

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Edna B. Ipson  
December 2, 1995  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Edna B. Ipson, conducted on December 2, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview 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 reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## **EDNA B. IPSON**

### **December 2, 1995**

Question: Edna, I'd like you to begin by telling me your name and your date of birth, and where you were born.

Answer: I was born in Lithuania. My first name is Edna. My middle name is was Butrimoitch. It's a long name, buy my sister come here to America, she changed that name to Barrett instead Butrimoitch, so she changed to Barrett. So my middle name is B. Edna B. Ipson. My name in Europe was Ipp, but I came here to America, my sister said, "Ipp, it doesn't sound so good." So she said to help me make it a little better, so I now have got the name Ipson. But in Europe was our name Ipp. And we have a big family in Europe, the Ipps.

Q: Okay, one moment. I need you to tell me what city you were born in and what year you were born.

A: In 1913, December the 15th. I was born in Lithuania, in Kovno. And . . .

Q: You want to tell me about your family?

A: Oh, about my family? You see, I had a father, my mother, a sister, brother, and the youngest brother. We had a nice life until the world [burned it]. I was very close to the family. I loved my people, people loved me. Got married. My husband -- when I met my husband, he was college and he studied law. After three years knowing each other -- more than three years -- we got married. My husband finished law and he was a lawyer in Kovno. I had my little boy, Jay, was born in 1935 -- in June or July, I cannot remember. And we had a very nice living with the neighbors, Christian people, and most of all, the Jewish people. We had a wonderful life. We have everything. Then, I had [Jay] in 1935. In 1935, my husband finished law, and he practiced law. It's a whole lot to tell you everything the way it was.

Q: Please try.

A: Then my husband couldn't practice anymore because they have to go five years in court, you know? They \_\_\_\_\_ because we were Jewish, he was a Jew. So then my husband, somebody recommend him to get some motorcycles, because he had a motorcycle. When he was a student, he bought a motorcycle, and instead to have a car, you know, he had the motorcycle. I know only a little about the motorcycles. The name was FN, from Belgium, \_\_\_\_\_. He started out with one motorcycle and then for one, he got five. And then he got ten. And then he got 20. And he sold. And it was just great, wonderful. He went to Belgium there, and then he got another [Aleo] from London, England. And life was really very good and sweet. No worry about food, no worry about clothes, no worry about anything. You really trade and you made. Well, it wasn't so for long.

Q: Now, before you go further, I just want to learn a little bit more about your family life, even before you got married -- how you were brought up, what you did . . .

A: Well, I finished high school -- not the high school, I went as a saleslady in the store, selling some merchandise. And I was modelling, I was weighing 105 pounds, so I was modelling some clothes, too, in the same store. And I made good money, I really did. And I could sell merchandise. I could sell everything that was in the store. I used to put on clothes and show them -- I used to sell the -- I was modelling, too. I didn't have to do anything they thought might be \_\_\_\_\_. I didn't have to help to support the family because my papa was making money. He had, you know, a shoe store and a repair shop, from shoes. So he was making good money, and he support all the children, but he worked. It was a sweet life. And then we had a home -- two-story house. So the three apartment my papa used to rent, and then the big one, we had been there, all the children, it was enough room. It was enough \_\_\_\_\_, close. They had a busy, sweet life.

Q: Was this in Kovno or [Slovodka].

A: [Slovodka]. The name of the house was [Belionus] and [Dejeu]. [Dejeu] \_\_\_\_\_ would bear the big [Yeshiva], if you know what a [Yeshiva] is. And that was about --even at the \_\_\_\_\_, the [Yeshiva] was there. And we used to go, you know, shoot this or something, if you know about the other days. \_\_\_\_\_ looked like the [Yeshiva] boys used to dance and sing and so on. And then, my mother, may she rest in peace, she used to give the boys each a bath twice a week. And they [could eat]. So it means breakfast, lunch, and dinner. AND that's what my mother used to give. Sometimes, if the help was a [serbet]. So at meals, we were good of the help and \_\_\_\_\_ some people. I didn't say that we were millionaires. But they were rich, you know. If they were happy, about the \_\_\_\_\_. I remember when the one thing that my papa start building the second floor, I used to go early in the morning -- and we didn't have the water, like here, but they have a little place they used to carry out the buckets and get the water from about a block away and bring home. But no matter what, they were \_\_\_\_\_, no matter what, they were before. Sometimes was maybe hard days, too. But it was a sweet life. Everybody determined. It was everybody together. No fights, no rise, no nothing. And then, I had a grandmother, too, with us. That life will never come back. It's right, the time is mine, too, but I never can forget. It's hard to describe, even in that language that I know so good, it's hard -- but I think it's hard to bring out -- retelling the fear [of the more], the fear for the same thing. It is -- I just couldn't describe, but I describe to you one thing about Friday night -- but it was for the Jewish people -- it's [Labutte]. Because it's Labutte -- everybody got a little house for their self. And Friday night, no matter, you reach a middle place [poor people], that Holy [Bible] gave the people life to lead a whole week. Even the people who came to [ask], you know, help. You had plenty poor people, but when it came Friday night, the candles was light up in the windows. The cakes they were cooking were smelling

all over. And no matter even -- you know, when the people didn't have -- they used to [say, "being in the house," Hallit].. You know what the [Hallit] is? That they should have for supper, [Hallit], because that was the main thing, you know. The life of -- the Jewish life, a little \_\_\_\_\_ -- no matter how many books you can write, it's hard to describe how beautiful and how lovely it was. It's so many things to describe about the life in Lithuania -- the holiness, the [Chabas]. My daddy used to go to \_\_\_\_\_, come back from \_\_\_\_\_. Everything was prepared. It is unbelievable to describe to you the happiness that you used to see daddies coming in. The table was set, the \_\_\_\_\_ was made, and everybody was sitting around the table and eating and enjoy it, the [Chabas]. The [CHabas] gave you so much for the whole week. To grow on. And you were brimming again about another Chabas. So that life, no matter what it is, and again, you [have to describe it], you don't have, we don't see. And we will never see it again. Never again. It's just for my eye I could see . . . candles' lights, this mirror, the way they were singing, the windows in the summertime was open. It is a life -- I don't know. I even, I think you need it. I cannot describe the beauty, what it means Friday night at [Chabas]. Everybody used to go, dressed up, [Chabas after], you know, the \_\_\_\_\_, and they could walk and talking and \_\_\_\_\_ each other, and dressed up with the best clothes what they have. But with [Chabas], you used to have -- and it's quite another feeling. It's hard, but it was the beauty. The [Yeshivas], the schools -- you had \_\_\_\_\_ schools, and everything was gone. Nothing was left over.

Q: Now, was most -- most of your activity was in the Slovodka (ph) side.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you go over to Kovno?

A: Well, in Slovodka (ph), then you see in Kovno. You see, in Kovno, I used to work there. Yet, everyday I used to work. And after, when I got married, I stopped working, and I had \_\_\_\_\_ my little boy, my Jay.

Q: I'm trying to get a sense of -- you're being very good at explaining to me what it felt like and what it looked like. What else you did -- were there a lot of cultural activities?

A: I used to help a whole lot, you know, some people (ph). I didn't do too much culture, but you see, I used to help a whole lot the Jewish poor people. For instance, if a girl, a poor girl, had a boy, after awhile forgot about it. And the girl didn't have no home, no nothing, and she find a boy and I want to marry them off (ph), see now, what I did, I took another lady with me and I went, took my friends and I told them about the cake (ph), and I said, "I need help. That girl didn't have anything." But you have to have a dowry, you have to have that and so on. And one thing I want to tell you -- that it happened to me -- two young girls. And that's what I helped them to get married. And they got married and they were leading a sweet life until, you know, the war came. I used to help a whole lot people who need some money, you know, to borrow the money to help to get, to buy Singer's (ph) machine. They didn't have -- they have to have special. I used to help them. I used to give them. And then they used to pay me back. So each time, then, if they need some money, I was on the book. I used to help them with that. And then, I -- then what had happened, I couldn't do anything in life, like culture or so on, because like I said, my husband was -- he finished law and then he started up with the motorcycles, and we have to make a living, too. So I was occupied with the children -- I had another child, too. [Pause] So, I was in the business with my husband. And it was really a life beautiful. Then when the war broke out, I lost a little dear (ph). I had a little dear (ph) and I lost him. Well, honey, it's a whole lot just to think that, it's a whole lot to talk. I don't

know, I'm jumping from one thing to the other, and I'm not going exactly the way it should be. I don't know.

Q: Let me ask you a question, okay? Before the war, was there much anti-semitism?

A: Anti-semitism? It started up about three years before the war. But it wasn't so big. It was, but it wasn't the way the war start.

Q: So as a child, as a girl . . .

A: You see, the problem, what it was in Lithuania, that the Russians came in. And when the Russians came in, you see, then it started up a whole lot worse. A whole lot worse because, you see, the Jewish people -- most of the Prolet (ph) people used to go, "Oh, oh." The Russians, they go, "Bring us -- I don't know -- the breath from the sky." But it wasn't like that, it wasn't. I'll give you an example. I have an uncle. He had a farm, a big farm. And he was \_\_\_\_\_, and among them was a whole lot farmers, \_\_\_\_\_ farmers. He always used to help them. When they need because they're in trouble, or they just need a horse, or they need -- they used to have a cow, because the little farmers, they was very poor there. And he used to help them because he was very big, had a very big farm. And the farmers knew my mother very well. Of course, she was raised in that farm, and then when she got married, you know, she came to Slovodka (ph). And when the farmer's people, somebody used to get sick, they used to come to us, and the mother used to help them, to take them to the hospital. She used to cook for them, you know, some food, and take over there. So, with the farmers, was very, very good. And, as I remember, and then later on, I will come, maybe to that point, the way we survived.

Q: We'll get to that. Now, was there much of a change of lifestyle when the Russians came in?

A: Yeah, it changed a whole lot. It changed a whole lot. I tell you something -- my husband can tell you more than I can tell you -- it changed everything, the whole life. It took the rich people who



had, you know, stores and they took him and send him to Siberia. And that was before the war started up. So the rich people, some of them, they were lucky. They went to America, they went to another place. But here, I could see everything the way it was. The middle-class, \_\_\_\_\_ didn't bother, but who was in charge in a place like factory people, or you know, the other people, you know, what they had stores, bakeries and so on -- the people went on the first list. And they took him away and they send him to Siberia. I still couldn't remember what had happened to the Lithuanian people. I still couldn't think how people could change -- murders, chilling. When the war broke out, like I told you, the \_\_\_\_\_ got here and the jail got here. And what had happened within that time, my husband, he took me and my son and my little girl, and we were running. Everybody start running to the RUssians, \_\_\_\_\_. We run and they couldn't reach, they couldn't see, because the German came here already (ph). So what we have to do? No food, no nothing. We turn back home. They come in home. Some Lithuanian people told us, "Don't go this way, go this way." It's terrible. They took the Jewish people to the Ninth Fort (ph). They never came back. The children, parents, all the people. \_\_\_\_\_, they took the children. They killed them all up there. Fortunately, we were lucky. We took the left \_\_\_\_\_, not the right, and became a home. And when I saw my father -- he was dark complexion -- he was light, like that. In one night, they killed 200 people, over 200 people. It was \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_ Gatvia (ph). And we came back and they told us what had happened. They then took the neighbors. The blood on the walls -- some people wrote in Yiddish, "Please, name Nicole" -- I don't know how to say it in English. He wrote with the blood of the singer (ph), with big letters. A little boy from the family, what they knew, he was under the bed. They didn't see him. He had seen what goes on. So that little boy became a life that had to lay there. I just don't know. It is so many things. So many things. It's unbelievable. You wouldn't believe it, and nobody could

believe that people could be such murderers. But murderers -- I judge the same people, the same people who we knew, they used to come to my house and \_\_\_\_\_. They asked to help -- the same Lithuanian people, they slaughtered them. But from one \_\_\_\_\_, from one all the way to the end, they didn't let \_\_\_\_\_. My papa was lucky. He locked windows, you know? And they got up on the \_\_\_\_\_, and it was very quiet. So fortunately, they didn't murder them. They thought nobody's home. Well, I want to think. Well, then it happened, and the Germans came in. And they took over, you know. Slovodkians (ph), they took, you know Kovno, all Lithuanian. They put us in the ghetto. Our house was on was on -- from the corner from our house, up \_\_\_\_\_ to the end. I \_\_\_\_\_ made the ghetto, already, that was in August the 15th, I think. Was locked up. You couldn't take anything with you. They had to leave everything that you had, except, you know, the clothes and something else. And we moved into my parents, in their house. And then my husband's family, and his sister -- they all were there in the house where we were living. It wasn't enough home[s] for so many people, I don't know, 50,000 it was. So we had two ghettos. One was a little ghetto, and one was the big ghetto. We were in the big ghetto. My husband's sister, her name was Doris, she was married, had a little boy. And she was in the little ghetto. I'm going -- I forgot to tell you something. And getting back the way i told you we find out -- you know what they did? They took the rabbis. They got in there, they cut off his head and they parade with the rabbi's head in the street. You see, when I am talking, that cannot concentrate. You see, I have to run from one to the other. That was terrible. That was murderous -- Yet I never thought that the Lithuanian people would do like that. A dog, a cat, got more privacies that a Jew. Well, I'll make short this. . .

Q: No, don't make short. If you can remember more incidences of the first two months, what you were doing before you moved to the ghetto, I think that would be very helpful.

A: What we were doing?

Q: What you were doing. Did they start passing laws? Did you have to hide? Was there terror in the streets?

A: Oh, that was in ghetto we have to hide ourselves.

Q: Alright, but in the months, you know, between the Germans coming and the ghetto, there was maybe one month? or a month and a half? What . . .

A: To getting in the ghetto?

Q: Before you moved to the ghetto. What else happened?

A: Oh, they didn't do nothing, just tried to get ahead a farmer who used to deliver us milk (ph). And I prepared him -- I knew already that we have to go, you know, in the ghetto -- that he should help me to bring some potatoes, flours, maybe, you know, oil, or something else. And that left us for a couple of months to go on with the food. It wasn't easy because we didn't have anything to eat. We couldn't go out. In \_\_\_\_\_, you had to go to work, but even if you go to work, you cannot bring in anything. So I have to hide. I'll tell you, when I went to work, I had to slice his bread like that, on my half a loaf. And I was looking which \_\_\_\_\_ is the best one to go in in the ghetto. So, I start looking around here and here. And then he came here to me, the police did, you know? The German guard. "What I have here?" I said, "Nothing. Perhaps it got here in your pocket. Oh" I said, "I got to just slice this bread. You know, you wouldn't believe it, but please believe me." He took away from me the bread because I have to help out (ph) Jay. He beat me up like an apple, an apple (ph). He beat me up, here in the back that for three weeks, I couldn't sleep on my back. And the next day, I have to go to work. It wasn't an easy life, but still, I was happy. And I had my family all together. No matter what he had, even then, they used to tell us, some days it's a good day. You can take being in the ghetto. You know? They used to bring in the food, and then all of a sudden, they used to take away from you. And here, it's no food, hunger. Then I used to go work.

I used to take some -- I tell you -- I used to go to work, I always, my feeling, I'll go find my little boy. By being in ghetto, they burned down the hospital, with the children, with the doctors, with the nurse, across from the place where we used to live, and there's a site. They used to take the children from the windows, the little babies, and threw them on the ground.

Q: Did you see this?

A: Not mine.

Q: But you saw them -- did you see the hospital burn?

A: Oh yes, it was not -- it was across from my old place. I was there. Not in the hospital. And they burned up the children.

Q: Did you hear screaming and . . .

A: I tell you something, that's what they said. It's hard for me because I'm coming back. [Pause] I don't know where I was.

Q: Well, I think you were trying to tell me about life in the ghetto.

A: Yeah.

Q: What kind of -- you were working?

A: I have to go to work.

Q: What kind of work?

A: What kind of work. Digging trenches until I was up to here. If you didn't finish, they would beat you up. They used to give you a special amount, so much and so much. You have to do it. That wasn't \_\_\_\_\_. It was, I think, more people. You used to have good brigades, and you used to have bad ones. A good brigade means that you would go out and you would shop, you know, to get a package. The bad ones used to be, like, big, old. And one day, I went to work. And we were standing, we were shoveling, you know, sand and mud. They were building a bridge. And we were

standing and we were talking. \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Oh, I wish I would have a \_\_\_\_\_ before \_\_\_\_\_." I said, "Well, I wish we could have Chabas (ph) to feast." You know, we were talking. We didn't talk about anything else. But just to have something that we used to have before the war. And by talking like that, the German guard got in, and I was standing with the shovel and I didn't work because we were talking. He hit me with his rifle over my head. I don't know how many stitches I had. I came bled up. And then I went, and they took me right away back to the ghetto. ANd I came to the \_\_\_\_\_ and the doctor gave me -- they put in some stitches -- they got out the hair and put me some stitches and bandaged up my head and the next day I had to go to work. I have to work every single day. Four o'clock in the morning, and then come back 5:00. Back home. My heart, about my little boy, because we used to say, "They get in and they get us and take away the children." So, you know, I'm awful sad. I bet it was. But now, I have something to tell you. They got in in the ghetto -- that was August, I think, the 15th or the 20th, I couldn't remember. In September, we had Rosh Hosanna. A day before that, they took out 20 -- 2,000 people to go to the \_\_\_\_\_, you know. And there was my father, my husband and my older brother. And between 4:30 and 5:00 -- do you know what it means? \_\_\_\_\_ -- "God's all over the ghetto." They got in and they said, "Get out." I said, "Where?" He said, "Do you see all the people here? Go with the people together. Save us little." It was a nice -- it wasn't too cold, but you know, in Europe, the weather is a little different. And I said, "Wait a moment. Let me take for my boy his clothes, his little coat." He said, "He doesn't need. He will have there enough." I had a feeling something is wrong. And I had my grandmother and my mother, my sister, Jay, myself, and we have to go for \_\_\_\_\_. And \_\_\_\_\_ was gone way, way -- hardly could see my --- and I knew, it is a selection. Because it was about 5,000 people in that area where we were -- was over 5,000 people. I was working. I couldn't say anything that they said only one thing. "\_\_\_\_\_, " God,

please, we are poor. Let them help us (ph).” Then they came, big field for us (ph). And everybody has to go forth, in a line. And we get there, to that place -- our neighbors, I see the doctor, the nurse, there. \_\_\_\_\_. I knew them. They were ahead of me. And I’d seen that if somebody said, “He’s a doctor, he’s a nurse, he’s a bookkeeper, he’s from the higher educated people,” left. I said, “That’s terrible.” It’s come by-and-by, asked my name, what I got here. So, I told him about \_\_\_\_\_. “My husband, my father and my brother went to the airport. They are automechanics.” And I said, “We left over.” And he said, \_\_\_\_\_. So I told him, “I am a dressmaker.” But I was young, I was strong, I wasn’t in tears. He said, \_\_\_\_\_. So, to the right side. To the right side, I knew that we are alive. The next morning, my father, shall he rest in peace, and my husband and my brother said that they already knew of the airport, but it was going good. And he said, “If they are not here,” he said my life is not anymore. That moment -- it’s hard to describe, it’s hard to describe -- There you see all the 50 people they took, I think, out of our 2,000, and killed them, all of them. At random, like dogs (ph). That was 1941.

Q: How did you know what happened to these people?

A: How? People used to come and tell us. People used to come and tell us this big, big -- how do you say it, \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: [Inaudible]

A: There are people dying to know, there was a \_\_\_\_\_. Let’s see, it was a whole lot made out when they got to the people -- the people have to do their own. And then, they used to kill them. And add them for the \_\_\_\_\_, while they just said to him, “Over my dead body, you go get, you know, my coat.” So, she got trapped anyhow, no matter what it is. And people used to tell us, and people -- not everybody got killed, but some people were still alive and the earth was just \_\_\_\_\_, like that. And who told us? It was some from Lithuanian people, some neighbors, once in a while

used to come in and to tell us that they'd taken so-and-so. And that's called the Ninth Port, where all the Germans -- even from Germany -- came in -- the boat from German people there. And they was going there, too, and they killed them, all of them. Honey, it's -- what can I tell you? It was horrible. It was . . . I don't know. I don't know reason why -- if that would happen right now, I really wasn't able to make it. But I was young, strong.

Q: When you, or your husband, went to work, and you went to separate places every day, were you worried that you wouldn't come back together?

A: No, uh-uh. The men used to go separate and I used to go separate.

Q: Did you think, when you left your -- when your husband would go to work, that maybe you wouldn't see him again?

A: Yeah, well. That's the way. And when I used to come back to the ghetto, I didn't know, and I'd go see my little boy \_\_\_\_\_. And I'd go see the people. And you see, that was the first selection, but it was \_\_\_\_\_, that is what Rosh Hosanna. And my husband was working in the airport. He met there a farmer. All the farmers used to come and help to build the airport, you know, sand and stones and \_\_\_\_\_ everything. My husband start talking to him, and he asked him if he knew a man who got a brother, his name was Itsak Kolinitzki (ph). "Oh," he said, "Yes, I do know him. He's still alive. He didn't go to the ghetto." He said, "You are sure?" And he told him where, you know, he used to hide himself. And he came home and he told us. I just couldn't believe it. And now, he would say, "Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ needs some medicine." (ph) Finally, I got in touch with one farmer. And there used to come the farmer, because they used to have the coal, and they used to take us to the Coal Brigade, and the Coal Brigade, I want to go there because I want to get in contact with that man, with that farmer. I took all of the \_\_\_\_\_. I looked like a \_\_\_\_\_, I didn't look like Jewish. And I was going there to the people, and the people they were nice and -- like I

said, some people, they were good. And I come to that farmer. And when I come to that farmer, that's the way I got in contact with my uncle, with my uncle the farmer (ph), because his farm was ransacked, and of course, was the other -- Julius was his name. I then got the -- how did he survive? I don't know. I lost contact to him. Then they had the big selection.

Q: When was that?

A: In October, I think the 20 or the 28th. It was bitter cold. And things got -- we survived, you know. But they took out close to 10,000 people, and the people got killed.

Q: Can you describe -- did you witness this selection? Were you at this selection? Were you there when they --

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Can you describe it?

A: The way it was? Well, you see -- my family was with us, together. And my husband, who spoke fluently German, and he talk to him. And when he talk to him and explained to him, what is his \_\_\_\_\_, what is his occupation, so he told him that he's a mechanic -- he was a mechanic like I am right now a mechanic. So, you see, the working people, like tailor, shoemakers, all different kind of people, you know, but they have an occupation, you know? So, once they find out that you are a mechanic, you are on the top, they wouldn't bother you, they know that you are good. So that's what had happened that we were lucky, the way my husband explained to him. And we survived.

Q: Can you describe for me something. When all of these people were taken away, when people were going to the left or the right, what were the people doing? Were they quiet, were they screaming?



A: You know? What I'll tell you. It is hard to describe. He became like a stone. It's nothing he can do. You have to go in that heap. It is fear. Fear and pain. Because you don't know. \_\_\_\_\_, or that is your list, that is the list \_\_\_\_\_. But fortunately, we were lucky. When my husband told them that he's a mechanic, and he's working, [Pause] -- When he told him that he's a mechanic, he told him to go right, so my parents survived, and we survived.

Q: Now, a question. When you went out on these work brigades -- when you went out to work on the work brigades, how did you get chosen to go on one team or another.

A: That wasn't so easy, hon. If you didn't go to work, they had the Jewish police. The Jewish police, when there was missing people, they would go on a hunt and see where the people are. I was arrested. I didn't go to work, I don't know what had happened. Jay didn't feel good or something, and my sister-in-law, her name was Goldie, she didn't go to work either. So what they did, they took us -- they took us in jail. And we fight with them. And people whom the police \_\_\_\_\_ knew saw we fight with them, so we stopped fighting, so they took us to the police. When \_\_\_\_\_ were released, my husband came from work and so he start telling the head man, he then took all over (ph), and then they released us. It's so many things to say.

Q: Let's take a break right now, okay? We need to take a break.

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2

Q: I wanted to know how you got chosen for a different work group.

A: Oh, that. We used to get up in the morning, 4:00 in the morning. Had a cup of coffee. Had to make coffee, you know I -- You didn't have anything, no wood, no nothing, so you used to take a big nail, a heavy one, put it into the electricity, and have a little -- something, you know, like a jar -- and you put it in in the jar, and the water was boiling and you didn't have coffee, but \_\_\_\_\_, we used to call it. It is just like something -- and we used to have in the morning, before we went, to have that, and a tiny little slice bread, and go to work. Sometimes we didn't have the bread. So, at least to have warm inside. And I used to go out, I used to see the Bad (ph) Brigade, but you can't get because there was a whole lot people, but I knew them. But fortunately, I used to be lucky. Fortunately, they used to pull me out from the Good brigade, and take me to the Bad brigade. What means a Good brigade? A Good brigade means you can work hard, it's no different. What it is, you are young, you are healthy, and then you take something to run in, around the people there because \_\_\_\_\_ used to be, and sell them something -- like a sleep, a place (ph), a something, whatever you had. And for that, you used to get some food. So at least -- or used to have some bread. Butter? We didn't know what it means, butter. No butter, no milk, no nothing. But at least, when you had the bread, you see, the coffee, like I explained to you, it's okay, you can make it. Who knew what it means, meat? Nothing. You didn't have nothing. But potatoes was very good, you know. A potato you can mix up with something else or you have to have. And you make something, add meal from that (ph). I remember one time, that they said you can bring in food. Well, the Good brigade -- when you used to have -- I used to take off my Star of David. I looked like a \_\_\_\_\_. And I was gone from one place, from one door to the other. Until, you know, they used to give us something. Some people said, "We don't have any," but they just \_\_\_\_\_ potato

peels. I said, "It's okay, too." I used to take potato peels. Whatever we could get to bring home. Potato peels, they wouldn't bother you so much -- unless (ph) they used to think that you have something else.

Q: Now, what would happen if you got caught bringing this food back?

A: Terrible, terrible. They used to send you in jail. That -- you were lucky. If they send you to jail. But some was good for me, you know, who was the brigade commanders (ph), you know, with the German guards. There was already good ones who let you go to do -- some of them was murderers. They didn't. If they had caught you -- it didn't hurt me so much the way they beat me up for the bread -- I didn't kill the pain, but I killed the pain for the hunger, to be hungry. For not having, but for taking away the bread from me. You see what I mean? You didn't kill no pain. But pain was hunger, no food to eat. Starving. So when we used to go the brigade, we used to have a Good brigade, so at least you used to get some clothes to change for food. So, when I used to come to the Christians there that knew me already, so they used to give me something to eat, a slice bread, it was okay, with some water.

Q: Now, did these Christians -- did they think you were just a poor farmer girl or what?

A: Hmm-mm. The Christians?

Q: Yeah. When you went to get something from them.

A: Well, I used to come back -- they didn't give you for free. But we were lucky that they gave us, for the clothes, what they had, because they figured, they said, that the ghetto -- the models (ph) from the clothes. Because why? Clothes you could have. They didn't take away. They took away from you the books, the paintings, the grand things. But clothes, as much as you could, you could take it in. The furniture, everything, you have to give. So you see? So when you used to have something to change, why not? They used to give you, you know? So they used to have a

\_\_\_\_\_, you see. It means that you used to have a good day with the food, but what you got, you are happy. I was running, smiling, I have something. But the worst thing was if you came to the ghetto, to the brigade, you know. So, if you had a good brigade, then you go through. If you have Bad brigade, you're in trouble.

Q: And how did you know which one you were in?

A: Well, that's what happened to me. I was looking for a good brigade. I knew where the good brigade was. And I was moving from one place to the other, and that's what I got caught, and that's what I got beat up. But it didn't, like I said, it didn't bother me, it didn't hurt me, you know, the way I was beated up, but it hurt me why I lost the bread. It's rich people, known people, in Lithuania, they didn't have nothing to eat. My husband -- he'll tell you tomorrow about it -- the way we used to help them -- from the same, what we had, you split in half -- half for us and half for them. And . . . I was young, I was strong, it was in the family. She lost a husband, she was with a \_\_\_\_\_, with her father and mother and I remember a young girl, a lady. She was married and her husband got killed. I think by the 550 people.

Q: Oh, tell me about that, will you?

A: Well --

Q: You forgot to tell me about that.

A: Yeah. The 550 people. It was across from our house. And my husband wasn't there, and I was running to look for him that he shouldn't come home. And all -- a whole lot friends, educated people -- they asked just for the educated people because they had to find out and \_\_\_\_\_ -- I don't know how to say in English, but that's okay, you can find out. So, everybody, just for two days' walk, or three days' walk, so they was exactly across from our house. And there was about 550 young people. And they took all the people and killed them. Believe it. Five hundred and fifty

career \_\_\_\_\_. Friends of friends, lawyers, doctors . . . it was unbelievable. People couldn't believe that that could happen. And in two days, it was finished. Where they took him to the Ninth Fort. The Ninth Fort, my husband, the \_\_\_\_\_ asked him about it, "Please do it." He could tell you everything the way it happened. They had been killed -- I don't know how many German people from Germany killed. So when you go, ask him. He could tell you more about it.

Q: When did this action take place?

A: That it happened when we got in and the ghetto, was August, the 20, I think. And that had happened before -- in a week, or two weeks later, when we got in in the ghetto. Then they took all the educated people, and they said they had to send them to the city order and to straighten out all the paperwork. "Please, and we need some help." And that's the way they took her husband. And they took them, and two days later, it was finished. We knew, somebody told us. Well. . .

Q: Let me ask you a question. Back to the work.

A: Again?

Q: When you went to work, who watched over your children?

A: My little girl -- I lost her before I got in the ghetto. My mother, she used to take care of my little boy. See, that's why I could go to work, because I know he's in good hands. But still, the fear -- because we used say in the other little cities, you know? -- they used to kill the children and take them away from the parents, and so on. So as long as I had my mother, my father, I was strong. But the fear inside I had . . . if I had come home, I hope I could find my little boy.

Q: What happened to your daughter?

A: To my little girl? She died. She died before I got in the ghetto.

Q: She was sick?

A: Yes. She was only four months old. And the way we were running and coming back, the way I told you before? And it was no help from doctors and so on and so she passed away. During in the ghetto, a lifetime, I used to run -- I used to get orders from the farmers, from the Christian people, what they need. "Can you bring me so-and-so? I'll have for you a nice package." I used to run in the ghetto, look at somebody had something, what they ask. And I used to ask him, how much does he want? And he used to tell me the price, how much they want to have. I used to go there to the people, the Christian people, who order, and I used to get, you know, a package or money, whatever it is. But the main thing it is that they want to have, you know -- food. So, it wasn't too hard to run and to go and to sell it to the people and bring for the people who needs the food. And now we had enough food for a couple days, probably, enough bread and so on. I stopped talking about the family, you know. But she had her parents, and she went herself. Her name was Bergma, Celia (ph). No food, no clothes, no -- even no water. So one day, they said that you can take in some wood, in the ghetto. You know what I did? I brought her -- you know, the wood -- and I gave to her and I told her (ph), go ahead, you go have hot water, you can have something to cook on. It was a risk to go out. It was really a risk. You think that the -- the Christian people, they used to say, "Please try to be careful. Try to be careful because you never know what can happen to you." But when hunger -- when you're hungry, you don't have nothing to heed. Nothing can stop you. I didn't care. Let them shoot me. Let them kill me. As long I am alive, I'll try to have something, the main thing was, you see, my Jay. It wasn't easy. But the hardest thing in the world was for me when I lost my people.

Q: How did that happen?

A: Well, nothing hard when I had my people -- my parents, my brothers, my sister. And in ten minutes, I lost them, in ten minutes. They had to have some people for \_\_\_\_\_, for Estonia. I don't

know how many people -- 500 or 600 people. I find out later, instead, they should go and get one person, they said, the singles (ph). It would take them a whole lot to get the people, so they took bigger families. So, what they did, they took my family. Five people in ten minutes. Right before I tear them out of my arms, they was already gone. [Crying] I couldn't do nothing. I couldn't do not a thing because the police and the German guards, and I didn't thought that that could happen to them. It was about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. Since then, I didn't see them anymore. My last -- please forgive me, I'm sorry. But do you know what it means to lose your family in ten minutes? I never could forget. And I shall never forget. At night, you cannot sleep, you've got the dreams. It's awful. It's awful, it's painful.

Q: When was this?

A: Huh?

Q: Do you remember when this happened? When did this happen?

A: In October of 1943. Between that time, there was a city with the name Shabut (ph), and there was a number of Jewish people. And the people of Shabut (ph), that was, at that time, from October until December. They took the children from the parents out there. And somebody came to tell us that the children from Shabut (ph) had been taken away from the parents. Children, little ones, until up to 12 years. Twelve years, they can still go on at the work \_\_\_\_\_. So I said to my husband, what he should do, before I find out about the farmer, that my uncle is still alive. I got in contact with the farmer, Martinez (ph), that was his name. ANd, like I told you, my uncle used to help them a whole lot. So, they want to pay back to him, to help him. He was out in 82 places doing things. Eighty-two places. The only thing that it was to get in contact is somebody had to contact them that we should survive if it was with Jay, or maybe to send Jay alone. I finally got in contact with that Julius Schmitt (ph), with him that was his neighbor. And I used to send him some medicine, too.

And then I used to send for him, for the farmer, he wants a suit I used to bring him, a suit. I used to run away, like I told you. I used to make my work, my work is finished, then I used to take off my Star of David, and used to run. I used to go. There was a coal brigade. There was, not too far from the coal brigade, a neighbor. And that man used to come to that neighbor. They knew each other. So when I got in over there, I used to find him. When I found him, first I have to finish my work. Four women has to finish to shovel the coal from the -- what you call it? -- train. So they used to have -- oy, like a choo choo train. So when I finish my work, and everything already finished, they didn't bother you, as long you finished at the coal brigade (ph). Then I went with him and I got in contact with him. And I told him about the baby. And I said, "Please, immediately, try to get my uncle and tell him about the teddy (ph). And please, he should help us to get out from the ghetto." That's the way I got in contact with my uncle. And I was in the brigade. And then, I had a nice, good package. He brought me some -- like, eggs, and he got a few pieces of butter, and bread, and flour. And when I got that, it was already late. The coal brigade was already gone. And I was left over by myself. Now, what should I do? Where should I \_\_\_\_? It's no place. No place where to go and what to do. I was fortunately lucky. It was there go slow (ph), you know -- what you call it? It was a brigade, but they used to make -- go slow, all the \_\_\_\_\_, and they used to take up from the garden.

Q: Cabbage?

A: Right. So that brigade was the latest. And fortunately, I was lucky that somebody told me you got one more brigade coming. And that brigade, when I said, "See me," they grabbed me right away and they brought me in the ghetto. And I came to safety. It happened there at the coal brigade, was easy to make a Pekel (ph), they way they said, you know, a package. So it was a good day. Everybody from the women that finished. And some people used to know already that some



people got clothes or something, you know. They made some packages -- good for us (ph). And all of a sudden, the guard from Gestapo came in to see what's going on by the coal brigade. Had seen their packages. And he asked, "Whose package is this one?" One girl got up and she said, "It's mine." She said, "Take the package." \_\_\_\_\_. Who she did, nobody knows. I had seen what had happened to her, so I already run away. I didn't look to him. And that arrogant Gestapo, what happened to her. I just don't know. Because why? She had a package. That was wrong. That was wrong. The life in ghetto is worse than a dog in the street. Four o'clock in the morning, they used \_\_\_\_\_. They used to call up to get dressed and get out and take them in a special place, special field. Cold, bitter cold, to test what the people gonna do. Having my little boy, before you dressed him -- here you couldn't see here in the clothes. I used to put up everything in his little bed that he used to be -- put up everything that in the morning, if it should rain, I should have right away for him, to dress him, and to be outside. How many people have there been -- in there room? No, less than that -- eight -- I think about eighteen or nineteen, maybe more. People there were sleeping on the floors. There was no beds, no sofas. But at least we had a pillow. And we had, you know, a \_\_\_\_\_, whatever. It's -- who can describe the horrible things in the ghettos. No ink can write, no writer can write up what we had to do during the three years. But one thing that it was to me, as I told you, that was my people there.

Q: Let me ask you two questions, okay? You okay?

A: Yes.

Q: When you were living in the ghetto, did you still have Chabas (ph)? Did you still celebrate the holidays?

A: The holidays?

Q: Mm-hm. Could you practice your religion while you were in the ghetto?

A: Yeah, we used to have the holidays. But each holiday, when it used to come, the Gestapo gave you right away a holiday -- taking people, sending them to the Ninth Fort, to kill the people there, to take off their bodies from the . . . from the caves. We never had a holiday that we should enjoy. Because each holiday, when it used to come, always used to be bitter because they used -- they always gave you such a rough time. Used to take our peoples, they used to kill the people, they used to hang the people. Honey, I cannot tell you, just in the three hours, what they did. Before they went to the airport, they took 2,000 people -- and it was Rosh Hosanna -- and some people didn't want to go because it was the holidays. And what do you think they did? They killed them. They killed them to show them that you must go to work, it's no holidays. So you asked me about holidays -- each holiday, no matter what, when used to come, always was bitter, full with tears, full of fear, full of pain. You cannot describe, even in Yiddish, which I know so good, I wouldn't be able to describe it. But I went through, and so many people went through. But, I was fortunately lucky. I am alive. There have been other people -- no more.

Q: Let me ask you a little more about the ghetto life. Were there -- other than your working, were there other activities going on in the ghetto? Were there -- was that -- how did the children go to school?

A: I think the children -- activities there was, but for the children, they used to have school. That's what they had, but they didn't know. It was all secretly, you see? But they used to have for the children a school. And it was teachers, and that was, but they didn't know. The Gestapo didn't know. But we had activities -- I don't remember, I don't know. Because you see, I was a slave. I was a slave. I used to go out in the morning, come back, see everybody's okay. Tired. Thinking what tomorrow will be. Will you have to get up early in the morning -- 4:00. So, I don't know too much about the activities, I'm honest with you. But I know that they have a school for the children.

And then, it wasn't too many. It was already each time, each quarter of the year, like three months, six months. Each time something had happened and they had an excuse. Something had happened and they used to take out. That happened, that sort of thing happened. (ph)

Q: Were there workshops inside the ghetto where people were --

A: Yeah, inside the ghetto was the workshop, too. And some of them were going outside, and the -- but not everybody was lucky to get in there, you know? It wasn't a whole lot people. I don't know, I've never been there. Because like I said, I was beating with myself, running here and there. But it was -- they used to make for the shoulders, you know, like gloves and socks and all different things, you know, there. In Europe, used to be very cold. And more things, you know, for the Gestapo. They used to come and want this suit, or a uniform to make and so on. They used to tell them to make it. And that way we survived, because the workmanship, the working people. And that the way I survived because I told them that I am not a saleslady, not that, but I am a dressmaker.

Q: Who was in charge of all of the workers? Was it the Gestapo? Was it the --

A: No, the Jewish people inside. The Gestapo was outside. The Gestapo had \_\_\_\_\_, like -- how do you say it -- the Gestapo didn't come near to the ghetto, but they had their own building. And when it used to come to selection, the first thing was the Gestapo.

Q: The Gestapo ran the selection.

A: The Gestapo used to come in the ghetto, oh yeah. They used to come into the ghetto. I remember one thing that had happened with a man. I couldn't remember too close, but my Jay will remember -- the way they hang some two people or more. And they took out all the people who was inside, that they should come and see the way it happened.

Q: Now, tell me a little bit about the administration in the ghetto. There was a unirat (ph)?

A: The unirat (ph).

Q: Yeah. How was that chosen? Did you know them?

A: Oh, yeah. I know. I know that \_\_\_\_\_. We all participated (ph). Tova [ph]? He studied with my husband, together. He was in the unirat (ph). And then was \_\_\_\_\_, Dr. Gerschon (ph). He was from Shabut (ph) and he came here because he got married, for a girl, you know, who's from Kovno. And then more people -- they was very active. And they came in, you know, when it was the big selection, the 10,000 people, like I told you. They asked, Gestapo asked -- Dr. Elkis (ph) was a famous doctor in \_\_\_\_\_. They want to have so many, so many people. And Dr. Elkis (ph) said, "I will not give you, I will not select people. Go ahead and do by yourself. So when we got out, it was in October 28th, I think, in the big field. And then you have to have luck -- who's alive and who's dead. And then they took out close to 10,000 people and they killed them, all of them. I think -- I don't know -- one survived, but I know that all of them got killed because they didn't let nobody stay at home, and everybody has to go out. And Dr. Elkis (ph) didn't want to have on his conscience that here, that is your life, and that is your dead. And then the unirat, you know, they used to have some trouble there. But they used to do something for them -- they gave them a year (ph), a present, or something, I don't know. The people trouble as they was in Gestapo, you know, but you go into the Gestapo, it is good-bye. You are not coming back to the ghetto, you are not coming back alive. So we used to help them. There was \_\_\_\_\_ -- I forgot, I tell you. It's already 50 years away. And you cannot remember. And my memory is not anymore what it used to be before.

Q: Were the people on the unirat (ph), were they good people?

A: Huh?

Q: The members of the unirat, were they good people?

A: They were Lithuanian.

Q: The people who served on the unirat (ph), the members of the unirat(ph) . . .

A: In the unirat (ph)?

Q: Yeah. Were they good people?

A: Oh, well, you know. It was a hard job, but it -- I don't want to say anything else. They were rough. The police was rough. The Jewish police was very rough. It was hard. I want to tell you one more thing -- the way I got with my uncle. The day we run away from the ghetto --

Q: Okay, but let me just -- I want you to tell me about that, but I just want to sort of finish the ghetto part of my questions. There's some things I'm really curious about.

A: Well, listen, for somebody, they were good. For somebody they were bad. You have to have vitamin tea, you know what it means? For \_\_\_\_\_. If you didn't have yellows, if you had yellow tea -- say, you have bad people and they are rough to . . .

Q: When you went to jail, was that the Jewish jail?

A: Huh?

Q: When you said you had to go to the jail that time -- you were sent to the jail, remember?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was that a Jewish police in the jail?

A: I don't follow.

Q: Okay, remember you told me that one time you were sent to the jail, to the prison.

A: Oh, in prison.

Q: Was that a Jewish police?

A: Sure.

Q: Ohh.

A: Jewish police. I beat him up, too. And they took me in jail, my sister-in-law and myself. And I was working every single day. Every single day I was working. Get up early in the morning -- rain, cold, snow. No matter what it is, you have to go.

Q: Now, this unirat (ph) -- were they in charge of the working . . .

A: The unirat was in charge for the Gestapo. You see, the unirat, they used to lead, like a government. And they used to get orders. They used to know when there came up a selection. They used to be the first ones to find out. And that's what it was. And if something was wrong, they used to call the police. The police was rough, tough. Very rough. Some of them were . . .

Q: Do you think that sometimes they helped the people? Did they warn you about the actions?

A: No. They never did. But I know -- well, the last action, what it was, a selection, the last one. Nobody knew. Because they were so good that they said, "You can take in food, as much as you can." They allowed you to bring in food. And by getting the food, I had a funny feeling, because each time, when they used to say, "You can bring food in the ghetto," Not to be afraid, you know, but they come to help (ph). In the next two days or three days, a selection. And that's what I remember -- that when I had food brought, heavier than I was -- a pekel (ph), the way we used to say it -- and I said to myself, I hope everything will be okay. And in the next two days, it was selection. So there was, you know, like a government in ghetto. AND in charge was Dr. Elkis (ph), a \_\_\_\_\_. Like I told you, and the few of them, what I know. But nothing could help you. Just you have to find out for yourself what you can do.

Q: Do you think that the life was different for a woman in the ghetto than it was for a man?

A: I think it was mostly the same thing. The women \_\_\_\_\_. And for the men, they used to take him, you know, to hard labor, different things to do. But for the women, the same thing, no different. No difference. I used to do all the hard work, all the hard work. That was my --like I said

-- my luck. When I used to have a good brigade, they used to push me out. You don't know what it used to be in the morning, on a big field, and to have the brigades, one goes to here, and one goes there. And all of a sudden, you got in in the good brigade, they pulled you out. And how many times I was beaten up from the police.

Q: The Jewish police.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was there -- for a woman, was it different because maybe in addition to doing the hard work, you also were more responsible for the children?

A: They didn't care for the children. You see, if they lost their husband, and she was by herself with a child, they didn't bother her. But who's with a family, you have to go to work.

Q: Were any women in the ghetto pregnant?

A: Oh, yes, indeed.

Q: And they were allowed to have their children?

A: Many people got pregnant and they had to make abortion. And it had to be quiet. Nobody should know. Because if they go find something, you get killed. Like, they took away in 19-- when they got into the ghetto, that was I think in September. And all the frills, what you had -- all the gold and silver and diamonds -- should be turned in to the Gestapo. If one -- if they go find out that one didn't turn in, ten families from the family where you are will be killed. And you know what my father did? My mother, as they got, you know, some fears (ph), he took apart and he wound it up -- and they didn't kill them. I had my purse I gave away, too, to that to the -- like I told you, to good Christians. But then they changed. They changed. They wasn't the same anymore. If you went there to get the clothes, you know what they did? They killed you. They killed you after the

Liberation. And they told me I shouldn't go and ask for the clothes because you'll get killed. I said, "Well, Hitler didn't kill me, to heck with them."

Q: Were you aware, in the ghetto, of any people who were sort of in an underground group of resistance?

A: Oh, there was underground people, too.

Q: Did you know them?

A: Some of them I already did, you know, like the partisan (ph). And the last one, whom I knew, he's already dead.

Q: But at the time, did you know about them?

A: At the time, I tell you, I knew that they exist -- a partisan group. But I wasn't there. I wasn't involved. My husband wasn't involved. Because at that time, I had my people, and I had my family. You see, Jay, myself, and . . . but after Liberation, then was time to talk. YOU could talk. Because you were afraid of your own shadow, that somebody should know or not. Darling, I tell you something. It is so much, so much. I didn't finish. I want to tell you another thing. You finished with the ghetto?

Q: Okay.

A: I'll go to my uncle. We got Jay, my husband and myself. We got already that man who came to pick us up and to take us in \_\_\_\_\_ -- it was about 60 or 70 kilometers -- 100 kilometers from that place where my uncle was.

Q: How did you get out of the ghetto?

A: That's what I want to tell you. So, and a month later, when I lost my people, they told us that they \_\_\_\_\_. They took the children away from the mothers. And we didn't know when to save Jay's life. I didn't care for myself. And \_\_\_\_\_, he said, "Edna, what happen to Jay will happen to



us. If Jay's gone, all of us will go. Don't look for some other places where to leave him." So then he give me a push to go see my uncle again. And when they came already to that point, the way they were talking and everything was set up, we cut the wires -- \_\_\_\_\_ -- and Jay walked out first. And he went across the street there, and we told Jay, "Here and here," and it was gone. Here and here in that place. We'll be there in another half hour, maybe. Please don't call, don't scream, don't say anything. Jay was waiting there for us -- there was another man who will pick us up. It took us about a half hour to go out on the wires. And you have to watch the guard. When the guard was away, and everything was quiet, we got through the wires, and we came to where Jay was. And that man, his name was Martinez (ph). And he took us there where my uncle was. What I did, I took Martinez (ph) a jacket. You know, he scout (ph). I gave it to \_\_\_\_\_, to my husband, and his I gave to Martinez (ph) because he is a Prussian (ph). And if he didn't look like a Jewish person, and when we were driving, we took Jay in that wagon. On top of that, we put up straw that you shouldn't see that the child is there. And I had -- from a Christian, I had somebody years ago, a little jacket, you know, a little coat, and put on a scarf, and both of us looked like Prussian (ph) people, like farmers. And sure enough, we drove up. It was about 30 miles from Kovno. And they stopped us. My heart was beating. And I said, that is the end. And what had happened, he said, "Have you got eggs for sale? Have you got something else for sale?" I said, "No." That man, Martinez (ph), himself, he said, "No, we don't have anything for sale." "Oh, well, good-bye." But that was a lucky moment. Finally, where should we go? So that farmer was very nice and he took us in to his house -- raining, cold, you know. We came in. He didn't took us right away to his house, but he took us to his brother-in-law's house. And Jay was there under the straw, and all of a sudden, he starts saying, "Mama, Daddy -- Mama, Daddy." And the farmer, his brother-in-law said, "What do I hear? I hear a voice." "Oh," he said, "Go away. You don't know what you're talking

about.” Lucky number again. And we brought there, then we came to his house. We came to his house and was there for 39 days. The time was up. We find out that some people -- a lawyer from a ghetto -- it means my uncle’s nephew is here hiding. He told us we have to go and not delay because we are in trouble. Gestapo, you know, the police, you know from over there -- the German police -- they was looking for the people. And there was, across from them, somebody left a little boy or a girl, to hide them. They killed him. It’s so many things, I tell you. It happened so fast, where to start. And then, we came to his house. And by going back, to another farmer, he said, “Please, get in, all of us, in one place.” Like this. ANd we looked, a big storm. And we heard not a fire from that place. The Germans was running to look around. And we were sitting there for an hour. Cold, bitter cold, just like that. That it shouldn’t look like we are Jewish people. That, see, that we are hiding. And they didn’t find us. That was another lucky number.

Q: Let me stop here for a minute.

A: It’s finished. It’s 4:00.

Q: Okay.

End of Tape 2.

Tape 3

Q: So you were in hiding for a long time, huh?

A: For nine months.

Q: Did you move around a lot or did you stay in one place the whole time?

A: Oh, no. You have to move. Right now, I'm coming -- can I say?

Q: Please.

A: So then, he told us, he said, "Get all together in one place, that it should look like a big rock." He himself, I shall never forget, got down on the ground, and lay down and he said, "They are coming." It means the German police -- I don't know who it was. After everything was over, he said to me, "You know, where should I take you?" I told him, "You know? Take me to Pashkovski (ph)." He said, "Okay. I'll take you there. But say anything to them that I brought you." I said, "Okay." He brought us there and he was waiting until we go inside. We got in there and knocked on the door. The dogs was barking and barking and barking and barking and I didn't know what it was. And I knocked on the door. He got back. He got scared when he's up seeing me (ph). I said, "Don't get scared. Do you know Heika (ph)?" That's the way they used to call her. "Yes." I said, "I'm Heika's (ph) daughter." "How did you come here?" I said, "Don't you know when I used to be a little girl, I used to come here and we got, you know, some fish, and we go fishing and so on?" "Oh, yeah. So what you hear? How did you come? How did you know?" I said, "I know the place very good. I could come and I could go." "Who brought you here? What you got here?" I said, "Well, I have a person who took me here, not to your place. But I knew exactly which way to go -- to the right, or to the left, or so on." And I said, "Please let me in." He looked at me and he said, "Okay, go in. You are sure nobody brought you here?" I said, "If somebody would've brought me here, I would have told you."

BUt I told him to remind him, “You don’t remember me, but you remember my mother. Do you remember when -- Mrs. Preskovski (ph) -- when she worked there, in hospital, you know, my mother, the way I told you, my mother used to cook and come to be with them and give them some food and so on.” He said, “Yes, it’s true.” And I said, “You used to come to our house with the horses and buggy.” He said, “Yes. Ah-ha. So you are Heika’s (ph) daughter.” I said, “Yes. And that is my husband. And that is my son.” I said, “Please let me in for a couple days until I get in contact with my uncle.” And my uncle told all the farmers where he is and where he is located -- not all of them, but a few of them., like that Martinez (ph). He knew everything. And he said, “Let me tell you something” -- All to the farmers . . . “If you want to get me out,” he said, “let me tell you one thing. Not one of you will be left alive.” Because it was not allowed to keep Jewish people. So he was in 82 places. Each time in another place, each time. The way people running from one place to the other. So, when it happened, that case. And he let us stay until -- I think six days or seven. And he starts looking around, why the dogs was barking. Why the dogs was barking. Something was wrong in their house. He said, “I cannot keep you anymore.” I said, “Put us in the potatoes bin,” you know, where the yeast is. Nothing doing. He got in contact with my uncle. And my uncle took us to another place. To \_\_\_\_\_. And by working over there, we were working -- I don’t know, a good while -- until we came to that farm. And poor farmer, very poor farmer, but very good people. Very good people. They share with us whatever they had. And my uncle used to come every week and to bring us some bread, milk for my -- for Jay. And so on, because they didn’t have anything. They didn’t have a cow. They got only one pig, or two, and two sheeps. When we came there, my uncle came. And he said, “Here is that place. Try to be as long as you can.” And the farmers, already, was afraid, that in case somebody will give him out. So all the farmers will get killed. So they were

watching already. You see, they was watching -- they was watching him that nobody should give him out, in case or now they're all in trouble. He came over there. And my uncle used to come there. But we have to have a hiding place. Because we heard that, you see, the Germans are losing. And that, to make a hiding place to be was impossible. And what had happened, there was two potato pits. And my husband made out a grave, and he made a tunnel to go in from one to the other. And it was no air to breathe. He made just a little bitty hole, that even you couldn't match up a light, a match to light up. We were there for nine months. The rest of my tale is the truth. Whatever had happened with my husband, he can tell you tomorrow. I fear not the Liberation. We didn't have no clothes, no nothing. Darling . . .

Q: How did you live in that hole for so long?

A: How did -- it wasn't only us. It my uncle. He had two children, his wife, his sister-in-law with a child. And other people came in, you know. We had maybe about 20 people hiding there. You couldn't work, you couldn't \_\_\_\_\_. We were like dead people on the floor. You couldn't stand. And at night, when it was already dark, when they used to go out and catch fresh air. We were there for nine or eight months in that grave.

Q: How did you get food?

A: It is a question. No clothes we have to wash. I'm asking the same thing.

Q: Did you eat?

A: Yeah, my uncle used to bring some things, you know, food?

Q: He would come and go?

A: Oh, yes. He used to come at night, about 10:00, when it used to get dark. So he used to come at night. He used to be with us for three hours, four hours. And that poor fellow used to go back to his place.

Q: So the people hiding with you, there was different relatives.

A: Yes. You see, that was the farmers, the way I told you, that my uncle used to live in peace with them. He used to help them a whole lot. And my grandmother, shall she rest in peace, she used to help them, too. And that what they liked. \_\_\_\_\_, in Lithuanian. And that's why they liked him, and that's why they helped him to survive. It's unbelievable.

Q: What did you do all day?

A: All day? Now I can tell you what I was doing. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know. I was writing something. One day, she came in, \_\_\_\_\_, came in. And she said, "Do you know how to sew?" I said, "Yes, I do." She said, "Look, I want to make Pearl (ph)." "But that is named for a son, Jacob." I said, "Sure, you can show me what you like to do, I'll help you." So, she gave me a needle and thread. And I know how to put the \_\_\_\_\_, not like here. But, the farmers, as long as you got to sleep and a jacket in that heat, and I was sewing there. And all of a sudden, she shout through the window, she got company. Oh, my goodness, that was horrible. Where should I go? I said, "Put me somewhere." She said, "Come on." She put me between, you know, the beets (ph). And I was hiding there, I was sitting there for four hours. I don't know, there's so many things to tell you about.

Q: Now, on a normal day, when you were in --

A: On a normal day, we used to sit -- oy -- well, you keep, you know, the corn, and when you -- and hay and so on in the bottom. We used to be there. As long we had, you know, the corn put it up, you know, hay, we used to be on top. Then, it start coming up lower and lower and lower. And it was no place left to go. That was the last place, take it or leave it, like somebody said. And my husband said they were looking there and said, "You know, maybe the potato peaks (ph)

will be just right because one wasn't far from the other. And he built up a place that, like, he would be engineer. And we had children with us. Four children. It's time to go, huh?

Q: No.

A: And we had four children, and the children, you see, he made a tunnel. We didn't have nothing. No wood, no nothing had to support. I don't know. The good Lord maybe saved our lives, by going from one \_\_\_\_\_ to the tunnel, and not having no support, whatsoever, fall down and you can, you know, get killed. So that saved our life. And we used to go out only at night.

Q: So during the day . . .

A: So during the day, they used to be there like I told you. You didn't do nothing.

Q: Now what would happen if the kids started crying or somebody got sick.

A: Well, it was really a problem. It was really a problem. I remember, Jay took sick with his gums. It was terrible. But you wouldn't believe it. So what you did, the lady, Proskovski (ph), she took onions and garlic and she used to rub him, you know. The teeth, it was swelled up, the gums and everything. And a little at a time, it start healing up. I was sick that they wanted to take me back to the ghetto. The ghetto still was running. And I was sick and they want to try to take me to a doctor. The way I you, that I looked like a \_\_\_\_\_. I didn't -- but I was afraid to go. So, with different kind of medicine, what they used to have. SO they used to make me some tea from a special flower. And I had some, I don't know, aspirins or something. And I survived. I didn't have to go back to the ghetto.

Q: Did you have to teach the children to act in a certain way? To be quiet? To hide?

A: Oh, the children knew it was quiet. And my uncle was teaching the children, you know, the whole Bible they knew by heart. They knew by heart the whole Bible. It was in the daytime, he was teaching them. And you know, you have to pray three times in the day? You know,

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and in the morning service. And they learn everything they knew.

They are right now in Israel. But it was tough. We didn't know what it means to shower for nine months. So when we got the first shower, to go in a Turkish bath, it was unbelievable.

Q: Did the farmer's wife come and check on you all the time?

A: Oh, yes. The farmer was with us because he was sitting there in the barn, and he was there and \_\_\_\_\_ used to help him to make the corn. And then he used to come in -- I forgot -- he used to come in at night and they had -- like, they make the flour by hand. I forgot what it is. So everybody was taking a little bit, and work and make some flour for bread, the corn.

Q: I want to ask you a question because I'm a little confused about something. When you -- When your husband made that tunnel, this was in the peets (ph)?

A: Yes, but you don't know what --

Q: Is this different than the barns? This is a different place? The same place.

A: I tell you what had happened. When my husband was making the tunnel, it was at night. Only at night you could do. He had a little lamp, you know, with a little, little, very little light. And people inside, in the house, we didn't know. And all the friends were locked up, sleeping. They had a dog. And the dog start running here and there, and he was barking, and we didn't know what it was. Jonas was the name of her son. It was on a Saturday night. He was going, you know, they used to go for dancing. And he used to have a fiddle, he used to play fiddle. And every Saturday night, they used to get together, the farmers, and dancing and singing. Finally, that boy, Jonas, come back. That dog run to him. And the dog was barking, and biting him. And he was running. Now my husband was. And when he came in, then he had seen him. If not him, he would be killed. And they helped him to take away from the same. He got there a little mark.



Q: SO this was near the barn.

A: Yes, you see. It was near to the barn, it was near to the house. It wasn't too far away.

Q: So sometimes in the daytime, you got out of the hole, and you went into the barn.

A: In the daytime . . .

Q: You went into the barn.

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No, since that -- excuse me -- since that was ready, since we had the hiding place, because the Russians come back to Lithuania, you know -- they weren't too far away. So, we have to have that hiding place. And that was in the daytime. We were sitting there, laying on the ground.

And at night, we used to go out for two, three hours.

Q: Do you know, were there partisans in this area?

A: Do what?

Q: Do you know if there were partisans in this area?

A: Where there that they was? (ph)

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't understand.

Q: Okay. In this area, were there partisan fighters? The resistance fighters?

A: Oh, no.

Q: No, not here. And were there a lot of Germans in the area?

A: Well, no. There wasn't, because there was, you see, just a farm. In the little farms, there was, you know, plenty of Germans. In each town, you had, you know, Germans, and then the Lithuanians. The murderers.

Q: How did you get water?

A: Well, she used to take and bring us, in a big pot, some water and peas. And the peas were so hard that you hardly could bite. So she was bringing us the water and the peas and the \_\_\_\_\_. I don't remember exactly the way it was. But everybody was taking a swallow of water, and something. Everybody got a slice bread. And that's it. And then, my uncle used to go out, and he used to bring something from the farmers. And my uncle was growing this \_\_\_\_\_, too. He used to take him out to help to bring the corn for the bread. He'll tell you tomorrow.

Q: Now, was it difficult to know who you could trust, who you could not trust?

A: It is, sure, difficult. But you see, as long as I have my uncle, wasn't difficult, because he knew the people. And he knew that he can trust the people. And he was beloved by the people. They liked him because he helped them. If he would be a bad farmer, that farm would be different. But he used to help everybody who needs some help. And then, they used to pay him out with different things, you see. So that's the way. They liked him.

Q: When you were hiding in this potato peet (ph) for all this time, do you remember what you thought about and what you dreamed about?

A: IF I remember what?

Q: What you were thinking or dreaming about at the time?

A: What can I dream? You dream only to be alive and to get out and to be a free man. That is the main dream, what it was. And the dream was mine. Maybe I'll go find my people. But I didn't. And I came back, I felt like I want to kill myself. But thanks to my husband. He always said it would work out. Said he'd get a farm and then you get to go on with your life. It was tough. Tough and hard.

Q: How were you liberated?

A: Huh?

Q: How did it happen that you were liberated?

A: When we were liberated?

Q: How did you know you were free?

A: When they liberated, we got out. We were free people. And my husband went back to Slobodka (ph), to Kovno.

Q: But how did you know you were free?

A: Huh?

Q: How did you know that you were free? What happened?

A: What had happened the -- \_\_\_\_\_. When the war was over, the Russians came in, in Lithuania. Earlier, when the war was end. You see? SO we got out, I think with six months earlier, or seven months, until the war was to the end.

Q: When were you liberated, do you remember?

A: When I was liberated? 1944 between June or July.

Q: And did the soldiers come through your area? Did the Russians . . .

A: The Russians came earlier.

Q: I know, but did they come in the area where you were hiding?

A: Yeah, right.

Q: So you saw them.

A: Yeah. We had seen them, we were talking, and then they found there some Jewish people. And they said, "Don't you say anything, that they are Jewish." That was a Jewish officer in the army. He said, "Don't say nothing." And we had to be quiet not to say anything. Because he said, "How did you survive? How you did it?" \_\_\_\_\_ -- I don't know how to say, "You are

against the government," or something. It was not an easy life, and that the Russians, too. It was terrible.

Q: Okay, just a minute. Just a minute. When the Russian soldiers came through, when you met them, were you in hiding underground?

A: We still, we had the hiding place. But somebody told us that it's already free, they already -- the Russian people, the Russian soldiers came in already. And we walked out. And we came in. And it wasn't too far from the house where we used to live. And that's how they met it.

Q: Must have been exciting, yes?

A: Yes it was excitement, but excitement with fears. Fear. Pain. What mend the pain? I will not say anymore. I hope I could -- I hoped always I was living this for . . . maybe I go see my people back. But I never did. And that was really again, perhaps you, too. Pray in full. You couldn't run away from yourself. Everything you ever had in your life. Hard labor didn't bother me. Didn't bother me. Hard labor -- I used to forget about my problems. But you never can forget. No matter how long you going to live. Never forget. Now, I can't forget what had happened, but I told you, it's just a little. Just a little, little. It's more and more to tell you.

[Crying]

Q: So you went back into Kovno with the soldiers?

A: What?

Q: After you were free, what did you do?

A: WHat I did? What should I tell you what I did? Would you believe it?

Q: I don't know.

A: Okay. No money, no clothes, no nothing. I don't know from first what to start it up, what I was doing.

Q: Did you go back to Kovno at first?

A: Oh, we went back to Kovno, but you had to make a living, too.

Q: Right. But when you went back in, what was it like? What did you see?

A: What I see?

Q: When you went back.

A: When I came to the ghetto, I had seen burned up bodies, children's feet, shoes. People killed. They were killed because they was in a bunker. And they find out, so they burn them up. I cannot talk to \_\_\_\_\_. It's such bad memories. The crowd . . . I said, "Not that, \_\_\_\_\_" Such bad memories. A crowd of people, you know? Children's hands, children's feet, with the shoes on. Some bodies were burned up if you didn't know whose shoes. Some of them were killed, shot. That's what we find out in the ghetto. That -- could these hurt -- the pictures, right now informed us (ph). You wouldn't believe it, but we had fear after the Liberation. It is unbelievable, unbelievable what they did. You see, some people had their bunker (ph) -- you know what the bunker(ph) is? Twenty people, 15 people -- they were hiding. And some of them -- I don't know how you tell them, how they get out -- that here is the bunkers. So what they did, some of them got out and they killed them. Some of them, they put up fire and they burned them up. It was horrible. It was bitter. It is -- you cannot describe -- you cannot describe the place, what we have seen and what they did to the Jewish people, to the Jewish \_\_\_\_\_. But they came in there to see blood all over, like in a slaughterhouse. It's hard, honey. It's hard to tell you, these people could be so violent. And maybe worse -- and maybe my husband's people were there, too.

Q: Were there any living people when you went in?

A: Huh?

Q: Were there any people alive still when you went in?

A: NOthing. No people alive, nothing. It was already slaughtered out. I don't know, it's -- it is unbelievable, unbelievable what was going on.

Q: Did you stay? Did you leave? What did you do?

A: We couldn't do nothing. We went. We didn't go \_\_\_\_\_ to Slovat (ph). And we got in, back to Kovno. In Kovno, there was my husband's friend, a lawyer, a Kirsch (ph). \_\_\_\_\_. And they took over there, the \_\_\_\_\_. And then, my husband got in in a little factory where they used to make candies. So they put him up as a -- he was taking care, he was there -- the leader. And that the way we started up. And then, I used to go sell to the farmers sewing machines. Oh, honey, it's \_\_\_\_\_. It's so many things what I did in my life. After the Liberation, I used to sell them to the farmers -- sewing machines -- and on the way back, I used to get money. AND you know, sometimes a pig, an already slaughter -- and more things than I used to bring back in Kovno, counties (ph). And I used to sell them, and I used to make some money. It happened that I lived there. I have a girl, but she used to take here and collect, you know, some money. It was the . . .

Q: Did the . . .

A: I used to run and made different things there. Used to sell them, get some, beg some -- like I said, pigs or a cow or something, and bring back, you know. In \_\_\_\_\_, my uncle used to help me.

Q: Did the Christian people, when you came back, did they welcome you?

A: Huh?

Q: The Lithuanian people, when you returned . . .

A: Yeah -- oh, they welcomed? Nah.

Q: How did they treat you?

A: It was no place. I tell you something. It was no harmony anymore between the Lithuanian people and our people, because we know that they are murderers. Wherever they can find a Jew, they used to kill them to take to the Gestapo. I never could believe that years, years ago, when I used to come to my grandmother, to the farm and be with them, everything was open wide. Nobody did bother you. BUt since the Lithuanians start killing the people -- no matter whatever they found -- they killed them. They didn't save their life, but they killed them.

Q: So how did you -- when you went back, did you --

A: I did, I came back where my husband was known, and he was a lawyer there. And then, he see -- he knew some people, some good people, you know. Letto (ph) was a new daddy, George (ph), he knew the other people. And how he said he raised a living, it was very hard, very, very hard. That's what I told you. I was taking food and running there to the farmers and selling them different things, what they needed.

Q: Was Jay in school? Did he go to school?

A: Jay? No, that's another point. Jay, I think, went to school just for a year, and then they run away. They have to run away because our life was very dangerous -- very, very dangerous because of the communists. My husband will tell you more.

Q: You don't want to tell me?

A: He'll tell you the same story a little bigger.

Q: Okay, why was it so dangerous with the communists?

A: What you said -- you said WHY?

Q: Why so dangerous with the communists?

A: Why so dangerous? You don't know the communist life. You don't know. I couldn't believe either. I couldn't believe -- because it's impossible. It wasn't the market share anymore like it was. And they believe on \_\_\_\_\_, eleven. There was a George (ph), a military (ph), and -- I don't know. It's so many things, honey.

Q: Are you tired? Do you want to take a little break?

A: I --

Q: Do you want to take a break?

A: Yeah. It's already 5:00.

Q: We'll just stop there . . .

A: Honey, I tell you something. . . .

Q: After the war, when you were in Kovno, and the Communists were in charge, could you be Jewish? Could you practice your religion? Could you observe the holidays?

A: Oh, yes. That you could do it. They didn't -- they wasn't against you. But they were against -- they didn't have any democracy the way we have here. There, everything that you used to do is under the government. Here, democracy means you can do what it please you. You can build what you want. You can build a business and make money. Pay the tax, the government wouldn't bother you. And you gradually start growing and growing and growing, if you are not lazy. If you work, you make. You don't work, you don't make. Over there, it's no democracy. You ask me right now about the Communism. I didn't want to say anything, but I'll have to bring up and to tell you what had happened, why we have to run away. As you know, I was in business. I didn't know that much (ph) about the Communism. In our place, where we used to live, was a George (ph) from the marines (ph). It was a captain over the eight \_\_\_\_\_. You know, you heard about \_\_\_\_\_. They were rough and tough. The way I used to buy the



machines and different things -- and a knitting machine -- somebody want to have a knitting machine. And I found somebody who had a good knitting machine. And a machine that you don't have to buy the merchandise, you know, but you can make your own wool, you know. Okay, they got that machine, and the man gave us some money. And my uncle was there, still on the farm. And what he gave me was a hog, you know, a cow, a life, and some money -- and some different, you know, food I couldn't remember. I had potatoes and flour and so on. But as (ph) I'm coming back, the girls from concentration camp was alive. But they come back, they didn't find no children, no husband, no nobody. So where they used to come? To the Ipps, you know -- in Lithuanian, Ipp-es. What I did, I didn't have too much at that time. So I had the potatoes, the potatoes and bread. And I had a big kettle. Put it up, peeled the potatoes with onion, pepper -- and it smells, it was so good -- and bread -- and I was feeding them with that. What had happened to me at that time -- when I got that cow, in that place where we used to live \_\_\_\_\_, there was the officer and the George (ph). And more, you know, from them. We took that cow in the \_\_\_\_\_, and we slaughtered it. And we -- like in a butcher shop -- we forgot to clean up the place. What had happened, all of a sudden that officer has to come down, and he had seen what he take. And he came to me, and he said, "Do you know, because I respect your husband --" I said, "That would change you?" And he said he could send me out (ph) for hard labor for five years. What he did. I said, "\_\_\_\_\_ (even though it was his name), I don't know. I have been living in a democracy country, you can do whatever it please -- you can do whatever is good." I said, "We will take it out right away and we go clean it up." I think my husband wasn't at that time at home. They send him, I think to Beluge (ph), in Lithuania. And I said, "Please, don't mention it. Don't bring any harm to us. Hitler didn't kill us. Please." And he used to come. I used to make the \_\_\_\_\_, different things, the Russian food. But I could

tell, and he was burning. But we got right away a person who came in and cleaned it up and gave them away everything that was there left. And he cleaned up and it was beautiful. He said, "Don't you know that that is not allowed in Russian to do?" I said, "\_\_\_\_\_ law (ph), how should I --" (You couldn't call them \_\_\_\_\_, you couldn't call them \_\_\_\_\_.) I said, "How should I know? Please remember one thing. We are raised in a democracy country." I said, "Do you see, I don't have any clothes. I want to get something to put on for me. You see my coat? What I was wearing is here with holes in my elbows." I said, "I have to do something. This is not making anything. I even don't have any coal to heat up the apartment." I said, "Please understand. Right now, I see the regulations, " I said, "from the Russian government. If you could teach me more, a little about that life, I promise you, I go follow exactly what you go say." And I was crying. I was strong, but I start crying because I was afraid for Jay. And now it's easy to have respect, you know. But that particular \_\_\_\_\_ Siberian (ph) -- where would be my little Jay? And then I have more children who had lost their mothers. And I kept them in my place. I had about four. He said, "Okay. I will tell you what you can do." I said, "What can I do to make a living?" I said, "Can I bake and sell, you know, some little cakes, you know." He said, "Yes, you can do it." We made a little kitchen -- a stove, a little stove. And the wood was so big, like that. And in that little stove, I used to bake and make cookies. Different things. And then I used to take that to the lady that runs the restaurant. And she used to sell them, and I was making a little money. When \_\_\_\_\_ came back, he told him the whole history, the way I did. Finally, we became good friends. And I told him, I said, "I go follow all the instructions. But you will tell (ph)." And that is no monkey business with them. They can send you away that you don't know where you are. And they can -- you don't know what you are anymore. And that was the life of them. Siberia. It came to a moment, that was enough. It was no life. It was -

- no life. I don't know, it's come back, maybe about 100 people, or 200 people. Jay was -- at that time, he was going to school. They had the school for the children.

Q: A Jewish school. A Jewish school?

A: Yiddish. Yes, a Yiddish school. And he was going there with some people who survived, you know, the way we did survive. \_\_\_\_\_. It's \_\_\_\_\_ moment. The day my husband told me about the cookies and the candies. That somebody called my husband that he's against the government. And they have to see outside, on the \_\_\_\_\_, you know, that they have to do something to send him away in Siberia or to punish him, whatever he was doing. ANd that was already bitter. That was already bad. That was before, but I want to say something else. I couldn't handle any more. I couldn't produce any more. The cookies was no life -- to stay and to cook all day, and then to sell it to make nothing. Finally, I sold the house that we had. And I ran back to the George (ph). And I had the -- I knew some people who want to sell the house, and they need some money to go in a \_\_\_\_\_. It's a pity-case or something, you know. And I help them. But with the help, I shouldn't do it. Because if they would caught me, they would send me to Siberia anyhow. My husband knew that the George (ph). And he introduced me to him. When he introduced me to him, I became a lawyer. I start doing the papers, you know, to sell the papers. A thousand in one night. That's the way I want to tell you. And I became -- I used to sell the house. I didn't have no trouble. I had the secretary. She knew me already. I had the people who want to buy. And a happy people who wants the money to get out from Kovno to go into free world. So i made money. The truth. I made money, I didn't have to work hard. But, each time I used to have something else to wear. I didn't wear the same clothes. [Crying] Everything that I was doing was fear. Fear and painful. We made some money. I made it. And it came the moment where we have to leave everything that again I had. And on

our way, 12:00 at night. To make a long story short, I ran, not to the door, but I open up a window and jumped out of the window -- jumped out with Jay through the window. In the back yard, was there a \_\_\_\_\_ truck, you know? And he took us to vendors (ph). Between three and four months, it took us to get in Berlin. And from Berlin, we got in in the American zone (ph). Four months, I forgot my name. Jay said, "I don't know what's my name." That's another thing -- cannot go on the same name each time. Each time, wherever we went, it was no flowers. They took out my husband from the train. We didn't \_\_\_\_\_ know about it. But they took my husband because he was wearing boots. And all of a sudden, they have seen that he got a watch. I thought it's the end. But he said, "Let me go. You want my boots? Here are the boots. In another place, you've got your watch. Let us go out." We had been in Nobody's Land for four or five days. Snow, bitter cold. Jay got sick. It is just unbelievable, unbelievable what people can go through -- maybe because I was younger. Well, to make a long story short, it was in Munich, and they had there, my husband had a job. Then I want to come to America to see my sister and my aunt that was my mother's sister. I wrote them a letter that I want to come to America and I need your help. Didn't took no time. And I told them I don't want to be any more on the bloody earth. And we got the papers. I didn't know what to do, which way to turn and which way to go. In Israel, you couldn't go because it's no place with no certificate. So, finally, when we came here, people were warm, people were nice. But I didn't have the language. I didn't know nothing. And my husband has to start out life from the beginning.

Q: I'm gonna stop the tape here because we have to put in another tape.

End of Tape 3.

Tape 4

Q: I think I told you what it's like in [Munich]. Life in [Munich] was when you had seen the people, what you thought they already did. And all of us hadn't yet seen them. Survivors. It's moment that I think, there I am. In seventh heaven? Or in another world? Or I'm dreaming. You can't tell reality. It is to describe you moments like that -- the other people thought the same way. Oy, you thought that you are dead. You are alive. I said, Yes, I am here. It is things that you couldn't believe. You couldn't believe and you see some friends -- \_\_\_\_\_, that they are still come out from the ghettos, from the concentration camps. You feel like one family. That's the way you felt when you have met the people from the concentration camps. We were looking at each other and saying, "Is that the truth?" We are still alive. We couldn't believe our own self anymore. And then we used to get together once in a while with some people, you know, whom we knew. They used to be in the -- what you call it -- in other places, just like this. It's unbelievable. It's really unbelievable. Tears from happiness that the people are alive. What you used to talking to people. What you used to do in Munich. In Munich, it was only one thing. How did you survive? How did you survive in places like that -- like in the concentration camps. No food, lice, no showers, no bread. And that was the main talk, about that. You couldn't talk about something else, but each time, "What happened to you? How did you survive? What happened to them?" And everybody used to tell you the biography of the war, the concentration camps, of the life, what they had there. And I know -- we were in the ghettos. It was the same thing, but not so horribly, like in the concentration camps. So fortunately, we were in ghetto. So that was the life in Munich.

Q: Were you surprised by what you learned?

A: Huh?

Q: Were you surprised to learn about the camps?

A: I wasn't surprised to know what was going on there. We knew already, in the ghettos. But when the girls come back, you know, and we were on the train and in Kovno, they used to tell us everything. And I know what life was, and I know what my life was. So when we were in Munich, it's no idle question. Just to go -- just to talk about the passing time from your life and now to look forward for your future. And we didn't want to stay anymore in Munich. It was enough. I couldn't. Each day was for me horrible. We used to hear Germans marching and back. And sometimes, she used to get in a fight with the Nazis. So the only place it was, to go to America.

Q: How long were you in Munich?

A: How long in Munich? From 1945 -- about three years, I would say, close to three years.

Q: Were you working there?

A: I didn't work there. My husband was working.

Q: You were not in the deporting \_\_\_\_\_.

A: No, I wasn't involved because I said Jay has to go to school, have to take him to school and he comes back. And I wasn't involved in anything. Just to watch out that there should be something to eat.

Q: Were there schools for the Jewish people there?

A: Where?

Q: In Munich, for the displaced persons?

A: Oh, it was a whole lot people in Munich, but it was a whole lot in the camps, you know. The \_\_\_\_\_ camps.

Q: Was your husband working with those people?

A: Oh, yes. He was the transport , later, of all the trucks, and the cars, and to give everybody, you know, who's coming in if they need a vehicle, to help them. And he had about, I don't know, about 15 people, chauffeurs, you know, where you have to take them in different places, in Boslin (ph), and \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know, in different places, they used to have for the \_\_\_\_\_, you know? He was working and he helped them to give them some trucks. The people who want to -- not to wait for any papers, but to go out without papers, and to fight, you know, to come to Israel. So the \_\_\_\_\_ used to take care of some displaced people. And he used give them the trucks and the gears (ph) and everything. He had a big position to do. He can tell you more about it.

Q: Okay. When you came over to the United States, where did you land?

A: What I learn?

Q: No, where did you first come?

A: The first stop was New York.

Q: How did that feel? WHat were your impressions?

A: How did I got here? I had my brother -- I had a brother, too. He was in Washington. And my sister was in Richmond, and my aunt. And by coming here, to Richmond, the United Jewish Appeals, they used to have the people who helped you. And I was afraid, with the job was that the neighbors, so nervous and accepting, they used to come and tell me, " Don't get upset. Take it easy. Take it easy."

Q: What I want to know is, when you first arrived in New York --

A: From New York.

Q: No, no. One minute.

A: Let finish. If not, I'll forget.

Q: Okay.

A: When I came to New York, my uncle in Philadelphia, his name is the same thing -- my father's brother. They was reading the paper, he read the paper -- the \_\_\_\_\_, a Jewish paper -- and they find out that the Ipp -- Ipp was our name -- \_\_\_\_\_, Edna Ipp, and Jay Ipp. And he find out and he came. My husband said, "Edna, do you have a few dollars? Call them up and tell them that you are coming." I said, "What you talking? We gonna need that dollar tomorrow to eat." So he said, "Well, it's your family." So that the way it happened. So my uncle got in contact with Richmond. My brother got in contact with Philadelphia. And it was going around already for a whole day. Telephone calls here and there and here and there. And finally, my uncle came from Philadelphia. And my brother came from Washington. And you would see a picture -- that day, I was sitting and knitting a haddock (ph), and all of a sudden, I opened my -- somebody said, "\_\_\_\_\_." They are there. I opened up my eyes and I recognized my brother. And when I have seen him, he said, "Edna, please. You choking me up. Let me loose. Let me go away." And then, we are going to Richmond. My brother told me, "I will take care." He said they found that they had to come to America, then they'll find that they had to come to Richmond. He'll go to Washington, Uncle Bennish (ph), may he rest in peace, he went to Philadelphia. And we came to Richmond. And it is a \_\_\_\_\_, a life from the beginning. Seeing people -- my sister. I didn't know my aunt. Her name was Bessie. I think I found the biggest diamond in the world -- having a family. I lost my family, as you know. But I found another family. They were so nice to us. They were so good to us. Alright, I didn't know the language. None of us knew the language. But Jay was young, and he picked up the language in no time, just like that. You had to see it (ph) to make a living. We were resting for a week. And he said, "You know, Edna, I wouldn't go to college back. I wouldn't study any more law." I



said, "Why?" He said, "And I love law." He said he had to be born here. You had to learn the language fluently. "I cannot take it anymore, to be a lawyer here, and to waste my time and not to be successful." So what had happened, he said, "You know why? I think we go up \_\_\_\_\_ station." I looked at him. He said, "It wouldn't be for long." So we opened up a \_\_\_\_\_ station. I couldn't stay home. The doctor told me to get out from the house because I could lose my mind. I was by myself. And he told him, "Take her out from the house, no matter what it is. She should meet the public, she should meet the people." And it was true. I met people. I was there in the station. I was pumping gas. I was talking to the people. I do it, all the work, what in a service station has to be done. And the people didn't come, you know, for a whole lot gas, like ten gallons, 15 gallons. They used to come, "Oh, two gallons. A dollar, a dollar and eight." And you have to do the work that they should come back, you know, to clean the windshields and everything. And this is the way that they came in. And they came in and they said, "I'd like to fill up, I think, with gas." Oh, I said that's a kind person there. Do you know what I did? I didn't know how to pump the gas. So instead, to stop the nozzle from the gas -- it shouldn't go in anymore because it was filled up -- I pressed the nozzle, and the gas flew up \_\_\_\_\_. Well, I told my husband, I said, "I'm not a service operator. I'm sorry." Oh, he said, "Don't worry." I lost a customer. I asked him, you know, with my language at that time, I didn't know even how to say even "thank you." Used to say, "Sank ye, sank ye."

Q: So you built a life here.

A: And I was working hard. But then, it wasn't hard. It was so easy. It was so wonderful. I said, "The country, it's so beautiful. The people . . ." I used to go out, always with a smile, and talk to the people. And I used to cry. All of a sudden, the customer came in -- from the customers I made good friends -- he said, "Mrs. Ipson, did somebody hurt you?" "Oh," I said,

“Oh, no. I have a cold. And that’s why my tears are running.” “Oh,” he said, “I’m sorry to hear.” I said, “But I am okay.” I wiped up my tears and start smiling. It was alright. Another episode I want to tell you. A yellow cab was not too far from our station. And two insurance people met each other and they observed me, the way I was working. And one said to the other, “That woman doesn’t have no problems whatsoever.” He said, “Why? Take a look at her, always with a smile, smiles, smiles. If she would have problems, she wouldn’t smile.” The other insurance man said, “Let’s betting ten dollars that she got problems, too.” He said, “Alright, let’s bet in ten dollars, and we’ll go to the lady, we’ll go ask her what problems she have, she doesn’t have.” So they came in and they asked me, “Listen, my dear lady.” [He] said, “We’d like to ask you a question.” I said, “If I be able to answer in English, I’ll be glad to answer.” He said, “It’s not hard.” I said, “What is it?” “Do you have problems?” [He] said, “I have talked to my friend and I told him that you don’t have no problems whatsoever because all day long, when I see you with the people just smiling.” I said, “Look, my dear friend, if I would told you my problems, what I had, the biggest tractor trailer wouldn’t take from one corner to the other.” The other man said, “Ten dollars.” And that’s what I know that they got in. It’s a wonderful country. It’s beautiful. People used to ask me, “How can you say that you are happy?” I said, “I am happy. Do you know what freedom means?” I said, “You can do everything that it please you. It’s a democracy country. You can work, just work. Pay tax. Pay everything. It’d be for you and it would be a \_\_\_\_\_ of the government. If you don’t want to work, you don’t pay the tax, you’re in trouble. You don’t have nothing. But work, hard work, makes your life sweet.” I would say, “You know why? Because I didn’t have time to think about my passing time.” And \_\_\_\_\_ became a lawyer. After all year, he came in and he start up in the service station. And it really helps me. But then I start thinking here, we are in a

wonderful country, we make a living. We go \_\_\_\_\_ something. And from the service station, we got in, and a whole \_\_\_\_\_ business. After my bill pass, nice business. And we made. And my husband, on top of that, he was working for the community. He was a member of B'nai B'rith (ph). He was a member in Temple. He was a member from the association, from the Job Association. He was a president. He was a \_\_\_\_\_. He is, even now, a clever, clever man. He did so much for the community in Richmond. I'm sorry that I didn't bore the papers with me, the write-ups.

Q: Throughout all of these horrible experiences that you went through, do you think that your religion helped give you the strength to keep going?

A: My sister, nobody --

Q: No, no, no. Your religion.

A: Oh, am I religious?

Q: When you -- through all of these bad times, did your religion help you? Did it give you strength?

A: Oh, my religion?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. I always prayed, and always had the prayer of my lips that God should help us. It's -- we used to go in Temple, we belonged to several temples, not the one I'm in now, but the first temple was \_\_\_\_\_. And the Jewish tradition, nobody could take that away. That is up today. And we raise up Jay in the same way. And not because Jay is my son, but he's really a very good leader. He just left the Temple as president. His beautiful awards from \_\_\_\_\_. He lead in Temple so good, and he was in other organizations, president -- was

president of B'nai B'rith (ph). He was president for \_\_\_\_\_. The whole family was very active in America.

Q: When you were -- when you were in the ghetto, and when you were hiding, did you think that you would get through it all?

A: No. No. BUt let me tell you something, and that is true. When my uncle used to come every week, and when he didn't come in time, and I didn't see him the next day or the third day -- because I believed in him -- I don't know how to say, in God? -- so when he used to come, he used to give us so much hope. And he used to talk about the religion. About the kind things. Deep in my heart, nobody can take away my name, Jew. And when I am here, I am going everywhere -- is my name. I'm Jewish. I'm not ashamed. Some children, they were ashamed to tell them that they are Jewish people. Here in America, in the temple where my husband was president -- and they have their lecture -- and somebody from the children said, "Oh, let's get up. My friend doesn't know that I am Jewish." And now, when I heard it, i really jumped up. I said, "What to be afraid. Here is a wonderful country. Here is a democracy country. Here is beautiful. You go to bed, you don't have to be afraid that in four or five hours that the \_\_\_\_\_ will came and you have to go out in bitter cold, 4:00 in the morning. And then, because they want to know how the Jewish people will behave." It is unbelievable for people when you said, "What means democracy?" Under Hitler, I told you what it is. Under the Russian people, you are not a person, you are just like I said. You have to go the way the government says. But your own ideas or something, you couldn't -- you couldn't have. But here, it's wonderful. You know what I called here? It's a paradise. We got out from hell and come to a paradise.

Q: Are there things that come up from time to time -- different sounds or sights that make you think about your life before?

A: You never could forget. No matter, each time when we are sitting and talking -- and even when you have company and you start talking, and you come up right away with the pacing \_\_\_\_\_. You cannot forget any. That's what we appreciate. That's why we are so grateful to America. Because we found the place where to live in freedom. I'm not afraid anymore when I go to bed that somebody will come and get rescued out. Do you know, honey, what is the meaning of that? No, people wouldn't know, because it is the worst thing in the world when you fall asleep after a hard day of labor, and all of a sudden, the \_\_\_\_\_ starts running, crying, calling you, "Get up!" And in ten minutes, you have to be dressed up and get out. But here, it's not anymore. Here is peace. Here is freedom. Here is wonderful.

Q: You feel at peace.

A: That peace -- I tell you something -- that freedom, who can describe to you the way I can describe democracy (ph). Like, somebody said to me -- this was the right up in the paper, in the gasoline station, when I was working. And one came in and said, "Look, if I go give you a million dollar and go back . . ." I said, "And if you will give me all the jewelry from the Queen Elizabeth and tell me to go back, I will tell you, 'Keep that. And I want my comfort here.' I am a citizen already." After the citizen papers, when I got them.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say?

A: I don't know. It's more things -- let's finish it -- there's more things, you know, to do. But, like I said, it's a wonderful country.

Q: Thank you.

A: Very -- I'm happy to be here. We arrange, we accomplish (ph). So, I figure that \_\_\_\_\_ couldn't study any more law, that he worries to the end (ph). I said, what -- but with his knowledge, my health, we could age and be \_\_\_\_\_ -- and not only for ourselves, but for the

community. I got to bring you that lettuce, but here's your receipt (ph). Well, it was working produce (ph). And now I have to tell you something. When \_\_\_\_ was president in Temple \_\_\_\_, in 1967, Ipsak Rabin (ph) --he invite Ipsak (ph) Rabin to come here to Richmond because he want to raise some bonds, Israeli bonds. And Ipsak Rabin (ph) came to Richmond and raised the money, I don't know, \$45,000. At that time, that was a whole lot money. And when he asked questions to \_\_\_\_\_ -- my husband, he could tell you what had happened. So we took pictures at that time. And I had Ipsak Rabin (ph), my husband, and myself. And the Jewish community, when they killed -- and they killed him, they asked me if I have something. I said, "I think I do. I think I have a picture from Ipsak Rabin (ph)." They said, "You do?" And I told him everything. And Jay will tell you the same thing, what had happened. Anyhow . . .

Q: That's enough, huh?

A: Huh?

Q: Thank you very much.

A: You're welcome.

Conclusion of Interview.