

Good morning. I'm Bernard Weinstein, director of the Kean College oral history project on the Holocaust. Assisting me is [? Freda ?] [? Rimmers. ?] We welcome Joseph Weinbuch. Mr. Weinbuch?

Yes, I'd like to tell my part of my life, being in the '30s, as I remember as a young man. And coming up, I experienced my Holocaust not-- and in 1939, when Hitler came in, I experienced my Holocaust in the '30s.

Where were you born?

KurÃ³w. I was born in a small town, KurÃ³w.

In what country?

Poland.

And where was it near?

That's near Lublin, PuÅawy. And I was very disturbed in my youth. Still people are disturbed from the Holocaust. I was disturbed in the '30s as a youngster. I couldn't accept the treatment as a Jew what I got in them years as a child. Not that I had anything against the inhabitants of the Polish or the different people. I couldn't accept it when I used to see the beatings, the disturbances we used to go through-- not necessary. My mother used to say, Joseph, come in, you can't hang around outside. You'll get hit with a rock, or you're going to get kicked. They used to close up the shutters. At home, they used to close the shutters when they were throwing rocks and things. After a while, naturally, it subsided, it went away. But that was the first experience I used to have as a young kid.

Were you ever personally threatened?

Threatened?

Yes, or beaten, or--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I was beaten in school. As I remember, as a youngster, I was sitting in the back. There used to be like farm boys. They used to come in for no reason at all and just give you a knock in the head, a bang in the head. And for instance, I remember one episode, my mother wanted me to take up an instrument. I said to my mother, fine.

I had my teacher-- and I was in the chorus. There must have been very few Jewish kids or something. The teacher wasn't Jewish. What I remember outstanding today, I came home, and my mother bought me a violin and she wanted me to play the violin. Oh, I must have hit the wrong note or something. The teacher came down with his bow, hit me right here in the head, knocking me in the head.

Not talking to me, listen, you made a mistake, or you did something wrong, or you hit the wrong note. Hit me in the front of the forehead. When I came home and my mother said, what happened to you? As a kid, I didn't notice it. She saw a red mark. I told her the story.

She says to me, you know what, Joseph? That's enough. You're not going through with this anymore. You put the violin away and put everything away. You don't need that extra thing. That was an extracurricular, they would say, like music, you know what I mean? And I stopped. I stopped at that. But that was the thing I used to go through in them years.

Do you think this teacher did it because you were Jewish?

As a grown up man, I will not say that he did it why I was a Jew. But he didn't do it to any other kids. As I remember it, I wasn't so non-cooperative. My mother was-- in them years, was a very educated person. You know, them years going

back 65 years ago. She was a nurse, a very educated person. She brought up three children.

And I think my brother and I-- the education we got is minimal. But I think she put something into the kids, where-- I don't know whoever meets me wherever I go, I try to not put myself as a show-off, but that's my nature. My mother said to me, I remember, be good to people, and that's what going to do you good. And always not in a rough position.

Even my kids today, they say to me-- Lorraine says to me-- Dad, how come I have to always forget and forgive? And I have some people that come down to me very rough to me. She says to me, you always told us always step away from people who are abusing you, or who try to be rough with you. Don't answer them. Don't try to be rough with them. If they would know what they're saying to you or what they're going to say, they will not do this thing. They will not say them things.

And she always complains about it to me. Oh, Dad, you must be wrong. I said, Lorraine, I am not wrong. I'm on the right path. You be nice. Look, I came here to the United States without one cent. I had \$35. I got a gorgeous home. I had some business. I've been respected in my community. I did a lot of things for the neighborhood.

I used to every year-- you can ask the B'nai B'rith, and this, I put it on the record on this tape. You're going to have it. You can ask the Springfield B'nai B'rith. I contribute every year for Thanksgiving for 10 people, 10 dinners, from turkeys to the food. Whatever was necessary with the turkey. And people in Springfield can verify that.

I did it for a reason as a person, as I like to be a humanitarian and be good to people. I did it-- when I was hungry years ago. I used to hang around in the fields, in the marshes. I was hungry, cold, without shoes, without anything. And I used to think to myself, if I ever survive, I have to see better things for humans.

And actually, I usually didn't ask people whom they give the packages. Well, I was to a close friend who picked up the packages, he said once to me, you know, Joseph, very few of our Jewish people in our town getting this. I think they're mostly poor people as non-Jews, maybe very few Jews. But none of the Jews were picked together all kind of stuff.

And I used to contribute for years and years. They used to come down to me, I used to give it, from eggs, to every little thing I used to give them. And even now I'm out of business, I still contribute monetary contributions with things.

But I remember when I was a youngster, and I used to beg for a bottle of some little milk or a slice of bread. And that was my main thing. If I trusted the people that worked near that area. Most of the time, I was eating like sugar beets, carrots.

And one time, a farmer caught me. He was somehow a fine man. Another thing is he knew my father. He knew me, my family. He says to me, you know, there is not a difference from carrots. The top from the carrots, they call it-- it's not. It's a white stuff, a long one. They look like carrots. I don't know what they call it. They put it in the soup.

He said to me, you know, that's not good to eat. But the carrots are good to eat. But if you want some carrots, don't go down where you're spoiling-- well, you know, I used to be a kid, I used to push it back in. I used to see a white end, I used to put it back in. And then he used to say to me, if you want some carrots, I'll give you some carrots. Don't go down to the fields.

But it was a distance from his house. I could never trust myself to go in. And somehow, he must have waited for me somewhere hidden, where he somehow said to himself, I must catch that guy, or somebody who-- and things like this, and I remember them things very precisely that I went through. It was a horrible thing.

So that's why I took up, and I give now as much as I can for charitable things. And if I can help anyone, if I can do something-- not I'm trying to-- that's my nature. I understand you can't go through your life being a nasty individual. My kids, my family ask me a lot of time questions. I give them an answer.

And they say to me, Dad, how do you know it's going to work out? I say to them, listen, how do you know it's not going to work out? I think positive. You can't keep on going and thinking about things that's not going to work, and this is not

going to work. It must work. It must not work, but you could try. You could do things your best. And that's my way of expressing as long as I'm going to live.

Even in a business way, I used to be nice to the people, always nice. And what happened? I always can go back the way I am not right now that I didn't do the wrong thing. That's why I'm telling my kids. I didn't do the wrong. I was nice to the people. And that's what got me where I am today.

If we could go back, what was your father's occupation?

My father--

And would you describe the rest of your family before?

My father's occupation was like, for instance, he had like a small-- but in that time, it was a big enough to have a family supply. I mean, he could afford the family in well standard, not luxurious, well standard. He used to have like a general store, like grocery, meats, I think. But actually, he used to do more.

Let's say, for instance, my father used to go on the market. He used to be more towards like the meat business and the grocery business. But the major thing is my father used to buy for somebody, like a-- I don't know how you call this. He used to be a supplier for certain people. [INAUDIBLE] biggest task is to buy things and ship them over.

Like Warsaw, I remember even my father used to mention them people, big people in the capital of Warsaw. It used to be one of the wholesalers used to come down to my father and give him some money. My father was a very trustworthy man. Why, in them years, if you hand somebody some money, that you had to hand it to somebody money who's reliable. So my father used to-- that person in Warsaw I remember called him a name, [? Benham ?] [? Prajan. ?] And he used to come down to our home. He used to hand my father X amount of money. He used to say, you buy me that. And he used to send them in.

He used to get like a certain percentage of whatever he sent in. If it was the market good, he used to get more. If less-- and that's what we used to carry on. We had a nice family and nice home, not luxurious, but in the standard going back 70 years ago, I would say it was a very nice setup for our family.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

I had one sister and one brother. My sister-- I was in the line. I was going away with my mother and my sister and my brother. My father didn't join us. He wasn't at home, and then later on, he saw what happened, and he didn't join us. But I went away with my mother and brother and sister. In that line, we were driven with these people-- with all our town drive out. It was like Easter time, second day of Easter.

This was this was after the war began, or before?

No, that that was during the wartime, during the war.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

It was 1941.

Yeah.

They come in in 1939. So I went away with that line. We supposed to go into a train. Before they come into the train, we couldn't get the train, and they put us into a barn, a few thousand people, women and children and sick people. And I was there. I said to my mother, I can't stay in that building inside. But it was like with wire around that building, and partially wood.

And my mother said to me-- not every mother to the-- every child thinks that their mother is the best. But I think my mother was the best and the smartest one, already going back 50 years ago, I would say. She said to me and my brother, we are going on our death. We are going to be all killed.

You know what you do, Joseph? Get out of here. Run out of here. David-- to my brother-- run out of here. And she even said to my sister, get out you too. But my sister wouldn't go. She's hung on like a girl, she hanged on to my-- she was with my mother.

But I took my mother's-- I was very alert as a young man, you know? As a kid, I was very alert. And I said to my mother, I'm going to get out. And so my brother went after me. And somehow, I sneaked through that fence, and I ran away back into the town.

What was the age difference between you and your brother and your sister?

Five years, four and a half years.

You were the oldest?

I was the oldest, yes. And I went back into the town. It's another thing, because as I ran out of this camp that was where all the people were held, that town, Konskowola was still intact with the Jews. They didn't drive them out. They thought they're going to take them out on the end. So I had my aunt living there. And I said to her-- I went in the house I know where she lives.

And she says to me, you know, Joseph run away. Don't stay here, where there's horrible things. There used to be some of the-- so to say some Jewish young people. I would call them hoods. And they were somehow cooperating with the Germans and the Ukrainians.

And the somehow, she said to me, run away. They might take you in if they know. They'll take you back. And I took her word. And it must have been around 4:00 in the morning. I was there during the day. At 4:00 in the morning, I ran away back to my town. I was enough alert that I didn't go into the-- it was like little villages. And I didn't go in there, but I went a distance away from the main road, and away from the-- I went cutting through the area.

And I came into my town, but no one was there. Everything is disturbed. Everybody was hidden. I didn't know where my father is. The only thing, I had my brother with me. But finally, I know the ways my father went by. He used to go on certain farm areas to certain people and all. And somehow, someone came down and said to me, you know, your father's here and there, and then I find him. But we couldn't stay together.

And my father took my younger brother with him. He went into a farm. But I was, as a young man, not noticeable. I worked in the fields. Let's say I could work in the fields.

Sometimes, I was very alert. I didn't trust anybody. I couldn't trust anybody. Whatever I saw, I couldn't trust anybody.

And I saw on the field some shepherds. They had the cows there, and their used to [? thing. ?] So they were younger than I am. I knew I could master to-- they couldn't put me into the-- hold me to-- put me into the-- young kids. And I went over down there. I was sitting around with them, or a distance away.

But sometimes, I used to get hungry. I used to ask them for some food. But one guy-- he was like a hunchback. He had a hunch on his back. And he drove the cows out for that farm, and I knew that farmer for whom he was working as a kid. It's not far away.

And I said to him, do you have something to eat? And I was a very particular guy in my young years. I wouldn't eat just anything. I'd rather eat carrots or the sugar beets. I'll eat a potato. But I'm going to go down and eat something non-familiar to me [INAUDIBLE].

So he says, I got something. I got a sandwich where I'll give you a half. I said fine, I appreciate it. So finally, I ate that sandwich, like a pumpernickel bread, I remember. And I was sitting with him, and I felt sorry for him. In a way, I didn't feel sorry. He was a very small little man.

And I looked at him, and then I finished eating. He says, you know what you ate just now? I said no-- in Polish, he says to me. I said, what did I eat now? I was pretty tasteful and good. I saw some meat in it-- very lean meat in it. And he says, you just ate some horse meat.

I says to him, how did you get horse meat? He says, my farmer-- a horse broke a leg. And they killed it, and they put it in a pickle, and taking each time a piece of-- they must-- I don't think they ate it. They must have given to the laborers who worked there. And I ate that sandwich up, and somehow, I filled up by my needs, my stomach, and I was all right. But I was still outstanding with me in my mind the way it was.

That time, it didn't bother you.

It didn't bother me as much. I was hungry. One episode I remember was in the summertime. I went up on a cherry tree. I saw a cherry tree during the daytime, but I couldn't get to it during the daytime. And I was very hungry, so I went up. I thought I'm going to go down around 5, 6 o'clock in the morning, and I'll get on that tree, and I'm going to eat some of the cherries.

I went up. And I ate some of the cherries. They were so sour cherries, that I ate so many, that I didn't feel my gums. After a while, I didn't feel my gums. And that was things like this.

And the most horrible thing for me was during the wintertime. I had to go in the barns that the farmers shouldn't know. I was sleeping into certain amount of-- I was sleeping till, let's say, 9:30 at night, 10:00 at night. And I had to get to a farm where they didn't have no dogs. Otherwise, they would be aware that someone is in the back of their barn. So I used to know the area that didn't have none.

So I had a couple of barns where I used to get into during the nighttime. But early in the morning, I was out, except it was very bad hurricane weather, I didn't go out. One reason is the farmers couldn't get out of their house either. They had to stay with all. The only thing what I did is I was upstairs in the barn between the straw and hay down there lying there. I was up there, so I used to listen downstairs. They used to come in and feed the cows, the pigs, and the chickens.

And I used to lie upstairs. He didn't know that I was up there, but I know he's there. But the reason is I usually choose older people. If they're young, they were a little bit more turned on against the Jews. The older people were more timid, more relaxed a little bit. Even if they would catch me.

You knew whose house you were going to, whose farm you were going to every time?

Yes, I knew. I didn't know them exact, but I know my father used to deal with them, see? My father used to deal with them. They used to come into our business.

So you were mainly in the area around your town?

Around my town, yes. Most of the time, I was around my town, and not near my town. I was away from the town, let's say, certain areas where the farmers couldn't catch me, or they didn't know me. In the summertime, I chose not to be near my house. I went away to certain areas where I was all a distance from all the people. I couldn't be with them. But otherwise-- for two pound of sugar-- if they would catch me, they get two pounds of sugar from the German, they used to give me away. There is no-- or they used to just be afraid. They used to just turn me in.

But some hid you willingly?

No. My father was hid willingly for money and that's with my brother. What the reason is--

Was your brother was your father?

My father, but I couldn't be with him for a reason. It's when they find out the whole family was with him-- let's say, they find-- they'll know already who is alive and who isn't. This they know about my father's family, let's say. I was left, with my brother and my father. If I would have stayed with my father there, we could have been killed all three together. This way, the farmer had a thinking, hey, one guy is missing. He might come back and take revenge.

I see.

See? That was the whole catch to it.

So it was better to scatter?

Scatter, but my brother was a young kid. My father was of age at that time. He was not young, but he wasn't as vigorous as I was as a young man. I was sleeping sometimes nights in a stack of hay. The thing is, I used to push myself in the stack of hay with my back, make myself pull out the straw and cover my front, and lay back and stay there for the night.

Was this during the summertime or the winter?

No, that was during the wintertime. But I always used to try to manage not to in the wintertime in the harsh weather not to be-- I used to go in the barn where it was not heated, there was no animals, but I was under four walls. The wind didn't hit me. It's a very bad winters down there.

What kind of clothes did you wear?

I didn't have no clothes. I had some very bad shoes of mine. I didn't have no right shoes. For instance, at times, I used to wear-- the farmers used to have them bags with the fertilizer. So they used to come in, the fertilizer bags. They used to spread it on the fields.

But see, I got to be a little bit more-- when needs come, you get innovative. So I took the bags from that fertilizer. I didn't know at that time about carcinogenic things, about chemicals. Who knew at that time?

But for the [INAUDIBLE] not to be dirty, I peeled off the inside the first. They used to come in three layers, them bags. It was like three layers. So I used to pick off the first layer, throw it away. And the middle layer, I used to put around my feet and tie it around, you know? And that's the way I used to a lot of times sleep at night.

How old were you at this time?

At that time, I was 15, 16. And I used to survive this way in the time. And I used to [INAUDIBLE] every time. And another thing what happened-- in my town, I'm going to-- that's the way I went through usually my things the wintertime. The summertime, I was a free bird.

The summertime, when the sun shined, even the rain time didn't bother me. It was raining, it didn't bother me. I used to get wet, and the sun come out or things like this, I used to take my clothes off, and I used to dry it out. And I used to be happy with it, as long as I had a little sun and I had a little food. That's the main thing.

And another problem what it was was the water. I used to be in areas where I could get a drink of water. And there used to be very dirty water. Well, I got during the years, you learn things, and you see things. I used to take a-- didn't have no clean clothes. I was clean. I used to wash them in the brooks. When I get to a brook, I wash out my things. And I was sitting there until they got dry.

But I used to come down to a creek. And I used to see bugs running around inside and things like this. And I was very thirsty. So I came at a thing where I used to take a shirt-- a clean thing, whatever I had was clean-- I used to put on top of the water. And I used to sip through that cloth. You know what I'm talking about?

Yes, I know.

You know?

Yeah. And I used to sip the water coming through. At least, I had some clean. I was-- maybe I shouldn't be. Even today, maybe I shouldn't be that way, but that's my nature. You can't change it. I can't be changed.

I was very, I mean-- I like cleanliness, clean, you know? Doesn't matter what it is. Like today, I will not eat if it's anything being covered by things. And that's the way I carried on. And I was drinking out of that creek that water, or washing myself sometimes. And then I used to go further.

But a lot of times, I used to be in crevasses, you know? Why was I in a crevasse? Like there used to be a hole inside. I used this put my back in, and a lot of time, I used to cover up in the front, and you couldn't see me. But one day, I was sitting in a crevasse, and down there was a big area of fields, like not marshes, but it there was marshes like a tundra. You could walk on it, but you got to be careful. I seen certain--

A swamp?

Yeah, a swamp in certain areas. So one day, I was sitting at crevasse-- raining. That's what happened. I was sitting there. Raining coming down, must have been like in-- I don't know, so much rain. Started up for a couple of days, but I didn't want to go away from that area. There was some dangerous [INAUDIBLE] going on at that time.

The Germans were going towards Russia with the tanks. And that was right-- I was sitting-- I could see them from the distance, the tanks, and all of the guns and all of them vehicles going through. I could see very distance away. But I could see guns. And you could hear the noises from guns.

And all of a sudden, I see one person running. And I know that one guy was hiding. A farmer was hiding a Jewish family. His name was-- they call at that time in Jewish language a [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] Abraham. He had some metal business. He hid down there with his daughter.

He was left in the whole family. He'd given away-- that farmer used to come down, and he used to probably give him away a fortune. He hid him down there. He was on e house in the whole area single house. And not far away from the marshes. And he was running. I didn't know that was him.

But as I looked out, I thought to myself, if somebody runs, that must be somebody who was running away from something. It was from a distance. But somehow, the rain subsided as he came towards me, and I thought to myself, I'm not going to let this go by. I was very not lazy, and I thought to myself, let me go down and see this. I'm very curious. No one will run in this area but a Jew. I kind of ran him down and found him. I was faster than he was.

But I come near him, I was shouting to him, and he must have recognized me, or he was out of steam to run. I caught up with him. I said to him, Abraham, where are you running? He says, you know what happened? I was in that with a guy. I know his name, but I right now, it's off my mind.

He was very well-known in the business with my father. He's a very nasty individual. Uneducated, nasty. And he was not just a farmer, he was just a-- In Polish, they call him [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. A dog catcher, they call him, you know? I would call it very bad. And he says to me-- that Abraham-- you know, Joseph, what happened? That guy, I overhear that with his sons talking that they're going to kill us. Somehow, he was near.

Was he a kind of bounty hunter, that kind of a person?

Yeah, something, and they're going to kill us, me and my daughter, and do away with us. And I somehow-- she couldn't come over that-- there was a big high fence. And he somehow-- I don't know how he manipulated himself, he ran out. And his daughter was left, so he said to me, if I'm not there, they're going to kill my kid.

After a while, I lost him. We were talking for a while, and I lost him. And the way it sounds to me-- after the war, he must have gone back there for his daughter or something. He just disappeared. I never seen him after the war. And I've never seen his kid after the war.

Now he must have gone back, or he must have done something there that both kids-- his little girl with him disappeared, like wiped out, didn't come back. But what happened? He didn't have no choice but being to go into him. It was coming up-- the way I understood-- like the wintertime, when it was raining-- come up already the spring. Like April, it was very hard rains. That must have been the beginning of this summer. And I don't think it was that time. He didn't-- guy in that place didn't want to go through with him the whole summer feeding him, being scared if the Germans come in.

And they catch you, they'll kill the whole family. So he tried to do away with him. And somehow, he took off. And after that, he must have been back in, and must have got killed by the same people. And that's it.

How many years did you live in the fields?

I would say from 1941 until 1944.

And your mother and sister?

Were killed. They're gone. You see, when I didn't finish it up. I ran away. They took away my mother at that time with the transport into Bergen-Belsen, they called it. They took them away to Bergen-Belsen. It was not far away from us. And they're gone. And since that time, I went away out of the town. I never returned there. But actually, I didn't come into my town.

Can you go back a little bit, Joseph, and talk about the ghetto that you lived in before?

I lived in that ghetto. I couldn't get out down there from the area, for instance. If you went out of the area, you're bound to be killed. It wasn't like a ghetto, but we had the area designated for the Jewish community. You couldn't step out of that boundary. And not enough-- what happened, they brought us in from different countries, like from Belgium. I remember a child from Belgium, from Germany. They brought in people.

What that was-- for the reason is, as I'm thinking now, when I was in this Jewish ghetto, they must have had a plan for that. For a reason is I remember that Majdanek was 35 miles away from our town. Majdanek-- that was the outskirts of Lublin. And they prepared the Jews like a station for them. From there on, they're going to bring them in to Majdanek, where there was a death camp.

Is that where your mother and sister were sent?

I couldn't-- I think, why should they take him into PuÅ,awy on the station from KoÅ,,skowola to PuÅ,awy, and then ship them? They could have taken them in from KurÅ³w to Majdanek. It was near it, you know? But I think they went in different direction. That's my-- well, the thing is, I think our town was-- you could go in different directions towards Lublin and towards the capital of Warsaw. You could go away towards Pallavi. In different directions-- it was like an artery for different towns to go through.

And I think the Germans brought in them Jews from different parts, from France, from Belgium, from Germany. They just packed them in. They had no place for them. But our town was burned down to the ground. In 1939, as a child, my father was in the army. He was in the air force. I mean, the town burned down.

I remember, I took my mother, and we had a horse. And I was a young kid, though I was very helpful with my family. When you grow up in things like this, even if you don't want to learn, you're forced into it. So I took the horse and buggy, and put whatever I could in. We went out of the town. I saved that yet. As that town was burning in a different direction.

But they were not just bombing our town. They were burning with incinerator bombs throwing. Naturally, in Europe, them houses, they were from wood. And just the only thing you have to do-- not for a bomb-- you can put a match to it, and everything will be burning one alongside each other, you know? It's a terrible sight when you see this. And I took my mother and my sister and my brother, and somehow, made it out of the outskirts. Then out of the outskirts, I came down.

And I didn't know they were shooting. The planes had gone so close we were between trees. And my mother said to me, I hope we are safe here. I said, you know-- I feel like as a youngster, I was very somehow awakened. I saw wires, like you see them poles, the wires.

It used to be at that time the name-- I don't remember certain things, but I remember the name-- it used to be the name called [POLISH]. They used to-- like here, the public service. They used to run the wiring all from town to town. So was such a heavy wires from this, in that area where I stopped with my horse and buggy with my mother and my sister.

And I said to my mother, if ever they throw something down here. And my mother said, they're going-- if we're not going to be killed by the planes, they're going to electrocute us. And I somehow took my mother, took a chance, with the planes going over our heads and I drove away a distance, where there was some trees down there.

And somehow I made it out of the farm. Then we came back. We couldn't go back. Everything was-- you couldn't walk in the street. Everything was burned down, crisp to the ground. Nothing there. The only thing when I came back to our home was a cellar where we could-- the cellar was built somehow-- the house was higher up. [INAUDIBLE].

We could go into the cellar from the outside. We could somehow manage to clean out the cellar, clean off the top. I don't know what it was, it must have been like a concrete or something. And we lived in that cellar for-- after we got back to our town. Maybe a week later or more down there. And the family started getting together.

And then at that time, that was right beginning of the war, we could see that Poland lost the war. We could see it, smell it. The people-- the army used to be disarranged. They used to go in different places. They used to one soldier here, and one, two over there. The army doesn't work that way. And all of a sudden, something like two weeks later, my father made it back home.

We didn't know if he's alive. Well, he was on the airfield. But somehow he made it back with his rifle, with everything else. But you see, when you went in a uniform, you couldn't walk without a rifle. That means you're a deserter. But there was thinking in time, that time, that they are still going to reorganize. And my father know about it.

He was in 1921, he was fighting the Bolsheviks in them years. And he know a little bit about the army. So he carried his rifle with him. Otherwise, he could be shot as a deserter. He came home. He took off his uniform. I remember he buried his rifle. That was finished. Then start up with things, problems start up.

But my father was very innovative man. We built our home with scraps. One home was given us from my grandfather. He had four daughters. My grandfather had four daughters. So at that time, to have children-- and we had a fine family.

I could see it, the way some people lived in Europe in them years, now when I'm more come to my senses, I see that we were a little bit, not richer, but more progressed a little bit. My grandfather had four daughters. And he worked for-- he gave everyone, as a dowry, he give each one a home, a house to live in. That was a roof over your head.

This was your mother's father?

Yes.

Your mother's father.

Yes. And that's what happened. And my father, for instance-- I'm going to bring this in-- my father was very innovative. He would build this home not in that place where my grandfather give him. But my father had a business, this business.

And he somehow made his business with his home combined. In the back we lived.

It was just like my father or mother know it was temporarily or they know what's coming. Temporary-- we kind of were cramped, but at least we had a roof. Some of them didn't have a roof. Matter of fact, some people got our basement to live in, [INAUDIBLE] people, the basement where we--

And we-- somehow, my father went back in business. And we did. But then the Germans start up. It was 1941. They started up. They took me away to a camp. Everybody had to give a certain amount of youngsters to go to work.

So I was working at a-- they call it [NON-ENGLISH]. That was Yanishov-- I even remember the name of that area-- Yanishov, where that was like a-- we were building trenches. Like the trenches were like this, high up, way high up. And they wanted to make a watershed going through them trenches into-- I don't know where they they're planning it-- it was a very big project-- from the [NON-ENGLISH] out someplace.

And I was with a group of them people. And I've seen down there-- I was young. They didn't feed us. They give us a little soup. But I was strong. My mother gave us a very good background. The reason is, she give us a-- we always were enough fed, enough clothes, enough-- not luxurious, but enough to call ourself middle class, so to say.

And I was in that camp for like for four months. It was in the fall I went back home-- in the fall. They send us back home. And they were bringing-- and that was operated not by the Germans, that was operated by the Jewish Committee.

The Judenrat.

Huh? Judenrat, right. And I had a very bad taste, because the guy I was explaining you, with his daughter, who was running that time on the fields. I always tell you about that episode. He was the head of the Judenrat. He was a well-to-do man. And the Germans usually picked the well-to-do in the Jewish community.

And at that time, it was-- my father-- but then I came home in the fall from that camp Yanishov. And that's near-- they call it-- the [INAUDIBLE] was near them. Some people will not recall the episode. It's near JÃ³zefÃ³w, ZaklikÃ³w, [PLACE NAME], all that area. It's more towards-- they call it more towards Zakarpacki Ukraine, and they call it-- more towards the Carpathian.

The Carpathian Mountains.

Yes.

Yes.

So I was sent back home. And I came home. It was in the fall. And I got sick on typhus. It was a epidemic of typhus. And the Germans, wherever was typhus, as soon as you were registered with a doctor, or they know about it, or some of the Christian people in the community who were against us, they used to give it out that you're sick of it. So they used to go around to the homes and take out the people and just dispose of them.

They shoot them?

They shoot them, yeah, shoot them. But my mother with my father, built a house. We had a little basement. And my mother says, as I came home-- I had very high fever. And she was a nurse.

She was not a finished nurse, but I remember they used to knock on our door at night time. She used to help families. Let's say, like some poor people, their kids were sick, or my mother, she was like a-- they were bearing a baby. She used to--

Midwife.

Midwife-- she used to be woken up. She used to not prescribe medicine, but she used to have like a home, things what was good for you. And somehow, we used to have a doctor in town. He somehow didn't-- he nudged to her that she's doing the right thing. And people used to come to her.

What I'm trying to bring out, at that time, my mother, she was-- I recall it now, I didn't even have a picture of her. I don't have a picture of my sister. I don't have a picture of my-- none of my family, have pictures. The only thing I got is a picture of my father.

And then, what I'm trying to bring out, my mother throw down some pillows and some defense, like certain things, like whatever she had to throw down to the basement. And she threw me-- put me down to the basement and covered the basement up. They came in, but they couldn't find anybody sick in the bed. You had to be in the bed [INAUDIBLE].

So I was in that basement. Then my mother, after they, like they went over-- each time it used to be like storms for them things, a storm of the Germans, a storm of the Ukraines, or beatings or things, or taken away to camps. It was a turmoil at all the time.

So my mother brought me up. And she kind of nursed me back. I don't know what she did, what medicine she got, how she's done it. Typhus, it's a deadly disease. And I got back somehow.

And from there on, we stayed in this house. And then in 1941, or was it in '42? Dates, I'm very-- it was like before Easter they've driven out all the Jews. We left this house. Whatever we had that was down there, we just took the barely belonging to us. My mother locked the doors, locked the shutters. But we left everything down there.

We're going to have to stop for a few minutes to change the tape.

Yes.

We'll continue the story momentarily.