

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:25,200

2

00:00:25,200 --> 00:00:29,640

Welcome, I'm Joseph Brail,
co-director of the Kean College

3

00:00:29,640 --> 00:00:31,800

Holocaust Resource Center.

4

00:00:31,800 --> 00:00:37,320

Today, Thursday,
November 12th, 1992,

5

00:00:37,320 --> 00:00:39,410

we are privileged to
have with us Mrs. Julia

6

00:00:39,410 --> 00:00:42,210

Altholz of South Orange?

7

00:00:42,210 --> 00:00:42,840

Maplewood.

8

00:00:42,840 --> 00:00:43,800

Maplewood.

9

00:00:43,800 --> 00:00:48,090

And Mrs. Altholz
will be good enough

10

00:00:48,090 --> 00:00:52,320

to share with us
her story of what

11

00:00:52,320 --> 00:00:55,380

happened to her as a
little girl in Poland.

12

00:00:55,380 --> 00:00:58,290

Mrs. Altholz, perhaps

you'll start by telling us

13

00:00:58,290 --> 00:01:00,550
where and when you were born.

14

00:01:00,550 --> 00:01:07,320
I was born in 1932
in Lwow, Poland.

15

00:01:07,320 --> 00:01:12,690
But I lived in Szerszeniwce,
which was a small village where

16

00:01:12,690 --> 00:01:14,230
my father had a farm.

17

00:01:14,230 --> 00:01:18,080
So although I was born in town,
I don't know exactly when,

18

00:01:18,080 --> 00:01:20,250
but we went back home,
which was Szerszeniwce.

19

00:01:20,250 --> 00:01:23,790

20

00:01:23,790 --> 00:01:27,000
Do we have
Szerszeniwce over here?

21

00:01:27,000 --> 00:01:30,720
Well, I put down
Lwow, because it is--

22

00:01:30,720 --> 00:01:31,860
well, yes, I don't have.

23

00:01:31,860 --> 00:01:34,320
This is Szybowice, where
I stayed during the war.

24

00:01:34,320 --> 00:01:38,010
But I was actually born in Lwow
and lived in Szerszeniowce.

25
00:01:38,010 --> 00:01:44,880
It's S-Z-E-R-- can I?

26
00:01:44,880 --> 00:01:46,680
I think maybe I should do it.

27
00:01:46,680 --> 00:01:47,706
Szerszeniowce.

28
00:01:47,706 --> 00:01:52,930

29
00:01:52,930 --> 00:01:55,960
It's C-Z-E-N-I-O with an umlaut.

30
00:01:55,960 --> 00:01:56,740
All right.

31
00:01:56,740 --> 00:01:58,840
It's a very small hamlet.

32
00:01:58,840 --> 00:02:00,460
All right.

33
00:02:00,460 --> 00:02:06,100
You have here some
wonderful family pictures.

34
00:02:06,100 --> 00:02:10,690
Perhaps we'll begin by taking
a look at the older of the two

35
00:02:10,690 --> 00:02:11,300
pictures.

36
00:02:11,300 --> 00:02:11,800
Yes.

37

00:02:11,800 --> 00:02:12,967

Can you say something about?

38

00:02:12,967 --> 00:02:13,690

Yes.

39

00:02:13,690 --> 00:02:15,700

This is my mother's family.

40

00:02:15,700 --> 00:02:17,920

And she was a young girl.

41

00:02:17,920 --> 00:02:22,230

This is my mother, the younger brother, her younger brother.

42

00:02:22,230 --> 00:02:26,200

My maternal grandparents, my grandmother, my grandfather.

43

00:02:26,200 --> 00:02:29,110

These are different uncles and aunts.

44

00:02:29,110 --> 00:02:33,050

They're all cousins of my mother.

45

00:02:33,050 --> 00:02:35,900

And what happened to them?

46

00:02:35,900 --> 00:02:43,300

Everyone in this picture except my youngest uncle

47

00:02:43,300 --> 00:02:44,980

was lost in the Holocaust.

48

00:02:44,980 --> 00:02:46,620

They were all killed.

49

00:02:46,620 --> 00:02:48,700

None of them were in
concentration camp.

50

00:02:48,700 --> 00:02:55,540

They actually perished before
by shootings and other means

51

00:02:55,540 --> 00:02:57,200

of killing people.

52

00:02:57,200 --> 00:03:01,270

So there are 14 people in this
picture and only two lived

53

00:03:01,270 --> 00:03:01,950

through the war.

54

00:03:01,950 --> 00:03:02,450

Is that it?

55

00:03:02,450 --> 00:03:05,200

Well, my mother didn't
live through the war.

56

00:03:05,200 --> 00:03:06,970

She was killed in the war, too.

57

00:03:06,970 --> 00:03:10,420

This was, as far as I can
tell you, it's only one,

58

00:03:10,420 --> 00:03:13,990

my uncle Kuba, who survived.

59

00:03:13,990 --> 00:03:16,580

And whom I met after the war.

60

00:03:16,580 --> 00:03:18,210

So one out of the 14?

61

00:03:18,210 --> 00:03:19,160

Yes.

62

00:03:19,160 --> 00:03:23,320

And the other 13 were
perished during the Holocaust.

63

00:03:23,320 --> 00:03:24,790

Yes.

64

00:03:24,790 --> 00:03:27,160

In this picture, what do we see?

65

00:03:27,160 --> 00:03:29,860

This is my father's family.

66

00:03:29,860 --> 00:03:34,000

And this is my
mother and father,

67

00:03:34,000 --> 00:03:38,950

my paternal grandmother,
my father's two brothers,

68

00:03:38,950 --> 00:03:40,940

a cousin.

69

00:03:40,940 --> 00:03:48,670

And there am I. Out of this
picture, we were luckier there.

70

00:03:48,670 --> 00:03:51,580

One, my father survived.

71

00:03:51,580 --> 00:03:59,210

His middle brother,
his cousin, and I.

72

00:03:59,210 --> 00:04:01,760

That's how many people?

73

00:04:01,760 --> 00:04:04,130

There were, let's

say, four people

74

00:04:04,130 --> 00:04:05,780
survived out of this picture.

75

00:04:05,780 --> 00:04:09,940

76

00:04:09,940 --> 00:04:12,660
There are 13 people in the
picture and four survived.

77

00:04:12,660 --> 00:04:14,710
Yes.

78

00:04:14,710 --> 00:04:15,210
All right.

79

00:04:15,210 --> 00:04:19,380
Let's now get back to try
to build up your story.

80

00:04:19,380 --> 00:04:20,920
When were you born?

81

00:04:20,920 --> 00:04:23,700
In 1932.

82

00:04:23,700 --> 00:04:24,930
August 18th.

83

00:04:24,930 --> 00:04:25,470
All right.

84

00:04:25,470 --> 00:04:27,268
That means that when
the war broke out,

85

00:04:27,268 --> 00:04:29,060
you were just passed
your seventh birthday.

86

00:04:29,060 --> 00:04:31,650

I was seven, yes.

87

00:04:31,650 --> 00:04:36,720

Do you recall life of the
first seven years of your life?

88

00:04:36,720 --> 00:04:38,910

Yes, I recall them
quite vividly.

89

00:04:38,910 --> 00:04:46,050

And I think that those years
made such a positive impact

90

00:04:46,050 --> 00:04:54,120

on me that maybe I came out
of this horror not totally

91

00:04:54,120 --> 00:04:57,720

and completely without hope.

92

00:04:57,720 --> 00:05:01,410

And I think it was
partly the way I grew up

93

00:05:01,410 --> 00:05:02,790

to the point of the war.

94

00:05:02,790 --> 00:05:06,240

And also some of the years
during the war, where

95

00:05:06,240 --> 00:05:07,650

I was lucky.

96

00:05:07,650 --> 00:05:10,710

We lived on a farm
which my father owned.

97

00:05:10,710 --> 00:05:11,940

It was a big place.

98
00:05:11,940 --> 00:05:16,410
We had woods, and river,
and cows, and pigs,

99
00:05:16,410 --> 00:05:18,900
and horses, and chickens.

100
00:05:18,900 --> 00:05:23,730
And I would think that it was an
idyllic life for a little girl.

101
00:05:23,730 --> 00:05:28,170
I was an only child,
probably very spoiled.

102
00:05:28,170 --> 00:05:30,930
Had the run of the place.

103
00:05:30,930 --> 00:05:36,270
Had good people around me,
uncles and aunts, grandparents,

104
00:05:36,270 --> 00:05:39,420
and only one grandmother,
who lived very close.

105
00:05:39,420 --> 00:05:43,500
She had a little tobacco
farm and a tobacco store.

106
00:05:43,500 --> 00:05:45,520
Lots of kids to play with.

107
00:05:45,520 --> 00:05:50,470
And I remember those years
as just absolutely wonderful.

108
00:05:50,470 --> 00:05:53,220
I traveled with my parents.

109
00:05:53,220 --> 00:05:55,180

I just had a wonderful time.

110
00:05:55,180 --> 00:05:57,510
I don't remember any
trauma other than once

111
00:05:57,510 --> 00:06:03,810
being bitten on my back by a
chicken who sat on her eggs.

112
00:06:03,810 --> 00:06:05,340
And I came too close to her.

113
00:06:05,340 --> 00:06:07,110
And she jumped and I fell.

114
00:06:07,110 --> 00:06:08,770
And she sort of
nudged me on my back.

115
00:06:08,770 --> 00:06:11,220
That was the biggest
trauma of my childhood.

116
00:06:11,220 --> 00:06:12,870
And you had just--

117
00:06:12,870 --> 00:06:15,360
had you begun school
before the war broke out?

118
00:06:15,360 --> 00:06:16,980
No, not yet.

119
00:06:16,980 --> 00:06:20,460
I was supposed to begin
school at the age of seven

120
00:06:20,460 --> 00:06:21,790
and then the war broke out.

121
00:06:21,790 --> 00:06:25,720

So I never actually went to school till after the war.

122
00:06:25,720 --> 00:06:31,080
But I don't believe that I was writing, but I think I read.

123
00:06:31,080 --> 00:06:33,030
I somehow-- I don't know where.

124
00:06:33,030 --> 00:06:37,290
I believe it was my aunt Fanny, who, when she came on vacation,

125
00:06:37,290 --> 00:06:40,110
would, I think, try to teach me.

126
00:06:40,110 --> 00:06:41,940
And I read a little bit.

127
00:06:41,940 --> 00:06:45,120
So your father, you say, was a--

128
00:06:45,120 --> 00:06:45,730
Farmer.

129
00:06:45,730 --> 00:06:46,320
--a farmer.

130
00:06:46,320 --> 00:06:47,470
And your mother?

131
00:06:47,470 --> 00:06:50,760
My mother was my mother and his wife.

132
00:06:50,760 --> 00:06:51,450
And a housewife.

133
00:06:51,450 --> 00:06:52,320
And a housewife.

134
00:06:52,320 --> 00:06:53,340
Very much so.

135
00:06:53,340 --> 00:06:55,500
All right.

136
00:06:55,500 --> 00:06:59,430
When the war broke out,
your part of Poland,

137
00:06:59,430 --> 00:07:00,540
what happened to it?

138
00:07:00,540 --> 00:07:05,220
Our part of Poland was invaded
by the Russians in 1939.

139
00:07:05,220 --> 00:07:09,070
And because my father was a
farm owner, or a land owner,

140
00:07:09,070 --> 00:07:12,180
he was considered
rather dangerous.

141
00:07:12,180 --> 00:07:17,190
They tried to take
all land owners

142
00:07:17,190 --> 00:07:23,460
and confiscate their lands and
send the perpetrators, people

143
00:07:23,460 --> 00:07:26,370
who own land, to Siberia.

144
00:07:26,370 --> 00:07:27,930
But it did not happen to us.

145
00:07:27,930 --> 00:07:34,470
Because as soon as the Russians
invaded, we went back to Lwow.

146
00:07:34,470 --> 00:07:38,880
Lwow was a beautiful larger
city in Eastern Poland,

147
00:07:38,880 --> 00:07:40,230
where we had an apartment.

148
00:07:40,230 --> 00:07:42,090
My parents maintained
an apartment there

149
00:07:42,090 --> 00:07:45,420
throughout the time that
we had owned the farm.

150
00:07:45,420 --> 00:07:49,310
And we went there in order,
according to my father,

151
00:07:49,310 --> 00:07:51,270
get lost in the crowd.

152
00:07:51,270 --> 00:07:52,950
And indeed, we did.

153
00:07:52,950 --> 00:07:57,300
He left everything, as
far as our possessions.

154
00:07:57,300 --> 00:07:59,070
And we went to Lwow.

155
00:07:59,070 --> 00:08:03,690
And he, very shortly
after getting there,

156
00:08:03,690 --> 00:08:09,870
decided that he was going to
get a job as a bookkeeper.

157
00:08:09,870 --> 00:08:15,000

And indeed, he got a job in
a hospital as a bookkeeper.

158
00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:18,210
And he then rose to the
ranks of [POLISH],, which

159
00:08:18,210 --> 00:08:21,270
means the top bookkeeper.

160
00:08:21,270 --> 00:08:24,120

161
00:08:24,120 --> 00:08:25,110
There was an anecdote.

162
00:08:25,110 --> 00:08:26,370
I'm not sure that it was true.

163
00:08:26,370 --> 00:08:29,040
But members of our
family kept saying

164
00:08:29,040 --> 00:08:33,330
that he went to the
hospital and told

165
00:08:33,330 --> 00:08:36,809
the people that he's always
worked for a big landowner.

166
00:08:36,809 --> 00:08:37,980
And he worked very hard.

167
00:08:37,980 --> 00:08:41,280
And he would show the
people his varicose veins.

168
00:08:41,280 --> 00:08:44,640
That he worked so hard, and
that now he deserves a good job.

169

00:08:44,640 --> 00:08:46,390

I'm not sure that
the story is true.

170

00:08:46,390 --> 00:08:49,830

But that's certainly the
legend in our family.

171

00:08:49,830 --> 00:08:50,880

And we stayed.

172

00:08:50,880 --> 00:08:54,870

I went there for the first time
to school, for a short time,

173

00:08:54,870 --> 00:08:57,432

to a Russian school.

174

00:08:57,432 --> 00:08:58,890

I didn't know the
Russian alphabet.

175

00:08:58,890 --> 00:09:00,780

I mean, I've never--
it was very foreign.

176

00:09:00,780 --> 00:09:01,890

But for a few months.

177

00:09:01,890 --> 00:09:03,990

And I don't really
remember much of that time.

178

00:09:03,990 --> 00:09:06,270

I do remember not
liking it, because I

179

00:09:06,270 --> 00:09:08,040

didn't understand anybody.

180

00:09:08,040 --> 00:09:11,310

But I did learn the
Russian alphabet

181
00:09:11,310 --> 00:09:14,760
that time, which helped me
years and years later when

182
00:09:14,760 --> 00:09:17,310
I went to the Soviet
Union with our family

183
00:09:17,310 --> 00:09:19,410
and I still could read
some of the alphabet.

184
00:09:19,410 --> 00:09:25,870

185
00:09:25,870 --> 00:09:30,910
The story of the war
in Poland is two parts.

186
00:09:30,910 --> 00:09:33,640
One, '39, when
Poland was divided

187
00:09:33,640 --> 00:09:34,917
between Russia and Poland.

188
00:09:34,917 --> 00:09:35,500
Right, for me.

189
00:09:35,500 --> 00:09:39,280
And June '41, when
the Russians--

190
00:09:39,280 --> 00:09:41,875
when the Germans--

191
00:09:41,875 --> 00:09:42,460
Hitler, yes.

192
00:09:42,460 --> 00:09:46,750
--invaded and went on to Russia.

193

00:09:46,750 --> 00:09:49,628

Can you describe what happened
to you and your family

194

00:09:49,628 --> 00:09:50,170

at this time?

195

00:09:50,170 --> 00:09:52,910

As I said, we lived
in our apartment.

196

00:09:52,910 --> 00:09:59,470

And I don't remember
many specific times

197

00:09:59,470 --> 00:10:02,290

that I had something
extraordinary happen.

198

00:10:02,290 --> 00:10:03,017

I went to school.

199

00:10:03,017 --> 00:10:04,600

As I said, I didn't
like it very much.

200

00:10:04,600 --> 00:10:06,370

And I understand my
mother kept me out

201

00:10:06,370 --> 00:10:09,580

of school if I became
very distraught about it.

202

00:10:09,580 --> 00:10:11,230

But generally, there was no--

203

00:10:11,230 --> 00:10:12,700

I mean, it was OK.

204

00:10:12,700 --> 00:10:16,090

But then as soon
as Hitler invaded,

205
00:10:16,090 --> 00:10:20,860
it was days when my
father came home one day.

206
00:10:20,860 --> 00:10:28,900
We lived in a town, in Lwow,
in a fairly non-Jewish area.

207
00:10:28,900 --> 00:10:32,260
It was Krupiarzka,
which was a town--

208
00:10:32,260 --> 00:10:35,310
a street that not that
many Jews lived there.

209
00:10:35,310 --> 00:10:37,180
So in that respect,
we were lucky.

210
00:10:37,180 --> 00:10:39,873
Because apparently,
the Akcjas, as they

211
00:10:39,873 --> 00:10:41,290
were called, where
they would keep

212
00:10:41,290 --> 00:10:45,550
taking Jews out and shooting
them, or taking them on lorries

213
00:10:45,550 --> 00:10:47,057
and taking them.

214
00:10:47,057 --> 00:10:48,640
At that time, we
certainly didn't know

215
00:10:48,640 --> 00:10:50,050

where they were taking them.

216

00:10:50,050 --> 00:10:53,957

This did not happen so much
in our little neighborhood

217

00:10:53,957 --> 00:10:55,540

because there were
not that many Jews.

218

00:10:55,540 --> 00:10:57,790

But my father came
home from work

219

00:10:57,790 --> 00:11:03,200

and told me, told us, that
there are these terrible things

220

00:11:03,200 --> 00:11:03,700

happening.

221

00:11:03,700 --> 00:11:05,710

People are being
shot in the streets.

222

00:11:05,710 --> 00:11:08,920

All lawyers, doctors,
professors who are Jewish

223

00:11:08,920 --> 00:11:12,730

are being taken and either
shot right there on the spot

224

00:11:12,730 --> 00:11:14,000

or taken away.

225

00:11:14,000 --> 00:11:17,080

And he thought that
this was the time

226

00:11:17,080 --> 00:11:22,120

to go back to Szerszeniwce,
to go back to our home.

227

00:11:22,120 --> 00:11:24,520

Because after all,
this was our home.

228

00:11:24,520 --> 00:11:29,890

And indeed, after listening to
a few of these very unfortunate

229

00:11:29,890 --> 00:11:34,570

occurrences, he decided
that we should go back home.

230

00:11:34,570 --> 00:11:37,540

Home was Szerszeniwce.

231

00:11:37,540 --> 00:11:39,940

I must tell you, I don't
know the reason for it,

232

00:11:39,940 --> 00:11:41,770

I don't remember that time.

233

00:11:41,770 --> 00:11:43,180

I don't remember.

234

00:11:43,180 --> 00:11:48,310

I remember Lwow, or Lemberg,
as it was called in German.

235

00:11:48,310 --> 00:11:51,340

But I don't remember
that short period of time

236

00:11:51,340 --> 00:11:53,170

when we went back
to Szerszeniwce.

237

00:11:53,170 --> 00:11:56,980

What I do remember
is coming back

238

00:11:56,980 --> 00:12:02,620
to Jezierzany, which was
a very small town where

239
00:12:02,620 --> 00:12:07,480
my maternal grandparents lived.

240
00:12:07,480 --> 00:12:09,600
At that time, it was
only my grandmother,

241
00:12:09,600 --> 00:12:12,610
because my grandfather had died
of natural causes some years

242
00:12:12,610 --> 00:12:13,720
before.

243
00:12:13,720 --> 00:12:18,730
And we stayed with my
grandmother on my mother's side

244
00:12:18,730 --> 00:12:22,320
in her home for a short while.

245
00:12:22,320 --> 00:12:26,520
And the first biggest
trauma of my life

246
00:12:26,520 --> 00:12:30,090
happened when one day,
my parents were away.

247
00:12:30,090 --> 00:12:33,070
And my grandmother
and I were at home.

248
00:12:33,070 --> 00:12:34,770
I loved washing her hair.

249
00:12:34,770 --> 00:12:38,700
And so since there were no
toys and no, for some reason,

250
00:12:38,700 --> 00:12:41,370
nothing else for me to
do, I washed her hair

251
00:12:41,370 --> 00:12:43,110
about four times a day.

252
00:12:43,110 --> 00:12:46,320
And I was washing her
hair, when suddenly, there

253
00:12:46,320 --> 00:12:47,970
were screams and yells.

254
00:12:47,970 --> 00:12:51,030
And I remember my
grandmother drying her hair

255
00:12:51,030 --> 00:12:52,420
and grabbing me.

256
00:12:52,420 --> 00:12:55,260
Well, apparently
there was an Akcja,

257
00:12:55,260 --> 00:12:57,930
which was that they
were hunting Jews.

258
00:12:57,930 --> 00:13:00,210
That's the only way
I could explain it.

259
00:13:00,210 --> 00:13:03,330
And she grabbed me by my hand.

260
00:13:03,330 --> 00:13:06,150
I wasn't fully dressed,
and I don't know why.

261
00:13:06,150 --> 00:13:07,620

The screams came from outside.

262

00:13:07,620 --> 00:13:08,280

Outside.

263

00:13:08,280 --> 00:13:09,850

The screams came from outside.

264

00:13:09,850 --> 00:13:12,210

She apparently knew
what they signified

265

00:13:12,210 --> 00:13:13,350

because she grabbed me.

266

00:13:13,350 --> 00:13:15,180

And as I say, I
wasn't fully dressed.

267

00:13:15,180 --> 00:13:18,660

It seemed to be that I
was maybe in a nightgown.

268

00:13:18,660 --> 00:13:23,170

And she ran with me
through the streets.

269

00:13:23,170 --> 00:13:28,020

In Poland, very often, there
were basements or cellars

270

00:13:28,020 --> 00:13:30,480

that were not inside the house.

271

00:13:30,480 --> 00:13:32,580

But there was the
house and the entrance,

272

00:13:32,580 --> 00:13:36,660

and next to the house, there
was a door, a trap door,

273

00:13:36,660 --> 00:13:38,880
in the pavement.

274
00:13:38,880 --> 00:13:41,507
You opened the trap door,
you went down the stairs,

275
00:13:41,507 --> 00:13:42,840
and that's where the cellar was.

276
00:13:42,840 --> 00:13:49,950
And at one such point, she
threw open one of those doors

277
00:13:49,950 --> 00:13:56,220
and practically pushed me down
the stairs and said, hide.

278
00:13:56,220 --> 00:13:57,460
Go there, go there.

279
00:13:57,460 --> 00:13:59,730
And I don't remember
exactly the words.

280
00:13:59,730 --> 00:14:02,340
And she ran away.

281
00:14:02,340 --> 00:14:06,070
And I stayed in that
cellar for a while.

282
00:14:06,070 --> 00:14:08,980
I don't know for how long.

283
00:14:08,980 --> 00:14:12,000
And I don't know how I came
to get out of that cellar.

284
00:14:12,000 --> 00:14:14,940
But I guess maybe what
happened was I finally

285

00:14:14,940 --> 00:14:16,590
got out of the cellar.

286

00:14:16,590 --> 00:14:20,512
And I don't know how I got
back to my grandmother's house.

287

00:14:20,512 --> 00:14:21,720
I really don't remember that.

288

00:14:21,720 --> 00:14:22,610
Or try not.

289

00:14:22,610 --> 00:14:23,760
Maybe I'm blocking it.

290

00:14:23,760 --> 00:14:25,830
I'm not sure.

291

00:14:25,830 --> 00:14:28,890
My grandmother was
shot in that raid.

292

00:14:28,890 --> 00:14:31,890
Apparently what happened, they
were just going from house

293

00:14:31,890 --> 00:14:34,110
to house, pulling Jews.

294

00:14:34,110 --> 00:14:37,110
Unlike the way we lived
in Lwow, in Lemberg,

295

00:14:37,110 --> 00:14:39,390
that was totally
non-Jewish area,

296

00:14:39,390 --> 00:14:45,450
my grandmother in her place
lived in a more Jewish area.

297

00:14:45,450 --> 00:14:51,540

And apparently,
she was trying not

298

00:14:51,540 --> 00:14:54,630

to be caught with
me because I guess

299

00:14:54,630 --> 00:14:56,460

she felt it was too dangerous.

300

00:14:56,460 --> 00:14:59,040

So she was trying to
go and hide elsewhere.

301

00:14:59,040 --> 00:15:00,870

And she was shot.

302

00:15:00,870 --> 00:15:03,930

And when I finally got
home-- and I don't exactly

303

00:15:03,930 --> 00:15:06,478

remember how that happened,
whether I did it by myself.

304

00:15:06,478 --> 00:15:07,020

I could have.

305

00:15:07,020 --> 00:15:08,160

I knew the town.

306

00:15:08,160 --> 00:15:09,870

Or somebody took me.

307

00:15:09,870 --> 00:15:15,930

After that Akcja, as they
called it, the raid on Jews,

308

00:15:15,930 --> 00:15:20,520

very quickly, my parents decided
that something very drastic

309
00:15:20,520 --> 00:15:21,510
has to be done.

310
00:15:21,510 --> 00:15:25,800
After the war, I was told, that
this happened several times,

311
00:15:25,800 --> 00:15:31,010
that they were just
arbitrarily hunting Jews.

312
00:15:31,010 --> 00:15:35,090
I think this is when the
thought occurred to my parents

313
00:15:35,090 --> 00:15:37,910
that, in order to
save me, they need

314
00:15:37,910 --> 00:15:43,370
to give me away to a
family, a Christian family.

315
00:15:43,370 --> 00:15:46,790
Because after the war, when I
questioned my parents how this

316
00:15:46,790 --> 00:15:51,530
was born in their minds,
they said, after this Akcja,

317
00:15:51,530 --> 00:15:57,170
after the time that
totally out of nowhere,

318
00:15:57,170 --> 00:15:59,730
this hunt began and
people were killed,

319
00:15:59,730 --> 00:16:02,270
including my grandmother,
they decided.

320

00:16:02,270 --> 00:16:05,503

Where were your parents when
your grandmother was with you,

321

00:16:05,503 --> 00:16:06,920

or you were with
your grandmother?

322

00:16:06,920 --> 00:16:08,660

We were all living together.

323

00:16:08,660 --> 00:16:13,190

But my parents went either to
visit someone or do something.

324

00:16:13,190 --> 00:16:14,450

They left the house.

325

00:16:14,450 --> 00:16:15,020

Yeah.

326

00:16:15,020 --> 00:16:18,740

When this particular Akcja
occurred, where they were,

327

00:16:18,740 --> 00:16:24,650

they were apparently visiting
some friends making plans.

328

00:16:24,650 --> 00:16:27,050

What it is that they
might want to do.

329

00:16:27,050 --> 00:16:31,190

Because it was quite apparent
that being Jewish in Poland

330

00:16:31,190 --> 00:16:33,950

at that time was not
a good thing to be.

331

00:16:33,950 --> 00:16:35,720

And that was just in
the very beginning

332

00:16:35,720 --> 00:16:38,876

of all of the trouble.

333

00:16:38,876 --> 00:16:42,630

But where they were, they
were more in a Christian area.

334

00:16:42,630 --> 00:16:43,130

Right.

335

00:16:43,130 --> 00:16:46,430

And not in the sort of
ghetto type of area,

336

00:16:46,430 --> 00:16:47,570

because many Jews lived.

337

00:16:47,570 --> 00:16:50,150

They went to visit
some Christian friends,

338

00:16:50,150 --> 00:16:56,480

probably to talk about maybe
some way of saving themselves.

339

00:16:56,480 --> 00:17:00,050

And they didn't know about the
Akcja, as they used to call.

340

00:17:00,050 --> 00:17:01,700

They used to call
these raids Akcja.

341

00:17:01,700 --> 00:17:04,640

342

00:17:04,640 --> 00:17:09,859

Did you ever understand why
your grandmother pushed you down

343
00:17:09,859 --> 00:17:12,619
into the cellar and
didn't join you?

344
00:17:12,619 --> 00:17:15,710
I understood it because
I questioned it.

345
00:17:15,710 --> 00:17:22,040
And to save one
small child, I was

346
00:17:22,040 --> 00:17:25,099
given to understand
early in my life

347
00:17:25,099 --> 00:17:30,550
that it was a lucky break
that I didn't look Jewish.

348
00:17:30,550 --> 00:17:36,050
That is, I didn't have a nose
that was supposed to be Jewish.

349
00:17:36,050 --> 00:17:43,300
That was a very prevalent part
of being Jewish, apparently,

350
00:17:43,300 --> 00:17:45,850
in Poland, at least, that
you had a Jewish nose.

351
00:17:45,850 --> 00:17:47,590
And I wasn't very dark.

352
00:17:47,590 --> 00:17:51,950
And I was the lucky one
who didn't look Jewish.

353
00:17:51,950 --> 00:17:57,610
So these looks meant
something, apparently.

354
00:17:57,610 --> 00:18:03,600
And they felt that since
I didn't look Jewish,

355
00:18:03,600 --> 00:18:06,030
being with a person
who looked Jewish,

356
00:18:06,030 --> 00:18:10,260
my grandmother was dark-haired
and dark eyes, a nose that

357
00:18:10,260 --> 00:18:11,520
wasn't perfectly straight.

358
00:18:11,520 --> 00:18:14,130
All of this was told to me,
of course, after the war.

359
00:18:14,130 --> 00:18:16,560
I didn't realize that
there was a Jewish look

360
00:18:16,560 --> 00:18:19,470
till it was made clear to me.

361
00:18:19,470 --> 00:18:26,310
So she thought that a
small child by herself

362
00:18:26,310 --> 00:18:29,400
is more likely to
be safe than someone

363
00:18:29,400 --> 00:18:34,020
with a fairly Jewish-looking
elderly woman.

364
00:18:34,020 --> 00:18:36,480
And so that's why she
pushed me down those stairs

365

00:18:36,480 --> 00:18:38,940

in order to separate
herself from me

366

00:18:38,940 --> 00:18:41,310

and still to keep me safe.

367

00:18:41,310 --> 00:18:46,620

I'm going to ask you to write
down the name of the town

368

00:18:46,620 --> 00:18:48,500

where your grandmother lived.

369

00:18:48,500 --> 00:18:49,950

Jezierzany.

370

00:18:49,950 --> 00:18:52,600

Oh, my goodness.

371

00:18:52,600 --> 00:18:53,637

Jezierzany.

372

00:18:53,637 --> 00:19:01,750

373

00:19:01,750 --> 00:19:04,600

All right.

374

00:19:04,600 --> 00:19:07,600

This is the time when the
Germans had already come.

375

00:19:07,600 --> 00:19:08,830

Oh, yes, absolutely.

376

00:19:08,830 --> 00:19:12,720

And what happened to your
family after that event?

377

00:19:12,720 --> 00:19:15,145

After these Akcjas
and your parents

378
00:19:15,145 --> 00:19:16,960
were looking for some
kind of solution.

379
00:19:16,960 --> 00:19:18,670
What my parents decided--

380
00:19:18,670 --> 00:19:22,690
and of course, all of that
was told to me slightly later.

381
00:19:22,690 --> 00:19:29,770
That the only way to try to
survive is to save the child.

382
00:19:29,770 --> 00:19:32,770
This is how I was
known, the child.

383
00:19:32,770 --> 00:19:37,150
And then when the child is
saved, or put into a place

384
00:19:37,150 --> 00:19:42,760
that seems to be safe, that
they would try and survive

385
00:19:42,760 --> 00:19:43,660
this horror.

386
00:19:43,660 --> 00:19:48,340
And so they decided to give
me away to a Christian family.

387
00:19:48,340 --> 00:19:53,020
Because they've heard
before that children were,

388
00:19:53,020 --> 00:19:57,010
when caught, were put much

quicker into the gas chambers

389

00:19:57,010 --> 00:19:57,730
or being shot.

390

00:19:57,730 --> 00:19:59,470
Because children are of no use.

391

00:19:59,470 --> 00:20:00,700
They certainly couldn't work.

392

00:20:00,700 --> 00:20:02,650
So they wanted to
save the child.

393

00:20:02,650 --> 00:20:07,060
And they did find,
through a grapevine,

394

00:20:07,060 --> 00:20:11,920
a person, whom I learned
to love and respect.

395

00:20:11,920 --> 00:20:17,650
And I called him [POLISH],,
which means grandpa.

396

00:20:17,650 --> 00:20:23,125
And this was Mr. Surowiec, a man
who had a very unusual family.

397

00:20:23,125 --> 00:20:27,130
He had two nieces, whom
he tried to bring up

398

00:20:27,130 --> 00:20:28,060
as his own children.

399

00:20:28,060 --> 00:20:30,370
And then I came on the scene.

400

00:20:30,370 --> 00:20:33,400

And my parents decided
that the only way to do

401
00:20:33,400 --> 00:20:35,330
is to try to save me.

402
00:20:35,330 --> 00:20:36,670
And they did.

403
00:20:36,670 --> 00:20:38,330
They found a person.

404
00:20:38,330 --> 00:20:40,960
It's a very long
and tedious story,

405
00:20:40,960 --> 00:20:43,510
so I don't think it's
possible for me to go into it.

406
00:20:43,510 --> 00:20:47,470
But they did find a person who,
without seeing me, knowing us

407
00:20:47,470 --> 00:20:52,930
at all personally, just knowing
that there is this Jewish child

408
00:20:52,930 --> 00:20:54,850
who needs protection.

409
00:20:54,850 --> 00:20:57,130
What they did need
is a picture of me.

410
00:20:57,130 --> 00:21:03,030
Because again, I apparently
didn't look Jewish.

411
00:21:03,030 --> 00:21:05,730
That is, I didn't have
whatever looks Jewish,

412

00:21:05,730 --> 00:21:07,440
that is dark eyes.

413

00:21:07,440 --> 00:21:09,120
I mean, it's really
very hard for me

414

00:21:09,120 --> 00:21:13,080
to even talk about it, the
prototype of looking Jewish.

415

00:21:13,080 --> 00:21:15,130
But apparently, I
didn't look Jewish.

416

00:21:15,130 --> 00:21:16,320
I didn't have a long nose.

417

00:21:16,320 --> 00:21:17,790
I wasn't dark.

418

00:21:17,790 --> 00:21:24,540
And so lucky me, I
could pass as a non-Jew.

419

00:21:24,540 --> 00:21:29,100
And those were the
only prerequisites

420

00:21:29,100 --> 00:21:30,600
that these people had.

421

00:21:30,600 --> 00:21:33,180
They said, we hate
to say this to you,

422

00:21:33,180 --> 00:21:35,670
but the safety of
the child depends on

423

00:21:35,670 --> 00:21:37,830
for her not looking

typically Jewish,

424

00:21:37,830 --> 00:21:41,250
meaning having dark eyes,
having slightly less

425

00:21:41,250 --> 00:21:44,580
than a perfect nose, dark hair.

426

00:21:44,580 --> 00:21:47,970
I mean, just talking about
it makes me uncomfortable.

427

00:21:47,970 --> 00:21:50,730
Do you recall friends of yours--

428

00:21:50,730 --> 00:21:54,930
little, young friends of yours
from the farm or in this town?

429

00:21:54,930 --> 00:21:57,180
Yes, I recall them
from the farm.

430

00:21:57,180 --> 00:22:02,550
They were all children of people
who were farmers and worked

431

00:22:02,550 --> 00:22:04,770
with my father.

432

00:22:04,770 --> 00:22:06,240
And they were--

433

00:22:06,240 --> 00:22:07,230
I loved them all.

434

00:22:07,230 --> 00:22:08,250
They were kids.

435

00:22:08,250 --> 00:22:10,410
We were all children.

436
00:22:10,410 --> 00:22:13,230
Whether we were lucky
enough, or whether I

437
00:22:13,230 --> 00:22:16,620
was lucky enough never to
know that there was something

438
00:22:16,620 --> 00:22:18,990
wrong with me, that suddenly
there was so much wrong

439
00:22:18,990 --> 00:22:21,503
with me when Hitler came
that I had to be hidden

440
00:22:21,503 --> 00:22:22,170
and all of that.

441
00:22:22,170 --> 00:22:23,910
As a child, I was
just one of the kids.

442
00:22:23,910 --> 00:22:26,670
What was the population of the--

443
00:22:26,670 --> 00:22:27,390
On our farm?

444
00:22:27,390 --> 00:22:29,850
--community where
your farm was located?

445
00:22:29,850 --> 00:22:31,770
There really was
not a community.

446
00:22:31,770 --> 00:22:33,930
There was a lot of land.

447
00:22:33,930 --> 00:22:36,600

My father owned most of it.

448

00:22:36,600 --> 00:22:42,420

And there were people,
farmers and experts

449

00:22:42,420 --> 00:22:44,170

in different fields.

450

00:22:44,170 --> 00:22:46,110

One knew a lot about tobacco.

451

00:22:46,110 --> 00:22:47,370

One knew a lot about horses.

452

00:22:47,370 --> 00:22:50,370

The other one knew
about sheep and ducks.

453

00:22:50,370 --> 00:22:54,210

And these were people
who lived in the village.

454

00:22:54,210 --> 00:22:59,160

Mostly very close to the farm.

455

00:22:59,160 --> 00:23:01,560

Some of them had small
farms of their own,

456

00:23:01,560 --> 00:23:03,930

some worked with my father.

457

00:23:03,930 --> 00:23:05,520

But these were
not Jewish people?

458

00:23:05,520 --> 00:23:06,608

None of them were Jewish.

459

00:23:06,608 --> 00:23:07,650

You were the only family.

460
00:23:07,650 --> 00:23:09,810
No, we were the only family.

461
00:23:09,810 --> 00:23:14,340
And my grandmother, my
paternal grandmother, who

462
00:23:14,340 --> 00:23:16,500
used to own a tobacco store.

463
00:23:16,500 --> 00:23:18,720
She grew tobacco then sold it.

464
00:23:18,720 --> 00:23:22,530
There were some other relatives
in other, smaller villages

465
00:23:22,530 --> 00:23:24,690
around.

466
00:23:24,690 --> 00:23:29,580
I only remember, you
know, wonderful things

467
00:23:29,580 --> 00:23:30,750
about that farm.

468
00:23:30,750 --> 00:23:32,040
A child on a farm.

469
00:23:32,040 --> 00:23:34,125
I couldn't imagine
a better life.

470
00:23:34,125 --> 00:23:36,660
Now, when you came to--

471
00:23:36,660 --> 00:23:38,190
how do I say, Jezierzany?

472

00:23:38,190 --> 00:23:39,630
Jezierzany, Jezierzany.

473
00:23:39,630 --> 00:23:40,770
That was my grand.

474
00:23:40,770 --> 00:23:41,640
That was after Lwow.

475
00:23:41,640 --> 00:23:42,180
Yes.

476
00:23:42,180 --> 00:23:46,510
Lwow became uninhabitable
for your family.

477
00:23:46,510 --> 00:23:47,010
Or any Jews.

478
00:23:47,010 --> 00:23:48,000
And your parents
decided to leave.

479
00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:48,740
Right, right.

480
00:23:48,740 --> 00:23:50,860
And came to the grandmother.

481
00:23:50,860 --> 00:23:52,110
To Jezierzany, to grandmother.

482
00:23:52,110 --> 00:23:53,860
We stayed there for
a very short, yes.

483
00:23:53,860 --> 00:23:54,902
The maternal grandmother.

484
00:23:54,902 --> 00:23:57,600
And did you have friends there?

485

00:23:57,600 --> 00:23:59,340

I don't remember if I did.

486

00:23:59,340 --> 00:24:00,723

I don't think so.

487

00:24:00,723 --> 00:24:01,890

You weren't there very long?

488

00:24:01,890 --> 00:24:03,420

No, I wasn't there very long.

489

00:24:03,420 --> 00:24:08,250

Again, I don't really-- being a child, it's hard to know time.

490

00:24:08,250 --> 00:24:10,290

I know that I wasn't there very long.

491

00:24:10,290 --> 00:24:11,220

It was a short time.

492

00:24:11,220 --> 00:24:11,720

All right.

493

00:24:11,720 --> 00:24:15,270

Then when you were given over for hiding

494

00:24:15,270 --> 00:24:18,760

with this Christian family, what town was that?

495

00:24:18,760 --> 00:24:20,850

That was in Szepowce.

496

00:24:20,850 --> 00:24:21,720

And I think I--

497

00:24:21,720 --> 00:24:22,410

We have that.

498
00:24:22,410 --> 00:24:22,980
Yes.

499
00:24:22,980 --> 00:24:26,550
That was a small village.

500
00:24:26,550 --> 00:24:30,810
And there, there were
no Jews at that time

501
00:24:30,810 --> 00:24:34,290
that were living as normal
human beings, obviously.

502
00:24:34,290 --> 00:24:36,720
They were either
in camps somewhere.

503
00:24:36,720 --> 00:24:41,700
There was a small working
camp not too far from there

504
00:24:41,700 --> 00:24:43,140
where they had Jews.

505
00:24:43,140 --> 00:24:44,830
There was like an--

506
00:24:44,830 --> 00:24:46,510
it wasn't a concentration camp.

507
00:24:46,510 --> 00:24:47,640
It was a work camp.

508
00:24:47,640 --> 00:24:48,580
A labor camp.

509
00:24:48,580 --> 00:24:52,590
A labor camp, a
small labor camp.

510
00:24:52,590 --> 00:24:56,790
What large town was near?

511
00:24:56,790 --> 00:24:58,830
It was Jezierzany, it was there.

512
00:24:58,830 --> 00:25:00,180
They were all near each other.

513
00:25:00,180 --> 00:25:01,430
They were all near each other.

514
00:25:01,430 --> 00:25:06,060
And the reason why I was
given away to these people,

515
00:25:06,060 --> 00:25:08,610
it was not only because
that was the person who

516
00:25:08,610 --> 00:25:13,020
was willing and able
to take me, but it

517
00:25:13,020 --> 00:25:16,290
was the proximity of places
my parents knew, I guess.

518
00:25:16,290 --> 00:25:20,880
They felt a little more
secure in giving me away

519
00:25:20,880 --> 00:25:25,110
to people who are not in
a very different area.

520
00:25:25,110 --> 00:25:28,020
Now, your parents
managed to find

521
00:25:28,020 --> 00:25:30,310

somebody who would take you in.

522

00:25:30,310 --> 00:25:33,255

Yes.

523

00:25:33,255 --> 00:25:36,060

It would help, since
you mentioned his name,

524

00:25:36,060 --> 00:25:39,750

and he's obviously a
wonderful human being,

525

00:25:39,750 --> 00:25:42,490

if you just put down the name
of the gentleman who saved you.

526

00:25:42,490 --> 00:25:42,990

Yes.

527

00:25:42,990 --> 00:25:47,300

528

00:25:47,300 --> 00:25:53,010

His name was Andrzej,
Andrew, Surowiec.

529

00:25:53,010 --> 00:25:58,400

530

00:25:58,400 --> 00:26:03,110

Did you understand why
did he take you in?

531

00:26:03,110 --> 00:26:05,090

My parents told me.

532

00:26:05,090 --> 00:26:10,520

As a matter of fact, I often
tell this to my children.

533

00:26:10,520 --> 00:26:12,950

I was, I guess, not quite eight.

534

00:26:12,950 --> 00:26:13,730

Or maybe I was.

535

00:26:13,730 --> 00:26:17,720

I must have been eight by then,
when my father and mother sat

536

00:26:17,720 --> 00:26:18,330

me down.

537

00:26:18,330 --> 00:26:20,480

And first of all, the
biggest shock of my life

538

00:26:20,480 --> 00:26:22,520

was when my mother
told me from now on,

539

00:26:22,520 --> 00:26:24,000

I have to wash my own hair.

540

00:26:24,000 --> 00:26:27,350

I had very, very long
hair in long braids.

541

00:26:27,350 --> 00:26:28,670

And that was a trauma.

542

00:26:28,670 --> 00:26:30,140

I mean, it's a childish trauma.

543

00:26:30,140 --> 00:26:32,360

But was a trauma to
be able to manage it.

544

00:26:32,360 --> 00:26:34,910

So I was very suspicious
that all of a sudden,

545

00:26:34,910 --> 00:26:36,050

I had to do this.

546
00:26:36,050 --> 00:26:40,440
But they wanted me to be as
self-sufficient as possible.

547
00:26:40,440 --> 00:26:41,900
Another thing that
my mother said,

548
00:26:41,900 --> 00:26:46,675
which I admired so much when
I became a mother of a child,

549
00:26:46,675 --> 00:26:47,770
of a daughter.

550
00:26:47,770 --> 00:26:49,520
I have a son and a daughter.

551
00:26:49,520 --> 00:26:51,740
But when my daughter
was born, I was really--

552
00:26:51,740 --> 00:26:53,040
it came back to me.

553
00:26:53,040 --> 00:26:56,570
My mother told me all
about being a female,

554
00:26:56,570 --> 00:26:59,120
being a woman, at age eight.

555
00:26:59,120 --> 00:27:00,710
All the things that
I needed to know.

556
00:27:00,710 --> 00:27:02,580
Because she felt that
there were some things

557

00:27:02,580 --> 00:27:06,410

I needed to know in
order to protect myself.

558

00:27:06,410 --> 00:27:08,240

And they told me
all of these things

559

00:27:08,240 --> 00:27:10,730

within about four evenings.

560

00:27:10,730 --> 00:27:13,700

They were telling me how
to take care of myself.

561

00:27:13,700 --> 00:27:15,260

I had to wash my own hair.

562

00:27:15,260 --> 00:27:16,550

And all other things.

563

00:27:16,550 --> 00:27:21,680

Because they told me that
they are going to let me

564

00:27:21,680 --> 00:27:25,520

stay with some very, very
nice people for a short time

565

00:27:25,520 --> 00:27:26,750

because times are bad.

566

00:27:26,750 --> 00:27:29,630

And I guess in the
way that they could

567

00:27:29,630 --> 00:27:33,800

find to explain to me the
bad times without actually

568

00:27:33,800 --> 00:27:37,280

frightening me more than
I was already frightened.

569

00:27:37,280 --> 00:27:41,000

And they told me that I will
be living with a family who

570

00:27:41,000 --> 00:27:43,220

will take care of me,
who are very nice,

571

00:27:43,220 --> 00:27:45,560

who are very sweet people.

572

00:27:45,560 --> 00:27:47,120

Just for a little time.

573

00:27:47,120 --> 00:27:49,430

And then that my parents
will come and get me

574

00:27:49,430 --> 00:27:53,630

again when the bad people
will leave, and war will stop.

575

00:27:53,630 --> 00:27:57,170

And what I remember is
that I didn't understand

576

00:27:57,170 --> 00:27:59,330

much what they were saying.

577

00:27:59,330 --> 00:28:01,705

And they said--

578

00:28:01,705 --> 00:28:03,080

But you were going
to leave them.

579

00:28:03,080 --> 00:28:04,760

But I was going to leave them.

580

00:28:04,760 --> 00:28:07,380

And I did.

581
00:28:07,380 --> 00:28:09,740
But I think the one
thing that helped

582
00:28:09,740 --> 00:28:12,380
me, that I wasn't
totally traumatized,

583
00:28:12,380 --> 00:28:15,680
was that they made
it a big deal.

584
00:28:15,680 --> 00:28:20,920
Because I arrived on the little
farm at Mr. and Mrs.-- not

585
00:28:20,920 --> 00:28:26,460
Mrs., but Mr. Surowiec,
during the day.

586
00:28:26,460 --> 00:28:28,400
So there was little play acting.

587
00:28:28,400 --> 00:28:30,950
And people picked me up.

588
00:28:30,950 --> 00:28:36,800
And I was supposed to be a child
of a niece of Mr. Surowiec who

589
00:28:36,800 --> 00:28:39,020
was living in a
different part of Poland.

590
00:28:39,020 --> 00:28:41,120
Who delivered you?

591
00:28:41,120 --> 00:28:45,530
A man who did not know
that I was Jewish.

592

00:28:45,530 --> 00:28:47,030
A man delivered me.

593
00:28:47,030 --> 00:28:51,320
He came in sort of a
buggy, horse and buggy.

594
00:28:51,320 --> 00:28:56,660
Apparently, being told
a story that a niece who

595
00:28:56,660 --> 00:28:59,510
had some very, very
hard times in Pomorze,

596
00:28:59,510 --> 00:29:01,460
which was another
part of Poland.

597
00:29:01,460 --> 00:29:04,370
She was apparently
an unwed mother.

598
00:29:04,370 --> 00:29:06,980
And that she was not
able to care of me.

599
00:29:06,980 --> 00:29:11,480
And that I was being
sent to this family,

600
00:29:11,480 --> 00:29:15,440
to this new family,
Mr. Surowiec.

601
00:29:15,440 --> 00:29:19,950
And the man who picked me
up thought that, indeed, I

602
00:29:19,950 --> 00:29:22,200
was this non-Jewish child.

603
00:29:22,200 --> 00:29:26,283

Because he did not pick
me up at my grandmother's

604
00:29:26,283 --> 00:29:27,200
where my parents were.

605
00:29:27,200 --> 00:29:30,030
But he picked me up kind
of halfway on the street

606
00:29:30,030 --> 00:29:31,920
somewhere.

607
00:29:31,920 --> 00:29:35,160
That was arranged
with Mr. Surowiec.

608
00:29:35,160 --> 00:29:37,170
And you were on the
street alone at that time?

609
00:29:37,170 --> 00:29:41,060
I was alone knowing the story.

610
00:29:41,060 --> 00:29:42,480
Where were your belongings?

611
00:29:42,480 --> 00:29:44,220
I had very little belongings.

612
00:29:44,220 --> 00:29:48,960
I had a small suitcase
and a big teddy bear.

613
00:29:48,960 --> 00:29:51,720
A brown teddy bear
and a little suitcase.

614
00:29:51,720 --> 00:29:54,660
And I was told-- and what
I meant to tell you before.

615

00:29:54,660 --> 00:29:58,170
That as a child, some
things become intriguing.

616
00:29:58,170 --> 00:30:01,500
And I think in my misery,
there was this intriguing story

617
00:30:01,500 --> 00:30:02,070
going on.

618
00:30:02,070 --> 00:30:04,560
Because my parents said,
this is like a little play,

619
00:30:04,560 --> 00:30:06,870
this is like a little
story that's going on.

620
00:30:06,870 --> 00:30:10,410
And I was apparently
sufficiently involved

621
00:30:10,410 --> 00:30:15,810
in the mystery of this that
that was not the hardest part.

622
00:30:15,810 --> 00:30:19,350
The hardest part was after, when
I realized what had happened.

623
00:30:19,350 --> 00:30:23,820
But as I was in the process of
this transportation from one

624
00:30:23,820 --> 00:30:27,270
place to another, I think I
was intrigued by all of this.

625
00:30:27,270 --> 00:30:31,650
And this man who took
me to my new home

626

00:30:31,650 --> 00:30:34,710
did not know that I
was a Jewish child.

627
00:30:34,710 --> 00:30:36,390
The only people who
knew was, of course,

628
00:30:36,390 --> 00:30:38,160
the family and the priest.

629
00:30:38,160 --> 00:30:40,410
And why was he so--

630
00:30:40,410 --> 00:30:42,030
I understand why
he was so like--

631
00:30:42,030 --> 00:30:42,360
Why was he selected?

632
00:30:42,360 --> 00:30:43,443
Because wanted to take me.

633
00:30:43,443 --> 00:30:45,000
No, from his point of view.

634
00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:46,450
From your parents'
point of view,

635
00:30:46,450 --> 00:30:48,443
obviously, he was
selected for your safety.

636
00:30:48,443 --> 00:30:49,860
From his point of
view, why was he

637
00:30:49,860 --> 00:30:52,530
selected to pick up this
little girl on the street?

638

00:30:52,530 --> 00:30:53,460

Not on the street.

639

00:30:53,460 --> 00:30:56,100

He was selected to
pick up the child, who

640

00:30:56,100 --> 00:30:59,445

was almost like an orphan,
whose mother was in Pomorze,

641

00:30:59,445 --> 00:31:00,210

and she came.

642

00:31:00,210 --> 00:31:04,290

Who was all alone and who was
all alone and who was a niece.

643

00:31:04,290 --> 00:31:07,412

But how did she land up
over there, wherever it was,

644

00:31:07,412 --> 00:31:08,370

all alone in this town?

645

00:31:08,370 --> 00:31:10,890

Because apparently,
the story was--

646

00:31:10,890 --> 00:31:14,040

that the niece, there
was such a person.

647

00:31:14,040 --> 00:31:18,300

There was a real niece in
Pomorze, of Mr. Surowiec.

648

00:31:18,300 --> 00:31:22,800

That the niece was able to
get me as far as this town

649

00:31:22,800 --> 00:31:23,610

by other means.

650

00:31:23,610 --> 00:31:25,050

Oh, this was out of town.

651

00:31:25,050 --> 00:31:26,820

No, it was sort of in town.

652

00:31:26,820 --> 00:31:31,590

That they were able to get
me from one place to another.

653

00:31:31,590 --> 00:31:35,490

And that would he kindly pick
me up at such and such a place.

654

00:31:35,490 --> 00:31:38,440

People had to go to work, so
they're just leaving me there.

655

00:31:38,440 --> 00:31:39,690

There was someone, apparently.

656

00:31:39,690 --> 00:31:41,565

As you look back on it,
do you understand it?

657

00:31:41,565 --> 00:31:43,458

No, completely unbelievable.

658

00:31:43,458 --> 00:31:44,250

I can't understand.

659

00:31:44,250 --> 00:31:46,590

If they're in town,
there was a small town.

660

00:31:46,590 --> 00:31:48,000

It was a small town.

661

00:31:48,000 --> 00:31:49,420

If you could go

to this location--

662
00:31:49,420 --> 00:31:49,710
Yes.

663
00:31:49,710 --> 00:31:51,210
--you could go to
the house already.

664
00:31:51,210 --> 00:31:51,960
No.

665
00:31:51,960 --> 00:31:54,120
The house was further away.

666
00:31:54,120 --> 00:31:56,850
I was still in Jezierzany
when I was picked up.

667
00:31:56,850 --> 00:31:58,560
Ah, then your
grandmother's town.

668
00:31:58,560 --> 00:32:00,222
Oh, yes, that was
my grandmother's--

669
00:32:00,222 --> 00:32:00,930
Ah, I see, I see.

670
00:32:00,930 --> 00:32:01,582
--town.

671
00:32:01,582 --> 00:32:02,540
And I went to Szepowce.

672
00:32:02,540 --> 00:32:03,720
Oh, now I understand.

673
00:32:03,720 --> 00:32:05,610
No, no, no, I was in the town.

674

00:32:05,610 --> 00:32:10,220

Except no one was there
to put me on that--

675

00:32:10,220 --> 00:32:10,970

Yeah.

676

00:32:10,970 --> 00:32:12,020

--little wagon.

677

00:32:12,020 --> 00:32:14,600

So they managed
to get a Pole who

678

00:32:14,600 --> 00:32:15,925

didn't know anything about it.

679

00:32:15,925 --> 00:32:17,300

He didn't know
anything about it.

680

00:32:17,300 --> 00:32:18,920

But he did know, apparently--

681

00:32:18,920 --> 00:32:21,860

Who was going to bring
you over to Mr.--

682

00:32:21,860 --> 00:32:22,550

Surowiec.

683

00:32:22,550 --> 00:32:23,310

Surowiec.

684

00:32:23,310 --> 00:32:23,870

Yes.

685

00:32:23,870 --> 00:32:26,480

And he did bring me
over to Mr. Surowiec.

686

00:32:26,480 --> 00:32:27,860
And it was during the day.

687
00:32:27,860 --> 00:32:30,260
So while all this
drama was going on,

688
00:32:30,260 --> 00:32:31,550
you were playing your role.

689
00:32:31,550 --> 00:32:32,753
I was playing my role.

690
00:32:32,753 --> 00:32:34,920
And then it hit you that
you were in a strange house

691
00:32:34,920 --> 00:32:35,755
with strange people.

692
00:32:35,755 --> 00:32:36,380
It hit me, yes.

693
00:32:36,380 --> 00:32:37,130
Then it hit me.

694
00:32:37,130 --> 00:32:38,010
And your parents weren't there.

695
00:32:38,010 --> 00:32:38,510
Right.

696
00:32:38,510 --> 00:32:42,020
But my parents did prepare me
for it in many different ways.

697
00:32:42,020 --> 00:32:45,800
But the thing that was--

698
00:32:45,800 --> 00:32:49,460
a child, I suppose,
hangs on or latches

699

00:32:49,460 --> 00:32:53,960

on to something that seems
to be comforting at the time.

700

00:32:53,960 --> 00:32:57,890

And this little story sort
of intrigued me, I guess.

701

00:32:57,890 --> 00:33:01,850

But I must tell you, this is
why I really loved that family.

702

00:33:01,850 --> 00:33:05,090

Is that it didn't last long.

703

00:33:05,090 --> 00:33:10,190

Mr. Surowiec and his
nieces, that was the family.

704

00:33:10,190 --> 00:33:12,440

They were, I think,
extraordinary people

705

00:33:12,440 --> 00:33:14,810

who loved this child.

706

00:33:14,810 --> 00:33:16,830

And they let me know it.

707

00:33:16,830 --> 00:33:22,470

So although I was different bad
dreams and things like that.

708

00:33:22,470 --> 00:33:29,180

But for the most part,
they did, in some way,

709

00:33:29,180 --> 00:33:31,340

show me a warmth and love.

710

00:33:31,340 --> 00:33:32,450

And it was genuine.

711
00:33:32,450 --> 00:33:34,460
It was genuine
from Mr. Surowiec.

712
00:33:34,460 --> 00:33:35,550
That I know.

713
00:33:35,550 --> 00:33:39,260
And the nieces, maybe it
wasn't quite as genuine.

714
00:33:39,260 --> 00:33:42,650
But they wanted to
please their uncle.

715
00:33:42,650 --> 00:33:43,730
And I was a little girl.

716
00:33:43,730 --> 00:33:45,770
So they were good to me, too.

717
00:33:45,770 --> 00:33:48,290
You talk about Mr.
Surowiec and the nieces.

718
00:33:48,290 --> 00:33:49,880
Is there a Mrs.
Surowiec anywhere?

719
00:33:49,880 --> 00:33:50,880
No, she died.

720
00:33:50,880 --> 00:33:54,530
She died before I
came onto the scene.

721
00:33:54,530 --> 00:33:57,020
The reason why this
family was an odd family

722

00:33:57,020 --> 00:34:00,140
is that Mr. Surowiec
lost his wife very early,

723
00:34:00,140 --> 00:34:01,460
when he was a young man.

724
00:34:01,460 --> 00:34:03,350
And he was probably--

725
00:34:03,350 --> 00:34:05,750
I know he was an
extraordinary human being.

726
00:34:05,750 --> 00:34:09,350
He took in those two nieces
of his who lost their parents.

727
00:34:09,350 --> 00:34:11,239
They were sisters,
the two nieces.

728
00:34:11,239 --> 00:34:13,219
And he took care of them.

729
00:34:13,219 --> 00:34:16,969
He became their father,
mother, their family.

730
00:34:16,969 --> 00:34:20,090
And then he took
another little child in.

731
00:34:20,090 --> 00:34:23,090
And it was very difficult
for him to give me up.

732
00:34:23,090 --> 00:34:25,460
Did you ever speak
to him after the war?

733
00:34:25,460 --> 00:34:27,230
Oh, sure.

734
00:34:27,230 --> 00:34:29,300
How long did he
live after the war?

735
00:34:29,300 --> 00:34:32,719
He lived quite a long
time after the war.

736
00:34:32,719 --> 00:34:34,460
I corresponded with him.

737
00:34:34,460 --> 00:34:36,710
And then, of course, when
we left Poland and then went

738
00:34:36,710 --> 00:34:39,170
to Germany, I spoke
to him from Germany.

739
00:34:39,170 --> 00:34:43,179
But once we lived in
America, he had died by then.

740
00:34:43,179 --> 00:34:44,060
In '53.

741
00:34:44,060 --> 00:34:46,088
Sort of, he semi-adopted you.

742
00:34:46,088 --> 00:34:47,630
And loved you as a
child, as though--

743
00:34:47,630 --> 00:34:48,500
He loved me--

744
00:34:48,500 --> 00:34:49,699
--you were his.

745
00:34:49,699 --> 00:34:51,320
Unconditionally, yes.

746
00:34:51,320 --> 00:34:55,489
He was a very
extraordinary human being.

747
00:34:55,489 --> 00:34:58,220
There was no financial
reward for him.

748
00:34:58,220 --> 00:35:00,740
There was financial
reward in the way--

749
00:35:00,740 --> 00:35:06,140
by the time my father
gave me to him,

750
00:35:06,140 --> 00:35:08,780
there was no financial
rewards, not that many.

751
00:35:08,780 --> 00:35:11,570
Because we had gone
through the Russians.

752
00:35:11,570 --> 00:35:13,440
Where there was some financial.

753
00:35:13,440 --> 00:35:16,010
He did not do it for
the sake of finances.

754
00:35:16,010 --> 00:35:17,270
No, he did not.

755
00:35:17,270 --> 00:35:20,600
He did it for a love of
a young, helpless child.

756
00:35:20,600 --> 00:35:22,820
First of all, he did
it because, I believe,

757

00:35:22,820 --> 00:35:27,210
that he was a true human being.

758

00:35:27,210 --> 00:35:28,040
He was Christian.

759

00:35:28,040 --> 00:35:30,030
I guess he was a true Christian.

760

00:35:30,030 --> 00:35:33,650
He was a man who
believed in God.

761

00:35:33,650 --> 00:35:37,760
And he was the man who believed
in the goodness of people.

762

00:35:37,760 --> 00:35:42,440
So when he took me, he didn't
love me, he didn't know me.

763

00:35:42,440 --> 00:35:44,300
And he did it first
because he thought

764

00:35:44,300 --> 00:35:45,508
it was the right thing to do.

765

00:35:45,508 --> 00:35:48,285
He did protect himself as much
as he could, the way I looked.

766

00:35:48,285 --> 00:35:49,160
They needed pictures.

767

00:35:49,160 --> 00:35:52,700
Because I mean, he didn't want
to endanger me or himself.

768

00:35:52,700 --> 00:35:54,950
He endangered himself plenty.

769

00:35:54,950 --> 00:35:57,860

But he was just an
extraordinary human being,

770

00:35:57,860 --> 00:36:02,000

who had some financial
arrangements.

771

00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:02,510

Some.

772

00:36:02,510 --> 00:36:06,170

By that time, my father didn't
have anything to give him.

773

00:36:06,170 --> 00:36:09,530

But he was just an
extraordinary human being.

774

00:36:09,530 --> 00:36:12,375

And you were with
him, then, from--

775

00:36:12,375 --> 00:36:14,000

when do you figure
that you joined him?

776

00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:15,770

I think it was '41.

777

00:36:15,770 --> 00:36:16,332

In '41.

778

00:36:16,332 --> 00:36:18,290

Shortly after the
Russian-German war broke out.

779

00:36:18,290 --> 00:36:19,550

Shortly, right.

780

00:36:19,550 --> 00:36:21,980

And then I was to

the very end, '45.

781

00:36:21,980 --> 00:36:22,970

Till the very end.

782

00:36:22,970 --> 00:36:25,995

And actually, the end over
there must have been before '45.

783

00:36:25,995 --> 00:36:28,540

Probably the end of
'44, beginning of '45.

784

00:36:28,540 --> 00:36:29,410

I'm not quite sure.

785

00:36:29,410 --> 00:36:31,340

So it was three, three and a
half years we're talking about.

786

00:36:31,340 --> 00:36:32,420

About three and a half
years, I figure, yes.

787

00:36:32,420 --> 00:36:34,160

In those three and a
half years, did you

788

00:36:34,160 --> 00:36:38,300

ever experience any
unusual experiences

789

00:36:38,300 --> 00:36:39,770

because of the situation?

790

00:36:39,770 --> 00:36:41,030

Yes.

791

00:36:41,030 --> 00:36:42,890

I experienced
several of them when

792

00:36:42,890 --> 00:36:45,860
they got afraid that
somebody might recognize me

793
00:36:45,860 --> 00:36:47,270
as a Jewish child.

794
00:36:47,270 --> 00:36:52,130
They were extremely thankful
that my Polish was pure Polish.

795
00:36:52,130 --> 00:36:54,170
I never spoke Yiddish
or any other language.

796
00:36:54,170 --> 00:36:55,220
I only spoke Polish.

797
00:36:55,220 --> 00:36:56,210
So there was no--

798
00:36:56,210 --> 00:36:59,060
because there were a lot
of people who really wanted

799
00:36:59,060 --> 00:37:02,272
to save children, but they
had either had heavy accents

800
00:37:02,272 --> 00:37:03,230
or didn't speak Polish.

801
00:37:03,230 --> 00:37:07,040
So some of them couldn't be
saved even if they would try.

802
00:37:07,040 --> 00:37:09,410
So that was helpful
to the family

803
00:37:09,410 --> 00:37:12,250
that I didn't scream out
that I was a Jewish child.

804
00:37:12,250 --> 00:37:15,550
Neither with my looks
nor with the language.

805
00:37:15,550 --> 00:37:17,110
But they were very careful.

806
00:37:17,110 --> 00:37:18,610
I mean, I was free.

807
00:37:18,610 --> 00:37:19,750
I was walking around.

808
00:37:19,750 --> 00:37:21,460
I went to church
three times a day.

809
00:37:21,460 --> 00:37:23,980
So that in itself
took all my day up.

810
00:37:23,980 --> 00:37:28,450
I went early morning to
services, then at 12 o'clock,

811
00:37:28,450 --> 00:37:29,980
then to vespers.

812
00:37:29,980 --> 00:37:32,080
And we had instructions
in the meantime.

813
00:37:32,080 --> 00:37:33,820
Because I did not go to school.

814
00:37:33,820 --> 00:37:36,640
They decided that it
wasn't the best for me

815
00:37:36,640 --> 00:37:37,750
to go to public school.

816
00:37:37,750 --> 00:37:41,740
And the thing, the fact was
that in that little hamlet,

817
00:37:41,740 --> 00:37:44,500
many girls didn't go to school.

818
00:37:44,500 --> 00:37:47,410
They went to church
school, as we called it.

819
00:37:47,410 --> 00:37:51,370
And we were learning how to
read a little bit, how to write,

820
00:37:51,370 --> 00:37:52,870
mostly religion.

821
00:37:52,870 --> 00:37:57,160
Some, we were drawing pictures,
we talked about the sky.

822
00:37:57,160 --> 00:38:00,460
I mean, it was certainly not
a high quality education.

823
00:38:00,460 --> 00:38:02,470
But they talked about
things that they

824
00:38:02,470 --> 00:38:05,350
felt were appropriate
for little girls.

825
00:38:05,350 --> 00:38:09,520
And no one knew that I was
Jewish, except the priest.

826
00:38:09,520 --> 00:38:15,460
The reason why the priest
knew is that apparently there

827

00:38:15,460 --> 00:38:20,260

was a pact between Mr.
Surowiec and my parents

828

00:38:20,260 --> 00:38:23,890

that if-- and I admired
my parents for it,

829

00:38:23,890 --> 00:38:26,940

and I will continue
to admire them for it.

830

00:38:26,940 --> 00:38:31,540

They said they felt, although
they were Jews, obviously,

831

00:38:31,540 --> 00:38:33,190

Judaism was very important.

832

00:38:33,190 --> 00:38:39,310

But to them, the love for
their child was more important.

833

00:38:39,310 --> 00:38:40,690

It was above everything.

834

00:38:40,690 --> 00:38:45,850

And they felt that after
the war, if no one remains

835

00:38:45,850 --> 00:38:49,060

from our immediate
families, rather than

836

00:38:49,060 --> 00:38:54,250

being a Jewish orphan, they
would have preferred for me

837

00:38:54,250 --> 00:39:00,850

to be a loved, beloved Christian
child that would have family.

838

00:39:00,850 --> 00:39:04,660

It took me many years
to understand it.

839

00:39:04,660 --> 00:39:08,980

I understood it only when
I had my own children.

840

00:39:08,980 --> 00:39:11,500

My parents's love
for their child

841

00:39:11,500 --> 00:39:15,190

was more than the love for their
religion, their background.

842

00:39:15,190 --> 00:39:19,480

And every person has to do
their own thinking about it.

843

00:39:19,480 --> 00:39:21,350

I'm not saying they
were right or wrong.

844

00:39:21,350 --> 00:39:24,160

I'm saying they were my parents.

845

00:39:24,160 --> 00:39:26,320

And so there was a pact.

846

00:39:26,320 --> 00:39:29,590

It wasn't written, there
wasn't anything in writing.

847

00:39:29,590 --> 00:39:33,250

And then two men, my
father to Mr. Surowiec,

848

00:39:33,250 --> 00:39:37,510

that if no one claims
me, if after the war,

849

00:39:37,510 --> 00:39:40,360

there is no one in the
family, they did not

850
00:39:40,360 --> 00:39:42,670
want me to be a Jewish orphan.

851
00:39:42,670 --> 00:39:46,180
They wanted me to be whatever
I was, but have a family.

852
00:39:46,180 --> 00:39:47,920
And of course, I
did not understand

853
00:39:47,920 --> 00:39:49,690
until I had children of my own.

854
00:39:49,690 --> 00:39:50,590
Fascinating.

855
00:39:50,590 --> 00:39:52,430
And I do feel the same way.

856
00:39:52,430 --> 00:39:56,710
And so this man,
slowly, I know and I

857
00:39:56,710 --> 00:39:59,560
believe that he tried and
prayed to God that someone

858
00:39:59,560 --> 00:40:01,570
of my family would be saved.

859
00:40:01,570 --> 00:40:08,500
But after having done that,
he very slowly prepared for me

860
00:40:08,500 --> 00:40:11,950
not only becoming a
Christian for the world.

861

00:40:11,950 --> 00:40:15,033

I mean, it was a sham at first.

862

00:40:15,033 --> 00:40:16,450

You know, I went
to church because

863

00:40:16,450 --> 00:40:18,117

every little Polish
girl went to church.

864

00:40:18,117 --> 00:40:21,850

But I think that deep
down, very slowly,

865

00:40:21,850 --> 00:40:24,490

they were interested
that I learn

866

00:40:24,490 --> 00:40:25,720

about the Christian religion.

867

00:40:25,720 --> 00:40:28,620

868

00:40:28,620 --> 00:40:31,230

What happened to your parents
during those three and a half

869

00:40:31,230 --> 00:40:31,730

years?

870

00:40:31,730 --> 00:40:38,130

As soon as my parents
gave me for safekeeping,

871

00:40:38,130 --> 00:40:39,640

they had made a decision.

872

00:40:39,640 --> 00:40:41,940

My mother didn't survive
the war, but my father did.

873

00:40:41,940 --> 00:40:44,220

And my father told me
they made a decision

874

00:40:44,220 --> 00:40:46,830

not to be caught in a camp.

875

00:40:46,830 --> 00:40:49,530

Because that's not
what they wanted to do.

876

00:40:49,530 --> 00:40:52,630

They wanted to try
and survive by hiding.

877

00:40:52,630 --> 00:40:55,830

They had many, many
Christian friends.

878

00:40:55,830 --> 00:40:59,042

That's because we had a farm
and father knew many farmers.

879

00:40:59,042 --> 00:41:00,250

And they were all Christians.

880

00:41:00,250 --> 00:41:02,280

There weren't that
many Jewish farmers.

881

00:41:02,280 --> 00:41:06,060

And they actually went from
one hiding place to another.

882

00:41:06,060 --> 00:41:08,970

And they were
surviving underground.

883

00:41:08,970 --> 00:41:13,170

In Poland, potatoes
were kept in the ground.

884

00:41:13,170 --> 00:41:18,150

They would dig
holes dug, straw put

885

00:41:18,150 --> 00:41:21,390

in the hole, potatoes
on top of the straw,

886

00:41:21,390 --> 00:41:27,450

another layer of straw to keep
the potatoes for the winter.

887

00:41:27,450 --> 00:41:31,240

And my parents, for
a very long time,

888

00:41:31,240 --> 00:41:38,160

lived in these underground holes
where the potatoes were kept.

889

00:41:38,160 --> 00:41:39,360

And they were--

890

00:41:39,360 --> 00:41:41,340

Do you have any idea
how long that was?

891

00:41:41,340 --> 00:41:45,000

Off and on for the
most part of the war.

892

00:41:45,000 --> 00:41:45,690

Off and on.

893

00:41:45,690 --> 00:41:49,060

Except after my
mother was killed,

894

00:41:49,060 --> 00:41:50,670

then my father was in the woods.

895

00:41:50,670 --> 00:41:53,610

Sometimes with the partisans,

sometimes hiding, sometimes

896

00:41:53,610 --> 00:41:56,160

hiding back in a hole,
sometimes in the woods.

897

00:41:56,160 --> 00:41:58,155

He was never captured.

898

00:41:58,155 --> 00:41:59,072

He lived in the woods.

899

00:41:59,072 --> 00:42:00,239

He kept on changing, though.

900

00:42:00,239 --> 00:42:01,080

He kept on changing.

901

00:42:01,080 --> 00:42:03,780

He kept on running.

902

00:42:03,780 --> 00:42:06,510

One of his brothers was killed.

903

00:42:06,510 --> 00:42:08,730

The other brother
survived with him

904

00:42:08,730 --> 00:42:11,820

for a while in these
different hiding places.

905

00:42:11,820 --> 00:42:13,260

Then they split.

906

00:42:13,260 --> 00:42:15,705

But they always ran,
from place to where.

907

00:42:15,705 --> 00:42:16,830

How did your mother perish?

908

00:42:16,830 --> 00:42:20,640

My mother perished
because right after I

909

00:42:20,640 --> 00:42:26,010

was given away to safety,
they began their hiding life.

910

00:42:26,010 --> 00:42:30,870

And they found a peasant
farmer who was very kind.

911

00:42:30,870 --> 00:42:33,930

And he said look, I cannot
really keep you on my land.

912

00:42:33,930 --> 00:42:36,420

But there is a no man's land.

913

00:42:36,420 --> 00:42:37,920

I will keep you there.

914

00:42:37,920 --> 00:42:39,660

He dug a hole.

915

00:42:39,660 --> 00:42:41,910

He got permission to
keep his potatoes.

916

00:42:41,910 --> 00:42:43,980

He made many holes
to keep his potatoes.

917

00:42:43,980 --> 00:42:45,660

And one of them,
my parents were.

918

00:42:45,660 --> 00:42:48,870

And only during the night
did they go and they eat.

919

00:42:48,870 --> 00:42:49,770

They ate at night.

920

00:42:49,770 --> 00:42:51,940

And they, of course,
they were human beings,

921

00:42:51,940 --> 00:42:53,190

they had some human functions.

922

00:42:53,190 --> 00:42:54,780

They did that at night.

923

00:42:54,780 --> 00:42:58,440

And he kept them safe.

924

00:42:58,440 --> 00:43:02,370

But other people in the
area were very suspicious.

925

00:43:02,370 --> 00:43:05,520

And he one day told--
one night told my father

926

00:43:05,520 --> 00:43:09,630

that you must find a different
hiding place for a little bit.

927

00:43:09,630 --> 00:43:12,660

Because they're going to
come and search my fields

928

00:43:12,660 --> 00:43:17,340

or search my house, search
where the horses were kept.

929

00:43:17,340 --> 00:43:19,560

And keep a hiding place.

930

00:43:19,560 --> 00:43:23,200

Find a hiding place for a
few days and then come back.

931

00:43:23,200 --> 00:43:27,000

So my father left my
mother in the hiding place,

932

00:43:27,000 --> 00:43:30,720

and at night, traveled to some
other peasants and farmers

933

00:43:30,720 --> 00:43:31,580

that he knew.

934

00:43:31,580 --> 00:43:36,480

He did find a man who said
he could keep him a week.

935

00:43:36,480 --> 00:43:39,780

But he had to wait
for the night.

936

00:43:39,780 --> 00:43:41,550

You couldn't travel
during the day.

937

00:43:41,550 --> 00:43:45,540

So he waited at this
new hiding place.

938

00:43:45,540 --> 00:43:50,190

And when he went back for
my mother, she was gone.

939

00:43:50,190 --> 00:43:54,450

Because during that day,
when my father was away--

940

00:43:54,450 --> 00:43:57,750

she was there, by the way,
there were more than one.

941

00:43:57,750 --> 00:43:59,730

There was a cousin,
a distant cousin,

942

00:43:59,730 --> 00:44:01,260
with them that was hiding.

943
00:44:01,260 --> 00:44:04,540
These two women were
discovered and shot.

944
00:44:04,540 --> 00:44:06,750
And they left them there.

945
00:44:06,750 --> 00:44:11,460
So your father's
survival, despite all

946
00:44:11,460 --> 00:44:14,520
those terrific efforts,
impressive efforts,

947
00:44:14,520 --> 00:44:18,030
at hiding in different
places and so on.

948
00:44:18,030 --> 00:44:19,890
His survival was accidental.

949
00:44:19,890 --> 00:44:22,650
Totally accidental.

950
00:44:22,650 --> 00:44:24,750
I don't like to
say it's b'shert.

951
00:44:24,750 --> 00:44:28,200
I don't like that--

952
00:44:28,200 --> 00:44:32,226
I have some trouble with
my own God at this point.

953
00:44:32,226 --> 00:44:34,580
The choosing.

954

00:44:34,580 --> 00:44:38,740
But nevertheless, I was lucky.

955
00:44:38,740 --> 00:44:41,440
I have a father, had a father.

956
00:44:41,440 --> 00:44:45,460
But this we hear very often
when we talk with survivors.

957
00:44:45,460 --> 00:44:46,030
Right.

958
00:44:46,030 --> 00:44:49,270
That in some cases, the
miracles were daily.

959
00:44:49,270 --> 00:44:51,640
Yes, it was-- oh,
absolutely, they were daily.

960
00:44:51,640 --> 00:44:56,890
In your father's case,
because of his connections

961
00:44:56,890 --> 00:44:58,240
and business with--

962
00:44:58,240 --> 00:44:59,710
Well, they're all farmers.

963
00:44:59,710 --> 00:45:00,877
--so many non-Jewish people.

964
00:45:00,877 --> 00:45:02,080
Mostly, it was no farmers.

965
00:45:02,080 --> 00:45:04,960
And my father was an
extraordinary human being.

966
00:45:04,960 --> 00:45:08,440

And he had many
friends, Jews, non-Jews.

967
00:45:08,440 --> 00:45:11,050
He was just a
special guy, I think.

968
00:45:11,050 --> 00:45:12,920
I know that he was.

969
00:45:12,920 --> 00:45:17,480
And so he, somehow, that's how.

970
00:45:17,480 --> 00:45:19,580
It was b'shert, as we say.

971
00:45:19,580 --> 00:45:23,840
At the time of liberation,
you were with Mr. Surowiec.

972
00:45:23,840 --> 00:45:24,500
Yes.

973
00:45:24,500 --> 00:45:26,630
And your father was in hiding.

974
00:45:26,630 --> 00:45:29,690
My father and his
brother were hiding.

975
00:45:29,690 --> 00:45:32,090
Sometimes together,
sometimes separate.

976
00:45:32,090 --> 00:45:33,230
But not far away.

977
00:45:33,230 --> 00:45:35,090
Not too far away,
not too far away.

978
00:45:35,090 --> 00:45:36,320

What happened at that point?

979

00:45:36,320 --> 00:45:39,830

At that point after the
war, the first thing

980

00:45:39,830 --> 00:45:42,110

my father and my
uncle did, of course,

981

00:45:42,110 --> 00:45:46,010

were came to the Mr. Surowiec.

982

00:45:46,010 --> 00:45:50,570

And there was one other
time that my father actually

983

00:45:50,570 --> 00:45:51,950

was on the property.

984

00:45:51,950 --> 00:45:54,170

That is when he
probably lost his mind

985

00:45:54,170 --> 00:45:55,400

when my mother was killed.

986

00:45:55,400 --> 00:45:58,010

And he simply walked I
don't know for how many days

987

00:45:58,010 --> 00:46:02,600

and found himself in the
backyard of our house.

988

00:46:02,600 --> 00:46:04,920

But apparently, realized
what he was doing,

989

00:46:04,920 --> 00:46:08,820

and just bypassed the
house during the day.

990

00:46:08,820 --> 00:46:12,920

Which, of course,
endangered him enormously.

991

00:46:12,920 --> 00:46:16,940

But I guess it just was too
much for him to discover

992

00:46:16,940 --> 00:46:18,260

what had happened to my mother.

993

00:46:18,260 --> 00:46:24,590

But in any event, after the war,
my uncle and my father came.

994

00:46:24,590 --> 00:46:26,840

And I must tell you
that we had moved

995

00:46:26,840 --> 00:46:30,890

a few times, the
Surowiecs and I,

996

00:46:30,890 --> 00:46:32,810

because of the bombing
and the shelling.

997

00:46:32,810 --> 00:46:35,660

So we had gone to
different little villages

998

00:46:35,660 --> 00:46:39,050

during the big fights that
were going on, you know,

999

00:46:39,050 --> 00:46:41,870

when Hitler was retreating.

1000

00:46:41,870 --> 00:46:47,300

But we were back in our
place when my father arrived.

1001

00:46:47,300 --> 00:46:51,920

And for a while,
we lived together.

1002

00:46:51,920 --> 00:46:53,390

Not in the same hut.

1003

00:46:53,390 --> 00:46:55,220

They were sort of
across the street.

1004

00:46:55,220 --> 00:46:59,280

Because Mr. Surowiec told my
father, there is no one left.

1005

00:46:59,280 --> 00:47:00,950

We had this child in common.

1006

00:47:00,950 --> 00:47:03,620

And he wanted them to all--

1007

00:47:03,620 --> 00:47:05,240

that we should
all live together.

1008

00:47:05,240 --> 00:47:06,603

And for a few months, we did.

1009

00:47:06,603 --> 00:47:08,270

Because my father
didn't have the heart.

1010

00:47:08,270 --> 00:47:11,930

He just couldn't
make a clean break.

1011

00:47:11,930 --> 00:47:13,160

So how long did that last?

1012

00:47:13,160 --> 00:47:14,550

I think a few months.

1013

00:47:14,550 --> 00:47:15,200
A few months.

1014
00:47:15,200 --> 00:47:16,510
Then what happened?

1015
00:47:16,510 --> 00:47:17,390
So where are we?

1016
00:47:17,390 --> 00:47:19,970
Are we in 1944 or
'45 at this point?

1017
00:47:19,970 --> 00:47:22,967
We are probably in
the beginning of '45.

1018
00:47:22,967 --> 00:47:24,050
Again, I'm not very clear.

1019
00:47:24,050 --> 00:47:25,610
The war is coming to an end.

1020
00:47:25,610 --> 00:47:28,370
Your father is deciding that
he wants to leave the area.

1021
00:47:28,370 --> 00:47:30,370
Yes, he's decided he
wants to leave the area.

1022
00:47:30,370 --> 00:47:31,370
He wants to make a life.

1023
00:47:31,370 --> 00:47:32,620
And what happened to you then?

1024
00:47:32,620 --> 00:47:35,690
And I did say goodbye
to the two nieces

1025
00:47:35,690 --> 00:47:40,838

of Mr. Surowiec, these
cousins of mine, if you will.

1026
00:47:40,838 --> 00:47:42,380
But I never could
say goodbye to him.

1027
00:47:42,380 --> 00:47:45,140
Because when he knew that my
father had made the decision,

1028
00:47:45,140 --> 00:47:50,120
he locked himself upstairs
in one of those attic places

1029
00:47:50,120 --> 00:47:50,898
where we kept.

1030
00:47:50,898 --> 00:47:52,440
This was very dramatic
and emotional.

1031
00:47:52,440 --> 00:47:54,350
It was very dramatic
and emotional.

1032
00:47:54,350 --> 00:47:56,900
And I had a letter that
I had brought with me,

1033
00:47:56,900 --> 00:47:59,240
as a matter of fact, that
I had written to them when

1034
00:47:59,240 --> 00:48:00,680
I was already back in Lwow.

1035
00:48:00,680 --> 00:48:03,560
We went back to
Lwow, to Lemberg.

1036
00:48:03,560 --> 00:48:08,570
That is the place where

war found us the first time

1037

00:48:08,570 --> 00:48:13,185
when the Russians invaded our
place, a little farm area.

1038

00:48:13,185 --> 00:48:14,560
We went to our
apartment in Lwow.

1039

00:48:14,560 --> 00:48:17,750
And we went back
there after the war.

1040

00:48:17,750 --> 00:48:19,580
We went back to the apartment.

1041

00:48:19,580 --> 00:48:22,640
Not to our apartment,
but to another apartment

1042

00:48:22,640 --> 00:48:25,430
in the same building,
as a matter of fact.

1043

00:48:25,430 --> 00:48:27,410
And again, with the Russians.

1044

00:48:27,410 --> 00:48:30,590
This time, the Russians
were liberators, not

1045

00:48:30,590 --> 00:48:34,130
invaders the way
they were in 1939.

1046

00:48:34,130 --> 00:48:38,030
This time, we
loved the Russians.

1047

00:48:38,030 --> 00:48:39,470
And as a matter
of fact, that love

1048
00:48:39,470 --> 00:48:42,170
persisted through all our
troubles, our own troubles

1049
00:48:42,170 --> 00:48:42,740
in America.

1050
00:48:42,740 --> 00:48:45,410
With the Russians,
to this day, I

1051
00:48:45,410 --> 00:48:50,010
have a very, very warm spot
for the Russian people.

1052
00:48:50,010 --> 00:48:52,340
And we went back to Lwow.

1053
00:48:52,340 --> 00:48:54,290
And we stayed there for a while.

1054
00:48:54,290 --> 00:48:58,400
My father, my uncle,
the one that survived.

1055
00:48:58,400 --> 00:49:00,650
Then we found other cousins.

1056
00:49:00,650 --> 00:49:01,730
Third cousins.

1057
00:49:01,730 --> 00:49:04,400
Everybody who was never
even thought as family

1058
00:49:04,400 --> 00:49:06,560
became close family, obviously.

1059
00:49:06,560 --> 00:49:09,770
And we made a new family.

1060

00:49:09,770 --> 00:49:13,910
That was my father, my father's
brother, a very, very distant

1061

00:49:13,910 --> 00:49:18,770
cousin, and his sister, and
a very distant cousin boy.

1062

00:49:18,770 --> 00:49:21,570
A son who also survived
like I did-- of course,

1063

00:49:21,570 --> 00:49:22,850
we didn't know that--

1064

00:49:22,850 --> 00:49:25,580
on our Aryan papers.

1065

00:49:25,580 --> 00:49:27,060
And we made this family.

1066

00:49:27,060 --> 00:49:29,060
We lived in a
two-room apartment.

1067

00:49:29,060 --> 00:49:29,720
In Lwow.

1068

00:49:29,720 --> 00:49:30,380
In Lwow.

1069

00:49:30,380 --> 00:49:32,480
In the same building that we--

1070

00:49:32,480 --> 00:49:33,890
How long did you remain there?

1071

00:49:33,890 --> 00:49:37,340
We remained probably
under a year.

1072

00:49:37,340 --> 00:49:37,910
And then?

1073
00:49:37,910 --> 00:49:40,490
And then we all
decided, that is,

1074
00:49:40,490 --> 00:49:42,830
the adults decided
that they want

1075
00:49:42,830 --> 00:49:47,480
to emigrate either to Israel
or to the United States.

1076
00:49:47,480 --> 00:49:49,740
And we began this journey.

1077
00:49:49,740 --> 00:49:51,920
We had to go to another
part of Poland, which

1078
00:49:51,920 --> 00:49:57,110
was Wroclaw, which was
under the German occupation.

1079
00:49:57,110 --> 00:49:59,520
And then became German
and then Polish again.

1080
00:49:59,520 --> 00:50:02,780
And then at this point after
the war, it was Polish again.

1081
00:50:02,780 --> 00:50:06,410
And then we went to
several DP camps.

1082
00:50:06,410 --> 00:50:10,220
And in those DP camps,
Displaced Persons camp,

1083
00:50:10,220 --> 00:50:12,650

one was in Bensheim, which
was already in Germany.

1084
00:50:12,650 --> 00:50:14,630
Because we went from
Poland to Germany

1085
00:50:14,630 --> 00:50:19,290
on our quest to go either
to Israel or to America.

1086
00:50:19,290 --> 00:50:25,670
My father by then had remarried
a wonderful woman, who truly--

1087
00:50:25,670 --> 00:50:29,540
and I cannot say that
she was my real mother,

1088
00:50:29,540 --> 00:50:30,410
because she wasn't.

1089
00:50:30,410 --> 00:50:34,110
But she was the closest
thing to a mother.

1090
00:50:34,110 --> 00:50:37,190
She really was a wonderful
woman, whom I loved very much.

1091
00:50:37,190 --> 00:50:41,480
And she and he decided
that they will not

1092
00:50:41,480 --> 00:50:44,180
emigrate to Israel,
that they will not

1093
00:50:44,180 --> 00:50:46,100
emigrate to the United States.

1094
00:50:46,100 --> 00:50:48,200
They felt subhuman.

1095
00:50:48,200 --> 00:50:50,120
They felt that they
were not human,

1096
00:50:50,120 --> 00:50:51,590
that they were
robbed of everything

1097
00:50:51,590 --> 00:50:53,420
that made them human.

1098
00:50:53,420 --> 00:50:58,250
And they decided to stay
in Germany, of all places.

1099
00:50:58,250 --> 00:50:59,600
And I questioned them.

1100
00:50:59,600 --> 00:51:03,410
And they told me the reason why
they couldn't stay in Poland.

1101
00:51:03,410 --> 00:51:05,930

1102
00:51:05,930 --> 00:51:09,290
The morality was--
they said that they

1103
00:51:09,290 --> 00:51:12,830
couldn't be immoral in Poland.

1104
00:51:12,830 --> 00:51:15,380
Because although
Poland proved to be

1105
00:51:15,380 --> 00:51:20,000
the most immoral place for them,
but this was the beginning.

1106
00:51:20,000 --> 00:51:22,880

This is when they were children,
where they learned what

1107
00:51:22,880 --> 00:51:24,980
an upstanding human being is.

1108
00:51:24,980 --> 00:51:27,200
They couldn't do it in Poland.

1109
00:51:27,200 --> 00:51:30,500
They could do anything
and everything in Germany,

1110
00:51:30,500 --> 00:51:33,410
because at that time, they
didn't consider Germany as

1111
00:51:33,410 --> 00:51:38,270
worthy of any moral behavior.

1112
00:51:38,270 --> 00:51:41,270
And my father became
a black marketeer.

1113
00:51:41,270 --> 00:51:43,400
And he couldn't
become that in Poland.

1114
00:51:43,400 --> 00:51:46,880
In spite of the fact, what
had happened to him in Poland,

1115
00:51:46,880 --> 00:51:48,860
he couldn't do it.

1116
00:51:48,860 --> 00:51:53,090
But in Germany, he
became a black marketeer.

1117
00:51:53,090 --> 00:51:54,500
How long were you in Germany?

1118

00:51:54,500 --> 00:51:55,190
Many years.

1119
00:51:55,190 --> 00:52:02,000
We were in Germany
from 1946 to '52,

1120
00:52:02,000 --> 00:52:04,730
when we emigrated to
the United States.

1121
00:52:04,730 --> 00:52:06,830
You came at '52.

1122
00:52:06,830 --> 00:52:07,330
Yes.

1123
00:52:07,330 --> 00:52:09,110
At this point,
you're 20 years old.

1124
00:52:09,110 --> 00:52:11,310
I'm 20 years old.

1125
00:52:11,310 --> 00:52:15,440
My parents educated
both me and my brother,

1126
00:52:15,440 --> 00:52:19,660
my brother who came into the
marriage through my stepmother.

1127
00:52:19,660 --> 00:52:21,020
Through his mother.

1128
00:52:21,020 --> 00:52:26,210
They both recuperated
to the extent

1129
00:52:26,210 --> 00:52:30,005
that one can recuperate
after the trauma.

1130

00:52:30,005 --> 00:52:33,470

But you came here at age
20 and immediately went

1131

00:52:33,470 --> 00:52:34,718

into Hunter College?

1132

00:52:34,718 --> 00:52:36,260

Hunter College with
two years credit.

1133

00:52:36,260 --> 00:52:37,350

How did you do it?

1134

00:52:37,350 --> 00:52:42,130

Well, the reason for it
was that when I was in--

1135

00:52:42,130 --> 00:52:42,630

Germany.

1136

00:52:42,630 --> 00:52:46,970

--in Germany, we learned
English in school.

1137

00:52:46,970 --> 00:52:48,650

We learned French and English.

1138

00:52:48,650 --> 00:52:52,400

But my parents early on
decided that they probably

1139

00:52:52,400 --> 00:52:53,630

will go to the United States.

1140

00:52:53,630 --> 00:52:58,130

Although my father had gone
to Israel, trying to emigrate.

1141

00:52:58,130 --> 00:53:00,180

But he did not.

1142

00:53:00,180 --> 00:53:03,860

And I had English
lessons in addition

1143

00:53:03,860 --> 00:53:11,300

to being taught English in
school and American history.

1144

00:53:11,300 --> 00:53:21,020

And with all the [GERMAN],, which
is when you finish high school,

1145

00:53:21,020 --> 00:53:23,180

had sufficient
credits, especially

1146

00:53:23,180 --> 00:53:27,170

in foreign languages, in
history and art history,

1147

00:53:27,170 --> 00:53:32,270

where, when I went to Hunter,
I went in as a freshman.

1148

00:53:32,270 --> 00:53:36,260

But within four months, they had
given me credit for two years.

1149

00:53:36,260 --> 00:53:38,360

Because I had-- except
American history.

1150

00:53:38,360 --> 00:53:40,400

I had to have American
history regents.

1151

00:53:40,400 --> 00:53:42,408

You came and lived
in New York City.

1152

00:53:42,408 --> 00:53:44,450

Yes, we lived in the Bronx
on the Grand Concourse

1153
00:53:44,450 --> 00:53:45,620
for a while.

1154
00:53:45,620 --> 00:53:48,500
Then I got married a year--

1155
00:53:48,500 --> 00:53:51,577
I was a year in Hunter
when I got married.

1156
00:53:51,577 --> 00:53:53,660
And we moved to Jackson
Heights, my husband and I.

1157
00:53:53,660 --> 00:53:55,640
That would be in '53.

1158
00:53:55,640 --> 00:53:57,770
And you moved to
Jackson Heights.

1159
00:53:57,770 --> 00:53:58,870
And you had two children.

1160
00:53:58,870 --> 00:53:59,870
And I have two children.

1161
00:53:59,870 --> 00:54:01,040
First a girl and a boy.

1162
00:54:01,040 --> 00:54:01,730
No, first a boy.

1163
00:54:01,730 --> 00:54:03,350
First a boy and then a girl.

1164
00:54:03,350 --> 00:54:05,060
What are they doing today?

1165
00:54:05,060 --> 00:54:10,490

Eric is an attorney and Jessica
is an arts editor for the MoMA.

1166
00:54:10,490 --> 00:54:11,000
For whom?

1167
00:54:11,000 --> 00:54:14,660
For Museum of Modern History--

1168
00:54:14,660 --> 00:54:15,800
Art, I'm sorry.

1169
00:54:15,800 --> 00:54:17,460
For the Museum of Modern Art.

1170
00:54:17,460 --> 00:54:19,130
Sounds very fascinating.

1171
00:54:19,130 --> 00:54:20,540
MoMA, right.

1172
00:54:20,540 --> 00:54:22,820
And what did your husband do?

1173
00:54:22,820 --> 00:54:24,770
My husband is a builder.

1174
00:54:24,770 --> 00:54:28,640
As many newcomers to
this country became.

1175
00:54:28,640 --> 00:54:31,910
But his profession really is--
he's a commercial photographer.

1176
00:54:31,910 --> 00:54:37,550
He had become a
builder when he thought

1177
00:54:37,550 --> 00:54:38,840
that he could do better.

1178

00:54:38,840 --> 00:54:41,720

When did you move to
New Jersey and why?

1179

00:54:41,720 --> 00:54:42,980

Only for the schools.

1180

00:54:42,980 --> 00:54:45,350

We lived in New York,
in Jackson Heights.

1181

00:54:45,350 --> 00:54:47,450

Then we wanted to
move to Manhattan.

1182

00:54:47,450 --> 00:54:51,650

And we would have to send our
children to private schools

1183

00:54:51,650 --> 00:54:53,150

even then.

1184

00:54:53,150 --> 00:54:57,440

And then my father made
my husband an offer

1185

00:54:57,440 --> 00:54:59,360

that he couldn't refuse.

1186

00:54:59,360 --> 00:55:03,140

And my father was a builder,
became a builder in New Jersey.

1187

00:55:03,140 --> 00:55:09,890

And he offered to you know,
take his son-in-law in who was

1188

00:55:09,890 --> 00:55:11,060

very--

1189

00:55:11,060 --> 00:55:13,100

not very much for

it, because he was

1190
00:55:13,100 --> 00:55:16,580
a photographer all these years.

1191
00:55:16,580 --> 00:55:19,250
But he then decided to do this.

1192
00:55:19,250 --> 00:55:22,890
And we moved to New Jersey
because of his new interest

1193
00:55:22,890 --> 00:55:26,160
that he might go into business.

1194
00:55:26,160 --> 00:55:28,890
I have a few questions
that I'd like to ask you.

1195
00:55:28,890 --> 00:55:30,640
And I see that the
tape is running out.

1196
00:55:30,640 --> 00:55:31,140
OK.

1197
00:55:31,140 --> 00:55:35,850
So we'll wait a while until
the new tape is put in.

1198
00:55:35,850 --> 00:55:37,770
And we'll continue
with the questions.

1199
00:55:37,770 --> 00:55:39,650
OK, OK.

1200
00:55:39,650 --> 00:55:49,313