

My name is Dr. Sidney Langer And I am the director of the Oral History Project of the Holocaust Center at Kean College of New Jersey. I'm very pleased that Mrs. Rae Kushner has consented to come to Kean College today and discuss with me some of her insights and memories into the years of the Holocaust.

Mrs. Kushner, thank you very much for coming [INAUDIBLE]. Could you tell me a little bit about when you were born, the town that you were born in Europe, and a little bit about the nature of life in the town that you come from?

I was born at North Poland, Novogradok We had 25,000 population.

Total number.

Total. Six towns for Jews. We lived a comfortable life, a quiet life. Mostly, the Jews were religious. There was Shabbat. They used to close the stores. They used to go to the synagogue.

We had private schools like for Hebrew. To learn, we had a yeshiva. We had a nice cultural life. Twenty six thousand Jews when the war broke out. They brought in 24,000 Jews more from all the small towns. And all the small town Jews, they gathered in our town.

What year were you born in?

I was born in 1923.

1923.

Yeah. We had our orphanage. We had hospital, Jewish home for the aged.

How large was your family?

Our family was a father, mother, and four kids, three daughters, and one son. The whole family was maybe 200 people. Like, my father had seven sisters, one brother. My mother was born from four children. Unfortunately, nobody was left from them. I have just two cousins right after the war.

But we lived. And I-- We felt a little bit antisemitism, like the Polish, there were Germans, and the Jews. But mostly, the small-- the storekeeper were Jewish people. [? Without ?] we're the middle-- we're the middle class people. We were not wealthy. The Jewish people were not wealthy. Some were poor.

But the middle class, they're just -- with the middle class people. And they were jealous when the Jewish people had a little store like the grocery, like the furrier, like the shoemaker, like they used to sell pots and all kinds of things. But we were just in connection with the middle class, not with the high society.

What did your father. do for a living?

My father had two fur stores. And he used to sell hats, men's hats. And we lived comfortable. We lived comfortable. The kids went to school, to private schools. I had an older sister. But she finished college, like university here. I was too young to step into college. But I went, too, to a private school.

Your sister went to university in the town?

In the town. They sent her to out of town. Later they sent me to a different town, when I got older, to Kraków, the Bais Yaakov seminary.

Did you have a Bais Yaakov seminary in your town?

No. We didn't have a Bais Yaakov seminary. They had a Tarbut. This is an elementary school. And they had a yeshiva.

So the Tarbut was for girls only?

For the children till the 12th grade.

From the kindergarten through 12th grade

12th grade.

For girls only?

Yeah. No. Boys and girls.

Boys and girls.

Yes. After 12th grade, some people went to high school or to college. And some went out of town to different schools.

You say your brother went to a yeshiva.

My brother, no, he was younger. He was young. And my sister, my older sister, went to college and started college when war broke out. I had an only brother. He was younger for me. And he was then but f5. When the war broke out, 16.

But he was going to go to a local cheder.

He went to a cheder. and later, he went to the Tarbut.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

For the school, yeah. It was a coed school for Jewish kids.

How many children were in the school? Do you remember?

The school, I think it was about 200 children.

There were 200 children.

Two hundred children, yes. And the whole problem started. In 1939, the war broke out. And Russia came to us. We were not too happy. But they took away everything. They nationalized all the stores. And the richer people, they took out to Siberia.

And this was a tragedy that time. I knew everybody was afraid to go there. Luckily, these people whom they took away to Siberia, they are still alive. And they came. We were wealthy, and they wanted to take us away.

But someone gave a hint to my mother that Saturday night, they are going to come and take us to Siberia. So my mother took all the four children. And she hide us in different houses for poor people. They should not get us.

And then came Saturday night. Nobody was home. They took, they put in the people in wagons. And like, no in wagons like in the subway, in the train. And they took out the people and took them to Siberia, the rich and the wealthy people. The poor people, they left in the town.

Now I wished they should take us to Russia after everything, the agony, the whole war. The people that they took away to Russia were lucky. But who knew there was going to come Germany. And it's going to be so bitter for us.

How old were you in 1939?

In 1939, I was 15.

You were 15 years old.

15 years old.

Were you aware of what was happening, you know--

Yes

In Europe, in Germany prior to 1939, when Hitler rose to power, before the actual beginning of the invasion of Poland?

We didn't know so much. Later, we find out from them. We knew that there's antisemitism. They used to come at holiday. They used to say, Jews go to Palestine. You don't have a place here. But we didn't pay attention.

Violence was a small element. Like, the first of the holi -- first May. May the 3rd is a holiday for the communists, for the Polish went. And they say, what are you doing here? Go to Palestine. It's not your country. But nobody paid attention.

Do you know remember what year that-- when did that start?

This was in 1935.

1935.

About 1936. And in 1937, a few Jews, friends of my father, they had stores, they had a wholesale grocery. He left everything. He sold, and he said, I'm going to Palestine. I'm not going to sit here. And he said to my father and mother, sell everything and run.

But we had a problem. We didn't know where to run. It was not Israel like today. The doors weren't open. It's not where the place, but you could legally sit down and make papers and go. First of all, it was very hard to get a visa to United States. It used to take months and years.

And with their families, with small kids to pick himself up, it was very hard. But they left to Palestine. And they are all alive. He just died recently. And she just died. She was 95. They went through very hard times there too. She was shot once. He was shot, you know. It was not like today, Israel.

But they felt the antisemitism. We felt that it's coming, something. But we couldn't help ourselves. The door was closed that time. You know how hard it was to get that visa to Israel to go. Young girls and boys used to sit in a kibbutz for three or four years, till one used to go to Palestine.

To America, very hard. You send papers. You need to wait for two or three years til you get the visa at that time.

So your family, your father, actually was making attempts in 1935, '36

'36. Yes. He had a sister here in United States, my father. And he tried very hard, the times, this could be felt. But they couldn't do nothing. Later in 1941, beginning of 1941, Germany took over us. And the people were confused.

But I still remember. Some people came from South Poland for the German about [INAUDIBLE] from 1939. And they told us stories. They told that they're killing Jews. We didn't believe them. We said what kind of people was he telling.

He told a story that the Jews open a grave, made them to open a grave. And later they put them in the grave alive, and they killed them. People were confused. And they wanted to run to Russia. But you couldn't run the time already.

The bombs went on you, airplanes. And the war started. And the city went on fire. And we saw already dead people lying on electrical wires and this became the little -- run in the suburb of the town.

And then German came. The [? terror ?] plans, I think it was like spies. And they said, don't be afraid. You're going to be safe. And they are good to you. And all the Jews will run in the suburb of town, five miles away from the town, six miles.

The farmers used to live there. And we were sitting there for a while. Later came announcement on the radios that all the Jews should come back to the city They stop bombing already to their homes.

This is in 1941?

1941. And everybody should go to work. So all the Jews came back to their homes, who had run . Who didn't had their home, came into the orders. And we settled down. After four or five weeks, they announce that we need to wear the yellow sign. So we put it on, and they give us orders.

You were seven 17 years old then.

16 then.

16.

And he put in the orders to put on the yellow sign that we are Jewish. We are Jews, that we are not allowed to go on the sidewalk. We should go in the middle of the street. Didn't bother at this. And we went to work. After a while--

Was there any discussion in your family?

There were discussion. We couldn't go no place. To Russia, to run, a lot of people were killed. My younger brother took the bike. And he wanted to run to Russia. Then my mother started to cry. But she heard that our friends, some got killed on the way. The other friends got all the -- the son got --

She didn't let him run. And they were confused. But what's the problem with us. The people remember the Germans from the first war. And they were good to them. They made a living. And they didn't touch nobody. Who could understand?

Who can think but such a thing, would happen to us? Nobody imagined that people should be like this. So we came back from the suburb to our house. Our house was done on fire. But we went out of the house. And we settled down.

Your family was together for the entire time when you were in the suburb.

All together, Yes, all together. And after a month later, we heard that all the Jews should get in one place. They should take something with them, how much they can carry. And this was a Saturday.

And therefore, what can you take with you with all the belongings in your house? My mother lit a candle-- lit candles Friday night. And I remember she was very crying. A burned candle went out. So she said, oh god, that's a bad sign.

And Saturday morning, we packed all. And we went to one gathering for all the Jews. And then, they brought over all the Jews from all the small towns. About I think, 10 miles from us was a little town Karelchy 20 miles was Dvoritz, Jettel, that's all little towns. So he gathered from 6,000 Jews, he brought in 24,000 Jews. So we became 30,000 Jews. He gathered us in one suburb where families used to live--

When you say he--

The Germans.

The Germans.

The Germans, they announced that we were settle in one place. And there was a suburb with the-- like a [? farmer ?] suburb, under the town. And he puts them, all our people. One Saturday-- one Saturday, he came over to the Jews where we got gathered.

And there was leaders from the Jewish people. They made Jewish people, some leaders, that they will send out the people to work. They will tell the people what to do. And we organized ourself. We lived twenty families in one house, one on top of the other. But we were happy that they are alive. And we couldn't realize what's going to happen next.

When you say that there are a number of leaders in the town, are you talking about the Judenrat.

The Judenrat. They made Judenrat people leaders, Jewish people leaders of all the Jews. Nobody want to belong there. But they didn't have the choice. But they had a tough job. Whenever they came new orders to them.

And they used to -- and they need to obey, they needed to obey this order. Like one Saturday they came, and they asked for 50 nicest looking girls, young girls. They needed fifty girls to work. And I was between them they send us out. All the mothers were crying. They didn't want to let the girls go. But it's a new [INAUDIBLE] send them [? general. ?]

Do you remember the year? Was that 19--

This was the end of 1941.

At the end of '41.

And he took us in the square. Every town had the square where the people used to walk Saturday, like on a walk. Thus Saturday night, all the Jewish people used to walk on the square. He took us on the square. And music was playing, a whole orchestra.

And he took-- he gathered all the intelligent people like the doctors, professors, teachers, lawyers. He brought them, about 100, 150 people, and he shoot them by the music on the square. And the blood was running on the square, on the stones.

And we're supposed to wash the stones, the 50 girls what he picked. And we helped to put on the bodies on the wagon, not on the car. No. On a wagon, you know, with horses. And their heads were hanging from the dead people. And we knew the people.

And the music was playing. And we washed the stones from the square. And later they had a ball. They were dancing in the square. Who shoot it? Nazis.

I understand. The selection of these intelligent individuals that you identified, was the Judenrat involved in that selection process?

They called out with names. They said, Mr. Gorwitz I want Mr. Gorwitz today. And once they knew who the lawyers are--

The Judenrat.

No the German. Somebody told them who the intelligent, or Polish, or somebody. He came to the Judenrat. And asked for ten doctors, for twenty lawyers, for the teachers. He gave them an order.

What could they do? And nobody respect-- nobody expected for what they were thinking. Maybe they're going to give them jobs. Maybe they're going to try to tell them what to do. Nobody knew. When the ghetto and the people find out what they did to them, people got very scary and very confused.

We were sitting. But they took us every day out from the ghetto to work, the young people, They give us bread, they give us food, a little bit we smuggled in from the outside. And we lived like animals. But we lived.

One day, he came. He said, I order the Judenrat that they need twenty handsome boys, the handsome boys, young boys, from the Jews. And this was New Year's Eve. Like, now Christmas nears. In our town, the pipes from the water used to freeze up sometimes. Though they had a ball in the governor's mansion. And the German-- they were German. And they told-- give the order the boys would come and put on fire,

Under the pipes, they should have the water. They got drunk, they were dancing and fooling around. Later on, German said, between all the boys, my brother was, my only brother. And they were drunk. They went down and performed. He said, let's go down. Let's kill the 20 Jews what are there.

In the middle of the night, about 12 o'clock, exactly the top of the governor's mansion, the Germans. And they say they went down with the gun. And they shoot all the twenty boys. And they fell on fire. When my mother found out that they shoot the twenty boys, then we ran out from the ghetto. We went to work. And she ran out to find out maybe someone is alive. And tomorrow morning--

Do you remember who came back and told you that this had happened?

The Judenrat knew this. And everybody knew that the boys already will not come back. That's why nobody want to come. The crying from the mothers and the crying from the fathers, don't take my son. He will never come back. We lived with that feeling that he will not come back.

Anybody try to hide so that they.

One, you couldn't. You hide but if it's an order, you cannot hide. They would kill all the Jews. It was risky. You know, if you don't give them what they want, at least, you felt [? trapped ?] and the rest of our life. If not, they're going to go in with machine guns. And they're going to kill everybody, that's going to be better?

One -- my mother ran out from the ghetto with my father and run to the governor's mansion. She couldn't go out there. But they've been stranded in the center Gentile. And she said, don't go, while all the Jewish guys are dead.

But she went and she searched in the empty houses, was beaten up by the bombs, by the airplanes. And all of a sudden, she heard like a boy, oh, oh, he's begging for help. And she goes over and there on our empty house was lying my brother, burned in the first degree from the fire.

But he was alive. So she was running to the Judenrat And she took a garbage pail, garbage pail. And they put him on the straw. And they bought him in the ghetto. The people went to work. So they put him under straw and under papers. And they brought him in the ghetto alive. He was in pain. And they put them in the attic.

Well, then two days later, they counted the bodies that were on fire, and one was missing. So they came to the ghetto. And they said, where is the Jew that was missing. Anyway, with our doctor's help and without nurses, he became healthy. And he start to work. And the end, I'll tell the end later, what happened to my brother.

Were there any doctors who could have helped when he was--

The doctors were [INAUDIBLE] in the ghetto.

They were left.

But left. How many doctors were left that Time And he was rescued. He was alive. And he mangled between everybody.

When they-- when they came, the Germans, and they said, well, one Jewish boy was missing--

They were looking around the ghetto. Oh, yes. They were storming. And they told the Judenrat that they're going to do something if they find out that he is there. They scared them, you know. But they were strong.

And they said, we don't know where he is. And they looked around all the houses there. Maybe they could find him. The ambition of them, if all the numbers were killed, it's got to be that one was alive.

Was the Judenrat afraid that if they didn't turn in, for example, your brother--

They were very scared. They're very afraid. They took a little bit, our own responsibility. You know, they said that what's going to happen to us is going to happen. But he was alive that second time at the end was. They went to work for two months. They cleaned the bricks.

Inside the ghetto.

No. Out of the ghetto, the young ones. They used to come-- a couple of Germans used to come to us, pick us up. We used to go to the houses to put together the bricks, to put together the glass, to clean up the-- everything what was from the [? prior ?] district. One morning when everybody was sleeping.

They surrounded the whole ghetto. Like in the war, they're going against soldiers, against missiles. They surrounded us from all the sides. And they took out 4,000 people, mostly the old, mostly the sick, mostly who they didn't like.

And they took three miles away from town and they tell them to make a grave, and they killed them. They killed them with machine guns, with machine guns. And 4,000 people were gone. And then we became panicky. Then they became panicky. And they said what's going to happen to us.

But they were smart. They knew how to take us. They came one morning. They made a gathering. And they said, we killed the old people, the people that cannot work, the young. But you are going to be protected.

We need you to work. And we're going to give you everything while you are talented people. And really, he left like the furrier and the [? carpenter, ?] and the-- first of all, they cleaned up the intelligent people.

But he was afraid they're going to organize something. And he said, we're going to move you from here, the people who are talented. And the people can be capable to work, we have a place for you. And then there, you're going to get double portion bread. You're going to get better food and everything.

And we were happy. He took us all around. This was like a courthouse, like the courthouse in Elizabeth, a big courthouse. And this was new in our town. They built it before the war. And there was a big, big square near the courtyards. He brought us in the building, everybody. People were [? talking. ?]

How many people?

Oh, must be about 12,000 people.

Were you together with your family?

Together with my family, with my father, mother, the two sisters, and a brother. And we were staying. And then we came in the court in the building. And they surrounded us and the Germans were staying in white gloves, dressed, Handsome Nazis. And they come in the building. And they made, you to the right, and you to the left. The right is to

die-- to live. And the left, it will die.

Did you know that?

We didn't know nothing. But it was already panicky. When he came, he said, you to the right and you to the left, I was a young girl. And I was staying with my father. And the whole family, people were already crying and screaming. And a German said you all to the right.

So then my mother started screaming, crying. I went over to the German, and I said, I'm young. I want to live. I want to work. Leave us on the other side. He kicked me in the behind with his-- with his boot that I went around the stairs.

And this was the way that the court, the square was. And ten trucks were staying. And they loaded the people on trucks. And they took them two mile away from the square.

Let me interrupt just one second.

Yeah.

When you said that they were taking people to the right and to the left.

Yes?

Was there any pattern that you observed in the selection? And who was going to the right.

He looked at you. If he looked at you, he looked at you. He took you to the left. If he didn't look at you, he took you to right.

So it was clear to you that the one at the right--

To the right is to stay alive. And to the left was dead

That was clear.

People knew already, people in our building. People were crying. We saw the trucks. And they're screaming on the trucks. And I went down to the square with my father, mother, and the whole families. We were staying. And the German were staying in front of us.

Before we went down. He asked us for our ring. He asked if we have belongings, money. And he was staying with a pot. And you threw everything in. Then we went down to the square . This is unbelievable to understand.

That the rabbis, young woman with babies by the breast, and they're screaming, and they're praying to god to rescue them, Shema Israel. They was screaming all kind of prayers. They knew that the trucks are going to the graves.

And he took three, four miles, the people, and he killed everybody. Meanwhile, came a German. We were next in line-- to go on the trucks took time, to load up the people with so many screaming, with so many-- came a German.

And he said to the Judenrat. One he lives now Israel. He says, I need four Jews, four yes. Give me their families. And they picked out who was staying in front They were furriers or they were not furriers.

He couldn't cancel it in time. He was a young boy alone, but his friend, he was killed too later. He was in Judenrat They cleaned them up later too. And the German took us away. And brought us into the light in the building.

Meanwhile, my mother was a very smart woman. And she said, kids run. You do not have a choice. You're going to be shot in the dark here, like to go to the grave. To my older sister, she says, run, run. They're going to be killed one.



Maybe one from you is going to be alive.

And she ran in the building. But the live people are , were. And then a Polish guy, he was whole big shot, became a whole big shot by the Germans. He was a poor boy. And he saw my sister running into the live people.

So he went after her. He knew that she was a rich daughter from wealthy-- from a store keeper. He went in. And that time when he rescued us, the furriers, the couple furriers, family of people, he ran in the building and took out my sister. And we saw her walking on the truck through the window. And she was killed that time. This was Thanksgiving, November 24th

They had yahrzeit the Memorial, after my sister. And after the big, actually, the killing, the big killing, all the people, they took away that time maybe 7,000 Jews, small babies, young.

I had a friend. But she had two twins brother. And he told her to stay on the left side. She should be alive. And she says, I want to go with my mother, with my brother, she says. He said, go. Maybe she would be alive. But mostly, because they'd want to go with my family.

And this was, for a while, maybe they would be rescued. He wiped out families. But nobody's left. He took us back to work. And tomorrow, they promised us that now the bad Jews are away, we going to be alive.

Do you have any idea how many Jews were left in the town after that particular day?

It's not that [INAUDIBLE]

In the ghetto.

In the ghetto. In the ghetto, about maybe about 2,000 3,000 Jews.

Out of the total of approximately 30,000.

30,000. But the 3,000 Jews that were left, we were working. He made like a factory. We were sewing up pants. We were sewing up fur. We help with all kinds of things. They cooked. They gave us bread. And we were thinking we are the chosen.

But for us, it's already going to be. Meanwhile, one day, the camp surrounded us. And they said they want all the small kids. I think this was more like 3,000 at the time, maybe 6,000. Family had yet more kids, you know, families.

They surrounded us. They took around the whole ghetto, 4:00 in the morning when people are sleeping after a day's work. And they said that they're taking all the young kids to kindergarten. They have a school special for them.

You know, when you see a family of four or five kids, and they're taking away all the kids, we saw that the kids are not going to come back. You can never forget the picture from the mothers and fathers, they were begging, and kneeling on their hands.

Then the German, with the white gloves. In the educated world, was staying and said, no, you cannot stay here one child. You're going to go with them. And the parents were kneeling. I had an uncle. He had two kids. And they knew that the kids were going first from everybody, you know, kids.

We took-- we had a storage from newspapers. So we took ten small kids, and put away in the back of the paper. They were seven-year-old, 10-year-old, with the baby who couldn't do nothing. But it was crying. And they put it in the back of the papers. And we told them to be quiet. And we kept them for a couple days. They took away all the small kids. And these 11 kids were left over.

This is a year

My uncle's two kids, a daughter and a son-- he was maybe 10, and she was maybe 8-- and a few people, what's left of the kids behind. And they were not satisfied. They were not happy that all the kids are out. And three days later, they came, the Germans. They surrounded again.

And they put in German shepherds, dogs. And these dogs got all the kids out from every corner where they hide. Some family hide a couple of kids in the attic. Or on a-- on a back room. But they cleaned out, and not one kid was left.

He didn't-- they didn't took them too far, one mile away like to [? Morris ?] Avenue. He didn't use bullets for them. It was too dear. They choked them with white powder. We were were staying, and screaming, and crying. We couldn't cry in the window but the [INAUDIBLE] should announce.

But can you imagine the cry and the [? hurts ?] from the parents who were staying and looking. And this was-- they clean out the Judenrein for the Jewish children. Then they were left. People got panicky. And they start to think we run away.

The intelligent people what were left, they had poison with themselves. They had tablets in order to take their life. I know a druggist. who survived. He had poison prepared. To demand that the bullets in the [? bank ?] over there.

But people start to run away a little bit from the ghetto. It wasn't easy. But it was surrounded with wires, high wires And the wires were electric-- electric. Who touched just the wire was killed automatically.

There's only one entrance to the ghetto.

One entrance to the ghetto but there was an army [? mistake. ?] But we had a little connection with the gentile people. where we worked. And they came to pick up these things like the hats, like the shoes, like the fur. Those who used to come in and save for money, they used to bring you a piece of bread, onion, something you couldn't live, It went on like a gentle, you know, together, we made business.

One girl, she has a sister in [Place name] river. This is a dentist, the daughter. The parents were killed. Her sister was so beautiful that Miss America, you cannot find such beautiful girl, intelligent. She ran out from the ghetto, with a gentile. And they caught her right away.

And they brought her back in the ghetto. And they hang her on a tree, this beautiful girl. They cut off her breast, naked. They pushed in a stick. I can't tell you where. And they made scared the other people to not to move.

Later they caught an other girl. But I saw her sister now in Israel. She was more beautiful girl. And we saw already that it's not going to be good for us too. But it's going to come to us the end too. They're going to kill us anyway. We lived with panicky.

We lived day by day. One day, we organized ourself. And we were thinking maybe we'll just open the doors and kill the German and run. Who's going to be alive is going be alive. Who will not go alive will die anyway.

Do you remember what date that was, not the exact date but the month.

This was like in 1940 end of 1942, beginning 1943. And--

Was he in charge of getting everybody together?

Yes. Yes. This was a couple of boys from the Judenrat And they were organized. So you know the mother from the one boy, but he was killed anyway. She started to cry. But you're going to open the doors. First you're going to kill my son, that he organized this.

Anyway, I don't know if they find out, if he had somebody to say, you know, every Jew wants to protect himself. So I

think if I'm going to tell something, maybe I'm going to be alive. You cannot blame nobody in that time. But it was not a normal time of life. Anyway one morning, the camp and the rest of all the Judenrat.

I just want to-- you said there's a gathering. And people came together to discuss.

Yes. No everybody. Not everybody, but the top leaders.

The top leaders, They're the top leaders.

Were you there or anybody from your family?

My brother was there, the top young leaders. It's going to be, anyway-- and to us, let's maybe try to open the door, to kill that German and to run, any way better dying running, like to take you with the bullets to the grave.

The mother from this organizer, she was crying. She's screaming, I'm going to go to the Germans. And I'll tell if you're going to try to do this. Anyway, they find out that there's something moving around in the ghetto.

And they tried to build in the ghetto, like a hiding place, like the our room, we are ten families. They digged under the floor something, WE couldn't put away the dirt outside. They would find out. So we put away in double walls.

If something will come, a killing, again, it's going to come, they'll run down to the hiding place. Who's going to be alive? Mostly, the mothers, the fathers. People were afraid not so much for the young for they can't work yet.

But you can never expect this. You know why? Well, they came all of a sudden when you are sleeping, when you didn't expect him. And all of a sudden, 4 o'clock in the morning. When everybody doesn't know what's going on.

They're surrounding you. And they're telling everybody out. And they come in the rooms with the dogs, the German shepherd, and with the guns. And you're going out the back-- in the back yard. A girl, she saw outside toilet. She lives now here in the United States.

So she ran in in the toilet. It was outside for the-- not inside, in the toilet. And she went in the dirt there. And she was sitting there for two or three days. Later she went out. And then they cleaned us up, that there were just left maybe 300 people.

Another few people ran away to the woods. They heard that some people ran away to the woods. It was not easy. But if they caught, they shoot you. They didn't have so much a problem yet with the Germans. But our good Polish friends would not cooperate with us. Very little, a small percentage. If they would help us, a lot of Jewish people would be left who had the money, maybe some took in 10 or 20.

Like my husband, he ran away from the ghetto. He just made a grave for himself, a grave for himself, for his sister, for his brother, and all the family . And he went through like this, the whole war.

When did he do it?

He did this in 1942. He saw the first thing, then the killing. He was a young boy, so he went in a little farm in the forest. It was not easy. But you needed to go for food. And how could he live in that cave, in that grave? The grave was like these two families were hiding.

Then they were left 300, 350 people. We heard that people are going away to the woods. They wanted to go. I left too. One thing yet. The killings were maybe five, six times. Every time, they cleaned up a little bit.

And one morning when they came, I skipped one. And he said that you're going to be all right, you're going to work, you're going to live forever. They're not going to touch you. And we worked. My mother, they made the hiding. She should go down. It's going to be something. She should go down underground, in the grave. But nobody had the time.

He took out my mother. He made, again, right, left, right, left. Every time he made right, left, you couldn't be smart, you couldn't be intelligent, you couldn't think if you would have ten heads, what he is going to do to you.

One time they said, they came, and they said, listen you're all going to be alive. We're going to give you a-- one is going to get a better work. You have two pieces of bread. And one is going to be one piece of bread.

Who could eat the bread? Who [? choked ?] the bread? Who needed the bread? But this was another sign that there's going to be something. And he came. He says, you go to the left. And you go to the right. Everything with the white gloves, everything with the manners, intelligent people, learned people.