

[MUSIC PLAYING] Good afternoon. My name is Joan Bang. I'm a member of the Kean 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 Mr. Ed Harvit, a survivor presently living in Mountainside, New Jersey, who has generously volunteered to give testimony about his experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Welcome, Mr. Harvit.

Thank you.

Could you tell us a little bit about your background-- where you were born, when you were born, your parents, your early childhood?

I was born in 1929 in June in what was then Poland. The name of the city was then Stanisławów. Since then, it's-- the city now is within the boundaries of the Soviet Union, and the name of the city was changed to Ivano-Frankivsk. The general area is referred to as Galicia.

And as far as I know, my paternal family has lived in that region for a long, long time, several generations at least. On my mother's side, her parents came also from Poland. But then during the First World War, they moved to Austria.

And my mother was raised in Vienna. And then married to Poland and lived in Stanisławów until 1943, where my mother-- a survivor of a pogrom where my father was killed-- and I left Stanisławów. And we went to Lwów, which was the largest city within the same-- basically the same area. And then we made several other moves.

Eventually, we were liberated by the Russian army and allowed to go to Poland, where the borders were shifted. And we were settled in the western part of Poland in a town which is now called Legnica-- the German name for that was Liegnitz-- on the Lower Silesia. And in 1946, we moved to Munich, West Germany. We lived there approximately five years and emigrated to the United States in 1951. After living in New York for a few months, we settled in New Jersey. And we are still here.

Could we back up for just a minute? Did you have brothers and sisters?

No, I was an only child.

Were there other members of your family living at your-- living in your home, though? Aunts or uncles or--

No, my parents and myself lived in the apartment building. And another apartment was occupied by my paternal grandparents. And my father had a brother who came to America right after the First World War and settled in New York.

What did your family do for a living?

My grandfather had a grocery store. And my father had a-- was a supplier of food stuff to the Polish army. My mother was a housewife.

And what was your early childhood education like then? Were you in a regular school? Were you in a Hebrew school?

Well, my father was really a Zionist. And when I was growing up as a child, it was really-- the Jewish population was persecuted, even before the war. And my parents decided not to send me to a public school. And instead, I attended a Hebrew school. It was also because of the convenience, because that school happened to be just across the street from where we lived.

So my early education was in a Hebrew school, but it was not a Hebrew religious school. It was a Hebrew non-religious

school, where the Jewish religion was taught only as a subject. But everything was taught in Hebrew.

And after we were occupied by the Russian army in 1939, that school was changed into a Yiddish school. And I attended that for a very short time and decided-- my parents decided then to send me to a public school instead. And then the war broke out, and then I obviously didn't go to school for the duration of the German occupation.

After the liberation by the Russian army in 1944, I went to school in the Russian educational system, where it runs from 1 to 10th grade. And then after that, you are ready to enter a higher school of learning. I went into the fifth grade and finished the fifth grade. And then we moved out of that area into West Germany.

Now, I lost some more time, as far as school goes. So then I was sort of too old to enter high school. And instead my mother insisted I studied. So my mother hired a private tutor. And I took private lessons and took an exam. And I entered the technical college, engineering school, in Munich. And I graduated in 1951 with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Did you perceive a difference between being in a public school and being in the early school, the Zionist school, that you were in? Were you treated differently as a Jew in the public school?

Are you referring to the--

I'm talking about the period before-- before the war, or when the Russians came in.

Well, I really don't remember having had any kind of problems in the school. And when I came-- I can only actually remember one-- just one case, in all my school days, as far as being discriminated, and that was in Munich as a college student.

The German setup of-- the university setup, or the engineering schools in Germany are not part of the universities. They are separate. But the system is-- the student body is very free. There's no attendance check or whatever. They come and go, they come and go, wherever they please. And they study or don't study. And just the professor lectures, and it's up to the student to study or not to study.

So that one incident that I remember is that the professor taught descriptive geometry, which was a very difficult subject to comprehend. And he was not a very good teacher as such. He was probably a very good engineer or-- but not a good teacher, couldn't explain to us. So we did not learn too much.

And the general student body was not very attentive. And some students in the back room-- back of the room were playing cards and reading newspapers. And so at one point, he pointed at me directly and said-- he called me by name, and asked me if I understood his lecture.

And I very demonstratively got up, and I said, I also-- and I underlined also-- don't understand. So he said, what do you mean also? I said, well, very few seem to understand, and I'm one of those that also don't understand. So then I decided that, obviously, he made sure to know who I was.

And the reason was actually-- I'm backtracking, I forgot to mention that-- on the previous lecture, where he didn't get much respect or whatever, he came out with a statement. He was sort of agitated, and he said, what is this, a Jew school? And nobody said anything. There was no answer or anything.

And at the end of the class, the student, the president of the class, came up to me. And they all knew that I was Jewish, and I was the only Jew in the class. And he said, did you hear that remark? And I said, yes, I did. So he said to me, how come you did not respond? So I looked at him, and I said, I thought that you were the president of the class, and obviously you found that to be objectionable. And if you did, why didn't you say anything?

So he did, subsequently. Told the professor on the following lecture that there was a Jewish student in the class, and they did not-- we did not appreciate this kind of remark. So then he called me by name and asked me, specifically, if I

understood his lecture.

After that incident, I had the right, as a non-German student-- because I wasn't, after all, a German student-- I had the right to request an oral examination. So I went up to him, and I asked him whether-- the next time we will have an examination, I would like to do it orally.

So he said, well-- he didn't like the idea, because it would mean to him to spend an extra hour or whatever time just sitting with me and testing me. So he said, well, why don't you try to do the exam with everybody else? And then if you have problems, I will give you an oral examination.

So I sat, and I wrote the exam, and I felt that I did fairly well. And when he announced the grades, and I got a passing grade, which I felt was not good enough. So I went over to him, and I asked him to see my paper.

Well, he stalled me for about two or three weeks. And he finally-- never showed me the paper, but he finally upgraded my grade. So that was the only incident throughout my school days that I had any kind of a case of where I felt that I was prejudiced against.

Being discriminated against.

Discriminated against.

Where were you at the outbreak of the war?

At the outbreak of the war, I was in my-- the town where I was born, in Stanisław³w.

And did you feel any danger at that time?

Well, I only felt the danger when the war started, because we were very cognizant of what was happening. And, you know, the war between Poland and Germany and the Soviet Union. And actually, we were run over by the Russian troops and occupied by the Russians. And that was in 1939. So the Russian occupation lasted from 1939 until 1941.

At this time, my grandparents, who were classified as capitalists-- and they were far from being capitalists-- but they owned a building, and my grandfather was a self-employed person. They were ordered to move out of the city. They were not allowed to live in their own house. And they had to move into a village, a nearby village.

But my father and I and my family stayed in the city. And my father became an employee in the food industry, but specifically under the ministry of the railroads.

In those days-- I don't know how it is now-- the Soviet railroad system was completely independent of all the other ministries. They ran their own not only railroads, but they ran their own food stores and clothing stores, everything. And even they had their own justice system. And my father was working for the railroad then.

In the period when it was still possible for you to get out-- your having said that your family was Zionists prompts this question-- did they ever entertain your parents or your grandparents any notion about going to Palestine or settling there? Or was it always that you wanted to stay in your own country?

Well, I don't know about my grandparents-- grandfather being a Zionist. I only know about my father being a Zionist. Whether he entertained the notion of moving to Palestine, I really don't know.

But I can imagine that he probably could not do it, because already, his older brother had left for the United-- for America. And his parents were alone-- would be alone if we would have left. So I imagine that even if he had feelings of going to Palestine, he probably wouldn't do it because of his parents. And my grandfather, specifically, was much older than my grandmother. And I don't think that they--

That he would have wanted to have left them.

--would've wanted to uproot himself and all this.

Were your maternal grandparents living near you at the time, too?

No, my maternal-- my mother lost her father when she was very, very young. And my grandmother, my mother's mother, lived in Vienna. And after the Anschluss, when Austria was taken over by Nazi regime, by Hitler, my grandmother never bothered actually to become an Austrian citizen.

So the Austrian government and Hitler, at one time, decided that all those that were not Austrian citizens on a given day had to move back to their original country. And they literally threw out my grandmother and other people like herself. She had lived there practically all her life. She had lost the Polish citizenship, so Poland would not let them in. And Austria threw them out.

So my grandmother and three other women found themselves on the border on the international territory between the two countries. And my mother got a letter-- got a telegram from one of these Polish people who sort of threw food to these four women. And somehow they got the address of my mother. And my mother traveled from the other side of Poland to see if she could-- what she could do about this. And she was able to smuggle these four women into Poland.

How did she do that?

She paid somebody at night, and they just brought them across the border. And then my grandmother lived with us, until she was taken away to a concentration camp. And I don't know what finally happened to her.

So during the early years of the war then, where you lived was occupied by the Russian soldiers. What was life like during that time? Were there food shortages? Did people still go about their business as if nothing had happened? Or was life pretty much the same?

Well, life could not go on as if nothing had happened, because a lot of things happened. There was obviously not private enterprise. Everybody became an employee of the state. And a lot of people, like my grandparents, had to leave the town. So life was not the same.

But being, at that time, about 10, 11 years old, it did not affect me very much. I went about my ways, going to school. And so I really honestly cannot remember all the details. But I don't remember anything extraordinarily bad or good. So just everything went a certain way, and that was it.

What did your father do for a living at that time?

Well, now he was working for the ministry of the railroad and the food supply for the employees of the railroad-- for the Russian railroad system.

When did things start to really change then? Or did you know that you were actually in danger?

Well, just prior to the occupation of the German army, we knew that the whole world is coming to some sort of an eclipse. Young men were being drafted into the Russian army-- most of them.

Some of the people escaped the German occupation of Poland and somehow found their way to our area, where we were not occupied by the Germans. And they were telling us what was happening on the other side. These were Jewish people. The beginning years was not really-- nobody was yet being massacred and killed. But they felt that something bad was going to happen.

This was before June of 1941, before the invasion?

That's correct. Specifically, my family, my father, was not drafted into the Russian army, probably primarily because he was a married man with a child. Instead, he was drafted into the fire department. And he was trained to be a fireman.

So actually when the war broke out in June the 22nd, if I remember, 1941, and the German planes flew overhead, and they bombed, and there was a fire someplace, I still remember seeing a fire engine passing by my house. And I saw my father on the fire engine.

As it happened, he was the only Jewish fireman. So after the ghetto was created, after we were occupied by the Germans, my father was given the job to organize the Jewish fire brigade within the ghetto. And he became sort of the chief of the Jewish fire department in our ghetto.

So when the Germans came in then and formed the ghetto, what were your living conditions like then?

Well, before they formed the ghetto, I can remember the first thing that happened that really hit everybody was that they proclaimed that every Jewish professional person had to come to register on a given day in order to obtain a license to practice their individual profession. And they were all gathered-- all these people were gathered and were taken directly to the cemetery. And until 6 o'clock that evening, they were shooting them, they were killing them.

For some reason, at 6 o'clock-- and I think it's 6 o'clock, I'm not 100% sure about the time-- but on a given moment, they ceased fire, and whoever was not killed was allowed to go back. But by then, most of the professional people were killed off.

Was this done all in one day? Or over a period of days?

That was done in one day. And then they designated an area of the city that was then-- they made all the non-Jews move out and all the Jews moved into that area.

Who did the killing, by the way? Was it the--

At that specific point, as far as I remember, were only German-- German--

The Einsatzgruppen?

I don't know. But they were not-- this was right at the beginning, so there were no-- no Ukrainian police or Polish or whatever. It was only Germans.

So then we were all told that we had to move in. And I don't know the details, but we were designated a very tiny, little apartment, where my father, mother, myself, my maternal grandmother, and my paternal grandparents moved all into this one little apartment. And that's where we were in the ghetto.

As I said, my father was given the job of organizing the Jewish fire brigade. And they gave them some space in a very old building, which was a very, very large pre-war textile mill. It was called Rudolf's Mühle, Rudolf's Mill, where he assembled a number of people that he was, in turn, training to be firefighters.

These were all Jewish people?

They were all Jewish people, because that was within the ghetto. There were very few able-bodied young men, because most of those had left with the Russian army. And so there were some-- I don't remember how many of these people were there in the Jewish fire brigade.

Their equipment was all hand-operated. Nothing was motorized, as far as I remember. Wagons that had to be-- the pumps had to be pushed and so forth. But they did the best they could. And I remember, on several occasions, they were actually called in to help put out fires outside of the ghetto to help the regular fire department.

Can you describe your living conditions in the ghetto for us a little bit more explicitly?

Well, as far as I remember, we had a two-room flat.

There were eight of you there, is that correct?

Well, my grandparents, two, my grandmother, three-- no, and three of us. There were six of us.

Six, right.

Six.

We had one-- a kitchen. I would guess the size, I would say, probably somewhere it's, like, 10 by 12. And a bedroom about that same size.

For the six of you.

For all of us, yes. And we were sort of, quote, unquote, "privileged people," because we-- my father was the chief of the fire department.

Is that why you were given this space?

I don't know whether this was the reason. But it was the next house right next to that Rudolf's Mill, where the fire department was situated.

That big building, the Rudolf's Mill, it was turned into a concentration camp within the ghetto, where they, in turn-- Jews who came out of Hungary, Hungarian Jews, that were not Hungarian citizens-- and Hungary, at that point, was an ally of-- allied with Hitler Germany. So they sent the Jews out of Hungary into Galicia.

And they put all these people, or many of those people, into this building. And every single day, they were shot-- I don't know how many, but a number of them-- until they were all killed off in that building.

And my father and the firemen and the Jewish police were asked-- were told-- made-- after everybody's actions, I don't know exactly what they had to do, but I guess dispose of the clothing. Everything had to be sorted out. All I can remember and that I know for a fact, that every afternoon I could hear shots, machine gun shots. And I knew for a fact that people were being killed there.

The people who were put into the concentration camp, were they-- were they specially selected? Were they picked up at random off the street? How were they brought there?

I really don't know. But these people were sent by the Hungarian government. And the word was that these people never bothered getting the Hungarian citizenship. They may have lived there for God knows how many years, probably their lives.

So they were deportees, in other words.

They were deported from Hungary because of lack of citizenship. Like my grandmother was deported from Austria, because she was not an Austrian citizen.

So they were brought there by transport and sent immediately--

They brought them by transport and sent directly into that building.

So you never saw them.

So these were not people from your ghetto itself that were being brought in here.

No, no, there was a concentration camp--

Just for these--

--inside the ghetto.

What was your life like at that time? Were you working? Were you just in the home? Or did you have-- had they set up these young men for some kind of a function as well?

Well, because of connections, so my father's connections, at the age of-- I think I was, like, 12 years old or whatever, I became a mechanic's helper fixing bicycles. Now, outside of the ghetto, they formed-- somebody formed-- in one large building, different trades, manned all by Jewish trades people serving the non-Jewish population. And among other things, there was a bicycle shop. And I was working at that bicycle shop as a gopher or helper to fix bicycles, whatever.

My mother eventually also worked in the same building. And she worked in a tailor shop. But in my case, specifically, I know that I would have never gotten a job had it not been for my father's position being the chief of the Jewish fire brigade.

We were assembled every morning on the Jewish side of the ghetto wall. As a group, we were led by police to the place of work. And after the work was completed, we were led back inside into the ghetto. And that's how--

Did you have any feelings at that time that you were not going to survive this experience, or that-- that you were really in immediate danger, or that any members of your family were in immediate danger? For example, your father, because he was in the position that he was in.

Well, there was no question that we were constantly in immediate danger. Because the object of forming a ghetto was to liquidate-- to kill everybody off and liquidating the ghetto.

And you realized that.

And we realized that, because people were being constantly taken away. I remember an incident where the Ukrainian-- the ghetto was manned by the Jewish police. We had a mayor, a Jewish mayor, and a Jewish police, and a Jewish fire department inside the ghetto. On the outside, we had the German police and Ukrainian police.

The gate, there was only one way to get in and out of the ghetto, through the main gate, which was manned on the outside by the Ukrainian and the Germans, and on the inside by the Jews. The wall was constructed completely surrounding the ghetto, which was a high wall with barbed wire. None of us was allowed to leave or enter as an individual. We could only go to work as a group, led out and led in.

And at one time, I remember specifically a Ukrainian-- I don't remember, Ukrainian or German policeman came with an arrest warrant against a Jewish man, a specific case. And this man would not let-- be arrested. He grabbed a bottle, hit the policeman, injured the German policeman, and he ran away.

The German police gave an order to the Jewish police to produce this man within 24 hours or whatever, or else. They were not able to find him. I don't know what happened to him. He escaped or whatever. So they organized a pogrom within the ghetto. They came in, and they-- first, they lined up the Jewish police, and they decimated. Every 10th Jewish policeman was hung on a gas lamp-- two on every gas lamp.

Then, they hung the mayor, the Jewish mayor of the ghetto. Then they dug a mass grave inside the center of-- on the main street of the ghetto. And they went house to house, rounding up only men, no women. And I don't know how many, but hundreds, maybe a thousand, maybe even more were killed and shot, and most of them killed into one grave.

Where I worked outside the ghetto with my mother, we were not allowed-- not brought back that day back home. We stayed overnight at our place of work, worked the following day. And when we came back the following day after work, the first thing I saw was, on every gas lamp, two men hanging, two Jewish policemen hanging.

You hadn't known about this.

Well, we knew that something was happening by the mere fact that we were not brought back home.

You knew that there was something going on.

There was something-- whatever something was happening, we knew it was nothing good happening. I saw this. Then they came by. I walked along the street with all these policemen hanging. And I passed by the mass grave. And I went close to the grave, and the grave was actually heaving.

I was watching how the grave was moving up and down-- and moans, because not everybody buried was dead. There were a lot of people that might have gotten shot through the arm or chest or whatever, and they fell in. And then the next body fell on top of them. And there a lot of people buried alive in that grave.

These men on the-- these policemen hung for three days before they cut them down and buried them. Those, like myself, that worked outside the ghetto or inside, just the next day, we were rounded up again, went back to work like nothing ever happened.

So I've become very callous. People would drive-- I stepped over all kinds of bodies. People just dropped dead from malnutrition, because the rations that we were given were not enough to live and too much to die. So eventually the weaker ones died.

One of the benefits of working outside the ghetto, like I did, was that I would smuggle things out of the ghetto, some things of clothing or some whatever, and barter for food. And then smuggle food back, which was illegal had I been caught when entering back. I could have been singled out and arrested and killed. But this was what was being done.

And all of your family, the six of you, were still living in your apartment at this particular point in time.

We were still, all of us, in that apartment. And another incident had happened. One day, we came to work. And for some reason, there was some sort of a commotion going on in the building.

What had happened was the overall director of this whole building of the different trades was a German. And he had a Jewish young woman secretary. And for some strange reason, he took his secretary, and he personally took her out of the building and most likely, we thought, brought her back into the ghetto.

So we all started feeling very uneasy. And I went over to my mother's department, and I said, let's get out of here. I had sort of an intuition that something is going to happen. And my mother said, well, we cannot just walk out. I mean, you cannot walk-- you couldn't walk through the streets alone.

And while I was talking to my mother, I looked out the window, and I saw a group of Jewish people being walked in a group. And I ran out, and I joined this group. And my mother ran after me, and she joined the group. And we joined this group, and we walked back into the ghetto with this group. I don't remember the details. They didn't check us too closely, whatever.

We went in. That afternoon, all the people from that building were rounded up, taken to the cemetery, executed, and that was the end of that building and of the jobs. This was in the process of being-- this ghetto being liquidated.

Then, of course, was the fatal infamous day in my life when my father was killed. Now this textile mill, which was the concentration camp for the Hungarian Jews, no longer housed any Jews, because it was-- the Jews were all killed off.

And this became now a warehouse for the German army for fur for the Eastern Front. And these were tremendous rooms. The size of the rooms-- it was a warehouse.

So again, on the 12th of October, 1942, this was-- we no longer worked there. And there was, again, in the morning, there was some sort of a commotion inside the ghetto. And the ghetto was quite large. I mean, there were-- I don't remember exactly how many, but there were 20,000, 30,000 people in this ghetto.

So some people came and said that the Germans were taking people out on the transport to a concentration camp or something. And my father had access to that building. So he opened one of his warehouse rooms with the fur, and he just hung around. And then after a while, we found-- somebody came and said that the Germans are coming closer to us.

So a whole group of people went into this room, and we hid underneath the fur. And we were hiding under the fur for a while. And then at one point, I heard, like, soldiers' steps and a lot of commotion. Everybody was laying low and quiet. And the door opened to that room, and I could hear a German, soldiers walking in, and a German voice. And he says, the question was, is anybody hiding-- being hidden here?

And I heard the answer, nobody is here. That was my father. And he says, tell me the truth, because it'll cost your head, in German. And my father said, nobody's here.

And then there was a lot of commotion and all kinds of screams and this and that. And I heard two shots. And a few minutes later, we were-- I was uncovered, and my mother stood there. And a lot of people running, and the German police, and the Jewish police, and the whole commotion in the room. And we were taken out. I did not realize that these two shots were fired at my father, and he laid dead there. I did not see his body.

We were taken out as a group. And I guess my mother, at that point, knew that my father was killed. I didn't. And we had been led to the center of the ghetto. And I kept saying to my mother, let's run. And she was very despondent. And she just didn't care. And she kept on walking. I said, let's run, let's run. But it was practically impossible, because we were surrounded by the German police.

So in a short while, we found ourselves at the center of the ghetto, where they were segregating all these people being brought in from different streets into this square. And we were being-- the people were being segregated. And my mother all of a sudden stepped out of line and the-- *Sturmführer* Schott was his name. He was the chief of the-- from the Gestapo for the ghetto. He was in charge of the ghetto.

And she stepped out towards him, and she said, I'm the wife of the chief of the Jewish fire brigade. And then he looked at my mother and he says, OK, get out-- get out of line. And she pulled me with her. There was a German soldier, and he was told to bring us to the Jewish police station, which was right facing the square.

And I sat at the window watching what was happening. And as I said, people were being brought in from different streets, different parts of the ghetto, segregated into different lines. If they had small children, these children were taken away from their parents. And the truck was-- would pull up, and the children would be tossed into the truck, one on top of the other, like cabbage.

And the truck would be full. The truck would pull off. And another would come in. And the adults would be segregated in different lines, and then taken away. And I failed to mention that my grandparents were also with us in this building. They were taken away at that point. And I have no idea where they wound up.

After this whole action ceased, we were told that we could leave now. And we left. My mother, meanwhile, told me that my father was shot. We did not know, at that point, whether he was dead or what.

So we went back to this building, and I climbed-- it was very high windows-- I climbed up, and I saw my father laying dead in this-- among all the fur and all this. And the next morning, his body was removed, and I have no idea where he was eventually buried.

So after my father was killed, and my grandparents were taken away, my mother had--

Excuse me, all your grandparents were taken-- all three--

All three, yes. At that point, my mother had made contacts while we were working outside the ghetto. She knew local people. She made some contacts with a Polish Gentile family. And one day, we just walked out of the ghetto. That's another story, but I don't know whether I should go into more detail.

Please.

Please do.

While my father was the chief of the fire brigade, and he had access into the camp where the Hungarian Jews were being held, my father helped a few of these Hungarian Jews escape. What he did, he had a-- he would put a fireman's belt over his jacket, put his overcoat with another-- with another fireman's belt, walk in, because he had access in and out, and he would take off one of these belts and give it to somebody, specifically. He was told who to bring out. And he would bring out these few men.

The Hungarian Jews had an underground worked out that they paid off somebody, and they were being smuggled back to Hungary. So he helped a few men, a few Hungarian men, go back to Hungary.

So after my father was killed, this underground wanted to help my mother and me. So my mother was contacted by somebody that, on a given night, somebody will come and get us out and take us to Hungary. But before this happened, somebody came to my mother and said that they're going to arrest us because somebody squealed or whatever.

So that same day, when my mother got that news, and since we were still able to walk out-- because we worked outside the ghetto, we had passes. So we joined the group with somebody else, and we just walked out the ghetto. And whatever he had on us, that's how we walked out.

My mother went to some of these people that she had made contacts, a Gentile family. And she paid them money, and they produced birth certificates for us, false documents, that we were mother and son Roman Catholics. And this family gave my mother an address in the largest city in Lw³w.

And we never went back to the ghetto. We just went to the train station and boarded the train, came to Lw³w, went to this apartment of that address. There was a Polish woman who shared a two-room apartment, a kitchen and a bedroom, with her daughter. And my mother introduced herself as being a widow of a Polish officer and played a very nationalistic kind of a role. And that Polish woman would help us stay with her.

So my mother and I slept in one bed, and she and her daughter slept in another bed. But because of the suddenness of our departure, obviously we didn't have any possessions. And one explanation to this woman was that because my father was supposedly a Polish officer, and we were going to be arrested by the Germans, that's why we had nothing with us.

I see.

But she also didn't have much money. So she was forced to go and seek employment, get a job. On the other hand, I could not go to school, primarily because there was a danger that I may have a medical examination. And I was circumcised and that was-- none of the Christian males were circumcised, so that would have been immediately a giveaway.

My mother got a job in the German army restaurant in the city of Lw³w. And she was put in charge of the kitchen for the employees. And she sort of had a fairly good job, because she had enough food, and she was able to bring food for me, where everybody was sort of going hungry, even the Gentile population.

We visited, on a few occasions, the Jewish section of Lw³w, which only then, at that point, was being organized into a

ghetto. Where in my town, they were already liquidating the ghetto. In LwA³w, they just started it. And actually, we spoke to Jewish people there. Nobody would really believe us that the plan of moving all these people into the ghetto was to annihilate them.

Anyhow, my mother, as I said, was raised in Vienna, so she spoke, obviously, German, Viennese German. And her superior, which was, I think, a lieutenant of the German army was the chief of that restaurant, of the kitchen at least. At one point, when there was some sort of a robbery inside the restaurant, and they were going to investigate, and they called in the police to investigate, my mother went over to him and said she wanted to be excused because she said she didn't feel well.

So he confronted her. He says, you don't have to worry about it. I know that you're Jewish and nothing will happen to you, which came as a tremendous shock to her. And subsequently, they had a party. And she was told to be at the party, was invited to be at the party, and was seated next to an SS officer.

And her boss, the Viennese lieutenant, was drunk. But the party went without a hitch. But then my mother really got scared, because she thought that at one moment he may not be as cautious and unwillingly, probably, say something and she would be killed.

By pure coincidence, walking through the streets of LwA³w, she spotted a man that she knew from before the war from our town, a Ukrainian man who lived in LwA³w. And she spoke with him and told him about our situation. And he was very sympathetic, and he wanted to help us. And he suggested that my mother ask for an audience with the archbishop. His official title was the metropolitan of the Greek Catholic denomination of the Ukrainian church, which had its seat, it's a mini Vatican in LwA³w.

And we went there-- my mother went there. She had an audience with this very old man. And he was on record really-- after the war, it was proven-- it was on record that he tried to help Jews, to save Jews. Perhaps for other reasons, also, because he-- one of his motives was to have the Jews converted to adopt Christianity as its religion, to adopt the New Testament.

He wanted to help us, and they did. But at first, they didn't know how to exactly do it. And finally the plan evolved that my mother and I brought back authentic documents of a woman and her son who were Roman Catholics. And officially, we were converted from Roman Catholicism to Greek Catholicism and given authentic documents. In reality, we were also baptized to adopt Christianity.

The name of this metropolitan, his name was Andrey Sheptytsky, who was a very, very well-known-- every Ukrainian person in the world knows of him. There is a movement now in Canada, where there is a college-- Saint Nicholas College, I believe, in Ottawa-- they are preparing the documentation for having Metropolitan Sheptytsky eventually canonized.

And I wrote once an article in the Ukrainian newspaper describing how church helped me. So I was interviewed by the two priests from that college who are directly involved with the documentation. And during my baptismal, my godfather was a very prominent priest in that church, who was actually the chancellor of the church.

So now armed with the new documents, we were a little more secure. Because in case we would be caught, these documents were verifiable. They would call the church, and they would indeed say that we were Greek Catholics.

The church offered us a sanctuary. They wanted to place my mother in a monastery and place me into some sort of a home for boys or whatever. But my mother chose not to accept this hospitality and this offer, because she didn't really want to part with me.

So this Ukraine man who introduced us to the suggestion of going to the church, he took us to another town, to his hometown, which was called CzortkA³w, which is not that-- too far away from StanislawA³w, where we originally came from. And he brought us to the house of his son, who was a bachelor and lived with his-- with his aunt-- the man who brought us, his sister.

And his son was a lawyer. And on a few days after we arrived there, he told my mother that he recognized her from his days when he was practicing law-- was clerking in the court in Stanislaw³w. And he knew who my mother was. So he says, you're not Mrs. [PERSONAL NAME], as her adopted name was, he said, but your name is Mrs. Horowitz.

And he was very kind. He said he wishes us good luck. But he was afraid that by living in the same house with us, if we were to be found out to be Jews, we would be killed, and he would be killed. So he asked us, in no uncertain terms, to please find another place to go.

I think at this point, we'll have to take a short break.

Yes.

OK.

I forgot to change the tape.

And we'll come back.

We'll come back.

Thank you.