

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Selma Wijnberg Engel
July 16, 1990
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Selma Wijnberg Engel, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on July 16, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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SELMA WIJNBERG ENGEL

July 16, 1990

01:00:32

Q: Why don't you tell me your name?

A: My name is Selma Engel. Wijnberg is my, my maiden name. And my parents – you want – yeah?

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Groningen. But we lived all these years. I was seven years old, we went to Zwolle. That's a other city. And there we lived till I, went to Po– till I went away, when the war started.

Q: What year were you born?

A: 1922.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit what it was like in the town where you were born and grew up?

A: Yes, in Holland it was very nice to live. It was something like I live now, like the children growing up in Brandford, Connecticut. I had only not-Jewish friends. I had a few Jewish friends; and, it was very assimilated. The way the Jews really lived was that we had – the Judaism was more in the house. I mean we lived in the country, so it was more in the house and, and not outside. So, I don't know how to explain it, we, we didn't go with – nobody went with beards or with peyos¹. Something like that, we didn't see it. But life was very nice in Holland. was not antisemitism. Was no antisemitism, and my parents had a hotel. They had a kosher hotel, and they had the only kosher hotel in the state where we lived in.

01:02:00

Like Holland is all divided in states, and it was the state of Overijssel; and so a lot of Jewish people came to our hotel because we had also – it was a small hotel. It was on a cattle market; and we lived – a part of – most, most the business came from the cattle market, as is typical in Europe. It's not so much here. And so we had a lot of Jewish salesmen. They slept over in our hotel. So it was a lot of Judaismic, and Jewish people came always to the hotel. And also when there was a kosher, wedding party or something like that came, that was always catered in our hotel. So a lot of Jewish life went on in our hotel. My mother was very religious. My father was not that religious; but we had to be religious because we had a kosher hotel and that goes together with it.

¹ earlocks worn by Hasidic Jews (Hebrew)

Q: , and you went to school?

A: I went to school, the elementary school; and then I went to high school. And the war broke out when I was not even eighteen years old. So I finished high school, and then, was – that was the end because right away we were not allowed to go to school. We were not allowed to go work. We were not allowed to do anything. That was, that was the first thing what the German did in Holland, to take us out from, from learning and anything. I started working, in a hospital, in the hospital, because I, I couldn't sit home and do nothing. And I start working in the beginning in the hospital, and cooking for Jewish patients. But that was, after a short time that was also was not allowed anymore. Like in '41, that was not allowed anymore. So, then I started helping all the Jewish people. I remember in that time we had already a star – we had to wear a star. And, I went to another – I took the star off. I always was a little bit against. And I took the star off, and I went with the train to another town and helped an older family, an older couple, what they were not allowed to have any help anymore from not-Jewish people. And we were not allowed to do really anything at all. So, that was a very short time. Also my, my, my father died on a heart attack in 1941; and on May the 10th the war broke out in Holland. The Germans came into Holland on May the 10th, and the war was only five days. I had two brothers what were in the, in the army. And it was a very nervous atmosphere, because we had a lot of Jewish people in the hotel because a Friday – from Friday or Saturday the war started and they stayed–there were a lot of Jewish people would stay overnight–and they stayed in our hotel, and everybody was tremendously – was panicky.

01:05:00

Very panicky right away, and because they know what was in Germany happened. It was next to the, the border was next to where we lived. You know, Holland is very small. And so, they, they, they run away and some—we have a lot of water in Holland – the Ijssel was a big river, and they left the car in the water. They drove them in the water, and they went farther together; because they thought that the German cannot take it. So it was a big panic. And after five days – well, there was a lot of traitors in Holland so the war didn't took long in Holland. After five days the war was over. And they didn't start right away, the Germans. They did it very slowly on; because they know that they cannot do it like it was in Poland, right away, and in Germany perhaps. But they did it very slowly on, and very often – very – they did it in a way that no – nobody felt really that there was something going on and it would happen something, serious things.

Q: What happened, with the hotel, or what did you begin to notice?

A: In 1941, there was a club in Holland, and it was a men's club. Very sophisticated, for lawyers; and, and the German right away took that building. So one of the head of the police and the owner from that men's club came to my mother and say, you know, "Why don't you go out of the hotel, so the Germans don't take it. And we take your hotel and that you will

save." And my mother was very upset, of course. They really— my father died, what I told you — they really built that hotel by themselves, really built it. And to leave everything, just to go out what you have in your hand, was very hard. So I don't remember exactly what was going on. I know after many talking with the police and with this man, the owner, my mother had to go out of the hotel and could just take with her—they talked her into it, perhaps it was the best—they could just go out of the hotel. And there was another Jewish family in our home town what, had a little house, very poor little house in a very poor area, and, we moved in that little house in. But I have to tell — yeah — it was already — we moved into the hotel in and in that little house in, and, and it was horrible. There was no hot water and there was no bathroom and it was a very poor neighborhood and I really hated it, I remember; and it was a very difficult time because, you were not allowed to go out and you hear the German already walking through your door. And also one day the German took all the people what went over to another religion, like there were was a Jewish boy by the name Wynberg and he went over to the Catholic religion, and they picked up all the people what went over to the, the Jews what went over to the Catholic religion. So they didn't know — they picked my mother and my two brothers and me. My oldest brother was married. I, I come from a family from four children and I was the youngest. I had three older brothers. And they took us already to the German border. But in Holland was a Jewish Raad², a Jewish group of people. What they say they help the Jews going to, Poland and Germany, but they went after it and they know that they made a mistake and we were already one or two days.

Q: Okay, fine. Can you just go back and explain why were you taken?

01:09:00

A: Because that was a mistake. It was a mistake that they took us because, they didn't know that the, the Wynberg, that boy, that he was it. They thought that we were it. It was a mistake. And it — because we had the same name. And so they sent us already — and always we had a little backpack staying by the door because everybody knows already that it would be perhaps something like that happened, that, that we would be called up, so we went to that — Enschede was the city. We went to Enschede. It was on the German border. And when we were there the Dutch Jewish organization, the Jewish Raad was there — I don't know how it is in English. They, they went working very effective and they got us back to my, to Zwolle, where I lived. And I remember when we came back.

Q: And how did they get you back?

A: I don't know, exactly. They talked with the Germans and they told them that they have the wrong people and that we were the wrong people and that they have to have this other boy what he went over to the Catholic religion and not we. We were Jews, and, and that's the reason, they got us back. They went after that they said they had the wrong people. But that was just a postponing of a time. And so we went — I remember we came back and all the

² Council (Dutch)

people were standing on the street and, and everybody was cheering that we came back and, and everybody came to our house and congratulated us. That's the reason it's so in my memory, that thing, that way. But, it didn't help much.

Q: What happened when you did go back?

A: Nothing happened. We just—

Q: What was your life like?

A: Our life was — we were not allowed to do anything, so it was very, very upsetting. It was very strenuous and it was very nervous. And, and the men had to go already to, work camp but I'm talking now where it's already the end of 1941, beginning 1942 or so. And, the men had to go to work camp. And I remember my brother was — one of my brothers was hidden and he just got married not long before, and her father had to go a work camp. And they starting already talking; they say, "Oh, when somebody goes to a work camp, then my father will be sent away. So you better come out of the hiding place." So my brother came out of the hiding place and her father — they would have sent away anyway — my — you know, the rumors go around. You didn't know what was going on. And so my brother came out. And the men went to working camps, but they were allowed to go weekends home; so nobody saw something difficult in it, not so serious in it. They thought, "Oh, they have to go there for helping, doing things," and they came weekends home. So in between, also, there were things going on in, in my home town. That a young group of men didn't have anything to do. They're all — everybody what had a business was taken away already for the Germans and they put Volk—, traitors what went with the Germans—they put in these businesses. So the men didn't have anything to do. And we were not allowed to go out of the house after five o'clock at night; we have to stay in. So these men, eight young married men, came together and played card. And one of the traitors, a Dutch man, went to the German and say, "You know, that bunch of Jews sitting there and playing card." And they took these eight men and sent them to Poland. So that was going on a lot. It was a, a lot of Dutch, not-Jewish people, what were traitors; and you had to be very, very careful, to not to talk and not to, say anything. I tried to, to, to do something, what, what I told you I went to Apeldoorn and helped—and that's a little town not far from my hometown—and helped an older family, an older couple. But it was after a very short time also very dangerous. And there was not much what you could do. I remember one day I was walked in my street, and in the street where I was, was a big house and there was a Catholic priest lived in there. And the Catholic priest came to me and he say — he start talking to me, and he said, "How do you think that you can save your life?" And I say, "The only way that I, that the Jews can save their life, is when not-Jewish people take us in." And, the same evening he came to me and he say, "I have a house for you. I have a place for you where you can go. And be ready tomorrow morning at five o'clock, six o'clock," I don't remember exactly what time, but very early in the morning, "with your bicycle, and a little bit what you can take with you on the bicycle, and I will bring you there." And that what I did. I remember I say goodbye to my mother and to my brothers, and I never saw them again. That was the last time, time that I ever saw my family. And, we

went to Utrecht, and I went to, a family – no, a woman, what she was a nurse. She came also from my hometown. I went to her house and, I stayed with her a few months.

01:15:00

And that was very, a very nice place with this woman to live; what she was the whole day gone and I was the whole day alone. And, then she had another family what she want to take in, and I went to another family's house. A very large house with, a lot of room, and I was there the maid. I had to clean the house, and I had to, was not allowed to talk to anybody. I was not allowed to go open the door ever. I was not allowed to go out of the house; and there was no food in the house and it was very hard already, food in Holland. Holland – they suffered tremendous in the war. They didn't have, much to eat and they had, didn't have much, it was very difficult; and these people, they really didn't have anything in the house. I remember they cooked the bones ten times to make soup and they had the cat's plate already with it. It was very awful fam– it was a very awful time for me to be there alone. And, I, I didn't I didn't get much to eat there. I remember I stole sometimes an apple, or I put in a sandwich under my pillow that at night when I came to my bed that I had something to eat– because there was, really nothing to eat there. These people – when I was there a few months, they had another Jewish family and they took in; an professor it was there–I met his wife, and they came upstairs and they want to use me also as a maid. I didn't let it. They had, they wanted I cleaned the oven and things like that, and I didn't do that. Because I was so very lonely and so unhappy, one day they told me that not far from them is another Jewish family hidden; and, I want to go and visit them. And I was very happy that I could talk with somebody. So after three months being alone in, in that, locked up in that house and not really having to talk with anybody. And they were very Christian. They really tried me to get over to their religion too, but, you know, it was very – it was not very pleasant time. I went, to this family, and the moment that I came into this family's house, the police came. And, I was very sure that I was safe because I had a passport and it was – every Jew in Holland had to have a passport with a “J” on it, and the underground took my “J” out of the passport. Well, I didn't know that you hold it to the light that you can see the J, so I came there and I – and when the police came. There were also police what were with the German. Dutch police that went over to NSB³, as they called them; and when police came I say I'm a nurse and have come to help these people. And so they took my passport and hold it to the light and they saw the “J” and that was it. So there wasn't – there was a family hidden there, a lawyer. And what I didn't know, the people where I was hidden were traitors. That what I heard when I came back. Twenty-eight Jews are caught after that I, after that I was the first one what was hidden there; and nothing happened to the people what lived in the house. Always when the German found Jews in an house, they took the whole family – most of the time the whole family, but sometimes just the men. And there never was happen something to these people, but I didn't know. I heard it all after the war. These men went to jail, but because I didn't know, after the war I, I testified for that they saved – that what I know.

³ National Socialistische Beweging (Dutch); National Socialist Movement.

01:19:00

Later on I heard what was happened to them. So anyway, the police tried to get to know from me where I was hidden, but I didn't want to tell because I thought I know there was another Jewish family there, and they have a chance then to, to get away. And so I didn't tell them; and the people where I was caught told them. So in the evening I had to go back to the place where I was hidden and they went to my room. I was in the attic. I had a room in the attic. And they opened the bed and they found that sandwich what I told you what I put sometimes under my pillow what I was very hungry. And they say, "See! Look what the Jews did! You know – see, you give them to eat and still she steals from you!" I remember that very – there's not many things that I remember, but that I remember. So anyway I don't remember what I took with me or how, but I remember I had to go back to the police station in Utrecht. I was a week in the police station in Utrecht. I could have got away from there. I had a brother what was married and he was hidden in Utrecht, and I visit him and I didn't get along with my sister-in-law. I still – she's still alive. I don't get along with her. Anyway, the, the kids were very small; and it was very dirty and it was very poor. And I thought, "When I have to go to my brother..." I, I just didn't want to. So the, the police asked me in Utrecht – they know that I could get away, so there was an underground already what I didn't know. That was already 1942, October 1942. I didn't know that there was the underground already in Holland, very strong. And, when I and – I say "no." I did – my mother didn't give me any money. I didn't have any money; and I thought when you have no money, where do I go? You know, you have to go somewhere. So I didn't, go away, and, that – I remember that, many times they tried to get me out, so in 19 – then I went, from there I went to Amsterdam. In Amsterdam I was, in jail. I was three months in jail in Amsterdam.

Q: Okay. How did you get to Amsterdam?

A: I don't remember.

Q: And–

01:21:48

A: I don't remember. I was together in Utrecht in jail with this family. I don't remember much about it. I remember they had a police, they always – I was young – I was nineteen, in between – young, good looking at that time, and the head of the police tried to get me also – something that he wants to take me to his house and – I don't know, there was something not so good. So, I don't remember how we came to Amsterdam. I think by truck, or with a bus; I have no idea, I don't remember that at all. I came – I remember we came to Amsterdam in – was in jail. I was three months in jail. I remember my family I had in Amsterdam knew about it, and they sent me some – sometimes things to jail, but, I do – I was in a cell with, seven – several – eight, nine women. We didn't get much to eat, every – everybody – we were with a professor's wife, and a doctor's wife, and a girl from, beautician, and somebody else from the street; and I, I, you know, it is really very worldly. It was the first time that in

my life I met really people what told me things about the world, when I was brought up in a very small town, a very – confined to a smaller group, area. Anyway, we were three months – I remember once I was laughing. There was – the girl, the woman what opened, what gives us our food, was, was a very mean German woman. And I started once laughing, and she say, "Do you have a brother that work in so and so hotel?" And my brother was in a hotel school, and he had to work in a hotel; and she was their maid. So she remembers my brother. And after that we got better food and we could share that together with the girls in the room. I remember also – I smoked in that time – and I had cigarette and I had no matches. I remember I was sitting hours hold my cigarette on the lamp perhaps it started making fire. But it didn't work. So I give the cigarettes on this, on this woman, what was, she was very happy with.

01:24:00

There was also one woman what I remember was very beautiful and had very blond long hair. And she came from – her fath– her husband had an, factory from hats; and she smuggled out all these little papers and she put it in somewhere and she got it out and she got money in and she was really a, a very rich woman. I remember I came in, and we went after there to another concentration camp; and she was already together with the head of the concentration camp. So I was three months in that ca– in, in the jail in Amsterdam.

Q: Were they all Jews?

A: Yeah, they were all Jews. They were all Jews. I was over Christmas there till beginning of January; I think the first or the second of January. And it, it was a very difficult time. We went also out. They took us out every day and we had to walk around, so like you see in movies, we had to walk around, and – but they didn't, didn't hit us. They didn't do any, punishments to us; but we didn't get much to eat. And it was – you didn't know what was happen, what would happen to you. After three months we had to go out, and I remember we went to an office and we were standing there with a whole bunch of Jewish girls. Girls from my age, seven, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old. I was already along between twenty years old then. Getting a little bit older. So, we were standing there. I remember one girl was singing, that song, a German song, that – what will happen to us. I – we met there also one of the girls what was a survivor, Ursula, Ursula Stern – Ula Stern – and we, we somehow stick together. Mimie Katz was one of the girls' name, and we somehow stick together from that point on. We went together to another concentration camp in Holland, Ought. That was the – just the opening from the concentration camp when we came there. It was 1943 and we were one of the first people what came there, because we didn't have any blankets and it was in January. We didn't have any blanket. They didn't have much food there, and, there were only wo– women were separate from the men. The men was in the other camp, a other part; and we were in one part. The men had it very difficult. They right away shaved the hair from the men, that they didn't get to eat. They had to work very heavy labor, and they got punished very badly. Because when I went later to Westerbork I went together with these men and I met them. We – I was very lucky, again. there was a man what

recognized me, what he came to our hotel, and he said, "Do you like to have a good job?" And I said, "Yes." I – he said, "Would you like to be the head of the laundry?" I said, "Yes." I didn't know anything about laundry, but I thought everything is better then; perhaps it looks good. So I worked in the laun– laundry, and I – to assort clothes, and they were sent out. And most of the time the half didn't come back, so it was not so good. It was – everybody was very unhappy. We, we – the, the – what I told you the girls what we met in jail, somehow we stick a little bit together. I don't know why, but, we know – when we went to Westerbork, we, we also came together in the, in the same co– sitting together in the train. Yeah.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit more about the, concentration camp before you – ?

A: No. What I don't remember much. It was three months long. I know we didn't get much to eat, and I had to work there assorting clothes. And I, I remember the bathrooms were together and they were very – a lot of older people and, and, I don't even remember if there were showers. I don't remember. I know we didn't get much – there was no salt, and we had to eat the food without salt; and I couldn't eat it. That's what I remember. I really don't remember much about that camp. I remember only that the men had it very difficult. But somehow I, I don't remember much. I may – that's – I don't – it was a very short time. I remember more that week what I was in, in Westerbork – where we went to with the train to Westerbork, and I was sitting together with one of the young men from my home town. And he was always very good looking, and I remember he was mar– he was in love with a married a woman, and he – they were sitting together and he looked awful. I mean he – you could see he didn't get to eat and he – he looked horrible. And, and, and with his wife, with his, girlfriend, what was his – and we went together to Westerbork. And when I came to Westerbork I remember that, we – they, they tried to get me out of the barrack where I was in, because – they couldn't get me out, because I was, hidden. And, and they couldn't get me out because of that, so my fa– I had – there came a brother from my mother. Was there for a long time, with five little children; and she was already a long time – they were already a long time in Westerbork. Westerbork was not a concentration camp. Westerbork was a camp, but it – what you could stay in Westerbork. It was safe. That was a camp where only people went through. A lot of people stayed there, and stayed there for a long time; and was very good eating and it was entertaining, and it was like a little village. And when you could stay in Westerbork, you were safe for your life; but when I, I couldn't stay there because I was hidden, and I was punished because of that – because – I had no chance to stay.

Q: What do you mean by you were hidden?

01:30:30

A: I was hidden in, in Holland; and so I – when you, you had no chance. I was hidden in Holland by these not- Jewish people. And I – what's the word for it? I forget it – I write it always down, this word, and I forget always that word. When I speak to people I write the word down, but I forgot. I had no chance to come out of there, because I was punished because I was hidden in Holland. When you – when, when I wouldn't have been hidden; they

would have taken you out of your house, you, you could have perhaps stayed there longer. So this uncle tried to get me out of the barracks, but we couldn't – they couldn't me out, this uncle. we stayed there a week, and somehow like Ula, Ursula Stern, and Mimie Katz and other – the other five girls, seven girls where we – I forgot the names from the other ones, because they went right away later to the gas chamber. So we, just a few girls what I stayed in Sobibór with, I remember vividly. So we, we were in Westerbork and we were not allowed to go out of this barrack and, that was in – that was in already April. I was three months in Vught. And in April, beginning of April I think – I don't remember the date exactly; but it is – statistically, you can find it out. We, one morning they give us some food and we had to go a freight car; and we had to go in this freight car. I remember also not so much about Westerbork either. I don't know, you know, forty years long we never talked about anything. And when I – when we talk to people I tell them more about – not about this – I tell more about.... So I don't remember much about that, the little episodes. I remember they didn't do us any harm, and there were no German. Only there was all Jew what we saw, what worked with us in Westerbork. And you didn't see – I didn't see any German. There were Germans more outside and, you know, in different places. But in the camp were only Jews – in so, in Westerbork. I, I remember now that we had to go into the train. This uncle what was in Westerbork went with the same transport to Sobibór as I went.

01:33:00

We went in the first – that was the first transport what went to Sobibór in freight wagons. till now they all went in pass – in regular trains, passagiertrein⁴, and I was the first one that went. We went the first one that went in freight trains. The freight trains, they put some straw on the ground and there was a barrel for the toilet in the corner; and I don't remember – I think it was open but I don't remember exactly, what we had to go to the bathroom. So – and now we were so, about 60 people they put in the train. And it was very, scary feeling. I remember we were all very nervous. We did – these young girls; we stick together also like we stick together in Westerbork, we stick together and we sat together in that train, in the train. I think we got some food, because I don't remember they were hungry. But, the – there were – in that time we say all Germans were standing outside in Westerbork; and when the train got closed with the door, and the lock on it, and there was just a little window on top, we were very afraid and we were very scared. There were a lot of older people in the train, and, and everybody wants to look through this window; but we were afraid because the Germans were shooting later on. When we went away, we stopped many times. The train stopped many times. And many times was always shooting on the outside and they were with dogs on the outside, and we could see through this little windows and we could see that people did like that to us. And we didn't know what it was, what it means. We thought just antisemites. You know, they want to have us dead. We went farther and farther. And the farther we went – see, we come from Holland and Holland is a little like America; it's small, very sophisticated, little town and you still see more poor, poor people.

⁴ Passenger-train (Dutch)

01:35:00

And the farther we came, the poorer the poor people looked, and, and after three days they – we thought we were in Russia. We had no idea. Also, we didn't have – and I thought I go to my mother. The only thing also in Utrecht, already I thought, "I want to go to my mother and my brothers." But I forgot to tell you when I was hidden the, the woman – the man what brought me to Utrecht was my English teacher; and his wife came to me when I was in – hidden in, in Utrecht, and she's told me one day that my mother on the way out of the house – she was planning to go hide somewhere – somebody told the Germans that my mother wants to go and hide somewhere and they caught my mother. And they send my mother already to Poland, and my brothers too. My two brothers, and one brother was just married also. And so, so I, I wanted to go to my mother. That's the all what I thought about it; also when I was in Utrecht, I wanted to go to my mother. That's the only thing what I thought about. And so I didn't want to go, really, hide somewhere because I didn't know there was the underground already that you that you had a chance to save a– somewhere that somebody would take you in. And, so when I went to, was in Westerbork I thought the only thing what I could, go to my mother; and that was that's that we all thought, the girls that were together with me what had already the family were, were, away, thought also they go to their family. So we had no idea that Holland – in Holland was, was no antisemitism. We didn't grow up with antisemitism. We didn't grow up to be afraid, that you say something and, and, and it would something happen to you. And so, we had no idea what would happen to us. So after three days and three nights, we, we came to Sobibór. What, what were – yeah?

Q: I was just going to say – can you recall anything else about the train ride?

A: I just can recall about the train ride that it was very scary. And how farther we went, how more the people did like that when we were fighting always what who can look outside; so when we could look outside we were very happy. And, and then when we saw these people, what they did to us – we had no idea and that's also what I recall, that – I don't recall that we were hungry. I remember we didn't have anything to drink. That I remember – we were very thirsty, what was already very hot – I think was very hot – I don't know – we were very thirsty. And we didn't have anything to drink and I think there had to be – and I remember there was a barrel and I think it was hidden because I don't – we were – all the people and, and we couldn't – everybody was sitting on the ground. We had nowhere – nowhere else to sit and in, in the straw, but that's all that I remember, that it was very scary, that we know where we go. Well, we had no idea where we went. I remember that we came out at Sobibór. They opened the, the doors; and then we heard screaming and with the whips throwing, and we heard, "Raus! Raus! Raus!"⁵ That we had to go out of the train with whips and, and hitting us already, and, and everybody stumbled over each other. And I remember there was a trolley. You know, was a trolley, little kipcar⁶ that goes over. And we saw all the people what couldn't walk, throwing in them; and little children went in that trolley. And it was very

⁵ Get out! (German)

⁶ Dump cart (Dutch)

confusing, you know, and we had to throw away our baggage, that little package what, what, backpack what we had. We had to throw that in, in, in a place. I remember vividly also that one woman threw away her package and her baby went, and, and, she said to German, "Oh, my child! My child!" And he had a whip and said he, and he hit this woman and saw blood from her face coming and said, "We will take care of this baby. You go!" So then we went farther and we stick somehow together with these young girls. And we passed all these Germans. The – all, all the SS's were standing there on the side, and we passed all these Germans; and they say, "You're out. You're out." And they pull us out, and we settled on the side. When I was in jail in Amsterdam, one of the girls—one these women what I told you about the blond hair—say she wants to go always with a German to bed and she thought when she get pregnant perhaps she can get out of jail.

01:40:00

So I didn't know really what she means what she say. But I say to the girls – we didn't know what had happened to us – we stay on the side; and I say to the girls, "What will happen to us?" "One shower," she always say, "one bath, and it is all over." I remember I say to the girls, "One bath and it is all over." I didn't know even what she was talking about. So we standing there together and we didn't know what's happened to us, if the Germans will use us – we had no idea. We were just standing there on the side. I think, I think we were ten or twelve or twenty – I don't know exactly how many girls. That's the first transport that took young girls, Dutch, Dutch young girls out. We were the first Dutch people, and we were standing on the side and when we saw the trans– we saw all the people passing by. We saw the – I think the women went first, and then the men went at last. But I don't remember exactly. I remember – saw them walking already that side to the to the gas chamber, that they had to take their clothes off. And I remember that also that I, we heard them speaking to the group of us standing there, and say, "You came to Sobibór, and everything will be okay," and we– "Here is a little card. You can write home that you are here in Sobibór and that you are – you go to a work camp." And we have to take a shower because the – it it's better for you that you take a shower; so we can, we will give you other clothes." That I remember – that they were talking to them. What, what they say exactly, I perhaps remember what I read later about it. But I remember that they talking to them, that they say, "Here is a card. You can write to Holland." For us, we were standing on the side and they brought us to Camp One. Sobibór was divided in–

Q: How long did you stand on the side like that?

01:42:00

A: So long that the people came and they were gone. So the men was on the right side – of the men went first, and then that was nobody there. Was nobody there anymore.

Q: Where did they all go? All the–?

A: We couldn't see it. We were standing on a spot that I – they were already going to the gas chamber, because Sobibór was a death camp. They – everybody went straight to the gas chamber. There was just a very small camp. When we came, there was a very small group of people just what was living and, and working in Sobibór. So all the – I don't remember – all the two thousand people that we came with went straight to the gas chamber. So the one group went already to the gas chamber. We went then to where we slept. The camp was divided in three parts. One camp part we slept, and one camp part we worked and one part was Lager Drei⁷. One – Camp One, Camp Two, Camp Three. We called "Lagers." Lager Drei was the death camp. When you were once there, or even looked at there, you never came back. So we – they brought us to Camp One. When we came on in Camp One, I saw people from my home town. I saw boys what I grew up with, as far back as their father and mother were my best – my parent's best friends. And I remember I saw one boy what, what, what, stayed with us in the hotel—in the wartime, in 1941—because he had to go out of his house. The German took his house, and he stayed with us. And I was so happy to see them. I said, "Hi, how are you?" And I waved to them. He was just standing there and he didn't say anything. And they were very scary and they didn't answer us. So they went to work first, and, then we went to work.

01:44:00

And we came to a barrack, and we had to assort clothes. We had to assort clothes. We had to do, first quality, and second quality; and we had to look after what was in the pockets we had to take out. And we had to empty, the knapsacks we had to empty. You know, I didn't know what I was doing. I had no – that I remember vividly – I had no idea that thinking that it was from people that that what came on. It was very stupid, but I didn't – I had no – I remember that we all assorted the clothes. And then after, four or five o'clock, I had to assort even the clothes. I remember that there was also the clothes from this uncle, from the man with the five children, was also in this transport. I – at five o'clock we had to go on a roll call, go out on a roll call, and we were brought to Lager One where we slept. And we came to Lager One, we had to dance for the Germans. There were some Jews what, what had instruments, what were already longer in camp and they had some instrument. In between the fire was burning and you could smell, you know, the – from bones and the hair – and the fire was burning and there was – that was like over, over the whole camp. Was very big, very big. And we had to dance. The Germans were standing there laughing and having fun and some – I don't know exactly, but some of the Jews had an instrument. They were playing the music, like a sub-distance from the Germans and it was an order that we had to dance. And Chaim, my husband, asked me to dance; and that was the first time that I met Chaim. I remember he looked terrible. He had no hair and had some hat on, and strange pants he wore. He wore always two pants because, when they hit him then it didn't hurt so much. So he had another pants on, and, and I – it was very strange. I, I, I don't remember much about that dancing really, but I remember we had to dance. When I went away from that I met these Dutch boys what I remember from my home town. And they told me, "Do you know what that fire

⁷ camp three (German)

means?" And I say, "No." And they, they were all married and all the wives went to the gas chamber. And they cried, and they told me. And it was very upsetting. I still, I still couldn't comprehend it. I think it took me a long time to think about it; that with all these people I came with, that they were dead and – you know? So, after that we talked together, we got very close. They, they were very hungry. They, we didn't get anything to eat in, in the camp. They didn't work with the barracks. They worked some place else. I was lucky that I start working with assorting clothes; so I had a chance to steal food from the, from the backpacks what the Dutch people brought when there was transport. They didn't have a chance to, to get anything. So after a very short time, there was a German, German Jew, and he was a traitor. Chaim, my husband, always say, "He wants to be holier than the Pope," this guy. And he told the Germans that the Dutch men– there were seventy-two Dutch men in camp–that they want to run away. We never know if it was truth or if it was just a lie. We really never know, but after a very short time that we were in camp – and I don't remember have long contact with the Dutch, young men – I remember they had to go on, on roll call. They had to, Ap– on Appell⁸ and they – I remember one of the boys – Zeehandelaar was the last name, Maurits Zeehandelaar – he had a little piece of butter and he brought it to me; says he, "When I come back, save it for me." So he give me the little piece of butter and he – they were shot. Seventy-two Dutch boys were shot, so they never came back. So I don't remember much talking to them. So that was a very short time that we was – after I was in camp that they got shot. I, I remember we didn't get much to eat. In the morning we got some black water and bread. It was for the whole day. It was like clay. It was very sour and you couldn't eat it. I couldn't eat it. And were – and I remember that from the beginning the Dutch people always tried to get that bread; and we, I gave it to them because, we could we could eat some, we could steal and we had together with us some – we could make some food. So, they were very hungry. Later on we get more Dutch people in camp. Later on there come more Dutch. I – somehow the Dutch were always, came to us and they wanted to have some food from the others. We had a little group of people. Some – later on came also, a cousin of mine came to camp, to Sobibór. And so I, we – and Mimie Katz was another Dutch girl what I was with in camp, and Ula. We had – we shared our food in the evening when we came together and we helped each other when we got sick and things like that.

01:50:30

We – most of the time we worked assorting clothes. When there came no transport, we had to work in the woods and clean the woods. Just there was no work there in that camp. Or we had to clean the railway, rail, railroad. Or we had to throw out the ashes from the – what we got. We didn't get it. They brought it. In the fields, and we had to assort – throw it in the fields for, fertilizing, the ashes. So I got typhus. I got sick on typhus. So there's a big part in Sobibór what I don't remember, because I got typhus. And you was not allowed to be sick in Sobibór. Everybody what was sick went straight to the gas chamber. I remember what I was sick and one day I stayed in, in the barrack. The barrack had no toilet. We were not – we had – there was a pail and that was our bathroom; and we slept in two rows, three rows, three.

⁸ roll call (German).

The floor and three rows, and we all with the lice a very short time, and there was – once there was another animal but also red and that was full and that little bit food what was sometimes had to put under the pillow and, and were the mice. I remember one day I put a pillow up and it was all mice with little babies under my pillow with that what – and we were already – I remember I was so upset from the first lice what I had that Chaim – I was on already – Chaim fell right away in love with me, so that was a big help for me too; you know, that, that the time in Sobibór was not so difficult if I would have been alone. But Chaim was already six months longer in camp. Now Chaim was really a girlfriend with somebody else, with Esther Raab – what was interviewed here – and I think she was jealous. Chaim right away fell in love with me, so he was a big help for me and all the time in the camp, because I don't think when I wouldn't have Chaim, I wouldn't have made it. Ultimately, definitely not out of camp. But when I was sick Chaim took me to the bathroom and made me walk and, he brought me, I think, food. I don't remember much from the time when that I had typhus because I was very sick and you had to go to work. And because of Chaim, and also because of the girlfriends what I had – I say they helped me through this time because that I remember. Later on they told that I fell sometimes asleep and they hide me when we had to clean the woods, so they hide me some where that I was sleeping. And also one day, Frenzel⁹ came out. Frenzel was one of the worst SS's in camp; and he came to the camp, Camp One, and he went, with the whip he went in the barrack in and everybody was sick, had to go out and had to stay on the middle and I remember so vividly, was also a boy that I know from Assen, from another town, from the Zionist organization, and he was standing there and, and they all was standing on a long time in the middle on the camp and they all got shot, right away.

01:54:00

When I – then he screamed and, and I came out and he recognized me; and I don't remember if it was Wagner¹⁰ or Frenzel – now one of the two – I mixed it up – he say to me, "Go back to work!" So I could go back to work. Just luck. Frenzel picked me out, too; and Frenzel somehow always picked me out. When I had a very heavy work – I don't know why – just luck. He picked me out and give me easier work. We had sometimes to go in the woods and picking mushrooms for the Germans, some of the girls. I remember I put everything, the mushrooms, I put them in my bra and in my underpants, and when we came home we cooked them in a little something what, what the Polish girls had; and then we had to go out and picking blueberries sometimes, but we were not allowed to eat them. So when we came back then we had to show our tongue if we had one. And we were very hungry in that time. When there came no transports, we were very hungry, because you couldn't save the food because the mice and the and the rats, they, they took away under your pillow. So we were very hungry. Somehow Frenzel, when I had very heavy work – we has also to go in the woods and cutting trees and bringing from one place to the other, or filling up these trolleys, what the people came in, with sand. And that we had to do on the – they were the Germans,

⁹ Oberscharführer Karl Frenzel

¹⁰ Oberscharführer Gustav Wagner

also the, the Kapos¹¹, with the whip in back of us, and they – we had to put it somewhere. You know, when there didn't come transport. So we were terrible. We are like animals already, because we were happy when there came a transport; because we know when it comes in a long time no transport, we go to the gas chamber. And when there come already transport, when they coming, then we were happy that they came. When there came transport from Holland, everything went very smoothly. And there came also transports from Poland, and when there came transports from Poland, was – we were locked up in our area and there was always shooting. There came also a transport from Belzec – my husband will tell that story from Belzec, that transport. I remember that we got locked up in our things and we thought, “that's the end of us.” There was shooting and there was screaming and there was – it, it was very scary; and that was from Belzec. They didn't want to go to the gas chamber, so they shot them on the spot. And many times when transports came from, from Poles – Polish Jews, they didn't want to go to the gas chamber because they know they went through the gas – that they went. So they just shot them on the spot. So, it was also many times we had to stay on roll call the whole night because an animal walked on one of the mines; because Sobibór was with, mines three times or two times and sometimes an animal walked on there – I don't know what kind of an animal – and then we had to stay the whole night on roll call. And we always made so out that, Chaim and I, that we stayed together.

01:58:00

You know, he always made sure that we always – when also once what is that there was, some Jews ran away. Two Jews ran away. They made it, too. And we had to go back and we stayed on roll call. And Chaim, Chaim had – the men had to stay separate and the women had to stay separate. And we stayed in Lager One on roll call, and they cut, they picked out every tenth person. So okay, imagine how what a nervous wreck I was – they picked out every tenth person, so it could have been Chaim. Chaim was number nine.

Q: They're going to change the tape.

A: What?

Q: They're going to change the tape.

A: Okay.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

¹¹ Forman (colloquial German); term used for inmates appointed by the SS to head a labor Kommando of prisoners.

TAPE #2

[Technical conversation]

02:00:27

A: Where did we stop?

Q: You were talking about standing in line and how they selected every ten people, and your husband—

A: Oh. Yeah. And he was number one – nine. He was number nine, and, and they were all shot. I remember so vividly, there was one woman, and one man was number ten and his girlfriend or his wife was there. And she say, "When he goes, I go with him." So she went also with him and they got shot. You hear, you hear the shooting. Shooting was – killing was nothing. You know, you live with the minute. You live with the second. I mean somebody died or somebody could – I mean you lived in such a fear, every minute of the day, that you don't know one day of the other, you know. And, and every time when I saw Chaim or if he saw me, we were happy that we were still alive. We were always together. They called us bride and "bruidegom"¹², because we were always together. We tried always be together. So – and you know, I, I was like a tomboy. I was always the only girl from four, from four children; and I grew up and I was the youngest so I grew up with my four brothers. So I remember that Chaim always calmed me down. And he was always sure that, that nobody really knows us, that we went and so, you know; he calmed me down. I stole a lot of food always from the packages.

02:02:00

And what was very, very dangerous. When they would caught us, they shoot me right away, straight. And, and I remember, once the they, they killed some people in the woods. There were – a group of men had to work in the woods and cutting trees; and they had a plan to run away. And when they were in the woods they, they killed some from the Ukrainians, what were also what take care of them. And they, they were Polish Jews, not Dutch Jews. Dutch Jews, they didn't think about running away. Because we know we didn't – where could we run? We don't know Polish, and where could we run? So they didn't – but they were the Polish Jews, and they killed and they ran away. And some got alive out. But most of the Dutch Jews, they shot a bunch and they caught them and they put them, they brought them back. And we had to stay on roll call, and we – I had a lot of food in my coat. I remember I put it in a coat. I don't how, how come that I had a coat – something over my arm. I remember. And one woman was crying when her husband – it was a Dutch woman – who got killed and I know they wouldn't do anything to her. So I say, "Will you take my coat?" And she took my coat; because I know for sure they wouldn't do, they wouldn't look over her

¹² bridegroom (Dutch)

if she would have some food when she was crying. And they had sometimes, you know, some feeling for the Dutch people. And they too – didn't take me to look over my clothes, but they took some of the other people look if they had food with them. After that we had to go on roll call on a big place, and we were standing. And again Chaim and I were standing next to each other; and they took a bunch of people and we had to stand 10 or 20 people—I don't remember the amount—and they had to stand farther up, and they will shoot them. They were planned to shoot them. My system was always— and was perhaps because I do a lot now when we see a movie where we don't want to see, we take it away right away – I never looked, so they shoot these 10 people. We had to stay all on roll call together, the whole camp; and we had to look what will happen to you when you do things like and they all shoot them. I didn't look. I saw them later that the Germans went again and shoot them again, that I that I remember, but I didn't see them falling. I remember one person seeing falling of that, that what I think I saw; but I remember that they went back and they all shot them again. And there were all because they want to show us what will happen to us if we will do a thing like that. Also I remember vividly that one boy opened a can of sardines, and they, they almost killed him. His, his arm was almost – he was almost dead. They put him on a piece of wood, and we had to also trade – and the whole— everybody what worked in the barracks had to go on a roll call and we had to watch this boy, and that was Wagner said, "That will happen to you. When you open a can of sardines, or you eat anything from the things what coming on. That will happen to you!" So, I remember this boy laying there and we know this boy. You know, some of the things stays in your mind what, what happened to people. I remember also once a man was standing and he did something wrong, and Wagner took a shovel and cut his head in two pieces. You know, and I see him also standing there, this man, and then he dropped dead. Once was a Kappa. He was laying in bed— a young boy from 15, 16 years old, and he was a very nice kid and— Pim was his name, I think, Pim, and Frenzel – Wagner came in and say, "Out! Up! Up! You have to go up! You have to go on— there comes a transport. You have to go out and work!" And he put with his whip, like that— out, as a joke. He, he was asleep, and Wagner took him out and shot him. You know, your life was, was nothing. You know, that I think what I remember, I remember that when we go from work and we had to go home, we had to sing, and we had to go down and up. There was a punishment.

02:07:00

You had lay down, "hinlegen und aufstehen"¹³ it was in German. You had to lay down and you had to go up, and you had to lay down on the order from the Germans. All punishment. We had to sing very nice. Many times we had to sing on the inside of the hall where were slept. We had to walk around, in – 10 people together— like in the Sing Sing when they – and it was – I think I saw movies from the Sing Sing, as a child, and I remember always like a Sing Sing. And it was beautiful singing. When there were already Russian Jews came, the Russian transport came already and also the Polish Jews; and we had to walk around and sing, Russian and Polish songs, and German songs. I was six months in, in camp. When I

¹³ Lay down and get up! (German)

look back, it I can't remember that it was six months; because I was a long time sick so there was a big part what I don't remember.

Q: How long were you sick?

02:08:00

A: I don't remember. I really don't remember. But I was sick. a week, six weeks. Chaim always covered up for me, a lot of times. And also my girls, the girls – the–Ula, Ursula Stern–what I did from the beginning for them when they was sick, or we could help each other. You have to have somebody what covers up for you in a camp, if not you couldn't live. You lived – I slept together with Mimie Katz – she came from Holland, Haarlem – and Ula, where I slept in the middle. So when something, we, we could help each other, that's what we did, so, after the – I don't – I, I remember that the camp got bigger and bigger. More people from, Minsk, from the Minsk – was a ghetto in Minsk. And people from Minsk came over, and we made big barracks, the building – big barracks in Sobibór and we all were very scared because there came no transports. They didn't come transports, and so we didn't know what was going on. And then, when the Minsk transport came these guy from Ger– from Russia, Sash, Sasha, Sash – he just died not long ago. he came with a group of Russian Jews. And I didn't talk with these, all these people, because, we Dutch people were, were like – they think did the Dutch – the Polish Jews hold together tremendous, and some of the young girls, had friends with the, with the Polish Jews. So, Katty Gokkes, she was also a Dutch girl, and she had – with one of the Kapos she was friendly. She was very beautiful. The German, the Polish Jews thought she was very beautiful. And she had friendship with one of the Polish Jews and so that's the reason, she knows everything; and she could tell Ula. But so, when you didn't have a Polish friend – the, the Polish stick tremendous together. They spoke Yiddish. We didn't speak Yiddish. In Holland, they didn't spoke Yiddish; so we spoke German but not Yiddish, so, we were goyim, we were not Jews. In the eyes from, from the, from the Polish Jews, we were not Jews. We were Jews, of course. We were at Sobibór. But we were not, we were – they they didn't understand that we didn't speak Yiddish, and they stick tremendous together, so when the whole thing from the uprising, we didn't know anything about it. The Dutch Jews didn't know anything about it. Ula was lucky that she knows this other girl that was also a survivor. It was lucky because of Katty Gokkes that she knows. Katty knows about that, she had a relationship with one of the Kapos. I don't remember his name. So, when there was already something going on and then they built very big barracks; so we went also, came in the big barracks. And I remember – I don't remember much about it. I don't remember much about it that I came to the big barrack; but I remember what it was a little bit better, what it was in that big barrack. There was a very big and much nicer, and I remember there was another girl – Viool was her name–that she came to Sobibór with her father and two sisters and they could sing very beautiful, and they were and they were always singing. And so she got also typhus and she was very sick and she had also a, a boyfriend and he left her there. He didn't take her – he ran away by himself. And there was another Dutch man – not a – from Czechoslovakia, he's alive – Kurt Thomas, and he was friendly with Katty Gokkes. That was his girlfriend; and when they run away and they were

in the woods, he say, "Where's Katty?," he says. "I have no idea where Katie is. You should know. You should have taken her with you like Chaim did." So Katty Gokkes also died. I, I, I'm – almost everybody died. But anyway, I didn't know anything what was going on from the uprising. So one day – it was, it was very dangerous also. It was like a war. Like in, in like there is a war, just a few people know about it; so nobody – there was just a very small group know about the uprising in Sobibór.

02:12:30

And one day Chaim tells me, "Try to get some clothes. I tried to get some boots; and dress yourself up." I was already a little bit better. It was – I, I was already much better, and so I – there is a barrack – all the boots, all the clothes went to different barracks, different tents, big tents. The boots were together. The clothes were together. Oh, yeah – one thi– one day – also, my mother knitted a lot and all my clothes was always knitted. Especially when I go to Poland, my mother put sure that in the backpack was all warm clothes. And Ula, Ula Stern, was a big person and I was a big person. One day she couldn't find any clothes, so she went to the barrack and she – coincident, she took one of the dresses what my mother knitted. And she came to, came to the barrack; and I remember that she had my dress on. I was very upset of course, it was my mother's dr– made that, so.... But, so it was all barracks that were over, that were sent, that were sent to Poland; where they make bundles out of it. There were other people again what worked there. Other people what worked and organized everything to separate. And it went in the trains what went back; what when the Jews came, the trains went back with all clothes what went back to Germany. And that went also, before the people went to the gas chamber, the men had to go and cut their hair; and that also went back to Germany. Everything, also the gold; and, we had to separate gold, and many times when we had to assort the clothes we found diamonds and gold in it, and I remember once I found a whole handful of diamonds and the German saw it and he took it. The Germans when they went on vacation to Germany, they took the backpack full with ger– with gold and with silver and with, with everything what, what they could grab; what was, what the Germans really want for the army. You know? So, when you, when you found that you have to give it up. I had to assort the clothes. And I was not so clever, really, that I thought about that the German and they take the gold; but a lot of people took it and hide it. I, I always cut out all the clothes what I had assorted. I, I cut it in pieces, when I saw that's the only sabotage what I can do. You know, to cut the clothes. And Chaim, and when I found something what nobody could see, I give it to Chaim. The fireman what had to burn all the pictures and all the documents what were burned in Sobibór – Chaim, that was Chaim's best friend. Szmuel was his name. And so Chaim many times put money under it, in the bottom and that went to him and he hide that in the ground. That was hidden in the ground, so I when we run away, Chaim makes sure that he got some of the money. So, so we, we– I didn't know anything, what was the uprising or anything what was, going– absolutely had no idea. So when Chaim told me try to get some warm clothes; then he told me, "Take some warm clothes," and he told me that what the plan is to do. Then he told I was not allowed to tell it to anybody, absolutely– and that's my always and guilt feeling. I had a cousin there, and I didn't tell her; and the same day she say, "I will make some food," when she work in the where the laundry

for the Germans and she had a chance to cook something. And I didn't tell her, and she didn't come out. And I always feel guilty that I didn't do it. So, I went to a barrack, and there was one German that was sometimes good. He didn't get also not much punishment, and he give me a pair of boots. And I had a lot of clothes on, what was very dumb, because when the German would have seen me with so much clothes on, he would have asked, "Why do you have so much clothes on?" So Chaim told me, "On four o'clock be by a big place." That is – and also the, the medicine, all the medicine the Dutch people brought a lot of medicine and that went also in one big place where, where they put the, the medicine, so the medicine was in that big place. And there he say, "Come there at four o'clock." So I make sure that I walked there at four o'clock. Everybody was working. Everything – nobody knows anything.

02:17:00

Everything – just a very small group of people what were involved in this in this uprising. So everything went through normal. I went walked – I don't know how, how I came to that, was allowed to walk there. Anyway, I walked there. I remember also in camp, once before the uprising, that I walked somewhere and I heard that the Germans spoke to the whole group of transport people; and I saw the rabbi and the cantor from my home town, sitting there. And I, you know, I just – I was planned just to run to them or – but I couldn't have done anything. Also, many times I saw people from my home town walking. There was a little window, and I saw people from my home town passing this window; and I was afraid that they would see me, you know, I made almost sure. Whole families I saw walking to the gas chamber, many, many times. And, and I couldn't say anything when even – was no way, nothing that I could do. Nothing that I could do. So I walked to Chaim, and on four o'clock, and I come there. I remember I walked in there, and one of the Kapos – Wieszubski was his name, yeah. He killed already a few Germans, and he was very nervous. And I say, "Take a pill for it, something for your nerves to calm down;" and he took it, and I remember and it was bitter and he spit it out. Says he, "I don't need it." So I met Chaim on the end, and there came – there wasn't – Chaim was not involved in the uprising, but somehow he say to me, "come there" and from there we will always go somehow in the area for roll call. So he want to be sure that we are together when there is a roll call. And there was a boy standing there and he was involved, he was in the uprising involved, and he had to kill one German. Together with the Kapo, with Wieszubski, and he say – I was standing together with him and Chaim – he say, "I'm afraid to go." Said Chaim, "You have to go." And said he, "I'm afraid." Said Chaim – "there's no way back." What we know already there was one young boy what had a chance to go walk around in camp and he knows already there were ten dead. So there was – we know already now, you know, there was – we know it is our death. When we, when we get caught now, that's the end. So the, the electricity was already cut off and the telephone was already cut off; so there was already, you know, was already not a connection anymore. So Chaim had no choice. He run inside and took a knife, put it in his boots; and he walked to this, office where Beckman¹⁴, was his name, was and in between the Kapo was already there. And he had no choice, Chaim. And he – I remember that he was gone. I was inside to take

¹⁴ Scharführer Kurt Beckman

the knife or something like that, and I didn't see him going away to the barrack; and I went looking for him. I said, "Where's Chaim? Where's Chaim?" Oh, I got so panicky, when I know already there was an uprising and there was something going on there, and I couldn't find Chaim. And then one of the boys, he say that, "I say Chaim is in that barrack." And I went looking where Chaim was and I hear screaming, like somebody killed a pork. Was screaming, this man – the SS man was screaming, of course; and they were killing him with knives. When it was – we couldn't, we couldn't use guns or anything because nobody was allowed to hear, hear that we were – that they were killing Germans because they were all over, the Ukraines were standing there and the, and the Poles were all around. So I went back to the spot; and I went, went there for the roll call because it was very dangerous. I know when I was standing there when just one German would walk around and if an Ukraine would see me there – I know that I went back to the, to that barrack and was the roll call.

02:21:30

I went in the roll call, and then we walked back to the – then there was the roll call, and it was already a little bit unorganized. It was, that was already, you know, with the, the main – you could see already it was unorganized; and then we started walking. And finally Chaim comes out, and he, he was bleeding. When he, when that knife slipped out of the head from this German and he got a cut in his arm. And he was all over blood; and I remember I thought, "God forbid we come somewhere and he sees this blood." And you know, I had no idea what will happen and what will happen now. I had no idea. We're running away or just was very – I, you know – so, I cleaned him up from this blood a little bit. So in the time that we were walking, and I think I had a handkerchief and I put a handkerchief on his arm. And it was bleeding and, and we were walking to Camp One, that we go home. In, in between more people came off, on all side people came; and, you see, I remember there were came a Ukrainian on a bicycle and they just killed him like nothing. Somebody had taken an axe or something, a knife or a who knows, and everybody start coming there together, what I remember; and then everybody say, "Hurrah!" or something. And then we started running, and we were lucky we were running to the entrance where the Sobibór comes in. And I remember that then Frenzel starts shooting. I hear guns starting already; the, the Germans knows what was going on. Because in between that we started walking and I cleaned Chaim up, a truck came. And it was one of the Germans was on this truck; and the Kapo what Chaim killed the back of it, he killed already a few other ones and he went on this truck. He jumped on this truck and tried – and then I don't know what's happened, but he never came out so I think he got killed on this truck. That was an family – an older man. He had three sons. He had three brothers and the father was there. I have to tell you later that I've met the father in Israel. There was there three boys, all the three boys were Kapos, and nobody came out. Nobody came out of this, out of the camp. So when we start running, Frenzel was already shooting and he had something in front of him. I saw it. And every – it was a little house and everybody stopped for that little house. So Chaim took my hand and, and he say, "Come," when it is no use that we stay there. And then everybody start running, and people start – and then we walked to this door, to this gate and everybody was falling around next to

us. Everybody – you hear mines going and people dropping dead, you know, on the mines, and you only you didn't see much. You just run. You just run. I remember I had a necklace full with Jewish emblems; and, and I thought, "Oh, when I come in a non-Jewish area I better take that off." So I – that was the first thing what I took off and throw away. And then I had to run and run and all the clothes slowly on. I took all the clothes off and I just had on what normally had on, because I couldn't run with all those clothes on. So I was running and running; and when I run I remember, when I'm very nervous, I get diarrhea and I had to stop all the time. And I was very nervous, of course, when you had to run; and then we heard shooting already in back of us, and we heard, screaming. And we're running and running and running till we came – and that was dark. Went to four o'clock, five o'clock, started be dark already. We're running and we're running, we're running and there come away a whole bunch of Jews. We stayed there together. People from Sobibór. And I saw also Kurt Thomas, and he asked me, "Where's Ula?" No. Where is his girlfriend, Millie.¹⁵ And I told him, "I don't know. You have to take her." I say, "Yeah, I had to run." So he – Chaim was the only one what took his girlfriend, what took, took his Dutch girl. He was the only one from all the Polish Jews. See how lucky I was. And we run and there we come together with a bunch of these Polish Jews. And Chaim say to them, "Can we stay together?" And one had a gun, a large gun; and he wants to shoot Chaim because he was afraid for me because I don't speak Polish. And, and right away they're, you know, they're afraid. So I jumped in front of Chaim, and he didn't shoot Chaim. And we went away, the two of us. We left all of them, and we went away, the two of us. We had – Chaim had some money, some gold pieces and some diamonds and we thought it was a lot of money. I have no idea how much it was. We both don't remember. He had in – where you put the glasses in – a case, he had filled with diamonds and gold and you know. And so we came; and he thought that and that was what we thought we can save our lives with. Was his brains, not mine. I wouldn't even think about money. So we went to a farmer in a little village, and we asked if we can stay for the night. And he say, "Yes." Chaim give him a gold piece, a gold dollar. I don't know how much it was. And we stayed in the attic for the night.

Q: How did you find this place?

A: We just saw somebody with a light on, and we walked in. We had a lot, that was just luck. We – just the lucky stuff. So I thought we didn't find them. It was just a little house and in the same village, the same day, we stay at night. We hide at night. In the same day, the Germans came and they went a lot of houses and they killed all the Jews. All the Jews what, what they could find, they killed all over; and they skipped this house where we were in, I think. But the same village that they went in houses in, so when it was started to be dark – I remember there was no bathroom, of course, and I had to go to the bathroom.

02:28:30

We were hidden down in the attic, and I'm still ashamed of what it was, it was terrible, it was

¹⁵ Also referred to as Mimie Katz.

terrible. Anyway, I walked in water and my shoe got too small, my boots got too small, so I took off my boots. I couldn't get it on anymore. So I had to walk all the two weeks on the side of my boots. Chaim had to cut it open with a knife, and I had to walk on the side of my boots; on one, on one boot when I couldn't get it on anymore. So we walked and we were wet and it was raining and we walked at night and I was very scared, and we walked through the woods. And every tree I looked "Frenzel." Frenzel wore always in, in cape, you know. And it, and sometimes the tree looks like that. I remember Chaim say once to me, "Now you have to stop saying things like that. You make me scared too." And once we went through a woods, and there was a body where we went through woods – very big where we walked for days. It – and there was a body laying there. We had to – you know – and it was very scary, you know. I came from a little town, and you know you come from after Sobibór but still it was just – it was very scary. We walked at night. When it's turned daytime we tried to hide. We tried to hide in houses, but most of the time they didn't want to take us. Sometimes they took us for money but most of the time not.

02:30:00

We slept in the woods, and we and when we walked near to an other town. We walked on the stars, on the stars; on the Wagen¹⁶, I think, on the Wagen. That was Chaim's part. We walked on the Wagen. So that's – Chaim want to go to the farmer where he worked before the war. Now in the war, he worked by a farmer; and he thought he goes to the farmer where he worked and perhaps this man will hide us. So we walked on the stars and we walked two weeks. One night we, we, we couldn't find somebody, and we were hidden in a hayloft, in a hayloft. And we were hidden there; and little kids were, were playing outside and they go, they climbing all on there and we were hiding under this, this hay. Well, how much can a kid have come up you? And they saw us and they run off saying, "Jews!"; when everybody knows of course of the uprising so we jumped out of there. And we started walking in daytime and there came two farmers with a wagon and they say to us, "Would you like to go with us?" And Chaim say, "yes," that we go with them. So Chaim went in one car and I went in the other. There were two men what belonged together; and Chaim understand Polish, but the people didn't think perhaps we had understood them. But they were planning to kill us and take our money and Chaim say, "Selma, jump!" And I jumped and he jumped, so then we walked farther. Was very dangerous, very dangerous. I remember once I was very thirsty, and it was a very beautiful farm. And I asked the woman if I could have some water, and she say, "No, Jew!" And she, you know, was sitting there. It was very nice. She was very nice dressed, and with a little baby, and next to her; and it was, you know, it was very – it is comparing with the Polish Jews went through, is it nothing but it was very – you were a nothing, you know. We walked many times, and there came a dog in back of us, and you were scared for everything and sometimes you saw an, an animal with eyes. You so used to eyes and you was laying there in the woods, it, it was a very scary time. We didn't have to eat. We walked two weeks. We ate the, the carrots what we saw in the fields and, and we

¹⁶ wagon (German); "Der Große Wagen" or "The Big Wagon" is a colloquial German term for the constellation Ursula Major.

were wet. And you couldn't wash yourself, and we were on the lice and we were dirty and I had, scabies and, and skin disease, what is a very – I had it worse than Chaim. He never that problem. That came always to me. And you were very dirty. It was – so we walked two weeks long and we couldn't find anything. One night we came to a farmer and Chaim asked him if he could hide us, and the farmer say – and we sleep, slept in the hay – he say, "I cannot do it. Where I sleep are too many people around, but my brother lives very separate somewhere. Perhaps he can do it." What was wonderful, this man had a wagon and he put Chaim on the wagon and put bushes on top of it so nobody could see it, and he dressed me like a Polish woman with a handkerchief and clothes from his wife on. And he brought us to his brother, what was very dangerous. When they would have caught him, they would have killed his family. They would burn down his whole farm and it was a very dangerous thing to do. Very – we, we give this man perhaps of course some money, but not much. I don't know, I have no idea, but we give him some money. He brought us to his brother. But his brother – we came to his brother, Adam Nowak and his wife.

03:34:00

And they – we in the evening we were allowed to wash ourselves. Now Chaim had this money hidden in a bandage on his leg and so when he was washing himself I think the farmer saw there was a lot of money, that's what I think. I, I definitely – he did it for the money. He was too dumb to do it for something else, and we say to him, "We give you all the money what we have. We give you everything we have. Can we stay here?" So we give him all the money what we have. I have no idea how much it was. And he hide us over the war. We stayed there nine months. What was – what I told you before, was very dangerous. We stayed in an attic. And we slept on hay with beams and it was a roof also from hay, with straw, and it was little holes in. We couldn't – we're not allowed to talk and we're not allowed to walk. The only thing what we could do was looking through this little hole where what we could see. And in the summer it was so hot that you couldn't – the mosquitoes and the flies – you can imagine the, the cows were under us. They came on top of us so we laid nude to save the little bit clothes what we had because we – I had these scabies and it was very, very contagious. And the woman put our clothes in, in an oven, so everything got really burned what, what – so we didn't have much clothes. That little bit what we had we saved so, we, we didn't wore it so much; and there was, there were full with flies so that so we didn't do anything then shaking the fly, and in the winter it was very, very cold. They gave us a, a blanket. We had a blanket, to put over. We got very little food when it was just – they were allowed it to bring us only once a day food, so they brought us a little bit bread, and we put it sometimes between our head and, at night the rats came to take it away. We, we were full with lice. I had this, abscess under my arm and Chaim too in his neck from lice. Once in a while we could, wash ourself, but when she saw that we had so scabie and she was afraid, to bring us back.

02:37:00

She was, she was afraid that also that one day that we didn't give her all the money; so, we

had to go out of the place where we slept at night. Sometimes also she let us in the living room and that we washed like I told you. So that was later on not anymore because we didn't walk so we could, I couldn't hardly walk anymore. I was very under-nourished. And we had to sleep with the pigs a few nights, what they smelled terrible and it was – I was – that was horrible. I remember, I remember there was a cuckoo flying over us, and Chaim say, "Selma, be quiet. That brings us luck." He was such a good guy. He always helped me up. I was very depressed and very upset about this time. I didn't know that I was pregnant. I was – I didn't get heavier because I was laying. We were not allowed to walk, and I was, I didn't have my period all these months; not, also not in camp, not at all, and I was, when I came to camp, very heavy from all the water retains in your body. And I didn't know I was, pregnant, and we both didn't know and, so we and so had liberty for. So I was very, very upset and very depressed, and I had a little diary and, Chaim say, "Write in your diary." And that helped me. That helped me a lot. I had a little pencil. You cannot read it any, almost not anymore, because it was just written with a pencil. And, we had a pail in the middle from us, and that was our bathroom and once a week they cleaned it and I remember when we had, some kind of a kale. It was such a smell that, you could almost not inhale. you could almost not live, such a smell was there from the pail, and there was no cover on. till now we eat not that kind of a kale. so when were out, they put us back in the same place. We were hidden there. And the rats run around us. We didn't have anything to do. I – and from the beginning I was knitting. She made her own linen on the spinning wheel; and I was knitting for her. But the kid – it was a little boy – wore that clothes. And the neighbors say, "How you got that nice clothes from?" So I couldn't knit anymore either, because, the neighbors were, were suspicious. There was, storks there settled on the farm, and we could see them. So we didn't have anything to do and we were watching these storks. So one, one day the storks went away, so the farmer comes to us and say, "You have to go. Could not one of you, have you any more – you have to go." And we say, "Why?" Because when storks go away that, that brings, then there is something going on, there's a supersti– superstition and he say, "Do you watch the storks?" And we say, "Yes." "Have you stopped watching the storks?" Thank God the storks came back! Also when she find out that I were pregnant, she want to send us away; and we say, "No, I'm not pregnant. I'm just....," and we didn't know either. "It's not true," and you know; we talked her into it, so she let us stay. But she was still planning to send us away. Also, we one day we hear some maybe shooting and we asked her why they're shooting, and he say, "They're shooting a, a Jew. They shot a Jew because he had such nice boots on, and the people want to have his boots so they shot the Jew." Also Chaim's best friend, what was the fireman in Sobibór, he went to a farmer and he say, "I have a lot of money with me. Will you hide me?" And the farmer say, "Yes." And at night he came with a hayfork and killed him. So we were very lucky. Very lucky. So in July 1944, we heard the war coming near to us, the Bug. We hear, the, the Germans going back. We heard the war and you hear them coming. You hear them coming already. So one day a little boy from the neighbor's saw a bird going up where we are, and he was running after this bird, and he saw us. By luck the Germans were already fly – running away. You could see it, the Germans running away, from that little hole what we had and it was very open field all around; and the little boy– so they let us stay. So, where was I?

Q: About that little boy...

A: Oh, that little boy came over, so then we hear the war coming nearer. We hear the war coming nearer, and so we were lucky that this boy came just in the right time. The – one day Adam came to us and say, "I think the war is over." And the airplanes coming over already, then you couldn't hear, so we went out. I remember Chaim went out by himself. I think, "Oh, God, he doesn't come back!" But he came back. And then I went out and I was in the sixth months pregnant. We had to hide in the in the fields, in the fields because the airplanes came over and it was war going on, and that took a day– I don't know how long it took. It was a very short time. After that we stayed a few days, but we were very under-nourished and we stayed a few days and we were sitting in the field and Chaim helped the farmer a little bit in the field with the hay. And then he heard – they were talking in the village that they want to kill us, the Jews. They want to kill us. So the farmer took us and brought us to Chelm, and when we came to Chelm, we thought we were the only Jews left. And we came to Chelm. We found some more Jews. Because we thought every concentration camp was like Sobibór. So we thought, you know, there were no Jews left. So we came to Chelm, and there came all the Jews what were left. Was one house where one Jewish family, and, and we went to that – where there were more Jews and we went and we stayed in there. We had no clothes. We had no money, absolutely no money. And there were about hundred Jews in that room. We, we, had no, nothing, absolutely nothing, just what we had on. And we came and I was pregnant. That was what my husband never liked to hear – he doesn't want to talk about it. He thinks that's terrible. We, we, we didn't have anything, so I started sewing, even for Esther Raab. I started sewing by hand, and we, we had nothing, no clothes to put, no blankets to put over us at night and we slept up the ground. There was one small bed; and because I was pregnant, they give us that bed, I remember. And so Chaim had to go in the army. He had to go in the army and I didn't speak a word Polish. I didn't speak almost no Yiddish. And I spoke German, but the Jews what, what they couldn't understand me; not some, most of them not. And we had no money, and he had to go in the army. He had to go fight for – with the Polish army, so, so he – some – we spoke with somebody, and he could start working in a hospital as nurse and they thought, we thought that he doesn't have to go in the army this way. So he worked as nurse. Chaim cannot see blood and there came once – I remember was a train and all people died almost, and he had to help and all these sick people cutting off the legs; and they're very primitive there still in that time. I don't know how, now. And so – maar¹⁷, after a while he made – I don't know if he made money but we know – yeah, he had to make some money. Of course, we had to eat; and I start cooking for all these people. I remember I start cooking and I didn't know how to cook Polish. When I was Dutch and in Holland they, they cook like in America a little bit, not, not like Poland, Pole. And I burned myself and I burnt my leg. It was very deep wounds and there was no doctor. And, ach, it was a mess. And, and I started sewing, so after a while we heard that Chaim had to go in the army anyway and also Chaim start selling gasoline. I don't know, he started doing something. I don't remember exactly what he did but he made a little bit money and also he got to know some people and the people went back to Sobibór. When they hide, so many

¹⁷ but (Dutch)

Jews hide money in the ground in Sobibór, and they went back to Sobibór to get the money. They started killing each other there in Sobibór because they start fighting. That, what I, I saw – "That's my money," and "That's your money." So I said to Chaim, "You don't go back to Sobibór. We brought it this far, and we will make it without this money." So he didn't go back. So somebody came and had some money and the money was rotten and the money – because it was moisture in the ground and the number from these dollars was gone. So said Chaim to him, "You know, I know somebody." Chaim got to know some people. My husband is very honest. "I can perhaps change that money for you." It was a hundred dollar bill. We put that hundred dollar bill under our pillow at night, under our clothes. We had not a pillow. Under his head, and somebody stole it at night away from him, and we had no idea who – just everybody knows there from each other. There's just a few Jews what was left there. So the man say, "You have to give me that money." So if Chaim made a little bit money he paid him off. Right away, you know, he paid him a little bit money. I have to tell you a story what was 20 years later. We lived in Israel. Twenty years later we lived in Israel. I come back to the other 20 years later we lived in Israel and all the Jews from Sobibór came together. And we had to go there too. And I see this man what I, what wanted the hundred dollar bill from us, and I say, "Do you remember the hundred dollar bill?" I opened my big mouth. "That he stole it under our head, and it was your hundred dollar bill." He said, "Yes, I remember." The next day he came to us in Beth Yitzhak, where we lived in Israel. He said, "He owe me hundred dollars." We give it to him. What Chaim say that, "This man comes to us and makes himself that low, he needs the hundred dollars." So anyway we lived – we went away from there and there came somebody what he also was a survivor from Sobibór, and we told him the story. We don't know what to do. Chaim had to go in the army and I'm – "What will I do?" And he say, "You know what you do? You go to this village where I live, and I give you – and you change your name, and grow a mustache and make yourself five years older and you don't have to go in the army anymore." So that's what we did. So we drove from one village, in between we, we, we went already from Chelm, and we met this man somewhere on the way and we drove in freight wagons and we were hitch hiking and we were sitting in the freight wagons and we went from one place to the other and I couldn't walk and it was just – and we slept on the floors and we were very – we didn't have anything and we were – it was in a horrible time. Anyway, we went from one place to the other; and finally we met this guy and he said, "You come to that in that village," and we went to that village. It was Parczew. Very small village. And we came in there and there was a Jewish woman, she had a little grocery store and she say to us, "I have a little apartment. You can live there. A real apartment, a Polish apartment." And we went in there and there was no, no – was no water and there was no bathroom and we stayed in that apartment and – yeah – we stayed in that apartment. And Ula – Chaim had to go away and make some money, so Chaim went where the Germans pulled away. He bought some stuff – I don't know – what he could sell by us. I don't know what he bought. Shoe, shoe laces, and shoe cream and little bit money what we had, perhaps ten dollars, fifty. And that he bought up, and it was far away; and then he brought it back where we lived, and he could sell it at a profit. From that profit we lived. We had nothing. And I was all alone in Parczew, and I was pregnant. In between it I got the baby, I think – yeah – I got the baby. And was terrible, and I had to go a – I didn't know how you got a baby, and he didn't know how you got a baby, and we didn't know why

the pain started and I don't.... Anyway, we had to walk five miles or two miles or three miles to the school where I got the baby; and they were all antisemites there. And laying there and I didn't know and it was – I was six months, six months laying flat so it was very difficult birth and it was a first child. So I was laying there five days and five nights in labor—that I remember exactly—in labor; and Chaim was not allowed to come because he wasn't, he had – I don't know – was – I don't remember. Anyway, we had a little boy and we went back to the – he picked me up with the wagon – that's a big story – any way he picked me up with the wagon. You want to know? This is terrible. You know, first of all, they, they came – the doctor came to me and said to me, "If you don't stop screaming, we'll throw you out on the street." Because they don't give me anything. They didn't give you anything for the pain; and they didn't give me anything and it was the first baby and it, it was horrible. And I didn't know what to do, and, and how to handle this pain; and finally after five days, one of the people what was laying Polish not-Jewish people was laying around. They say, "You had the showing, so perhaps it's time." And so they came, and I had to walk to a room; and in two minutes the baby was there, of course, after five days laying there. And then have to walk back to the other room, and I was laying in bed and they didn't want to touch me, the doctors, because I was full with these scabies and I had lice. No. I didn't have lice. I had also scabie. I had not also the scabie – a little bit of scabie, but it was almost gone. It was almost gone, but they didn't want to touch me because I was Jewish. Well, not-Jewish doctors, and they looked under the bed. When they saw no blood under it, they say, "Oh, everything was okay." So I say to Chaim, "I have to get away from here. I don't want to stay here a minute longer." So he came with a wagon and he picked me up and he brought us to that apartment, the baby and me. I didn't, I didn't have anything for this baby. In between from my own little bit what I had, I made some – sewed by hand some clothes for this baby. You know, when I was a teenager I didn't see many babies, so I really didn't know what babies was wearing. So from my imagination I made – I was very handy always with doing things by hand, so I made – sewed clothes from Chaim's little bit what he had; and from my little bit what I clothes on, I sewed clothes for the baby, so that little bit we had and I think we got from people a bed where we could put a baby in. Now Chaim timmered¹⁸ a bed we made from – made himself a bed what we stole wood from old houses in the village; and he also made a bed where we could sleep on in that village. But we still had our own clothes what was our blanket, and it was cold already. It was October the baby born. No, the baby was born in October – yeah – the baby was born in October. And the apartment, the windows, there was – the windows, it was openings there as big as your hand. In the morning when you woke up, it's ice. Everything was ice in the, you know, the, the – from your breathing, everything was ice. And so we couldn't let the baby sleep by themselves. It would freeze to death right away. So finally the other Jews what lived in this village heard about us, and they give us some feather bed. Before already the baby was born. But the feather bed was full with fleas. I never forgot. Ah was horrible. At night you could almost not sleep from the fleas, so I remember I hang it – Dutch people are very clean, and I was very clean and very proper, you know. So I put – cleaning and scrubbing, that was my – we had nothing, but that apartment where we lived was so clean; so I hang it always outside. I thought it will kill the fleas, in the

¹⁸ built (Dutch)

freezing will clear the fleas. But it don't. They go inside these feathers and when it gets warm, they're getting out. So anyway, this would be the – that was not the worst we – you know, the loneliness that I was there and I still was isolated from everybody. I couldn't talk to anybody. What could I talk with the baby? I couldn't even go to the doctor with the baby, because there wasn't nothing. I never went off with the baby to the doctor. And I cried so much that there was neighbors that, that the walls were very thin, that the neighbors made the same sound already from my crying. Because I felt it was worse than camp almost because I had not to talk with anybody, and just that I was sitting with this baby. Maar¹⁹, Chaim had to go away to make some money, that the only way that he – I don't know. That was the way it was.

Q: Was this towards the end of the war?

A: This was already – the war was over.

Q: The war was over?

A: That the war was over. When we went down from where we were hidden, the war was over. When we went down, where the farmer – and we went down, the war was – that was the end of the war. We saw the two Russian walking. And I remember I went to him and I kissed him, and I say, "Oh, you freed us!"

Q: You kissed...?

A: The Russian, the Russian soldiers, because they freed us. They didn't do anything to us. They were also, not to the farmer. They didn't do anything in Poland to the people what they freed. In Germany, they started doing that, but not to the Russian soldiers when they came to Poland, they didn't do anything to us. Because the Poles suffered, too. But the Russians suffered tremendous from the Germans. What's – how many got killed in, in Russia, in Stalingrad, and Leningrad; and so they were very nice to us. So in 1943, in July, the war was over. We were freed. 19– 1944. 1944, July. 1943 we run away. October 14th we run away from concentration camp and nine months later in July, I think July – nine months later – June or July, we got freed in

Q: When did you come to the United States?

A: 1957.

Q: And what happened between the end of the war and '57?

A: We, when we were in that village, one night we heard that, we heard that they want to kill all the Jews in that village – partisans, the not-Jewish partisans in the woods. So middle of the

¹⁹ but (Dutch)

night we went to Lublin. We rented a – or somebody took us with a truck. I don't know. I think somebody with a truck what also ran away, went to Lublin, and we stayed in Lublin with Podchlebnik²⁰, also survivor from Sobibór. That was one of the survivors what run away from Sobibór. And we stay – and he was already a long time and he was already a big shot. He made already a lot of money. So when we were there Chaim met some Dutch people, and they told him that they're planning to go over the land to Russia. They organized some Dutch people – was also a Dutch captain – they organize all the Dutch people. Chaim say he was Dutch. In between Chaim say he was Dutch, and he went – we went over Romania, Hungary, and we took three months in freight wagons with 140 people, with two – they made two layers out of it. We slept down with the baby, with a sick baby in between. I got dysentery, and the baby got dysentery; and we stayed and we went, with, and we didn't get much to eat, and no, washing – not to wash yourself. I nursed, I nursed the baby. So, and we went to, we stayed in Chernovitz. That is Romania. We stayed there two weeks in a camp with gypsies and all people that were – that Hitler went after, what were survivors....

Q: How did you get to Israel?

A: Israel, I went in, in '51. We went – we lived in Holland before then.

Q: Okay, that's, that's the tape. That's the end–

A: That's the end of the story.

Q: The second tape is, is over.

A: So tell Chaim, "Tell that story." That's very interesting. The baby died on the way to, to Holland, on the boat. When we went on the boat, the baby died on the boat from food poisoning and died and was buried in the sea.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Q: So you came to America in '57.

A: We went to Holland. And from Holland, we went to Israel; when I didn't want to live in Holland anymore. My whole family was killed – everybody, nothing left. I didn't want to live in Holland. So, he would like to live in Holland. I didn't – compare from Pole, Holland is gorgeous; but I, I didn't want – I couldn't live in Holland anymore. And it was very hard for him, too, in Holland, to start – he's a businessman. It was very hard to start in Holland a business. Holland, you have to go three years to school, we had already between us two children. We have two children. So, you could very easy go to Israel, but you couldn't come in to America. Especially on Polish quota. And I – so we went to Israel.

²⁰ Shlomo Podchlebnik

[TECHNICAL CONVERSATION]