

[MUSIC PLAYING] Good afternoon. My name is Jeanie Miller. I'm a member of the Kane College Oral Testimonies Project of the Holocaust Resource Center. We are affiliated with the Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at the Sterling Library of Yale University. Sharing the interview with me is Dr. Bernard Weinstein.

We are privileged to welcome Susan Schmelzer, a survivor presently living in Elizabeth, New Jersey, who has generously volunteered to give testimony about her experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Welcome. Do you want to start telling us about your life in Poland when you were a young girl and what your family life was like?

I was born in 1923 in a comfortable home and business. My father was in business. We were three children.

Till 1939, the war then broke out in 1939. The Russian occupied our town and they were to 1942. In 1942, the Germans occupied our town and they start discriminating to Jews.

What was the name of your town?

Zaleshchiki. This was on the border of Romania. It was the Polish Riviera. And in '42, the Germans, when they came, in they start killing Jews.

One day in November '42 they killed but 2000 Jews. And me and my family survived it, this action.

How did you manage to survive that?

We were hidden in our basement a whole day and a whole night. And they were searching and they didn't find us.

Mrs. Schmelzer, before we go ahead into that period of time, I wonder if we could backtrack a little bit and talk about your early life, some of your early memories, some of your early experiences before the war, before everything started.

Well, I was in a comfortable home. My parents, I was always brought up with, there was always a maid. And we used to go to resorts with my parents. I used to go with my mother. I have some memories. And it was a good life.

Yeah. So you experienced a comfortable--

Yes. A comfortable home.

--existence. What did your father do? What was his business?

He was in business. He had a mill where they making flour, all kinds. We had property. He was a businessman.

Yeah, yeah. And you were sent to public or private school?

Yeah, public school. By 1939, when the war broke out, I had to start going to, there was a business school. They didn't accept the Jews at that time, not everybody. Our city was very antisemitic.

They used to come in. There was a Polish and German professor. He was like a spy for the German already in schools. In fact, I have some pictures. I got just lately pictures when I was a kid in public school with a teacher in there.

And now I discovered that her father was a spy in school from Germany. I just got that picture last year from somebody. I was in the first grade. Yes.

And was it is his job to report or to--

Yes. He was a spy for Germany. The years from-- We didn't know about it. Like when Hitler came in power in 1936, seven, and he was already waiting for the Germans. He was a spy in our town.

When you talk about antisemitism in your town. How did you personally experience it? Or your family experience it?

It was a resort town and they used to come, like generals with their families, in the resort. There were some Germans that were burning beards of Jews in the streets. Already at that time.

Before September of 1939?

In '39, before the war. Yeah. I didn't realize what goes on, and later I discovered. We didn't know. You were ashamed to speak Jewish. We were just all talking Polish. You were ashamed to--

To acknowledge.

--admit that you were a Jew. That you are Jew, yes. Because it was progressive town.

It wasn't the old fashioned, like Jews the beards or what. Our town was very progressive. We were walking around in shorts, young children in the streets.

Was your family religious?

Not too much. We believed, but not too much. My mother would make delight Saturday. And I would show up.

Did you have a kosher home?

It was kosher, but they gave me to eat ham. Because ham, I was very skinny and all and a spoiled brat and I didn't gain weight. So that time I was like, oh, this will make me to fill myself up. Or what? Not to get sick.

There was no penicillin at that time. Was no something when I was sick. I think I had scarlet fever or what. It was probably, I remember this.

And you took music lessons?

Yes. I was playing violin at that time and I was going to public school. But they antisemitic because I remember we were comfortable. I had a teacher and she gave me a bad mark. In fact, I was talking with a girlfriend lately.

She gave me a bad mark. My father had to pay off to pass me the grade. I should be able to pass. I don't know, was it the second or the third grade there. I remember that time.

Do you think it was because you were Jewish that this happened?

Yes. Yes. Her husband was working in like paying taxes. So they made my father to pay more taxes. And she was the teacher.

I remember she went to have some money to pay off. So I know that my parents paid off some money to her. I remember her name. I was just discussing with a friend. I was in Canada. We were talking about it.

Yeah. Were there many Jews in your community?

Yes, there were. I think there were about 2000 Jews.

Yeah. And you had Jewish friends?

Yes.

As you were growing up?

Yes.

Did you feel any kind of personal discomfort or fear or anything like that in that period of time before the war?

Well, you see, they used to come-- it'd be like a colony from you come in. Because they were so reserved. So there were all kind of boys. We were afraid about the gentle boys.

So yeah I remember that time. Or for the girls. OK we had at home a maid and she wasn't Jewish, but she was nice. Probably she was pushy, depended on the work, when she was working for us.

Yeah.

And you didn't trust Gentiles?

Not too much.

Other than your maid.

Not too much. Not too much.

What was the first recollection you had of the war coming?

Right. I didn't understand. I remember I was in our bed here out and I saw the planes coming.

I was probably not smart enough. I said, it will be some excitement, a change in our life. It will be roar. I didn't understand what will happen.

Were the planes you saw German planes or Russian planes?

I don't know. I don't remember. It was small planes. It's not the planes, what they have it now. It just was planes.

And I remember I was in backyard and I was struck, sitting there with a friend and we were saying, oh, some excitement will be a change. I didn't realize what would happen.

And how long after that did you have to move out of your home?

That time, the Russians occupied. And they gave us 11 passport to send us, who was more comfortable. Like my father was a businessman, they had to send him and Serbia. So you had passports, everybody.

Like now with Russia. People, every citizen has a passport in Russia now. So we got marked 11. So they had to send us away on the Speer.

Something happened that I don't know. Virtually my father arranged that we were staying. But temporarily, I should continue to go to school. My parents sent me to a different town where we had family and I continued teaching myself Hebrew, a little bit English and playing the violin to continue my studies.

What were you studying for? Did you have a goal that you wanted to achieve at the time?

No. At the time I was 16 years old. I didn't know what I was doing. We were mixed up. We didn't know what was the goal, what I will do. I just didn't know.

What are your general recollections of life under the Russian occupation?

I start that time, I remember we came back our town. I started like a business school. Until I came, the two years passed by and then I was going to half a year or 3/4 of a year to the business school. And the Germans came in. So everything collapsed again.

Yeah. But there was a two year period, wasn't there, before the Germans actually came in, right?

Yes.

So I'm under the Russians, were you given free access? Could you go everywhere?

Yes.

As Jews?

Yes. As Jews, we could go. I remember we met Russian Jews, girls and boys. But I understood maybe my parents were uncomfortable or I didn't properly pay attention what was going on in my home.

Was your father permitted to conduct his business under the Russians?

Yes. But in a different style of it. Something was different go on. I remember we built a house.

We couldn't finish, was not enough material and not ours we were building at that time. There was not enough material to finish it up and withstand. Now when I came back four years ago, I saw it finished. And it's old. It's 40-years-old. Like I mentioned to you.

And you were building the house to live in?

Another extra house. I don't know what was the reason.

At that time, there were no persecutions, there were no--

The Russians? I didn't feel-- No, the Russians from the Russian side didn't feel-- I didn't the persecution from the Russians.

You had a brother and a sister?

Yes.

What were they doing at this time?

I'm the oldest one. They were still younger. My sister was nine-years-old and she was killed from the Germans. My brother's here in the United States. He's living here.

He's three years younger. I was the oldest one. So they were children. I don't know if they know what was going on. Well, she's not alive anymore, my sister. This was till the Germans occupied.

At what point did you actually feel that your life was in danger? Was it when the Germans came in?

Came in, yes. I remember.

And how did you know?

They were saying that they killed Jews. They were going to kill Jews. We were afraid to look out the window. And our

house was facing the main street.

We were sneaking in to lookout. They were marching the streets and searching for Jews and taking away from Jews. Like linen, floors, tapestry.

What was important, I don't know to them. Goat. They were taking away some better furnitures they were taking from Jews away and ship them to Germany.

Did the German invasion seem like a surprise to you?

Yes. To me, I don't know. I remember my father was reading the paper, what was going on.

I didn't follow it because to me I didn't know what was going on. It was still sheltered from the parents. Yes, so I didn't know what was going on.

Was there bombing going on at the beginning?

Yes. We had a bridge and the bridge was going across to Romania was bombed. And we lived not too far, so I remember the sound was scary. The bridge was bombed. So this is what I remember.

And how would you describe the first days under the Germans? What were some of the early things that happened?

The first days? People were just afraid. I just had fear. I don't remember. I had fear.

I didn't know what was going on. I saw them march in the streets, the Germans in the uniform with the swastikas on the arms. And they were running on their motorcycles, and the dogs and searching for Jews.

And I just remember we had to stay away. That's what I remember. I didn't know what was going on and what will happen. I don't remember but, just when you are young, you don't realize what goes on..

But I didn't follow the newspaper. I didn't know about. I didn't listen to radios. Sometimes I saw somebody listen to a radio about what's going on are important on the border on Austria. I didn't pay attention because I was too young too. Maybe I was not smart enough at that time.

At this time, did you have to leave school also?

Oh yeah, sure. We were are already from the Russians, I had to leave school. But the Russians because they change, I had to go to a different town. That's why I took private lessons from a private teacher in a different town.

My parents took a different apartment in the other town like we should be strangers. And we were living in there, started taking lessons in that town. Like I mentioned to you, Hebrew and a little bit of English. I remember this table they taught me. I didn't know, I couldn't say the word.

What was the difference between the town that you had lived in and the town that you had to go to?

That nobody will know about us.

Yeah. Were there any differences in the way the house--

The same thing, the Russians. But they don't know us. So I was just there with my mother, I think my sister. I don't remember my brother.

I thought my father was still in our hometown. That was something he arranged. That we came back and we stayed. I know probably he paid it off or what.

I don't know what was going on. Who was more comfortable? They tried to still pay off.

What happened next under the Germans?

They occupied our town, like I mentioned to you. In December I think, was it? In November they killed us and we were hidden in a cellar, my whole family, and we survived that action.

That day they killed about 2000 Jews from our county. Took them up out of the city and they digged a grave. And they buried them. I remember a girlfriend survived.

She was on top laying in the soil. She had just one bullet. I do not know, arm or where and she survived this. I think some people were taken to a concentration, two Belzec.

We didn't know at that time that they were shipping them to Belzec. Because news, everything stopped coming around. We didn't know what goes on.

How did you find out about the shootings? The mass shootings?

They disappeared, the people. And after we heard that there were killed people there and they were killed in that grave out of the town. That survived. We just heard about it.

Describe where you and your family were hiding.

That day?

Was it just one day that you were?

That day and that night in my town. You see, September we had to leave our town because they had to make Judenfrei, free of Jews. So who was alive still had to leave the town and we went to Tolstoye, but it was the ghetto.

They accumulated Jews from all vicinity. It's come say Elizabeth, and from Union, to Trenton. In Trenton, they made the ghetto from all them. And there in that ghetto I live in one room with my parents.

Your father was with you at this time?

Yes. My father, my mother, and my sister. We were there. We came in September. And then I think December, January, I had typhus that spread the disease, typhus. And I was sick.

Later, it was until March. March they took me to Reich.

Was this back in '42 or '43?

'43. March '43. Because we left in September. We left in '42, we left my town, Zaleshchiki. And we went to Tolstoye. And there they took me to to work on the field in March, in springtime.

That time, I met my husband. And we working in the fields from the Wehrmacht. From 5:00 in the morning to till 7:00, 8:00 in the night.

What did you do?

We were planting beets, sugar beets and corn. Working, digging with a shovel. It wasn't like a farmer here. Doing hard labor work.

Were their guards around you all the time?

Yes. Ukrainian guards. They were chasing us with a--

Bayonet?

I guess, with a stick.

Why were they chasing you?

To speed up the work.

And what were the conditions like in the ghetto, other than being crowded?

It wasn't good. With the spread of disease you couldn't get any food. The only how you survived it just what you had a jacket or what. Somebody came close, you exchanged it and she gave you a little bit of flour or I don't know, milk or what was there at the time to survive, to keep alive.

And your parents stayed there all day in the home?

Yes, in the room. It was one house for share. five, six rooms, five families. Everybody in one room was living.

Was your brother old enough to work at the time or was he not?

He was younger than me. But they took him to work too.

In the same place where you were?

Yes. I was in the girls barrack and he was in the -- between the boys. And the boys were working separate than the girls. I used to see him once in a while.

He got sick that time in that camp too. He had typhus and was laying in a stable between the horses, because it was warm. So he was sick that time.

Did you live in barracks there or?

Yes, barracks. Was just like a wooden barrack. There was straw on the floor and that's it.

How many in a bed?

There was no bed.

There were no beds?

We were just laying like I was with my girlfriend, but she's now in Caracas, she lives. I was sleeping with her. So we were in one corner.

When did you go home?

Where home?

You said, did you go back to see your parents?

Once in a while. I went, like I think the weekend, I went to see the ghetto. How long? From March till May. By may

they killed them.

May 23, they killed my parents. They started killing. We were on the field in the morning, you heard shooting. And people were running in the woods.

I couldn't run. I remember my husband came and was carrying me. And I had somethings to change. I took a little bag where I had some clothes to change.

And then we lived in that, we used to wash in the stream, the clothes to change to keep ourself clean I remember. And that day when they killed my parents were killed 3,000 Jews. My father had to dig himself his grave.

They put a board on top of the grave and they were killing people. They took off jewelry, clothes. Just naked men and women. And they had a guard with a violin, with instruments to play on the side. That's what they did.

What was the purpose of having somebody play a violin? Just to be sadistic?

Yes. This was because I didn't know what goes on there. We just heard how they shooting. We were hidden in the fields, in the village out of the town, say in the suburbs someplace of Elizabeth on a farm.

And we were laying there, like a whole day till past 6 o'clock in the afternoon and quiet down. So I went to town to see my parents. So we were stepping on dead bodies, because people were still laying in the streets.

I went to look for them. So I came to the house and my parents were there. A neighbor, a gentle neighbor says that my sister was yelling and saying, she had been so young. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

That means, I'm so young. Let me live. But they killed her. And they took everything out from the room. I don't know what.

Some papers I found still. Had like our insurance policy. I remember I showed it to my husband. That when I will be 20-years-old I will be able to cash it. So I took it out, my parents.

Somebody didn't know, so they left this. I remember this, I took out from the house. And I digged out, as I mentioned to you, that he had, that my father told me.

Tell that story now.

When I was still with my parents, my father had some gold. So he buried near a tree. He says, in case you will survive, you will be able to take this. He point me.

He pointed out. And sure enough, when they were killed, I went I digged it out. How they were killed, my parents, somebody told me that my father digged his grave himself.

And he was laying up on the cemetary. They rounded up to Jews, the 3,000 Jews with their arms behind their head. And they were sitting and waiting. And one after one they were killed.

Later they spread-- Some people were still alive. Some were wounded in the arm. But when you go in the grave, the soil was still moving. So they spread something, shouldn't be no disease. Because the soil was moving still from the grave.

Was your sister with your parents at the time?

Yes. She was killed with my parents. My mother was 40-years-old, my father was 45 and my sister was nine-years-old. 3,000 Jews were that day killed.

You found them? You found the bodies?

I didn't find. I just knew in that mass grave they were killed.

And you have been to that grave since?

I didn't. I just went now. I couldn't go. I couldn't go. I just knew what happened. When I survived, I couldn't go. Now from United States I went to visit.

Is there any marker there?

No. It's no marker. All around is grown corn and potatoes of a dead spot. They didn't touch it. They found pieces, like arms or legs.

I don't know. From the soil what was just said a little bit-- everything settled. Was no monument, nothing. Was just this spot they didn't plant it. They probably didn't perforator to do something.

They didn't plant nothing. And this was the mass grave of 3,000 people. So is what I know. That's why I went to visit that spot. And if you see bones, you think maybe it's from animals.

But this was human bones probably and they were working in the -- planting the corn and the potatoes, they were digging. Maybe they had places and everything is deteriorated now, so many years. So that's why I know that they were there. I hope I will still be able to go. I would like to go visit the grave.

How did you meet your husband?

I met my husband in ghetto. I was scheduled to go to that camp, [PLACE NAME] and he was scheduled on another camp. Anyway, he changed his mind. He went to the same camp that I was.

And when they killed my parents, he started taking care of me. And we were already together, we were hidden. After a while, after every day break in the fields, somebody, I think I mentioned to you, approached him. And he, and his brother, and another friend, a young guy, they approached and we should join the underground, because we were young people.

Some men didn't want to take along the girls, because they not gonna be able to keep up. But my husband says something, to put on pants and she will join us.

So he disguised you as a boy or?

Well, and he bought a gun. Somebody approached him to buy some ammunition to join. My husband's brother had a gun and our other friend had a gun. People, like three couples, everybody had a girlfriend. I

Was my husband's girlfriend. And my other friend that was killed and my husband's brother. But we were working every day. One day they killed my husband's brother and they took the gun away because some people mentioned that we have ammunition, we have guns. We were looking to approach the underground.

Did you meet up with the underground?

No. We never had the chance.

Was this a Jewish underground? Or was it Jewish--

We heard about it, but we never could reach nobody. We couldn't. We didn't have the chance. So we kept the gun.

Remember once I was carrying the gun here. My husband was carrying in this pocket. My other friend had it with his

girlfriend. My husband's brother got killed and they took away that gun.

And they came to our camp and they said, this is a gun of a Juden That they were surprised, should be in a small place like this. Because there was not too much courage to do it. People were afraid.

It wasn't easy. My husband will tell you the day he got the gun, he will mention it, the day he came to it. And our friend-
- They chased us all.

They were looking for my husband because they knew my husband has a gun too when they killed my husband's brother. And they chased us back in the camp. And then lined us up, girls and boys separate.

Some girls pointed out that I'm a girlfriend from a guy that has a gun. And then my husband ran away. He threw his gun in the fields someplace in [INAUDIBLE].

He put it away and knew where it is. And he ran away. Something he was a whole day in a cemetery, staying hidden.

And I was standing in line. They were looking for what we have. Still ammunition, they were searching us.

Our friend threw away the gun too. Well, he had some bullets in his handkerchief and he was so scared that some German saw him throwing out a bullet. So they took him and they punished him so badly.

They were cutting pieces of his fingers. They digged his eyes out. They were punishing him. Every day he was in a prison and cutting the pieces off of him.

Did he survive?

No. No. Till they cut him up in pieces. I don't know who digged, who buried them even, because we ran away.

My husband, me and our friend's girlfriend. And thanks to her, she's now living in Brooklyn. Thanks to her, we are alive. Because she took us to a farmer that she knew in a different village.

You hid out there?

Yeah. Till '44 we were hidden there, with my husband and me. And like I mentioned to you, the story that she got attached to my husband. The woman, she had the husband.

And he promised that after the war, I would give up the property, the right of everything that my father owned. My friend had some things. And that's why she-- It wasn't easy for her to keep us there.

And the farmer was willing to help you?

Yes.

Who's farm it was?

Yes. He cried. I remember we celebrated Christmas there and he gave us a little bit of food every day they were hidden there.

Sleeping three people, one bed. My husband, me, and my girlfriend. And she was sleeping with her husband in one room. In a farm up on the hill.

How long did this go on? Were you there?

For till we came there, they lived through somethings too.

Tell us about that.

You were on attics before. And we were in the chicken coop living with the chickens. And in the nighttime we were in fields. And I used to watch, every bird has a nest to go in.

Every little any has a thing to crawl in. And we didn't have no place where to go. But we had the arm bands, because every Jew had to wear a arm band with the Jewish star.

Soviet took over and we worked fields. Was sitting, remember, in a chicken coop for a day and a night, all day like this. I couldn't take it anymore with the chickens. And they were chasing us.

And everybody was pointing. Those dirty jew. Dirty Jew. When you worked up in the fields.

The farmers were waiting still taking off the plantation from the fields or the cattle still were on fields. And somebody who was go on fields. We were hidden all the different places, in a different spot.

So even without the stars, they knew you were Jews?

Because they knew who hides. Days were misty, rainy, already in fall. Till December, we would sleep in the snow outside. Till December that we came to-- December 10 we came to that farmer.

We were staying the whole night outside till we walked in the morning to that farmer and asked her. she said they save us. It was up on a hill, in the woods, one little house. There where be survived in that house till March when they liberated us.

Who liberated you?

The Russians again came. They liberated us. Well between we had something episode, too. There was a German group still on the Kremlin and they didn't have a chance to pass by. And they came back.

I remember they came to the house and that farmer and one was wounded. One German was wounded. And he came into the farmer's house and he said to our farmer, take me across the river because someone go there, the tower, with my group there. So they came in and my husband made believe he doesn't understand German.

And he bandaged the German's leg. And I was like I was a farmer, the farmer's sister back from town that we came, because for school shooting around there. All kinds of activities going around. So they ask who I am.

So I told them, I'm a sister. I came from town. And they was so busy with themselves, that they were just looking to run away. Because they were afraid of the Russians too.

The one German says to me, come with me. I remember, because the Russians will kill you. I was almost approached from them.

Before hand, you told us there was another German who was humane to you.

Yes. He gave me, when I was still in town, my hometown, they took me to break and he gave me a piece of candy. He said, you're so pretty.

What will happen to you? And he gave me a piece of candy. I remember he pat my cheek. And I didn't know what he meant.

But this early a German knew that you were Jewish.

Yeah. Sure. They know, because--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

They knew Jews survived. They knew that I'm Jewish. They knew that Jews survived om there.

Yeah.

I remember there was a time when my father was still alive, I had the chance to be a Aryan to go with a boy because I didn't look too much Jewish. He said, that will give you some money and go survive not to be a Jew. Better not to be a Jew than be a dead Jew.

And I just couldn't take the pressure. No. I did. I couldn't do it.

Now, I notice you have blue eyes. What was her hair color when you were young?

Blonde.

You were blonde?

I come from blonde family, yes. In fact, my son has blue eyes and blonde hair. My grandchildren too. And my daughter looks like my husband's family.

And now a baby, a year old, she came out. Of course, my daughter's son is brown eyes. And my granddaughter is a year old now, it's going to be in December.

She has blue eyes. It's still in the genes. And that time I didn't look too much Jewish. I could escape.

What about your husband? Did he look Aryan too or somewhat?

He was wearing a mustache like this, you know?

Did he have dark hair?

He was a little darker than me. He has green eyes. [INAUDIBLE] for a change. You will see. And he will show you a picture, how he look when he was younger.

Because he has still a picture. He was in the service in the Polish army. So he has some pictures from the Polish army. Yeah.

Were there any other experiences while you were in hiding that you recollect?

In that farmer's house?

Yes.

Yes. You know I promised her that I'm going to come by. Sometimes she was very mean to me. She used to hit me. She didn't like me because she presumed that I have something common with my husband.

And she liked him?

Yes. And she was afraid to admit her husband. Her husband was a very old man.

Did your husband promise her that he would marry her?

Yes, after the war. But we were all living in one room. There was no other-- Maybe he gave her just a kiss. But there was no other occasions.

She used to write him notes, but he used to write her notes too, that after the war, they will be together. And I think they were very nice people, nice to us because we survived. But they got killed. We went to help him after the war.

They were killed by the Germans or by the Russians?

I don't know. I think from the underground group. Somebody mentioned that they saved Jews. He was an old man and she was at that time, maybe in the 50s. Because right after the war we want to still-- revenge them, but that's somethings--

Reward them.

Reward them, I mean. Reward them with something that they did to us. But we were looking for them and we couldn't find them.

So you don't know the exact circumstances of their deaths?

No. I think they got killed from the underground. Because they were in the field. They were living there up in the woods, up on the hill. They were killed. Somebody told this then they not alive anymore.

And you think it might have been because it was known that they helped Jews?

Maybe.

The underground was antisemitic too?

Yes. The neighbors, some of them mean. There were good ones and there were-- The good ones, thanks to them we are alive. It's like here, the good fish and bad fish.

Now, getting back to when you were liberated. You went to a DP camp?

We were liberated and I lived in Czernowitz because there were Jews and I heard my brothers there. We were in Czernowitz. And we try to survive, to eat. Because we weren't nourished.

And we lived there from say, from March till springtime. I think a year. Later we tried to go to Israel to join the Hachsharah to go to Israel.

And We came to Poland and we lived in Poland. In Poland we joined a group and we went by train to Czechoslovakia, like I mentioned to you, With the UNRRA. And something, they didn't let us through.

So we ended up in Germany. And we ended up in Germany in Pocking. Then in Czernowitz, I got married by a rabbi and in the court when I was living there at the time in Germany. So I was legal with my husband.

Let me backtrack a little bit again.

I'm flying--

That's all right. No, that's good. It's good. It's good. You're providing markers for us so that we can cover things in greater detail as we go along. What was liberation life for you?

Oh, we were very happy. I remember I was working in Czernowitz with a girlfriend. And there was still all kind of

Russians. So one ways in Russian to me and my friend. She's now in Toronto, lives in Russia.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] It means, look, still Jews are walking around. After liberation, they were all kind. We tried to survive, to work something, get a job.

My husband had that job for the Russian government. At that time he working, I remember they send them to the appropriate turfs. He was right in-- something in a lumber place something? Or in buildings. Something in building.

I was staying in Czernowitz, and they send him away for couple of months to Russia, I remember. They came back and till we tried to join to go to Poland, to go to Israel. And then we came to Germany.

I got pregnant. In '46 my son was born and I had family in the United States. My mother's sister and brother.

And they start writing letters. So they sent affidavit for us. And my brother was here already. And we came to United States.

How did your brother get here?

He escaped the Russians, because they want to have him in the army, leaving to Italy. And it was from Italy on a huge group brought to United States. And they send him papers. My family sent him papers to the United States, to my mother's sister.

Was he liberated directly from the labor camp?

Yes. In fact, he was wounded. I was away, because we were hidden by the family. And he was in camp. He was wounded.

He was hidden under a dead body. Because they were bombed. He has some marks still on his body that he was wounded. He has now grown up children, two already married.

And how did he get to the United States?

My family was sent him papers from Italy. He was in Italy. He crossed the border, escaping.

It wasn't easy. We were on the borders and denied across. Like now, people, the Mexican crossing borders, they're barefoot.

Illegal alien.

So he probably did the same thing. You know, he knows his story. I was away with my husband already. At that time I was married in '45, right after liberation.

Where does your brother live now?

In Queens. It was hard. That guy, all kind of situations you face.

So in Germany, your son was born. Yes. In Bensheim, in the displaced persons camp in 1946. And I got some papers from my family, affidavit, and they sent me. So in '49 we arrived to the United States. and we lived in the Bronx.

Stayed with my father's sister in an apartment. And later we, my husband started work in the Bronx. And later he worked and my daughter was born in the Bronx. And after we lived in Queens, bought a home in Queens.

From Queens we lived in Elizabeth. We lived seven years in Queens. My son was going to college and my daughter was in Southampton College. My son was in Pace College later for his masters.

He was going to School of Science. And now he's in business with us. And my daughter married. She has two children.

Have you been able to talk with your children about this? About your experiences?

They know for a long time, because my son took psychology. So a long time ago, people tell him this story. He knows. He knows how we survived.

In fact, when he saw the Holocaust, there was a couple, a young boy with a gun. I don't know if you remember, they were hidden in my attic. So he says, you know ma and daddy, I'm picturing you both the same way.

Because we were telling stories that we were hidden someplace certain days, and attics, and in the woods and things. He says, I picture you, both of you like this. [INAUDIBLE] and he remembered this. During the Holocaust, a boy and a girl.

And he saw the picture. And sure enough, he asked us questions. How could a human being be-- but you see the Germans, they had gave them narcotics.

But they were so vial that they could do this. Because some of them were nice. But some of them were mean. This was probably their job. Who knows.

We will have to break soon because we've gotten the signal.

I know.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us, or recollect, or anything of significance that you would like to say perhaps in closing?

I wish no generation should go through again the same thing. It wasn't easy. And I'm thankful that I raised two normal children. I think they're normal.

I don't know, sometime I was thinking I was maybe I tried to do my best to raise them, because of my mine. But had I survived and I was emotional and raised in a family.

So I'm glad I raised two normal children. And thank God they stay normal. They have their own families. So I'm thankful to God for this.

We're very thankful that you could be with us today.

Thank you.

And we look forward to hearing your husband's story also.

Yes. Thank you. Well, it's a little bit emotional. All right. Is it done?

[MUSIC PLAYING]