

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Miriam Shulman July 23, 1996 RG-50.030*0375

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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Miriam Shulman, conducted on July 23, 1996 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview 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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Miriam Shulman
July 23, 1996

Question: Miriam, will you begin by telling me your full name, your date of birth and where you were born.

Answer: I was born in a small town near Vilnaashashoc(ph). And my, I was born in June the 26th, 1918.

Q: And your name?

A: Miriam Shulman, Miriam Kabachik(ph).

Q: Miriam Shulman today?

A: Now, I am Miriam Shulman.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family life before the war and your town.

A: We were young, we were, I was going to school. Well, a lot of friends, young. We were in, we were well off in Poland, didn't have to worry about anything and until it came the day that it started that...

Q: Tell me about your family. Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: Well, I lost my father, I don't remember my father. When I was a year and three-quarters, my father passed away. I had my mother and we were five children in the house. I had three brothers and we were, and I am a sister. I lost one brother in 1933 from leukemia. And, then my sister got married young, but my mother was quite a lady that she knew how to manage, because she was in the business and she raised us, too.

Q: What kind of business.

A: In tannery business, leather tannery. We had a tannery, we had a wholesale place and we had a retail. But, it was all in leather business. And my brothers helped a lot, my mother, to go on because it was a very hard business for a woman to go on with it.

Q: Was that unusual for a woman to be running such a big business?

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A: Very unusual. Very, she was in, she was completely, nobody, unbelievable but kind of woman she was to carry on this kind of business. To take it over after the death of my father. Which was during the war, World War I, when everything was destroyed. And she had to rebuild everything. And raise five children. It was very extraordinary.

Q: What was the town like? Can you describe it so that I can get a feeling for what it was like to live in this town?

A: It was a happy little town. There were, there was a Hebrew school. There were, before the Hebrew school, were the Hada(ph), Hada that they used to go to a Hada first to learn Hebrew to learn the _____. And then there was a very good Hebrew school, private. And later on in the years we decided that that's not enough. We have to learn Polish, too. So, we went to the Polish school. And after we got through with Polish school, who could afford, went to study in Vilna(ph). And from my family, they all went to study in Vilna. And until the war started...

Q: So, you were studying in Vilna as well?

A: I, I was, no, I was home already because after my brother passed away, we were all home with my mother.

Q: Now, when you went to high school, did you go to a Polish school?

A: It was a Polish private school. That wasn't easy to get in just to any school. So, we had to go to private schools.

Q: What do you mean?

A: There was the _____, which belongs to the government, not everybody could get in.

Q: What, why? What, how would you get in?

A: How would we get in?

Q: Why couldn't everybody...

A: They didn't accept, they didn't accept everybody. Was not all the Jewish people could get in. So, we went to private schools. And, maybe, people could not afford, maybe later on they would, later on was a little easier. But if you could, people that could afford, went to private schools.

Q: So, you went to school with Polish kids?

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A: No, it was mostly Jewish children. Mostly, Jewish children. But, it was a Polish, everything in Polish.

Q: Did you mix at all with Polish people? Did you have Polish neighbors?

A: Yes. We had a very close neighbor, Polish family. And we were very close to them. But we found out the difference, is when the war started. But, we were very close to a lot of Poles. We had a lot of friends among the Poles.

Q: Now, when you were living in the town, did you experience or know much about anti-Semitism?

A: Yes. Yes. Very much. It was the last years, especially. When there was that, they were calling that not to shop in Jewish stores. They used to say, _____. In Polish. We should go to our own, translation. But, there was mostly Jewish stores in town and they had depended on the Jewish people for shopping.

Q: Was your family religious?

A: There was no other way in Poland than being religious, but I wouldn't call it specially because being brought up without a father, so were not that strict like in some of my friends' homes. Because I always used to admire their way of being stricter and religious than we were. But my mother always said, _____. To come and eat in our house and conduct the holidays in Shabis(ph). You know that we should feel that we have to obey everything according to the laws.

Q: Were the holidays a special time for you?

A: There was okay, but they were sad. We always felt the sadness that we don't have our father. Even we, at the table, nothing was missing in the house, everything was there and we had the _____ conducting all the holidays and everything with us, but it was always sad.

Q: Is there anything else you can tell me about your life before the war that would give me special insight into what it was like living there? What good memories do you have?

A: Oh, I had 12 girlfriends and then when we get a little older, there were a lot of boyfriends. And it was kind of, I was born in a house that was a open house, everybody was coming in to our house. They chose to. And young people and they used to come from small towns, Saturday night, to us.

And having parties and dances and music. It was, there was a very, we used to sit up Friday night

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until two o'clock at night and every time in another house. And then all the girls and the boys used to come and find some snacks in the house. And having a good time, but this was mainly Friday and Saturdays, because this is the days there was no school. Or this is the days they didn't work, people did not work. Because everything was closed on Saturday. But it was a, we had happy times. We did. We enjoyed the small towns. It was kind of together, everything was together. If anybody had a problem, if anybody had a death, the whole town _____. It was, everybody knew everybody, everybody knew what they have, what's going on, what the news of the town. It was a very nice town. We had three temples. We had, the Hebrew school was excellent. And then, of course, when we changed to private school, it was also very good. It was a normal life. A normal, nice life. We knew each other. It was friendly. It was welcome. We never had a door locked. The doors were always open and unlocked. And we had a lot of friends among the non-Jews. That they were always welcome in the house. And coming in.

Q: Were there political associations? Were you involved in any youth groups?

A: Yes. Yes. We belonged to the Bittah(ph). Which is now the right wing. And we used to go out, outings and every, every so often meetings. I, there was a library. I was working in the library. When it was open to public, two days a week. But, there was always people, it was all kind of organizations. We had the Bittah, we had the Ashomerits(ph) _____, we had the Zionist, other organizations. People were coming for meetings. We had always speakers coming from other towns together. And it was always meetings and there was almost, if we would have, we didn't have more time because in the time that we were in school, there was not time. And later on, we were going from, we used to go this town there is something going on. A kid knows this town there is something. People used to come to our town, always we go to other towns. And it was, we knew the surrounding, around small towns always, too. It was a very friendly way of living.

Q: Were you aware, before the Germans came in, of what was going on in Germany and, did you know about Hitler, did you know about any of this?

A: Yes, we knew because we always had a newspaper in the house from Warsaw. We didn't have a

newspaper printed in our town, but we used to have the newspaper from Warsaw. It was a Jewish

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newspaper. We knew, but we would, we would never believe that can something happen. There can be a change in our life. We would never believe it. I, even the day when it happened, we did not believe what had happened to us. There was, it's a very, I would say like this, when you live in a home that you got everything, nothing is missing except, I said, we missed our father very much in life. That nobody can chase us out of the house. Nobody can take away from us anything. It's ours. It belongs to us. And we have such good neighbors and we have such good people around us. All our workers in the tannery, they were so devoted to us. And even, we had a maid, she was 16 years with us. She raised us, she spoke Yiddish just like we did. And we were so, we were so well known in town. That we couldn't understand that something could happen to us. And the day that the war broke out, we were having a good time in our garden. We were all sitting, boys and girls, we were having a good time. And all of a sudden they come and they say the war, a war broke out. We couldn't believe it. We ran home to the houses and we couldn't understand what happened here.

Q: When you say the war broke out, are you talking about...

A: 1939. September, 1939. We couldn't believe it. We weren't ready for it. We weren't, we didn't know there is, we didn't know what a war means even.

Q: So, maybe you can tell me what happened. What you did at that point.

A: Well, everybody went to their house and I came and everybody was afraid. They were afraid, for example, we won't have any news what's going on because they were confiscating the radios. And I went into the Commandant from the town, which was a neighbor and he was, we were very friendly with him. And I asked him, please see they should not take away our radio. This is a coincidence, I can never forget it, and he said, okay, I'll let you have it. And my brother was crying, they wanted to take away his motorcycle. He was the only one in town he had a motorcycle. And they wanted to confiscate it, his motorcycle, to mobilize. And he said, let him hide, I'll stay behind. It was a lot of things that happened, but we had the privileges to benefit from people that we knew that they will help us. And that's when, but, it didn't take too long when the Russians marched in. Then we started to feel problems. Because we knew that we will be the ones who will suffer more

than anybody else. The day of Forshoshona(ph), we were all in the temple, did not know what's

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going on. And we came out from the temple, we see tanks are coming in, armies coming in and they are Russians. So, of course, then we started to feel war, we were confused, we didn't what is going, what will be with us. And we had a lot of certain experience without, without protection. Because they did send out the police and the Commandant and everything, they send them to Siberia. And we had nobody, no protection over us, to watch us. So, there was a lot of certain bad experiences. But we did overcome that until it became worse.

Q: Well, you were under the Russians for two years almost.

A: No.

Q: No?

A: It became, they gave it to Lithuania. We became Lithuanians, we not no more Poles. The Lithuanians took it over. And they forced us to go to learn, if anybody did not speak Lithuanian, if you got any problems, they really used to beat us up. And we started to study, but the language, before Lithuanian, we started to study Russian. And then in no time, we became Lithuanian, so we had to learn Lithuanian. The Lithuanian language and there was, a very, very hard language to learn. So, there was a very, very hard, but there was freedom. We still, people used to travel overseas. People could, I could, we could travel. We were going to Vilna, we were going to Kovna(ph), Kovna was before we couldn't go. We could travel all over. And then it started a lot of coming from other towns because they that from Lithuania you can leave the country for travel, for going farther if you wanted to go to the United States or something. It wasn't easy, but you could make it yet. Which, where the Germans were occupational, where the Russians were occupied, you could not travel.

Q: So, the Russians weren't in control?

A: A very short time, a very short time.

Q: So, how did this affect your life? Your family was fairly affluent and under the Lithuanians and the Russians, did they allow all of this privilege?

A: No. My, the whole family, from the time that the Russians were, my family did not sleep at

home. I was the only one, we were raising a little boy from our cousin from Vilna, he had to study

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to be Bar Mitzvah. So we brought him to our house, it was a open house. Always family, always people. And we were teaching him the Bar Mitvah, to be. So, I'm the only one with him, I slept, we slept in the house. Because the police department was very close to our home. And I used to stay up until 2:00 and if I didn't see a stationwagon near the police, it means they are not going to come for us. Then I used to go to sleep. But I used to cry a lot and the little boy used to always come to me and comfort me. Mira, why are you crying? Why are you crying? I said, it's okay, I want to cry because mother is not home. Or my mother will come, I won't cry any more. So, they used to sleep always in different places. My two brothers and my mother, and I used to stay home and watch the house. And that time, that was a big tragedy. We didn't know that can come worse. And, that was very hard. We knew that any day we'll be sent to Siberia. We knew it. And it wouldn't take long, if they would stay longer.

Q: So, they took away your business, the tannery?

A: The tannery, yes. They nationalized the tannery. They, everything was sold out quickly. They, when the Russians marched in, the next day, when we got up, we saw a line that we thought they will push away our house. They were all lined up to get in to buy the merchandise. The leather. And we were used that everybody comes in to buy what they need. There was nothing. You can't even, they would like to buy, they didn't have it. So, they told us there is things, they want as much as they could take. Take it. So, it didn't take too long to sell out everything, in a couple of days, it was all empty.

Q: Now, who bought this? The Russians?

A: The Russians. Until, this was when, until, then after, Lithuania was no problem. Business was going on as normal.

Q: So, how soon did the Russians actually move in? Do you remember the date?

A: It was in September, I don't remember the date exactly. But I know that as we came out from the temple, and we saw the Russians marching in and we didn't understand why. What are they doing?

There was going to be a war with the Germans. How come the Russians are marching in? Because

they took it over before, in Warsaw the war was still going on. The Poles were still fighting with the Germans.

Q: So, this was 1940, the fall of 1940?

A: Yeah. This is still in 1939.

Q: The Russians came in in 1939?

A: Yes. They marched into our place, to our, right away.

Q: So, you weren't under the Lithuanians very long.

A: Yes, we were. We were from '40 until '41. Until '41 we were Lithuania.

Q: Okay. So, you're considering the Lithuanians and the Russians the same? This is where I'm getting confused.

A: Yes.

Q: When you say you were under the Lithuanians and that wasn't bad, and then the Russians came in.

A: No, no. The Russians came before Lithuania. The Russians marched in when the war on Poland was still fighting. There was, the war started in September, and it was before the holidays, our holidays, and then in, I don't know exactly the time, but in a few weeks they were there. In a week or two weeks, the Russians marched in. And then they gave it to Lithuania. After they moved, they did not move out, but they were going farther to Lithuania and they actually, the ones that remained is the Lithuanians. Only Lithuanians, no more Russians.

Q: But was Lithuania...

A: Under the Russian occupation.

Q: Now, when your town was under the control of the Russians and the Lithuanians, could you continue practicing your religion? Was that a problem?

A: No problem. We could practice religion, we were, we could, the temples were open. The schools were open. It was a normal life. We could travel. There was, the only, maybe the poor

people could feel it more because there was a scarce in food product. There was a problem with

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exchanging food. If you had something worth to exchange, you got the food, whatever you wanted. Because the farmers used to come to town and bring food. But you had to give them something, they did not want to take money. They wanted exchange. And the problem was for the poor people. So this is what for some other ones, it was a lot of problems. I remember we had a cow always in the house. Now, when we milk the cow, we always used to take it to take to everybody of the neighbors, annoying some people that they need it, to give it away. To help them because they could not buy it. This was for some people a little, they felt that people, the poor people felt it more than did people that were well off.

Q: But on the other hand, your mother and your brothers had to hide.

A: Not for the Lithuanians. For the time of the Russians, but they weren't too long with us. It was long enough because we knew we are afraid, it was long enough. But, not, they weren't too long. The Lithuanians took it all.

Q: So, do you remember how long the Russians were, their presence was there? Was it a few months, a few weeks?

A: No, a few months. A few months.

Q: And then after they left, your mother could come home?

A: We were home all day, just at night we didn't sleep, because most of the taking out of people sent to Siberia, was at night. In the middle of the night. But during the day, we were always watching ourselves. Always looking in the back, but not, it was normal. The only problem was because we knew that at night, someday we will have to disappear.

Q: Do you remember what you talked about?

A: We tried not to talk too much, because we couldn't trust, it's a very funny situation, you could not trust your neighbor. You could not trust anybody. Because there were meetings constantly, for example, in the, in town. In the Piatza(ph). And when they used to come to talk, if we didn't go out to listen, they used to say, oh, it's too good for them. They don't even come to see it. To listen. And if we went, we always had somebody in the back watching us. If we clap our hands proper. If

we are happy. And if we were happy, they used to say, they are still happy. It's, they're still better off, they're still happy. Whatever we did was wrong, we couldn't know which direction. And...

End of tape 1.

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Tape 2.

Q: When you said, it'll be a minute before we start, but, when you're talking...

I'm rolling.

Q: You're rolling? Okay. You were saying that you would go out in the square and people were watching you. This was the Lithuanians?

A: The Russians. The time of the Russians. For the time of the Lithuanian, I'll tell you an incident for example. The border between White Russia and Lithuania was only three kilometers from our town. My brother, the youngest brother, loved animals. So, he asked to one Pole if he can bring him a nice horse. And since our tannery was right on the border, it was easy to sneak it in. And he brought him a horse. And he went to pick up the horse and bring it to the barn near the house. I almost, I forgot it, I just, recently when I was in Brazil where my brothers lived, my brother did remind me, do you remember how you saved my life? And I said what did I do? He said, don't you remember when I was bringing the horse home and a Lithuanian policeman came up to him and said he wants, where did you get the horse? Did you bring it from over the border? And he said, no, I bought it from the tannery and I'm bringing it to the house. Which was true, he picked it up from the tannery. But, he said, no, it's a too beautiful horse. You got it from over, and he wanted to take it away. And I didn't know what's going on, I was standing in the house in the window and all of a sudden I see he's standing, my brother stays with the horse and he's arguing with the policeman. And the policeman was grabbing his gun to him. So, I ran out and I jumped on the policeman and I grabbed, I almost grabbed the gun out of him and pushed him away from my brother. And then I started, give him the horse, let him take the horse, we get into the house. There were certain things, some are forgotten and some things come, some remind you of whatever was during the war, certain incidents. But we were a normal life, we used to go for an evening school, in evening schools we were going, studying the languages. Until, of course, the Germans came in.

Q: Did you have the business during the Lithuanian occupation?

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A: The tannery was nationalized. So, we didn't have it. But, we did have, we still were going on with some business. Hidden, there was hidden business, it was not, because my brother used to go to Vilna and bring certain merchandise that we used to sell, but maybe, maybe it would normalize and we would maybe get into business again. But the business was kind of not normal.

Q: But everything else went on?

A: Yeah, it could have, eventually we would have a normal life with the Lithuanians. And we would maybe be better off if we would understand each other more.

Q: What about anti-Semitism during the Lithuanian period.

A: There was. We always felt it. We always did. But, we always, we used to translate it maybe because they don't understand us. But, the Lithuanians always they had a record of being anti-Semites.

Q: How would that manifest itself?

A: We always had to watch, to know that we are Jews. We always had to know about it. That we are not, we are second-hand citizens. We're told the privileges that we had. We are not, we weren't too much at home.

Q: Was that troublesome?

A: I, yes, because, but we did not feel it as bad because a lot of refugees were coming in, every night, every night, they used to come in and stop in our house. They were running away from the occupation of where the Germans occupied already. And they used to tell stories that, what we felt was nothing. We still were in our homes, we had our belongings, we were, we lived a normal life and we happy we could help them. There wasn't a night that people should not come in from the borders. So, our trouble wasn't as bad as the other ones, what we felt.

Q: Tell me about how all of this changed.

A: When?

Q: Well, you've been saying that this wasn't so bad until the Germans...

A: Until the Germans came in. Because the Germans, in 1941, that was in June, and we saw all of a

sudden, a big movement in our town because our town was the main road from Vilna Lida(ph),

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from Lithuania to _____. And all of a sudden we see a lot of movement, that a lot of trucks are running through our town and we did not know what is going on. And we, of course, any truck that stopped, we went to ask them what is going on. And they say, you don't know? The Germans declared war. And they are, they were running back to Russia, because Lithuania was full of Russian people. They were under their command. And so we knew that, we actually found out that there is going to be a war again. There was news that the Russians, that the Lithuanians are killing the Russians. They are throwing them into the ocean. Because they actually want friends, they didn't like them. It was just superficial that they lived in harmony. They were, they wanted to get rid of them. And they, and the war, early in the morning we heard the Germans marching in. Because, and I remember I had a cousin that was in the Polish Army and we didn't sleep that night. We were standing and talking, what will it be, what will he do? What is going on? We did not know what to expect. And we heard, I heard, like somebody would play with rocks, the noise like you throw rocks, so I says, but what is this noise? Do you hear? What is it? They said, they are throwing parachutes. And he said, you'll see. Because he knew, he was in the army, he understood better than we did. They are parachuting some people here. And in no time they will march in. And it didn't take too long, and in the morning, the Germans started to march in. So, we left the house and we went to some of our workers. We stayed there all day. And then we decided we have to go to our house. To see what, what will it be with us? Of course, in those times there was no, no camps, no death camps, nothing. They just, well, people lived under the German occupations. It was scary. There was a lot of things going on. But, we did not expect what we had later on. And, but we came home and we lived for awhile. On the second day, for example, I was standing in the window and a couple of Germans walked up to us and one German looks up and I had a watch in my hand. And he said, give me the watch. I'm in my house, why should I give him the watch? I couldn't understand it. So, I said, no. And my brother heard it and came, he said, take off the watch and give it to him in a hurry. Don't you know what this is? He takes a Jew in a minute. You'll be dead. Give him the watch. So, of course, I took off the watch and I give it to him. But I still

thought, yeah, we are somebody in our homes, I don't have to give it to him. And then it didn't

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matter, they could take whatever they wanted. But, we were in one way lucky. Because our house was in the middle of the town and it was very big. It was a two story and as they were coming in more and more, they occupied for the main stop, for the main office, so the Germans, the very important Germans used to stay in our house. And right away they put up a note, that nobody is allowed to come in there. So, we actually did not suffer too much. In a way, they used to take out some people. For example, if a man with a beard, they used to follow him if he went to the temple, and then cut his beard off or beat him up or something. We did not feel it in our house because nobody was allowed, the access wasn't allowed to come into our house.

Q: So, it was the German army that was sharing part of your house?

A: Yes. The army, the main, from the main lines of their, until the year, they stayed until they almost marched into Leningrad. Our house was occupied. And, as a matter of fact, there were certain things I had to make for them, like cut up vegetables and this. But, we felt kind of, we didn't feel what some other people, get the problems.

Q: Now, when you went out of the house, was there a big German presence on the streets?

A: Not big, not big. But there were always Germans, yes. And, at that time, was formed the _____. And people had to go to work. There was not specially, but they had, they had to give somebody something to do.

Q: You?

A: I didn't, I did not have to go, but I volunteered to go. I did. I didn't want to be any different.

Q: What did you do?

A: Cleaned the street, pull out grass. Go, there was _____, but they had to employ people. Just to sit in the sun and burn yourself.

Q: Was there any brutality?

A: There was in town. There was. We did not, we did not get to it, but there was brutality.

Q: Did you see it?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: Did they close the synagogues?

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A: As far as I remember, they were not closed. But, I know there was incidents where they took out and I think this is because there was, if anybody from the Poles that had, was mad at you, they used to get together to transfer to the Germans, and they used to come to this and this house, where was mad somebody, and take them out, for example, to the cemetery and shoot over his head. Just, just to, they did not kill anybody, but to torture them. To put a fear in them. This I know. I heard it. We used to hear a lot about it. Is they cut the beard off this, they did this, just torturing certain people. But, there was no, were no casualties in those times, until the day came.

Q: Were there special rules that were put in place?

A: Oh, yes. We had to put on the yellow _____ on our arms. We could not walk on the sidewalk. And as this progressed further, the Poles were not allowed to come to sell us anything. We couldn't, we were not allowed, they weren't allowed to bring to sell something to Jews. We, especially, did not feel it as much because we had so many friends around the Poles, that even if they had to risk their life, they used to bring us anyway. The war would go on and out of 20 years, we would have plenty of food in our house.

Q: So your Polish friends didn't turn on you?

A: No. No. Until the last, even the last days, but our neighbor, when my mother wanted to hide one night at our neighbors, and we were such devoted, close friends, she did not let even my mother to sleep overnight. She said she can't let her in. She said she can't let her in. But our workers were very devoted until the last day. That's very unusual, very unusual.

Q: So, when you say the last day, what does that mean? What happened?

A: That was the day there was _____. In the morning for, before our High Holidays. This was in 1941. I and one of our neighbors, we said, we have to clean, they were very much concentrated on clean _____ in town. And we had a big yard in front, so we got up in the morning and I said to this young girl, you'll help me and we'll clean the good in front very thoroughly, so tomorrow, we won't have to work. Because there was, it would have been a big tragedy on _____ to do something. We weren't used to. Everything was closed and

everybody were in the temples. And as we were doing it, one of our relatives came running to the

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house and she started to cry, oh, my God, oh, what will we do, what will, I says, what happened, what happened? She said, didn't you see all the notices that are put on the walls who has money, who has gold, who has silver, who has materials, who has leather, whatever it is, they should bring it in to the police. And this is a sign they are going to do something to us. They'll make it like nobody told about killing. They make a ghetto. And it started a big commotion in town, everybody was running to the police bringing in some whatever they want. Whatever they could hide, they were. They were already hidden. We already gave it away to some among our Polish friends to hide a lot of things. But, whatever we had, we were going and bringing it in to the police. And, this was going on all morning, and then a lot of people started to leave town. And then we heard that two sisters got killed. They were trying to leave the town. And they caught them and they killed, and this stopped a lot of people. But, we still did not, my mother still ordered my two brothers and we had two refugees, young men, that they ran away from the occupation of the Germans where they occupied before us. And they got dressed a lot of clothes, and she told them where to go, to one of a shoemaker that he used to be a friend of ours. And it was only about a kilometer and a half from town. They should go there and stay there until we see what will come out. We still didn't know what is going to happen to us. And as they, and were sure that they left already. They got dressed and left. And my sister, we brought my sister from, my sister was married in White Russia. We brought her from there with the two children because her husband was taken away right the first week when the Germans came in. They occupied their town and they took away, the took the doctors and the lawyers and the teachers. He was a teacher. And they took him right away, they killed him, but we did not know that. All the time the told, the explanation was they took him for work someplace. And every day we used to send somebody to, they used to say they're working near Warsaw, so we send somebody near Warsaw. They weren't there. They said, oh, they left yesterday. They transferred them to another place, they transferred them there. We couldn't find him anywhere, until we, it took a long time until we realized that they killed him. And so my sister, there was no exchange, they didn't have what to exchange, so she, we brought her to our house and

she lived with us. And my sister, we arranged, my mother arranged that my sister and the children

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should go to one of our workers to stay there. And I and mother did remain in the house. And I was running from one house to another house where there were fathers to see what are they doing. Maybe they know better than we what we know. And they kept saying, one said, where can I run? I have to go to more ask for a piece of bread. So, how can I run? And others says, how can we run? Look at my old mother, she can't work, she's in bed most of the time. I went into another girlfriend, I said, Myrtle, what are you doing? How can I run? My daughter is pregnant. The brought her from Lider(ph), from the bigger towns, they pulled out people and brought to the small towns because they're still, and those were, I'm talking all about the wealthier people. Where can I run? Look at her, she is to have a baby any day. Where can I run? I'm not running. I'll stay. And I was running around like this all day, not knowing what, what will it come out. And then I came, I got tired, and I came, it was getting a little dark. I came into the house and my mother was going to light the candles. And I look out through the window and I see civilian people who _____ on their shoulders. So, I got very frightened. I thought, gee, that's not, that's not normal. They are not Germans, they are civilians. So, I kept yelling, I yelled out to my mother, you _____, let's run. But we weren't ready, where to run also. So, we ran, we thought we will go to one of our workers, to get united with my sister and the children. But, by coincidence, in the morning, we had a lot of money in the house. And we decided to go hide it where the tannery is. Because the tannery is in the back of the town. If we need money, we can sooner dig it out. Like in town, everybody is watching over you. As I and my brother were going to take the, with a whole basket of money that we carried, we put a stick in and he carried from one side, I from the other side. One of the Pole, a Pole that was coming from church, this was on Sunday, and he gets, comes closer to us and says, _____, I feel so bad, I hear that it's a bad time coming on us, on you. And if you want, come, run to me. To my farm. But we never knew where a farm is out of town, we never went out of town. We never went anywhere, we didn't know where to go. So, that was in the afternoon, and then at night, we decided, and I said to my mother, let's run. I knew where we have to run to. To be united with my sister because my brothers we knew are hidden there. I,

we couldn't run through the front door, we went to the back door. And I did not look around, I just

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opened the barn door, and I ran, it was not too far because it was a small town, anyplace was not that far. My mother looked around and she found my brothers, sitting in the barn. And she says, what are you doing here? They say they couldn't leave town because there was, there were rumors that they are shooting. So, we returned back home. So she said to them, what is my life? My life doesn't mean anything. If you don't save yourself, what does it mean to me? So, she said, go to the garden, we had a big garden in the, right after the houses. And she said to them, go in the garden. Lay down under the leaves from the cucumbers because they are very big now. And, see, at night if you can get out. And she did, in the meantime, she didn't, I left. And when I was running, one of the Poles there, said to me, Mirchka(ph), where are you running? You'll get shot, don't run. I'll tell you, I'll get into, where do you want to go? I was not smart enough, and I told them where I'm running. I wasn't supposed to say where I'm running. But, I told them, I'm going to the Vladik's(ph) house. And he said, well, I'll get into the house, I'll open up the window in my house, and you jump through the window and then cross the street and get in. So, he did, he went into the house and opened up the window and I went through the window, I jumped over and I crossed the street and I was reunited with my sister. And there were three, four, four families more, Jewish families that night. And, of course, I was with three children, my sister and we had the boy, the cousin from Vilna, and there was a big commotion. This one to eat and this one to drink and all night we were very busy. And then in the morning, his wife came out and says that you will all have to leave because I don't want to get killed because of you.

Q: Okay. Let's change the tape. We'll pick up...

End of tape 2.

Tape 3

A: So, I said to her, don't worry, we won't stay here. I will try, I'll take one child and I'll try to move to the factory. To the tannery, because it's very close there. It was close to the tannery, he was working for us, all my live I knew him. And his brothers were working for us, too. And, if they'll catch me there, all they can do is kill me. But I am in my own place so we will not cause trouble to you. And I got into there, to the house, and I was still thinking about the Pole who gave us the idea to run to his house. And I also knew from another Pole that came about five days before to our house, and he looked up and we were boarding the sister and the children, and he warned us, he said to my mother, why did you bring your daughter and children here? The Lithuanians wants a clean Lithuania with no Jews. And in White Russia, the Jews, I don't know how long, but the Jews who still live in Lithuania, they are going to kill all the Jews. And we knew that he is from the more intelligent Poles, not just the farmer, it was a very rich farmer. But he had children, they were very high rank in the Polish army, all officers. We knew that he knows something, but the way he expressed it, so, we did not want to accept it. So, after he left us, my mother said, _____, he came to our house and eats our supper, _____. We couldn't believe it, we didn't want to believe it. Who is going to chase us out of the house? It's ours. It went from generation to generation. And he was, he gave us also the idea, the only ones that will survive is people that they will hide. And my oldest brother, later on, went and he stayed with him for awhile. But, it was very hard to hide because they all had people working for them, and they knew they will talk to those, they are keeping Jews. But, as I was in the tannery all the day, then I told my sister, if I pass through right, she should come. But we did not know where my mother is. My mother wasn't with us. We knew that my brothers, I didn't know that they are in town. We were sure that they are protected. Because the first thing for the protection was the men. What we looked. And as I, and I said to the janitor, where is Marisha(ph)? Marisha was married to him, she was a maid for us. And I wanted to go to town and find out where my mother is. We didn't know what, we didn't know what is going on. That night, they get out everybody to the temple, all the

Jews. But, we did not know what is going on. So I said, Leder(ph), go and find out where my

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mother is. I thought maybe she went back to the house. And he said, she is not home and I don't want you here. So I thought, well, we started to feel more and more that we are not wanted anyplace. We have no place, we have no way, we don't know what to do. So, I said, no, I will not be here too long. And there was a slaughterhouse right near our tannery. I saw a young man coming out, so there was a hope chest standing in this little house. And there was even some of our things. I took out a piece of material for a suit and I called him, I don't remember his name. And I said, if you tell me where Kokochan(ph) is, a village, where the Pole told us that if we want, we should run to him, I will give you this piece of material. He said, I don't want to be killed. Because if I'll go with you, I'll get killed. I said, no you won't. You go from one side and I go from another side, far away from each other. And, if they catch me, obviously, they will kill me, but I will never say that you are going with me. I will never, I promise you, I will not give you out. And he did, and he showed me where Kokochan is. I couldn't get into his, into this man's house right away because there were, I saw, there is people are driving around with motorcycles. And, obviously, I didn't think there is only, there must be Germans, and I cannot _____, I was hiding in a little forest. And then, and they left, I went there. But I asked him to go and bring my sister with the other two children, and she'll give you more things. She'll pay good off. And he did, and he brought my sister and the children there. But, there was, at the time of the Russians, this Pole himself, was hiding, because he was a rich farmer. So, he was afraid that they will send him out to Siberia, too. So, he had workers, and the workers did not want us. They want us out and out and out. So, we told them that we will not stay. We only want to know where my mother is. So, and the owner, the farmer, was not in. He went to _____ to see what's going on with the Jews. What kind of commotion is going on. So, I said, the minute you will find out where my mother is, we are going to be gone from your house. We will not stay here. Not knowing where will we go, what will we do, where is anybody? I, anyway, they kept, we want you out, we want you out. So, when he came, he gave us a horse and buggy, next day. And we were going to move to a village that we knew where the Tartars are. And they are Muslims. There was only one small

village, but they used to buy leather from us. So, we thought we will go there meantime, if they will

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accept us, we don't know. But at least it's close to White Russia, small town Raddan(ph). If not, we will have to go to Raddan. And we came there, I did remain to see what, you'll go to town and you'll find out where my mother is. He did go and he came with the news that my mother went with all the Jews to the temple. They are all locked up. And he said, so my place was, I felt I have to go to see what is with my sister and the children. We went there, but he was, he brought us every day information. Where my mother is, where my, he found out that my brothers did not leave the town. They are hiding in a shoemaker's house in town. Not too, right around the corner where we lived. And they are there, they're hidden in the barn. If they will be able to get out, we don't know. He said, but if they will be able, they will leave. Tonight or tomorrow night. I was, went, I was with my sister there, we had what to eat. Obviously, they gave us what to eat. And, but, we don't, we did not know what we should do. We were absolutely, we didn't know where should we turn, where should we go. And, then he told us, we didn't know what was going on, but we heard that on Wednesday, they took out all the Jews from the temples there and they brought them out a big market which used to be the, the farmers used to bring in their cattle and their food to sell, there was one, like a farmer's market they called it. Once a week they used to come there with everything to sell to town. And my mother is there, too. We told the people. We did not know what the fate will, what will be with us, we didn't know what will be with her. My brothers did not come out yet. But, next night they did come in, they came in. They came in, but of course, we knew we cannot be there. So, we moved to another place, another, it was a mother to this worker of ours. She took us in for awhile. And, knowing that is the hardest part, with children, we have three small children. We have a 13 year old, we have a two and a half and a year. So, we decided, since we have the horse and buggy that they gave to us, we'll send them to my mother's family. My mother came from a small town, Liptenshoc(ph). We'll send them there and there was no ghettos yet. And we'll see if they will meantime be there until we will know what, until we reunite together. Until we will see, maybe we will all go to live in White Russia. With my mother's family. Because my mother had two sisters and she had two, three brothers. They were all in small towns there. And in the

meantime, we will be around with them together. But, it took quite awhile until we got all together.

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So, we came and we went to Radden. It was 14 kilometers from our town. And in no time, they made a ghetto.

Q: Let me ask you a question here. Did you find out what happened to the people who were in the marketplace at that time?

A: Yes, yes. My mother came, she knew everything. They brought them out, they get out Sunday night. They brought, near us was a small town where a mental institution for mental people, they put them out in a row, but entering the temple, like in the hall. And every, and then they announced that everybody should come to the temple. They can bring in what they carry on their shoulders. They gave them sticks and they told everybody to hit over their heads. So, they were beating up everybody. The name of this town was Shiloch(ph), a small little town. And then, of course, the brought from another, from Walkinik(ph) was a small town. They brought Jews from Walkinik, also, to the temple. And it was very crowded and there were people sick, people having children. No facilities to go out. But I heard that one of my girlfriends and the Commandant, the Lithuanian Commandant came to the temple, she went out, because we knew him, and she said to him, give us a way of, live with dignity. Not, there was no bathrooms, there was nothing. She says, or kill us. Pick what you want. Or kill us or give us a way to live like humans. And he said, we'll see, we'll see. That was Sunday night, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. They brought all of the Jews, all of them out from the temple in the market. The market was closed gates. And they told everybody to sit down, nobody can stand up. Now, one man, he was asthmatic and he could not breath. So he stood up. And they shot him. So this was the first casualty in this parking place. And then, in no time, mother was there. Now, we weren't there, but every day that Polish man used to bring us all the news. They started to gather, they went through and they picked all the young men and the strong men, young and strong. And they told them they're taking, their wives, they're taking them for work. There was a big farm near Ashashoc(ph), where the owner wasn't there already because they sent him to Siberia. But of course, the ground, the people tried to keep it up. And they took them there to work and they forced them to write letters to their wives, they are okay and they are

alive and they are working. But, the name was Sacluski(ph), they were working on Sacluski's farm.

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That wasn't true. Because the minute they got them out, they had dug all of the ditches. Near the cemetery. And they took them and they shot them there. They brought us information, for example, that one of my cousins, got out from the grave and he said, if you want, I'll give you the hair off my head, but shoot us right. Because about, they were all, they made them undress and they were shooting them and they were falling into the graves. But some weren't shot. They covered them when they were still alive. So, he said, shoot us right. But we still didn't believe it. And one of our worker's wives came to my mother, to bring her food, and tell her, we want to save you. Once you are out of here, come, we will save you. They used to bring food and give it to the people that were watching around there. And they wanted to save her. And my mother says, she is not going out. She is afraid. Until on the second day, one came and she actually beat up my mother, and she kicked her out with her feet. She put a big shawl on her and she kicked her so bad that she brought her up to a nearby house and put her up in the, made her go up in the attic and she said, you are going here to lay, I will cover you with straw, but you cannot move until I will come back to you. And she was hiding there for, in the attic, for the day and at night she heard somebody, something moving there. So, she didn't know, is it a mouse, it's human or what. But, she got closer to the place and she touched a hand. And she said, who are you? Very quietly. And she said, I am Sonja Kovaski(ph), which she married, this is my sister-in-law now. And, of course, they couldn't talk any more. They heard the Germans drinking and singing and enjoying and everything. And she didn't know what is going on. And how long she is going to be there. No food, no drink, nothing. But this was Friday, until Friday. Friday afternoon she came, that woman, took her out from the attic and she says, she dressed her like a farmer, she gave her a pail and a, I don't know, in Polish you call it, kapatchka(ph), but you dig potatoes. And she says, you are going to follow me. She dressed her with a scarf and she brought her in the house and they gave her a glass of milk and a piece of bread, and she says, you are going to your children. I'm going to bring you to your children. And, but you cannot move, you cannot look around, you cannot do anything. She did not want to tell her that everybody's killed already. Because she was afraid in case my mother faints or

something, what will she do with her? So, she says, you're going with me. And she brought her to

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Kokochan. And then he brought her to us because we were in _____, it was another small village there. And then she told, she came, she told us what had happened. That Thursday they finished all the men killing and Friday there were still some women, and where the women are killed, and where the men are killed, and we still could not believe it.

Q: This was your whole town?

A: Yes. This was, because when my mother, when there was, on the premises where they were, when they told my mother why they want to save her, and they told her where they are killing the Jews, she came up to, there were two doctors, Jewish doctors. And she says to them, what should we do because some young people wanted to revolt against it, they said, let's kill at least some Germans. We're getting killed, let's kill, they didn't let them because they said, because if you revolt, we'll all get killed. Obviously, they would have, they killed them anyway. But, he said to them, so my mother, this is boykavochnik(ph), you are such a smart woman, you are a business woman. Can you believe that they will kill 4,000 people? No, it's impossible! They won't do it, they cannot do it! And they made her, she is stupid to believe them. And this is, still when it happened, nobody believed it, that that's going to happen. We thought, they'll make a ghetto. We thought they will take away from us everything. But we could not believe they are going to kill us. We couldn't believe it. And that's how we were fooled all the time. Because we did not believe it. And later on, in experience, every town was a different way of killing. It was always before a Jewish holiday. There was always a diff, there was always with a different excuse. There was not excuses, but they were differently that nobody could believe it. Now, my sister was with my mother's family and, until one day came a selection. They took out there. And they put them, they told them to get out in the market. And they, my sister walked with her two children with no husband. So, left, right, left, right. And my uncle saw that she goes left and they already heard about what left means. So, he felt like he was going to faint and they, from the back they pushed him, like there is no time to faint, you go. Because he was going right. And that's where my sister got killed that day, but this was in 1942. She lived from 1941 until 1942, she lived with my

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mother's family. And we were hiding. Until we feel like we cannot do it anymore. We went to the, in Raddan was a ghetto, we went to the Raddan ghetto.

Q: So, for this year or so, year and a half, you were hiding in different places?

A: We found places, yes. And then it started even worse. When we went to the ghetto.

Q: Actually, before you tell me about the ghetto, I just have a couple of questions?

A: Yeah.

Q: How did you know who to trust? I mean, you seemed to be lucky, a lot of Polish people weren't so helpful.

A: We were one of the very, very lucky people. Because we knew, we, how we did not trust, it's very hard to say. We had trust, too much, later we found out we should not trust that much. But in beginning, we trusted because you couldn't understand, how can somebody hurt us? We were friends! We lived together. We were loved! Among the Poles. We were loved! The workers would cut their necks off for us. They would give everything for us. They would do everything. And how can anybody hurt us? How can you believe it?

Q: And no one double crossed you?

A: No. No. Until, no, nobody, until they just said we have to leave. We have to leave. They _____, the mayor from the village came one day, and so we were with a widow because she was a widow of, one of our worker's mother-in-law, and she kept us there. And he came and he told that we have to leave because otherwise the whole village will get killed. So, of course, we did not want to do them any harm, and we said, okay, we are going to leave. And my brother went to Raddan, the youngest brother, went to Raddan to find out where can we go? What should he do? He came there and they surround, they were looking for people they did not have White Russian passports. And they found, because we didn't have, we were Lithuanians already. And they found, the caught about 10 people. It was my brother and one of my cousins and some more and they brought them into the police and they beat him up so badly and we found out what is going on in Raddan. We were still in the village, so we notify that Polish man, he was friendly with the mayor

of this town of Raddan, and he went there and he intervened with them and they let him out. But,

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my brother came to the village, for a week he couldn't sit down. He could not move. His back was all black, beaten up so badly. And then we realized that whatever will be, we have to go to Raddan, to the ghetto. And we went to Raddan, we went, finally, we all get up and we went to Radden to the ghetto. I and my mother and my two brothers. And until we were in the ghetto, it was very uncomfortable, until one night, it was on Saturday night, the Polish man came into the ghetto at night and he said, and he got scared, what are you doing here? _____ is not allowed to get into the ghetto, is not allowed to drive, is curfew at night. And is there only one that protects us, that takes interest in us already. And we were, we didn't want him to, he should get out, he should get killed because of us. He said, I went to sleep and I had a bad dream. And I want, I came to take you out from the ghetto. I said, we'll all get, so you'll get killed and we'll get killed. You'll take us out at night to a village? He said, yes, I have prepared a village for you. And I'm going to take you there. Because the dream was a bad one. He was a great believer. And he took us out and he brought us there. It was a widow with children, her husband went to the war and didn't come back. And he told us we have to stay there.

End of tape 3.

Tape 4

Q: ...continue when we start again. I wanted to ask you...

You can start.

A: We weren't there too long.

Q: In Raddan?

A: In Raddan. We weren't there too long. Life was consigned to the room, we had one room. We still had food to eat because the people used to come and bring us food. We did not know what any more can give. What they all can give. We did not. We just existed. Nothing, we did not know a thing, what there will be, what we have to expect. Where we are. But, we weren't there too long.

Q: A few months?

A: Maybe less, I don't remember. I just remember that not too long. And then when they took us out, so, then we never returned any more to the ghetto.

Q: In this ghetto, was this a big ghetto?

A: No, because Raddan was smaller than Ashashoc. It was a very small town. They had a big Yshiva(ph), they were famous for a big Yshiva. Famous for the biggest rabbi in the, his name, they used to call him the Rapofitzheim(ph), but there were not, I don't know the population, but it was a very, much smaller than Ashashoc.

Q: And was the ghetto, were there Germans in the ghetto or was it all self-patrolled?

A: The Germans always were patrolling it. Because it was a curfew, you couldn't go out at night. The minute that it used to get dark, you were locked up in the houses. In the daytime you could jump from one house, maybe to the next, to talk a little. To talk to some people. To see people who were hiding from our town, who came there from our town. And, but it was very little conversation there, very little, we didn't know what will be with us. We didn't have any hope for better, we did not have any hope, we existed, we didn't know what to think even what will be.

Q: Do you remember your conversations with your family?

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A: We had friends that, before the war my mother used to help them a lot, they were poor. And I, one night, we were in the villages, yet, it was before the holidays. I said, I'm going to get a prayer book. And I risked to go to the town from the village with, of course, with the woman's daughter. But she had to go on one side, we always arranged it, that if they catch us, they should not, people should not suffer from us. And I came to these people and they say me, they couldn't believe it. They were, where is everybody? Who is alive? Because they knew that we, that they already killed our town. And I say, we are all the family, except my sister's husband. And, what can I do for you? We had nothing, I just ran out from the house like I stayed, with nothing, I didn't even have time to put on a pair of shoes. I took the shoes with me and ran out in a pair of slippers. So I said, no, nothing, I really don't, I want a toothbrush. Forget about toothpaste, a toothbrush and a little salt to be able to brush our teeth. So, she says, no, but you don't need any underwear or nothing? I said, no, a little towel and a dishtowel. So she brought me and I, and she gave me a prayer book and I went back. But, that's all we wanted. I felt, I always had my prayer book with me. Even when we were warm, the minute I heard the German's boots walking by the house, I took, I used to grab the prayer book and pray. And we were, we were still believe that there would come a miracle. Another day, another day, there will a miracle for us. We, something God has to do for us. It was, but the day never came. It never came. The only one that was right is the Polish man that took us out that night because this was Saturday, Friday night and on Sunday, they surround Raddan and they went from house to house and we did not have White Russian passports, the took him and they killed him. And we would have been in this part because we did not have Russian passport. And he had the feeling of fear and he took us out at night. It's like a prophet. It's unbelievable.

Q: So, during this period, instead of being resentful, you prayed harder?

A: Yes. We prayed harder. We prayed harder and believed there will come a miracle. Every holiday that what, how did we know it's a holiday? We had no calendars, we had nothing. By the sun, by the moon. And we used to _____, it must be a miracle, it must be a miracle. It never came. Now, this woman that we were hiding, the first one that he brought us from Raddan, I

and my mother did not eat _____, we did not eat meat. We only had bread or potatoes and

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she was afraid that we are going to die in her house. So, she went one day to the ghetto and went into a rabbi and asked what should she do. She is hiding Jews and she is afraid we are going to die there. What should she, what can? So, he gave her a prayer book and he told her, you bring it home to them and tell them, they, occasionally they feel weak, they should eat meat. No bones, not any of the bones, just eat a piece of meat for survival. But the future, we did not, I don't think we were thinking hard. I don't think we had the ability of thinking what will happen to us. What should we do? Where should it go? What, we didn't, but we felt like whatever they advised us, this, the first farmer, the one that had the sons that they were hiring in Polish army and everything, we felt that they are right. The only way we can survive is by hiding. And I was very much fed up and I was against it. I kept telling to my brother, why do we have to be different? Everybody, all my girlfriends are killed. Everybody is killed. Why do we, why do we have to be stubborn and want to leave? What purpose? What? What, they are all killed, nobody is here around us. And he said, I want to live to tell the world what had happened to us. And I used to scream, why do we have to tell the world? The world doesn't think about us, they don't help us. And he said, I want to live it through. He had a vision, he wanted to leave and I was giving up because the prayers did not help. And this is our, then it started. Of course, this Pole had a big vision and he told us how we can hide. He made hiding places for us in the houses, but the Poles had a smell, somehow they used to feel, that this and this family is hiding somebody. They had a very funny feeling. If they saw an extra from the chimney, extra smoke is coming out, she is baking bread more than normally she would bake for herself. This is how they used to find out. And if one knew, right away they started the other one, they're starting to talk. And then they used to come to the homes and find and kill them. It was every day that we hear those stories. But, this man watched over us, with making a good hiding place. And he started to have food, and my youngest brother was always very daring to go out at night and bring food in. And we lived with the pigs, with the horses, with the cows. It's all we, you could talk to them and asking them to why are they so lucky? That they are free and we are mice. We are mice. And, but we had to, then we were changing places from one place to another

place. He also always divided us. He said if in one place they will catch, he wanted so badly we

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should survive, that he was, he had a better vision that we did. That we will hide separately then if one part get killed, the other one will survive. And then he brought us into a place and we had a very good hiding place there. We could not hide in his house because himself was hiding already. He was sentenced to death from the Poles, he was sentenced to death from Lithuania, from the Germans, everybody wanted to kill him. Because they said he, they called him the Jewish Botchkadik(ph), Father of the Jews. And they caught him once in Ashashoc and they beat him up so badly, they brought him in to the, then at night they put him in the hospital. And they were going to shoot him next day. The doctor's wife knew that he is taking care of us and she came in at night to his room and she said, I am going to leave the window open, I want you to run away because they are going to shoot you tomorrow morning. And he didn't know how he can, he couldn't move, he had no clothes, he couldn't move. But, somehow, he get up his strength, and he got out, the cold, through the garden, and he came into one of our neighbors, and he told them what had happened to him and they brought him clothes and they let him rest there for a day or two and they, and he came back and since then, he was hiding himself.

Q: What motivated somebody like him to take such risks for other people?

A: I would say, he wanted to show the world what he'd accomplished. He was a believer because his mother, his father was dead, and his mother used to, we always used to hear, Kashmish(ph), what will it be? You'll get killed. Why do you have to do it? And Maria was always hanging on the, the picture was always hanging on the wall. And he used to say, he used to say, darn you and start praying. And he says, mother, I have to do something. I want to, they are good people, I want to save them. And she was begging him, give up. Give up. You'll get killed because of them. And the minute he used to start with such a belief the he was, he believed that he will pull it through. And we brought him here. He used to pray every day, my husband used to take him to every church, anyplace he wanted, he believed. And he wasn't considered for a very nice man. For a rough man. But, he sounded like he wanted, he started, he wanted to fulfill his mission.

Q: What did you do all day long when you were hiding?

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A: I don't, I really can't, and I came to the United States, I'll tell you nights, I used to think, what did they do, what did we do? I had work, I had work, because I had worked for the ladies. I helped them in the kitchen. But the rest of the people. How did we survive? Not having a tomorrow, not, we had to think, obviously, what tomorrow will bring us? We didn't. What did we do? I don't know. I used to get up in the morning, if we set, if we were in the house, I used to help her peel potatoes, make the pancakes for, the men used to come from the field. I used to wash everybody's laundry, whatever, if you want to call it, but, I don't know what we did.

Q: So, you weren't just in some hiding place? You had a little bit of movement?

A: Not only, not outside, never outside. Only, I was in the kitchen in certain places. In some places, I didn't, we were there day and night. It depends which place. We were once in a place that everybody died from typhus. And we were still there in that house and we didn't catch it. Only one child survived. The father and the mother and the sister, they all died from typhus. They were in their house and we were in a small, in a very small corner that you could not even move like this. It used to come a holiday, people there used to come to visit sometimes. We were sitting in certain cellars, sitting, could never move. We couldn't turn over from one side to another side. We had to sit like this. Was there a little, some food is okay, for two, three days we never could move. There were times, but we, I can't understand today, what, how we did it. I can't. It was winter, it was a very cold winter. We had no clothes. We had no water to, in times that we were in a barn that we did not have to wash ourselves. But she used to bring in one pail of water for 10 people, for example, sometimes more. So we had one cup of water for each one. So, one cup we used to drink and the other cup we used to just wash ourself a little. How can a person survive like this? I don't know. I don't know.

Q: How long did you stay in one place? You said you had to move around.

A: In one place we stayed about a year, more than a year. Until her brother came. When we were there, it was okay. We had a very good, like here is the stove and under the stove was the hiding place. And the minute that the Germans are passing by, we used to run there, close, and it was

good. But she wanted, some more people came to her for help. And she was a very, she was a

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widow, she had four children, and they came in, this was a place that we stayed a long time. This is the place. That I am skipping some other places before. That she, they came, this was the White Poles, not the Germans. We left there. Her brother came to tell that we should leave because they are talking about that she has Jews. And this is when he found out about the smoke of the chimney. The smoke is going out too often, that means she is baking bread for some Jews. And, we, the Polish man came, the one that took care of us, and he transferred us to another place. But there did remain still 10 people. Two of my cousins, one with the family, his wife and child and another one. And day they came, the White Poles came in on a Sunday. The boys weren't there, they were just two little, two small girls, a 10 year old and an 8 year old girl. And they said you have to show us where you hide the Jews. And she says, I have no Jews. And she said, we know you have, you have to tell us where. And she didn't. And they looked all over and they could not find them. Because this was really the best hiding place. And she, and all of a sudden, he took his rifle and he hit it on the floor and it discharged. And he hit himself, blood started to go from his chin. And the girls were afraid, they saw blood, it is killing the mother, so they said, come on, I will tell you where the Jews are. And she went and she showed. And they took him out. It was in January, on the snow, and they laid him out and they killed him. Except my cousin and his wife and his child. He was raised on a farm close to there, close to where they were, he was raised in, this was in Debinik(ph), they, this village, and he was raised in Paradna(ph), a small, and the _____ of the White Poles was in Paradna. And they took him there and they kept them three days and tortured them. They should say where, he should tell them where we are. Because they knew that we are helping him with food and everything. And he did not tell. On the third day they killed him. And he was such, so beloved among the Poles. He was in the Polish army, he was raised on a farm together with the farmers. It didn't matter, they killed him. But the main thing was to them to find us. Because they were so stupid, they thought that where we are, we have the money with us. So they were going for money, too. But this, and then after, we were in a place that apart, I was with my brother and my cousin, with his mother and father in another place. And we were at also a

hiding place. But we could see that if nobody comes into the house, we could sit in the kitchen.

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Actually, the whole household was in one room. There was no such a thing as a kitchen or a bedroom or something. There were beds near the wall and the stove and the table and that was everything. And under the stove, we had our hiding place. And when we were not in the hiding place, we had somebody sitting in the window and watching. And my cousin was on the watch that moment, and all of a sudden he turns around and he says, let's hide. I see, I don't know, they look to me like women, but they have long coats, it was winter. And what happened, he couldn't see from far away. But, my brother went to the window and he gives a look and he said, hurry up, let's run and hide, let's run and hide, because they have guns. They have rifles under their coats. If they are Germans, if they are Poles, we did not know. But, as we ran and were hiding and she put the chickens under the stove and my brother was sitting near the little door and he was, he heard them coming in and speaking to her in Polish. And he said to us, like we should say goodbye to each other. That's it. We are gone. They catching us. And they were poking and poking all over. And then they said, let's go to the barn. They couldn't find. So, the noise of the chickens also threw them off, the noise, because they were disturbing the chickens. And they went to the barn and they were beating her, her husband wasn't home, and the children, lucky that the children were not home. And she kept saying, I don't have Jews, I'm not hiding Jews. I don't know what you want from me. And they looked all over, they didn't find us and they left. This was a miracle. If you want to know a miracle, this was a miracle.

Q: These were Poles?

A: Poles. But other ones, also by the Poles, got killed.

Q: And there were Germans around, as well?

A: There were the Germans. They never came in the village. Occasionally, they used to pass by. I know once, I was by myself in one place and they said they are expecting the Germans and they send me out to a forest to hide. And I went and I found a tree that leaves, the needle tree was almost underground and I laid down under the tree. And I had to wait until somebody will come and give me notice to come out. So I was laying in that place, I will never forget it, I was talking to my

father all the time. Help me, help me. I'm in great danger and I'm all by myself. Because the

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family was in a different place. We were supposed to be settled in this woman's house, and I was supposed, I was the first one, but since the hiding place wasn't ready and they were expecting the Germans to pass through the village, they didn't know what they will do. If they will stop down at, then she was afraid and she sent me out there. And then it was getting dark, the came and they said I can get out. They just passed by the village, the did not get into the village.

Q: So you were more afraid of the Poles? Than the Germans? They seemed to be around...

A: Just the same. Just the same. Because one day, I and my oldest brother, we were passing through, we had to go to change places and it was in the daytime, we were dressed like peasants, and we're both going, and it was in the middle of the day. That was very daring, of course, to do it, but we thought, well, it's the middle of the day, the farmers are already going home to rest, because they always worked until about 11, 12 o'clock, and then they go rest. And then we'll not have too far to go, a few kilometers. And as we are going, one man was working and we don't look even at that side, and he stops us, _____, he said, do you have leather to sell? So, we got very frightened. We said, no, we have nothing now. We have nothing. And we just kept on going. But, we especially could not hide, because everybody knew us. We could not go, like some people used to work from one place to another as long as they did not look like Jews. We could not. Everybody knew us. One day...

Q: Let me stop you here so we can change the tape. And then we'll pick up there, okay?

End of tape 4.

Tape 5

...was in the Partisans, because thanks to him, my husband survived, because my husband was in Partisans, one Jew in the Russian Partisans. And he was a doctor there. Originally was a dentist, but he's a doctor, so they did need him. They were afraid to kill my husband.

Q: Now, I'm not, do we remember where we left off? I usually write it down, but I didn't.

A: It was the 10 people that were in the hiding place where we were over a year.

Q: Okay. Actually, I do have a question. Are we, we're going? Okay. I do have a question. Now, this man who came and took you out of the Raddan ghetto, did he help you find all of these hiding places?

A: Yes, he did. All the places.

Q: So, he took care of you?

A: Yeah. He took care of us until the end. But, end, we got free from his house. Because nobody, there was no place to go. When they burned, and the place where I told you where we left, we changed places. And there were 10 people left and the Poles came and they found them. The woman, you know, the children told them where the hiding place and they killed them and they took her down to the basement and they burned everything. They burned their life and all of the wealth, she was a very wealthy woman.

Q: This is the widow?

A: The widow. And they burned her with everything. The children, the little girls that survived and, lucky that the men, the two boys weren't home. Because if they were home, if they would be home, they would kill them, too.

Q: Now, is this the place where you also met other people who were in hiding? The _____ family?

A: When we got out from there, after the fire, and every places where only Jews were around, they will send out. We got out in the middle of the night, in the fields, not knowing what to do. We were standing and praying somebody should come and shoot us. Get rid of it. Just, we were all got

out with whatever we had on our backs, a few things. And we did not know what we have to do.

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So, the only way to go, is to go to this Pole's house. And we knew he is not home, but he should let us into the barn, because people will not think that he is hiding Jews now in the house. So, we can get into the barn and just digging ourselves, because there was a lot of _____, a lot of things, and until _____ made to go to Raddan, because he is hiding himself. The mayor of Raddan is a good friend of his. So, he is around them, hiding them himself. And notify him, they know where he is, and notify them that we are in his house, we have no place to go. Take us to the Partisans, or he should shoot us, or to do whatever they want to do with us. That is the end, we cannot do anything more. So, when we came, as we were standing, two Jews passed by and they found us and he said, I'll give you a place. So, they took us up to a place, the name was Doomlay(ph), or Dorman(ph), I don't remember that name. And they notify him where we are, when we dug into the barn when we were sitting there. Next day he came and he said, okay, we'll make a place to hide here. And you'll stay here for awhile. And we'll see what will be, but he said, it's, the war will come to an end. We don't know when, but it's going to, the Germans are, the Russians are defeating the Germans. And he came, when he dug out a place for us and we were there, 10 people. Next morning comes in the man, he says, you told me only 10 people, there is 20 here. We said, no, count. Count us, we are only 10. No, there is 20, there is 20 people, I can't keep you. Anyway, we beg him, of course, we paid a lot of money for these places. And he...

Q: So you still had money with you?

A: Yes. We had. One of our workers dug out our money and he brought, to a penny, didn't touch one piece of gold or one dollar. He brought, they were so devoted to us, he brought us the money, but we never carried it with us. We always used to hide it someplace, wherever we were. And for the places, this Pole that took care of us, did not take money from us. But the other places were paid with gold. So, we were there a couple of days and all of a sudden we get up one night, we are all flooded. That place. It was, water came in. Almost drowning ourself in the water. Anyway, we got out and we notified him again, what should we do? So, he said, there is, I'll come and I'll find something what we can do. He went to the woods and he brought in young trees and they spread it

out, that went like a _____, and he dug out where our feet are. He dug out a ditch and

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the water used to get into one place and a couple of times during the night, we had to get out and take out the water and that's the way we were sleeping and getting up, sleeping and getting up. Until he said, you have to go. I can't keep you. I'm afraid. So that time, we decided to go to his house and that's the end. Take us to the Partisans, or kill us, or do whatever you want, it must come to an end. And my brother, we had a gun with one shell. My cousin was tall so he took a stick pretending that he has ammunition. And we were standing in the field and my cousin and my brother, the youngest brother, because my older brother was always afraid. He knew one thing, he want to survive. He did not know what to help, but he did not find, think what he can help, but only, he wants to survive. So it means if nobody sees him, he'll survive. My younger brother and my cousin went to the window and they knocked on the window, and they asked the possessors, that's the help that he left to do his ground. They should let him in and they said they will not let him in. So my brother said to them, you know, look at the gun. I'm going to kill you if you won't let me in. So you have to let us in. If you don't want us, we will not stay, but we have to have that you should go to Raddan and bring Kashmish(ph) here and he has to help us to decide what to do. Maybe he can transfer us to the Partisans. Because we were not too far from, they call it Natchaputche(ph), where the Partisans were there. And we have no place to go, you must do for us something. So, we came there. And they were afraid for the gun, which obviously, could not shoot. And they, he said, you don't have to let us into the house. Just let us in the barn. Let us in where the cows, let us in where the horses are. Let us in where the pigs are. Anyplace, a corner that we can get in. And she was afraid and they let us in. But we did not know that the same night that we were, they opened the door and told us to go out, the same as where Yaffa(ph) was with her family, hiding. Because the house was burning and the woman was burned alive. So they opened up the doors and out.

Q: Yaffa Elliach(ph)?

A: Yaffa Elliach with her family was already in his house. They were already there, but they were in, there was a hiding place in the house. So, they were there, but they did not tell us. So, they let

us into the barn. The next day he came home and he said, I cannot let you go to the Partisans.

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Because the war is coming to an end. The news are going to be showing much better the Russians are defeating the Germans. And they and you have, and I want you to survive. So, what we'll do, I'll build, nobody think I have Jews now. They wouldn't think I do because I'm hiding myself. I'll make a new hiding place where the horses are. And you'll hide there and we'll see what will be. I want you to survive. And we dug over night a hiding place and we were sitting there and then the _____ came out and they introduced themselves. They are there, too. And another couple of Jews are there.

Q: And you knew that from before?

A: It's my cousins. Yaffa's father was real cousins because his mother and my father were sisters and brothers. But in the beginning, of course, everybody wants to survive. Nobody wanted to identify. Except, I'll tell you, my mother. My mother until the last minute was still looking maybe she can save somebody. Maybe she can bring somebody and save somebody. And the more she brought people in, the less chance we had to survive. And the less money we had to buy food.

Q: Where was she finding people to bring in and save?

A: We took out from Vilna(ph) ghetto, three people. We found _____ from the labor place, we found my cousin, that he was with us. And my cousin, the other cousin, with his wife and child, one he did not give us out where we are. He could have tell where we are because he knew where we are. And they would go right away and catch us. But we paid for it. The night before they got killed, my brother was there bringing him food. And they beg him he should stay overnight there. And he said, no, I'll go back to my people.

Q: So, you're telling me that, while you were hiding, you were still able to help other people?

A: Yes.

Q: That's amazing.

A: That was my mother. That was my mother. She did not look that she won't have it for tomorrow, but she has it today and it was still looking, we had a cousin, he was an engineer in a small town near Ashashoc. We sent four times for somebody to bring him. And he kept delaying.

He couldn't believe that they cannot run the factory, it was a paper factory. That they will not be
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able to run the factory from him because he started it in Germany and he was working there all his life. That how can they, they won't run and they won't kill him. But it came when we sent the last time, he was gone already. It was too late. We had a druggist in Liptenshoc, that they left him alive. They killed everybody and left him because they did not have another druggist in the town. So they let him. We kept begging him, we'll take him out. And until it came a day that we sent again, next week, next week, the next week didn't come. It came a day that he was gone. They killed him.

Q: So you would try to help people, your Polish people would help you get them?

A: Yes. For every time they went to town to bring somebody, was paid off very well. _____ gold.

Q: You were starting to tell me that at one point you had to go into one of the towns and you went into a church. What was that?

A: Yeah. This was when I wanted to meet this mayor of this town. And see what he can do for us. Maybe he can help us. To hide as Poles was impossible because our accent wasn't good. To go deep in Poland. To stay here, it was impossible, everybody knew us. So, but, we wanted to take out the children, my sister and the children from the ghetto. Because we knew there would come a day they will get killed. Besides that, we didn't know tomorrow brings us either. So, we, we decided he'll take me to this, Schmigera(ph) was his name. We'll meet him in church and we'll talk to him and see what he can do for us. That night I was resting in the attic, I and my mother I remember, I had a dream. I had a dream, _____. And I highly believed that this can come to something. You know, you start believing in things which, you know, we never did. We believed in dreams. We believed, there was a lot of superstition going on. And I thought, that dream means something because the translation is, there'll come a day that a bear will leave together with the ship, kavish(ph). And maybe there will come a peace that they'll want us to leave. So, I will go to the church because I've never been to a church and, accordingly, we were not supposed to enter the church, believers. And I went with him, I was dressed like a peasant, and we came into

_____ house and he introduced me that I am a cousin from another place, he brought me, The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

and we are going to church. And we went and I told him, I'll fail because I don't know what to do. Whatever I'll do, you go after me, you do. And then _____ came to us in church and he said he cannot talk to us now. But they are building a new church at the end of the town. I should, after we get through here, he should take me there and he will talk to me. So we met him and I told him the story so he can make us out Polish papers. All of us. And maybe we can survive as Poles, but we have to go away from this neighborhood. So, I said no, because our Polish accent will give us out right away. Because we spoke Polish more like the White Russians, not like in Warsaw, like _____. So I said about to give away the children, then we'll take at least the sister with us. So he said, I'll try. I'll try everything because I will not forget what you did for me. During the Russian occupation, that he was hiding, his wife was already sent to Siberia. This Pole was his cousin and he used to come during the market day [phone ringing]. After the church, we went there and we met him. And he told me what he can do, he said, alright, he will see what he can do about the children. And next day he gave us an answer. He gave us the answer that he has a very good place, and we knew, because we knew everybody. And I knew that this is, it cannot be it was a miracle. It was a big, rich farmer, they were very good people. Very nice. And they will take the two children to raise them. And we notified my sister. Everything wasn't easy. Because everything got, _____, there was no communication, no telephones, nothing. And she said she is not giving the children, she wants to die wherever the children are, together. So, we failed on this. Then I went into the ghetto and I met some people from our home town. And they were talking and they told me what they suffer from this man. And to us he is an angel. So, and I should talk to him. And I talked to him and he told me why he wants, he does not take revenge from all the Jewish people, only ones, the people that they, it was their fault to send his wife to Siberia. But, anyway, he got, he was, he really was better. Because, as I said, we did him a lot of favors, by not giving him out to the Russians, by, I used to open up the back door and let him in to meet his cousin. I gave him a warm, and meals, also, if they want, I used to always leave something for them to eat in the room and they used to see it and talk and then disappear. All our life was like this. And that's

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what, we went again from place to place. We went into hiding and my sister, that was in 1942 when my sister got killed, in May, 1942.

Q: What was the name of that town?

A: Vasilishoc(ph). Those pictures we just looked at were Vasilishoc. They were, all the towns were connected, they were not connected like here, for example. You get out it's Pasadena, _____, but they were not a lot of distances, just, you know, maybe seven kilometers, maybe 14 kilometers from each other. And, but they were all small towns. Ashashoc was the best, was famous because we had a good communication between Vilna, Lider, Gordna(ph) and we had the bus passing through. It was like a freeway going through town. But, otherwise, those small towns didn't have a bus coming in. They didn't have a taxi. We didn't have taxis, either. Right before the war, some taxis used to pass through town.

Q: When you went into this church, were you nervous?

A: Very much. Very much. Because I was afraid that God is going to punish me.

Q: You were afraid God was going to punish you for going into the church, not of getting caught by the Polish people?

A: No, I wasn't, I knew there, I am in good hands. Because I'm not exposed to the, to out around the public, just in church. And I was dressed just like a Polish girl. Couldn't tell.

Q: But you were afraid you were going against your faith?

A: Faith, yes.

Q: You didn't feel forsaken by your faith at all?

A: No, but, I don't know. We were, and we weren't that religious, in our house. We weren't that religious. We kept all the, you know, everything kosher and this and that, but we weren't very religious. But I always am with people today, very religious. I felt like if we would have a father, we would probably be also as religious as my friends, because my friends were very religious.

Q: Did you have any contact with Partisans?

A: No. But we knew that they exist. We knew who are the head of them. Because we knew them.

We knew where they are because one time, I and my youngest brother and my sister were a short
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time in a place, they were right in the pasture, in that, where the Partisans are. We were there in the middle. And that was a very good place to hide. Because his son, that Polish man, his son went to work for the Germans. He was a policeman, he got killed. So nobody would ever believe that he has Jews in his house. But, there was once, they call it a blava(ph), they surround, the Germans surrounded the, this, the woods and were trying to kill, some people got killed during it. And this _____ was just moving around, going forth and back from the bombs and from the grenades and from everything. And then we decided to leave, I did not, we didn't want to stay there.

Q: So there was a big, strong German presence and you were very aware of the war?

A: Oh, we were aware, they had, there were Polish people that they told the, used to be in contact with the Partisans. There were some. The Polish people, when they organized against the Jews, but not all of them. They were not, there was a cousin of this Polish man that we were survived by him, this _____. That he was called to join the White Partisans. And we were afraid, he was, he ran away from a big town, came to survive in this village because the Germans, the Germans or the Russians, I don't know, did something to his parents, and when he was called to join the White Partisans, he, we were afraid, the risk, this _____ Jews, and he could not lie. He was a very honest and not smart man. And we knew that he will tell, yes. So every night we used to bring him into our hiding place and he used to _____. You have to go, obviously, they call you. Otherwise, they will kill you. But, if they will ask you, what will you tell them? _____, I will never say that. I will not, I will never give, but we couldn't trust him. And every night we used to like, bother him, what will you do? And he kept saying, always crossing his heart and saying, cross my heart, I will not say, and he finally went and he did not. He did not tell that we are hiding there.

Q: He checked on you all the time?

A: No, after he left to the Partisans, he never came, we never saw him. Now, I know where he is now. We write, we exchange cards for Christmas, when the Polish man was here, I sent him money. I met his sister one day in Israel, but two years ago, almost three years, I met her in Israel.

Sent him money, he is an engineer. Very intelligent man, but I never saw him. Like this Polish

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man, Edward(ph) Shepard(ph), now he was, at that time, probably 10 or 12 years old, maybe less. We never saw him. I only saw his silhouette. Standing near the kettle and watching them in a big coat, dressed. And I never saw him in his face. Because we were hiding, not Yaffa or the other ones, they saw him because he used to come in to eat in the house. But we were in the barn, we never came into the house. So, now he is alive. We write to him. Send him money. We are in contact with him. But, I never knew who he is.

Q: Do we need to change the tape?

End of tape 5.

Tape 6

A: They would kill him just as they would kill us.

Q: Because he was harboring Jews?

A: Because he was, yes, because they knew.

Q: Was he the one, who, oh, don't stop.

A: Because the difference from this boy to the other ones, the other ones couldn't even sign their names. They couldn't write. He came from a big town. And he came because he had no way, all the family was sent out someplace. And he was intelligent. He used to go with the polk(ph), how do you say in English, plock(ph), you know, to work on the, to work the ground. Everybody that came to this farmer's, they had to work, they had to know how to work on the farm. And he was going with his book. He was holding in one hand the book, he was studying himself, he was learning himself, and he was working in the field. And we always used to make fun of him, how could he do it? And at night he used to teach himself algebra and he was, he was, he was a different breed, because some, like the shepherd, the shepherd couldn't even sign his name, he never saw a school. So, we knew he was different, but what we knew, he is such an honest man, he cannot lie.

Q: And this is the cousin of your savior?

A: Yes, of our savior, yes.

Q: Now, during all this time, how much information did you have about the outside world and what was happening in the camps? Did you know anything?

A: We did not know. We didn't know what is going on with the death camps. We did not know what day is today. Except just looking by the moon we knew what, if it's the beginning of the month or the end of the month or whenever it is. And the only thing we knew, Yaffa kept, the first time when we met, she says, do you still have your prayer book with you? Because every place I went, I went with my prayer book. And by the end, I lost it in the Pignon(ph). And I saw her the first time in the United States she said, do you have your little prayer book. And I said, no I don't have it, I left it in the house and everything was destroyed.

Q: What else? You were in hiding, really from...

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A: From '41 until '44.

Q: Any other aspect to all of that you want to talk about?

A: Do you want to know about _____ after the war when we came back home?

Q: I do, but first, I want to know how you found out you were liberated. But, in the hiding, in all these places, you hid in different places and you basically had somebody who helped you find places and some of them you had...

A: We couldn't, we could not do one thing without him. We didn't, everything was his, now one time I got sick and my foot swelled up very badly and he came to visit us and he almost fainted when he looked at my foot. Because I asked, what will it be? You have to kill me. I can't run to hide. It was red and swollen. And he said, I will see what we can do. He went to one of our friends, an old lady that her son was a shoemaker and he, we knew him. And he told her what had happened to me and she went to the river and picked some leaves from the lilies, the white lily leaves and she gave him to bring it to me. And a piece of old linen and white flour and she said, let her put on the leaves and this will take off the redness and the swelling a little and then it will start itching, I should put on. He wasn't satisfied that this can help me. He went to the doctor in Ashashoc and he told him that he knows that we are hiding. And the doctor was a German, his name was Leah(ph), but he was, we knew him, we knew him. It's different with people that they know everybody. And he said to me, he said, I will give you an ointment and you take it out to her. And he brought it to me and my foot healed up. Otherwise, I, I said, the only survival, the only help we could have, I said, shoot me. Because I don't want other people should get killed because of me.

Q: Do you think there was any difference in your experiences because you were a girl instead of a boy?

A: No. I was more help than almost a boy. I could wash the laundry, I cut their hair with the not scissors, with the scissors they cut the sheeps, I wouldn't be able to hold it in my hand now. Cut their hair, washed, make something to eat for them, mend, I was doing everything.

Q: And no one tried to take advantage of you?

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A: No. No. We were all in the same house. I didn't have, for example, a dress to change. And there was men around, what do you do if you have to wash it? I had an apron. I used to put on an apron in front and just go all the time to the front where the apron is. Until it dries.

Q: I mean, I'm just curious, women have things they have to take care of and then when you're in such unusual circumstances, it must be difficult.

A: It, I don't know, we didn't feel so difficult. The only thing what we, what was difficult is when it was very cold. And we did not have warm clothing. This is then we were all, we were sleeping 10 people together.

Q: Did you have your period throughout this whole time?

A: For a long time I didn't have a period. It disappeared. For a long time, maybe about a year and a half or more.

Q: Maybe it was nutritional or...

A: Yes. Our gums, in about a few months after we left the house, our gums started to bleed. Now what should we do? We don't know what to do. So the farmer advised us we should eat onion and garlic. My brother got out and he bought a sack of garlic and a sack of onion and if we had bread, we used to take, that's what we used to eat, a piece of bread with garlic and onion. Because there was no food, there was no, absolutely nothing, especially for us that we did not want to eat meat. But by the end we, I and my mother, started to eat meat. But the meat was, we didn't have enough.

Q: Coming from a home that was very, very comfortable, you had to adapt a lot. I mean, you were not a farmer.

A: No.

Q: What was the most difficult thing to adapt to?

A: The most difficult thing was for me once, he brought me to a place on the way to Vasilishoc, it was a farm, there was a widow there with children and he said he wants, he was doing a transaction that he wanted to separate the family in three places. To find three places to have us. And he told me, this Polish man, he brought him there and he said, I am a relative and I had a fight at home and I

want to run away from the house and he'll leave me there for a short time. And being there and

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since I am from a farm, I have to know how to feed a cow, how to feed a horse, how to milk a cow, how to work in the barn to make the grain come out from, you know, you have to work with this. I didn't know. I got out at night and I'm going with them to feed the cows with a younger daughter because, obviously, she's, the younger daughter is younger than I am, the daughter, but she knows what to do. And I am afraid to go near the horse and I am afraid to go near the cow. The cow we had I would maybe cope with it, but I don't know how to milk a cow like they milk. And I insist I have to learn, I have to do it. So, it didn't take long, next day I was feeding the cow, I wasn't afraid for the horse, I went to them in the morning to the woods to cut trees down for, because there was no men in the house, it was all women. And young children. To cut the trees, but I'll tell you, every tree that I cut that ground was soaked with my tears. This I remember. There was so much tears in that forest that I tell, this is how we are, be cutting us down. Like I should not cut the trees because why do I do it to the trees when we've been cut down like this? This I can, I don't, I never I think repeated it, but I couldn't take to cut down a tree. I couldn't. And I was going and I was cutting down the tree and I was crying bitterly and came home and make dinner for them. I was there, and then on Sunday, I had to hide myself because they were already, the girl was probably 14, 15, and boys are coming. And I was afraid to be there. Maybe they will recognize that I'm Jewish. So I used to tell them that I am very sick and I'm very tired and I used to get into the barn and dig in myself all the way on the bottom and hide. Until one day a doctor was passing from, walking from Vilna to Gordna and this was on the road from Vilna to Grodna, that village. And I made a soup with milk and he was very hungry and he stopped and, of course, they used to give people to eat because he was, constantly people were passing by. And he said, and after he ate he said, oh, I haven't had a meal like this in a long time, who made that meal? And I heard him talking, I disappeared, of course, right away from the house, but I thought it over and I said, I'll never make another meal, there was little bowls from potatoes with milk. And, obviously, on the farms they did not make it. That was a Jewish meal. And I never did it again. I said, no. Until I did not, I was not secure there. I thought something will happen to me by the end there. There was too many people,

I learned how to make the grain, I learned how to make _____ out of, I learned

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everything, I learned, and in a very short time, but I felt someday they will recognize that I am not doing like they are doing. And we notified him he should come and pull me out, I cannot be by myself.

Q: In a situation like that, when you were separated from your family, were you worried that you might not see them again?

A: Yes. Yes. We never knew what the hour can bring us. We never knew about it. Now, for example, when I left that place, I had, at that time I had a sack with some clothes already. He picked up, this man picked up, I told him where they were hidden, but they were dressy clothes, I couldn't wear it anyway, there was wool dressed and I couldn't wear it. I wasn't allowed to wear it. She told, and I was, when he came to pick me up, she said, the clothes disappeared, somebody had stolen the clothes. Of course, I did not bring up to a thing that's a tragedy, I said, okay, it's alright. To them it meant something, to me it doesn't even mean anything. I left everything, as long as I got out alive from there. Because I was sure I will not get out alive from there. After that man recognized that the food is not the same and they are coming in constantly, boys to the girl and I disappear in that time, by the end they will come out, who is she? Who is she? It's a mystery, I'm there and I'm not there. But _____ thinking, I don't know, we didn't, if we would have the brains to think a lot, I think we should have commit suicide. And you know, nobody committed suicide, very little. Unless they knew the Germans are going to kill them, they were waiting for to be definitely killed. Otherwise, there was very little suicide. But I was thinking, why didn't we do it? Why did we have to suffer? Like this? You're completely not a human being any more.

Q: You must have had a strong will to survive.

A: My brother, my brother said he wants to be the one to tell the world what had happened to us. And he's the one, he was like a rabbit hiding and nothing, did not do anything. My younger brother was the main supplier. He is the man that, he is the one that was risking his life for everybody to bring these people food and these, and get out and get the food, because we had no problem getting the food, there was just the risk to go out to get it. The Polish people would give us.

Q: How old were your brothers at the time, about?

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A: My older brother, it's 1942, or 1941, '42, he was born in 1910, so he was 30 some years, 30 years old. And then the second one was my brother that died from leukemia and the third one was my sister, and I was the fourth.

Q: And then your younger brother?

A: My younger brother was, oh, we were all a year and three-quarters. My mom, that's what mamma, actually, I don't even know when I was born. I just, Yaffa just got some documents so she will find out. Because when I asked, when I came to the United States, I asked my mother, when is the date that my birthday is? She said, when we were all picking berries. So I took it in June. Because this is the time that we pick berries. Because we, I had, some of my girlfriends had birthday parties, not too many, occasionally. And I used to come home and ask my mother, why can't we have a birthday party? My mother used to always say, you don't have a father, there's no holidays. She gave us everything what we wanted and we helped in the business, I used to go to school and excuse myself at 12:00 and be home and work in the business. My brothers stopped schools, they were in the business. Everybody was helping. We got, I could get any amount of money I want, everything was open for us. We had beautiful clothes always, made, everything, but when it came to holidays, she always let us know, we don't have a father. And my mother could have remarried very easily, very easily. But she did not want another father for us. Because she only lived with him 10 years. And he passed away from the epidemic.

Q: Tell me how liberation came about for you.

A: We were sitting in a barn and he came from Raddan that day. And he said, the news is very good, because the mayor used to get newspapers. Now, he didn't get a thing, because he couldn't read a newspaper anyway. He wouldn't, he didn't bring it to us. So, but we heard at night, every night we used to hear airplanes running. Because, as a matter of fact, Yaffa's mother got, was pregnant and she had a baby. And they brought her, they were hiding in the house. So they brought her to our hiding place to have the baby. And we didn't know what to do with her. Because the minute the baby will start crying, we have to hide, we have to, we are finished. So that night he

came from Raddan, that Polish man, and my brother and her father took the baby, picked it up in a

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basket and we thought, who is the righteous, who is the best man in the villages around, and they took the baby and they went there at night and they tied it up under the ceiling and they left the baby and there was a note, take him to the church and christen him. And they were so foolish, they, some of the pilots, but we heard every night, Russian planes passing by. That one of the pilots was a woman and she had a baby and they dropped the baby. They did not think it is a Jewish baby. And they raised the baby and the baby was okay until it got killed.

Q: When you heard these Russian planes, did it give you hope?

A: Hope. We have, we had hope, but we were afraid for the day when they will come. We did not know, how can we get out and show our faces? How can we face the world, how can we look at people that they wanted to kill us? That they robbed us. For what? I have some pictures that one of our workers brought us in the ghetto and brought us to the ghetto. He found the pictures on the floor, whatever he found, he got into the house because we had a little dog and the dog didn't want to leave the house and constantly sitting and crying. So he came in to get a blanket, something from the house to take him to his house, and he found the pictures and he brought them to the ghetto to Raddan. And we couldn't understand how can we go on living to look at people that, some were good and helped us, some just wanted to get rid of us. That was the hardest part that we did not know how we will survive, how we can go on in life. And that, we didn't think it will be so fast, but that night a lot of airplanes were passing above us. And he came in, he came home that time. And he came into our barn and he showed us that in case they bomb and the barn catches on fire, there was insurance, so the grass was high, he took out a rock from the, and we should get through there and run to the fields. This is what he prepared for us. On Saturday morning, afternoon, we see the Germans are coming into the village and starting to station themselves. Put up their equipment, to put the fence, and I thought, here, this is the day that we are dying. We got to, we lived to and that is the date we are going to die. Because no way will we survive. The village will catch on fire, we have no place to run. We can run through the grass, but that will be hot, too. But that's the end of us. In about half, they had just started like you put out now, the equipment, they started to settle and

in no time came an order they have to leave. They left, they were about, they stationed themselves

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only about five kilometers from there and in about half an hour we saw all the village there is on fire. It's burning. This was luck, this was luck, you have to call it fate. That was luck. And of course, next morning we knew that they are all gone. That for us was the end of the war but we were afraid to go to town. We didn't know what to do. But we knew if we will stay longer and they will think that he has Jews in the house, we'll be killed there from the White Poles. So my brother and Yaffa's father, they went to Ashashoc because it was only three kilometers we were hiding from Ashashoc. And they went there and they met some people and they met some Russian people, Russian soldiers and they told them to wait another couple of days because it's insecure to come right now. Because they are _____ right now and a minute later Germans can retreat and come back. So we waited a couple of days. Of course, we did not sleep, we did not eat, we were alert all the time and then we decided we must go because we cannot stay here. And we went to town, we came in to our house, I want to think about the three kilometers walking to the house. And imagining the town with Jews, without my friends, without everybody. And I don't know how we made it, I think we were numb. We did not think what we are doing. We were numb. And we came into our house and it an elderly couple living and they got very scared and we told them not to be scared. They'll have to move out eventually, but they can still stay until they find a place to stay. Of course, there's nothing there. We bought some lumber and we made some little beds and picked up a few pillows and we were about 20 people in our house, all single people. Anybody that was single came to my mother. My mother was their mother, everybody. We ourselves did not have yet what to eat, but we knew we will not be short on food. They will bring us food. Everybody will bring us food so we won't, we didn't worry. And did remain in the house until the end.

Q: So how long did you remain in the house?

A: We came in June. It was the holidays, we had a _____. We had Russian soldiers stopping in the house, we made a prayer, we took one, we were praying there. We had an incident, we got poisoned from food. I and my brother almost died that night. One night, it was innkeeper night. Until when was the pogrom? I, October, from the 19th to the 20th. We lived at home, there

was only about four or five _____ from Jews, but we had a lot of people in our house, coming,

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going, coming, going. My sister friend, Abe's wife used to come, she was left alone, all the parents died, got killed, they were in the Partisans. And she was the only one alive, everybody was in our house. And in the morning, one woman brought us laundry and she said, you know, I want to tell you something. Be aware, the White Poles are going to kill you. I would suggest you should not sleep at home. But, except, again, we were the only family they would tell us. And I got very scared and I was alerting everybody, let's not sleep at home. We have nothing, what do we have in our homes, nothing. Let's try and see what, how we can protect ourselves. Why we need protection? There was no, the Russian army, because they were, the Germans were moving, they were moving more to Russia, they were almost near Minsk(ph), they were past Minsk, they were already near, they were deep in Russia. And the deeper they were, the more, the main police used to go with them. So...

(ph)

Q: Finish your sentence please.

A: So, she, we didn't know what to do and we, and I was, I kept walking from one house to one house to the other house, would tell them, let's not sleep at night, because that's what she told me. And they said, I'm off my mind. You got off your mind, you are crazy.

End of tape 6.

Tape 7

Q: So, you tried to warn people and they all thought you were crazy?

A: Crazy. And I said, I'm not going to sleep at night. I'm going to sleep in the garden. We had a big garden right at the end of the house. I'm going to stay there all night and I'm not going to sleep. All of a sudden, my younger brother wasn't home with his wife and my older brother wasn't home. They were in Vilna, Yaffa's father was in Vilna. So, and it was getting to afternoon, Yaffa's father and my brother and three Russian people in a stationwagon, they're coming in. So, here I run to, it was getting a little darker and I run into the house and I said, what will we do? Did you tell, Tegula(ph), her name was Tegula, did you tell your husband what we are expecting? And she said, you are crazy, go to sleep. You are crazy, go to sleep.

Q: This was Yaffa's mother?

A: Yeah.

Q: And their house was near yours?

A: Yes, right, it was our house in the center and theirs was like in the corner. And I got very upset with her that she didn't even, she didn't tell him what is going on. And she said, look, here we have protections, we have three soldiers, one was a high ranking soldier and two, I don't know, one was a chauffeur and the other one, and they are sleeping in our house, when we are having our dinner, and we are not afraid. I went home and I talked to my oldest brother and my oldest brother said, yes, I am agreed that you are crazy. Go to sleep. I said, I am not going to go to sleep. Go to sleep. I said, I am not. So they said, you know what we'll do? We had a two story house, we'll put, we'll change guard, all night, one will stay upstairs near the door and watch. And who did they choose? We had a boy, a young boy, 15 years old that lived with us from Vilna. He was not a smart boy, obviously, because three, four years he is without parents and from one place to another place, and I went to sleep and I dozed off and all of a sudden I hear, my room was downstairs, and I hear like soldier boots are going, they are passing by my window. And I jumped up and ran upstairs and I see a circle of people speaking Polish. I put, I laid down on, they should not see me standing up, I laid

down on the balcony and I hear them, exactly what they were talking. And I started to wake up

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everybody and nobody moving. They say, you are crazy. You imagine things. I said, come out, give a look, they are right in front of our house. Would they go to our house? As many people as are here? Nobody would get out alive. Because we wouldn't be able to run, they would surround the house or they, like they did there, they throw a grenade. We wouldn't survive.

Q: When you heard them talking, what did you hear them saying?

A: I didn't, not exactly, but they were debating, they planned to go to our house and they, then they between themselves decided, but then they better go to Sonneson's(ph) house because there are the Russians and they can take their documents and their ammunition. And they went there and in no time, we heard a grenade. And then everybody started to run. Everybody started to run that I even forgot that I have to go with my mother. My brother, I ran out with Petkofski(ph), one from our home town, he just testified something, too. And we ran, we didn't know where to run, we ran to the gardens and we ran into a ditch and then another one. The Smarts(ph) came also to the same ditch, but not knowing where we are, if we are there or what, and we were hiding there and not knowing what we are hiding, what should we expect, but it came to my mind, my mother. Where is my mother? And, but there was no way to go look back or nothing. In the morning we were sitting there and mice were running on our hat, and we couldn't move, we were sitting there in the ditch. In the morning, we got through the night, we don't know, should we go out, should we sit there? What should we do? We don't know. We only, I heard shooting, but I didn't know what is going on. Anyway, it came about 8:00 probably, we have to go out, we can't sit, whatever will happen to us will happen. I walked out to the house, it was not too far from the house, and I heard screaming. It was her father, crying and screaming.

Q: Whose father?

A: Yaffa's father. And I said, when we get close to, we were afraid even to give a step someplace, and he said, my Fagalese(ph) is dead, they shot my wife and the child. And we were begging her all the time, not to pick up the boy. The boy is in good hands, let's know, we knew we were not secure. We knew it. But we couldn't believe ourselves that somebody will do us harm. And then he said, I

said, I don't want to see it, I don't want to see it. And in no time, we left, we left all, we went to

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Raddan, stayed there over Shabbas(ph). And came back, the next day we left to Vilna, I never came back to the town again. My brothers went a couple of times. I never did. We stayed in Vilna until they started to arrest my brother all the time to interrogate him. He should tell, they wanted him, he should testify that the Poles did not, that the Poles, a father or something, I couldn't understand what, I really don't, but I know I went, we didn't, and they warned us, we had the mayor that came after to our town, I have his name written, advised us not to go any more to the town because we will get killed. So, definitely, we definitely did not think to return any more. We were in Vilna, but we knew we cannot be any more on this ground.

Q: You found your mother? She came?

A: Oh, yes. We got all together and we all left for to leave, to run and then we moved to Vilna.

Q: Let me ask you a stupid question. When you heard these soldiers come in, before you started warning everybody, how were you absolutely sure they were Polish soldiers?

A: I heard them speaking. I didn't know, I couldn't hear what they are speaking, but I heard them speaking, that they are having a conversation, they were advising each other, should they go to our house, should they go there.

Q: And it wasn't German, it was absolutely...

A: No, definitely not German, definitely heard Polish and the woman told us.

Q: What woman?

A: The woman that came in the morning that brought us the laundry, she told us that the White Poles, but I heard them speaking Polish. There was no Germans, that was way past the time from Germans.

Q: Were you surprised? Here you had survived all of this, you were liberated, you went back to your town, and you were still fighting a war.

A: But we had twice that we almost got killed by the Poles. So it was not a surprise either. Because at _____ house the Poles killed. At _____ when we were sitting there, when they came they didn't find us, we were lucky. So we knew that they are against us, we knew,

but, like we did not believe that the Germans were going to kill everybody, like the doctor said to

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my mother, you are such a smart woman, Mrs. Kabachik, are you going to tell me that they will kill 4,000 people? That's the same with us, why should they kill us? What did we do wrong?

Q: And Yaffa's family was very distraught?

A: Yeah, you survive, she had killed, one baby killed, one baby in the ghetto when there was the selection, and she said she will never want to be a killer for another baby. And here, why? What did we have? So whatever we had, they robbed. Whatever we had was left and they robbed it and that's why we knew they would need it because they found the clothes that was left, all the things that was left to us, they found it. They were finding it in the, he was a janitor in their slaughterhouse. He is the one, he showed me how to go to Corcochan(ph).

Q: And he is one of the people who...

A: He was, he was involved in that, I don't, I cannot tell who shot them, I don't know. But he was also involved in this bunch of people. And that's what we decided, while we are still in Vilna and we wanted to know where did her father disappear? Yaffa was a little baby, my mother wanted to take her. Her uncle didn't give us the children. Because he said, I am the brother, they belong to me. And we, I could not speak Russian. I spoke Russian, I understood, but I couldn't. I took my cousin, which spoke a beautiful Russian, and they told us there is one mayor, Pukavnik(ph) Straffski(ph), we should go, he is a Jew and he is a very high rank officer, we should go to him and tell him the story and let him help us to find where Moishe(ph) Sonneson is. At least to know where he is. So, when I told him the story, he woke up, he was never a Jew, but he woke up, his heart, with such a killing, he started to cry. He heard the story what had happened in our town, after we got through the war, after we got survived, and why did they do it now to us? So, I, and he grabbed the telephone and called up the Porkoror(ph) Belehoov(ph), and I heard him talking and telling him the story. And we have to find out where Sonneson is. I did it on my own, Yaffa did not know, nobody knew. And he said, he'll come three days later and I will tell you what we can help you. And we came, I went with my cousin and three days later and he said, I am sorry, I am sorry that I'm involved in that, I'm sorry, I'm in trouble. I am in trouble. That, they killed, they killed her

because, Moishe put her out to be killed because he wanted to rob the Polish people. And we

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became very good friends with this Pukavnik, he used to come in to Vilna to our house because we had a piano in the house and he liked music so he used to come to play. And he said there is no place for us. Because there were constantly people got killed on the streets. We never went out in Vilna from the house too far. We were assigned to that room, we were four families in one apartment and never moved out, never nothing. And one day he said, run. So we made papers, I and my brother, we couldn't make it to run all together so they were making papers for me and for my brother and got into a cattle train. And we were hiding there with the cattle and we came to Lods(ph).

Q: How long did you stay in Vilna, do you think?

A: Until, from October until March, about four months, maybe, or three months.

Q: And you still felt like you were in hiding still.

A: Oh, yes. We were all the time in hiding. We were only, this Polish man used to come to us and his cousin used to come to us in Vilna, but we were never secure. We never knew if tomorrow is another day for us. And then we came to Lods and they told us they have a room for us in Lods, but we cannot go out on the streets because there is pogroms every day. So we got into a room and we were waiting for the family to come. Until the family came and then we found out there is an organization that is pulling out all the Jews, we'll go on the way to Israel. That's what we thought. We never knew we'll end up in the United States. We thought we are going to be, to go to Israel.

Q: How did you know to go to Lods?

A: There was an organizer, how did we go to go to Lods?

Q: How did you decide to go there?

A: Because we had to run away from Lithuania and that was Poland. Lods was Poland.

Q: But the White Poles were...

A: Yes, but there nobody knows us. And there was places where we were assigned to go. We didn't go anyplace to rent our room. There were places where they had assigned, an accumulation

of all the people who were running from Lithuania, from White Russia, that's where they were supposed to be settled. It was organized by Israel. _____.

Q: So you were told, you were informed that everybody was heading towards Lodsch?

A: Yes.

Q: So the problems after liberation were with the Poles and the Lithuanians?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. I just wanted to understand that.

A: So we came there and then one day they said we have to move. We have to go farther, we have to be going closer to where we can go to Israel. We never knew where we are going. There came an order, tonight we are leaving. We packed our packs on our shoulders and that's all we could take and we are going.

Q: Do you know which organizations were helping you?

A: There was _____ and we never saw who was in charge of it. We never knew what we are doing, we just took, they gave us orders, for example, we got documents that we are Greeks, by the way, and we are coming from a camp to go home. So when we came to Czechoslovakia, here we are on a train, we go to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Krakaw, Warsaw, all these towns and we come to Czechoslovakia and there was no communication right away so we get off of the train. And the orders was for us, who speaks Hebrew? Could speak Hebrew _____, if anybody, Russian soldiers show up, because they were under the occupation of the Russians, should sit down and pray. And if somebody comes to talk to them, they have to pretend they don't hear. They have to pretend they don't see and who speaks Hebrew, should speak Hebrew between themselves. Here are coming in a few Russian soldiers, we were sitting waiting for a train and he says, who are these clowns? Who are these clowns? And we understand what they are talking and we pretend we don't understand. So he says, well, they show me their documents, they are Greeks, they are going from the camp home, let's go in the town there is a Greek and we will come, we will bring him and he'll find out from them who they are. He'll know how the speak the language. The

first best train that came, didn't know where it is going, what it is going, we were on the train, on top

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of the train, on step of the train, didn't matter if we will fall, only to kill ourself, no matter what, we were on the train. We come on the train, it gets a little dark and we heard them, what we heard, notified us that we are going to Budapest from there. And we hear coming up that soldiers are there and they are talking to themselves, look, if they are coming from a camp, how come they have backpacks? When they will fall asleep, we'll grab their backpacks and we will throw them down from the train. What do you do? So here we are sitting holding each other tight and we are not sleeping when you are sitting like this on the train. Waiting the night should get over and we should survive the night. We did. And we're coming into Budapest and they pack us, not a car, how do you call it, the communication, it was a streetcar. And they pack us and I had a fair cold, a _____. And I hear one saying, she's coming from camp, how does she have a cold like this? They didn't have in camps this kind of colds. Let's find out who they are. And I whispered the man that I thought he is the leader, I didn't know for certain but I thought maybe. And I said, I have to, the minute that streetcar stops, I have to get off. And we have to change to another one to run into another one and there they will tell us where we have to go. Anyway, they were not one, there were probably several, one remained, the other ones jumped off with me and we changed to another streetcar and we came to the camp where we are assigned. And we never could get out from the camp. That's where we had to stay until we was transferred. I was lucky. One morning, we were 60 people in a room, sleeping all the way on the floor, no pillows, nothing, whatever we would cover or something. One woman comes on and she goes and looks around and looks and looks and she's, you could see she's an elderly person but she's so desperate. So I stopped her, I said, lady, what are you looking? She says, my daughter, they took her away, the Germans and maybe with so many people coming, maybe she will be there among them. And you look so much like her. So, I says, no, I'm not her. She says, be my daughter, so I said to her, I have my mother here. Anyway, she used to come every day to the camp and she used to take me out. I used to go, take something, I had embroidery a lot, which I used to embroider and I picked it up from hiding places. Used to go to the market with her and we used to sell something, a little something, and we

used to bring food in the camp for my mother and in no time, they told us to move. We have to go.

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Q: Where was this camp?

A: In Budapest. So again, we take the streetcar and we don't know where we are going. We have to go. We are going to the train, that's what he said, but nowhere, where we are going, we did not know.

Q: And how long do you think you were there?

A: We were there about two months probably.

Q: In Lodsch you were there how long?

A: Lodsch was so blank to me, Lodsch was really blank to me. Because it was terrible there. So at Budapest at least I went out, I saw, the first time we saw food, the first time we saw corn, we can buy a corn to eat. And because otherwise in the camps was just soup and bread. So, I, they pack us on a streetcar and I was the last one, everybody got in and I was standing on the step holding on to the handles. And I fell back and I remain myself, the streetcar goes, leaves. And I don't know where to go and I don't know the language and I don't know, I knew just few words that I learned from her. And I don't know and it's getting dark. And I got so many stories that people were caught on the street and they were sent to Siberia. Because the Russian soldiers were obviously around there. I only knew that the camp must be like in the back, I have to go back and undid it. Like on the north side of the street is a big building and there is the camp, the camp obviously was always locked, we couldn't go out when we wanted. But I, I don't know how I made it. I don't know. I saw it's getting dark and in Buddah, I was never in Buddah because I knew Buddah is in the mountains and I see lights coming up and it's so beautiful and now life is finished, my life especially is finished. I don't know where to go. Anyway, I took a streetcar and I went and as I went I noticed that camp and I jumped off and I went into the camp and I told them what happened to me and I don't know where they went and I don't know what I can do. Anyway, in the early morning, almost like in the middle of the night, my brother showed up, my oldest brother. My mother came in the station there and she saw I am not there so she started to scream and cry, she is not moving any place until they find me. And they did let her, they said you have to go. So my oldest brother said, I

am going to find her. I'm going to. I'm not going with them. And he forced them to take him back

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to the camp and he found me in the camp. And the next time they did bring us, they brought us to a station and there one of my cousins got very sick. We had to go past, it was by Yugoslavia because I heard speaking there. In four hours we had to make it to that station where we were supposed to meet. People broke their feet, people broke their arms, there was up and down, there was mountains, there was, we made it. We were carrying each other, we were holding on to each other, we made it in four hours. And my mother, we made it, we came there, but where we were so close together and there they packed us and took us to Italy. We came to Italy, we went to Venice and then we went, very short, I just, barely saw the birds and the water and they transferred us to Patawa(ph). And from Patawa I remember we were so hungry, we had no food and we went out and we bought a piece of herring, and we didn't see herring all the time from the war, and we ate with bread and then they told us they're sending us to near Milano. Not, now I'm blank, I can't remind myself where it is the camp. Because I got married there. And we were there in a camp with 80 people, who wants to sing in the middle of the night, who wants to get married and fight with their wife every middle of the night, who wants to, and here we are there in the middle. Anyway, by that time, on the last stop, when we came to go to Italy, this I missed, we were there and my legs were very swollen and my brother always, he was very tall, he was six foot tall, he liked to hear stories. We were so bitter we didn't want to hear anything, not to see anything, who cares what it is, let the world come to an end already. And he goes out and the tell him and he overhears a story that this and this name, Norman Shulman, Schlemovitch(ph), not Shulman, Schlemovitch, they caught him on the border with some young people. Everybody ran away, he did not run away because he felt like he is not guilty of anything and he's in jail there. And there's nobody to help him because there is no family.

Q: I have to stop now.

End of tape 7.

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Tape 8

Q: We stopped, your brother had told you that, this Norman...

A: Yes. So Norman came to us, I was in bed, and he said to my mother, do you know who is here? Your brother's relative, this and this, and we knew him because we knew the whole family. Because in the town that he was born, my mother had two sisters and a brother. And, of course, we used to go to visit my uncle in Liptenshoc and we always used to meet, I used to meet his sister, I used to meet his two sisters, and I knew every one of them we knew. Because his mother used to come there on vacation, too. So, we decided, tomorrow morning, we decided, in the prison that he is, is nothing, is just like upstairs, he comes to the window and you can talk to him. So the whole family takes, in the morning we go there to see what we can do for him, obviously. We come there and he tells us his story, that he is innocent. There were people crossing the border to, on the way, it was from Italy to Germany, I don't even know where the border was. Some were smuggling money in at that time, but he had nothing. He had, he was innocent, he just was going with them. And they put him, of course, he didn't run away. They ran away, he didn't run away. And they put him in jail. And, you can save me. You go tomorrow to the authorities of the Germans and tell them that you are my wife, you survived in a camp and I didn't know where he is and he doesn't know where I am. And try to see they should let me out. Because I am, I did not do anything wrong. So, next, we go there, we come to the office, they told us where to go. And I come to the office and she listens to me and I tell her, but of course, I have to lie. And I was very much afraid. I was shivering. I was so shivering that I could not talk. And I said, out to the secretary, how would you feel when you lose everybody, you lose, I lost, I didn't know where my husband is and that's all I want. I want to be reunited. Please let him out, don't ask me too many questions, I can't answer. And I said, I am really very sick right now and I show her my legs. And my knees were very swollen. So she said, okay, come tomorrow. I come tomorrow and I am shivering, I really shiver. Because I know I'm lying. And she tells me, what date did you get liberated? I didn't know. I didn't know what to say. So I started to cry and I said, why are you asking me questions? Did we

have a calendar? Do I know where I am? Do I know what I can, what happened to us? We are just

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lucky by a miracle. We survived. And I found out my husband survived, so that's all I want, just reunite me with him. And she said, alright, she told me the date. And she marked down and she said, okay, stop crying. Go home, go to your kin, take care of your legs, we'll let him out. And a few hours later he came.

Q: What was the name of this camp in Italy?

A: It was, I think, Villa(ph), I think it was Villa. Now, this wasn't in Italy. It was on the border of Italy and Germany.

Q: You mean this prison?

A: This prison.

Q: But your DP camp was...

A: The next, then we crossed the border and we went to Italy. We went to Italy together already. We came to Italy and he was with us in camp and then he told my mother that he would like to marry me. And my mother did not want to hear. He had a wife, he had two children that he lost. He's much older than I am. And she did not want, and my brothers did not want.

Q: And you?

A: And I was very disappointed. I had several boyfriends there. And I was disappointed seeing people, they get married and they fight at night and they divorce next day. And I was afraid for a stranger. So I said, and he was very intelligent, my husband. Very knowledgeable. I liked this intelligence. I didn't look at anything. I didn't finish studying. I didn't, I felt like, I like a person like this. And I said, I would like to marry him. But they said no. And if mother said no, it's no. Anyway, he got mad and he went and picked up himself, and we didn't have too much what to carry to move. And he went to Rome. In Rome there was the Macahs(ph), which remains all the organizers of our _____, refugees. And he got an offer. They knew that he knows Hebrew, he was never a teacher, but he knew, whatever he knew he remembered. And they knew it very well. So, he should organize the Hebrew schools. Because there is children coming from Hungary, from all over the world, from Russia, everybody of a different language. Children picked

up from the war raised by Poles. They would only speak Polish. People from all over the world,

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there is different languages. Everybody is waiting. We didn't plan about another way but to get to Israel. But, we had to get illegally to Israel. And we started to get rumors that they are drowning the boats. The boats that leaves to Israel, is illegal, and they are drowning a lot of people which were afraid to move, too. Anyway, so they said, you know _____ that you can do it. So, they gave him, and he organized the school. He was the only one teacher, he was the only one everything. And he taught everything in Hebrew. Geography, arithmetic, he taught, not being a teacher. And, I'll show you the pictures later from this, from this school. And he organized and it was going very beautifully, but he felt that just teaching is not enough, they have to have acting, they have to have singing, they have to have a little fun, the children. They didn't live yet, they didn't have any fun. So there came a friend of his that he knows, that he was an author, a singer in Warsaw and he also was a Cantor(ph) in Vilna. And he took him in. He said, I'll teach you the Hebrew, every night what you have to teach tomorrow, but you occupy the children in _____, it means in acting and other things. And he did. And little by little he organized another teacher, another, he had three, four teachers already. And the school was going beautifully. And it was good, no this is when he started, and then he called me up and he says, oh, we get married, or forget about me and I'll forget about you.

Q: Now, you were still where?

A: We were still in Kermorna(ph). This, I jumped a little bit. Ahead of time. And I said to mother that, I said, I want him, he should come. And he came and my mother and my brothers were eating. They were going on, we will not let you get married. And I said, I want to marry him, I do. So, anyway, in a couple of days, they wrote the invitations, they are to a few people, and we got married. And we left next morning to Rome. He had a room near the Vatican, and there were not allowed to be married people there. But since the landlady liked him very much, so she let him stay two weeks with me there. Now we took our nephew with us. He was 17 years old, we took him out from the camp. My mother, of course, did not want him to leave. But, we told there is a better life, you will study, he's 17 years old, he has to study, he was caught in the war when he was twelve

years old. We have to take him. But, where should we put him. We are not allowed to stay there in

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the room, so how long, and what we'll do. So, we used to, we had two beds, we slept, the three of us, and in the morning we used to put him in the closet or in the _____ under the door to hide him and then he used to go out during the bell, he just came in to us. Anyway, it came two weeks, we had to move, we found a room to stay. There was no lights, nothing, it was dark all day. No food, the packages we got, they used to eat it up in about a week or two weeks. I did not, I lived on bread and food. And then he was tutoring, _____'s children, two boys he had. They came from Lithuania. And he was the main authority in the Macahs, in the where all the workers for the benefit of the Jewish refugees is. And he said to him, you know, I'll pass on the room to you, where I'm living, because I'm getting an apartment. And that was, we had a hope that we are going to start living. He passed on the apartment, one room only. But again, we had our nephew with us. So again, we had to hide him. And he got tired of it, we were, we didn't say anything, I didn't say anything, because that was my mother's eyeballs, you know, he's from the old family, one. And then he started to, he didn't want to go to his school, to my husband's school. He used to take, go on the streetcars, 17 years old and coming late home and it was very not good. We felt like we had, are not doing justice. So, we decided, we were in a kibbutz near the _____, it's near Rome, and there's a lot of young people, and they teach him in a different, there's no adults, there's more in his age, 17, because Norman's students were young, up to 12, 13, not 17. And we decided, and he agreed with us, he will go to this kibbutz with the young people. And he left just like this, and I told him, in the daytime I will wash your clothes, what we had there. And we'll bring it to him tomorrow morning, I'll go at the wash yard and I will it to him. That night they surrounded camp and they took out all the young people and they put them on a boat and they sent them to Israel illegally. And when my mother found out that he is sent to Israel illegally, I thought that's the end of my life. She would never forgive me. She was giving on like I would take the life away from her. It happened a miracle, to make it short. And David _____. They had returned the boat and they didn't harm them, but they returned the boat, not to Naples, near Naples was a port and we found out they returned the boat. And of course, promptly my mother and one of my

brothers and I and my husband and we are running there to get him off the boat. At that time we

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found out that my husband, my husband knew he has a brother in the United States. He knew he has a brother in Argentina. But he did not know the addresses, did not know where they lived. But he put a ad in the paper and he thought _____. And he ask, he wrote his name, that Norman Kabachik is looking for his brother and this. His brother did not read the Jewish Press already, but one of, an old lady from his town read it and she came, she knew his brother and came early in the morning. Knocked on the door and she said, hurry, hurry, you have a brother who is alive. And he was the youngest. His brother, his mother birthed 16 children, some never lived, they died at birth, but he was the youngest, he was the second from the youngest, the youngest was a sister. His name is Norman and he is in Italy and she gave him the address and everything. And we got right away, a telegram and \$50. So here we have \$50. We pick up the \$50 and we go to take him off of the ship. And my mother there, we come there, and he said, no, I'm not getting off. You are waiting to get to Israel, you don't know where, we didn't plan to go to the United States at that time. And we just got through hell, we did not have no food, no water for three days. I used to turn out, he showed us how he turned out his pocket and looked for a crumb. And people were dead on the, a couple of people on the trip. And I have the certificate to get in legally to Israel now, they gave them, and I can take 8,000 liras for it if I want to sell it. I don't want the money, I want to go to Israel. We can get in legally. You said to us, you may have to get through the same way he just got through. And I don't want to go through over again, that. And I'm going. We took out the \$50, we gave him, and I bought him some clothes to change. And they left to Israel. So he did remain in Israel and we already got in touch with his brother and his brother sent us right away papers. But there was a toss up, the Argentina brother wanted us to come and this wanted us to come. But he had chosen the United States. And that's what, it didn't, it wasn't easy to come.

Q: Now, when did you come over here? To the United States?

A: We came here in 1948. March, 1948.

Q: So you were in Italy about two years?

A: More than two years, over two years, almost three years.

Q: Mostly in Rome?

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A: Rome.

Q: In this camp, Kromona(ph), you were not there so long?

A: No. No, we were just there about two or three months, maybe. Until I decided I am not going to listen to the family.

Q: I just want to ask you real quickly, because this is, I'm going to let you continue. But this camp Kromona, were there only Jewish refugees there?

A: Yes, in Kramona were only Jewish.

Q: Was it okay there? Was it decent?

A: There was about 80 people in the room, a lot of quarrels, a lot screaming, a lot of uncomfortable things. The kitchen was still only soup and bread, but we had, my brothers knew how to make leather. So they found, they got in contact with some people that they wanted to learn how to make leather. And they worked with them, they were teaching them, so they started to have some money.

Q: Was the camp, were you sealed in, or could you come and go as you wanted?

A: We could come, in Italy we could come and go. No problem. Italy, we learned to be free. When I came to Italy, to Rome, in Kromona we weren't that much going out. Going out sometimes to buy a piece of fruit or something. But when I came to Rome, and I used to go onto the street and you know the Italian how they speak with their hands and they scream? I used to get frightened and run home right away and come to my landlady and tell her that people were, I saw people fighting and I was very much afraid. And she taught me how to free, she said, you have to learn how to be free, it's free. They are not fighting, they are talking like this. That's the way Italians talk. That's the way, once the DP, the MP, were looking for somebody and they knocked on our room at night in our house. And they came in, they were just looking for a certain, I don't know what. I fell out of bed when I saw a man, somebody in a uniform. I got so hysterical that I thought, well, this is the end of us. I couldn't, until now, I can't, I can't cope with uniformed people.

Q: How long did it take you to feel somewhat comfortable? Somewhat safe?

A: Until we came to the United States. I lived with my sister-in-law and lived, they picked us up

from the station, we came by train from New York. But we started to feel we are free. And we, at

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that time we didn't have locked windows, we didn't have locked doors. We weren't afraid to go at night. We had no car. My husband got a job. We thought he will be a teacher, but he said he is not going to be a teacher. He doesn't want to leave, to remain a teacher. He'll remain a teacher, he said, I'll teach, I'll have my cellar, that's it, I want to do something in a hurry that we can go on living like everybody is living. They have a car, they have a home. The dream to have your own home, you know what it is? To have, maybe a car, I didn't dream to have a car. But, maybe to have a car. My niece and nephew, Norman's brother's two children, they lived very close to us and I could walk to them. I used to go in the daytime to one niece and the other, then I started to help my niece, my niece was very sick, so I was helping her with her baby, she had a year old baby. And I was pregnant with my daughter at that time. And I used to help her, but everything was just in the mind to dream, someday, maybe. I did not, I was a pessimist. I didn't think we would ever, I didn't think, I didn't, but my husband had a feel to get out and accomplish what people did in the, when they were young, he has to do it in a hurry. And that's why he said, I am not going to be a teacher. And the children were very disappointed. Because they, and I wanted, because the atmosphere, the friends would be different. When we go in business, _____ and have to learn the language. My husband picked up the language very easily. Not, first thing he started school right away. I couldn't. I, and he had, he comes from a family that language is _____ to him, it's easy, very easy. He went less than a year and the teacher wanted to give him a diploma that he finished high school. But he wasn't interested in the papers or something, as long as he can go on working and get out on our own, not to live with my sister-in-law because we lived with her. And she did not have any children and here I am pregnant and I have a baby and her mother used to say, why don't you give the baby to my daughter, you're young, you'll have another one. And I was frightened for it. Because she has a home, she has everything. I have nothing. And how can I be secure that I won't have to give up my baby? So we wanted, and we couldn't find a place to rent. It was impossible in '49, '48, '49, to find a place to rent. Until, luckily, we found a little house in the east of Los Angeles and I moved out. And we started our life on our own.

Q: So you're, the brother lived in Los Angeles?

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A: Yes.

Q: And you took the train from New York?

A: But, his brother died in December. And they did not tell us. The sister-in-law wanted so badly, and the children, that we should come, that they decided they will not tell us. We got, I probably was the only one on the ship that we got a telegram that my sister-in-law wrote in the telegram, she'll be the happiest woman in the United States when we will come there. And did not tell us that he is not here. So, obviously, this is what was, we were, wanted to do. And we came and he was dead already three months. He died in December, we came in March. And that was a big disappointment for my husband. Because we could have gone to Argentina and have the brother. That's all he wanted, to have a brother, from such a family. So, but, we stepped forward, we didn't look for the, we didn't look back. We were, we would do everything, any way at a job and then he got fired from the job because he was planning to go in business with somebody and, again, was no money to live on. We were offered help, but we would not accept. We lived on \$25 a month, paying rent and everything and a new child. And doctors and dentists and we made it. I don't know. We made it. We moved out from Los Angeles. We met a woman. After he was fired and he was looking to go to business, in business, we met a woman that she worked for his brother. And everybody that knew his brother was crazy about him. Nothing but praises. And she said, I have a very hard time living here because we worked, we opened stores and we got broke, if you are planning to go in business, try a small town. And she offered where they just opened a business. And I, as we were talking to her, I said, Mary, I can't see myself, where do I have to go, I have nobody. At least my husband has a niece and a nephew, which they loved me dearly, they would do everything for me. But I have here nobody. She said, Miriam, she looked up at me, she says, Miriam, from now you are my sister. You are my adopted sister. And she was. She was my sister all the way until she died. As a matter of fact, it was this night I dreamed about her. They were so devoted when my husband was sick. We didn't have a car, we lived in Los Angeles yet. And they, we used to drive with them, they had a truck, we used to drive in the truck with them to

Monrovia(ph) every day. They, they guided us, and then we wanted to rent a house in Monrovia, I

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had two children already and we couldn't, they wouldn't rent two children a house. So we were driving, first was the rent. My mother was in Brazil, she went to the brothers to Brazil from me to live. And I was pregnant, I had a lot of problem with swelling in my hands and my feet. And we felt if my mother would come, she could help me, not to use so much water, and I would be able to help my brother, my husband because he was opening a business in Monrovia where she advised. And then I would go help him, not knowing anything about that. And we moved to Monrovia, we finally found a house that he wanted to buy and I went to see it and I said, I can't move to the house, my mother was too old, and I said, my mother wouldn't be able to straighten out. She has to go _____, because there was something, \$8,000, and I said, I can't do that to my mother. We'll live in the east of Los Angeles near the temple, she'll go Saturday to the temple, she speaks Yiddish there, she never learned English, what will I do to her? I cannot do it to her. Anyway, then my sister-in-law came to visit us one day and I said, come on, I want to show what my husband wants to do to my mother. To buy a house like this. So, she went with us and she says, because this was without a down payment we could buy. And she says, do you see anything else? I says, yes, today the real estate man showed me a house, but we need \$3,000 down payment and I don't want my niece, they could give us, because they gave us some money for the store to open, but we paid them right back. And she said to me, so I said, I don't have the down payment. She says, here is \$3,000, go buy the house. I said, in January, this was in the beginning of September, you'll have it back.

End of tape 8.

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Tape 9

A: So, we bought the house and it was near a school, of course, and I started to work in stores because my mother was with me and she was taking care of the children. But they were driving me crazy. My mother should leave because she came on a visit from Brazil. And this was a big tragedy to me if my mother is to live. Because my mother wanted to live with me. Even she has there the two sons and the sons were very good to my mother. Very good. But she wanted to live with me, not to go back to Brazil. The life there was terrible when they came in. The snakes used to come in, they lived in a house there was no windows, the snakes used to come into the house. And the mosquitoes and the, and then, so, she didn't. We worked very hard and we couldn't make her stay, so she went to New York and one of my cousins introduced her to a rabbi and he married her. And I could not go see her because I didn't have the money, but a friend of mine was coming from Israel to Los Angeles and she stopped to see her, and she came in and she says to me, Mirali(ph), you must borrow money and go see how your mother lives. Queen Elizabeth doesn't have this respect what your mother has from that rabbi. He worships every step she gives and every place she sits down. You must. But I didn't borrow. And, unfortunately, less than a year, he died in his sleep. So then she came back to me. And she lived with me.

Q: So you built up a life in Southern California. You had two children.

A: I had two children.

Q: Let me ask you a couple of questions. In coming to this country, was it difficult to begin a new life?

A: It was difficult. There was difficult, not speaking English. Lucky that one of my nieces spoke Hebrew a little because her mother was a Hebrew principal here when they came. And I was very well liked in the family. So there was, I would say, I shouldn't say there was, I was still lucky. Lucky. Because a lot of people came and they had problems to adjust well with this. We adjusted beautifully with our relatives. And they were trying to be very nice. In American way. Ours was different, but we could go on until we started on our own.

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Q: Well, other than the language, what was the most difficult for you? Was there sort of a culture shock?

A: No, I'll tell you, they did. We came from the train today, and next morning I got up to my sister, Laura(ph), and I said, look, I realize we are coming from a different country, different culture, different upbringing. I want you to teach me. I want you to make a remark whatever I do wrong. I want you to teach me how to help you because you are just a widow a few months. How to help you, how to help somebody that needs my help, and teach me. Don't be afraid to tell me anything. I'll take everything what you tell me. She took me around, she kissed me, and she says, I would never believe that I can have a sister-in-law like you. She said, this is what I will do. I will be with you. But, there was a big difference, as it was going on, because she wanted to remarry. And we felt uncomfortable. We wanted to get out and here we couldn't get a place. But, as it was going on, it developed that we had our own place and we, then we have the children and we moved away. And we became, we were friends all the time. We were friends. There were some things that we were a little, always said in her heart, but she did not do certain things. But we never brought it up. Whatever she did was wonderful for us.

Q: How long did it take you to stop thinking about all that you had been through?

A: Because I was very busy. I worked in the store from eight until, sometimes until 10:00 at night. We did not go to restaurants to eat. We cooked. And I was a very clean housekeeper so there was a lot of work at home. My mother started to get ill, so I was busy with her very much. There was no time to think. This is a big _____, no time. But, if I, when we brought the Polish man to the United States, I could not speak for two weeks. I was, I couldn't, I could not speak a word Polish. I felt bad. Well, I still cannot speak Polish. And I just, I did not know what to do. I didn't. We were two weeks, thank God with my husband and my cousin, _____. He and his wife, they were accepted, we picked them up from the train, they brought him to his house and people started to call us to help and we signed up to the Congress of the Polish Survivors and they did a lot to help me with him. To take him out, he was honored in Temple, there was 1,500 people. We

were invited by Fox Studio to _____, and then to give a tour of Fox Studio. And we were

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invited by a writer, Brown, in Pacific Palisade and took us out. And everybody tried to be nice and help him. It was before the parade in Pasadena, the Jewish Agency sent us tickets that we should have a place to take him because they have places. He had, he could have a lot more honor here. Why I was so afraid for him, I don't know. I was so overprotective of him that I did, I was afraid to let him go in public places. Everyone that called us, I used to investigate like, who he is, what he's, God forbid somebody would not do something to him. That was a very big mistake for me. But he had a good time here. He had, we took him to Disneyland and my niece bought him, everybody bought him beautiful presents and he used to get up, things he never saw in his life. _____, they gave him a silver cup and he said, what do I do? And my niece bought him a watch. So he got up in the morning like a baby play with a doll, that's how he played with that watch. And we bought him a car. And we bought him a tractor here. And clothes and he was in _____, we took parties, we were to a New Year's party together with him. And it was wonderful. But then he said, he want to go to New York. Because he had the saloms(ph) which survive from him, and he had Yaffa. And he went to New York. They were not stupid like I am. They won't overprotect. They took him, the mayor gave him the key of the town and he was on television and he was all over. He could have been here, too. I didn't, I was afraid to let him do it.

Q: Did you quickly resume your observance of religion?

A: Yes. It was hard for me because since I come from an orthodox family. And there the temple was conservative. So, when you have to drive to the temple, God, how can you drive on Shabatza(ph)? So, because I used to walk to the store, I worked, but I would walk to the store. So, my mother used to stay near the temple and go there to the temple. And little by little, once the cousin, the rabbi got sick on Yontif(ph). And my husband used to go to the temple. And I stayed home. Prayed in the house. So, my mother, after Yontif, my mother comes and she says to me, _____, the rabbi did not show up and they asked your husband to conduct the services.

And everybody just hung on me, congratulating me, what a wonderful service they had. They never

had heard something like it. And how lucky she has such a son-in-law. So my mother came home

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and she said to me, you have to start going to the temple and see a man that he had made up his mind that if he will survive, he is going deep in Russia, he will never observe Judaism. He doesn't want anybody to know that he is a Jew. And he'll never, he wants to be lost. And look what had happened. So little by little, I started to go to the temple, to drive the temple, and we became members. And we had, of course, the money to help. My husband was 20 years a treasurer in temple. And we build a temple. We brought the cornerstone from Israel for the new temple.

Q: Something that I'm always curious about. You went through so much difficulty and trauma because you were Jewish. Some people like the man who went into Russia, probably decided they didn't want to be Jewish any more. For you this was important?

A: For me it was important. And our children, from the first possibility they could do, were brought up in Camp _____, for example the year that my mother died, I thought I cannot send them to Camp _____, we did not have the money. Because the hospital and the burial and the debt of my mother was absolutely outrageous for me. I didn't think I can cope with it.

Q: What year was that?

A: 1961. And the rabbi came to visit us and my brothers flew in from Brazil and he asked me, are the children going to camp? And I said to the rabbi, I don't know what to tell you. Right now, I can't send them, but I'll see. And he said, I'll see _____, don't keep them away because they wanted, they wanted, they liked to learn.

Q: Why was religion so important to you? Or why is it, I should say.

A: We didn't know any other way. And because we suffered, because we suffered, I was once in the hospital after surgery in, it was in Glendora(ph), it was run by nuns. And once, they always had a priest there, and he came and he started to talk to me. You suffered so much, I understand, why don't you become a Catholic and you won't have every to suffer from religion. And I said, something about it, the more you become strong about the religion. We are brought up this way and I like the religion and I want to be, I want to remain this. He used to come every day to talk to me.

Q: Let me ask you one more question. Clearly, having gone through this, impacted you later on. How you lived your life, your values, maybe how you raised your children. Can you talk about that a little bit?

A: Yeah. I could. The minute we used to, my mother said one thing, the minute you'll make for a trip, first thing you go see the brothers how they live in Brazil. Because she felt always sorry that here we have a nice, very modest home, very modest. Because we didn't look for anything, we just looked, we had to support my nephew in Israel because he was by himself. And he did need support. And we felt like nothing means to us but to educate the children about Judaism and to learn Hebrew and even my husband was teaching them Hebrew at night. But they did not have enough respect to study with him. So they used to fall asleep on the table because it didn't, it's better to play football than to study. But we took a Hebrew teacher from Israel that he used to come twice a week and teach them Hebrew. And we started, as they got older, of course, first was Camp _____, and then we started to send them _____ to Israel. And then when my daughter, where she went to school there was two and a half Jews. For under 50 children graduated, there was only this couple of Jewish children. I always used to tell her about to be aware that she will have to marry a Jew. She cannot intermarry. And it came to high school, the graduation, she had to go to overnight parties and she wanted to go. And she got some boys there that she brought home and she gave them Jewish names and she comes in and she introduces me, they are Jewish, and I, this is Paul and this is this and this is this and I said, what's their last name? And she says, _____, I know it smart, she's read it all in the newspaper. I know this. She says, mother, I want to go, I don't want to miss this fun and I'm going with one. So and then, the other parties she used to bring some from the temple, some of the boys. And she went, and then when she got married, she moved to New York. And her children, she started to bring up in the schuls(ph), in Hebrew schools.

Q: You mentioned that, you know, you see somebody in uniform even today, and it alarms you. Are there other things like that that bring back these memories?

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A: I always see the Poles standing in front of my house. I see it all the time. Day and night. This does not go away from me. I see the German when he came and I took off my watch. I see the day that I was sent out to hide by myself, because it seems like I was with my mother or with my brother, one of them, because we were always in different places, but I had somebody with me. And I that, as I said, in Italy, when my landlady used to teach us to be free, not to be afraid, but it still was a fear for us. Very much. But I thought, United States, in this time that we came is so lucky, I was sure that _____ are dying from hunger because nobody drinks here. Nobody steals here. We used to go to my niece, walk, 12:00 at night, 11:00 at night, in the middle of day, whenever we used to walk between the two nieces, the niece and nephew and where we lived on Sawyer(ph) Street, and we want to _____. We used to walk out, _____ walk in the middle of the night. Robertson(ph) Boulevard wasn't built yet. We were only two houses, on Sawyer Street, Beverlywood(ph) was not built yet. And we want to _____, we were free.

Q: Let me ask you one more question. Certain values that you learned as a child from your mother, they really stick with you and, not only may they help you through all of this, it was the way you lived after you were free? Certain things that are important to you?

A: Giving. Help people. To help. And it was upon a time that when we survived, that I said, I will never help people. Because from certain people, which I don't want to mention, we did not, we had a little disappointment. And, but, if you learn it at home from childhood, it won't go away from you. I love to help people. And I love to do for people. And I'm known here in the building. That's why it helps me now to pull through the debt of my husband. I have here family, some have moved away, they went to retirement places. But I am like the sister, some says I'm their mother, some tell me I am their doctor. I am, I live very close to the people and I love people. I cannot leave to see to one evening that I would get crazy. After my husband died, I could not sit down at a table and eat. I used to stand at the sink and eat, Friday night especially. But if my neighbors went to temple, I was called to come. I was welcome to come there and eat with them, but I didn't want. I said I have to learn to live by myself. And, but to go, anybody that calls me, anybody they says,

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I'm going, and they think about me and they care about me. This is the whole idea, they care about me.

Q: What year did your husband die?

A: In 1992. Four years, on the Fourth of July.

Q: When you came over here, did you openly talk about your experiences?

A: Not too much. I talk now more than I used to. Now if we come together, we always find a way to talk about survival. Unless my friend is up here. And tell them things. And everybody is interested. It's funny. Everybody wants to know. It's not, they are not running away because I tell them. And I found it necessary that they should know because a lot of people are telling me that we lived here and we didn't know what you got through. We didn't know what was going on in this world. We were busy, we had small children, we were busy and we never knew what was going on in Europe. We didn't know about the war that much. So this is important that they should know. And it's nothing to be ashamed, we didn't choose it. This is the idea. And my children want to know about it. And my grandchildren.

Q: Was it easy to tell them about it?

A: In the beginning it wasn't easy. But later on we did. But we still, I don't think we told them everything. I don't think we told them everything. Because my husband always used to see, he said, I was locked up in a building and I saw the way they put my wife and children on the truck. Now, I did get this, true. But I, because when my sister got killed we were in very big danger, so we didn't grieve even as much, because we knew that we are going to be killed, too. Didn't think any other way. But he always said it in his, and he always was screaming at night. I, I don't think there was a night when I didn't have to wake him up, Norman, why are you screaming?

Q: For many years?

A: For many, many years. For many years. It never went away from him. Because he saw things that, we maybe were scared, but he saw it, he saw it. There was shooting in front of him, they were shooting people. And even in the Partisans, being one Jew that he could have been killed. He was one Jew in the Russian army.

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Q: You've been very gracious with your time. Is there anything else you want to add and then we'll finish?

A: No more wars. No more wars. But the Polish know that they did contribute a lot to our agony and killing and everything. They did. They should not say that they did not. Not 100%, but a very small percentage. When the Polish man came to us, I went into a _____ once with him and he said, see, they tell that Polish people did not help. Here, he himself said, maybe one or two percent, maybe less. This is sad because we lived with them and we could live in harmony and everything. This is a deep, why? Why? Because we were born Jews? So, that's...

Q: Thank you.

Conclusion of interview.

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