

I'll just ask-- I'll make the first sentence, and I'll just say, you were telling that you left from the--

Yeah.

OK? Here. You were telling me that you left the cellar after two days, and then you went to the labor camp with--

My two sisters.

--your two sisters.

Yeah. So I have to talk about it. We went-- been taken to the Brody [NON-ENGLISH] lager, which was located in the middle of town. That was the kaserne that I mentioned before, that my father used to take out the Jewish soldiers for Saturday dinners.

We met a lot of people there that have all their families already taken away. And they've been transferred to death camp for all the work they needed. One night, one of my friends, younger than I am, came at night. She was thrown out from the train, going to Majdanek by her mother. And she was shot by the German soldiers that stayed on the top of that death train.

She told me that my mother and my brother had been with her. And she even mentioned that my brother had a mind to jump too. Luckily, she escaped, and--

But she was wounded.

--she was wounded in her leg, and was find undressed and naked completely by a priest that took her to his house, dressed her, and made her go back to our town.

How old was she?

At that time-- she's five years younger than I am, so she was, in 1943, very, very young. And then we've been hiding with her and my future husband, together in one of the-- that's fine.

No, no, I just want to know, you went first from the cellar to this kaserne to the camp. Now how were you able to hide?

Oh, no, wait.

At what point?

I did not finish. That's true. We stayed in the [NON-ENGLISH] for few weeks. My two sisters, a friend of my father, a Polish man, promised to find a place to hide. And they went there, and they had to be separated and go in two different places.

I went to a different hiding place with that girl. My future husband was there too--

OK, so let me just make sure--

--and another--

--I understand. So this Polish individual, not Jewish, correct--

Yeah.

--who had been a friend of your father, was able to get you and your sister to--

No, promised just to put my daughters in certain place-- my sisters-- sorry-- in certain places.

OK. And I went to another place that a Polish woman, for money, had a cellar built under her bedroom. And she kept us, promised to keep us there for a while. She cooked for us and brought us food once a day. There was--

How many people were hiding there?

--around seven, eight people at the time.

Why did she hide you?

She was a friend of our friends, and someone found out that she wants to do it for money, mainly.

Who was paying her?

We had some friends who had some money, like golden things. And one night, I went down out from the cellar, and changed something for the Polish zloty, and we paid her. She was quite good to us. We never found track of her. So maybe she died already, because we tried to find her. She was an older woman.

And she used to bring down the food and jokingly said, instead of throwing it out, you eat it. But still, she was the one that saved our lives. One afternoon, I remember clearly, the steps on the upstairs, and two German soldiers came. And in their loud voices, we could hear saying, we have an [GERMAN] under the [GERMAN]. And they looked under the bed.

Want to translate, just--

He once found the Jews under the bed. They opened the closet, which was just under that cellar. But they did not think that the cellar would be below that closet.

We were there a few months that we never thought we'll live. The memories hounded us of losing all the parents. But somehow, the strong will for life or survival made us exist.

I found out, in the meantime, that my sisters (VOICE BREAKING) came back for one night to the camp, because that Polish man was expecting company for that Sunday. And he was afraid that, wandering around the house, they can find the two Jewish girls there. And he would have been, of course, prosecuted for it immediately.

So he told them, if you go back just for one night, and Monday-- or was it the next day-- come back, I will try to locate you somewhere. And that was the second and real Judenfrei in our town. There was no more Jew allowed to be seen or found without being killed immediately.

We stayed there for a while. Then the news start to come in then the Russian, the Germans are losing the war. But there are Germans starting to walk back frozen, defeated from the climate they couldn't take in Russia. But even this news could not bring us any hope. How can you live (VOICE BREAKING) when you know you'll be free, and there is no one to welcome you or to talk to you or to comfort you?

We went to the woods for a while, and then we were liberated in 1944 by the Russians. The war was still going on in the other part of Poland, which was previously occupied by the Germans too.

We stayed there almost a year. And then in '45, when the war was over--

Just one question, I'm sorry to interrupt. For a year, you stayed--

Around.

Where?

In little towns-- in Galicia, in Dubno, Krzemieniec.

And who were you together with?

What?

Who were you together with?

With a few friends, like we all clicked together to survive.

And your present husband?

Yes.

But you were not married--

No, I got married in end of 1944. In 1945, the war was over. We all tried to think where do we go from there. We did not make up our minds Israel would be the place. Or my husband had a brother in USA.

We went, a whole group, the friends, to Poland, Lodz, where the war-- the peace was announced, and the Germans defeated, thank God.

It wasn't-- we stayed there for a while, and then we went to Cordova. And from Cordova, they had a special organized place to take people to Germany, to the displaced camps. We went to Germany, and we stayed in [? FÄ¼rth. ?] And then from [? FÄ¼rth, ?] we went to Frankfurt, from where we emigrated to the USA in 1948.

So you were in DP camp from 1945 until '48?

'46, we'd been in Lodz, there, for a while.

OK. So from '46 to '48, you were in DP camp?

Yes. And in 1948, we arrived in this country in June. I remember it was Shavuot, and my brother-in-law and sister-in-law took us down the boat. And it was a very heartbreaking reunion for my husband to tell his brother that he was the only one left from his big family.

They had a nice, wonderful family life. They adored their sister, who'd had such a hard time to have a baby. And she had it two years before the war. The mother that was like a queen for them died, too, in the ghetto.

Then my relatives start to pour in, which I incidentally found. And, in a way, it was one of the hardest time in my life too, that I always thought it would be one of the happiest. But all of a sudden, you wind up in a country. It's not envious being that you see full families together, living normally, being worried and taken care of, minute by minute.

And here you find yourself all alone, from everyone you had. Our family consisted of around 40 to 50 cousins from both sides, my father's and my mother's. All had been brutally killed. Not till now I have no idea. If I would want to go back, like people go back to see the grave-- you feel it will give you a relief-- there's no place where to go. There are no graves. Whole Poland is covered with Jewish blood.

But somehow, you adjust. In 1950, my daughter was born, and I think that was (VOICE BREAKING) the turning point in my life. I think that was one of the happiest moments, when she was born. All of a sudden, I felt so strong. I felt like I'm now in charge, and responsible (VOICE BREAKING) for my daughter's well-being, and just pray she should never have to go through half or one minute what we went through the war.

She could not understand why she doesn't have any grandmothers, any grandfather, (VOICE BREAKING) any aunts, uncles, cousins. And I just could not make myself tell my children. I thought it was not fair they should be told about all this suffering. I thought it will give them a harsh outlook of life. But somehow, I survived.

Pleasant things have been coming, with the birthday parties, little celebrations. I really think that my children brought back life to me. We worked both hard here, but we gave our children a good education, what was pounded in me from home.

My daughter graduate Boston University as a art major, was working later for a publishing company. My younger daughter graduate college as a teacher, and was considered a very good and caring teacher when she taught in Elizabeth public schools. I guess I had to live to give life for my children, or to tell you that story.

[SNIFFLES]

[PAPER RUSTLING]

OK, Charlie.

Stay here.