teach, and they could not work in government establishment -- establishments. So she couldn't work for any -- she had to work privately, and it's very har -- it was extremely hard to work -- to get a job in a private institution. I don't know if there were any private institutions, except if it were for a business. And she was a lawyer. She was a lawyer, she was very accomplished, very good looking, very elegant. She appeared in society pages. She did get married, but she got married to somebody who was -- I can't understand how in the world that happened, but it did happen, he was a censor for the city of -- of **Lwów**. And censor had a very important function, because they censored, actually, the press, and -- and so on -- many other things. So apparently he



work in a -- you know, in a government establishment. I don't know how long, maybe he got fired to -- after the '35 or '36, I -- and I think this is at the time I think she divorced him shortly before the war started. I don't know exactly what year, I'm just guessing when it comes to the year. '37, maybe? Thirty si -- eight? And it was a tragic divorce, and she had the very influential friends, Catholic friends, so it was -- whom she spend a lot of time. Chances are they influenced her too, and she wanted -- or -- or maybe I -- I don't know, I -- there was rumors she might have fallen in love with somebody who was not Jewish, and she wanted to -- she wanted to connect with him, and he under -- but it -- it didn't happen anyway, but she also felt that she wanted to do it because she felt solace in the --

Q: In the church.

A: In the church. She -- one time she -- she told me that the churches are always open, and you can go and find this -- consolation there. If you see, you can find consolation the synagogue too, but I guess she didn't know enough to know that.

Q: Right.

A: Right, yeah.

Q: And was she then able to work, because she had converted?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She got a job.

Q: As a lawyer?

A: I don't know.

Q: Do you remember?

A: I -- may --

Q: You're not sure.

A: I don't remember -- I don't know. But she did get a job.

Q: Did your grandmother convert as well?

A: My moth -- I found out that my grandmother converted after the war, or -- because she wanted to be buried near her son.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And -- and they -- and since he stayed in **Poland**, and married a Polish woman, he would be buried in Catholic cemetery. He also converted.

Q: That's what I was going to say. So he also converted?

A: He also converted, about the same time, and -- as my --

Q: Your aunt.

A: Yeah, right.

Q: Oh. And did you know about this when you were a kid?

A: I think I knew about that, yes. I knew about that.

Q: Was it a scandal in the family, or was it **[indecipherable]**

A: If it were a scandal we were not -- we didn't know -- I -- I think by that time the contact with the other members of the family was severed for financial reasons. It was severed before, the financial something or other. Unfortunately my mother very much

missed her cousins, she loved them. But it happened at the higher level, in other words, it happened a-at the generational level of the grandparents.

Q: They split from --

A: From the other fellows.

Q: I see.

A: Yeah. Because that was another family. My grandmother had two sisters. And one of the sisters had four children. And my mother was very much, very friendly with them.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Right. But when the grandfather broke up with the rest of them, then the family had to follow. So that was very sad, yeah.

Q: Now, as you're growing up, you are eight years old when the Nazis take over in **Germany**.

A: No, no, no, no, no --

Q: 1920 -- '33.

A: -- no, no, no. Oh, when they -- yes, yes, right, yeah, that's true.

Q: Right, okay. So, at some point, between eight years old, '33 and '39, are you he -- before the ger --

A: Oh yes, oh yes.

Q: Are you hearing about what's going on?

A: Oh yes, oh yes. Not only that, not only that, I think in 1913 my mother had -- had a very dear friend who lived in **Germany** with her mother, and she came to visit us. She

went -- she came to **Poland** in, I think, 1938. I think she came to **Poland**, chances are she came to **Poland** after the **Kristallnacht**, Crystal Night. And -- and -- and I-I remember being in the bedroom, and I remember they're talking in the dining room, shushing one to the other, a-a-and it -- and it was so scary, I can't tell you how scary it was. Whatever -- a-and -- and the -- what was even scarier than -- after all the horror which she described to my mother, whatever it was I didn't hear, I just felt the -- the tension of it. She -- she went back. She went back cause she didn't want to leave her mother.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Not that she could have been saved, because the -- **Hitler** would have caught up with her. But with us, he caught up in '41, because in '39 we had the Soviets.

Q: So when this woman left, did you talk to your mother and say, you know, what's going on, or did you --

A: Well, I could ask, but my mother -- my mother would never tell me horror stories. She would never tell me anything to -- to scare me, or to -- to do anything. She -- she tried to make everything beautiful for me. So -- the parent -- the parents talked about it, I'm sure, but i-i -- it -- d -- you can just feel that -- the fe -- I was cre -- it's cre -- you know, sometimes you're more scared when you don't know, right? So I remember being very, very fearful at that time, yes. It -- it was like a horror that we're standing here, and you never -- and you didn't know when it would come and o -- take over, right, right.

Q: Do you start hearing more things explicitly as you get a little bit older, as it gets closer to 1939, or is it still a blur?

A: What happens in the -- I -- i -- we don't know exactly what's happening in **Germany**, and we don't know anything that happens **Soviet Union** because that door is co -- completely locked up and the keys are thrown away. But i-in **Poland** itself, we have enough problems to cope, because there are -- there are rumors of pogroms and they are not publicized, so you don't know exactly, it's strictly rumors. There are so-called -- there's numerous clauses at the university, meaning that you -- the Jews cannot -- only -- only very limited amounts of Jews can enter universities. If they already have the privilege of attending the universities, there are so-called ghetto benches at the universities where they have to sit separately at the end of the bench, and some students rebel against it, and they are being fought. And I recently read something I didn't even know, in a book that also relates what happened in **Lwów**, that they had razor blades attached to the -- to the canes, and they would cut up people's faces, in demonstrations, and there were many demon -- student demonstrations. And they used to be called **Endecy**, plural for what -- that organiza -- organization [**indecipherable**] yeah. And we knew about it, all along. That was all known, but life went on, you know? Nobody was killing us, you know? Times were bad, but then you get used to bad times.

Q: Did things happen to you in your school?

A: Nothing happened at my school.

Q: Nothing.

A: As a matter of fact, I was accepted to a very exclusive, private -- not private, public high school. The public high school was more exclusive than private. And they would not

admit Jews there, very rarely. And since my mother went to that high school before, and so did my aunt, they went and they asked if I could be admitted. And -- and I was admitted, but I wasn't the only one, because in that year they admitted five Jewish girls, including me, for a class of 150. And it was f -- a special privilege, this -- th -- usually they would not admit them. What -- what was so special about that school? Very high level ins -- of instruction, and lower fees. Cause if you went into a private school, the -- the schools were not public there. So there were only, I think two -- two high schools, actually. I -- I -- I knew -- I know of one public high school in **Lwów**, and -- for girls, there are ya -- are many for boys, but not for girls. For girls there is only one, right? And I had the confirmation of it, because at the -- our reunion -- reunion at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **US** Holocaust Memorial Museum, I met a woman from **Lwów**, and when I told her about my high school, she said, "Aaahh." She knew what that was. So I had -- I felt very confirmed, yes.

Q: And what year was that when you were going to go into that high school?

A: I wa -- I thi -- just one year, 1939. To -- 1938 to 1939.

Q: So you were only there for one year?

A: For one year in the Polish, and then that school -- then the Soviets came, and that coo -  
- school remained the only Polish school in the city. In other words, where they taught the subjects in Polish. All the other schools were can -- had -- transforming to Russian speaking schools. So this was the only school, and it became -- it was no longer

segregated and they admitted boys, so we had boy and girl -- boys and girls, but it was taught in Polish, except that we had two hours of Russian every day.

Q: Two. So what was that like when the Russians ca -- I mean, now you know it's -- there's a war.

A: Oh yeah, yeah. So how'd it all start? I remember that by that time my grandmother lived in another apartment, and my mother being a very good daughter, and the war starting, she didn't want to leave her mother alone, so she moved us all to her ga -- to be together, to her mother's apartment. And that apartment was near a botanic garden, in the very nice area. And -- and I remember I locked myself up in one little bedroom, very -- the f -- last bedroom, and I was reading "**Gone With the Wind.**" And since I was reading about **Rhett Butler** and **Scarlett O'Hara**, I for -- all -- forgot all about the war.

Q: But there was a war going on in the book.

A: There was a war going on, but I was in -- I was ra -- I was in the s -- see a -- I was at -- living the war in between the States, yeah. I --

Q: Was that a very popular book in **Europe**? In **Poland**?

A: Oh yes, it just came out, it was extremely popular --

Q: Really?

A: And how, ow -- of course, how could it not have been? I -- I read in Polish because was already translated.

Q: Right. Wow.

A: Yeah, but you see, what happened was, it wasn't a war. It was a war, and it wasn't a war. Germans invaded **Poland**, so -- and then the Soviets invaded **Poland**. And there was a **Ribbentrop-Molotov** non-aggression pact. So the Poles had to surrender, and they had to s-surrender to the Soviets, and to -- to the Germans, and they stood -- the two armies stood in front of **Lwów** and we didn't know what happened. That's how I locked myself up. I was a queen of escape, you know, even in those days. I -- I -- I -- this was -- I read to escape, that's it.

Q: **Lwów** was right close to the border --

A: Right -- right --

Q: -- right -- right there.

A: -- on the bor --

Q: Right.

A: -- almost, no **Przemysl** was on the border.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: See, the Germans overran **Przemysl**. **Przemysl** was divided by the **San** River, as you know, right? So, on one side the Soviets took, had [indecipherable] and the other side were the Germans, and the Jews were in between, and they were absolutely massacred there, right. Yeah, first when they first came, and then the second time, right, was -- yeah.

Q: So, when did you come out of your room [indecipherable]

A: When I came out of the room, we knew that the ser -- the war was over, and the Soviets were taking over s -- s -- so it took me a couple of days.



Q: And --

A: See, it took a -- it took a very short time. I mean, it was couple of days, right.

Q: Were you nervous about the Soviets taking over?

A: Well, we didn't know what do -- they -- to expect, but it's not that we were happy about the Soviets. We were happy because the Germans didn't took over -- didn't take over, because that would have been the end right there.

Q: And that you felt at the time, that this was just --

A: So that time, it was a -- a respite, but we weren't happy at all because my father had the business, he was a businessman. And there was article 11 or something, protocol 11, article 11, all the business people had to be taken -- exiled, a-and maybe out of **Lwów** or into si -- **Siberia**. And many were, right? So -- so my father right away gave up hi -- the warehouses and whatever he had there, a-and he stopped being a businessman. So that was the end of that.

Q: And so what did he do?

A: He got a job as a ga -- accountant, and he worked for 400 **rubles**, which is okay, but since my mother still didn't work, it was not enough, and we -- at the end e -- I mean, we were starving, actually. We had no -- we had no income. It was very bad, yeah. And I wa -- and then I was an adolescent and I was a hungry adolescent, and I came down with s-scarlet fever that I **contacted** in -- in a public -- public medical service, public clinic, because now th -- under the Soviets, all the medical services were free. But I got contaminated directly with scarlet fever, so I had a bad case of scarlet fever.

Q: And how -- how old were you -- this was 1939, or 1940?

A: This is 19 -- end of 1940, right. E-e-end of 19 --

Q: You remember --

A: -- or maybe I wa -- '40 -- beginning of 1941, right.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So yeah, right.

Q: You -- you remember being sick?

A: Oh, I remember it very well, I wa -- almost died.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, it was terrible. I remember being in a hospital, I remember the doctors coming in, and I remember my mother visiting me after six weeks or so, and when she looked at me she got scared because my -- I was as skinny as they come. My mother was skinnier too, maybe skinnier than I was. She lost fi -- tw -- 20 kilos, which means 40 pounds, at the time I was sick.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, yeah, because she was so scared that she might lose me, I was very dangerously ill. So, but that served us well, when the Germans came in. We used it.

Q: All right, we -- why don't we stop the tape, and we'll start right there.

A: Okay.

### **End of Tape Two**

### Beginning Tape Three

Q: All right, we're going to come back to the scarlet fever story and the Germans, and how that saved you, but I want to go back a little bit, because there's a part of the conversion story that you didn't tell us before, mainly about your grandfather. Can you --

A: Oh, right. Well, i-it happened, I think, 1937 maybe, when my bos -- my aunt and my uncle were very desperate, without a job. Especially my aunt, because sh -- as I said, she went through a divorce that was very painful. And so my grandfather remembered that he had a friend closely connected to **Marshal Pi -- Pilsudski**. And so he went to see him and -- in **Warsaw**, and to ask him if he could help f -- to find the -- the job for both of them, for my aunt and my uncle. And he told my grandfather that he could not because they were not -- they were Jewish, and there was no way he could do it. Should they convert, that would be possible. And -- and that's what happened. But as far as my aunt was concerned, she was very desperate, and she -- and she was -- and she could have been on the verge of suicide because I think maybe with her romantic disenchantments, as well as because she couldn't be independent. So she converted, and she stayed converted. So that's what happened. And -- but they both got jobs. I know my uncle didn't get a job in **Lwów**, but he got a job in another town in **Poland**.

Q: So do you think your grandfather converted because --

A: My grandfather never converted.

Q: Did -- didn't convert. But --

A: Grandfather never converted.

Q: -- the uncle converted in order to get a job, you think.

A: I-I have a feeling that that could have been the reason, right, yeah. But he was so assimilated that it -- it -- I don't think it made much difference for him.

Q: Right.

A: You -- they were very assimilated. They never spoke anything but Polish in their household, even in the older generation li -- level. My father spoke Yiddish, but my mother did not.

Q: I see.

A: And she didn't -- I don't think she knew how. So I -- so in her household, apparently they didn't speak yi -- I don't know if my grandmother spoke Yiddish or not, but she never spoke it.

Q: So one difference one can see in **Poland**, in terms of the anti-Semitism is that it wasn't really racial. Because if a Jew converted, they were considered to be Catholic.

A: Yes, you might say that, but --

Q: But --

A: You might say that, but -- but because in terms of -- of conversion and getting job, that was one thing, but you were always who you were, no matter what. If people knew you as a Jew, you stayed a Jew. **Mendelsohn** with his cross on his grave is still a Jew to all Germans, so was [indecipherable] and he -- even though he converted. So --

Q: So it was the same in **Poland**?

A: Oh, absolutely. Except if they didn't know it. If they didn't know it, it just as with that boy, he didn't know I was Jewish, I was a -- we could have been the best of friends. But once he knew it, it was the end.

Q: Right.

A: Right. That's how it was.

Q: Now, one more question, because when we took the break you told me something about your mother that I didn't know, that she had gone to conservatory, but hadn't finished.

A: Right, she went to conservatory and she went, and she studied education in -- in the university, but she dropped out, and I -- I think she dropped out to -- in order to help th -- her parents make the ends meet, which could never happen anyway. But she wanted to lower her own burden on them. And then I think that the marriage of my parents was arranged. I didn't know it, but it was probably a matchmaking kind of deal. In other words, they were -- it was a **shidach**, if you know the word **shidach**.

Q: Right, right.

A: Right.

Q: So did your parents get along, do you think, as far as you --

A: Well, the thing is that I never knew that. I never knew that, that the marriage was arranged.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I knew then -- a-as a matter of fact, I couldn't understand how come my mother married my father, because he was much older than she was. And then she told me that in-initially she was dating a -- a -- a dental student, and -- but in order to marry the dental student, she had to have a dowry, because dental students need a dowry to establish themselves, and there was no dowry. Not that kind of a dowry. There was a dowry, had to be a dowry, but not that kind of a dowry. So my mo- mother didn't marry him. I think she liked him, she took me as a patient to him one time.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, and I liked him too, he was -- he was cute.

Q: So did your mother talk to you about the marriage?

A: No, never.

Q: She never did.

A: Never, never. I found that out by accident from the letters that I have read, maybe -- maybe 10 years ago, maybe five years ago, I don't remember, that were written to my aunt. She died recently, I don't know when she died, I -- I ca -- I have no notion of time passing. And in those letters my father describes a situation in which he was to marry somebody else. And he was very fond of that other person, but something came up, and he broke the engagement. He broke the engagement. Somebody offended him. And shortly after that, he married my mother. So I say, how in the world did he marry my mother? So I -- I'm guessing that it was a **shidach**. I mean s -- a situation in which the ma

-- marriage is arranged, pre-arranged, right. So those are these family stories, each family has it's secrets. But I didn't know it. I didn't know it until just now.

Q: Really, just recently?

A: I mean in **America**, right.

Q: Uh-huh. Do you remember your mother singing?

A: Oh, of course. I was brought up on all the operas.

Q: Yes?

A: Of course. My mother sang "**Madama Butterfly**," and she sang "**La Traviata**," and she sang the "**Rosenkavalier**," and she sang everything you want.

Q: So she really had a cultivated voice.

A: Oh, she had a magnificent lyric soprano voice.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, yes. As a matter of fact, she used to like to tell me how as she once sang by open window and a gentleman asked her if she is a-an opera singer, and she was so flattered.

Q: Did you go to concerts, as a kid?

A: I went a -- yes, I went to the operas.

Q: You did.

A: And I didn't have to go to my mother [**indecipherable**] my aunt had the recitals in their -- her apartment, she sang a -- what did she sing? **Schubert**, I think, yeah.

Q: So your aunt, her sister, played piano?

A: Oh, my mother played piano too.

Q: Oh, your mother played piano, too?

A: Oh sure, of course she played piano. If you would sing, you have to play piano. But she played mostly from hearing, you know?

Q: By ear.

A: By ear, yes, she played by ear but she read notes too, I mean, if she wanted, she read notes. And -- and my aunt sang well. I remember sitting at one of her recitals. They opened the -- all the rooms, like that. And -- and s --

Q: That must have been exciting.

A: And she sat in the room when there was light coming from the balcony, and that was very exciting, yes. I was very proud.

Q: Could you -- can you sing? Did you get a voice?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: They were waiting for me to s -- to -- to ma-mature, and to sing.

Q: Didn't happen.

A: Didn't happen. It didn't happen. No, I ha -- well, number one, I had the **mezzo** voice, I didn't have a soprano, I was not a soprano. But I -- I could carry a tune pretty well. Not any more. Excuse me, I need to drink the water.

Q: Sure. Well, that's an interesting sidelight. Okay, let's go to your scarlet fever.

A: Oh yes.

Q: How does the scarlet fever --



A: Yes.

Q: -- protect you when the Nazis come?

A: You know, when Nazis came, they also had the carte blanche to go to -- to Jewish houses and do whatever they want. Take out what they wanted, do what they want.

Q: Right.

A: So what my mother did -- I don't know if maybe it was my idea -- is -- probably had to be my mother's idea, and the -- what did she do, she -- she put a sign on the bedroom door, **sharla -- sharla fe -- feber. Sharla feber.** Meaning scarlet fever. So whoever want the -- if the soldiers came in and saw that sign, they ran. You know, Germans were pretty sanitary people, they didn't want to get involved in. Sometimes it didn't work. One time it didn't work. A guy came in, he was inebriated, I have to say, and as he was inebriated, he decided he wants to -- he wants to sit at the table and have cup of tea. So, he just -- you know, we had to do what he says, there was no such thing as say no except one time my father did say no, which was absolutely heroic. And so he -- he sat with the table, he had his tea. And I was -- as I was recovering from s-scarlet fever, I lost all my hair. Yes, I di --

Q: Really?

A: -- I lost hair, completely. And -- not completely, but almost completely. But as it -- the hair grew in, and -- and I -- previously I had the straight hair, that hair grew in curly. So I was pretty cute, and I was pretty young. And I couldn't speak German, so I didn't say a word. But my parents, of course, talked German. I -- I don't know what they had -- he

had to say, I don't -- I don't remember I understood. And what happened was he s -- he sat for quite some time, he drank his tea, and he asked for soap. So my mother gave him some soap, wif -- we had soap, and he -- then he left. And he said, "You can be proud of your daughter," to them. I don't know what he had in mind. As I said he was drunk, so -- so that's an episode. In that episode, tha -- after that episode, we decided we -- we -- and as the time went on, it wasn't good to be sick for a Jew, because sick Jews were dead Jews, sooner or later. So we -- we did not use the sign any more.

Q: Do you remember when the Germans came into **Lwów** --

A: Oh, sure I do.

Q: -- in June?

A: I remember, I was standing in the balcony watching them come in.

Q: What was that like?

A: That was -- that was -- I can't tell you. It was very, very, very scary. And they marched in in a column, and it -- I -- if I recall cor -- if I recall correctly, **Gródecka** has cobblestones, too. So they marched on the cobblestones, and you could hear them march in boots, marching boots, yes. And I was -- and that balcony was my favorite spot, because I used to read on that balcony. You know, there was a space for a chaise lounge, and you could lie down and get suntan and do everything, and -- and we -- that's what I used to do, and -- and that's what I did that particular day. On a **[indecipherable]** I think it was on the 20 -- I don't know what date, it was a -- the end of June, I think.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Because the war started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June of '41, and I think that's when it was when they marched in, or shortly after, because **Lwów** was very close. And --

Q: And you were living on **Gródecka**?

A: We were not on **Gródecka**, off **Gródecka**.

Q: Were off **Gródecka**.

A: Off **Gródecka**. It was a small street, so you could see from the balcony as they marched on **Gródecka**, could see **Gródecka**.

Q: What were you afraid of, do you think? When you say you were afraid when you saw them, what --

A: Y-You -- what you were afraid of, you were afraid of what you didn't know. You knew they had concentration camps. There was **Kristallnacht**. Of course, we didn't know that there was much worse than that. That we didn't know. Nobody knew then. Nine -- although we knew more, I think because after all, 1941, there -- they were already in **Poland**, and in **Warsaw**, and in the western part -- part of **Poland**. However, I don't think there was that much communication because of the Soviets. And the other thing, we were so preoccupied with our s -- penury, we were poor, we really, you know, when I got sick and my grandmother came to -- to see -- to visit me, and she went -- she was there all day and she wanted to eat something, she went to the -- to the cupboard and there was nothing there. She realized that we had no food. And I -- and the -- and she didn't know that we ha -- apparently my mother was always good at giving, but never on taking, because she didn't know my mother didn't have food to -- with her family. A-And they

did, because in that family, my grandfather worked, my aunt worked, and my uncle worked under the Soviets.

Q: Right.

A: Right. So I'd -- so after I -- when I was getting better, all my mother was feeding me was farina. I was getting fat on farina, which were very good, and my mother served it with butter, it was great. Right. That's what I was eating most of the time.

Q: That first month was very difficult when the Germans came in because there were --

A: Yes.

Q: -- pogroms right away.

A: Yeah, and I had to --

Q: Right [indecipherable]

A: Yeah right.

Q: Yes.

A: But I want to finish that other part --

Q: Sure.

A: -- about the scarlet fever. So -- and I was recuperating from scarlet fever, I wasn't allowed to go out or anything, God forbid, and -- and the -- that June 23<sup>rd</sup>, which was Sunday, I was -- that was my first day out, supposed to have been, and I was going to go to the pool, and meet all my cous -- high school friends. And lo and behold, the Germans stopped it. On that day, the Germans started the invasion. So that was the end of everyth -

- not every -- well, that was an end of everything, actually. Right. So could you rephrase your question [indecipherable]

Q: Well, what I was going -- there was no fighting in **Lwów**, they just came in --

A: There wa -- there was --

Q: -- or was there fight --

A: -- there was no fight -- there was very little fighting. I think there was some bombing maybe, of the airport, but the -- the -- the -- the Russians withdrew.

Q: Uh-huh, very quickly.

A: Russians withdrew very quickly. And some people went with them. Some people went with them, but golly, we wouldn't -- how could we? I mean -- right. My mother was very attached to her mother, but that wouldn't apply in that case anyway. But my father before the war offered my mother, maybe you should go and join his family in **America**. And my mother and I witnessed that. My mother said, "And how could I leave my mother?"

Q: Uh-huh. Not how could I leave you, but how could I leave my mother, yeah.

A: Right. And how could I leave my mother. And so that was the end of that, yeah. And -  
- and my father and my mother had very good relations except for the financial things, because my mother always wanted to help her family, a-and -- and -- and my father yielded to this, and did, to his own ruin. And that was -- yeah.

Q: So he gave mother to -- money, rather --

A: No, he didn't give any money, but she tried to help the family. He hired people from -- from my mother's family. He purchased debt ridden realty to alleviate the debts, and it

turned out that they were so indebted that the -- the -- that he didn't even know the debts were -- that were -- were on that property, right. He was -- yeah, it was. It was a ver -- horrendous, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: But by the time the Germans come, your father doesn't have a business.

A: No, by the time the Russians come he already ha -- there's no business.

Q: Right.

A: But there is also no income, because the 400 **rubles** for a family is not enough. And my mother never worked, so sh -- I guess she didn't know how to -- how to work.

Q: Now does your father stand up to the Germans very quickly? Is there a scene?

A: Yes, right, oh my father's di -- well, I -- I told you that the Jewish apartments were free for all, any time. And so one time we had two **S.S.'s** barge in, and they didn't care too much about other things, but they wanted to -- to have my father -- there was a daybed, horsehair filled daybed that they liked, so they pointed to it and told my father **[speaks German here]**. He -- they started it with a **Z-form**, you know, **Z-form** is a form of -- form in German. And my father said **[speaks German]**. And he was short, you know, my father. A-And he stood **[indecipherable]** like this, and he pointed at the picture on the wall. And he said **[speaks German]**. So what does the officer do? He grabs him by a neck and he says yes, **truk** -- no, how did he say it, he didn't use the **Z-**

form any more, he said **[speaks German]**. So my father -- so, what happens, and -- and he starts to pulling out, he holds him like this and starts to pull out his revolver.

Q: The German is pulling out his revolver.

A: Revolver.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So what does my mother do -- and I have to describe what these two officers look like. I -- I had a young eye, you know, I was a teenager, and they looked very handsome. They were tall, and blonde. They had **[indecipherable]** hanging down here. They had those blue green uniforms in be -- and scary, scary **S.S.'s** on that black background, right on here --

Q: Right here?

A: -- around the neck. And -- but my mother goes in the back, you can imagine scene, he holds my father by the throat, and my mother goes in back of him and pulls his tunic as he's taking the revolver out.

Q: She pulls the tunic of the German?

A: Yes, yes. So the German d-doesn't know what's happening, he's turning around, there's my mother. So I -- I -- he gets furious, and then I look at him, I look at him with all the hate that I could muster, I have to tell you. So -- so he sees me with that hatred in my eyes, and he has to take out his hands, so he slaps me, and I ro -- and he throws me into the corner, you know. But, in the meantime, somehow, the guy, other, comes to him and they -- and they leave.

Q: All right, go back a little bit. Now translate what's being said between the German and your father and your father to the German. What is it he says?

A: Well, he says to my father, bring this down.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And my father says, "I'm not going to bring it down, I'm an Austrian officer, and I'm not going to bring it down." And he points to the picture on the wall, telling that he's not going to bring it down, that's it. Because he's an officer. So the other guy gets mad, that here's a **[speaks German]** I don't know how the **[indecipherable]** cursed Jews.

**Perflukten** means probably --

Q: Cursed j --

A: Cursed -- cursed Jew.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I think. I-I'm not sure.

Q: Like a damn Jew.

A: Damn Jew, damn Jew is better.

Q: Yeah.

A: Right. So a-an -- h -- so he changes the form of address, he doesn't -- h-he -- he uses **do**, means you know, the difference between thou and you, I guess. And in English that's the -- th-the difference, I imagine.

Q: So then he orders him?

A: He orders him to take it down.



Q: Yeah, right.

A: And my father insists that he's not going to take it down, because he is an Austrian officer. And at that time, he's ch -- he starts taking -- you know, they all have this tendency, do that thing. They -- they can grab you, I -- I guess. Anyway, so my father didn't bring it down, they left.

Q: Now your mother is doing something that's very peculiar.

A: Yeah.

Q: So she's holding him --

A: Pulling him away --

Q: Right.

A: -- I mean, of course. She -- she pulls away because h -- she ge -- young -- whatever it is, it was an instantaneous reaction.

Q: Right, right.

A: But you can imagine the courage of this?

Q: No, I can't because I also -- you're very lucky that you weren't all shot.

A: Right, right, right, right, because they were S.S. -- S.S.'s.

Q: But do you remember when these guys left? You -- were you three sort of --

A: I -- I -- I was very sho -- yeah, I was very much in shock.

Q: I would imagine, yeah.

A: I was very much in shock, yeah. A-and -- and they must have had other considerations, but in that com -- that will come from other -- from other

[**indecipherable**] stories, so I don't want to -- you know, they did it -- this was illegal what they were doing, in a way. They -- they could do it, and yet th -- you know, I don't know how legal it was for them to do it.

Q: Right, right.

A: Officially -- officially.

Q: So they have do it carefully.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: So maybe they didn't want to leave c-cadavers behind them. I have no idea, I just -- they just -- at that time I was so drained, I -- they just left, that's it, and they -- my father didn't take it down, no.

Q: So now what happens?

A: So I don't know where we are. Are we --

Q: We're in June, we're still in June

A: In June, the Soviets ca-came in, so the life started under the Soviets, so I went back to school, and it was like a school that was --

Q: You mean the Germans came in, so you were --

A: Oh, now we talking about Germans, or the Soviets?

Q: I thought we --

A: Oh, we still ba --

Q: Aren't we still in **Germany**? I mean, the Germans have taken over, they came in in 1941.

A: All right, so now, okay, all right. You see, I have to be brought to all that. So -- yeah --

Q: Is there something about the Soviets you want to say that you didn't say?

A: No, no, I -- not that I remember, really. No, because it was a go -- I -- I remember very dreary life under the Soviets.

Q: Dreary?

A: Very dreary.

Q: But not dangerous?

A: Not dangerous, no. Oh, well, in a way it was somewhat dangerous, because you had to -- I remember th-the -- having an understanding with my girlfriends that if anybody ever stopped us, we would have a tale to tell, and it should be the same tel -- tal -- tale. Cause we, of course, we were talking against the government.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah. And I had to learn the Constitution, and I had a very bad grade, I couldn't learn the Constitution. Constitution was a one -- a very -- Soviet Constitution is a wonderful piece of -- document. It gives you all the rights you can imagine, right. But you don't have, right.

Q: Now why was it dreary, or dull?

A: Well, for one thing it -- I -- it was dreary for many reasons. For economic reasons, because there was no money, for food even. And for other reason, because I was an

adolescent and that was a -- hard to be a **[indecipherable]** it would have been hard anyway, probably, anywhere. But it was a -- you see, it's -- how did I -- how did I put it? I put it's hard to be an adolescent, it's even harder to be a hungry adolescent.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: Right.

Q: Do -- do you remember a lot of refugees coming into **Lwów** during that time?

A: Oh yes, our family did. My grandfather's family came. And they were -- shortly after, they were deported. They were deport to **Siberia**, which saved their lives.

Q: Mm.

A: How did they get deported? Because life for refugees, it was very difficult, because it was difficult for other people too, many other people, and as a refugee they didn't have a -- apartments, and so on and so forth, so it's even harder for them. And so there was a -- I don't know how to describe it -- the Soviet ran a survey, and they asked people what they are going to do after the war. Would they go back to their homes in the previous location, or would they want to stay under the benevolent Soviet rule? That wasn't in the paper, I'm adding it up. A-And so, most people, a lot of people, many people, thousands of people signed up they want to go back to their apartments and recover their possessions. All these people within, I think, 24 hours, were deported. And -- but th-the Soviets didn't intend to save them, they intended to punish them. But eventually that was the case.

Q: Because they were Jewish.

A: Most of these people came back.

Q: Came back, right. So when the Germans take over, and it's --

A: The Germans didn't take a -- start to -- they give carte blanche to the Ukrainians.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the Ukrainians barge into people's houses, or even catch them on the street, and take them to the prisons -- prisons. And I was most familiar with the prisons that was across the street from my father's office. Except my father wasn't there any more, because the office was surrendered as the Soviets came in.

Q: Right.

A: So -- so they ri -- ri -- th-they would beat them up, or they made them dig graves for the o -- I don't know, they make -- made them dig graves for the people that the Soviets killed, or they made them dig up the graves -- the -- the shallow graves that the Soviets buried their people in there. You know, whoever that was.

Q: Right. And what was the name of the prison that was near your father's work?

A: Oh, th -- th -- they di -- that was the -- I think that -- that was a nickname, was **Brygidki**, but that was a nickname, there was probably an official name, yeah, right.

Q: And did you know also that the Ukrainians were massacring Jews?

A: Of cour -- that -- yes, yes.

Q: You did. Yes, you did.

A: They did, yeah. At that time it was the mob. And don't -- and of course the Germans incited this, they incited the mob, they gave them their right. I don't know exactly if the **Petliura** Days happened right after they came, or they came and they happened at the end

of the month. But **Petliura** was the man who was assassinated by a Jewish boy, 1926, actually, because they killed his parents in the pogrom.

Q: Right.

A: He killed -- he was a notorious leader, anti-Semitic leader.

Q: **Petliura** occurs in Jan -- July 25<sup>th</sup>, or something like that.

A: I -- I know, but --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- that's -- but they had the -- they had riots right the first two days --

Q: Before, right, right.

A: -- maybe under another name.

Q: Right.

A: Right. And they -- the others were repeated again, but I -- I can't --

Q: Did you ever see violence?

A: I did not see -- well, I did see violence, but not at that point.

Q: Not at that -- that's what I'm wondering, at that point.

A: No, not at that point.

Q: Okay.

A: I mu -- I -- I didn't leave the house, period. Once the Germans came in --

Q: You stayed in the house.

A: See, you remember I was an adolescent who wa -- who was kept in the house because of sickness, now [indecipherable] adolescent kept in the house because of danger. So, I didn't -- I -- for months, first few months I didn't come out at all.

Q: Right.

A: But I was studying.

Q: You were studying?

A: Yeah. I had to do something, right? Yeah, yeah. I have to tell you about studying, how I came to study what I was studying.

Q: Okay, we're going to have to stop the tape.

A: Okay.

Q: And w -- and we'll do it next -- for the next time.

A: Excuse me.

Q: Studying, okay.

**End of Tape Three**

### Beginning Tape Four

Q: **Janine**, I wanted to go back just for a minute because at lunch you mentioned cats, that you had had cats through most of your childhood --

A: Right.

Q: -- including when you were in the ghetto.

A: It wasn't in the ghetto.

Q: It was before.

A: It was before we went to the ghetto, in the ghetto we had no -- I don't know there was space or food for animals, I didn't see any.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I -- we had them in our apartment, and I don't know how we got that little cat, but we did. And even though my fa -- my father initially objected to my spending too much time with cats, di -- didn't have nothing against that little cat. It was a very poor little thing, and it -- it barely lived, it was so little. And what happened was one night -- and it was, I think a Friday night before Monday round-up, when this cat got enta -- I think overnight, got entangled in bed linens and we found him dead in the morning. And for us it was a bad omen. And not only that we were sorry for the little cat because he was so helpless, but it was like a metaphor for our own future.

Q: Yeah.

A: Right. So it was -- you know, was kind of, very sad, right.



Q: Now you said that when the Germans came in, your parents or your -- your mother in particular wouldn't let you go out of the house, so you were studying.

A: Yeah.

Q: What were you doing?

A: And how did I -- well, I studied from the books I already had, first. And by happy circumstance, we shared a -- we shared a bathroom with another family, on th -- the -- on -- outside of the apartment itself. And in those days we had no toilet paper, so what we used was newspaper, mostly. And one day, while in the washroom, I saw pages from books. And -- and they -- it looked like very interesting books. So I went to my neighbor and I told her that I provide her with all the newspapers I can if she gives me the books. And I ended up with 20 volume world history and a magnificent edition of **Schiller**, complete works of **Schiller**, illustrated.

Q: Really?

A: Right. And I spend the time I had just starting the world history, that's why I'm so good in history, you see.

Q: So you can thank the Germans for this.

A: Well, I wouldn't thank the Germans --

Q: No, for anything.

A: -- not for this --

Q: Right.

A: -- not for this, not for anything else. I would be very pleased learning history on my own.

Q: Right.

A: Right. And so -- and I did, and I -- I studied French from the books I had, but I didn't have any books, so I didn't learn much French. Cause I had the -- I remember I -- I had two volume, from the two volume some kind of a romance novel I only had one. So -- and I think his name was **Edgar Feuillet, Feuillet**, he was very popular at a certain time. Very popular -- popular author. Ra -- light fiction, of course. And -- but I loved **Schiller** was magnificent. Everything was in Polish, of course. And -- and I -- I can list you all the plays that I read, and "**Joan of Arc**" and "**Fiesco of Genoa**," I think. I don't know, maybe it has another title. And "**The Robbers**," the most famous, I think. A-And with all kinds of quotations that are world famous. And I loved it, so I -- that -- well, I loved that - - that -- I can say that the -- the -- the -- the round-ups raged outside, and I was reading **Schiller**. And my mother -- and one day I -- and I was very, very -- I -- I showed my discontent and I was telling my mother, "How can I ever go to university if I can't go even to high school?" And my mother looked at me as if I were from another planet. And I probably knew I was from another planet, but I did it anyway, I -- I studied. I studied, I spend a whole day doing all -- studying, reading mostly. Yeah. And what happened i -- in the meantime my father had a job, he went to his job in construction. He had the same job from the beginning and he was the one who was provided with the **Ausweiss. Ausweiss**, which is the certificate -- work certificate. As you know significance work certificates in

those days. And he worked in constructions. I don't think he was a -- a builder himself, but he apparently supervised the -- whatever there was, or did them. Maybe he did the payroll for the Polish worker -- workers. He might have worked then as a payroll person. But he -- his title was **Bau Secretaire**.

Q: **Bau Secretaire**.

A: **Bau** meaning building. **Secretaire** - secretary. Excuse me.

Q: And he had that job from when the Germans came, or this was the same job that --

A: No, no, I think it was -- I have no idea actually -- I wouldn't --

Q: You don't know?

A: -- I -- I never ask that question myself. I think it must have been another job. I -- I don't know. I really don't know. But it was far away and of course, Jews could not -- soon after the Germans came in, there -- there were no schools, there were no rights to use public transportation. We had to wear an armband, which had to be wide. And -- wide, pretty wide, yes. With the blue **Magen Davidz** on it.

Q: And did you wear it on your right sleeve or your left sleeve?

A: On the right sleeve.

Q: On the right sleeve.

A: Right, on the right sleeve, yeah.

Q: But when they came in, when you had to put that on, it was summer. So did you have to wear it if your arms were bare? Do you remember?

A: They didn't care how they wear -- how you were wearing, you had to wear them, so you wore probably shorter sleeves, and you didn't wear a -- but you had to wear them, if you didn't wear them, or -- and you were caught, then -- they -- you -- that was a death penalty right there, or they beat you to death or whatever they would do.

Q: So you didn't sew it on, you simply put it on for each of -- piece of clothing.

A: Well, it -- i-it -- whatever it was, depending on the nature of the -- the -- of the clo -- clothes you were wearing, or type of garment you were wearing.

Q: And where did you get them from, do you remember?

A: No. I -- I remember that they were covered with plastic, some of them, yes.

Q: Really?

A: That the fabric was covered with plastic and that was made more sewed, and they could have a snap. They were not all fr -- made from fabric. They were made from fabric, but the fabric -- excuse me -- was protected. Fabric was protected with plastic. That's what I remember, yes. Yeah. And that -- you know this th -- this -- th-this time, I mean, in the beginning, it was when my cousin was taken and -- and beaten so horrible. But he -- he survived the war.

Q: And what was his name?

A: Dr. **Hertzel**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He was a lawyer, but he had a de -- a -- you know, he study, he had post-doctorate studies.

Q: And where were you living?

A: We were living the same apartment.

Q: You were?

A: All the time. At that time. In that time, that was right after the Germans came in.

Q: Right.

A: A few months after. And we kept living in the same apartment until such time when they told us that everybody has to move to the ghetto. And whoever -- yeah, in that time we were seeking other means of staying. And this is at that time that my grandfather more or less was killed. Because what happened was that the younger people had to go to work. And with the ordinance of everybody going to the ghetto, somebody had to go and arrange for an apartment. No -- you could not arrange for an apartment, there was no such thing as apartment. You can arrange for a place to sleep, because the ghetto was made small. And -- and that was very difficult because you had to buy your place from -- to sleep from somebody who was there already. From the people who occupied the place. You could buy it either from the Poles, or -- who had apartments in the ghetto still, or from the Jews who owned the apartments, and you could rent, sublet, some other place. And we had no money, because w-we did a foolish thing. If we had some gold, either we didn't sell at the right time or we had to give it away when they asked for the con -- th-the Germans asked for the contributions. And we had to surrender all the fur coats, or e-everything. You could not own furs, you can own -- you cannot own the radios. And that was in the first months, I think. And I remember we had a very nice and friendly Pole, we

sold the radio to him. And he was very nice and friendly guy. And it was shortly after **Pearl Harbor**, because we hear -- I remember hearing **Pearl Harbor** announcements on the radio. And oh, we were so happy, not because the **Pearl Harbor** was bombed, but because the Americans were -- entered the war and if they entered the war they will win and we will survive and we'll live. That's what we thought. I remember even the place I stood at to -- to listen to the radio.

Q: Where were you?

A: I was in front of the Venetian mirror and the radio was kitty corner from me, and I was there, and we were so amazed and then we came closer to the radio to hear it again and again, right. A-An -- and then this guy came, and -- and he was telling us -- and a -- I must have -- he must have been very careful to tell us what he told us, he said we should get out. We should do something to get out, because he witnessed the place where he saw a field covered with armbands. And he didn't say he -- he witnessed a killing field, he just said he witnessed seeing the armbands, and let us fill in the rest. And well, the thing is, we believed him, and we didn't want to believe him. I think in bottom of our hearts we knew what he was saying, but we had no place to go and in order to go somewhere you had to have means. You couldn't just go.

Q: Right.

A: You couldn't get out of town. The only way you could do is to get papers and live under another name. That was the only thing you could do. I-I -- I don't think we contemplated that yet, it was too early.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Right, yeah.

Q: Were you st -- were you in the room when he came in and said this?

A: Oh yes, yeah.

Q: You -- so you heard him.

A: I heard him. I heard say that. And then I er -- I told him, I -- I ask my mother, "Did you hear what he said?" And my mother said, "Oh, don't worry. That's not true." See, my mother was being my mother.

Q: Did you still believe him?

A: Oh, I did. We all did. I'm sure we did. But we -- you know, what's the use of believing? Should we commit suicide right there and then? What could we do? I mean there was no -- there was no exit. There just was no exit.

Q: Right.

A: And the only way we did what we did, we used passive resistance all the way through. Trying to survive and that was a passive resistance. They wanted us dead, and we -- we by -- and we tried to catch onto a straw, and we did, I mean, as long as we could, we did. That's it, right.

Q: And when your father was working in -- somehow in connection with this renovation of apartments --

A: Right.

Q: -- do you have any id -- you don't have no idea how he got this job?

A: Well, I -- I do know. Maybe he got the job through his previous job, because he probably was doing a similar job when he was doing payroll a-accounting. I -- I'm just speculating on that.

Q: Right, right.

A: A-And not only that, he got -- he got me a job on that construction to work for -- I worked on construction, so I could have some papers. So I would go to work, and I would mix cement.

Q: Really?

A: Oh yeah. I -- I -- I did different things. I mixed cement. I worked in officer's quarters after they did renovation and we had to scrub the floors and do the windows. And I -- I had a teammate with whom I worked, a very nice girl. And I -- we were very good friends. And -- and then we heard that -- y-you know, I'm skipping in time, but this is her story. And her -- and I really liked her, and she has big, brown eyes and -- and two braids, brown, thick braids. And a very fresh face, sh -- it was rosy cheeks. And -- and I remember us sitting in this apartment on the window sill, a-and a -- and we were talking about the -- about the rumors of the -- about the rumors of the August round-up. And -- and I told her that she needs to hide. That's the only way we could -- we can survive is by hiding.

Q: Right.

A: Because our papers were not good enough. There was a time where he -- or whoever was in charge, invalidated all the certificates. And you had to have certificates signed by



certain agencies like Gestapo, or **S.S.**, or God knows what else, or special **Wehrmacht** divisions. I have no -- I don't remember any more. A-And we didn't have that, we had just, you know, local kind of thing. So, I nas -- and she ask me, "Where would I hide?" And I said, "I don't know, but you have to." A-And you know, I didn't know where I'm going to hide either, I-I had no idea, but it was in my head that unless you hide there's no -- there is no saving yourself. That's it. And that's what happened. I don't know what happened to her.

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't have no idea what happened to her because after the August round-up we -- we no longer could be where we were, and we had to go to the ghetto.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: You're talking about August '42 round-up, right.

A: That was August '42. Until then, then my father -- my grandfather went to look for a place, and --

Q: Right. And he was shot.

A: -- and -- and he was -- I don't know wa -- no, he wasn't shot, I don't know what happened to tho -- you know they -- this was -- this was so cunningly devised, because they knew that the young people wouldn't go to look for apartments, they had to go to work. So they knew the older people would go, so they left -- they closed all the entrances, wherever they were, and that -- and left that **Peltewna** Street entrance, and

they caught everybody one by one. And later on the rumors were that -- that they shot them, that they -- the rumors were that they saw naked people on the trucks, and there was a bad day, I -- I don't know what it was -- it was -- I think it was cold -- cold days, it wa -- it -- it could have been either in the fall -- in November something, November '41, maybe, or spring '42. Probably November '41. And -- and so it was very cold, and -- and then they said they gassed them with the carbon monoxide in the trucks, or they took them somewhere where they shot them on the hills. They used to call na -- **na piaski**. **Piaski** meaning sands. On the sands, **na piaski**. They killed them o-on the sands. And voila, and that's it. And -- and -- and then my father -- grandfather never came back.

Q: And when did you hear about what people thought happened there, or what people saw.

A: Right after that.

Q: Right afterwards.

A: Right after that, right after that, right, right. Shortly after that.

Q: So that must have been very depressing for the family [**indecipherable**]

A: Well, it -- it was -- you couldn't e -- the problem is you couldn't even mourn because you had to be concerned well -- to do with -- you know, with yourself. And this is when my mother went -- decided -- we decided that the -- the special permits allowed you to stay in your apartment. So my mother went to the **Stadthauptman's** office, the -- right to the den of the lion. And wi -- she put her nice dress on, dark blue with polka dots. I think she put a very nice hair from the good old days, and she had the box of chocolates. And

she offered -- I think my father gave her the instructions, and she probably knew from -- maybe he even got acquainted with the **Stadthauptman**, maybe **Stadthauptman** would come and supervise the -- you know, a ca -- a -- would come and supervise whatever they were doing, you know what I mean? And -- and so my mother went, and she ask for a -- for permit. I don't know if she -- she to -- must have talked directly to him, whoever he was. There are names for him, but I don't remember what they are. I mean, because there were two **Stadthauptmans**, so I don't know which one it was. And - - and he gave her a permit, just like that. And the permit was a piece of paper, German, that you could put on your door, that gave you permission to stay, that nobody has business to -- yeah. That they oh -- whoever it is that lives in the apartment has a right to --

Q: To be there.

A: To be there.

Q: And **Stadthauptman** means what?

A: I -- **Stadthauptman**, or **stadt** means city, and **hauptman** means captain. Now, y -- captain of the city, you can translate it. I -- I would say it's equivalency of the mayor, you know, but -- but the mayor -- occupational kind of military -- he was in -- he was a military person, he was a soldier.

Q: Right. So was your father living where he was working, and --

A: My father would come and go. He would come to stay in the house, and sometimes he would stay on the construction.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And during the round-ups, he would st -- if he knew about the round-ups, he would stay on the construction.

Q: So your mother is getting a permit so the two of you are not touched, and --

A: Well, no, not just two of us, my father, too.

Q: And so that is

A: My father lives in the apartment. He's does the -- he did -- didn't move out.

Q: Right.

A: He -- he lives in the apartment, sometimes he -- he would stay overnight. You know, it was easier for him if it was a -- let's say if he worked in a -- in an apartment house, maybe he could sleep over there, I don't know. I don't remember that any more, right. But --

Q: But you're s -- you're still in the same place?

A: You sa -- we still in the same place. An-and we are -- and my mother renewed it twice, and the third time she couldn't renew it. But she was so desperate, I -- and that -- the -- the secretary told her, there is one way that you could still stay. If it -- if our apartment is re -- now, what is it, sequestered? Taken over by -- sequestered by the army, or the army or anybody, y-you know, of German officialdom.

Q: Right.

A: And if somebody's stationed in ou-our apartment, we can stay too. And so my mother didn't know what to do, I think she went back to my father to ask what to do, and they

said they would put some civil civilian workers. German -- German civilian, but they would stip -- still had the uniform, the dark blue uniforms. And they worked on the railroads. And -- and they took one room, and stayed there maybe couple months because it was before the round-up again. And just before the round-up, maybe a week before, I don't know how long before, she said they have -- they are -- they're shipped to the eastern front. And that's -- and they packed up the bags and left.

Q: So that means you lost the permit.

A: Yeah, we lost the permit.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Let me go back a little bit. I-Is it true that in 1941, at some point you had a tutor?

A: Yes, that's right. Oh, that was so wonderful. I -- I -- I was very eager to -- to learn, and my girlfriend had a -- my girlfriend former's teacher -- former teacher, was giving lessons, and -- but she was in the -- close to the ghetto, but not in the ghetto proper, just -- I think close to the ghetto. And she said she would tutor me. And I go, I would go there -- for three months I had her. And I -- I loved it, because she was very, very educated, and she taught me English, she taught me German and she taught me French. She -- she was linguist. And I study -- I studied all the three languages. Whatever -- I didn't learn much, but whatever I -- you know, three months, you can -- but I couldn't pay her, so I didn't pay her, and she taught me anyway, without -- you know, this is -- tells you how good the people were. You know, she -- she said that's okay, I'll teach you. And then there was

another -- there was a -- I th -- another round-up, you know? And I don't know what we did for that round-up, maybe I was -- went to work, and it -- it -- it -- it didn't penetrate to our area. Don't forget we were not in the ghetto proper, so -- so we didn't -- anyway, so - - so I -- I -- I -- we -- I d -- we couldn't go anywhere, so I didn't go anywhere during that time. Eith -- either a -- maybe I didn't even go to work. But it was not a long round-up, it was kind of -- it was a shorter round-up. And by the time -- and then I went there, and my mother was so happy, because my mother provided me with a bag of farina, traded for some linen, either napkins, or bookcase -- pillowcases. And I went there, and she was not there any more. She was taken in that --

Q: In that round-up?

A: In that -- that round-up. See, you're -- but I think that she was a heroine of -- of resistance, because we were trying to, in spite of all the terrible times we were trying to misstate it -- maintain a -- a -- a -- a -- a livi -- a -- a -- some kind of normalcy, so we wouldn't be so desperate. So this is what we did now, but then -- and then they took her. And whoever they took at that ti -- whoever -- yeah -- whomever -- whomev -- whomever they took, they -- I think by then they transported to **Belzec**, right, and we know about **Belzec**.

Q: Right. So she would have been killed immediately.

A: She would have been -- if they took her there, she would have been killed immediately.

Q: Right.

A: Unless they took her for a -- the -- the -- for selection they used to take them to **Janowska** camp, which was a horrid, horrid experience.

Q: So -- so that was a little devastating for you, I guess, right?

A: I -- I -- yeah, of course, I mean, it was terrible. Was terrible. It still is.

Q: I can see.

A: Yeah, it still is, yeah. Yeah, but you know, she -- and I -- what is so terrible is I don't remember her name.

Q: Oh.

A: I don't remember even her name.

Q: Can you see her in your head, what she looked like?

A: I can't even see what I er -- I can't see her. Vaguely outline, no I can't see her. But I -- I just remember how -- how generous she was, though.

Q: Right.

A: Her spirit of generosity.

Q: Do you remember her apartment?

A: Well, I -- I -- it was not much of an apartment, it probably was a room, yeah, right.

No, I don't re -- I remember just studying, that's -- that I could study, yeah. And I was so -- I was really -- that time, and it was at -- if you can have a happy time in the ghetto, yeah, you know, that was the time.

Q: But now you weren't -- were you in the ghetto when [indecipherable]

A: Well, when I went to her I was in the ghetto, oh yeah. Right.

Q: Oh really, I see, so she was actually in the ghetto.

A: I think she was probably in the ghetto. You know, I don't know, the ghetto got constantly changed in borders, you know?

Q: Right, right.

A: You know, they may -- they -- they fo -- they would take people and then they would make it smaller. And they were changing -- you know, we didn't know which is the ghetto. Today you were in the ghetto and you bought an apartment, you think that you're in the ghetto, and the next day the ghetto gets small and you have to move in. And -- and you lost the money that you invested in this place.

Q: Well, you may not remember, but if she actually was in the ghetto, how would you be able to go in and then come out again?

A: Because the ghetto was open --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- at that time. The ghetto did not get closed until 19 -- until September, I don't know which September seven, '42.

Q: Uh-huh. And this -- we're still in 1941, so she was --

A: Yeah, she was probably --

Q: -- I see, s -- so when it's o -- cu -- because I'm not sure that people necessarily understand. When it's open, what does that actually mean, that --

A: That mean that you can walk in and walk out.

Q: There are no -- there's not guards?



A: Well they -- there were also always -- I don't know if there were guards, but you can walk in and walk out, right. No guards.

Q: Without a pass?

A: Yeah, the guy -- the people can -- you know, ghetto was al -- always the ga -- the ghetto area was always the target of all kinds of activities for the Germans. Because they would go in, they had accumulated a Jewish population, and they could do what they pleased. And -- and do, you know, they could take them out of their apartments, they could capture them on the street.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They could not do that in the areas that were mixed.

Q: Right.

A: Right. So that was a little different. But I -- at that time -- you see, when there were no round-ups, people would try to live normally.

Q: Right.

A: They -- they in between -- see you could -- yeah, every time you -- they wanted contribution, the people said okay, we'll give you the contribution, will you leave us alone? The people hoped. We always hoped, you hope until the end. Even when the b -- the bullets raging are aimed at you, you still hope that something is going to happen.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Right, right.

Q: Okay.

A: That's how it happens, right?

Q: We're going to change the tape.

A: Oh great. That's good, I can blow my n --

**End of Tape Four**

### Beginning Tape Five

Q: I'm -- I'm tempted to call you **Janka**, but --

A: Yeah, that's nice, if you want to, that -- that sounds good.

Q: Ho -- how were you eating, what were you eating?

A: You know what? I don't remember. I don't know what we were eating, I don't know how we got our food. I -- but we ate very little, and we were hungry forever. What we were doing is sometimes the peasants would come to the door, and I guess my mother had a -- a treasure of linens and she would bargain [indecipherable] away for a piece of - - chunk of cheese, or a chunk of bread, or a piece of something. And sometimes my father would bring something from where he was. And that's how we lived. We -- or we would sell something, but the problem is we were not smart enough. I don't know, my father should have been smart enough, but we -- we didn't -- we should have sold our furniture first, but we didn't do that. Instead, we sold everything else. If we had some gold that we didn't give away, then we sold that first. And this is something you don't sell, this is something you sew into the lining of your clothes, right? But we didn't do that, and -- unfortunately. And our neighbor, from across th-the -- the neighbor who provided me with the books, they left their apartment empty, but I don't know what happened to them, really, because when we came back they weren't there. And I -- you know, and we came back to -- to our apartment after the round-up of August '42, they weren't there. And they had a little baby, they just -- she -- the woman just gave birth to a little baby boy who was circumcised in the -- and I was scared stiff because those -- the --

we heard rumors about this particular August round-up, that -- how they -- what they were doing to little children. So, as I was mounting the stairs, and the stairs were rounded up to our apartment, I was looking on the wall to see if I -- somebody did something, you know, to somebody and there would be traces of blood, or I-I didn't even want to look, actually, but that's -- that's what I was fru -- that I was afraid that they were taken, I -- I don't know what happened to them. They might have, or they might have escaped. If they had means, they could have bought a -- some hiding place in some -- some Pole or Ukrainian. But they were never guaranteed to last. But -- so I don't know what happened to them either.

Q: How about sanitary conditions? Did you have running water in [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, we had the running water. We -- we had running water in the place we lived, yes.

Q: You did.

A: Not cold and hot, of course, but running water, yeah. We --

Q: Just cold.

A: Cold water, right. And there was gas, and I remember one time I cooked noodles for my father, and I didn't know how to cook at all, so I -- I left them in the water, and they got very soggy. And my father [indecipherable] which was nice.

Q: And did you bring the food to him, at the place of business?

A: Yeah, I know, he told me -- no, no, no --

Q: No

A: -- that was at home, my mother wasn't there, I guess. I don't know where she was, but this is one my memory with my father, yeah.

Q: And the toilet is outside the apartment?

A: And the toilet [indecipherable] is on the -- outside the apartment, yes.

Q: Now, do you think that you had some conditions that were somewhat better than in the ghetto, that they wouldn't have had running water in the ghetto?

A: No, in the ghetto -- not necessarily, and they would have running water in the ghetto, probably. Some apartments in the ghetto were in homes, were very deluxe. My mother was very unhappy with her apartment before the war. She was supposed to have gotten the nice apartment, in the same building, as part of her dowry, she never da -- did, you know. And so she was kept wi -- up with promises, and that never materialized.

Q: I see, right.

A: And that was one of the many sources of her, you know, dissatisfaction and unhappiness. But she was always a devoted daughter, that didn't ever change.

Q: Right. And where is your grandmother?

A: My grandmother is dead now. She was an old woman, so she died.

Q: She died?

A: In 1970's.

Q: No, no, no, no, I don't mean that. I meant now, 1941.

A: Oh, 1941.

Q: I [indecipherable] ask where is she -- where was she --

A: Oh yes, my grandmother, I didn't know -- at that time, what happened was there was one round-up, and -- and -- and my mother -- I think my grandmother, I don't know where she was, but she faced -- she was actually caught. I don't know exactly where she was caught -- where is she -- was caught near our building, but she was caught. And my mother -- grandmother was a very beautiful woman, very stately woman, tall and straight as a ramrod, she was wonderful. She had a wonderful presence. Wer -- her head was up and high she had the white hair, and she had a beautiful face. And apparently -- and I heard that story from my uncle recently, when we were in **Poland**. I -- I didn't hear -- I didn't know it somehow, I don't know how bu -- I didn't know it, but I didn't. It happened so that they -- she was caught and she was told to go into -- mount into the truck. And so she asked th-the man if he would kindly help her. And he let her go.

Q: He let her go?

A: He let her go. He must have been a Ukrainian, or -- yeah. And he let her go, right. And then, when my aunt heard that, I think she got my grandmother out, and took her to where she placed my uncle. My uncle never wore an armband.

Q: Now this is the unc --

A: And neither did my aunt.

Q: Right.

A: They never wore armbands.

Q: And these are the two that had converted?

A: Yes.

Q: But the Germans didn't realize, I guess.

A: Well, there were the Germans, yeah, the Poles didn't realize it, it's -- the Germans didn't know who was who.

Q: Right.

A: You know, they -- unless a Jew had **payess** and a very prominent nose, or -- or -- or special garb, they wouldn't know who were Jewish.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But the other people did.

Q: So your uncle is out --

A: So my uncle -- my -- I -- you know, I -- my time descriptions, I don't know exactly why that happened, but my aunt arranged for my uncle to work in a little God-forsaken town that's not even on the map, not a town, a little village. And to work as -- either in a mill -- I think he worked in a mill, as a mi-mill supervisor. And she arrange it through her acquaintance with a count who owned the local -- he owned before the war, the local -- not the local, but the villages there. They were -- you know, they were part of his estate.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So, what he owned was that mill, before the war, and the brewery, there was a brewery. But the Germans let him manage that. Of course, that wou -- became a part of the German occupational forces, and they let him manage it. So he hired my uncle to manage them all. So my uncle lived there, and he lived in the little village, **Ponikwa** it's

called, and -- and he had the little apartment that you obtained from local Protestant, or Ukrainian Protestants. Not Protestants, it was something else, I don't remember.

Q: Is it **Jehovah's** Witnesses?

A: Something like that. I don't know if they were **Jehovah's** Witnesses, but they might have been, right, right. Or maybe not **Jehovah's** Witness, whatever there was at the time, I don't remember. And so he -- and there was a hut again. And the hut -- some of the huts didn't have real floors, they had clay floors. So I'm describing this from the times I ended up being there too.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But that time I didn't even know he was there, because you know, we didn't know what the other people were doing.

Q: Yeah.

A: We just didn't know.

Q: But your aunt brought your grandmother to the same village?

A: So my -- ye-yeah. I think my -- we finally sublet-ed, so we must have -- I don't remember how it happened, but she did take her, and -- and this count, by the way, even transported my uncle -- I didn't know -- to **Ponikwa** and he transported my grandmother, but not me. We had another trip. My aunt [indecipherable]

Q: But you didn't know --

A: No, I didn't know any --

Q: -- that they were there?



A: No.

Q: And --

A: No, I didn't.

Q: Did yo -- were you all aware of where your aunt was in **Lwów**?

A: We didn't know where she lived, no.

Q: You didn't?

A: No, no. She lived somewhere and no, we didn't know. Maybe my mother knew, but I didn't know.

Q: So you were not seeing each other ee -- wh -- even when you were living in the area inside?

A: No, no, no, we -- I don't know if my mother met my aunt in between. Maybe she did, maybe she didn't, I don't know.

Q: Uh-huh, you don't know.

A: Right.

Q: Do y -- when you think about this, when the Germans come in '41, through '41, and then '42, can you feel as if everything is getting tighter and more and more difficult, is there a --

A: Absolutely, I mean it was like a net, you know?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Like in a net you c-catch fish in a net, and you pull the string, and -- and it closes up on you, that's how it was.

Q: Right. What wer -- what were you like?

A: What I was like?

Q: You're a teenager at this time, this is --

A: Yeah, I don't know what I was like. I -- I gave examples, so I was like different things in different times, I imagine. You know, at that time I remember being a teenager and walking in cement, whatever it was, i-in the construction place. And then, after I was -- I wash out -- I washed up, a-a-and I put my clothes on, a-and my foreman looked at me, he said, "Are you the same person?" A-An-And I was still a teenager, and then I -- maybe I should be ashamed of it, but I remember I her -- I yearned for a white jacket, because that was what the girls were wearing. Can you imagine this, in all this times? Well anyway, I-I confess --

Q: You mean that the -- you mean the Gentile girls were wearing white --

A: No, no, even Jewish girls --

Q: Even -- everybody?

A: -- some Jewish girls, too, I -- I -- I --

Q: Were wearing white jackets?

A: -- white jackets, was summertime. That was -- must have been summer of '41, it was shortly after they came. So maybe wasn't that tight yet. So, you know what my mother did? My mother had a local seamstress, and she took my father's slacks, my father had a beautiful white slacks, and didn't look like he would be wearing them again, so my mother had them made into a jacket for me, and I had a white jacket.

Q: That's very special, huh?

A: Right. But it -- it's just tell you that in middle of -- of horror --

Q: Right.

A: -- there are things like that. And I imagine if -- I was not the only one things like that were happening to. Our problems, where we were so -- we were deprived, so we had to catch onto little things, wi -- do the things we could do that were feasible.

Q: Right. I understand that you liked to sleep a lot.

A: Right, I d -- han -- yaha -- wa -- I -- you know, I liked to sleep when I could sleep, but when we ended up in the real ghetto we couldn't sleep, because sometimes we had to move from place to place to place to place, and there was no time to sleep. And by then we were covered a little with the lice, and I -- you remember my mother de-licing me, if you can call it that, right.

Q: Delous -- you mean, picking --

A: Di -- yeah -- I -- yeah, right, delousing, right, I'm sorry.

Q: How was she doing it? She was picking up the --

A: Yes, actually, right.

Q: Did she have lice also?

A: Probably.

Q: Did you delouse her?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: Just her ya -- for you, huh?

A: Yeah, right. I was in [indecipherable] well, I didn't do other things either, but I didn't tell you how we went to the ghetto yet, so --

Q: No, ar -- no, we're not even there yet.

A: We're not there yet.

Q: No.

A: Right.

Q: No.

A: Right. So, in due course.

Q: There's a period when your -- your mother and you may also ha -- heard rumors that the -- in August of '42 that there was going to be a huge round-up, which ended up actually being about 50,000 Jews, I think, that were rounded up.

A: Well, at that time I give you the rumors of that time.

Q: Mm.

A: 60,000.

Q: That was the rumors.

A: That's the ghetto rumors, that's what we heard in ghetto, after they -- yeah. It's not the numbers that they are quoting now, but that time it was 60,000.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Whatever is true we ne -- we never know.

Q: So when your mother thought this might happen --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- she tried to get you to be hiding with Mrs. **Kwiatkowska** --

A: All right.

Q: Is that right?

A: That -- there are different things that happened.

Q: Okay.

A: First, what the first thing that happened was actually, yeah -- I don't know whose idea it was, might have been my idea. Cause my mother initially was thinking about the maid. She had a maid once, and -- and she loved her very much, and the maid loved my mother. And she was thinking maybe the maid could do something. But the maid, in order to -- you know, we had to have money to pay. You can't ask anybody take me in and -- and not pay. And so I thought maybe Mrs. **K** would do that, and she happened to be cler -- close by, and the maid was not. She was -- I don't know where she was. She was out of town, she was not even in the city. And -- and we did hear the rumors maybe several days before. Because number one, they -- they couldn't hide it. They invalidated the -- the -- at that time again, they invalidated certain passes, certain certificates. And -- and what else they did, they surrounded the city. All the exits of the city was Ukrainian police, and -- and German police, maybe even with **Wehrmacht** for what I know, because they need a lot of people. So you couldn't get out of the city, there was no way you could get out of the city. So I thought maybe I could do -- we didn't know how long it's going to last, and

-- you know? So my mother had happened to have 75 **zlotys**. So I said, "Maybe we go to Mrs. **K**, and maybe for a couple days I -- I can stay with her." And my mother did, a-and -- and she said yes. But what happened was -- an -- and my mother said she's going to hide under the apartment. Our -- not our apartment, but maybe in the basement of our building. And she did, actually, and somebody saw her. But I think the person who saw her was my milk brother, I don't know there is such a definition.

Q: Milk?

A: Brother, tha -- this is a -- a literal translation from Polish, and what it means is that his mother nursed me. She was my nanny. I -- how would you call it in English?

Q: A wet nurse?

A: A wet -- no.

Q: No?

A: Oh yeah. No, no. Wet nurse? Yeah, well -- but what is -- was he to me? He --

Q: Now that I don't know.

A: Right. Okay. So she saw him, and I guess he didn't turn her in. Excuse me. I'm doing it?

Q: Mm.

A: All right. So --

Q: So Mrs. **K** is Mrs. **Kwiatkowska**, right, who is the mother of your very close friend?

A: Right.

Q: Yes. Okay, go ahead.

A: And so what happens is that she says yes, and my mother gives her all the money she has, and she happens to have 75 **zlotys**, 25 per day. And that was adequate. Ye -- Mrs. -- her name was **Janina** also, she -- she was v -- also very poor. She sent her children out because she felt they could eat better in the countryside, and she alone stayed in the apartment. So for her, the -- the money was good, that would give her some food to eat. And she fed me very well, I really ate at her place, was wonderful. She gave me a wonderful soup, and other things, too, I don't even wo -- I remember the soup very well. But what happened is after two days my mother didn't come back. And so she became alarmed, because she couldn't get stuck with a Jewish child. I mean, what would she do if -- I mean, another arm -- mouth to feed, what would she do? So she said -- I -- I said, "My mother," I told her, "my mother went -- said she's going to hide in her apartment building, in the basement." And so she went there to look for her, my mother wasn't there. So she -- now -- now she got really scared, what happened? So I said, "You know, the other chance is that he -- she might be in construction."

Q: Right.

A: On a construction site, where my father was. And so she went there, and she found my mother, and at that time she transported me there, not -- not officially, but unofficially. We took public transportation, minus the armband, and she gave me one of these certificates that you saw, I don't know which one. I don't know which one actually, was first that I got.

Q: So that you have papers that would say that you're Polish, and Catholic?

A: Right. And then -- and the -- and the -- she found me -- we found my mother, and I wanted to give back the papers. And she says, "You da -- don -- you can keep it. And if somebody stops you with them, or discovers you, you say you found them in a book." It was her words. You know? She was a very kind person. A-And so --

Q: Did you look Polish?

A: Well, a --

Q: In some way?

A: Well, I was blonde. I had straight hair. I could -- I could have had braids, and I did have braids if I wanted to have braids. And what else -- and I had green eyes. So I was -- and I spoke Polish too well, as a matter of fact, right. So I was a good --

Q: You could pass easily.

A: -- I -- I could pass.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't know if my mother could pass as well. My mother was an auburn -- she wasn't a redhead, but she was auburn. She didn't look particularly Jewish, and her Polish was superb.

Q: Mm-hm. Well, let me ask you something. You said that after you had scarlet fever --

A: Right.

Q: -- and you had lost your hair --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and it came back --



A: Curly.

Q: -- curly. Was it now --

A: But then -- but then straightened up.

Q: It did straighten out, so it became more --

A: Yeah, right, unfortunately --

Q: -- I see.

A: -- I wanted to have it curly --

Q: Right.

A: -- looked very cute. But I have no pictures to prove it, because all pictures of that time, we destroyed.

Q: Right, yeah.

A: Yeah, we destroyed on purpose because we didn't -- I didn't want to be caught with them.

Q: So now what happens? You go -- you're now with your mother and your father in this construction --

A: Not with my father, my father's on a different -- was a different place.

Q: So where was she? Where was -- where did she find your mother?

A: She -- she found my mother in the villa of super -- of -- not superintendent, but the **Stadthauptman**, the city commandant.

Q: In his villa?

A: In his villa.

Q: What was she doing?

A: She was hiding there. It was unfinished. It was under construction, but it was like an unfinished and unfinished. Nobody worked there. It was left unfinished to -- maybe for other teams to come finish it.

Q: I see.

A: But nobody was there. My father told her to -- to go there.

Q: Oh, your father said to go there --

A: Right.

Q: -- because he thought it would be safe.

A: Because he knew.

Q: I see.

A: Yeah, right. So th -- here's this beautiful villa, and I don't know where we sleep, I don't know what we eat. But I remembered the orchard.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I sit in the orchard, and I read all day. And I look at the beautiful butterflies, and -  
- and the flowers, and the ap -- apples. I think I eat the apples that are not yet ripe, because --

Q: And you're not afraid to be outside?

A: No, I'm not. I was sitting in the yar -- in the orchard. I remember sitting in the orchard.

Q: Do you know how many days you were there? Do you have any recollection?

A: I think there -- the -- the **Aktion**, or the -- the round-up lasted for two weeks, but we didn't get there until later, because I was few days here and there, so we didn't get there until later. So it was maybe 10 days.

Q: In that place?

A: In that place. And one time they came, the **Stadthauptman** came to look at his villa, and we were there. And we were there -- as a matter of fact there was no place to hide because the closets were open. They were kind of closets that were open, they weren't finished yet, so it was like -- like this, you see? I don't know if you can see. And we were against the wall here. But here, this area was open. They came to the room, and they came with dogs, and with children. An -- an -- and I remembered the si -- remembering -- I -- I -- I sit -- I talk about it as my body is turning into a prayer against that wall, and I hold my mother's hand. And that's how we stood as long as they were there. But they didn't see us.

Q: They didn't see you?

A: They didn't see us.

Q: So they didn't come all the way into the room?

A: No, they just came in the front door, the dogs and all, and nobody --

Q: And the dogs didn't smell you?

A: No. If they did, they didn't come to -- or maybe the dogs stayed outside. I mean, we heard the dogs barking, but maybe they didn't bring them to the house.

Q: Right.

A: Right. And the -- and then they left.

Q: And then they left.

A: And they left, right. Yeah, well. Well, that wasn't the end of that either. So -- so we stay there, and we stay there. I think somebody would come and bring us some food, I don't know, maybe my father's worker -- one of my father's workers, but I don't remember that. I -- I'm just speculating somebody had to bring us some food, because --

Q: Right, because --

A: -- how did we live, right?

Q: Right, right.

A: So I think somebody -- and -- and I think somebody might have told us that this is over, and that we can go home. And -- and then we went home. And as we went home, we were stopped. And by that time I had my armband. I don't know how it happened exactly, but either I took my armband off, or I had it on and my mother covered my arm. As -- and we were stopped by certain -- by -- later on we found out he was the **Stadthauptman's** driver, who spoke Polish too, but he addressed us in German, of course, because my mother had her armband. A-And since her armband was open, and mine is covered by her arm, because we are just -- we held on to each other, you know, for -- for -- for -- yeah, for life, actually. And -- and so he -- and he asked me if I was Jewish, and I don't know why, maybe I think before we might have said -- been thinking that maybe I should -- I should -- I -- I should get papers and go and pretend not to be Jewish, and I told him I was not. And then he detached me from my mother, and he saw

the arm badge. And he again f -- instead of talking y-y-you know, he started talking to -- I think he started initially speaking Polish, and then, when he saw that I was Jewish, he grabbed me and started to speak German to me.

Q: And he grabbed you by the neck?

A: Yeah, and he said ha -- he -- and he accused me of lying. Well, I don't know which language any more, but he -- they -- a language that I understood. And, "H -- how dare you lying to me," he said. And -- and again, he grabbed me by his -- by the throat, you know, just like they usually do, right? Anyway -- and I -- somehow I lose all my fear. And I looked at him, and I said, "You know, look at the -- look at the nature. Look how b -- the trees are green, look how the sky is blue. I am 16 years old. I want to live." And really, I ma -- he must have heard me.

Q: Cause he took --

A: Because he let me -- he let us go. He just let us go, that's it.

Q: And you -- you weren't crying.

A: No, I wasn't crying. God forbid, I was just the opposite. It was like I threw the fear down in my feet. I was completely composed. I -- I said it like if you know you have a play, and you rehearsed for a play. And I must have rehearsed it sitting in that garden there, and -- and brooding about being 16 years old and having to die. You know, and I told him, and he heard.

Q: How do you account for that? Since it was a frightening time, and certainly that was a frightening situation?

A: How do I account for that? I don't know. The grace of God, I don't know. Or -- or something, but --

Q: Did you shake afterwards?

A: I did. I think I did, yes, I had a -- I -- I -- I was completely drained. I was completely spent. Yeah, right. Completely, completely spent. But not too long, cause we didn't have time for that. Well, anyway, but he -- he -- he heard me, and he let us go, and -- and my mother was very proud of me because she -- you know, I -- I told him the truth, I -- you see, I told him re -- no, I was trying to convince him that I would lie, why wouldn't I lie? I want to -- I'm 16 years old, I want to live. Why you -- the lying is not unnatural in **[indecipherable]**. And he heard it. And it was a beautiful day. It was a beautiful day, and -- and it was in August, so you can imagine, yeah. No, that -- that was the tragedy of it, too, right. Because we wanted -- we wanted the skies to -- to roar, just like in **King Lear**, the skies were roaring. But no, not one day of rain, right. That's how it happened, I na -- yeah, and that's how they took so many people. And then they took my cousin -- my cousins, my mother's first cousin, and her husband, and who else from my family. And that -- yeah, from my immediate family, that's who they took.

Q: Okay.

A: Right.

Q: We're going to change the tape.

A: That's good.

### **End of Tape Five**

### Beginning Tape Six

Q: Okay. It -- it appears that you're outside living in that place for about a couple of weeks, and then you have to go to the ghetto? Is that true?

A: And we have -- first we go to our apartment.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And that's when we discovered that our apartment's locked up, and there are two suitcases out.

Q: Two suitcases outside?

A: Right. And -- and I still wa -- ha -- de -- am debating with myself, did my mother pack them before we left, or did the people pack them who took our apartment. But I don't know. I think my mother must have packed them, and they decided in the goodness of their hearts to put it out. But -- and we -- they could do it, because they have everything el -- they had everything else. They had four -- two, three bedroom ap -- three up -- no, not three bedroom, but three room apartment with all the furniture, with all the -- whatever linens that were left, with everything. Completely -- with books, with jewelry, some left jewelry that my mother had.

Q: And your china?

A: Well, th -- the -- and the china of course, and the sterling silver, right. Everything was left. And my ga -- and my aunt was so angry that my mother didn't give her the stand -- sterling silver to keep. But my mother thought she had the idea that she might want to sell it. And she didn't have a chance to, and so the sterling silver went to whoever possessed

our apartment. The same guy who wanted to have it from the beginning. He just was biding his time. He knew sooner or later he would get. But he was the first on the list, so he got it.

Q: And there was a list that the -- that the Germans created --

A: Well, a -- you know, once there was somebody on the list, and then that was it. I -- unless there was somebody who was more entitled. If he's -- you -- was Ukrainian, the only other person might have wanted was the German, but the German wouldn't want it because this was not the German area.

Q: Right.

A: The German area was separate from all areas, and this is -- was an area where nobody could be, and that's when the guy caught us. My mother was trying to explain to me that my f -- him, that her husband works there. But I don't know what possessed me, I -- I -- I did lie to him about something, because he ac -- he accused me of lying.

Q: Right.

A: Oh, and you asked me h-how come I did that. I think I did that, now that I think of it, is because I felt that I was falsely accused. You know what I mean?

Q: Of lying?

A: Of lying. And -- and -- and why wouldn't -- not falsely accused, but I was legitimate in lying if I wanted to lie, was perfectly justifiable for me to lie, cause I was protecting my life. And he heard it, and he probably agreed with me.

Q: Or you somehow disarmed him, and he didn't know what to do.



A: I guess. Could be, could be, right.

Q: So you come to the apartment, and there are two pieces of luggage --

A: Right.

Q: -- sitting there?

A: Right. So what do we do, we take the luggage down, and I look at the walls to see if anybody got massacred in the place. And -- and then we were down, and I -- don't ask me how are we with those suitcases, we end up in the ghetto. And by then it's September, and it's Jewish holidays, high holidays. And -- because they like to arrange things to celebrate Jewish holidays, and that was their way of celebration. So -- so we're -- but the -- we have no place to be, so we stay outside. And --

Q: You mean in the street of the ghetto?

A: In there was like a square.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And there's a bunch of, lot of, hundreds of people, we are not the only ones. There are hundreds of people there. So we s -- make a camp around our suitcases, and that's where we are. And -- and lo and behold, we meet one of my mother's cousins, but not the cousins that I mentioned before. Our family had a poorest -- poorer branch yet. And the poorer -- the poor branch of our family was also my mother's first cousins. There were -- to start from the beginning, there -- my grandmother had two sisters. One sister's name was **Regina**, and she had those sons, one of whom -- she had two sons, one of whom was a -- a lawyer, one was a doctor, and two daughters. And one of the daughters worked for

my father. And the other sister, her name was **Sallah**, and she had two daughters. One daughter's name was **Irena** -- no, sorry, **Irene**. Or in Polish **Evanna**. And the others -- the daughter's name was **Mina**. When the girls were very young, her husband, who was a teacher, died. And she had -- she was a single mother with two daughters. And the mothers in those days didn't work. So she didn't work. I don't know how she lived. By the time I remembered knowing her, her daughter were all -- daughters were already grown up. She saw -- she send them to voke -- to a vocational school, and they became accomplished sis -- seamstresses and hand-embroiderers, and knitters, a-and in order to have a -- she send them there in order for them to have a vocation, to be able to earn a living. And they lived with st -- their mother, and she lived in a poor area, and her hou -- and she lived in an apartment also didn't have a floor. But I used to love to go there because they had the wonderful handiw -- handworks, and I still remember they made beautiful little dolls for me. And **Mina** was especially talented, and she made a doll [indecipherable] whose -- sh-she was dressed a la ma -- **Marie Antoinette**, in a magnificent satin dress. A green satin dress with very -- with nicely fitted bodice, and with a beautiful p -- how shall I say, wig, **perruque**, and it was just magnificent, and a -- I always cherished that. And I -- one day I f -- in -- in **America**, not long ago, I found myself buying a **Dalton -- Royal Dalton** girl in a -- in a green dress.

Q: Really?

A: [indecipherable] and I didn't know how I did it, but -- until afterwards, right. And so -- and -- and so I used to love to vre -- to go there, and they would let me roam in their

drawers, and I would find treasures there, and my mother used to bring some money, too, for her. And -- and one day there was happy news, **Irene** got married. And she got married and she had a boy, and that was before the war. And now, at the war, the boy was, I think, seven years old initially, and then he was older as the time went on. And the -- the -- her husband went to war with the Poles. He went -- he was in Polish army, and he never came back. So she never knew what happened to him. And so they were left together again. The -- the mother died, I guess, she got older and she died. And then -- now there were two -- two sisters, and we met them, with their girlfriend in the -- in the ghetto. We met them actually on that square. What happened was that the sister-in-law of **Irena** was there too. And I even stole two lima beans from her pot, because the people were cooking soup on the, you know, little pots. And I was so hungry, and I saw those two lima beans, and -- you know, before they were cooked, I kind of snuck them out. And what happened was -- and I th -- I forever re -- I felt guilty about it, because once the soup was cooked, she offered to each of us a plate of soup, right. And so we lived there, on the square, sleeping in a square, until one day we slept on our suitcases, and we woke up the next day without them.

Q: Oh my. So now you really have nothing.

A: Yeah, except one little suitcase. There is one little suitcase that's left. And -- but -- a- and the good thing is that we found my cousins, and there was a wonderful feeling, to -- you know, you cannot imagine somebody is alive. Because when you so concerned you don't even know who's alive and who's dead, cause the other people are dying

elsewhere, and you don't know what happened to them, for a long time, maybe never. You -- you can never find out. Well, so here they are. And my girlfriend -- and my cousin **Irene** has a apartment. And the apartment is in the area of the ghetto. So we all go there to that apartment. I don't know, I don't see my father there. He must have been staying somewhere else. I -- I don't see my father there. And as we move into the apartment, a very short time after, it's on the corner of the street, **Harriman** and **Lokietek**. And it -- it faces headquarters, either of Jewish Council or the Jewish police. And all of a sudden, wi -- through the window, facing it, just directly facing it, I see the **S.S.** loading some young Jews, pushing, and hitting, and beating, and -- Jewish policemen. And especially one. And this Jewish policeman looks like the -- the -- his executioner. He's al -- also blonde, and he looks just like him, except he has a Jewish uniform on him. And they take him somewhere, we don't know where. And they -- later on, of course, the rumors c-circulate very fast. They hang him. At that time -- I don't know how true that is, but at that time the rumor said that they had to hang each other on the balconies, which are rear balconies of the buildings. And it was just around the corner from where we were. And so I -- we didn't see it happen, we didn't see it happen, and my mother didn't take me to look afterwards, because they left them hanging for a long time. And they didn't all hang them on good ropes. They hang them on thin ropes, so the ropes will break, and the people would come down and be bloody and made to go again to be rehanged. And there was -- and last one of them was Dr. **Landsberg**, and he was the head of the Jewish Council. And there's a controversy about what he did or didn't do. But at this moment -- and I'm -

- I'm quoting the rumors of the ghetto at that time, that they wanted to hang him, and they hanged him on a -- on this thin rope. So he was one of those who ca -- came down, and he claimed the international law that allows for mercy if somebody's rope breaks. But they only laughed at that, and -- and he -- I don't know if he had to hang himself, or somebody hanged him. I don't know if they hanged him, or if he had to hang himself. And tha -- and there were 11 people who died that way. And they were left to hang and the -- the mob would come and -- and tease and -- for everybody see, but my mother -- that's why I'm sorry, I should have gone and seen, too, then I would have been a witness. But I was witness of the rest, but not of the act itself. But I'm quoting the rumors of the time, not -- not whatever was given out.

Q: So your mother went and saw?

A: I -- she might have, but --

Q: But you're not sure?

A: I -- I'm not sure, no.

Q: And you didn't e -- you didn't see them hanging at all?

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother didn't want me to.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: So, how many of you were in this apartment?

A: There were just three of us, that was a normal apartment, but we didn't stay long, because the -- the ghetto was made completely small, and you had to move on.

Q: Wait a minute, is -- where is **Juno** and his -- his mother, the ba -- the boy.

A: Oh -- oh, she's -- he's with us. We are together.

Q: He's with you?

A: Now we are t -- all together.

Q: Right.

A: There was -- in our party now is **Mina**. Now, **Mina** has a kidney disease.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And once a week at least, my wer-- ts -- he's not my uncle, he's her first cousin, and my mother's first cousin, and I call him uncle because he was my mother's age, or even older than my mother.

Q: Right, right.

A: So he would come, he -- and he worked in that **Janowska** camp. See, in the beginning **Janowska** camp was not as bad as it turned out to be later. In the beginning people -- some people w-went to work there, and some -- they cou -- they have a job, and they have certificates, and they can -- a-and they can have good -- good certificates of -- you know, that would help them live, you know?

Q: Right.

A: And my uncle was one of them. And -- but then it turned out into a terrible thing, but he had the right to leave the -- he could leave the camp, and he would come to get her,

and -- wherever she was, and he would give her shots to remove the water, I guess. A- And -- and he would do it on regular basis. He always found us, I don't know how, but he did. And the ghetto got smaller, so we had to go to another, different place. And then -- from then on we went to places where -- in different places, we -- we were in different places all the time, you know?

Q: So was it every few weeks you have to move, or even more often?

A: I -- yeah, I -- I think -- I don't know exactly. I think there was one place we stayed longer. But first we went to a place, and right away they told us there's a round-up, going to be. And the place had a hiding -- hiding -- there was a hiding place, and there's a ha -- the hiding place was again, it was like a false attic, and they would put us there, and an armoire, and some kind of pay -- piece of furniture in front of it, and a lot of people went in there, because it was a -- a pretty big place. And so my mother went, we all went in there. An -- our group, and the little boy, and there was a woman with a child, that was probably drugged, because it didn't cry. But somebody must have known about the hiding place, and there was a man with -- an older Jew with a beard, and -- you know. And well, it didn't take long, somebody knocked on the door. We -- we were there for awhile, for a few hours I think, and as -- and then all of a sudden we heard noise, and they all -- opened the door, and we were discovered by Jewish police. So they took the old man first. They took my -- they tried to take my mother, but my mother resisted and they didn't take her, they didn't insist. My mother, who had a beautiful auburn hair turned gray in no time, and so she looked older than her age. And th-th -- they kind of

real -- now they -- they didn't insist at all, and I saw -- I don't know if I saw it before or after, it had to be after we were discovered already. And so they took some people, and some people th -- they -- they left us, our group, wh-whole group, and maybe even some other people, I don't know who they were. And they told us to wait because they didn't have transportation. So we were sitting there waiting, and -- through the window, and it was like a -- there was a ki -- must have been a nice apartment because it was a large window, and it was framing a landscape of snow on the -- on the ground and on the trees. And I saw a Jew in a **kapota**, you know, this -- thi -- this garb, medieval garb, long garb, and the **payess**, and the black hat. And the -- and a policeman roughing him up a little and taking him. A-And the -- and there was no conviction in what the policeman did. He didn't do it, you could see he -- he didn't want to do it. And there was no resistance on the part of the man. He was -- he was -- I guess reconciled to his fate. And -- and he took him. And he took him wherever he took him, I didn't see that. And we were waiting for long, long time, at least three hours, and I was again doing my brooding, and that time was thinking of French Revolution. And I was thinking what it was like for the aristocrats. I'm sorry, but that's the truth. I was thinking of French Revolution and aristocrats losing their heads, and **place de la Concorde** and **place de Liberté** or whatever it was called then, I don't know. And -- and then I said, there is a difference. And the difference is that before they killed them, they announced their name, and their rank, and their place in life, and everybody knew who they were. And I said, if we die, nobody will know our name, the time of our death, nobody will know that we lived. So



not only our -- we -- we will meet death, but our life is going to be eliminated, we didn't live. And -- and I said that was a pretty nasty [indecipherable]. I'm sure I see -- I -- I -- I shared that with my mother, I'm sure. I don't know what she said, she probably thought I was crazy. Well, I was crazy, in a way. Anyway, but then what happened is by the time six o'clock came, they came, the Jewish policeman came and they said the contingent was full.

Q: So you could go?

A: So we could go. You know, and a -- that's -- this is the role of p -- Jewish policemen. And you know, when they first started, I -- I feel sorry for them. There's a lot of talk about their brutality, but I didn't encounter it.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I didn't encounter it because I know that had there been no Jewish policeman, Ukrainians, or Germans, there would be transportation. They would find ways of taking us, no matter what. But because it was Jewish policemen, they stopped. So in a way -- but at the same time, you cannot forget the people who went.

Q: Right. Cause somebody went.

A: Somebody went. Somebody went. And that was very, very -- that -- then -- then -- then it connected with guilt.

Q: How?

A: Well, because why me?

Q: Oh my -- why you, yeah.

A: Right. And -- and that -- so it -- that -- so we wa -- left this place. Again the ghetto was made smaller, they took people, so you had to move somewhere else. So the next place I remember, I don't know if it was exactly the next place. But the next place I remember was a hot -- in a worse neighborhood of **Lwów**. That was a hot -- that was really what I missed. There was no roads in from the [indecipherable] there was dirt, and th-the hut had I don't know what kind of roof, no roof, was some kind of a -- what kind of roof do you use if you don't use a roof? I don't know. A straw roof or something like that? I don't know what it was. And it was a huge room, one room, and several famil -- families who are there. So I remember **Mina**, always in bed because she's sick. And forever making her things, knitting, knitting, knitting. And actually they were -- I think they were earning our money. I -- they were supporting us maybe, in a way. I remember that the girlfriend of **I-Irene's** is there, but I don't remember her name, so that's why I can't refer to her by name. And -- and I think she's mad. She's mad because my mother doesn't let me go and -- and get food on the Aryan side, because I have Aryan looks, I mean non-Jewish looks, and why don't I go and a -- why don't I go and -- and do that? And **Irene** explains to her, because **Irene** is a very sweet person and very understanding, she says, "You know, she wasn't brought up that way," she says. So you know, I'm an observer now, so I'm telling you what I observed.

Q: Right.

A: And -- and so I don't do anything, I just -- I'm a parasite, but not for long. My father gets me a job, and this is a great job. What do I do? I scrub the floors again, but I -- I am on a not Jewish team, I am on a Gentile team, and I get paid money.

Q: Really?

A: I get paid money. And I don't remember this story very well, but I think that one d -- but as long as they don't know, the -- the Polish women, that I get the same money they do, but one day I'm so greedy for the money that I don't wait, and I take -- I -- I get the money the same time they do. And I think that was it, but for three months it was glorious. For three months, I think, I worked there. And -- and I -- we ate, we really ate. We ate lot of grain, and the grain is not good for your stomach, so it caused all kinds of problems. But, you know, grain is good but not good, yo-you know what I mean. So -- well, anyway, I -- I don't want to get gory details. So I would go and like the work was very hard, but I do it, and -- but one time I catch -- I took the money in presence of the women, and shortly after I got fired, because I was taking the place of a Gentile woman.

Q: And they knew you were Jewish?

A: Oh, they knew I Jewish, I had an armband on.

Q: Uh-huh, you were wearing the armband.

A: Right. So I got fired, and that was the end. But before that happened, or maybe shortly after that happened, there was another ra -- a round-up. And here we were in that place, with lot of families, and there's not -- and they had -- they invited one of the people in the

round-up invited the -- to their shelter. And the shelter was built under the road. Oh yeah, but to keep the chronology straight, by that time, shortly before, my father gets taken.

Q: Okay.

A: To the **Janowska** camp. Before we go into the shelter, my father is taken.

Q: The -- is it the second time that you're hiding?

A: Before we go -- we -- yeah, the second time we are hiding.

Q: Right.

A: My father gets taken to the camp, right. And -- and he gets taken again, going through the **Peltewna** Street, and he had a bag of potatoes on his back. And -- I mean, and they take him. And my uncle -- my uncle, my cousin tells us that, that he is in the camp. But in the beginning my father was a magnificent calligrapher, he had a beautiful handwriting. And I still have examples of his handwriting, and they all letters, it -- it -- it looks like the, you know, professional calligrapher. And he becomes a sign painter in the camp. And -- and this is a skilled job, so he's not treated -- but my father is in his 50's, and he -- and he has arthritis everywh -- I mean, by then he probably forgot about his arthritis, you know, somehow. Mind over matter, whatever it was. So my father is in the camp, and now they are -- have the round-up and we have to go into a shelter. But while he's in the camp, my mother's managing to -- to send him something. And you can send people because there are other people who -- who have exit rights, so they -- the food is being brought in -- into the camp. And -- so every day when we can give him piece of bread -- I know how we get it, my -- my mother gets it. And -- and -- or -- or half a -- I remember

th -- th -- this one I wer -- half a jar of soup. Small jar like that, half of it. A-And s -- and so, but we have to go into the shelter. And the shelter is built underneath, and -- and this very tight. And -- and there a place for seven people, and everybody sits next to the other, and there -- the one seat sits on the board on a pail and this is your bathroom. And -- and we sit there, I think, for two weeks.

Q: Two weeks?

A: Right.

Q: We're going to have to change the tape, so hold that part of the story and we'll do that, we'll start right with that.

**End of Tape Six**

## Beginning Tape Seven

Q: All right, when we ended the last tape you were describing hiding with those seven people on those benches.

A: Right, right. So we had to stay there two -- I remember two weeks, because it's for two weeks that we didn't send Father anything. An-An -- and I was very concerned about this, because I knew that if we don't send him anything, he may not survive. And -- and so -- and I had that dream, in which my uncle comes and tells me that Uncle **Emil**, or cousin **Emil** will tell me that he's dead. And -- and so, after this -- the -- the -- this round-up is over, we can come out, I tell that -- when it happened, when I dream about it, I tell it to my mother, and my mother's starting to reassure me it's only a dream. Well, it really happened. And not right away, we didn't know right -- right away. And in sequence, I remember one more hiding place. That hiding place apparently was very safe, because nobody bothered us at all. I mean, nobody knocked, nobody denounced, nobody did anything. But then we had to -- again, the ghetto was made smaller, and we had to go into another apartment. And we did, and again there was a round-up. I don't know if we had time to breathe, altogether. And again the people were -- I -- you know, people say that the people in the ghetto were terrible, but we encountered only good will. And -- and we were invited to another place to hide, and the we -- and it was very, very ingenious. But we have to remember that by that time there was -- I -- I don't think there were any p -- p -- Jewish police, because as they killed the head of the **Judenrat**, as they killed the head of the -- they broke up the police, there was no more Jewish policemen. They -- they

created [indecipherable] other bodies, they created something else, but they replaced them somehow, but not as policeman. And so anyway, so this was the p -- this -- why was it so ingenious? Because the entrance was inside of a armoire, just like a -- you know, I don't know if you remember, there is a tale by -- by **Lewis**, about some kind of fantasy that he wrote, how you enter through a -- into a fantasy land through a sleeve in a coat. And we entered through a hole in the ground into the -- into the hole in the ground. I mean, through the hole into the hole in the ground.

Q: In the hole -- the -- the -- the hole into the armoire --

A: The hole was made inside the armoire --

Q: -- moire, and --

A: -- leading underground.

Q: Right, uh-huh.

A: And it covered only that area, I think, that -- of the armoire, more or less. There was space for very few people. But we went there, somebody covered the hole with the suitcase, I don't know how many, there must have been many other shelters, because there was space for very few, but we were -- my mother and I were the two of them. And so we went into this space, and -- and shortly after, we heard knocking. And this time there were not Jewish police, there was **S.S.** and Gestapo, and they came with sticks, and they knocked all over the place. They knocked in the walls, they knocked in the floor. But because we were under the armoire, they did -- they couldn't hear the hollow sound, and we survived that, too. And so that was a short thing, it didn't last too long, we didn't

stay there too long. And we came out, and I remember that after this round-up again, the ghetto ga -- was made smaller. But because we were hiding in that other place, and this place, **Mina's** condition deteriorated. And I don't think he -- he came -- he came in time, cousin **Emil**, to give her shots. And as we had to move -- we moved into another apartment again, and this time it was a beautiful place, a beautiful home. And you could see, I -- it almost looked like somebody just left. And -- and there were pictures of Swiss mountains, with **prossrip** -- prosperous people modeling in -- in front of beautiful chalets, and -- and all kinds of stuff put in a fancy wall, it's -- with the finest [indecipherable] but a -- w -- nobody lives there. And -- and so we -- we were not the only ones there, and I don't think we had a bag, because my mother and I, we sat in a closet, one next to the other, with bags against the wall, and a -- and my mother felt bad that we couldn't go to sleep. I said, "As I hold your hand I'm okay." And -- and we were -- and I was sleeping sitting against the wall. But when we woke up, **Mina** was dead. She ha -- she -- they put her into a bed, but she was dead. And that was very, very sad. Again, we had to leave there, f -- it was just temporary and we had to move -- move out of that place.

Q: And is the child **Juno**, and **Irena** with you? Or are --

A: Yeah, we are all together, but different par -- I mean, we were together, was different place. And the i -- and the poor **Juno**, he has distended belly because he's hungry, we all hungry. And -- and then you know, but it's much ter -- more terrible.

Q: Right.



A: And -- and he -- the children are quiet, they don't even, you know, they -- they just take it. And sometimes he would whine, but you know, it was hopeless, i-it -- it's just -- I can't imagine how hard it was on her, on -- cause it did -- it must have broken her heart. It was hard on us too, to watch him suffer.

Q: Right, right.

A: And -- well anyway, so **Mina** died, and we couldn't even stay there to mourn or anything.

Q: Right, right.

A: And just had to leave her. And -- so we made a sarcophagus for her. We laid her on the bed, and we gather furniture around her, just like a pyramid.

Q: Really?

A: And -- and we said **Kaddish**, my cousin **Irena**, **Irene** said -- said **Kaddish**, and we had to leave. And actually, before she died she probably felt that she was dying. A-And she said, "I -- I -- I'm the happy one." And y-y-y-y-y -- **Irene** said that too, and she's the happy one, after she died. She -- she's the happy one. Right. An-And -- and we left her. And just left her as she was. And then -- and that was -- that was about -- about March '43 by then. And I still didn't know my father is dead at that time.

Q: And do you think your father was arrested in '43, or taken into **Janowska**?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: In '43?

A: Yeah, he was taken when he was bringing the potatoes for us.

Q: I see, right, okay.

A: And I felt terrible because I said, what if he didn't bring the potatoes for us, he did it for us. And I lived with that for years and years and years. And -- and I felt guilty for my father's death, until I realized that it wasn't us who killed -- who killed him, right?

Q: Right. Certainly not.

A: Right.

Q: So how -- it takes two or three weeks before you find out, or more?

A: I think it -- I don't know how it is, but th-this -- first was the once hiding place, then the other, and then we had to evacuate. I-It subs -- and then, after I go -- we go to the last place that **Emil** comes and tells my mother about Father's death. Maybe I was there, too, but I don't remember, and my father died. And I was absolutely heartbroken. And at that time we were in a place where there's no space to walk. And the beds, they took somebody -- again, there were people who worked, and there were people who didn't. And allegedly there were two ghettos, ghetto **A** and ghetto **B**. Ghetto **A** were the people who worked, ghetto **B** were the illegals, who did not work. And th -- you know, if you didn't work, you had to go to **Janowska** or somewhere. They were trying to eliminate the ghetto altogether. So -- so we are on that place, and we are one of the bads, and it's -- the day before, I find out that the father is dead. And I sit on this bed all day and I cry, one of the beds. And the next day at six o'clock they tell us we have to leave because the inspection is coming, and we are illegals. So my mother packs up the little sack, or the billo -- suitcase that I have, and -- and -- and we go out in the square, not far from where

they were. And it's six o'clock in the morning and nobody's there. So we just walk around, and walk around, and we talk and talk about what hope there is, what -- and so on and so forth, and how we going to -- to -- to -- what's going to happen to us. And will we live or will we die, I mean -- I -- and I -- I also worry that -- I feel that we still have hope, because as long as you live, th -- until the end, you hope. And -- and just as we do that, there is a -- we don't even know, but there is a fence on one side of the square. And the fence is open and the people are walking out. And -- and my mother puts the suitcase in my hand and say, "You go with them. Go to **Wanda**." And I didn't have her address, I -- I -- I'm a -- my mother, I think before, sometime before, gave me an address. But I never tested it, so I didn't know it for sure. And -- and my mother pushes me out. And I said, "Now how can I leave you?" And my mother said, "Oh, you'll take me out," she says, lightly, you know, yeah, like if it was -- had nothing, t -- you know, to do that. And -- and he -- she embraces this and she pushes me out, because you know, the people's home is not very big. And these are the people who go to work. And before they go to work they have to be disinfected, which is a horrendous ordeal in -- in which they were beaten and - - and di -- teased, and -- and -- and humiliated terribly. Ah -- but I don't stay with them. I drop my armband and I'm on the other side, and I leave them, I leave the --

Q: And nobody caught --

A: -- and nobody is there, and I don't know how it was there were no ga -- guards in that particular place there were no guards. If there are guards, I am -- we don't even look for them, we just -- I do whatever I do without -- just look around like this and that's it.

Q: And you're still carrying your little suitcase?

A: And I have my little suitcase, right. And like -- I go to look for my aunt. In the meantime I'm crying like a baby, with -- you know, I -- because I just left my mother. It's lucky for me there are not many s -- people on street, but all alone and ho --

Q: And the day before, you found out about your father?

A: Right, right, right. Just day before, right. And -- and I -- so I cry like a baby and I go and I cry, and all of a sudden I see a soldier coming up. And it turns out to be an Italian soldier. They would ta -- send Italian soldiers to the front. And being an Italian soldier he's very full of compassion, so he comes to me and he asks me -- I mean in Italian, r-right, w-which I don't know. Di -- di -- you know, but you don't n-need to know, because body -- it's body talk, or -- yeah. Anyway, so he -- he tells me -- I mean, he doesn't tell me anything, but he's signs maybe he could help me. And I say oh no, no, no, thank you very much, and I le -- and I just go. And then I realize I better mind my appearance, so I stop crying, and I try to behave like everybody else. And by the time it's 7:30, I arrive to the place where should be my aunt's apartment. But it isn't, it doesn't look the -- she described her apartment to us as a place where there is a separate entrance. And this place does not have an entrance, separate entrance. So this is a wrong address, and I don't want to knock on the door, so I stand in front for awhile, and -- and then all of a sudden the people -- there are people all around, so I can't stand too long. And I move on to the next place, and the next place looks very much like it might be her place, and I take courage in my hands, and I knock on the door. And she opens the door, and she almost faints. A

whole -- a whole -- blood is drained from her face, she -- i-it -- it's just unbelievable. I mean, it's hard to describe. And well, but she -- I enter, and she closes door behind --

Q: So is the -- is the -- is it fear that's coming over her --

A: Oh, yes.

Q: -- or she's glad to see -- she's not glad to see you?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No, she's not.

Q: No.

A: What comes to her mind, if I can read her mind, is what am I going to do with her?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Right. Well, of course. And I don't hold it against her.

Q: Me -- you were 18 at the time?

A: Not yet.

Q: Not yet. Not quite?

A: Wait a minute, it's -- it's 943, but I go -- I'm going to be 18 in October.

Q: In October.

A: Right.

Q: Right. So you're pretty --

A: So I'm still --

Q: You're still 17.

A: I'm still 17. I'm very young, right. That's important.

Q: Yes.

A: Anyway, so -- so my aunt -- and then we cannot talk. I cannot talk to her. Now I'm completely drained, I don't know what I'm doing, nothing. I'm just -- I'm just in shock, I have to say. And so my aunt knows what's going on, so she puts me on her little couch. She has a very small place. There is a bed, there is a little couch with bookshelves on top. There is one space that has a door that leads to the apartment next door, because she sublets from somebody. And there is a door to the outside. I don't know where she does her ablutions, I don't remember. And so we cannot talk, because she's not supposed to have anybody there.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She has no guests, and she has to go to work. So she puts a big, big bowl of grits in front of me, and I'm in seventh heaven again. So I stay there all day eating grits and reading books, in the back, right. So -- and then she comes back, and that goes on for three days like that. And I don't talk, and she doesn't talk. So it's -- finally she says, "You know what? I can't keep you here. I have to take you to the ghetto, and then I'll commit suicide." And well, I think we did talk somewhat, but not much, only maybe in writing. Because she did tell me -- tell me how very fearful she is of being discovered. How she hears of be -- of women being tortured when they are taken for Jews, even not Jewish women. And she tells me what tortures are applied. Like hot -- hot and -- hot and cold, and all kinds of horrible things. I mean, not all kinds. Hot baths, real boiling water,

and some other things. Or ice water, something like that. And -- and then, I finally think of the little paper that **Pani Janina** gave to me, and -- and I show it to her. And when she looks at it, she has that glimpse of hope in her eyes. And she said, "Oh, we can do something with that." And she has those two friends. I -- I -- I'm kind of angry at them because I thought they should have been more helpful, but who is to know. I don't remember their names either, any more. And those two friends were not Jewish.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And she's very close with them. I felt that maybe they should have given more support, or maybe helped her more than they did, because she was very good to them in the times past, and wasn't that -- like it was a new friendship. So she takes the paper [indecipherable] to show it to them, and -- and she says maybe you can use it, but I tell her we can not use it without the permission of the lady, of the mother, **Pani Janina**, we cannot do it, because I wouldn't want to -- if she wants to do it, she has to do it knowingly, not behind their back. So they do that, they go to her and they ask her permission. And I don't see them, I'm -- oh yeah, I did see them one time, excuse me.

Q: These two friends?

A: Right.

Q: Mm-hm

A: I -- well, I knew them from before the war, as a child. But I didn't know them -- but I didn't see them since then, and -- anyway -- so they go to **Pani Janina** and they asked her if it's okay to use her paper, and she gives them another paper. I don't know which

one is which, I -- one was **extract** of birth certificate, and the other is a school certificate of -- of her younger chi -- younger daughter. And what happens is that -- she says yes, on the condition that I would convert if I survive. And I say yes. And the two friends come in to see if I -- what do I look like, if I can take a chance outside. So they make my hair look like if I am a peasant, and -- which I -- I don't -- I didn't like my appearance at all, but -- right. And then -- since then I gained weight. I was fed on this grits every day, so I -- I got rounded up. I-It took a -- maybe two weeks -- a week or two weeks, some like that. And a -- but they tell me, but she du -- she walks like a Jew.

Q: What's that supposed to mean?

A: Exactly what it does. W-What do you think Jews looked like when they got out of the ghetto? Or if they escape from a train, what did they look like?

Q: Fearful?

A: Right. More dead. That was fearful in every pore of their body. In their eyes, in their hair. That's how fearful you are. Well, anyway, and so -- well, but this could be overcome, so it wasn't the most terrible thing. And my aunt decides she's going to take me to where my grandmother is and my uncle in **Ponikwa**. But this time the count is not going to drive us with his car. This time we are going to take a train. So we take **[indecipherable]** and this is a -- we take the train to -- we have to take a train to **Brody**, and from **Brody** we have to go by something, by -- by cart to **Ponikwa**. And well, the suitcase was put over our -- on the shelf above our heads, but by the time that they -- we arrived, there is no suitcase. So -- and you know -- what was -- that was very dangerous,



because everybody knew that the Jews when they escaped, they have nothing. So if you had no clothes, that was one thing against you that was very significant. But we couldn't do noth -- anything about it, and that was the truth, they saw it. So --

Q: Wh-Wh -- where were your papers?

A: My papers, well wi -- on me.

Q: On you.

A: Not in -- God forbid they should have been in the suitcases.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: Oh my goodness, that would be the end. No, they were on me. I didn't even think of it, but they must have been, right, cause I have them now, right. So, or maybe my aunt held them. I -- I have no idea. That could be -- that too. And so we went there, and I lived with my uncle, and -- and they introduce me as my -- the niece, the granddaughter, everything was legitimate. And I lived with them. And I went to the woods, looking for partisans, looking for mushrooms and looking for partisans.

Q: The partisans, why are you looking for partisans?

A: Well, because I want to join them, why not?

Q: Oh really?

A: Well, sure.

Q: Uh-huh. Okay.

A: Or -- or -- or -- you know, I was looking for partisans. I went to the woods, the woods were there, a-and yeah. Well, it wasn't -- it was as foolish as -- you know, it was a foolish thing, but I -- I really went deep into the woods. And -- I wi --

Q: But you thought you might fight with the partisans?

A: Yeah, that I might find partisans. But they probably were afraid of me, and they didn't come out, if they were there.

Q: They might have thought --

A: They probably thought I was a nice little Gentile girl, and they all better stay away. They were afraid to be discovered, sure.

Q: Sure.

A: And -- and I don't know necessarily, maybe there were Jews hiding there too, because one day there was a big, big **deshri**, big scream on the streets, they ka -- killed the Jew, they killed the Jew, and everybody ran to ki -- to see. The -- they -- they killed somebody who was probably hiding in the fields. And the Ukrainian police with the dogs chased him and they killed him, but we never went to look. We did -- yeah, we didn't want to go to look because we didn't know what our reaction would be if -- what we would say, or we would do.

Q: Are you depressed at this point?

A: I -- I -- I don't know if you can be depressed, any more than you would be **[indecipherable]**. I'm not situationally depressed, I don't know. I may be depressed later. I don't know, I don't think about that.

Q: Well, were you very sad when you were alone? Was it very difficult for you?

A: Oh, you mean when I di -- was I depressed when -- when this happened. I was in terrible state, not depression, I was in despair, I -- it wasn't a state of depression, it was total despair because my mother was in the ghetto and nobody was doing anything to help her. And I didn't see what they could do to help her, because we had no papers for her.

Q: Right.

A: So -- an -- and -- and no papers could be had without money.

Q: Right. So when you were in the village --

A: So I was in the village there from March, or -- or is it April, it's a March April kind of thing.

Q: Mm-hm. In '43.

A: '43. And -- and -- and -- and my mother -- an-and my mother was in the ghetto, and nobody knew what's going to happen, a-and -- and I didn't have to wait long because in May they started it. A-And we -- and rumors spread fast. And not only that, shortly after we had a letter from my aunt's friends, that she committed suicide.

Q: That your aunt committed suicide.

A: Right. And -- and they announced, a-and they -- they told us about a funeral and nobody went to the funeral, because w-we were -- I guess my uncle didn't want to go to the funeral because he was afraid to be recognized by somebody.

Q: And --

A: And nobody went to the funeral.

Q: And the assumption is that she killed herself why?

A: Well initially I heard from my uncle, he told me she wrote a letter. My aunt -- my mother gro -- wrote to her a very desperate letter from the ghetto, apparently you could write and be delivered. I mean, the mail could be delivered. And she wrote a desperate letter, and my aunt, since my aunt could not help her, she killed herself. And then I spoke to my uncle not long ago, I mean, maybe half a year ago on the phone, and he told me that's not the reason, that the real reason was that somebody stopped her and took her papers, and told her that they -- h-her papers are going to be verified, and they are going to come back after to her, to -- they going to return. And she was afraid that she might be tortured, and she might give away our place where we are. In other words, betray us under torture. So she took pills. An overdose, she overdosed.

Q: Different story, huh?

A: Yeah, well I -- but it's very --

Q: [indecipherable] yes --

A: -- it's -- well, it was very plausible.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they probably both true.

Q: True.

A: Right. They're both true.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Maybe he -- at that time he didn't want to scare us, because that was his -- is still under the -- it was still under the occupation.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: Right.

A: My grandmother, he -- they -- he -- he would have to tell my grandmother, too, and he probably didn't want to do that. That was her daughter, she lost two daughters, just like that. A-A-And -- and shortly after, I had to work in the fields. It was an ordinance that whoever didn't work had to work either in the fields or pay some ransom or something. I don't know what happened, but I went to work in the fields. Either way it was suspicious.

Q: Right.

A: If I didn't work, was suspicious, if I pay the rents, was suspicious. So I -- I went, and -

Q: You know, can you hold that thought? Because we have to change the tape, I'm afraid. Thank you.

### **End of Tape Seven**

### Beginning Tape Eight

Q: You were explaining that you were suspicious if you worked in the field and got money, and you were suspicious if you didn't work. So let's talk about what you were doing when you were [indecipherable]

A: So we ended up in that we -- we -- I guess we discussed it with my uncle and my grandmother, and we decided I should go and work. And I went to work and I worked for a half day. And I don't know if it was the same day or the next day, I was arrested.

Q: The same -- the first time that you --

A: Worked half a day.

Q: Really?

A: Right. I think that I -- had to be the next day.

Q: Mm-hm

A: Or maybe it could have been the same day. If I worked in the morning I could ha -- I think I was arrested two o'clock in the afternoon.

Q: Huh.

A: And I was arrested and put on a cart -- horse -- horse cart, right? There was a seat -- there was a seat on the cart that was -- I don't know how to describe it. How do describe a peasant means of transportation?

Q: A cart with a horse?

A: Yeah.

Q: A cart.

A: A horse cart?

Q: I think it's cart. I think it's okay.

A: It is? Okay.

Q: Or carriage? It wouldn't be a carriage.

A: It wasn't a carriage, no, no --

Q: No, that's too --

A: -- no, oh no, it was too -- that would be too elaborate.

Q: Yeah.

A: And so it was a horse cart. And I was arrested by two Ukrainian policeman, and -- who were rather polite, and -- and he told me that I'm being suspected of being Jewish, and I'm taken to the **Brody** commis -- **Commissariat** of Police.

Q: Now this is the little town that you passed through when you first came, **Brody**?

A: Yeah. Yeah, I think -- yes, definitely, it had to be. That was the closest town to the area. In the midway we are being stopped by some other Ukrainian police, and they bring a girl, about my age, dark, curly hair, looks like a gypsy. Big, black eyes, very lively, making jokes, funny. And they do the same thing with her, ther -- she's being suspected of being Jewish, and now there are two of us being taken to the **Brody** jail. And we get to the **Brody** jail and they put us in different cells -- different cells, and I don't know, I remember time with people in the cell, and I remember time without people in the cell. I think they put people in the cell to find out who I was. You know, if I would part with some secrets or something. Or just to observe. And one time my uncle came, or -- and I

spoke to him through the window, and I was trying to convince him that they will not deport me, I'm not going to be deported, but we didn't speak of deportation to -- as a Jew. We spoke of deportation as a Pole. And -- because the jail -- the people with whom we were jailed were the people who were being readied for a departure to amer -- not to **Germany**, to forced labor. A-And how it would work, there were the -- the organizations in -- organizations of private people in **Germany** who would put an order for forced labor help. And they would recruit the people either by doing **rafles** on the streets -- **rafles** -- no, t -- said -- ch -- is -- that's a French word, doing **rafle**. Well, by closing the street and arresting anybody within.

Q: An **aktion**.

A: No, that wouldn't be, because that was directed against the local population.

Q: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

A: Either Poles or -- I don't know if that time they would take or ca -- Ukrainians too, because Ukrainians were actually their helpers and they were -- but they -- only in the beginning, later on turned to -- oth-otherwise. But -- so there were people in that jail who were Poles being readied for transportation to **Germany**.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But to us they said they going to -- they're waiting for the Gestapo officers who are not there, and we are going to be interrogated. And we sat there for at least a week. And after a week they came around, they said well, since you say we are **Lwów**, we are going to send you to **Lwów**. Let them interrogate you in **Lwów**, **Lwów**. And they --



Q: Now, in the meantime you have your papers with you, these papers.

A: I have my papers, right, I showed them the papers.

Q: Right.

A: But the -- they never interrogated me directly in **Brody**. They -- I think they did it through subterfuge. They put people in -- in the -- you know, in the jail cell to kind of figure out who you were.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And apparently they didn't come to any definite -- definitive conclusions, so they decided they don't want to bother with it and they send us -- I don't know what they did - - thought, but this is what I thought that they thought. And they send us to -- a-and they sen-send us to **Lwów**. And in **Lwów** they send us to a transit camp. A transit camp was a camp that housed people that go to **Germany** as forced laborers.

Q: And th-the ghetto th -- no longer exists?

A: That has nothing to do ghet -- the lot -- ghetto no longer exists.

Q: And where did they send you, it -- it's actually in **Lwów**?

A: This is in **Lwów** and it's also on the **Janowska** street.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But it's not a concentration camp.

Q: Right.

A: It's a camp, it's a transit camp.

Q: I see.

A: In that camp there are barracks, and barracks for men I think must be separate, and barracks for women. And the women are -- yeah, and they -- yo -- yo -- and th-they -- and women are waiting for determination where they are going to go. So they bring us straight to the commandant of the camp, in other words to the camp commanding [indecipherable] director, whatever you want to call. And -- and he speaks Polish, and there's one thing that I didn't tell you, because I forgot, that on the little piece of paper, marking my name, there is a **J**, a big **J**, in the corner, underlined, it's like made with a black magic marker, and we know what it stands for if it's a **J**, right?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: For **Juden**.

Q: Right.

A: And -- and a -- I think this paper has a copy attached to it. And my friend **Franka** also has one like that. But he doesn't see us together again, he sees us separately. And he tells me in Polish, "They tell me you are a Jewish -- you -- you are a Jew." And I say to him, "Ah, they are just teasing me." And he just dismisses it, and he said to me -- he tells me to report to the barracks. So I go to the barracks and with all the bunch of all the other women. And there's already of wh -- and then I found -- I find **Franka** there, and we -- we sleep on the cots next to each other. And there is a rumor already about some girls that look Jewish, and the whole barracks are full of rumors that those two girls are Jewish, but not us. Another --

Q: A second pair?

A: Yeah, another pair of girls who ap -- who apparently are attracting attention to themselves by singing. They have beautiful voices, and they say they are Russians, and they are singing. So I -- I mean, I -- I could -- didn't -- I don't know what happened, but I know that -- I don't think that anything happened on that parti -- in the place about them, except that they were -- I knew that they got off in **Erfurt** when we went further.

Q: Now, was **Franka** Jewish?

A: Oh yes. We --

Q: Did you know?

A: Oh, right away. I --

Q: You knew it right away?

A: Oh yeah, we -- you know, we had th-the uncanny instinct to discover one another. We did it always, even in **Stuttgart** when we finally got to our final destination, we discovered our -- identities of other girls in our situation.

Q: Now on the papers that you had --

A: It was that **J**.

Q: The **J** was put on by these Ukrainians?

A: Yeah, yes, and the -- but the **J** was only on the top copy, and on the bottom copy didn't have it, because it didn't go through, there was no -- anything before.

Q: I see, right, right.

A: So I don't know how it happened, but **Franka** had the presence of mind, and one piece of paper was to be kept in -- in **Brody** and the other went with us. So in her case,

her piece of paper with the **J** stayed in **Brody**, and the white one went with her, and with me it was just the opposite.

Q: The opposite.

A: So, I was very scared that any time now we were escorted by -- well, we stayed in -- i- in bra -- in the -- in this camp for it -- I don't know if a week or two weeks or something like that. I think they -- probably a week. I send the cards to my grandmother, to make sure they know they are being deported, which was a good sign because they wouldn't deport Jewish -- Jewish people to **Germany** for labor, because the Jewish people were deported for death. So that was a good sign for them, so they could, you know, could protect themselves that way. And so what happened was that they put us on the train and it was a regular train, but we were escorted by soldiers.

Q: So you were sitting on chairs -- on benches.

A: We were sitting on the benches. And we had access to windows, but I was terribly depressed, speaking of depression. I was so depressed that my unc -- my aunt gave me a little bottle with cyanide. And she told me --

Q: Your grandmother, or your --

A: No, my aunt, **Wanda**.

Q: **Wanda**, from a long time ago.

A: Right. When I was there in her apartment.

Q: Right.

A: She gave me a bottle of cyanide. So I don't know, I was so -- in such a despair that I decided I should -- I should do it. And I was throu -- in the window, and nobody could -- I felt nobody could see me, I took it out, and I ga -- put it to -- to my mouth, and I kind of smelled it, and then I threw it. And I was thinking -- I -- I think I -- I must have made a decision that if I did that, that would be a self accusation.

Q: Yeah.

A: And -- and if -- and I wouldn't jeopardize just me, but I'd jeopardize everybody who was with me. A-And it was stupid. And I still did -- I wasn't dead, after all, and I was still going -- I was going to **Germany** and why do that, right? So I made the right decision and I threw away the -- the what's his name, the cyanide. Who knows, might have not been good anyway, because sometimes they sold the -- you know, something that was strictly not --

Q: Right.

A: -- f-falsified, right? Well anyway, so we went on the train, and w-we passed through **Plaszów**, and we saw the people on the -- in the -- in the camp uniforms, in the depression and the -- it -- it was very hard to watch that, very, very hard. And -- and then we were into **Germany**. We passed **Erfurt**, we passed **Trier**, and we still didn't know where we are going, I don't think we did. And we ended up in **Stuttgart**. And apparently what they did is they sent job orders that -- those were specific job orders and they already -- and we were already assigned in **Lwów** where we were going. So my girlfriend

ended up as a -- as a helper in a café house, and I was assigned to be a kitchen maid, and a -- and -- a kitchen maid in a restaurant in **Stuttgart**.

Q: These are two different places? How --

A: Is a -- they're both in **Stuttgart**.

Q: Right, but --

A: But she's in a different location, and I am different location. I am in a restaurant, which is located in a suburb of **Stuttgart** called **Feuerbach**. In **Stuttgart**, **Feuerbach**. And she is somewhere else, I -- I don't remember where. And -- and our career as forced laborers begins in **Germany**. And -- so there is a whole -- I get to meet my boss, my -- I have two bosses, he -- both are single, man and woman, sister and brother. They own the restaurant, and they own -- I don't know if they own the building, but they own the first -- I think first floor. Their apartment's on the first floor. And this is a -- and a European first floor, so here it will be a second floor, because the restaurant is on the first floor. I have a little -- a little -- I don't know how to describe because it's so small, a little cubicle on -- in the attic up there, all the way up on top. But it's very nice, it's single, and -- and the roofs -- the roof was almost on my head, but it has furniture, it has nice, white furniture. Has a white bed and a white dresser with a mirror, can you imagine that? Wow. So here I have this white dresser and a mirror, and the dresser is so close to the bed that I knocked it up right away. I da -- the dresser, I mean. Anyway, and what do -- that was an absolute blessing. That fact, that I had it -- a room away from everybody, that was a blessing, cause if I was to work in a factory, I would have to share wu -- probably live in a camp

kind of situation, in a barracks, or in dormitories with a bunch of who knows whom. And it was bunch of really dangerous people, because many people who went to work in **Germany**, not Jewish, were people who -- who -- I -- I mean, I don't want to denigrate anybody, but people in lower level element. I-I won't say criminals, but -- I wouldn't go that far. But it so happened -- but anyway, whoever they were, they will -- they might have recognized me. Not becau -- because in -- in spite of re -- every sa -- appearances -- appearances are g -- are good for a short time, but if you live with somebody longer you - - you know the difference. It's deeper than the skin, you know, right. So anyway, so that's was my situation, my hours were from seven to 10, and --

Q: Seven in the morning till 10 at night?

A: Right. With two hours of **Zimmerstunden**, meaning I had two hours break. And that was yeah, that break was respected when -- when -- before the bombing started. Once the bombing started I had to work all the way through, and I went -- I went hysterical one time, cause I -- I just couldn't cope.

Q: With the bombing?

A: Not with the bombing. With the work.

Q: With the work?

A: Well, because I ji -- I -- as I mentioned before, I loved my sleep. And w -- and we had to go to a little shelter, and I -- I decided I only go to the shelter when the bombs are coming down. Very often the alarms came in, but the -- the planes went further to another cities. And -- but if the -- the alarm sounds you have to go, and I decided when I heard

the bombs coming -- and you can hear it because there was a different sound, very, very specific, and those were fire bombs, they're inflammatory bombs. So you could -- that -- the swish, you could hear that. And so I wouldn't go to the shelter. So my boss told me you have to go to the shelter, because they'll say that you're signaling the -- the -- the bombers. So I had to go to the shelter, so I barely slept. And my sleep was more important for me than anything else. Well anyway, you know, we keep our idiosyncrasies.

Q: Right.

A: Right. So anyway, but in the -- sometime in between, I developed a very, very bad inflammation. We had to -- when we were cooking we had to -- the potatoes were cooked on a steam, and th-there was a huge container. And usually I didn't deal with it, because it -- it was the boss, who was a man th-that did it with his sister, who was used to it, but one time I had to do it with somebody else, and the steam burned my hand. I still have a scar somewhere. Right, here is the scar.

Q: Right.

A: I had the -- so the -- I got -- I was burned by this steam, and the steam -- and th-the -- the wound did get inflamed to such a degree that I had a red -- a red mark in my vein going up. And so finally my boss decided that it looks too bad and send me to the hospital. And they -- and they operated immediately.

Q: Really?



A: Oh yeah. And they put me asleep. And wh-what was funny to me, I don't know it has any significance at all, they made me count, and I counted in French. I don't know -- I don't know what I could have counted, and I -- I don't know what language I could have -- yeah, but I counted in French.

Q: Were you speaking fluent German?

A: By then I should have. Not when I got there, certainly not. But I s -- I went to look for books. I went to look for culture, which was very hard, because I was a foreigner, **Ausländering**, so when I went to -- to the bookstores, they wouldn't sen -- sell me anything. But I think I ended up with a dictionary, and I eventually ended up some books. I ended up with first volume of **Dostoevsky**, "**Crime and Punishment**," in German, but not the second volume. I ended up with another book which I loved, and a -- but I lend it to somebody and they got bumped, so the book, I never got the book back.

Q: And what was that book?

A: I-I don't remember this.

Q: You don't know.

A: But it was a fantasy book and I loved it. In German, everything in German, and -- and I had a free day on Friday and my girlfriend tried to get the same day, and sh-she didn't work hard, because she was very pretty so they put on her a black uniform with a frilly apron and a little frilly lace hat -- the hat top, or something, and -- and she didn't work too hard. And -- and what she did, among other things, she had to paste the -- she had to paste the food stamps. And she pasted the food stamps -- of course, the food stamps, th-

they were rationed, the Germans were rationed, and it was very hard to get the meat stamps. Anyway, but she -- apparently -- I don't know whether she took it as a gift or she absconded with it, either, and she came up with a sheet of meat stamps. So wow, that was so tremendous, we went and bought ourselves sausage. And we sat on our -- in my bed, in my little bedroom, and we -- and we ate the sausage just like that.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, it was a special treat. Because we had food there, but a -- you know, that wasn't -- the best food wasn't --

Q: Right.

A: -- right, to be had. But I was never hungry, I cannot complain. And I wasn't -- I wasn't treated badly by my boss. I had scary moments all the time because I was afraid that somebody's going to discover my piece of paper with **A** on it, and every time the phone rang, the phone rang and my heart went into spins.

Q: You mean with a **J** on it.

A: With a **J** on it.

Q: **J**.

A: Because the -- I thought that they -- it was taken to the **Arbeitsamt**, which is a work office --

Q: Right.

A: -- labor office, and that's -- yeah, and all the way through I -- I was afraid somebody might discover it. But thank God they didn't. I had a scare one day when my boss told me

Herr **Binder** is coming, and I had a fit. Cause Herr **Binder** is -- was the name of my father. It happened to be another Herr **Binder**, and this was -- he was the -- he was deliverer of the so-soda **vasser**. I mean th-the soda, right?

Q: Soda?

A: Bi -- bottles of soda.

Q: Right.

A: Right, right.

Q: So what was -- what work did you have to do for them?

A: Okay, what work did I do. In the morning I had to come, and I had to peel the potatoes, which wasn't bad. And then I had to wash the dishes. The primary job was for me to wash dishes, from -- restaurant dishes. You can imagine that. And that was -- there was no machines there. So I stood forever, washing dishes, right. I-Is that -- I had an adventure washing dishes, because there was a patron who saw me washing dishes, I guess, because every -- I was here, and here the door would open and the waitress would -- she was graceful waitress, she opened -- she had to -- maybe three sets of dishes in her -- or four sets of dishes in her arms, and she would open swinging door with her leg, and she would march in there. It was a sight to see. But every time she opened the door, there was the patron sitting by the -- what's his name -- by the door, and -- and I was there, and to -- washing dishes. So one day somebody send me a rose, a beautiful rose, a perfect rose. It was fine, I -- I -- an-an-and the -- I -- and the guy who was smiling there, I guessed he must have been he, so I smiled back to him. And lo and behold, a day after or

so, somebody -- my boss, or my -- no, the waitress tells me that he wants to meet me after work. And I say, "Uh-uh, I'm not meeting him." And that went on for a few days. In the meantime the rose was getting more beautiful in my room up there, because it was a red rose, and the room was white, so in front of a mirror was multiplied, it was a beautiful rose. Anyway, but I said no, and no, and no. And then my boss came in and said, "How come you say no? Why don't you go and meet him? He's a nice guy, he send you the rose. Go and meet him." I said, "No, I -- I don't want to meet him. You can tell him, I don't want to meet him." And ended there, but I didn't want to meet him because I didn't want to get involved into attachments that may lead me where I don't want to go.

Q: Right.

A: Right. So that was the end of that. But I -- there were -- we met many girls, who were as us, on Aryan papers, on non-Jewish papers, and we met [indecipherable] anyways, all over the place, and somehow we felt each other. One time we had a terrible scare. We had my boss, who was very considerate, apparently, in some ways. He was considerate that way, he was considerate. I had to si -- wear a sign as a Pole, and he tore it off, he said, "In my house you don't have to wear it." So I -- that meant that we can go anywhere. I mean, we could go to movies. And the movies was a good place to hide, I thought. So on the way off, I couldn't stay home, right? So **Franka** and I, we would go to the movies. And in the movies one time, somebody, as we were walking out, somebody knocks and touches our -- on our shoulder and say we -- and -- and two girls, and they say, "We know who you are." So that was as scary as [indecipherable], I said, "Yes, and

who are we?" And then we went out, and they admitted they were Jewish and we are Jewish, and -- and like this, yeah right, just like that, admitted immediately. Because you know, we needed it. We needed to be who we were. We couldn't -- we pretend, you know? We didn't want to pretend, we wanted feel -- we wanted to be our o -- who we were, really. Right, right. So we disco -- I counted 17 girls, and I'm sure there were more.

Q: 17?

A: I discovered 17, yeah, 17 girls.

Q: And -- and when you went to the movies, did you see newsreels and propaganda stories?

A: Probably, probably. I saw the propaganda stuff in the papers, terrible propaganda stuff, about the **Warsaw** ghetto, and terrible things, terrible things. They showed women in mink coats entering, stepping over **cadavers** on the thing. And y-you know, we know that Jews were not allowed to own furs, so how could they wear furs? So, either they weren't Jews, or they were -- I don't know who they were, right.

Q: And the kinds of movies that they show? It was ger --

A: And the kinds of movies, they were very neutral movies, and I think that new -- movies are -- were made to kind of lift the spirit -- German spirit. So we saw some comedies, we saw some -- some things I saw even more than once. Some were pretty good, one had a background of pastoral symphony. It was based on pastoral symphony, which was quite good. And the music was good. And so -- and so on, and so forth. But in -- again, that -- for me that was the escape, I -- I was -- that was an ongoing theme.

Q: To escape, that's --

A: Right, yeah. To escape from the here and now, right.

Q: Makes perfect sense.

A: Right. So that's how -- and tha -- how it went on and on, and it -- what bothered me, yeah I did other tricks there. I -- I -- I didn't -- I wasn't good cover up person. My lady boss had a very nice voice.

Q: I'm going to --

A: Oh?

Q: -- hold that thought, because we have to change the tape.

### **End of Tape Eight**

### Beginning Tape Nine

Q: Can you tell us where the res -- the name of the restaurant?

A: I -- I believe that its name is **Nordend, N-o-r-d-e-n-d**. And it was located on **Siemensstrasse 2. Siemmen -- Siemmen** Street number two. And it was a corner kind of building and had -- it was like a promontory, and there were streets on each -- either side, and the front of it stood -- not exactly in front of it, but not far in front of it stood a huge shelter, and upright anti-bomb shelter.

Q: What do you mean upright?

A: It was tall, with a tower.

Q: Oh, not underground?

A: No.

Q: Oh.

A: And that's our -- that was our air raid shelter.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It had very thick walls.

Q: I should hope.

A: Right. And that's where I was supposed to go --

Q: Right.

A: -- every night when it --

Q: When they bombed.

A: Right, right.

Q: Did they start bombing very quickly after you had co -- arrived in [indecipherable]

A: No, no, they started ba-bombing in the last year, I think.

Q: In '44.

A: Yeah, but we used to hear the **V-einz**, or maybe **V-zwei -- zwei**, you know the -- the **V-1** and **V-2**, whatever, I don't know which one was then when I was there. But we -- you could hear it going to **London**.

Q: Really?

A: Yup, yup. And -- and -- and not far from us, on the hills, in the vineyards -- there were vineyards -- vineyards around **Stuttgart**, was a fir -- flag -- flag -- you know, antof -- anti-aircraft guns, right.

Q: So you were being protected from the allies, huh?

A: We were being protected from the allies, right, I -- and well, actually, I had absolutely no fear of the planes.

Q: None?

A: None whatsoever. None whatso -- not only that, one time I had a bomb in -- in -- in my **mansard** window, in front of it, it was one of those windows that are made in the roof, I forget what they are called in English.

Q: A sun -- a sun -- sun window, I mean a --

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: No.

A: That's a window that's in the roof and has a dormer window, it's called, I think.



Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, **mansard** in -- in French, from the name of the architect **Mansard**, right.

Anyway, so there was a bomb sitting there, the incendiary bomb. So I went down my boss and I told him I have an incendiary bomb in my -- in my -- in front of my window. So he went and -- he -- he went, he pulled the bi -- bomb out, and he dropped it, I don't where he dropped it, but it was a dud, and nothing happened.

Q: Fortunately.

A: Right.

Q: So how come you weren't afraid?

A: I don't know.

Q: Were you not afraid to die, or you just weren't afraid of --

A: I was afraid to die by the hand of the Germans, but I wasn't afraid to die by the hand of allies. I wouldn't mind if I were, it would have been okay to, right.

Q: When we ended the last tape, you were beginning to talk about one of the owners, the woman --

A: Yes, right.

Q: -- who had you said, a very nice voice.

A: Yes, and her favorite aria was "**Un bel di**," and she sang it in German. And I couldn't help but helping her with it. And -- and it was very bizarre that the peasant girl out of God forsaken **Poland** can sing -- not sing, but is familiar with the "**Un bel di**," right? So,

then my cover wasn't very good, but by then they got used to me and they needed me so it didn't matter. They didn't pay attention whatsoever.

Q: But were you singing in a **mezzo** range, or did --

A: I -- I -- no, I wasn't singing, I was humming it. I -- I could hum it with her. She was singing, I would be humming --

Q: Right.

A: -- and you know, or maybe while I was scrubbing the floor I was singing "**Un bel di**," in German. I mean, you could sing it in any key, right? And -- and then not only that, what I did, they had a piano, so -- and oh -- lo and behold they have a -- had a piano and they had "**Lorelei**." And "**Lorelei**" is the ballad that **Heine** wrote to -- I think -- I don't know whose music. I -- I don't recall whose music, but I don't think it's **Schubert**, it's somebody else's music. And -- and of course, **Heine** was a Jew. So I would go there, and I would play "**Lorelei**," and I would sing it.

Q: So you could play the piano as well, you took lessons?

A: Oh well, now -- oh, yes.

Q: But you didn't talk about that [indecipherable]

A: Well, we didn't talk about it because I was taking piano lessons before the war. And even in the war -- I forgot about that -- but I was taking piano lessons until I couldn't take them any more. And I remember my last lesson with my teacher, and she told she was preparing me for the recital, and I was supposed to play "**Fleurelise**," and she was very tough teacher, she was my mother's teacher, and she was tough. And -- and -- and she

finally was pleased with the way I played, and she said, “Well, you’re going to play the recital.” And I said, “This is my last lesson.” And that was it. And -- and she knew what I was talking about. And that was the end of that. And I never saw her again, and she probably di -- she, of course she didn’t see me either. She probably thought what -- what befell me, befelled all the other people, or the other way around, right. It -- what befell them befell me, right. So that was the end my piano career, right. I -- I’m planning to resume it after I retire.

Q: Yes?

A: Yeah, I have a piano. I bought a piano for that purpose.

Q: Have you played at all over the years?

A: No, just --

Q: A little bit?

A: No, just a --

Q: Scale?

A: Right. A scale. I didn’t have time, I been doing other things.

Q: Right. Well good, I’d like to hear you.

A: Well, it will take awhile.

Q: So you are at this restaurant for what, a year and a half, two years?

A: I was there until the liberation.

Q: So you’re there almost two years.

A: Right, yeah.

Q: It's a long time.

A: Almost two years, yeah, right, right. A-And -- and the end was getting very tough, because everybody else got bombed except us. That means that we were -- yeah, and I saw that happen, because I had this room with the view, and I saw the city burn. I saw **Stuttgart** burn.

Q: But not where you were?

A: No, no, no, I was on -- on the first floor, and watching **Stuttgart** burn. Felt very good about it, I have to confess. I hope not many people were killed, because I don't wish anybody to be killed. I -- I -- I hope they were all safe in the shelters. But, yeah, right. But I didn't mind burning, no.

Q: Ho -- how was it for you to be with these Germans, who may have been supporting the Nazis? [**indecipherable**]

A: Oh, they were supporting them.

Q: They were supporting.

A: Th-They were supporting -- they were -- you know, oh we had an incident, let's say, and that time **Franka** was with me, I think she was helping out because we had so much work, so she came to help us out. And the window was open and we saw prisoners from camps, marching. And **Franka**, who has a wonderful presence of mind, took a pear that was there, and threw it out of the window, right in the middle. She knew right away who they were, and -- and -- and of course my boss got very mad, and he said, "These are criminals," and closed the door -- and he closed the window, so we couldn't do it any

more. But he said, "You mustn't help them, they are criminals." And that -- that was the incident.

Q: That was -- mm-hm.

A: Yeah, so -- right.

Q: Did they ever talk to you about --

A: Never.

Q: Nothing -- never.

A: I never talked about anything with them.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: No. Only things that pertained to -- yeah.

Q: So how tough was this to be with these people?

A: It was very tough. It wasn't life. For me it was like being suspended in the air. I -- I didn't attach to -- didn't want to attach to anybody cause I was afraid that I -- I was living a lie, and I didn't want to connect with anybody and live the same lie. It -- it's been -- speaking of the representative of the other sex, an-and that's why I didn't want to connect with anybody, even though I knew that many of the Jewish girls had boyfriends, some of had -- some of -- the -- to whom they lied, and who were anti-Semitic, and they didn't mind it because they were so much in love with them. And I had one who had the boyfriend who was a German, and -- right. So I -- I -- I didn't want that, I didn't want to do anything. I didn't want to complicate my life more than it was, anyway.

Q: Right. And when you got together with these woman, who -- all of whom knew everybody was Jewish --

A: Right, right. So -- yeah?

Q: -- did you talk?

A: Oh yes, we talked, we did -- we did black market with them, because since **Franka** had the fr -- the -- the sausage, so we traded the sausage for the -- for clothes.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Because they worked in a factory, clothes factory and they -- I don't know what the fabric was, certainly wasn't wool, was some synthetic fabric. And so we got the fabric, and some girls worked in the -- as seamstresses, sewed us uniforms, kind of, we had skirts and tops, so we had the same outfit, skirt and a top, in dark blue. That was it. I mean, so we did lots of stuff like that. But -- yeah. And it was all cover, you know, undercover stuff, [**indecipherable**] kept in secret. And those girls had very hard life because they were afraid that somebody will denounce them. And some girls we thought were Jewish, but never admitted to it. And then th-there were some men under cover, but they would never admit to it. And -- because it was very hard to be a man and be in **Germany**. My -- my husband, though, was. He was in -- in forced labor too.

Q: Really?

A: Chances are it cost his life, cause he had to spray the fields with arsenic. And -- and then he ended up with leukemia, right, right. So anyway, so i-it was -- for me it wasn't living, it was being suspended, like suspended living. It was just -- it's hard to desc -- it's

not hard to describe, it was just like I -- I waited -- I waited. It was living in waiting stance.

Q: Well let me ask you what may be a strange question. To think about the end of the war would mean that you would face a world without your mother, without your father, with so many relatives gone.

A: Right.

Q: And yet facing the war -- you still face that, but possibly your own de -- I mean, it must have been a terrible conflict.

A: Well, y-you know, you don't think about everything at once. You think about things that are of immediate concern. And my immediate concern is that nobody co -- should see my **W** -- my ji -- **J** there, and that was -- I was fearful of that, that was my main concern. The other concern later on was that I was so overworked that I thought I can't last. And -- but the -- there, every d-day, war is coming to an end. And I was very depressed all the way through. I was extremely depressed all the way through. Oh, and I have to tell you that there were some highlights. I made an acquaintance of a French soldier who was a prisoner of war. And I think he was -- I -- sometimes I would go out in the back of our place, lo and behold I saw the soldiers. Oh golly, I ca -- I can -- I knew right away he was a French soldier, cause he had a French uniform. Still, uniform without any epaulets or anything like that. And -- and I tried my French on him, and he tried his German. My French was very poor, and his German was so accented, we had a very hard time communicated. But commun-municated we did, and was a lot of fun. And then I

introduced **Franka** to him and he fell in love with her. So there we were, the three of us, right, and that was wonderful because when the time came to leave **Stuttgart** he was very helpful, and --

Q: So how was he a prisoner of war in the back of the restaurant? Why --

A: Well, because they lived in a camp, but they had privileges of walking outside.

Q: Really?

A: Oh yeah, well how else would I have met him?

Q: Yeah.

A: Right? I -- I mean, I didn't question it --

Q: Just sal -- right.

A: -- he was there, that was it. There -- there's af -- however, however, I found out that there were many prisoners of war. All prisoners were -- of war were offered freedom if they accepted to work for the Germans. And some officers and aristocrats did just that. And then they went back to **France**, and they assumed their --

Q: Their old --

A: Their old whatever that was that they were doing before the war, right, right. But he was not one of them, he was a real soldier, and he did not abnegate his loyalty.

Q: Right.

A: Right. So anyway, he was a wa -- a very nice guy, and he helped us get away from a -- and a -- ya -- when we were liberated, it was a wonderful moment, that was one of the happiest moments after the birth of my child -- my children, right. It was --



Q: What was it like?

A: It was just -- that was just unbelievable. For one thing, we left our places of work, and **Franka's** people, who were very good to her, and who apparently appeared to be even anti-**Hitler** ga -- left her in charge of their apartment, which was completely empty, to -- of furniture, of everything. But th -- they didn't want to have it looted, or something, lose whatever there was, and -- and they g-gave her the keys so she could stay there. So we stayed there even though -- there must have been a bed, I -- I must have slept somewhere, because the -- I assume there was th -- maybe a day or two before the -- th-the capitulation of the Germans. And so we were there, and we are kind of hovering in the basement because we heard a -- a -- shots, and ov -- all of a sudden the shots stopped, and we kind of picked up, you know, to look through the window. And then we saw a helmet, and that helmet didn't look like a German helmet. And we looked out, it wasn't a German helmet, it was an American helmet sitting on a French, I don't know, guy. I don't know how we knew what a French guy, he must have been in uniform. He must have had a French uniform. And that's how we knew, and then we fell into each other's arms and we cried. We cried for a long time. We really cried, and cried, and cried, yeah. And then the - - and then we ga -- and -- and then **Marcel** came, and he had a bunch of Fr-French guys with him and --

Q: This is the **POW** that you met, yes.

A: **Marcel**, di -- yeah, right. I -- his name was **Marcel**, he was wonderful. I forget -- I don't remember his last name, but I had it somewhere at home because he wrote letters to

me, and he wrote -- he gave me books as mementos, it was very nice. And -- and she introduced us and I have the pictures of the boys.

Q: These other boys.

A: These other boys. And these other boys were members of the resistance and they were given the privilege -- they were given the privilege to liberate -- to enter **Germany**, and -- and -- and they wanted to enter **Germany**, because **France** wanted to enter **Germany** to have some say after the war. So this was General **Leclerc's**, General **Leclerc** regiment, and -- and allegedly, I don't know how true that is, there was a rumor that they used him because he had small tanks, and that was the area of the **Black Forest, Forêt Noir**, and they are going through that, and they had to have the small tanks. And these guys who are resistance fighters, and they want to go to **Germany** to get -- to -- true revenge **Oradour**. So their motto was, Remember **Oradour**. **Oradour** was a city which was burned as a reprisal for some resistance deed, where all the people were killed, a-a-and it's -- it's -- and some were bur-burned alive in a church. So that was their slogan. But they were French so they weren't very vengeful. I -- I -- they did some tricks on the Germans. I -- that's again hearsay, I didn't see it, but they were talking about it. What they did, they took all clothes there was -- there were in the house, and they poured jelly on it.

Q: It's tough to clean.

A: I guess.

Q: So how long before you left?

A: Couple of days.

Q: Couple of days.

A: Few days. Very few days. Why? Because I didn't know it again, the -- the allies said that they are going to put the -- all the foreigners into camps, and I had this idea that since I was not in a camp all -- all the horrible time, there was no need for me to go in a camp after liberation.

Q: Right.

A: It made absolutely no sense to me. And since we had **Marcel**, and I want to go to **Paris**, and I very much want to go to **Paris**, cause I -- I was imbued with all this idea of that French culture -- this was really typical of **Poland**, because **Poland** had a very -- affinity with the French because of their aristocracy and because of **Napoleon**, who was promising them free **Poland**, and all that jazz, so I -- I loved everything French, and so we went to **France**, but it wasn't so easy either, nothing is easy. First we hitchhiked, and -- and I remember **Marcel** was with us for awhile, and we requisitioned a German farm. We said that we needed a --

Q: A farm?

A: -- requis -- a far -- not the whole farm, we went in and asked -- I -- I'm using the wrong word [**indecipherable**] my -- you have to forgive my English. It's -- we went to a farmer's house, and there was a farmer's wife, and we asked th-the -- sleeping quarters for the night, and breakfast. And that's what we got. We slept on the floor, we didn't sleep in bed, but was comfortable enough. And then **Marcel** had to join his -- he had to be repatriated, so he had to go on his own, and we went -- we went -- we hitchhiked on

American trucks. There was nothing else that was going, so it had to be American trucks. And the Americans were very good, and we told them we want to go home, or something, I don't know what we told them. But the -- we didn't speak English at all, so we couldn't speak English, so they pu -- they took us in and we -- and then where w -- they got off, we wer -- they had to stop, we got off, and we went in another truck, and th -- we ended up in a place where **Marcel** told us -- I -- I don't recall exactly, but I now are just surmising, we m-met with him in a place where was a security center for the -- and I don't know if it was on the French soil, or if it was on an American soil -- I -- not American soil, on the German soil, I don't remember that. It must have been on -- on the border, or something. Or -- at that time there were no borders, so it didn't really matter. Because th -- now the f -- **Germany** had no more borders. The former borders wouldn't count. So -- so we ended up in security place, and I had to go through security, and **Franka** had to go through security, and **Marcel** didn't have to. But **Marcel** concocted a story for me which now looking back it seemed so foolish and stupid that I can't even imagine. He decided I needed to tell them that I lived in **France** before the war, in my stupid little French, and -- and that I -- and my na -- and th -- and ga -- he gave me another name to sound more French. I -- I was a -- a French in a -- from -- of Polish origin, and I was deported to **Germany** for labor. Well, that opened a can of worms. It was a terrible thing to do. So I was introduced to this major, French major, and I explained to him what **Marcel** told me to do. And he went to a hell and fury. And he abused me using the language I could not even translate, so I don't -- not do it. And he

called me all kinds of terrible names. Allegedly, according to him, and I'm not sure it was hundred percent true, maybe he just wanted to scare me. But he said that only volunteers, women volunteers went to **Germany** for forced labor, and if I were a women volunteer, then I -- and he called me whatever it is that he called me. A traitor and some other juicy things. And so I, being the little girl, I still was a little -- my mother's little girl, I started to cry. And I tried to re -- no, I [indecipherable] I am -- I am Jewish. Ah, well that was another can of worms, you are Jewish. Okay, let's see -- look through your things. And he tells me, and how come this sweater's new and still has the mark a -- i-i-it -- it's not -- it has a mark of the factory on it? And how come -- you are a dirty Jew, you probably went and robbed the factory, you robbed and plundered. You **sale juive**. I -- I don't think it stopped my tears, right. An-And you know, the thing was that in order to have the sweater, in order to have whatever I had, my rucksack, I traded it, the dress that my aunt gave me, because I felt that I didn't have room for it. And I traded everything I had to have this nap -- knapsack and this sweater, and things that I could wear and put in the knapsack. So I felt that -- and there's one thing I could never stand and I still cannot stand is injustice. So I thought that was the most, the -- the biggest injustice that to -- to -- to be faced with this bloody major, and I felt I was back in **France** of -- what was the name of the guy who was innocently accused of betrayal? Well, I -- I know his name, but doesn't come to me.

Q: In "**Les Miserables**"?

A: No, no, no, no **Miserables**, that's a real story. That was a [indecipherable]

Q: Oh, **Dreyfus**.

A: **Dreyfus**, right, and [indecipherable] **Dreyfus**, right. They accused him of something they pin on him and I felt just like **Dreyfus**. Right, well, you know, I always make connections to the --

Q: Right.

A: -- to -- to either history or literature. Anyway, so here I was. And then I had my -- but I had my diary, I kept a diary, I wish I had this diary, would have been lot of fun. But I don't know what happened to it, I think became -- it's -- it got destroyed in **France**, as a matter of fact. I should have taken it with me, too bad. Anyway, so -- and they -- the next day, they gave me my -- everything back. They were very polite, and they gave me papers, the papers that you ha -- that I have in my catalog of things that still -- that remained. And -- a-and there we -- there was a pass to go to **France**, to **Paris**, and to enter **France** legally.

Q: And **Franka**, how did she get in?

A: And **Franka**, since she didn't speak French, my dear friend **Marcel** made her a Dutch girl. Now he could have made me a Dutch girl too, but he didn't.

Q: And why was it okay for a Dutch girl to go to **Paris**?

A: Because she was on her way to her country. But as a Jewish girl, I was on -- also on my way somewhere, and I was trying to explain to him, I want to go to **America** to ga -- join the -- the -- my father's brothers and sisters.

Q: Right.

A: So that was my -- and they wouldn't want strangers to stay in **France**, they fought it tooth and nail.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you had a diary that you wrote when, during these two years at the restaurant?

A: Yes.

Q: Really?

A: It was a very [indecipherable] diary, but it was a diary, right.

Q: Huh.

A: Yeah, it was written in Polish as far as I knew. Right, Polish.

Q: Yeah, I would imagine.

A: Right.

Q: Although that would have been danger -- no, no, they knew you were Polish, so --

A: Yeah, it was pro -- written --

Q: And they couldn't read it.

A: -- in Polish and they couldn't read it anyway --

Q: Right.

A: -- and they were too busy with whatever was happening to them, they wouldn't -- and -- and I -- oh, and I went back to my boss to get my papers, because I had papers, and he gave me the papers, and he was furious. He said that the -- the girls are -- you see while

we were working there, I recommended some of the Jewish girls for him to help because he needed so much help.

Q: Right.

A: All the other restaurants were bombed out.

Q: Right.

A: And those girls allegedly came and ask him for money, and -- and -- and he fi -- yeah, and he si -- thought that I set him up.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Right.

Q: Okay, we have to stop the tape.

**End of Tape Nine**



### Beginning Tape 10

Q: Okay. **Janka**, how long -- is it okay if I call you **Janka**? Yes?

A: Go -- by all means, if you wish, yes.

Q: How long were you in **Paris** before you left with **Francesca**, or **Franka**?

A: Well, I -- not too long. Y -- we arrived, let's say in May -- oh yes, we arrived exactly on May eighth, because this was a day of victory --

Q: Right.

A: -- and we witnessed the day of victory in **Paris**, and **Paris** was dancing. So we stayed there, we were taken -- first we spend a -- a couple of days at the Hotel **Lutetia**, which was a hote -- a place where they gathered all the refugees coming out of the war zone, and they were giving them medical reviews, and then they was disposing wi-with them accordingly to their state of health. And since our health appeared -- appeared to them adequate, they referred us to the Jewish agencies. And the Jewish agencies, since we were young girls, they were -- we were treated as adolescents, and we report to something called **pension en famille**, but it wasn't really -- it was a converted synagogue, and we -- in [**indecipherable**] converted offices in we -- that was very -- it was very primitive because they were converted offices, and we spend there some time. And then they made plans for us, as far as our future was concerned. I was to -- to become a **stenodactylo**, meaning I had to -- I was -- since I didn't have a high school diploma and I couldn't have a high school diploma, I could not have the permission to study, so I had to learn a vocation, that vocation would have been -- that was the easiest thing, since I knew

a little French, so I would go to the French school, and then I would become a **stenodactylo**. And that was the plan. And **Franka** had to learn French first, and then decide what to do later. But in the meantime **Franka** came up with the idea that we -- she has to look for her family, she cannot start new life without finishing the old one, which was -- it kind of made sense. And it made sense to me too, except it was so hard to get to **Paris**, and to leave it, we would have to do some horrendous things. Because there were no trains, nothing. The only trains that went back to **Poland** were the Russian convoys, with the rush -- Russian nationals, because there was a secret agreement at **Yalta** between the heads of states, that all the western heads of states relinquish the rights to Russian nationals, and will turn them over to the -- to the Russian authorities. And that's what they were doing. And I witnessed them doing that in the movie theaters, where they would stand by the door, and watch for the patrons to leave, and they would round up whomever -- whoever they thought were a nash -- a Russian national, which wasn't too hard to detect. And the only way we could do that -- and then they would put them in a special camp that was organized in a place called **Beauregard**, near **Paris**, and once you entered this it was Russian territory, it was just like entering a ma -- a Russian embassy, and there you were in a Russian soil, that was it. So the only way to ma -- **Franka** had some Russian friends, so she found that out. She spoke Russian, her family was of Russian origin. And she spoke Russian very well, I -- I just had little Russian. And she decided that we can enter that camp, and -- and then they will transport us east. I don't know, we didn't have it -- the idea that we might go to **Lwów**, but I -- I -- I don't think ba

-- well, anyway, by the time when we le -- we went to that camp, that was a very primitive camp, with barracks, and there were a lot of people, and they all under lock and key, of course. That was a locked up camp with, I think, guards all over the place. And I think we spend some time there, maybe week, maybe more, maybe less. And we left in July, I think, or maybe late June, I don't know. I can look at the dates in the papers. And - and we left on a transport, and it was -- i-it was not a regular train, it was a train tha -- for deportees, so it was not a -- it was freight train, in -- in other words. And I think we sl- slept on the gr -- on the -- on something made from straw kind of things, inside the train. And the train would stop very often because to let go other trains that had priority. And one such train was a prison train, with -- guarded by soldiers, with -- with bars in the little windows, and right away the rumors spread that this train was a prison train for the followers of General **Vlasov**, and General **Vlasov** was a -- a traitor to the war effort because he -- even though he was originally a very heroic general, he surrendered to Germans and he promised them to fight on their side, along -- and he recruited lot of former prisoners of war, maybe mostly Ukrainians. And they fought -- I don't if they fought it, maybe -- I don't know if Germans really trusted them to fight or not. But, a-at the end of the war, they were considered the biggest traitors ever, both to the Russians, and to Americans, because they were fighting on the side of **Germany**. But General **Vlasov** was thinking in terms of saving his skin, and so he pushed to be on the -- under the western side -- western sphere of influence. So, he surrendered, somewhere in **Czechoslovakia**, or maybe not in **Czechoslovakia**, I think near **Czechoslovakia**, to the

American forces, with his whole army. And he was taken prisoner, but he didn't know about that arrangement of yal -- at **Yalta**, and he was immediately turned over -- I don't know if -- how immediately, but very soon turned over to the Soviet authorities, and he was sent to **Russia** and shot. And I -- I don't know if he was tried or not, if he -- you know, I don't know. They -- they did show trials in **Soviet Union**. But the soldiers, the soldiers we saw there, and the soldiers were making jokes with us, who would -- you know, we surrounded, surrounded the train right away, and there were young faces in these barred windows, and they were smiling and laughing. A-And -- and we all knew they were going to their death. And I didn't know, you know, we knew they were going to their death, but what kind of death they met, I didn't know then, until now I saw it on the internet. And it -- there is a -- and there is a -- a report of somebody who witnessed, an engineer, American engineer in the army who witnessed their surrender, and he relates that they were shot immediately after they disembarked in -- on the -- out of the trains in **Russia**. They were sho -- o-on -- on arrival. They were shot on arrival. A-And we met that -- we met them on the way. And we had to wait because their train had the priority.

Q: So, in your going back to **Poland**, you were going to go with **Franka**, you were not going to go to find your own family.

A: Well, I sure did if I could find them, because my uncle -- my uncle worked in **Rzeszów** before the war, that was the little town. So I thought I'll got to **Rzeszów**, and maybe he was there, maybe he came back and I could find him in **Rzeszów** because that's where his job was.

Q: Right.

A: And nobody knew there he was a Jew there, because he worked there as a Pole, so he could go there.

Q: Right.

A: So, I -- I-I -- I ha -- I -- I think we got off in **Kraków**, and we got the permit. As refugees they would give us a per -- we got -- we escaped from the train, it wasn't so easy, we -- we brood about it, and thought about it, and -- and we got off the train by subterfuge, telling we wanted water, or something, or food. And we never got back on, and our papers went with the train, the main papers that we had. And our name went -- yeah, they went to **Russia**. So -- but we had some other papers still left, so we used them. And I think we did anyway. I -- you know, I don't remember what I had or I didn't have, I certainly acquire a lot -- acquired -- upon arrival, we acquired a lot of papers. So -- and I know that if we went to **Poland**, we went under name of **Franka** and **Helena**, or **Helene**, because that -- otherwise would have been foolish. So -- so a-an -- so we got off at **Kraków**, we got a pass to **Rzeszów**, we got off in **Rzeszów**. When we got off -- I mean, we escaped from the train in **Kraków**, and we got a permit -- free train ride to **Rzeszów**, o-on the base that we were refugees looking for family, which was true. We got to **Rzeszów**, and we walked in the situation after a pogrom. And because there was a pogrom in there -- **Rzeszów** couple days before, and we learned that, and the streets were kind of empty, we didn't know what to do, but we came across a person, we decided he must be Jewish. So we stopped him, a-and he turned -- it turned out right, and right away

he took us to the place, to a Jewish community, and they said people are in hiding now because we have the situation, and later on I found out that some people were even killed, but at that time he didn't tell us that. But I found out from other people who were there, and you know, and that's why I knew about the -- I mean, from another point of view. But in the meantime he -- he told us that -- well, i-if we want to get out, we should get out as soon as possible. I don't know if it was he who told us that the borders to **Czechoslovakia**, we have to get out from Czechoslova -- through **Czechoslovakia**, might be closed, and he send us to **Kraków**, back to **Kraków**, and he gave us money, and he prepared our -- I-I don't know if we got a train pass, or we paid for the train, whatever it was. They ro -- and they received us just like we were their brothers, or their family; very, very well. And they put us on the train, and we ended up in **Kraków**, only this time to stay, not to leave. And the first thing we did, we went to the Jewish Community Center, and we started looking for people who registered there, because whoever came, registered there. And he told us that, he told us go to -- go to [indecipherable] to examine the registry of survivors. And lo and behold I found my girlfriend from **Lwów**. The girl, with whom I went to school, the high school, was my best friend in high school. So of course I located her, and I told her our situation, w -- she -- she told me her story. She had a tragic story too, convoluted tragic story. Her fa -- her brother went to -- volunteered to fight for -- in **Warsaw** ghetto -- not **Warsaw** ghetto, the Polish **Warsaw** uprising, and he -- he fought as a Pole, and he was taken prisoner and he died in somewhere, of his wounds. And so she was now alone, and -- and her parents got killed

in the round-ups of **Lwów**, and she says she wants to go with us. So there were three of us now. So -- but she knew a lot of people in **Kraków**, so she arranged for passes to **Czechoslovakia**. The reason we went to **Czechoslova** -- we were going to **Czechoslovakia** is to -- to go to the French embassy. And the fren -- the closest was in **Prague**, so we went to **Prague**. So we -- so she secured the -- she helped us secure the passes, and that time was still passes and the wonder was, that was one of the last passes every issued at that time. Later on the borders were closed, there were no passes, and whoever wanted to get out had to do it illegally. So the people were crossing to **Germany** instead of **Prague**. And we went -- I think we went through **Katowice**, because I have a pass to **Katowice**. So he -- we went through **Katowice** to **Prague**. Of course **Prague** is the mo -- one of the most beautiful cities of **Europe**, and we were there for three days and I'm s -- kind of speeding it up, so we did see some places and things. But when we went to the French embassy we presented our case, and -- and -- and without any ado, they granted the per -- as the [indecipherable]. We told them that we -- we were in **France** and we came back to look for the family, and we didn't find anybody. So since we didn't find any -- in **Rzeszów** I didn't find anybody, my be -- my uncle wasn't there. And I checked with -- they had registry there too, the local registry and he wasn't there. And -- and so I went -- so we told him the truth, and he said yes of course, and he said com -- that there's a plane tomorrow that leaves for **Paris**. Be on it. And --

Q: And so you went?

A: On a plane, on a military plane, repatriated to **Paris**, right.

Q: And where did you go when you were in **Paris**? Did you all three stick together?

A: Oh yes, absolutely, and the thing is that we didn't come in under our own name. All our papers were issued in -- in the fa -- under false names. So I -- I was very lucky, sometime after, but not right away after, maybe months after, I got to talk to a very -- very thoughtful and helpful social worker, and I told her that I -- here I have my real name, but I live under this false name, and -- and she said, "But you can change it, I can arrange it for you." And she did, without any pro -- I don't know how she did it, but she did it, and I got my own name back. But **Franka** stayed on her other name.

Q: She did?

A: Yeah. And -- and my girlfriend, who escaped from a **Belzec** train --

Q: Oh my.

A: -- you heard that girl -- my girlfriend from high school, her name was **Maryla**. She -- she yeah, she had horrendous stories to tell. And she escaped from the train, yeah, right. And she was with us, and we shared for awhile, we -- now they treated us as adults, no more children, and they put us first on the d -- **Ambrose Thomas** for a short time, and then they transferred us to -- to **Guy Patin**. And then the -- we start a new life again.

Q: And is -- is that where you were interviewed by **David Boder**?

A: Yes, uh-huh.

Q: Let me -- I just want to play the first minute of the tape.

A: By all means.

Q: Have you -- have you heard your tape?



A: Oh yes.

Q: You have heard the tape.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Okay.

A: I have a very nice voice on that tape.

Q: Yes, you do.

A: Very nice, girlish voice.

Q: Let's see if we can -- I can just --

**[plays excerpt from audiotape]**

Q: We won't go through your story **[indecipherable]**

A: That's good. But you -- the quality of your tape is much better than any of mine. The one I have is terrible.

Q: Well then, we'll provide you with --

A: Yeah, that would be nice.

Q: -- a good -- a good quality tape.

A: And if you could send me a good copy, too, that would be good.

Q: Yeah, yeah, sure.

A: A -- a written copy.

Q: Of the transcript?

A: Yeah, right.

Q: Sure, sure.

A: Because mine is very --

Q: Absolutely.

A: -- all over the place.

Q: So how is it that you came to be interviewed by this man?

A: Well, I think he needed for -- h-he wanted to interview survivors, and where is a better place than in a survivor home [indecipherable] of the local agency, right? So he found th-there many candidates. I don't know how many people were actually interviewed on g -- on **Guy Patin**, because most of them were survivors.

Q: So a number of you were interviewed?

A: Oh yes, many people were interviewed.

Q: Do you remember being interviewed [indecipherable]

A: Not at all, not at all.

Q: You don't remember.

A: Not at all, not -- and I was so amazed when my friend informed me that my interview was on the internet, and I couldn't believe it. I said, "That's not possible, I was never interviewed." And well -- and I -- and yes, and I went to the internet, and I saw my name.

Q: And you saw the transcript?

A: I didn't see the transcript.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I don't know how I -- I wa -- I -- actually -- I don't know, I had a di -- I -- I wasn't that well versed in the computer use that I could do that. So I think I notified then my son, and he located it right away.

Q: Right.

A: He locate it and he provided me with everything. And I told him I'm not happy with having it published without my permission, and he located whoever was in charge of that project, and -- and they removed my name --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- and my tape and everything off the internet. And this is how it wasn't listed. It was not listed on the list of interviewees.

Q: Right, it was taken off.

A: Right.

Q: Yes. So you have absolutely no recollection of him, or the day or anything?

A: I have ver -- I -- I can have only recollection by listening to --

Q: Yes.

A: -- to my voice.

Q: Yes.

A: Because that I recognize. And I vaguely recognize his too, because I apparently had -- and I remembered -- and I have a very neg -- a rather negative memory of the interview, because I felt myself be very vulnerable during that interview. Not -- yeah, right, for some reason, I don't know, just listening to the tape.

Q: That you were feeling vulnerable.

A: Right.

Q: And did you feel he was being aggressive, or you were afraid of him, do you think?

A: I think I was afraid of him. I think he must have reminded me of my Professor **Napadiewich**. He had that way about him, you know, like condescending way of a professor speaking down to his student. Not an American professor, but a German professor, or the Russian professor from before the war, which is a different thing.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: Then that's what you -- that's what you recall feeling?

A: Yeah, so I felt -- I -- I don't know how I felt. Tha -- in the beginning I felt co-comfortable, I think.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: When I started answering question, but later on I think it changes. But I -- I gave him the answers as best I could, I guess, and that's how it was.

Q: What do you think about him now?

A: Well, I think he -- I have a great admiration for him. I don't know h-how he was -- what motivated him to do what he did. Whether it was a desire for a -- for fame, or was it a genuine research of a scientist. I mean, ger -- and was the general desire of a scientist to want to research? Probably both, I imagine it was both.

Q: He didn't become famous.

A: Well he didn't, but -- but he is famous now, and he will be even more famous.

Q: Yes, that may be -- that may be true.

A: He was -- it will be posthumous.

Q: Yes.

A: His fame is going to be posthumous, but -- but he certainly earned it. He definitely earned it.

Q: What did you think when you listened to yourself?

A: Well, I didn't like myself too well --

Q: Why?

A: -- on that tape. I don't know. I -- I -- I -- maybe because it's different to look at it from the hindsight. I felt that I -- I -- I shouldn't be fee-feeling so -- so vulnerable, that I should have been more responsive to his questions in terms of if I didn't like him I could have said so. But I didn't, I -- it seemed to me that I wanted to tell him what he wanted to hear.

Q: You wanted to please him?

A: Yes, right.

Q: Yeah.

A: I -- I have this feeling now. I don't know if it's -- I -- I -- that too may be incorrect, but that's what I think. But you know, it's all speculation, you specu -- you speculate about things like that.

Q: Right.

A: Right. So -- and I may be wrong even now, but I have a great admiration for him, a -- y -- y -- you know, nobody wanted to hear our stories, nobody did, really. A-And th-the reception we received, it was a wonderful reception -- I wa -- that I received in **France**, both times. It was an unconditional positive regard, it was wonderful. But nobody really wanted to hear anything. Even I came to **America**, none of my -- except for one cousin, none of my family wanted to hear. You see, you s -- said, it's okay, you are here now, and -- yeah.

Q: Forget about it.

A: Right, right. You know, and things like that you don't forget, you li -- not [indecipherable] you don't forget it, but your unconscious mind doesn't forget them, and it -- and it takes over. A-And I ne -- and you make decisions, and you make -- and you live according to what you're -- yeah, what's dictated to you by your past, in a way. So I would never forget it. So he was the only one who had determination, and the stamina a- and interest to hear that. So I -- I think he deserves all the credit he -- he should get.

Q: Right.

A: Right, that's how I feel about him now.

Q: You -- you know at least one other woman that she has spoken with --

A: I -- I -- maybe more than one, I me -- I -- I'm -- I'm just suspecting the other one, too -

Q: Right.

A: -- but I am not hundred percent sure.

Q: But **Bella**, who lives outside of **Paris** --

A: Right.

Q: -- you've spoken to.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Does she have a clear recollection about him, or is she as vague as you are?

A: According to -- well, I -- I know that that may be -- **Elizabeth** knows that, maybe, cause I don't know, I have no idea, cause I didn't speak to **Bella** about this.

Q: I see.

A: I only called her to find out if she's willing to give the information on request of Mr. **Marziali**.

Q: Uh-huh. From **NPR**, yes, yes.

A: Right, and so I checked with **Sara** because otherwise I wouldn't give him her address.

Q: Right, right.

A: And I assumed since she was willing to do it for him, that she would do it certainly for the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Q: Museum, right.

A: So that's how it came about. And for some reason, I -- I have this uncanny suspicion that the other w-woman might be another interviewee.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: And -- and -- you, of course, this has to be checked out. I could have maybe even call her sometime, but you know, I haven't been in touch with her for a long time. Maybe last year I called them. Every so often I call them up to make sure that they are still around.

Q: Did **Franka** stay in **Paris**?

A: I don't know what happened to **Franka**.

Q: You don't know what happened --

A: **Franka** disappeared from my --

Q: Really?

A: -- horizon completely, yeah. What happened with her was that our -- our ways parted. Maybe not unnecesar -- not necessarily on a positive note, but not an unfriendly note either.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, not completely, we didn't break up or anything. But she -- I heard -- the last I heard of her that she was adopted by a na -- a Canadian family and was going to be brought --

Q: To **Canada**?

A: -- to **Canada**. And I looked at her all over the place on the internet and in **Canada**. I looked on -- for her under her assumed name, and under her real name that I knew. And of course, if she got married I wouldn't know her married name.

Q: Right, right.

A: So, and we didn't --



Q: So you lost her?

A: I lost her, right. And she lost me.

Q: Yeah. Hm. Well, that's interesting. Okay, we're going to change the tape, and let --

**End of Tape 10**

## Beginning Tape 11

Q: I said I had one question, but actually I have a couple. First of all, what was **Franka**, or **Francesca's** full name? Her real name?

A: Her real name was **Roberta Lander. L-a-n-d-e-r.**

Q: That's her real name?

A: Her real name.

Q: And what was her fake name?

A: And her fake name was **Francziszka Markowiecka.**

Q: Huh. Where did she come from?

A: Well, I think h-her family was of Russian origin, but they ended up in **Lwów.**

Q: Sounds ita -- doesn't sound Polish.

A: **Lander?**

Q: **Lander.**

A: Well, that sounds Jewish and Polish.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: It's like **Binder.**

Q: Right, that's true.

A: And you can have **Binders** in **Germany**, and there are **Binders** in French --

Q: Right.

A: -- and in French there's even a street called an **impasse binder** somewhere.

Q: Right. Just shows my ignorance, that's all.

A: Well -- I -- you --

Q: What about the other woman who you met in **Lwów** who came back with you -- oh, you met in **Kraków**.

A: Oh, well sh -- sh -- I don't know her assumed name, but her real name was **Maryla Bardach, B-a-r-d-a-c-h**, and I don't know what was her -- I don't remember her married name.

Q: Nice names.

A: Right. No, nice Jewish names, you know. They -- but they were Jewish in **Poland**, and you had a Jewish name, that was the end of you. I mean, not [**indecipherable**] of you, but of your career, of your anything.

Q: Do -- do you have a sense of how this history has affected you?

A: I'm working on it.

Q: You're working on it. It's hard, isn't it?

A: I'm working on it. Yeah, I -- I still don't know how to ge -- explain it. I think that if I was formed by the Holocaust, I was much more formed by my upbringing and my genes. And -- and the Holocaust may have reinforced what was there, or destroyed some of it. I ya --

Q: Did it make you cynical in any way about human beings?

A: I don't think so. I don't think so. No, no, and I -- didn't destroy my faith either.

Q: Really?

A: No, no, because I explain it -- I have my explanation which I find comfortable. And explanation is that we are all endowed with free will, and with a sense of responsibility and -- and we are responsible for our acts. So I don't blame God for what the Germans did. And I'm very, very existentialistic about it. And maybe **Jean-Paul Sartre** had something to do with it. And -- and I feel that everybody's responsible for his acts, and that's it. And hiding behind God, or demon, it's not going to -- or devil, or **Satan**, it's not going to do any good. That's my philosophy.

Q: Right.

A: Right.

Q: So I know that you married in 1950 or '51.

A: '51, yes.

Q: Came to the **United States** in '53.

A: Right.

Q: You married a survivor.

A: Right.

Q: Who unfortunately passed away in '77.

A: Right, yeah. And he was in **Warsaw**, he -- he participate in the resistance, he smuggled papers, and probably arms too, but I'm not hundred percent sure about that.

And -- and he went through **Pawiak**, which is a horrendous prison.

Q: Right.

A: And he got himself deported to **Germany**, which was -- which was absolutely a **tour de force**, because for a Jew, get deported to **Germany**, it's just incredible. They had to go through the physical examination, and -- and if you were circumcised, that was obvious, but he sometime -- somehow -- somehow he managed that.

Q: Right.

A: And he was farmed out to the farmers. So he worked on the f -- on the farms. And he had very hard work, he had to work very hard. And -- and w -- at the liberation he was actually working for the American army, and -- as an interpreter, and he had a di -- uniform and a motorcycle, and -- and he was happy, I guess. Until he got to **Belgium**, and it was the -- this particular, seventh, I think, regiment, was transferred to **Belgium**, and in **Belgium** they -- they no longer needed a German translator. So he was -- how shall I say? He was let go. And -- but he happened to have family in **France**, so he went to **France**, to **Paris**. And one day he needed some information in the office near the **Guy Patin**. And he knocked on the door of the office, there was some writing on the wall -- on the door, but I don't remember what it was, and lo and behold there were three girls there instead of the office. And so he -- he was very happy, and he told his story and the girls told their story and he started dating one of the girls, but it wasn't me.

Q: Oh.

A: Right. And it was my girlfriend **Maryla**, and well, I -- I -- but I -- I guess she wanted to get married, and he wasn't ready to get married. And he found a good listener in me,

so I took her place. And that's how it went. And we got married in 1951. No, 1950.

Right, 1950.

Q: 1950.

A: Right.

Q: And your first son was born in **Paris**?

A: Right, right. And then we -- I -- I had to -- you know, in the meantime I applied to American embassy for the visa, and for my visa, I don't know why I had to wait so long. I didn't obtain the visa until six years of wait, and I found many people who got it much sooner, out of **Germany**. They -- they got the visa sooner than I got it in **Paris**. And then my -- I got my -- since I got married, my husband had to get a visa, too. So it took another two years.

Q: Right.

A: So we waited there for eight years. We wait there -- we didn't wait --

Q: Where?

A: -- waiting in **Paris** is okay.

Q: Is -- is -- is not so bad.

A: Right, right, yeah.

Q: Right. And you had two more children?

A: But I had -- they were born in **Chicago**.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you have three boys, right.

A: I have three boys, right.

Q: And we will stay here all night if we go into your life --

A: Right, absolutely, yeah.

Q: -- all -- all time --

A: Yeah, right.

Q: -- and so maybe we'll do that at another time.

A: Sure.

Q: But I want to thank you. I can't tell you how much I thank you.

A: Oh well, you're most welcome, I -- I -- I'm the one to thank you, because the fact that you want to hear it, that's -- that's -- makes room for my gratitude.

Q: Well, we all thank you. I thank you so very much.

A: Thank you.

Q: Cause it was wonderful to be with your today.

A: Thank you so much.

Q: And **Janine**, who is this?

A: This is my grandmother **Aurelia**, on my mother's side, and this is picture of my grandfather **Herman**. And most of these pictures were taken on their wedding day, I believe, in 1899, or 1898.

Q: And who is this?

A: This is a photograph of my mother at the age of two, taken by her father in the living room of their home.

Q: And who is this, **Janine**?

A: This is my father, before his marriage, in the Austrian uniform.

Q: How old -- how old do you think he was?

A: He was probably recruited in 1914 or 1915, and he was born in 1889, so you can figure it out, I -- my math isn't that good.

Q: Would this have been the photograph on the wall, when he spoke to the Germans?

A: No, no, he was standing up, no. I don't think this is an officer's uniform. I-It's a uniform of a corporal, probably. Th -- there was another picture and he -- in which he was standing, not sitting.

Q: And this shot?

A: And this shot, it -- this is also my father after the war probably, but I don't know in what year it was taken.

Q: And this couple?

A: Is -- these are my parents on their wedding day. And that would have been in 1924.

Q: And who is down below there?

A: And this is picture of me at the age of two. And I'm very scared looking because -- that's because I am scared.

Q: And this picture?



A: And this is a picture of my mother and me, and we are on vacation in **Jaremcze**, and we are facing a beautiful river, so we have a beautiful view from where we sit.

Q: And here?

A: And this is a picture of my parents and me. I'm about 11 years old at the time, and we are in **Jaremcze**, again, more or less in the same place. It's a beach in -- on a river, and it's very stony because it's a mountain river -- mountain stream.

Q: And who is this?

A: And this is my Aunt **Wanda** and her brother, who is my uncle, but whom I call by the first name anyway. And they are on vacation also, in a place called **Zoppot**, which is on the **Baltic** Sea.

Q: Do you know if he survived the war?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: He did.

A: Oh yes.

Q: But you never saw him?

A: Oh, I did see him, I -- when I paid a visit to him when I went to visit my family in **Poland**, yes. He's the one who survived the war with my aunt -- not my aunt, pardon me --

Q: Your grandmother.

A: -- with my grandmother, yes.

Q: And when did you visit him?

A: About two years ago, or three years ago.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah, something like that, yeah.

Q: And who is that on the right there? Who is that, **Janine**, who is that?

A: This is my grandmother **Esther**, who was the mother of my father.

Q: And she was the one who lived in **Przemysl**?

A: Right. She was the one who lived in **Przemysl**.

Q: And how about this group shot?

A: This group shot was made to honor the wedding of my American Aunt **Gertrude** in **Chicago**. And was sent by her mother and the family that was left there, and some of their friends. And the children in the front were the grandchildren and my -- also my first cousins, I guess. And I know that the one on -- the last one on the right, she is the one who survived the war, and who went to **Palestine** at that time. And -- and she started a family there.

Q: And who is this?

A: And this is the photograph of my grandmother and my uncle, and they both survived the war. And -- but my grandmother died in 1972, I think.

Q: And what were their first names?

A: And her name was **Aurelia**, and his name was **Julius**. Still is.

Q: And who is this?

A: This is first cousin to my mother, whom I called uncle because he was so much older -  
- he was even older than my mother -- and his wife, they had no children. And he  
survived the war. She sa -- he survive it -- he sur -- all -- survived the riot in **Lwów**, the  
first riot **Lwów**. And then when I was in **Paris** he wrote to me from **Kraków** that he  
wants to adopt me and send me to study at the **Sorbonne**, and he died of, I think, heart  
failure. I don't remember. I -- I was -- I wasn't there, I was informed i -- about it much  
later.

Q: Would you have -- would you have wanted him to adopt you?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Yes?

A: Oh yes, very much so. I mean, I was so starved for family, I -- I -- I -- I remember  
going through **Champs Elysee** and crying the day I -- my family found me. So I -- I --  
yeah.

Q: Now who is that on the right?

A: On the right is my friend **Franka**, with whom I survived very bitter years.

Q: In **Stuttgart**?

A: In **Stuttgart** yes, and jail -- starting in the jail in **Brody**, through **Stuttgart** and then  
first years in **Paris**. And --

Q: Who is the other?

A: And this picture is a picture of me, also in p -- taken in **Paris**, probably in 1946.

Q: And who is this?

A: And this is my husband, at that time my husband to be, in his American uniform, that will look -- that looked very handsome on him. He was a very handsome young man.

Q: And his name?

A: And his name was **Joseph Oberrotman**, I mean, in Polish **Józef Oberrotman**.

Q: And this picture?

A: In this picture I'm sitting in front of the villa in **Biarritz**. We went on a trip with students, and a whole villa was rented to the students for a period of two weeks, and I was lucky to be one of them. And we spent two weeks in **Biarritz**.

Q: Do you remember what year that was?

A: Maybe there is a date there.

Q: Well, it looks like it says '43, but it can't be '43.

A: It's probably '48 if it's not '43, right.

Q: Uh-huh. So, before you were married?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: Right. I --

Q: And who is this on the left?

A: It's me, taken -- it's enlarged from a passport picture, I think. One of the passport pictures I had to prepare for the American [**indecipherable**] and -- and I think it was after I got married.

Q: And here?

A: And this is **Alain**, my son, at the age of eight months.

Q: And on the right?

A: It's I, with **Alain**, and he is probably a year and a half old.

Q: Very long hair.

A: Right. That was very fashionable at that time.

Q: And this group?

A: And this group is [indecipherable] women and children on the boat **SS America**, that brought me to **America** in February 1953, and I am there with **Alain**. ... -- gotten the original for that.

Q: What about this shot?

A: I probably have it. Huh?

Q: This shot here?

A: Uh-huh. I -- I probably have the invitation, that was invitation to the fundraiser, t-to testimonial dinner.

Q: And who is this?

A: This is my husband, and this is I, and -- yes? No, it was a testimonial dinner for bonds. And -- and my husband was honored for the activities and contribution in the state of **Israel**.

Q: And do you remember about what year that was?

A: That should be on the invitation, on the back of the invitation.

Q: 1974. Sorry. It's okay.

A: Got what I wanted.

Q: Okay, who is this group here?

A: All right, so these are my three sons. Starting from the right it's **Alain**, and --

Q: This was the boy with the shu -- with the long hair.

A: Right. And I think the middle one is **Danny**, who is the youngest really, and the one on the left is **Mark**.

Q: And who is that?

A: And this is I.

Q: And this group?

A: This photograph I think was taken in front of the cemetery building in **Warsaw**, and I'm surrounded by the members of the March of the Living group. We met them on the way, and I told them part of my story, and they were very thrilled, and they wanted to take a picture with me. So that was it, may -- they made me very happy. I was very happy in that picture, right.

### **End of Tape 11**

### **Conclusion of Interview**