INTERVIEW WITH MOISE (MOISHE, MOSHE, MOSES) WEINER

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Abstract

Moise Weiner was born in a shtetl near Vinnytsya, Ukraine where there were about 45,000 Jews before the war. The family consisted of three brothers and two sisters, another brother having died around the time Moise was born. Although the family was poor, they valued education as a way out of poverty. Moise attended the Ukrainian school, the path to study for the professions, instead of the Jewish school. He tells how people reacted when Molotov announced war with Germany. His older sister urged the family to get away, but they had no money. Because his sister was engaged to an Army officer, she was given one of the train passes issued for her fiancé's family. Moise's parents threw him on the train with his sister, though he had no pass; thus saving his life. They never made it to their destination because the Germans attacked the train. They managed to escape, and made their way to Orsk in the Urals. He worked at different jobs until he was called into the army in 1945, after the war.

Moise also tells about the Russian Civil War and how his parents were almost killed during the pogroms of that time. His brothers and sister became Communists during the war. He was called a non-party Bolshevik. After the war, he became a writer and was a Refusenik for ten years. Both his parents, a younger sister, a brother, and many relatives perished in the Holocaust.

Transcript

Moise Weiner: Moise Weiner, I was born on the 24th of May, 1927 in the shtetl Vakhnovka (Vachnovka, Vichnifka, Wachnowka) by name. It's in the Ukraine not far from Vinnytsya (Vinnitsa, Vinnytsia, Vinitza, Winnica, Winnitsa, Winniza) Region (Oblast).

Interviewer: Can you spell the shtetl for me?

Moise Weiner: V A C H N O V K A, Vakhnovka, not far from Lipovets (Lipovich, Lipovec, Lipovetz, Lipowiec).

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about your family, what your father did for a living, what your mother was doing, how many brothers and sisters you have.

Moise Weiner: My mother had six child births; but one, the eldest child, died when I was born in 1927, from scarlet fever. So before war we were seven in all --- five children, three brothers and two sisters. Before the Revolution my father began to work at the age of eight years, when a little boy, when his mother died. I don't know how to say it in English; it's a long story to tell because you should know the history on the Ukraine. It was under Polish influence. It was an estate of the Pulitz (ph?) or the Polish Count; and the shtetl, the villages, were working for that estate, for the castle of the Pulitz. My father was taken to a merchant who bought cattle far distance, and they buy food. He was a cowboy; simply he was a cowboy.

Interviewer: Like he drove cattle?

Moise Weiner: Cattle from Warsaw to Ukraine, from Moldavia to that place and so on. So he was a cowboy; and before the Revolution he was a cowboy or the help of the merchant of the cattle. After the Revolution he had no profession; he was an unqualified worker. It was very hard for him to earn money for a living; to feed seven people, seven mouths. So we helped when we were boys; we sold papers.

Interviewer: Newspapers?

Moise Weiner: Yes, you know the song, "Bagelach Koch Par Terrosin" (ph?)? So it was boys (?). My eldest sister worked at the plant. The main aim of our family, because my parents were illiterate people, true they knew Yiddish, but they went to the Cheder, and they went to a Jewish school. But in Russian they didn't know the Russian language. They couldn't write, couldn't read. My father was 54, maybe 56, when he started to speak Russian, to read the newspaper; that's all, to sign his name. Before the war he worked at market as a tax collector. That was his last job. I want to say that they spoiled us; the mother and father, especially my mother. That not obliging us; but simply it was a saying, "If I had a pen in my hand, I would … (?). It was a very poor region. The people were very poor there; not a ghetto, but a slum.

Interviewer: Was it an agricultural region? Did people work farms or was it in the city?

Moise Weiner: In the city, in the city, in the city. It's an agricultural region, but the city had some plots. We survived in the great hunger of 1932. I was by death already in 1932. But we managed how to survive that hunger.

Interviewer: That was a very bad time, I know. I studied about the famine in the Ukraine at that time.

Moise Weiner: It was not an easy living. But the main aim of our family, of my brothers, to get an education; because it was the only way to make a good life, to get away from the Jewishness, from that Judaism that was, did not gave way to the social life surroundings because there was no Jewish social life. You couldn't become an engineer studying Yiddish. You couldn't become a doctor studying Yiddish. You could become a doctor, and engineer if you studied Russian or Ukrainian because there were universities and institutes, and the schools were in Russian or in Ukraine. I started at a Ukrainian school; I know the Ukrainian language. So it was like nail in our brains to get education.

Interviewer: Your parents encouraged you to study.

Moise Weiner: To study, yes, and the war delayed a bit. My elder brother got hired; he studied as an economist when he was 40, when he came after the war. I started by correspondence because I had to make a living, to work. As the Bible says, a boy who provides himself is not enough. So I never felt myself enough, to be enough, because I began to work. So everybody of us get high education.

Interviewer: How much older were … were you the youngest?

Moise Weiner: I was the youngest of the boys. My sister that was killed, her name was Yeva (ph?). And my younger daughter who came with us now to the United States, I named her after my sister. She is Yeva.

Interviewer: How much older were your brothers than you were? Your older brothers and sisters, how much older were they:

Moise Weiner:Well, my elder sister was ten years older than me. She was 24, and I was 14 when we left. My elder brother was six years older, and my second brother was three years older. Depart in 1941 and never get together again.

Interviewer: Your brothers, you were separated from them?

Moise Weiner:We were separated all our life. They were in the army. The second brother we didn't know if he's alive until 1947, because we had no information about him. He went away with the boys and perished. The elder brother found us, me and my sister. There was a special office in Buguruslan, in the creation office, and we gave our address there. He, from the army, made the inquiries, and they sent him our address, and he found us at the end of 1941. That brother couldn't find it. He couldn't find him until 1947. We lived in separate, different town, cities.

Interviewer: After the war?

Moise Weiner: After the war, yes. My sister stayed in, there was such a town, Orsk in Orenburg Region. And she got married and get her work too, oculist (?) in Kazakhstan. She lives now here, there, all her life there. I was a bit a tramp and changed many cities in my life. But most the second half of my life I lived in, with my wife and my children, in the center of Russia. It is not far from Volga, there's such a town, Penza --- Saratov, Penza, Kuybyshev (Kuibyshev)/Samara --- that's the triangle with Vyonetsk (ph?). It is a place where practically without Jews because in that place, before the Revolution, Jews were not allowed to live. In Penza Region, the population of Penza Region is about one and a half million. They're mostly Russians, a million and two hundred fifty thousand are Russians; the rest are Tartars and Mordova (Moldova, Mordva). The rest in official information is given ten thousands: that's Georgians, Estonians, Syrians, Jews, and so on, Gypsies, and maybe it's a thousand or two thousand Jews from that number. But most of them are assimilated Jews; no Jewish life at all. So I can say that I am an assimilated Jew in the Russian culture. I'm a Russian writer.

Interviewer: That's what you did after the war? You became a writer?

Moise Weiner:I studied; I became a teacher. I studied at an Institute of Foreign Languages. I learned the English language, and I worked at school and then as an

interpreter, a translator at the plant; and tried to become, it's not so easy to become a writer in Russia. Well, I worked, I like to say for work; I worked to gain money to feed my family, to keep my family. Then I worked for myself at the table writing books.

Interviewer: For this, the book?

Moise Weiner: Well, it's not the only; I'm an author of seven books, and I translated. When I was in the age of 56, I learned Yiddish myself, and I translated from Yiddish into Russian some novels of Jewish writers. And I had my own books, and I'm still a member of the Union of Russian Writers. I was a member from 1964, so it's about 30 years. So we lived separate. My brother returned to Vinnytsya, my sister stayed in Octuvist (ph?), Kazakhstan, and I lived in Russia. The last four years I lived not far from Moscow. I was ten years in refuse.

Interviewer: In where?

Moise Weiner: I was refusenik. Ten years, they didn't allow me to go. I appealed in 19… I showed you the photo when we forced, they are standing in 1982, I came to Vinnytsya. We met, all because I was a year in refuse, and I was waiting for permission to go. And we met. It was '91 I appealed first to leave the country because I wanted to go away from there. I managed to get away only this year.

Interviewer: How long ago did you arrive in this country?

Moise Weiner: Three months and a half.

Interviewer: So you got here when?

Moise Weiner: In January, the 11th of January. See, the 11th is, how to say it, arakavua (ph?), it's such a number. The 11th of July in 1941 I left Vinnytsya, and in the 11th of January I left Russia too.

Interviewer: That's right, symmetry.

Moise Weiner:I don't remember what is the English word for that.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about Vinnytsya when you were growing up. What kind of town it was like? Were there a lot of Jews there?

Moise Weiner:Yes. It was before the war, it was like Berdychiv (Bardichev, Berdichev, Berditchev, Berditchov, Berdyczow) that's the Jewish town.

Interviewer: Very high Jewish population.

Moise Weiner:Yes. It was a Jewish town, mostly Jewish town, and I spoke Yiddish in my family. We were a Yiddish family. But in the street with my friends, it was a Jewish street, a Jewish region, a Jewish settlement, Jerusalemka (ph?). It was a mixed language: Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, not a pure language. At school I started Ukrainian; all of us, we started in a Ukrainian school. I think that it was about, maybe half of the population was Jewish. It was about maybe 45,000 of Jews in Vinnytsya before the war; and 36 of them were killed; 36,000 were killed, approximately. Nobody knows the exact number. But you see even after forty years after the war, when you have married and children, it recovered; it restored only to 10,000. It didn't recover the Jewish population. The remains of that population left for Israel; most of them. The son of my elder brother is the last now who stays now in Vinnytsya, but he applied for …

Interviewer: To leave.

Moise Weiner:To leave --- he wants to go to the United States, not to Israel. Well, so when he leaves, nobody of our relatives …

Interviewer: The last of the relatives.

Moise Weiner:Yeah, it's the last of the relatives in Vinnytsya. But my sister is in Kazakhstan, and her son is in Leningrad; that's all.

Interviewer: Do you remember any instances when you were growing up of anti-Semitism:

Moise Weiner: In Vinnytsya?

Interviewer: In Vinnytsya.

Moise Weiner: Only, only, how to say, in the street maybe; but there was no state anti-Semitism before the war. You can call it, it's not anti-Semitism. There were many Jewish schools in Vinnytsya. There was even a college, a Jewish college. But they lost their students, not because of anti-Semitism, but because of the trends of assimilation; because the main trend of the Jewish life was to become assimilated. It was theoretically approved by Marxism, because there was no Israel before the war. The only way to become cultured, educated people was to become, so the Marxists said, and it was the politics of the state, because it was a Marxist state, to help the Jews to become assimilated in the surrounding culture, the Russian Ukraine. So it was not an act of anti-Semitism, but I would say quite contrary. It was the desire to help the Jews to get away from that life they led because they were not educated; they had no profession, no skill. They were mainly shopkeepers; not shopkeepers, but petty shopkeepers.

Interviewer: That's bourgeois?

Moise Weiner: No, it's not bourgeois. It's you bought a chicken; our neighbor, she bought a chicken, alive. In our family we didn't eat poultry from the shops. My mother used to go to the market to buy live chickens, and I, as the youngest, my duty was to go with them to the shochet; if you know what's that. It was a special synagogue. The synagogue was demolished in 1936 or '37, but not as an act of anti-Semitism. It was an act of religious; because not synagogues, but churches, Polish kosciols, they were closed and demolished, too. There is a special --- do you know what is kashrut?

Interviewer: Kosher, yes.

Moise Weiner: Kosher, so if you want to have kosher poultry you have to go to a special man who killed with a razor; it was called shochet. He was in the neighborhood with the synagogue. But when the synagogue was demolished to the ground, his box was left; and I brought him the poultry, usually two chickens.

But our neighbor, she bought a chicken. She cleared from the feathers and cut it in four pieces and went selling it to the neighbors. It was her living. So, is she petty bourgeois? This was the trade. In our house was a metal worker, I don't know in English. The other was a kersak (ph?); furs, hats and clothes from fur.

Interviewer: A furrier.

Moise Weiner: A furrier, artisans maybe. The second was a glass-maker, windows. He put glasses into windows.

Interviewer: These people all lived in your building?

Moise Weiner: On our street. It was such people. The most educated one in our street was an account. That was the intelligentsia of our street, that's all. That was our street.

Interviewer: Do you remember what your street was called, the name of the street?

Moise Weiner: The name of the street was called Niznagrazdowska (ph?). Now the street does not exist. I showed you --- no street. Shalom (Sholom, Sholem) Aleichem was the second. It does not exist now. A bit, three house on the second half maybe are left from Shalom Aleichem Street. That's all; so, a very nice town, very green. A river, a very nice river, The Southern Bug (Buh). I had many friends.

Interviewer: Were most of your friends Jewish or were they …?

Moise Weiner: Jewish, Jewish. Most of them were killed. My best friend, his name was Reva Drakob (ph?). He and his father, they stayed in the town, were taken for hard labor, and they worked for the Nazis not far from Kiev; dug in the earth, I don't know exactly what.

Interviewer: Ditches.

Moise Weiner:Ditches. And my friend, he was a boy with my age, maybe he was fifteen or sixteen already. He began to quarrel with the --- not the supervisor, but with kapo I don't know what --- Ukrainians, policemen; and he was killed with a spade, my friend. And his father became mad seeing that. After the war I came to Vinnytsya, and they found the family, the mother; and she did not allow me to greet her husband, the father of my friend, because not to disturb him. One of my best friends, he has the same name as me, we were sitting the same desk in school seven years. Do you understand what's friendship, if you are sitting seven years? He was killed during the war, and his mother, when she met me in the street, she began to beat me. She went into hysteria, she became hysterical; why he's killed and you are alive. But she didn't understand what she says, but she knew me from the boyhood. So most of my friends were killed during the war.

Interviewer: Did you go to a Jewish school?

Moise Weiner:No.

Interviewer: You went to a public school then?

Moise Weiner:I went to --- the Jewish schools were public schools. They were not private schools. They were state schools, as the Ukrainians and Russians, but I told you that first, I wanted to go to a Jewish school. But then my elder sister, she took me away from there because she wanted to make, not a career, but to make life better. You have to go to, not only me, but everybody decided. I went to, my brothers, me and my sister, we all went to Ukrainian schools; started in Ukrainian schools, it's not public. But before the war there were three Jewish schools. But if in our class, in the seventh class, were maybe 40 pupils in one class; in Jewish school were only five. And one of my friends who went to the Jewish schools, he said that we are lucky because we are asked by the teacher maybe once in two weeks; and he had to prepare his lessons every day because they are only five pupils in the class. It was before the war, but maybe at the beginning of the war they are full. After the war, no Jewish schools. The main language in the streets was Jewish.

Interviewer: Hebrew or Yiddish?

Moise Weiner: No, Yiddish. Hebrew was not in favor; it's loshn-koydesh (Lashon HaKodesh), it's only for the prayers. But every day was Jewish, Yiddish. Therefore, Ukrainian or Jewish was the language. After the war, maybe 50 years, I had Jewish speech; but the last years, no Jewish language.

Interviewer: Let me ask you, do you remember any of --- I know that you know the Germans come to power; the Nazis come to power in Germany in 1933. Did you know, or did people in your family know, about the Germans; what the Nazis were doing in Germany at this time?

Moise Weiner: Well, I can tell you one detail of the beginning of the war what the people heard about the Germans. It is an emotional. When the war, I was in the street with my friend. He photographed me, and we went to the shop to buy some chemicals for the negatives. And the way they announced it at 12 o'clock, the prime minister will be speaking with the urgent information. And we went home, because we were waiting for something like that. It was Molotov speaking, and when he announced that we are at war with the Germans, I run out into the street. From every house in that street there was not weeping, but howling, like about death. The people felt that they are doomed to death. That was the first feeling. That was the attitude, the knowledge about the Germans. Surely we knew about the Nazi's attitude to the Jews, but not at that … that was the first reaction; and it was an exact reaction.

Interviewer: Do you remember in 1939 when the Germans and the Soviet Union divided Poland; do you remember what people thought about that at the time? Were they concerned that the Germans were going to come on in to the Soviet Union, or were they not very concerned? Do you remember?

Moise Weiner: Yes. My father, the matter is that Vinnytsya, the railroad was to the west was through Vinnytsya; and we saw the trains with goods that were butter, flour, and so on. We didn't get bread enough, and everything was sent to Germany. That's the first time; but when the Germans went into Finland in 1940 …

Interviewer: When the Germans went into Finland?

Moise Weiner: Yes, after we were at war with Finland, the Germans were invited by the Finns to come in; and when they went there, my father said, 'that's war'.

Interviewer: He knew that they were going to attack after that.

Moise Weiner: Yeah, that's war. He was not very great politician, but he understand. He was a very clever man. He understood; he was not educated, but life educated him. Life is a very good teacher. He understand when they went into Romania, that they are ready to go to war. He understood it quite well.

Interviewer: So it wasn't a surprise when they attacked?

Moise Weiner: No, no, it was not a surprise, because we were waiting every day for that. We were not far from the old frontier, and my brother was in the army; and he was on special courses in Chisinau (Kishinev, Keshenev, Keshinov, Khisinau, Kishenew, Kiscinev, Kishinef, Kiszyniow). But his division was in Comrat (Komrat). Now if you followed the events in Russia, the Gagauz (Gagauzia, Gagauz Yeni) Republic there on the south; the capital of that autonomy is Comrat. And he was serving in Comrat; but he was in courses, special courses. He was in Chisinau, and his last letter was that he's recalled to his --- it was the 29th of May --- and when he got this letter, my father said, 'that's awful'. He understood it.

Interviewer: That was the 29th of May in 1941.

Moise Weiner: Yes.

Interviewer: So about a month before the war started.

Moise Weiner: Yes, because the Germans were there already in Romania. He understood what --- he knew it not from the papers, but he knew it from life; the movement of our brothers, our sons, everything.

Interviewer: Do you remember what the papers were saying at that time?

Moise Weiner: I don't know exactly; but it was 'be calm'.

Interviewer: That war wouldn't happen, and things like that?

Moise Weiner: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: You said that your brother was in the army. When did he go into the army, your older brother?

Moise Weiner: 1940.

Interviewer: He went into the army in 1940, and that's your oldest brother?

Moise Weiner: Oldest brother.

Interviewer: What was his name?

Moise Weiner: Israel. We all had biblical names. I'm Moshe, Moise, Moses. He's Israel; and my second brother is Shimson something, Simson; I don't know …

Interviewer: Oh, Samson.

Moise Weiner: Yes. Samson, Samson the gibber (ph?), Shimson the gibber. In Yiddish it's … in Hebrew it is Samson the strongest, the giant, Samson.

Interviewer: Do you remember --- let's see, you told me a little bit about when the war started, when you said the people were howling when they heard about the war starting. After that, what happened? What did people do? Did people try to get away? Did they run?

Moise Weiner: Yes, the people tried to get --- my sister urged my father to get away immediately on November the 24th. But we were very poor, and we had no money, and …

Interviewer: This was your older sister who said this?

Moise Weiner: Yes. She was the most cultured; she understood better than anyone what is happening. Three days she stayed in a line on the station to buy a ticket.

Interviewer: For three days she did?

Moise Weiner: She didn't manage to get a ticket.

Interviewer: But she stood in line for three days?

Moise Weiner: She stood in line beginning from the 26th until the 29th, and then they canceled to sell tickets.

Interviewer: And this was tickets for the train?

Moise Weiner: Tickets for the train; he wanted to go to Kiev. We hoped that Kiev would never be occupied. The myth was that when the Germans would come to the old frontier, fire will fire them off. They will perish in fire because we had a myth that our frontier is like a line of Maginot. So we hope, and we …

Tape 1, Side B

Moise Weiner: 29th or 30th of May, of June; but it was then to deal with that panic the authorities spread. Not the news, but hearing, I don't know, that the cavalry of Budyonny (Budyonnyy, Budennii, Budenny, Budyoni, Budyenny), there was such a commander, a hero of the civil war, of the Revolution, that his cavalry pushed back the Germans and liberated L'viv (Lvov, Lwow, Lemberg, Leopol). And the people went home.

Interviewer: They were calmed by that.

Moise Weiner: By that; returned to their homes, not every … But the authorities used these two days to form echelon and to send away their families.

Interviewer: The government people did this?

Moise Weiner: Yes, the Communists, the local …

Interviewer: Because they knew what was happening?

Moise Weiner: Yes. They sent away in passenger cars with their dogs and suitcases (?) with their home flowers. People saw that, after the second of June when they sent away their families, the panic began again. On the fifth, the youth was sent away from the town.

Interviewer: All the youth was, yeah.

Moise Weiner: … is my brother.

Interviewer: Oh, to go to the army; all the people who were of age to go in the army.

Moise Weiner: Yeah, they were taken away; and little by little the town became empty. It was every night it was bombed by the Germans.

Interviewer: When did the bombing start, do you remember?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, the first bombing was on the 24th of June, on the second day of the war; on the third day of the war. And he came every day right at twelve o'clock.

Interviewer: Twelve o'clock at noon?

Moise Weiner: No, no, in the night. And he bombed mostly with fire bombs to make. And he knew what to bomb, he knew what to bomb. First he bombed stores --- medicine stores, the food stores, the Red Army building, and so on. So was the first bombing.

Interviewer: And that continued on every day?

Moise Weiner: Every day, every day.

Interviewer: What did your family do?

Moise Weiner: Every night we went to the bomb shelters. We spent the night in the bomb shelter.

Interviewer: How far away from your house was the bomb shelter?

Moise Weiner: Not far. It's maybe three --- it was in a Jewish school, in a basement of a Jewish school; not far, two or three, two blocks away maybe. We made trenches. I remember; on this place we dug trenches. In the day we sat there. It was a deep trench, maybe two meters deep, covered with logs. We sat there. But after that, a bomb struck one trench, and everybody was killed; we preferred to go to the bomb shelter.

Interviewer: You said that your family didn't have enough money to go, to leave.

Moise Weiner: I won't say. Well, we couldn't get tickets to the railway. The question was to buy a pair of horses and a cart and go away. My mother was an ill woman; she was not very old I understand now, she was 48. But she had thrombosis (?), if you know what's that?

Interviewer: No.

Moise Weiner: It's varicose veins. We discussed several variants how to get away. By foot she couldn't go. To buy horses and a cart, no money. To get together with somebody, very poor people, no money. So we didn't know what to do. The only way was the railroad station. So we went on the eighth of July; we went to the railway station, that's all.

Interviewer: And that's when your parents put you on …

Moise Weiner: It was we sat three days there, not be able to get, only on the 11th of July they gave eight open cars, open wagons. So we departed on the station with my parents on the 11th of July.

Interviewer: Did they tell you anything when they left as to what you should do, what you should try to do, just go where they took you or …

Moise Weiner: We didn't think that the Germans would really come. My father, because the bombings were every day, told that the children must be sent away from the town, from the bombing. He didn't think that the Germans would come because the old frontier will stop them. He was sure that it would be so. So he gave us a loaf of bread and a piece of fat; Ukrainian bread, that's all we had with ourselves for three days. He told us for three days it would be enough for you. You would go somewhere. I don't remember, I was a boy; I don't remember exactly what, but that was the whole supply. Instead of three days, a week were 100 kilometers.

Interviewer: For one week you only made 100 kilometers on the train?

Moise Weiner: Yes. We stopped every half hour.

Interviewer: Because of the bombing?

Moise Weiner: Bombing, blocking of the rails and so on. The peasants didn't --- we went to a village to buy something. They didn't want to get the money, it's paper; give something, we hadn't. We had nothing. Change, natural change; they

didn't take money. So I don't remember exactly any instruction what to do, because nobody knew what to do.

Interviewer: Was this a special train to get children out of the city?

Moise Weiner: No, no; a train; who had passes. The passes was to Kuybyshev; the pass was to Kuybyshev.

Interviewer: How did you and your sister get passes? Did your parents buy them for you?

Moise Weiner: No, no. I told you that my sister was engaged, and he was an officer in the army. And his family get passes. The pass was for four people. His parents did not go. His two sisters, three sisters, took for one place my sister. I was without a pass. I was thrown simply on the edge (?); that's all.

Interviewer: Your father threw you on the train?

Moise Weiner: Yes. He saved me my life; give me my life for the second time.

Interviewer: As far as you knew, the train was just going to go to Kuybyshev; and that's as far at it would go?

Moise Weiner: Yes.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to get from Vinnytsya to Kuybyshev?

Moise Weiner: We didn't get to Kuybyshev.

Interviewer: You never made it there?

Moise Weiner: We were bombed. Not far from Vinnytsya was a satcha (ph?) station of Sinivka (ph?). We were bombed there, and then after that we met the

sisters of my sister's groom; they were in the army. And we stayed in the hospital with them, in a military hospital. And after that, they put us in an echelon of wounded; my sister and his two sisters, as medical sisters to help the wounded.

Interviewer: That was going to the East?

Moise Weiner:To the East, yes; and we managed to go only 18 or 16 kilometers from that station. We met the German tanks, five tanks. They began to shell the locomotives, stopped him, set him the fire. We didn't understand what was happening. We thought it was bombing, simply bombing. We didn't catch it; the Germans are here already. So, but when we looked out, we saw five tanks approaching and shelling the echelon; and they shelled every, setting fire.

Interviewer: Was this train marked as a wounded train, like a Red Cross on it, or anything?

Moise Weiner:Do not remember. It was cars, like, not passenger cars, but we called them Japluski (ph?). That's for cattle.

Interviewer: Cattle car.

Moise Weiner:Cattle car or for foods; not food, but car for products, produce --- freight. And there were shelves, mid-shelves, and the wounded were lying on the shelves and on the floor --- both sides. And we were helping them who was without in the head, with legs, and very hard wounded. And they set every car in fire; and who could run, they jumped out, and we ran away. And those who could not run, could not move, they perished in that fire. So, it was such an experience, yeah. So after that, we ran by foot, maybe 24 hours, running from …. Those tanks, they were running after us and tried to shell, how to say it, to kill you with the shell, the running soldiers. They were playing; the aim was like shooting. And we were running about 24 hours; don't stop. After the war, I found that there was when we went to such a town, Uman, on the Ukraine. And after the war when I was writing that book about the war, I learned that the Germans surrounded three armies from that town. It was called the Uman cattle. They took like 100,000 soldiers and officers, only like prisoners of war. But we managed to get out from that loop.

Interviewer: From the trap?

Moise Weiner:From that trap; and we went out, not to the east, but to the south, southwest [was more likely southeast] to the railroad, such a town, Pervomays'k. And from there we caught a train; it was maybe weeks, (??). So we never came to Kuybyshev. We came to Kuybyshev after two months, maybe, of moving; but they didn't wait for us. So we went further to the Urals. We wanted to go to the middle Asia, most of them. Most of the echelons were directed to the middle Asia, but when we sprang out from the tanks running, I was in a shirt and the trousers, and my sister was in a thin summer dress. And that was all we had on us. And after two months, we were shabby and lousy, without money; and we decided to stop our running not far from Orenburg. And one of our sisters, a girl, she got a job in Orsk; and we lived 10 people in such a room. And there it was at the end of September ….

Interviewer: Now Orsk is in the Urals?

Moise Weiner:Yes, it's in the South Urals. It is on the river Ural. It is the frontier between Europe and Asia; so you can stay in Europe, cross the bridge, and you are in Asia. So I lived on two continents; it's divided. That town is situated on both sides of that river, and that's in Europe and in Asia.

Interviewer: When you arrived there, what did you do? Did they put you to work?

Moise Weiner:My sister got a job, and I found a job.

Interviewer: What was your job?

Moise Weiner:My first job was a terrific one. I was a little boy.

Interviewer: You were about 14 at this time?

Moise Weiner: Fourteen, yes. I was more than 14 because I was born in May and that was in September; and 14 and three, four months. I went to (don't know

what it is in English) tshicago (ph?); what's tshicago, how they call that cattle is killed.

Interviewer: How they kill cattle? A slaughterhouse?

Moise Weiner: Slaughterhouse, yes; a huge slaughterhouse, and the cattle is killed. And from the meat is sausages and so on; conserve, baked, so…. I worked there 10 days. It was a specialty, I don't know; the hind part of a cow, frozen, with such a knife. I had to clear the meat from the bones, and it's a great skill to put the knife between the bone and not the meat; but if you know if meat. You know that between the bone and meat is some layer …

Interviewer: A membrane.

Moise Weiner: A membrane; and if you do not put your knife between the surface of the bone and that membrane, you will suffer a great deal because you will not cut …

Interviewer: Hard to cut it.

Moise Weiner: Yes, hard to cut. I had not the skill to do it, and it was heavier than I myself and frozen. On the 10th day, I put the knife into the fingers, and I got blood infection. So it was blue, my hand. I went away from that. After when they healed my hand, I went to sewing --- not fabric --- it was enterprise, so …

Interviewer: This is where they built sewing machines?

Moise Weiner: No, no. It's where sewing uniform for the army --- women mostly; and I started. First I was an apprentice, and then when I was 15, I became master of the shift because the grown-up were called to the front. And I and three other boys were the gang that had to check regularly to repair the machines. So I was a qualified master at 16. At 16, I had the highest qualification, the eighth qualification for master. And there I worked all the war until 1945, until I was called to the army.

Interviewer: And you were called into the army in 1945?

Moise Weiner: Yes.

Interviewer: What time of year; do you remember?

Moise Weiner: It was after the war. I was 18 in May, and it was in June or July. In August I was called to Leninburg (ph?) [perhaps Leningrad]. It was in August already. But I did not serve in the army. I was called to Lindacher (ph?) Academy, and I did not manage to get into it.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about the town that you were in, in Orsk; what it was like at that time during the war? Were there lots of hardship, was there much food there?

Moise Weiner: No; it is … if you know the history of Russia, maybe you know of the Ukrainian poet, Taras Shevchenko. Taras Shevchenko was in exile in that town, last century. When he was in that town, he wrote about it. It is a town where nothing to hank (?) yourself. It's Steppe. It was formed as a fortress the Russians used to expanding into the middle Asia. In Asia they used to form in the Steppe, fortresses. Orsk was at first a military fortress.

Interviewer: An outpost or something.

Moise Weiner: Outpost, it's an outpost as you call it. It's a hill --- the first. The outpost was built on a hill. It looks around the Steppe. Before the war, they found nickel.

Interviewer: Nickel, the metal.

Moise Weiner: Metal. And they built a very large plant there, nickel plant. And many enterprises from the Ukraine, Russia, were evacuated to that town. Most of them were military. Over the fence there was from Moscow, a plant. Boys were working. They made mines, yeah. We were sewing ammunition for garment (?), and they were making mines. The others were making shells and so on. It was mostly plants, military plants, and three labor camps. It was gulag, one of the gulag places. They were mostly engaged, exploited, in building the houses. There was socialist town. They built the houses in that town; some schools, many hospitals, and that's a slaughter house, and that's all I suppose. Now it's a very

large industrial town. Food, food, there was no food. There was no food; the system was they had cards ---

Interviewer: A ration card?

Moise Weiner: Ration card, yes. We got --- I got 500 grams of bread.

Interviewer: Every day?

Moise Weiner: Every day, but it was not enough.

Interviewer: Did you get anything else besides bread?

Moise Weiner: Yes, we used these cards only in the dining --- not restaurants, but they were called; not fabric, but had its own dining …

Interviewer: Canteen or …

Moise Weiner: Yes, and there we dined there. We had dinner there, and we had to give our cards there. And I had a garden with my sister; we raised potatoes. And your --- I don't remember --- Wallace maybe; was not the ambassador to Russia, but he was a special envoy of Roosevelt in Russia. He called those gardens, vegetable gardens, victory gardens; because if not those gardens, it would be very hard to survive. So we had some supply of potatoes for the winter. That's all I suppose what we had. But work, I worked; the shift was for the machines was 10 hours; one hour the break, one hour to change the shift. It was 12 hours; 24 hours were divided into two.

Interviewer: So some people worked in the day, and some people worked at night. Is that how it worked?

Moise Weiner: We changed; one week in the day and one week in the night. The shift began at eight o'clock in the morning and ended at eight o'clock in the evening. The night shift began at eight o'clock in the evening and ended at eight

o'clock. But we, the mechanics, had to work much more because we were obliged to work some two, three hours to help our colleagues.

Interviewer: You all made sure the machines were running all right?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, because we had no supplies of details, of spare parts during the war; and the machines were out of work, most of them. So the usual working day for me was 14, 16 hours. And if that master who had to change me, if he fell ill, I was put, as they called it, that time on the war situation; had no right to leave the shop and could prolong three, four a week, round the clock work. Five minutes sleep was a happy change.

Interviewer: And you did this until the end of the war? This is where you worked?

Moise Weiner: Yeah.

Interviewer: I think that's all the questions I have about your story. Can I ask you about your parents?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, I told you some things.

Interviewer: You're right; let's go back. Tell me where they were born and their names.

Moise Weiner: Yes, well I cannot say exactly where they were; I think they were born in Vakhnovka. They were married in Vakhnovka, in the same shtetl where I was born.

Interviewer: What was your mother's name?

Moise Weiner: I want you to explain me one thing, with the names. Nobody knows the full name, because when the Jews were given last names, what you call here, they were not given their real Jewish names, but depending on the place where they lived or to the Count to whom they belonged. In the Ukraine the

names were distorted. So my brother is a Suar (ph?); but in the Ukraine, it was distorted to Srue (ph?). I saw even here in America, a man died, and his name's Srue; not a Suar, but a Srue. It's not a name; it's something …

Interviewer: It's like a nickname or something?

Moise Weiner: It's not a nickname; it's like Bob, Robert and Bob.

Interviewer: Yeah, that would be a nickname. Like my name is Anthony; my real name is Anthony, but my nickname is Tony.

Moise Weiner: So my father's father's name, not my father, but my grandfather's name; I only last year found it in the Bible. It is Issachar (Yissachar); Isischor (ph?) in English. But my father's second name was --- he was Isaac; my father Sauschis (ph?), not Issachar, but Sachar (ph?). You have half a name. So what is the name of my mother? The real, I don't know; I know she was called Machla.

Interviewer: Machla, and that was her first name?

Moise Weiner: Her first name, and her maiden name was Sandler. And when she married, she became Weiner.

Interviewer: So your father's --- he was Isaac Weiner?

Moise Weiner: Isaac Weiner, yes. Russian transcription of Machla is Maria. Well maybe we be transcribed as so, but we don't know is it really so.

Interviewer: Machla looks fine to me.

Moise Weiner: Fine, yeah? Well, it's Machla.

Interviewer: Do you remember the years that they were born, their birthdays?

Moise Weiner: Yes; the birthday I don't know.

Interviewer: But the year?

Moise Weiner: The year I tell you, it was '86 for my father.

Interviewer: 1886?

Moise Weiner: Yes; and '92 for my mother.

Interviewer: Do you know when they were married?

Moise Weiner: Twelve, 1912. I remember quite well because my mother had in the house a picture, hand worked it.

Interviewer: Oh, needlepoint or something like that?

Moise Weiner: Yes, needlework, and the date was of their marriage, 1912. I remember it. I see it before my eyes now, even now.

Interviewer: I know we talked about what your father did; that he was a cowboy.

Moise Weiner: He was a cowboy in his younger… Then he was maybe a bit of merchant maybe, I don't know; before the Revolution.

Interviewer: Was your mother, was she just a housewife or did she …?

Moise Weiner: She was a housewife all her life, as far as I remember. She had five children to keep, to bring up. She began her day at five in the morning and ended at two in the night. And she did nothing in the eyes of the household.

Interviewer: I think most mothers get that, unfortunately. They do a lot, but nobody actually sees what they do, unfortunately. Was you family, your parents especially, were they very religious?

Moise Weiner: Yes, my father was religious. I remember him to take me with himself to the synagogue. But when the synagogue was destroyed, he prayed at home. He had phylacteries, I remember, and the shawl. He was religious, yeah. My mother went to the synagogue too, but not every day.

Interviewer: Did your father go every day?

Moise Weiner: On the holidays, mostly, because you see the synagogue was destroyed in 1936 or '37. I was a boy of nine or ten; I don't remember. I remember only that the last effort of my father to keep to religion was enough. Before the war, he and his neighbor, there is such a Jewish holiday as Succos (Sukkos, Sicchos) in Yiddish, Sukkot (Succot); they tried to make a sukkah (siccha). It's a tent maybe with greens and so forth. Then, when they were sitting in that sukkah, drinking wine, maybe, I don't remember, a military man came and destroyed that.

Interviewer: He knocked it over?

Moise Weiner: Knocked it over, yes; and pulled them away from there.

Interviewer: Do you remember when that happened?

Moise Weiner: It was not long before the war. That was, I don't remember, the last effort to; after that he stayed home, prayed only at home.

Interviewer: Did your father ever talk about World War I or the Revolution.

Moise Weiner: Yeah.

Interviewer: Was he in the First World War?

Moise Weiner: He was not; but he was, two times, he was nearly killed. The first time --- maybe you know that during the Civil War there were many gangs, nationalistic gangs, that when they came to a Jewish shtetl, they made pogroms killing people. My father was young enough, and he took part in a band of self-defense, sammabaronika (?). When one of the gangs of Petlura (Petliura, Petlyura ?) came, five people, and they were caught by the Petlurivtsa (?); and they want them to be shot. And the same time my mother rushed, not to the rebbe, but to the Christian …

Interviewer: Priest or … ?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, the priest, the Christian, the Pope.

Interviewer: The priest, yeah.

Moise Weiner: The priest, yeah, the priest, the priest, and asked him for help to save the life of her husband. When they were brought to the lawn, was very green grass. And the leader of that gang said, 'it's a pity to spoil such grass with Jewish blood;' let us go further. And that saved them the life because the priest succeeded to come to the place and stopped the killing in the name of Christ. And they were set free. And my father, I remember, told that he was in such strength that his hands were bound, that he…

Interviewer: Oh my gosh, he broke the bones.

Moise Weiner: He broke the bones. It was the first time. So it was the legends (?) of our family, this killing, the second killing … Was in their shtetl one of the --- I don't know how to call it --- a soldier, a gangster. He rushed in the house.

Interviewer: Into your parents' house?

Moise Weiner: Yes, and began to beat --- the Cossacks had on a stick, leather ---

Interviewer: A whip?

Moise Weiner: A whip, nagaika (nagayka, nagyka) in Russian. At the end he had a leaden bob; it can kill you. And she had a little child, a baby, on her hand; and he began to beat her. And she was saved only, she told me, that she pressed herself to the wall protecting the kid; and when he hit her, the bob couldn't get at her, but on the wall. The bob struck the wall, but not the … And that saved her the life and the life of the child. Maybe it was my brother that died in 19.. (1927 ?), maybe that's what. That's the experience of my parents in that war.

Interviewer: That was during the Civil War?

Moise Weiner: The Civil War, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you ever remember your father speaking, or your parents speaking about the Revolution?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, why not? They did not make difference between the Civil War and the Revolution, because the Revolution was not on the Ukraine. There was no Revolution; there was only Civil War, because the Revolution was in Russia, and there they came to restore the Soviet power. And the Civil War there were many gangs, Makhno (Machno), Petlura, Teutoni (ph?), Degrees (ph?), and so on. They told many stories about --- there were stories only about the beating of Jews; bad, that's all. And about the Germans; one of the faults of the Jews on the Ukraine was that they remembered the Germans of that time.

Interviewer: From the first war?

Moise Weiner: From the first war. Are they not Hilmen (ph?)? They are Hilmen (ph?).

Interviewer: Honorable people, yes.

Moise Weiner: Honorable people; people like we are. That's propaganda, and that was the mistake. If we knew really what is coming, but who knew that?

Interviewer: Did most of the Jews in the Ukraine feel that way, that the Germans were relatively decent people, and that they wouldn't do these things to them?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, yeah. Well I think many of them who remember.

Interviewer: The older generation.

Moise Weiner: The older generation; the young knew. We read books. We knew films; we saw films about … Professor Mamlock was such a film. We read Vectaya's (ph?) books, and so we knew --- the papers, the radio --- before the pact; before the pact between Molotov and Ribbentrop, the propaganda was against the Nazis. So, we were a bit educated in that field. We knew what Nazis meant. But older generation, 'sota vitenhop' (ph?).

Interviewer: You said that your father, after the Revolution, he didn't have, you know after the Civil War also, he was an unskilled laborer because he didn't have, I guess, an industrial job before the war; so he didn't really have a job after the war. But he worked as a tax collector?

Moise Weiner: No, he worked as a driver. He had horses at one time; you know, a belagula (ph?). What is a belagula, in Yiddish, in Ukraine? It's a driver, it's not passengers you drive, but stones, bricks, and so on.

Interviewer: So he transported these things.

Moise Weiner: Transported, yeah. That was a long time his job until the mid of the thirties. Then he lost his horses, and he was …

Interviewer: How did he lose his horses, do you remember? Did they die?

Moise Weiner: Yes. One died, and the second he sold. He had two horses. Then he worked as a night watch …

Interviewer: Night watchman?

Moise Weiner: Yeah. And the last years when he became a bit ill, he became in the market; it's an open market, so a tax collector. And that was his last job.

Interviewer: There was a large open market in Vinnytsya?

Moise Weiner: Two.

Interviewer: Two markets.

Moise Weiner: Yeah.

Interviewer: One was near your home?

Moise Weiner: No, they were both not near. One, on this place, when we arrived to settle here; there was a little market here, but it was demolished by the authorities. But two big markets were on that end of the city, and the second, the best, were on the other side.

Interviewer: What did he collect taxes on? Was it on the things that people sold, or is that how he collected…?

Moise Weiner: No, for the place.

Interviewer: Oh, for the place. So he took fees for people to set up their booths?

Moise Weiner: Yeah, yeah; I remember that. If you come with a wagon of goods, you had to have a place; and you have to pay a ruble for that.

Interviewer: Did anybody in your family ever become Communists? Were they in the Komsomol or in the …?

Moise Weiner:In my family, my father and my mother, no. What's about my brothers and sisters, we were all in Komsomol. My brothers during the war became Communists and my sister, too.

Interviewer: So they joined the party.

Moise Weiner:They joined the party. I never joined the party. I was, as we called, non-party Bolshevik; so we called it in Russia. I thought that three from us, it's enough for the party. I'll be free. I don't like party discipline; so I told, no.

Interviewer: When we talked about before the Germans came and right before the war, can you tell me what you remember; and what you know about what happened to your parents after they put you on the train in 1941?

Moise Weiner:No. We tried to find out who saw them the last, and we have very vague idea. You see hope dies the last; so we hoped that they survived.

Interviewer: You don't know what happened?

Moise Weiner:We didn't know. I tried, you see, the whole my life I tried to understand what was my father had been doing between the time the Nazis came and his death; from day to death. I see they were put to work from the jail. But there is a book, exists such a book, the American author of John Hersey. He has written a book, *The Wall*, about the Warsaw ghetto. He has written that book using the Ringelblum papers. I only here in America, I managed to get that book, Ringelblum's Diaries. My daughter made me a copy of it. Now I'm reading that. But that book of Hersey's was written in 1950 or '53, maybe. I didn't know about it; I came across it only in 1983. And in that book I read everything I wanted to. It's a book about the war and the ghetto, and what the Jews were doing from day to day from the beginning of the occupation. So that's a great book from my point of view.

Interviewer: So you don't know what happened to your parents after they put you on the train---you and your sister?

Moise Weiner: No, no. He told me maybe he will go to Rakhnovka, to the parents of my mother; but they didn't do anything. They returned home, and they were caught by the Germans there.

Interviewer: And that's all you know?

Moise Weiner: That's all I know, yeah.

Interviewer: Can I ask you about your uncle?

Moise Weiner: Yes, that's my uncle; Isaac too.

Interviewer: He was also Isaac?

Moise Weiner: Isaac, yes.

Interviewer: And he was your mother's brother?

Moise Weiner: Yes, it's my mother's brother.

Interviewer: So he would be Sandler, also?

Moise Weiner: Sandler; he's Sandler, yes.

Interviewer: Was he also born in …

Moise Weiner: Rakhnovka, yes. They were all born in Rakhnovka; they came from Rakhnovka, all. Well, I cannot say that tree of …, theological tree…

Interviewer: The family tree?

Moise Weiner: We were not used to --- I know my parents and my grand…, that's all. I saw my grandfather, my mother's father, maybe two times in my life. He was a grey-bearded (?), and he lived until 86. If he would not have been killed, maybe he would have. He was a very strong man.

Interviewer: Do you remember when your uncle was born?

Moise Weiner: No; I know he was younger than my mother; the difference, maybe two years.

Interviewer: I'll put 1890 then.

Moise Weiner: '94, maybe '95. So he was 45, maybe he was, when the war began.

Interviewer: Did you remember your mother talking about him very much, what kind of person he was?

Moise Weiner: Well, he was a person about whom, sort of a taboo, because he was married not on a Jewess; and he drank vodka. It was a horror for the Jews if a Jew at that time drank Vodka --- not much. But he was a builder painter.

Interviewer: He painted houses.

Moise Weiner: Houses; and when he came from work, he took a glass of vodka, maybe a little glass of vodka. It was a very terrible deed from the point of view of my mother. She survived.

Interviewer: His wife did?

Moise Weiner: Yes. I saw her after the war; I was a kid. I wanted to know his fate. I remembered the address where she lived, and I went to her and asked her about his fate; and she couldn't tell me anything at all.

Interviewer: She didn't know for certain. You told me the story about what happened to him.

Moise Weiner: He was called to, maybe to, not exactly to the fighting army, but he was called to the army. It was called battalions, building battalions; battalions that earthworks and so on.

Interviewer: Like the engineering battalion or something?

Moise Weiner: Engineering battalion, yes; he was called to that. He was a painter. He was called to that battalion, and when they were surrounded by the Germans and kept like war prisoners, they were ordered to stay in a line, or two lines; I don't know exactly. Another witness told about his death to my elder brother; he stood beside him.

Interviewer: He was right beside your uncle when he died?

Moise Weiner: Yes. He was standing in that line. And when the command was, 'commissars and Jews step out three steps,' they stepped out. They didn't know why they did that. The command was make with them, how to say it in English? [He says something in Yiddish.]

Interviewer: Get finished with them or make an end of them.

Moise Weiner: Make an end of them. One of his compatriots standing there rushed out from the line, took off his bandage, and with that band he strangled him from behind --- and strangled him. That was how he died. That was the story.

Interviewer: Do you know when that happened, was that 1941?

Moise Weiner: It was 1941.

Interviewer: Do you know where he was captured? No? Just somewhere in the Ukraine?

Moise Weiner: Somewhere; it's under Kiev, because it was not far from Kiev.

Interviewer: It was near Kiev?

Moise Weiner: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything about your mother's family; about how many brothers and sisters she had?

Moise Weiner: Yes, because I remember it very well. Because I don't know how it's in your family, but in our family it was the cult of Machla's relatives. He liked them very much, and the love of my mother to her sisters, to her brothers, were given to the children; and to the relatives of my father we were not so …

Interviewer: Not as close.

Moise Weiner: Yeah, not as close. So they were six, three sisters and three brothers.

Interviewer: Where did your uncle fall in that? Was he the oldest or the youngest brother?

Moise Weiner: No, no, the eldest was my mother's sister --- her mother (they are looking at photographs) --- Gittel. Her name was Gittel (?).

Interviewer: This is Gittel?

Moise Weiner: No, this is Rosa; she was a very beautiful girl. She was gassed before the war in Vinnytsya; she was a very beautiful girl. It's a photo, but in real life she was very nice. Gittel had three daughters; she was the youngest. Two elder daughters of Gittel were married, and one had two children, and the other had one. They had husbands, very nice guys, both; and they were killed in Odessa.

Interviewer: The husbands were killed in Odessa, or she was killed in Odessa?

Moise Weiner: The whole family was killed; my aunt, her husband, her daughters, her granddaughters. It was in Odessa.

Interviewer: Do you know how she died?

Moise Weiner: No; they were killed …

Interviewer: They were just captured by the Germans?

Moise Weiner: Germans --- the mass killings, the mass killings.

Interviewer: Can you tell me, Gittel and her husband, what did her husband do, do you remember, for a living?

Moise Weiner: He worked at a plant; he was a steel worker.

Interviewer: Do you remember what plant he worked at?

Moise Weiner: Well, I don't exactly remember, but I remember he presented us with knives that he did at work; when he was, as a guest, you know. But his daughters were educated and their sons-in-law, the husbands of the daughters, were too educated. They had high education. One was a teacher maybe, the other I don't remember. I do not remember; I would not say.

Interviewer: So Rosa was not married, though?

Moise Weiner: No, no, she was 17; she was in the tenth form.

Interviewer: Do you remember when she was born?

Moise Weiner: If she was 17 in ’40; ’23 maybe.

Interviewer: And she was born in Odessa?

Moise Weiner: She was born, I don’t know.

Interviewer: But she wasn’t born in Vakhnovka?

Moise Weiner: Vakhnovka, I think no. Or maybe she was born in Vakhnovka; I will not say.

Interviewer: I think that’s all my questions. Do we have anybody else?

Moise Weiner: Well, the younger brother, Rafael (ph?) Liebowitz (?), [different last name?] was killed with his family, of my mother.

Interviewer: Your mother’s brother.

Moise Weiner: My mother’s brother, the younger brother. He had two sons and a daughter. He and his wife and the whole family of his wife was killed in Lipovets; and one of the brother with my grand-dad, her brothers, was killed and his son, his wife, three daughters; very many people died, were killed in Vakhnovka. He was buried alive, I was told; that family was buried alive. They were thrown into the ground.

Interviewer: Oh, is this the person you’re talking about who was buried alive?

Moise Weiner: No, no. I talk about his brother. His brother was the father of these; my grand-dad. He was killed too. So it’s a long story to tell. It’s about 60 people. I can’t name you by myself.

Interviewer: I think we talked about everybody. Is there anybody else? We did your parents; we did Rosa. I may call you. Is that okay?

Moise Weiner:What can I say? The only thing I want to save, the memory of my parents. That is all I want to say, the memory of those who were killed. I stayed alive; I'm thankful. If I would have been a religious man, I would say, 'thank God I'm alive.' I'm alive and that's the best prize in my life. I had my life during the war, after the war; hard or not hard, it's everybody. But I'm alive. My little sister is killed. She would have been now about 60. She had no life. My parents were killed. My mother was a very young… I'm older than my father now; he was killed 56 year. My mother was 49. They were young people. My Uncle Isaac was 45. Rafael was maybe in his 30's or maybe 40. Gittel was a little older, but Rosa was 17. They were young people, my brothers and cousins and so on. So if there is any possibility to keep the memory about them, not about me. I have my own memory, but they cannot say nothing. I can say for them something, not very much. Therefore, if you can have their names in you museum that people shall remember them, I would be quite grateful; that's all.

Interviewer: [something in Yiddish]

Moise Weiner:[same thing in Yiddish]