

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Lari Manojlovich
June 5, 1993
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PREFACE

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LARI MANOJLOVICH

June 5, 1993

MS. MANOJLOVICH: You could ask me questions.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Today is June the 5th --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- 1993. And we are in Warren, Ohio. And we are here to do an interview for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum of one of Jehovah's Witnesses. And this is the events in her life that happened to her before she became one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: Would you please tell us your full name, and would you spell it for us, please?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: My -- from start, it's -- my full name was Lari Riesis Senonona Kortova. That my maiden name. And then after that, I was in Germany, I married. My husband is Valdeta Manojlovich, his name.

THE INTERVIEWER: And would you spell that last name, please?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Valdeta, V-a- --Manojlovich, M-a-n-o-j-l-o-v-i-c-h.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Kind of hard little bit, but it's -- I -- take me hard to learn, too, to spell his name, Manojlovich. I'm Russian myself.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: And he's from Yugoslavia. And I know his language right away. It's kind of -- Russian and Yugoslav, Polish, it's, you know, different languages, but you could learn easy, you know, if you associated with the friends or relatives.

THE INTERVIEWER: Would you tell us your present address here in Ohio?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: 3 -- 237 Douglas Northwest. I live -- Northwest in Warren, Ohio.

THE INTERVIEWER: And the Zip Code?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Zip Code, 44493.

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THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: 83, yes. I forgot. It's --

THE INTERVIEWER: 44983?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: 83, yeah, yeah. 44983.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, if we can go back a little bit in your life when you were first born, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I have two sister and one brother. One older sister from me, one youngest. I'm in the middle. And brother was last one. He was youngest.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. And would you tell us their names?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, first my sister older, Zenaida, Zena, we call her. Then Olga, my youngest sister, and brother Nikolai, Nikolai. He's the youngest one. And my mother were Yona or we call her Julie. My father Simone, Simon if it English, but we call -- they call him Simone Kortova.

THE INTERVIEWER: Very good. And where was your mother and father born, do you remember?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes. In Russia. They was born in a village, miles from Harkov, probably about 100 miles. Honest to tell, I forgot that village already. But they was born in village. And after that, we moved to city. We live in city.

THE INTERVIEWER: And what was the name of the city you moved to?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Harkov. It was probably about 250 miles from Kiev, something like that. I never been in Kiev, but I live all my life till war in Harkov. Yeah. In 19-- -- about 1945 when -- I mean '40 when Hitler started war, I was already 16 1/2 years old --

THE INTERVIEWER: At that time.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: -- war started, yes.

THE INTERVIEWER: What was the -- what age -- or rather, what was the date of your birth?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: 1925. 1925, I was born.

THE INTERVIEWER: And the month?

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MS. MANOJLOVICH: November 1st. Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: And what was it like in Russia, say, before 1933 when Hitler had come to power in Germany? What was it like in your home town? Could you describe what your father did and your mother and what the town was like?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Uh-huh. We didn't know about it till 1940. And maybe some hear about it, you know who, but really, we didn't know till that started already war. But maybe somebody -- maybe that time where we are, was told, didn't know because I was young, not interested, or something was -- till started war. Then when Hitler started coming to Russia, took us in 1943 or '42, something like -- all right.

THE INTERVIEWER: What type of work did your father do?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: He was working train, on a train, go train from city to city. And he take the tickets from people, you know. He work on a train, railroads. And that's his work there all the time. My mother, she was working factory, was factory make lamps, you know, lamps for going in tunnel for collected, you know, coal, coal factory. And they make the lamps so you put them on your head so you see it. So she was work there till war started. And then they shut them up, everything.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now, when did you first begin to realize as a young person that things were beginning to change? Can you recall before 1939, before Hitler went into Poland?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes. It was started shorten food and people kind of started depressed and no want to associated and stay from one another, kind of -- but we noted that something -- when they talk, people together, we know that something going on. But that time, young people like me, I was no worried. I just was worried to find some kind of job to work, and -- you know, and after that, start war, like you say. And that's it. We finish. People start -- mostly people started go away farther they could go from, you know, the country what war. Some move to Delawistok, some move there, some different cities, so they don't want to associate it or see it. But we could move nowhere. We were staying in same city.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now, your home town, was it close to Poland?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes. I guess that was Ukraine and Poland, Czechoslovakia, Harkov, yes. They are kind of close. Moscow, Moscow far away from everything. I never been. My sister was, but I never been in Moscow.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I live in same city all my years till war.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, can you recall which troops came into your home town to take over? Was it the German troops?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes, it was German. Russian move away. And they come in. I guess they was afraid or what, but I remember they come in. And right away, you couldn't do nothing or go walk. And they just all over and just keep you in the house or someplace. And that's all they do, take food, you know, take from us so they could eat something. And I guess they don't have enough food, and asking what -- "Do you have this? Do you have that," and take some potatoes or something and take that with them. But more after that started, food -- and especially in the wintertime, you can find nothing eat. And no matter what you do, some people kill -- find some dead maybe animal or something, they started eat that. Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, you were 16 years old at the time?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: And that was what -- do you remember the month and the day?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Month, I forgot. I forgot which day, but I know it was close to winter, you know, cold months. Maybe October, November. I don't remember.

THE INTERVIEWER: 19-- --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: But I know winter was so rough.

THE INTERVIEWER: That was what year now?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Which year? I think 1942, something, because in 1943, they move us to the -- Germany, all people, especially young people who don't have no family, no married, they come and pick you up, don't even ask you want to go or not. They just put you in a train and take to Germany, work. That's all I remember.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, what happened to your mother and your father and your sisters?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: My mother and my father, my two -- one sister, they took, pack some little bit clothes or something and ran away from that Harkov where I live. I don't remember honest to tell you where they went. They went someplace. I never see them again. And my older sister stay with me, Zena. She stay with me till I start -- they took me. They don't took her. She was pregnant. She was married. But her husband was on the Front when she was. Her husband was on the Front, and she stayed Harkov. She said, "Lari, I have to stay. Maybe Iwan will come in. I want to be with him." Iwan, his name was. And I don't know if he come or maybe they been killed, don't know, because they took me, and right away -- it was tough. During that war time when Hitler still was there, we have to go find food only in village where is, you know, like farmer, we have to go. If I had like dress or maybe shoes extra, I take with me and I exchange for food to the -- in the country, people. They give you maybe like potatoes or rye, rye, you know, that seeds, and you go home and

you grind, make some bread. And that's what I remember. It was tough. And after that, took me to Germany.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, your sister's husband, was he in the Russian Army?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes. He was in the Russian Army. He was in war. And she -- they don't took her. I wish -- I mean if I was not -- pregnant, they might took her and take with me. I would be with her. But they don't want to take her. They don't want to -- she was pregnant, and so she stayed.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: And how did the German soldiers treat your family when they came into town? Was there any abuse?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, they don't treat -- like beat you up or something. They just want to do what they want to do. You know, stay quiet and don't go no -- and don't, you know, ask questions or something. They don't -- I don't remember. They don't beat me or my sister. They just come in. And if I have, you know, something to eat, or they might took it, something, you know. I guess they don't have enough food -- they probably have food, but they wanted something else. They thought maybe we have meat. We don't have no meat, no nothing. On a farm, people have cows, they have milk, and they could exchange. But I tell you honest, I never forget till when Hitler come, right away, he started slaughtering Jew. And when we go, no matter which city, village, you see them hanging on balcony, houses, on the trees. When you walk on a sidewalk -- no sidewalk, there was no sidewalk at that time, just ground, and when you see tree, you see again in tree just passing by, see like die leave. That's what they was like, you know. And that's what I remember. And Harkov was pretty big city. And you see in a balcony, in a tree, everywhere, they slaughtered. And we couldn't understand why they do that that time. Why they do that, kill this just Jew? And one thing I remember, I have one friend, Jew, woman. And she stay with me. And then my sister say, "Lari, we have got -- if they find out that she's a Jew stay with us, they going to kill us, too." So you know what she did? We give her some few things, she pack a suitcase and went away. I don't have no idea. Maybe she still alive, maybe not. But I know they kill lots of Jew in that city.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. So now, they took you from your home town.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: And they took you to a place in Germany. How did they transport you?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: On a train. They put us in a boxcar, you know, just put some straw, little bit. And we don't -- no chair, no nothing. Oh, maybe like 25 all together, women, children and men, and drive us through the night, not through the day because they might, you know, maybe think airplane see, maybe just throw a bomb. So through the night, they bring us -- ten days, take us -- I

don't know why, ten days. Then when they bring closer to Germany, they stop in some kind of camp and give us shower and give us -- you know, take us, you know, wash us, and then put us on a regular train, you know. You could sit down, look in a window, and bring us to Germany.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, when you were being transported on that train, did they have any toilet facilities or anything?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, on a train, I don't remember. That don't take too long. I think one day. They stop. You know, they stop and maybe go someplace and they stop, they take restroom, if you want a drink, little bit, they stop. And then we go back in the train, take us about good 24 hours and bring to that little city called -- little village, Schoin. That about maybe six miles from city Taylor. Then they bring there. And then from -- you know, from Taylor, they bring to Schoin, and I stayed, worked on a factory.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. So they put you to work in a factory. Now, what type of work did you do?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: They make munitions there. And I was washing, cleaning shells, I don't know, tank shells or what they. There was big like maybe like foot long, maybe longer than foot, and wide, I don't know how could you tell, like this wide (indicating). And we have to have lamp right there on the table. And I have to look lamp light and see inside. If it broke inside or scratched, kind of, you know, deteriorated, then I throw away, you know. And I look at another one, better. I put them in a box. And they -- you know, they -- you know, after putting in enough, they took it, bring me another. And another lady, she wash them in another room. They have water there, whatever they wash, put them in, wash them, bring me again, look it. That's what -- some lady was -- women, they put them in the shell and mark something on it, some kind, you know, paint, I guess name or what, a number. And that's all I remember. It was German put people to work. Civil there with me. I remember was elderly men and women. They work with us, too.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now, what was that year again?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: In 1942. During -- I remember, you know, took it -- oh, maybe March, I know winter already started, you know, slow down, March. And they take and bring them in Germany.

THE INTERVIEWER: And what were the working conditions like? What time did you start? What time did you quit? Did you have a lunch break? What type of food did they give you?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, started early about 8:00, maybe even earlier. I don't remember pretty good. That time, we don't have no clock, no watch, nothing. They just, you know, bring -- come to us, and we walk, where we live, we walk, maybe mile walk from that village. We walk three by three, you know, three girls, three boys. And then they bring us to that factory, and that's all. They don't give us -- in the morning, they give you warm water. They bring big, big like not bucket, I don't know how you call, maybe like five, ten gallons, warm water to drink. That's it. 12:00 or 11:30,

11:00, I don't remember, they take -- bell ring, and we stop working. And then we go maybe half a block, little one, not restaurant, some like shack, and they bring there and some cook soup, women. Our women weren't up there, but Germany, they looking. She cook like soup a little bit, like beets little bit, potatoes and maybe stakruger, they call stakruger, some kind of fruit, like fruit. And they give you one little bowl, not good bowl, some chunk, and put them in that, and that's what you eat. That's just lunch. And boy, if you don't enough, satisfy, you sneak, you want to take another spoon, you know, go in the line maybe, you take another spoon. If that guy who notice what you do, you already eat second time, he take that stick and beat your head off. I never forget. Especially boys, he beat up with that stick. And that's our lunch. And then we work again, I don't know, 4:00, 5:00. And then they bring you to barracks where you live. And then they give you to maybe something eat little bit, piece of bread or something, no meat, no meat. I don't remember meat. And tea with something like that. No coffee. And that's all. It was tough. We starving.

THE INTERVIEWER: What was the language spoken there in your barracks and in the munitions plant?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: You mean people who work with me? All kind. It was Slovak, Russian, Polish, and maybe even Hungarian was. I didn't know that kind. But mostly Russian.

THE INTERVIEWER: Was there any talk there about what was happening to the Jewish people --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- to the Jehovah's Witnesses --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- or to the Gypsies?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: We never heard that, no. We never spoke about. Only was thinking and crying, everybody, why we have to suffer. We want to go home. But we know we can't go home because they won't let us go. They bring us, force us to work because they need that work, somebody done, and they work. They don't pay us nothing. We don't even care. We can't go nowhere. Soon they bring us to the place where we work, barbed wire all over, locked doors, that's it. And when we go home there, I remember I started -- I don't know, everybody develop lice in the head because no soap, no water. And I had beautiful long hair, and I have to chop them off. And because -- and if -- then we stand in line to get hot water. By the time line come out for water, we don't -- they don't have any hot water, so you have to wash with block in cold water. And clothes, no clothes. Everything just tore them up.

THE INTERVIEWER: What did they give you for clothing?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: They give you -- I remember when we ready to start war out, they make some kind -- kind of greenish, grayish dress, I don't know, make like from wool. When I putting it

on myself, it's kind of scratchy, kind of funny feeling, couldn't stand it. And clothes, shoes, mostly girls I remember and we make it from wool. You know, get -- you know, you know. And it is hard because they kind of rub in, you get kind of wore out.

THE INTERVIEWER: Blisters?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Blisters, uh-huh. But dress, especially if it's cold, kind of, you know, scratchy. I think they make from some kind material not developed good or something, you know, plain. I never forget that. I still -- kind of greenish, grayish like a dress sort of.

THE INTERVIEWER: Did you and the other prisoners, did you lose weight?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Oh, naturally. Oh, yes. We was -- I don't remember. We never get on a scale together and see how much weight. We was no worried. We just was worried to eat something. And we sneak -- once sometime barbed wire. They have one that stay -- that soldier on one side, camp on another. And they walk and we don't see it. And if we go, you know, climb over the fence. Couple times, I know I hear couple girls, I forgot their name, sneak. And I remember was already fall, and they -- German usually put food like Walter told you, on -- in that some kind of -- dig them up like ground and put food there. We sneak there, you know, steal couple like potatoes or some other, you know, vegetables. Then we bring to the barracks where we living. We slice it. And we have not stove, we have big like -- I don't know, big like tank, gasoline tank or something. And that -- with some coal or wood keep us warm, you know, around. And on the top, you could put in maybe -- you put in maybe like piece of potatoes and you could cook, you know, kind of get little bit warm. And you eat that. That's all I know. And they give you that piece of bread so thin you could see through. Yeah. But, oh, people starve. Was bad.

THE INTERVIEWER: Did they keep all the women together --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- and all the men together?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Men was staying close to my husband. Next -- he was war prisoner. And they was -- that barracks was next to boys. But they could see, you know, like fence to fence. But girls was completely maybe two miles from it. No associate with them. I remember once very well when they bring us to Germany that -- Schoin first -- I don't know how many months, we stay with girls from different countries like France, maybe England and other, I remember. And I don't think that they work. They work like in offices or something because I remember they wear nice clothes. And that barracks where they stayed, the door and window, we could see through the window, and we stay there, oh, till they build the barracks for us. And then they move us. But those girls, they was not work with us. I don't know. They maybe work some maybe offices or something in a city, cellar, maybe they work there. And I don't remember -- only one thing I remember, they have that garbage like they open late. And I remember I went there and I find bread there, already was green, you know, spoiled. And I took -- we took home and I cleaned that out, throw away, and I eat rest of

them. And after that -- but what they did for us, you know, few girls who was there with me, they sneak through the window and run away. I don't know where or what. And they find out. And they started locking doors and windows so we couldn't go nowhere, even can't go in the bathroom. That, I remember. And after that, they move us, you know, barracks, you know, village.

THE INTERVIEWER: What type of hospital facilities did they have?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I don't know. We never been. I never been in hospital. If you sick or something, just stay till you get well. That time, was no heart, no nothing, just maybe sick little bit, you know, get flu, like flu or something. But they stay home, you know. You can't go nowhere anyway. But never -- I never been in hospital till war finish.

THE INTERVIEWER: What did you think about the German people who were in charge? You were of the Christian background, right?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. Well, I was Orthodox, yes.

THE INTERVIEWER: Orthodox?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Uh-huh.

THE INTERVIEWER: And these were Germans who were supposedly Christian people.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, the civil people was all right, you know? Honest to tell you, they was kind of humble, and, you know, pitiful, but other -- like soldiers something, no. Like people maybe was through some time before maybe World War I was. They know what -- you know, that time. But other -- the soldiers, they was not -- no, they don't care, especially I don't know why they don't like Russians. They call us all kind of name, they just --

THE INTERVIEWER: Like what? What were the names they would --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, swine, they called us, like pigs in English. You know, they calling you names. I remember, they -- "Oh, you swine." And I remember when I come, that I tell somebody I took it -- I took something, and he come late -- I come late when I already met my future husband, but we don't have nothing associated. And we stay at fence and talk through the fence. And he say, "What's your name?" I told him. I say, "What's your name?" We talk little bit. He say, "I am from Yugoslavia." And I understand his language little bit. Like, say, Russian say, we say rousch, one, like English, ideal. And Yugoslavian say yearдон so you could understand. We say -- I say tee. He would tell me titu. You know, that's tee, that mean you, so I could understand his words little bit and him me. And we talk little bit. He say, "Where you come from?" And I told him there, there. And then I heard some ring bell. In a factory, you know, they rung a bell because they give us rest little bit, to rest and this and that. And I say, "Okay." I don't know, I kind of -- there was kind of woods or something. I turn this way, turn that way, kind few minutes late. And that man who work with us, watch us, our -- you know, that foreman, and he was in a war before he started to work here.

And I think he was already little bit in the head. And he slapped me so hard because I come few minutes late. That, I going to remember till I --

THE INTERVIEWER: Did you see other prisoners being beat up or --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Oh, yes. They sometime, you know, slap them and give them trouble, too. Civil all right, but soldiers, no. They was not very kind. But yes. That's all I remember. It was rough. I could write book. I used to -- when I come to this country and I started to talk little bit friends, and they listen, they say, "Boy, Lari, you could write book." Walter got double. He got more he could write. I don't know. But it was to put -- I couldn't believe when we come to America and we stay in America. When we reach America, we stay in Chicago couple weeks, then we come to Warren.

THE INTERVIEWER: What were the reasons why soldiers would beat up the women or the men? Do you remember incidents?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, I don't know really. Maybe they no want justice, only want to do something when they told them. But they usually -- why I can remember that what men beat up one boy, he took it -- he always carried that stick. He took from chair, you know, chair, that leg, and he always carry with him. And something, you turn around wrong or, you know, do something, you know, he just -- he hit you on the back or what, no matter what. Then I never been hit except that -- on the face one time. But boys was hit, what they -- I don't know, don't do right job or don't want to pay attention or something. I don't know.

THE INTERVIEWER: Any of the women in your barracks, did any of them die while you were --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No. No. I don't -- no. Some run away, you know, but die, I don't remember, no. Was young women.

THE INTERVIEWER: So they mainly didn't feed you a lot, but they fed you just enough so you could keep working --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: That's it.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- in the factory?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: To just survive. And that's all they was worried, not to -- but I remember when bring us to cellar and, you know, give us little bit food. And people stay, you know, whole like half a block. And people stay, you know, watching us. They probably told them Russian come from, you know, to Germany. Boy, they call us all kind of names, throw all kind of things and fun, make fun of us. We just stay looking, crying.

THE INTERVIEWER: Did any of the German soldiers ever try to molest the girls?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I don't know. I couldn't tell you that. I don't remember that happened, in this and that. At that time, I don't know. No. I never hear that, molested. They never tried to, you know, be nice to me or something. I don't -- only civil people was nice.

THE INTERVIEWER: All right. Now, the war began to change in the middle, 1943 or so --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- '44? Did you see a change in the attitude of the soldiers in charge of -- the people in charge? Did you notice that there was --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Maybe, maybe not, but I kind of was so -- how you say upset. And they call me baby. Why they call me baby, I cry all the time. Maybe that's why I was so upset and hurt. And I can't even know what happened with my parents because I like to write to them or something. I never write letter, no nothing. No.

THE INTERVIEWER: There was no paper to write?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No, no, no. Never write. I never find out nothing about my parents, about my sister till I come to America. Then I write back. And Momma die in I think seventy -- after war already, Momma die. My father was killed, I don't know in the war or killed, what, I don't know. And brother was -- and sister, they move from Harkov, went different cities.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now, as we get toward the end of the war, did you always stay in the same --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes. Till finish war, uh-huh, till finish.

THE INTERVIEWER: Until the war was over?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: That's right. We stay then. Then after that, we stayed same camp, and then move away but they want to take us because German push away some, you know, going farther. And they want to take people with them, too, but we don't go. Some maybe go who was with German cause, you know, but some don't. I don't. We stay there. And some went back to Russia, but I didn't go. I already met Walter. We married after war.

THE INTERVIEWER: Which Army came into your area to free your area, do you remember?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I don't. I don't remember.

THE INTERVIEWER: The British or the Americans or --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I think British. Walter know. Walter know. I think Brit- -- no, no American. I think British. Walter know. I don't know that. He good with politic and this. I don't --

THE INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the day that the troops came in or that the Germans left? Do you remember that day?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: How did you feel?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I don't -- yeah. That was nice, you know. And they want to -- some -- now, Delmenhorst really not far away. And some want to take -- go there with -- to them. They was nice. But they was soldiers, I remember. I don't remember what they -- after that, they probably went back to -- closer to Russia or something. We was staying. Walter saying I want to go to -- move to another camp, how I say displaced person. We stay in that camp because we don't want to go back to old country.

THE INTERVIEWER: How did you feel when you saw the German soldiers finally --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Gone.

THE INTERVIEWER: How did you feel?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. Everybody was glad, yeah. We don't see them no more because they go in farther and farther till reach Germany. And that, I remember.

THE INTERVIEWER: You mean --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I don't know.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- there was just one morning, you woke up, and they were gone?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: They gone, that's right, because we see we could go outside, could go walk all over, and door is open. We was so glad. And everybody say war is finish. War is finish. Everybody throw away hat on the top and started marching and singing songs. I remember that. Yeah. And it was so complete -- that, I remember, but how -- they probably left in the night, you know, Germans.

THE INTERVIEWER: Did you have any idea that they were going to leave?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No. We was thought we going to stay here till, I don't know when, when, when every day. But we don't have no newspaper, no radio, nothing. We don't know nothing till somebody maybe like, you know, watching that civil people. But after that, we noted something different. We don't -- they don't take us no job no more, and that's it. And we could go in village, look for food, and they give us food. Yes. We could -- German nice people. They give us food,

bread, soup. They was nice after that. And Walter -- with Walter, we stay a little bit. And after that, we apply for America.

THE INTERVIEWER: I see. Very good. So then did you ever go back to your home town?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No, no. I never come back. No. We stayed there. Then I move us to Delmenhorst and we stay in Delmenhorst for a while, then we move from Schoin to Delmenhorst, we stay while, and then that, we apply for America and we come here.

THE INTERVIEWER: So then the work camp you were in was on German territory?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah, in Germany. It's called little village, Schoin. They build factory there. It village -- I don't know, some farmer live. But I remember the girls would stay there maybe few and run away in the farm. We have even a one man -- he is now in Canada. She is I think -- no, no, they don't Jehovah Witness, I don't think so. Few years back, I think '92 or '91, she come from Canada, visit me. I don't know how she find out I am here. Somebody probably -- there was one woman, Lida Ponkovich, where we stay in hiding out village. Walter -- there was -- that soldiers. And I was married already. And that king, Peter from England, you know, he come, no, Peter -- no, Yugoslavian king, my husband, he come to England, and then he come to visit Walter, and he come. And Walter say, "I no want to go back to Yugoslavia because now is communism there, so we going to wait, Lari. Maybe we go someplace different." That's all I remember.

THE INTERVIEWER: Did they ever try to encourage you to go back to Russia?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. They say, we have nice now, we have our right. Everything be all right. But I probably if I was single, I be going, you know, because mostly went, you know, my friends -- probably went, but I married my husband. He was, you know, Yugoslav. And he said, "Lari, I no want to go Yugoslavia no more."

THE INTERVIEWER: When you were going through this experience and you were Orthodox --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah, I was.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- did you begin to doubt God? Did you begin --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah, I been thinking. I say how -- like that, why you do this? We all the time blame how God to leave that Hitler to do such a thing to us. Why did -- what you do, especially children, young, why have to suffer like that? I never think that the devil could do such a thing. You know, at that time, we don't think, you know, who the evil was, but I was thinking why would he do like that, why -- we was blame Stalin all the time. Everybody was mad on him. Why he do like that, why he didn't fight or do something so Hitler wouldn't -- you know, put it up with that, so that's what we was -- everybody. But I was not understand politic too much. At that time,

women kind of politic, no. Some may be interested, but I wasn't. I was all thinking working, have family, have, you know, good life, that's all. Yes. It was rough.

THE INTERVIEWER: So then your -- then when it came to your belief in God, it was almost --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. I went I think. I went few times already at that time was church be down, but they fix them up. I went couple times. At that time, what priest talk, we call that -- we call bachaska, Russian, that like pope. And when we take praying -- I don't know. I was not too much about religion. At that time, Stalin was keep us from religion. He don't believe in God. And we don't go. And besides, he destroyed all churches, Stalin, you know, not to go anymore to churches. They have to start to build it, you know, new churches. But Stalin, he was not Catholic. But I guess he -- maybe kind of like Poland, Slovakia, maybe they have, but Russia, no. He was -- he was not careful. He himself was not living right. His wife left him, whatever.

THE INTERVIEWER: Stalin?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes. Svetlana, her name was. He was fighting with her. Lenin, he was little bit different I recall till then. He was kind of more humble. But Stalin, he was -- he was Dzhugashvili his really name. He was -- live in Stalingrad, Stalin. That's why probably call him Stalin. His really name is Dzhugashvili. He was not of the -- I think Orzabachan they call or Russian call Ruvine. He was not Russian really, you know, Slovack, no. Dzhugash really his name.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, so you met your husband in the camp?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes, um-hum. In a camp was when we working after work.

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, did you speak the same language?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. We kind of, you know, understand, yeah. He understand my little bit words, I his, and kind of more, you know, understand because Slovak, Polish, Russian, Ukranian, it is kind of easy, you know, words. Little bit pronunciation, but words the same. Like Russian say halab. Walter say laba, see? Laba, lee, laba, you say halab. And we say moleko, milk. He say maleko, yeah. When they say -- I say -- we say cartoshka, that mean potatoes, he say crumpera, yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: I understand.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: We say tee, yeah, tee. Onanaw, that same thing. That mean you, me, he, she, that -- yeah. It is understand, Ukraine.

THE INTERVIEWER: So how did you meet your husband?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: After -- why we meet, he work in a munition factory. This shell, big shells like tank shells or airplane shells, we wash them and they send to the munition. They -- he probably explain you, they fill them up, send them on the Front, the shells, yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: So you met him one day.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER: When you got the coffee?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. No. We didn't talk. We just look at each other. Not supposed to talk, you know, only if, you know, no work. At work, we not supposed to talk. But once in a while, he just see -- some other ones, I see was Lida nice and was Tatiana, I remember, there was too -- met, too, you know. But after that, Ponkovich, Lida, we was all together in a camp. Some went in Canada, some went Australia, some went New Zealand, my friends. So I -- once in a while, we, you know, write to each other, you know, letters.

THE INTERVIEWER: So when did you become or when did you come in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: When we was come to America, in Chicago, we was stay there about two weeks. And after that, we come. They send Walter here in Warren, Ohio. And when we come here, there was one same nationality, Yugoslavian, live on over there east -- no, that west. They -- when they bring us from Chicago on a bus, we come there and wait till -- you know, to get off on a bus, somebody. And then man come from this family, he responsible that, you know, and he pick us up in a car. We talk because he is same nationality, bring to his mother and father. We stay with elderly people. They pass away already, but maybe like couple weeks. And then Walter find job with farmer, work on a farm. We lived over here but now street, Scott Street, we stay there three years till we could buy house or something like that. But we stay there with those people. And I help this lady cleaning, washing. She was elderly, sickly a little bit -- washing. And then, you know, we stay there till we find place where to live. Then we move. And we stay with them close till they both die. They pass away, elderly. And her son, one die, I think he moved. The other one, he die sometime in eighty. He was close to 90 years old.

THE INTERVIEWER: So you began to study the Bible with them?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: No. That another lady that call, visit us, she's very nice. And when we were staying, soon, she find out that we come from Germany, she call all her friends, Yugoslavian people, all kind of people, say that couple come from Germany, Russian -- his wife Russian, he's Yugoslavian. They need clothes, they need food. And they all collected, bring half a truck, everything, clothes, food. After that, she started visiting that sister. Every day, she come and talk with us, explain us what to do. And finally, she tell that she is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. And I started studying Bible. I have a Russian -- I bring Russian Bible from Germany. And I study Bible with her and another Polish lady with her. We started in -- 1953 when I started, then in 1955, when

we come to America, I got pregnant, I was four months, 1955. I was baptized with brother Henry Labood and Angela Natalli from Niles. He was -- he could tell his story, too. I was baptized 1955 in June. It was nothing but like -- you know, going -- there was mosquito, lake, up to knee. And, you know -- it was already maybe got half a dozen. It was not assembly or not. I wish it was assembly, but that time was no assembly. And he say, "You want be baptized, Lari?" I say, "Yes, sure." So we went friends and we baptized since 1955.

THE INTERVIEWER: So what do you think of people today who say that the atrocities that happened in Germany didn't happen during World War II?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, mostly believe. Mostly believe it is true. Maybe some don't. They don't -- it is possible like this, but I think they believe. Some believe it was going on. Time get now with more and more, you know, that time, too, was still people not understand, but I think once you tell them it's the truth, you know, because they know, what reason I have to lie what I achieve for because it's true, what happened. If something was done before to you awful, you never forget, no matter what. You never forget. But thank God maybe that he, you know, help me survive. I appreciate that Jehovah got merciful. Like they say, what you sow, you reap. They going to -- you know, what they done, they going -- they probably going to -- so but I am glad we survive.

THE INTERVIEWER: It's amazing that humans can be so good --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- and then you find other humans --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- the same capacity to love, but they hate.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. Especially I remember those Jew, I don't know why, you go passing by sometime in the street, you know, on a corner, on a house, see hanging person, no. But I saw that, and so many. They hanging, and people walking and looking, nothing. I just -- I thought -- I was only 16 years, and I say why they do? I don't understand that time. Bible I never have, I never read. I never have Bible till I came to America. Why, why they -- Jew kill them? Why they don't kill us. Well, they might kill if you go against them, you know, say something, you know, don't want to go, fight or something, but mostly -- I didn't see no women. I saw men. Honest to tell, I didn't see no women hanging, but I saw men.

THE INTERVIEWER: And it was the German soldiers who did this?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah, who did that, yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Because I remember if it is men -- I remember we keep one man. My mother, my sister was with me, too, younger, and brother still was small. Was man, we kind of hide him. I don't know why. Momma didn't tell me. But after we hear some what's going on, Momma say, "You have to go." I don't know where he went. I know he was man. And at night, I don't know, didn't see. Only in the day.

THE INTERVIEWER: He was a young Jewish man?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. He was Jew. I don't know why -- he was Jew because Russian, Russian free. We could go outside at that time except you have to do what they tell you, don't -- you know. But that man -- I remember now that Momma talk with my daddy, say, "We can't keep him no more. You know, they find out, they might kill us." And we let him go. I don't know where he went.

THE INTERVIEWER: So now, perhaps we can see some of the pictures of your family today. Would that be possible?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. Could be. My momma die, but my sister, they -- my two sister both married, and my brother, too. They live in Russia. I think my brother kind of what's going on today in Russia, he kind of don't like. I think my sister wrote him, he say he want to go someplace different, different country, you know. He say what's going on, there is no -- food shortage, everything bad, too. They starving there, too. You have to -- you know, that that -- what his name, Yeltsin. Gorbachev I think little bit was -- I think he was better. I don't pretty good politic, but I think he was little bit kind of have sense more. But Yeltsin, I don't know. You can -- I don't understand.

THE INTERVIEWER: Do you -- from time to time now, do you still have some flashbacks --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- of what happened to you?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Oh, yeah.

THE INTERVIEWER: Do you wake up at nighttime? Do you think?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. Not -- sometime I don't want to think, but sometime, you know, come -- friends come in and they, you know, ask me one question, "Lari, how long you been or how that?" I might say, thinking, I say, "Oh, I don't want to remember. I just want to forget." It is hard to explain, but it was experience, you know -- my children, too, sometime they talk with friends. They say, "My mother and father, they come from Europe. They was in during war there." And they talk to friends or relatives. They both married American women.

THE INTERVIEWER: What was the worst experience that you ever remember? Can you tell us about that?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Well, separate from parents, you know, run away, hunger, and basically -- I mean beat you up, and problems, all kind. It was rough, honest. That's how could remember it. You probably never forget, you know. But if -- I guess I would say it's only me because that time, war was -- probably was more people suffering, not only me. Everybody probably suffering. It was nothing to be proud or something. At that time, I wasn't thinking who win, who lose, I just thinking to survive and to live like human being, you know.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Maybe now, we can -- we will turn off the camera for a second. If you could get some pictures of your family, we would like to have some pictures --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Okay. Okay.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- of your family.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Okay. We came to United States that 1955 -- '45, '45, yes. That was my husband. And this is my son. This is other pictures here. He was four years and a half when we come to America. After this, he was nine years. He went to school. And after that, I have another son, when -- Michael born that 1955.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. Go ahead.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Okay. This is -- this is my picture of my parents. My mother here at the bottom, my older sister on top, my younger and brother on that side. His name Nikolai and Zena, Olga, and my mother, Julia, Julie.

THE INTERVIEWER: And when were those pictures taken?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Oh, they send me after World War II from home.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Sometime -- 1950s sometime.

THE INTERVIEWER: All right. Can we see the picture of your son there when he was real little?

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. He was born in Germany. We bring little picture with him, that he was born there. And then he was -- he was pioneer when he growing up, to be pioneering. Was very good boy, very good boy. And after that, he married. This now is finish school, that took picture, this picture. He was finish schools, 18 years.

THE INTERVIEWER: All right.

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MS. MANOJLOVICH: Now, this is my grandchildren. That from younger son, picture. And this is from my older son David, what --

THE INTERVIEWER: Very good.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Yeah. I have two granddaughter, one grandson.

THE INTERVIEWER: Okay. We would like to thank you very much --

MS. MANOJLOVICH: You are welcome.

THE INTERVIEWER: -- on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: I appreciate it, too. It really nice to -- I thought I never could tell nobody my story like that. Once in a while, I will tell, you know, friends. They -- everybody like to listen, some couldn't even -- you know, a mess, we have been through.

THE INTERVIEWER: Well, thank you once again.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Okay.

THE INTERVIEWER: We appreciate it.

MS. MANOJLOVICH: Thank you.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.