

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Lidia Siciarz**  
**January 11, 2000**  
**RG-50.030\*0405**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Lidia Siciarz, conducted on January 11, 2000 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.

## **LIDIA SICIARZ**

### **January 11, 2000**

#### Beginning Tape One

Question: Can you begin telling us your name, your full -- your -- your full name and where you were born?

Answer: Well, my name is Lidia Siciarz, and the maiden name was Kleinman, and I was born in Kraków, in 16 of May, 1930.

Q: And were you known by any other name during the war?

A: Oh yes, my war name, I had two names. One was Maria Borofska, and because somebody by same name met me, that was -- so my name -- I got the new papers, which was Maria Vorshinska, and that was my name during the war, and even after the war, I just kept this name til I got married. I never went back to my name, yeah.

Q: Tell us the -- the -- the names of your mother and father.

A: My mother was Anuta Schwartzman, and he -- my father's name was Mandel Kleinman. And he --

Q: Do you know where they were born? Can you tell us that?

A: Oh yes, my mother was born in Pinsk, in 1904. I think it was 14 of the April, I'm not sure. And my father was born in Nowy Sacz, was Galitsia, in 1899. The date was May nine, 1899. And he -- the entire family came from Nowy Sacz, which was Galitsia. And I think that my grandfather came from Vienna because -- but I'm not sure about that.

Q: Tell us about the gr -- maternal grandparents and the paternal grandparents, what you know th -- their names and where they lived.

A: My mother's family lived in Pinsk, and her father was a merchant, and his name was Abraham Schwartzman. They came from Russia after revolution, that was -- what I was told, I'm not sure about that. And my grandmother was Basha Kagan Schwartzman, and they all live in Pinsk. They have five children; two daughters and three sons. And she -- most of the children were well educated, they send them to university -- to school, and later to university. Family actually spoke Russian at home because it was section of bialo -- Byelorussia, Byeloru -- and I knew them, they used -- my grandmother used to come to our house every summer, and she -- when the war started, we actually went to Pinsk because it was on eastern border of Poland, and we were hoping the German will never get there. So that was kind of escape from the -- western part of Poland where we lived.

Q: What can you tell us about your paternal grandparents, your father's parents?

A: My father's parents came from Nowy Sacz. My mother -- my grandmother's name was Deborah Shtand, and father was Sim -- Simhar Kleinman. My father -- my grandfather was Simhar Kleinman, they have four children; one son, which was my father, and three daughters. And they've had a lot of connection with Austria, they had family in Austria, in Vienna. And they practically spoke German. Yeah, because it was kind of -- but of course, we spoke Polish. My grandfather used to have brick plant in Nowy Sacz, and he was very well off.

Q: So on one side they -- the grandparents spoke Russian, and on the other side German?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what were the first languages of your mother and father?

A: My mother actually spoke Polish with an accent, but my father spoke fluent -- fluent Polish and fluent German. My first language was Polish. Yes, I spoke Polish.

Q: But your mother's first language had been Russian?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Did anyone speak Yiddish at home?

A: No. Probably my mother family more than my father fam -- my father family, they didn't speak Yiddish at all. They were very assimilated, my father family. My mother family was not. But they were not, you know, [indecipherable] people, they were traditional. My grandfather was si -- h-his business was he was renting e -- the properties from the Polish nobles in eastern part of Poland, and he was running those properties, giving them money, you know, because he used to always [indecipherable] those are nobles, and that was he was doing.

Q: They were farms, sort of, or just --

A: Probably far -- I don't know, probably farms --

Q: Okay.

A: -- probably farms. I really know very little because he die when I was five years old. So I know they lost a lot of money during the revolution, Russian revolution, that when my mother used to talk about, but --

Q: Can you remember what your grandparent's home was like in Pinsk when you were little, but -- but not -- not during the war, when you were little.

A: I was only -- the first time I went to Pinsk was just 1939.

Q: Uh-huh. Okay.

A: But they had a home, it was a big house, of which there was old-fashioned furniture and my grandmother was renting part of the house to someone, to the family, Polish family. And she lived in two rooms, and what I remember also that it was novelty for me that it was one big stove and it was in the corner. So when you put fire on one side, the other room was warm as well,

Now everyth -- it was in the corner, so -- so four rooms were heated by one big fireplace, and was kind of a novelty for me.

Q: Tell us about her. You mentioned that she came to visit you when you were a little girl, not that you went so much before 1939.

A: Yes, she used to be in our house every d -- every summer, and she used to bring her own dishes because she was kosher. Ye -- and she -- so we -- she didn't eat from my mother kitchen. But she was very mild, she was kind of you know, very sweet old lady.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't remember -- I -- I really loved her dearly because she was unpretentious and very simple woman, very sweet, sweet lady. That what I remember about her.

Q: Di-Did that bother your mother that she wouldn't eat from your table, was --

A: No, no.

Q: -- that be a friction? No.

A: That was th -- no, that was kind of joke at home, everybody was laughing, but don't bother her at all, you know. She used to store her dishes always in the attic, so when she used to come in she had to take them out because she didn't believe my mother didn't wash them properly. But she was very unpretentious, she had one glass plate, and it was made out of glass because that -- she could use for both, you know, meat and milk. And he -- that what I remember, really.

Q: Did you ever visit your father's grandparents?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Tell us about that.

A: They live in Nowy Sacz and they were very kind of society people. Well dressed and well spoken and I had to behave when I was in their house. And I was quite often in their house, of course. Always I had to behave.

Q: Uh-huh. Was that hard, or were you a sort of rambunctious little girl?

A: Not really because that how it was, so I knew my place. You know, we -- in -- if -- on that time, children didn't have to have -- any rights whatsoever. It's not like today my kids. It's -- you know, for instance, when older people used to visit, I used to come and say hi, and I had to leave the room. It was no place for me with older people. I couldn't hang around with -- with my father friends. But I had -- I was so -- obliged to come in and introduce myself or -- or just say hi. And that was the story, it was very rigid discipline in our home, even when I was only child.

Q: Tell us what you remember about your home. What -- what did it look like?

A: Well --

Q: And when -- and -- and how did you get from -- you were born in Kraków, but you lived in another place. Tell us about that.

A: Well, my father was a medical doctor and apparently -- and he had his training in hospital in Kraków, but I never really lived in Kraków, I was only born there. And we live in this small, charming little village near Nowy Sacz, which was in -- they have like 200 people of Jewish population, and I don't think they have more than a thousand people in the entire village. And that was in Carpathian mountains, stuck between, you know, in the valley between mountains, and -- very beautiful place. And my father bought his practice that -- our doctor who died. He was Polish doctor and his family stayed in this place, and my parents were very friendly with the -- with this [indiscernible] and her daughter. And he -- these two women, they were teachers in school -- in the school. I don't remember how many classes, I think only five classes were in the school. Finally --

five grades. Maybe more, I don't know. I went to first grade, and she was my teacher. And the population was mostly Polish farmers, and it was also priest, who was my father's friend, and the lawyer who came from this region, he used to have a law firm in New York -- in Nowy Sacz, and he was my father's friend. And it was always crowd of guests and people coming to our -- for vacation, for longer stay, for skiing because it was a good skiing in the area. And my parents were extremely social, and social life was very important.

Q: Tell us the name of the town.

A: Wanska. Wanska Nadunietsin. It was the -- on the Dunajec river, between Nowy Sacz and Starzenice, Starzenice was the resort town. It's a beautiful, beautiful place. My parents used to go hiking and -- and used to, I remember, on the carnival season, my mother used to bring those balloons and stuff and hang on my -- from the parties that used to attend. They had very, very social life. To restaurant in the nearby region. My -- my father had a good practice, and he was very much liked by local people. He also had the patients which couldn't pay, and he -- he was always working for government, so as regional doctor he was paid for certain [indecipherable] probably patient that couldn't pay.

Q: He was working for the Polish government?

A: For the --

Q: For the regional government.

A: Regional government.

Q: Okay.

A: Regional government, yes. He was the -- I don't know -- regional doctor, that's what they call that.

Q: Can you talk a bit more about his standing in the community? You've described a small community, how did your father fit in as the -- the town doctor?

A: I -- it was in -- on that time in Poland it was big distance between peasants and -- and people which were educated. So they were all kind of lower -- lower class people that [indecipherable] you call, and he had commanded respect. I remember his patients waiting -- he had practice at home, it -- part of the house was clinic -- by the way, he bought an -- on '36, I think, he built the house for us, it was designed by his friend architect, and it was a really beautiful house. It was never fully furnished, because war started. And he -- so people were [indecipherable] he -- kissing his, you know, bending and -- and grabbing his feet, or kissing his hand. Now, that kind of relation between poor and -- and whoever gave them help, it always amazed me [indecipherable] because all my friends were the village children. I used to run with them, I used to eat in their houses. And I didn't realize that actually they did it because they needed my father. So my -- I rather assoc -- associate myself with all those kids. We had fun climbing the trees, you know, and --

Q: When you had talked about your father getting together with the priest, can you talk a little bit more about that?

A: Oh yes, the local priest, which was [speaks Polish here] used to call him, he was a big friend of my parents. And my father was playing bridge, there used to be evening bridge with the priest, and the police, the commandant of local police, Mr. Polovich, and he -- the pharmacist, that was a bridge party. And he -- probably they -- they used to drink as well, because drinking in Poland was one of the social events. And he -- and also he had the friends around, you know, some people living in the estates, which my father probably treated, and they befriend him, the Polish people. He had friends, he -- we were extremely assimilated. I knew I am Jewish, but wa -- I

never went to synagogue. My parents never observe any holidays, except my mother, probably from [indecipherable] she never ate on the Yom Kippur, that's -- she only drank tea, I tho -- tea with milk, that was her way of celebrating. But my father family was to-totally unobservant. But he -- my grandfather was Zionist, and we have this little box of [speaks Polish here] we should bring, with money to b-buy land in Palestine.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: So that was something that --

Q: S-So they didn't observe holidays, or was there anything special about Friday in your home?

A: No, no, no. On weeke -- on Fridays, on Saturdays, on Sundays, my parents usually took off. They went to friends and -- and they have friends, they have a lot of Polish friends, and a lot of Jewish friends, mostly doctors or lawyers, and he -- from Nowy Sacz, or -- or from Starzenice, or those nearby places, larger cities.

Q: In general, what ca -- in general, can you tell us more about the atmosphere in the town? Was that normal for Jews and non-Jews to be so friendly, or do you think it was particularly your father was very comfortable --

A: No, it was my father who was the -- actually, because in this town was -- is small Jewish population, which is actually large -- large Jewish population for the size of town. And they were mostly very religious. They used to walk in those, you know, dress, headdresses, and -- but we had nothing -- at least I don't remember, I never had anything in common with these people. It was the only place that my father -- mother used to go, they had some kind of restaurant, and every fr -- every Thursday, I think, they used to have the market. So from y -- on -- in the center of the town. So used to -- so people from nearby [indecipherable] or the merchant used to come and bring, you know, those goods. And was a big ma -- great big market and people were

making pots on the street, you know, and stuff like that. So -- and they were selling -- also, local people were selling stuff on this market. But the only people that my fr -- my mother used to go, it was the local store. Her name was Mrs. Horowicz, and she always bring the chair and my mother had to sit down, and she chat, and then she bought whatever she needed, and she used to go home. And the local little restaurant actually that was kind of in, when the peasants, whoever they sold the goods on the market used to drink, they live out of vodka, you know, and -- and this woman was very observant. And I call her [speaks Polish here] gran-grandmother Haija. And they used to go there, is always fascinated me. And on high holiday, where you didn't bring the bre -- eat the bread, I used to bring with my sandwich, and she didn't know how to get me out because I -- I was spoiling her holiday. And so the only family I remember that's from the town, but we had really nothing in common in -- except they were my pa -- father patients.

Q: I -- I don't know if -- how did you think about the observant Jews? Did you consider yourself a part of them in some way, or separate?

A: Totally separate.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It was like, you know, having some Muslim community here, and you don't belong there. That what I felt. It means -- I never thought about it. I f -- consider myself Polish. My father was a great Polish patriot, he was in Polish army when he was a young 18 years old boy, he escaped to Pulsudski legion, and he fought for independent and probably that why he had all those friends. And later on he graduate from Lvov, from university in Lvov, and then he went to Vienna, to the -- for his training and then he was in Kraków.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The only time that I remember really anti-Semite is just before war, that I faced that. My mother send me to Mrs. Horowicz to buy something, and it was a group of young boys, young people, in front of the store, and they didn't let me -- anybody -- get to the store, and they directed everybody to store -- Polish store which opened next door. So I was afraid and I went to this Polish store and I bought whatever it was. I was eight years old in that time. And when I bring it home, I told my mother what happened, I couldn't go to buy -- bought at this place, she asked me to return it. And maybe because my father has -- was -- had the standing, he -- and he asked me to go to Mrs. Horowicz, so I went, nobody touched me. But the first time I saw, you know, this -- I felt what happened, really. But he -- we were kind of protected in this town, and if you -- I really didn't feel anything because I was not privileged to -- nobody really told me anything. I felt extremely secure, and extremely important because my father. That's --

Q: Tell us what your parents taught you about faith, or God.

A: Nothing.

Q: Nothing.

A: It was no discussion in our house about faith and God. That was for -- I don't know. It was nothing against and nothing for. The first -- actually the first time I was taught about faith, when I was with nuns. And maybe because of my training, I was not really very convinced. I was baptized, and se -- I was taught all those religious, you know, everything about Catholic religion, and I know -- I know til today, and I went to Communion, and -- but I -- it was kind of, you know, very superficial. I was never very convinced, I was -- what my pa -- fa -- my parents used to, what I heard at home, that is not really important because you need to be moral [indecipherable] it is something that you have to face. And faith was something that everybody

was privileged to do whatever. They didn't -- they were not [indecipherable] fighting [indecipherable] but it was total freedom of your thinking.

Q: Can you talk a little bit more about that, that your parents said you had to be moral inside, so they -- they really were talking to you about really core values, but in a different way.

A: Yeah, oh yes, I was taught values. People don't do that [indecipherable] used to say. And I had to -- I knew exactly what is right, what is wrong. It was very strongly defined in our family, that you don't do certain things, you have to -- you know better. So I was taught -- I saw it in my family that there were certain thing that we don't do. You don't lie, you don't steal, you don't -- you have to be helpful, you need to be -- you n-need to give, you cannot be selfish. That what we were taught. You have, for instance, you know, what every child in probably Europe on that time was taught, that if you see the older person, you have to stand up and give the place to the older person. You cannot [indecipherable] yourself. Is -- is no-no. You don't behave like that. You cannot steal, you cannot -- you know, you have to be consider.

Q: For example, how did your mother or father teach you about helping others?

A: I saw it because my father was helping. I used to go, when I was a little child, he had those patient in the mountains, he couldn't get -- reach them by car, so they used to bring is -- on the wintertime they used to send sleds, you know, and he used to take me with him to those houses. And people are so poor, you know. When I think about it today -- they live in the huts, and they didn't have glass in the windows, only skin from the animal skin, which was transparent. And they didn't have a floor, the floor was just, you know, earth, and some wooden chips. And they sleep in one room with the animals, because is -- was warm, and these people were -- were so poor. He used to leave money to -- for -- to these people for the i -- because they couldn't buy medicine. That why they kissed his hands, you know, and he -- they were extremely, extremely

poor people. In this region, I think it were -- they were the poorest people in the po -- in Poland. And they very nice people, except they drunk a lot. I remember also that e -- when they have weddings. After wedding, my father used to have a lot of patients ti -- with knife si -- which were stabbed, al -- wo-wounds, you know. The -- the one family rebel another -- 'nother family, and so he used to have all those bloodiest people, they killed themselves, they -- they stabbed themselves. They were mostly uneducated, they couldn't read and write. They didn't have electricity.

Q: Back to the being moral inside, something your father and mother said to you, when you returned the -- the grocery item back to the Polish store and went to the Jewish store, Mrs. Horowicz, when you came home, did they talk to you about that?

A: No. It was done. No, I had to do what was right, and it was done. My parents didn't talk very much to me, you know, it was kind of -- they expect from me. They -- and now is not like today, you talk to children, you explain to children, no. You just -- she told me it's not right, you have to buy from Mr. hor -- nobody can force you. And you have to go and return it, and you go and buy from Mr. Horowicz, you cannot be afraid. And I was afraid. It was the first time, actually, when I -- and later on when we already left the -- during the war, went to Pinsk, and Russians came to Pinsk, that was a first -- you know, this region of Poland was occupied by Russian.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then I went to school, and suddenly I was between the normal kids, and then I learn who I am, you know, because they call me mountain Jew, I remember. I spoke with a different accent, I wa -- I had this accent of the village. And he -- in Pinsk, people, they spoke with Russian accent, with this different accent. So they call me mountain Jew, and he -- then I learned who I am.

Q: What would they -- ho-how would they say that in Polish?

A: [speaks Polish here]

Q: Oh. Can you tell us about school in the little town you grew up in? You said you went to first grade, t-tell us what that was like.

A: Oh, that was great, because see, Mrs. Holibook was my fi -- both my teacher and she was great friend of my family, so I was very privilege in this school. But she was demanding, you know, I remember I -- I have a problem writing, we used to write like entire line that would write m, n, n, whatever. And I couldn't write this a properly. And I had a lot of problems because she called my father and he -- she talked to him because the phones were -- we used to have phone number one, and if you call, you -- you turn your phone, and then you con -- and we were connected to post office, and the post office connect us to whoever had the phones around. And phone number one, number one [indecipherable] of my father, it's very funny. So I was disciplined, I -- I didn't have any privileges because they expect me to be better than everybody else, and I was not.

Q: How were you disciplined?

A: I was not -- not allowed to go out. I was yell upon. I -- well, they even spanked me. It was normal. Today if I would spank my daughter, she -- she probably would call police. But on that time was normal, and they used to spank me.

Q: An -- bi -- di -- tell us, is -- is there more you can tell us about school?

A: I remember very little about the school. I -- they were -- they were mixed children. The Jewish children used to go to cheder -- to Hebrew, to Jewish school, but there were some in our class. And I really cannot remember the names.

Q: So you, when you were growing up before the war, you only went to first grade? How far did you get?

A: Is -- second, second grade. Second grade.

Q: Tell us some about your friends then in your village, i-i-if -- if the friends at the school are not as prominent in your mind -- can you talk some about the friends that you grew up with?

A: Oh yes, it -- it was this boy, he was son of the policeman. It was family which lived downstairs when we lived in the up -- whenever we live in apartment. Then was Yerzhika Pelovich and his sister. And of course we play. And there were some village children, but I don't remember names at all, which we always play. It was a girl named Roma, I remember I used to play with her. And hi -- i-it's rather visually, I can visualize, you know, the place and faces of those kids, but I had quite a lot of village children that we used to play, and -- mostly boys. I don't know why gir -- what happened to girls.

Q: What would you do when you were playing?

A: Oh, we play in soldiers and si -- and robbers, and policemen, and -- and climb trees and ti -- I used to go -- summertime we used to go to the fields, where parents were working on the fields, and we used to horse around, you know, but was the -- some -- was kind of children play.

Wintertime we used to go skiing, everybody has homemade ski, I had the -- I was only one that was -- my parents bought me the ski. And everybody has kind of, you know, handmade skis.

Used to go to nearby a -- you know, hills, and ski down and --

Q: How would it work? You would just walk up the hill, put your skis on and come down?

A: No, we used to have those skis tied around the end, we used to go on the skis and -- and ski down. You have to struggle to go up. Nobody -- we used to go like one hour up and five minutes down.

Q: And -- and now you also lived near the river, ho -- would you ever go to the river by yourself, or who would you go with?

A: With my mother, she was the wonderful swimmer. But she -- because I was the only child, she never let me to go to the water, and I couldn't sw -- I cannot swim even today. I was petrify. Sh -- they kept me, you know, close to the river and I never really -- they never taught me how to swim. And I was -- it was a really dangerous river. Every year few people drowned. It was very s -- has very strong current, was coming from the mountains. And he -- was very wide in Wanska, it was one of the widest and deepest place. And she used to swim. She used to go and swim and he and her friend, daughter of Mrs. [indecipherable], they were -- and all our guests, who -- whoever could swim. I was not allowed, no, I was the only child.

Q: You talk about Wanska being a resort town, how so?

A: No, Wanska was not resort --

Q: No, okay.

A: -- nearby Starzenice was resort town.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Wanska was simple village, a lot of -- what they had over there, it was this priest who taught the farmers. He helped them to buy cherry trees and apple trees. And those apple trees were growing on -- on the hills, and doing very well. So they really live out a variety of apples and cherries. They used to farm. And the -- the were mostly farms. It was a poor area because they didn't have a land [indecipherable] mountains. But every little corner was just farmed. And they had the lambs, you know, and wool, and cows.

Q: Did you know the priest at all, you --

A: Oh yes. After the war when my father found me, he left me with the priest because he didn't know -- he went to look for most of the family. And so I live for several months on -- in his -- near the church, in his -- with him.

Q: Back in --

A: Back in '45.

Q: In -- in Wanska?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Ah. And again, the name of this priest?

A: Chance Putt. Stanislav Putt.

Q: So when you were a little girl living in Wanska, did you ever have occasion to go to the Catholic church?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Hm.

A: With our maid, Sunday. Sunday morning she used to take me, because my parents usually took off, and she couldn't leave me at home, so I used to go to church with her. And my parents didn't mind.

Q: What memories do you have of that?

A: Rather pleasant, you know, I listened to this priest talking to people. I even remember once when -- just before war, when he talk about arming themself. And he said, we don't have umbrella for rain. I remember the -- it's funny that I remember that kind of statement, that we don't have any umbrella to protect ourself. And -- but, you know, it was kind of fun. I didn't have any religious convicti -- convictions. It was not very important.

Q: What was the priest actually telling people to do?

A: To protect themself, to -- you know, to go to the army and to -- was just before war. E- Explain how important it is to fight the Germans.

Q: Did -- did your maid -- when she took you, did she explain anything about the service, or perhaps teach you how to cross yourself?

A: No, she was a very simple woman. Everybody crossed themselves, I could cross myself too, I know all the prayers. But they were -- they didn't have any meaning for me, you know, just -- everybody did it, so I did it too. Was kind of -- it was not deep, you know, religious conviction or anything like that. So when I was -- during the war, I really don't have any problem, because I did not have Jewish accent. I knew all the ritu -- rituals. So I -- I just could easil -- it's like, you know, acting on the stage.

Q: Where would your father and mother take off to every Sunday?

A: Oh, they went to [indecipherable] or they went to a restaurants, or they used to go hiking with friends. So they -- they had a lot of social arrangements, and they had to meet people. You know, this little town, Wanska was just -- my father used to work and probably they meet people that they felt comfortable with. They went to see family, my father had two sisters, and -- three sister, actually. So they always visit here or there. They went to Kraków quite often.

Q: C-Can you describe the house that your father built?

A: Oh yes, yes, it was really well design -- architecturally well designed house. The part of the house was his clinic. And then we have this wonderful living room with terrace leading upstairs, very modern house. And my grandfather, Donnik, gave him the building material so he didn't have to pay for it. It's a very well crafted house. Th-There were two story house, ground floor with the modern kitchen, with the place that we ate every day and then formal dining room and hall which was kind of family room and then living room separate. And I know that my grandfather gave him a gift of furniture to this living room, which were exported from Vienna, I think, from Austria.

Q: This is your father's father?

A: Yes.

Q: Who had the brick factory.

A: Yes.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And he -- they had my parents bedroom, which was next to my room. And it's two big terraces, you know, that we can -- I loved this house, it was -- and the huge, huge garden where my father planted apple trees, apple orchard. The garden used to go all the way down to the river. And he -- he had ros -- rose bushes, which he liked cultivate very much, so we had th-the roses. And in front he would -- he brought the gardener, and he had -- we have the big, we call it clump, it means the flower bed, and it looked like a star. And everything was se -- surrounded by high walls, so -- and I remember funny things. It was the -- we had a dog, which -- three dogs actually, one was on the -- all the time on the chain, and it supposed to be very bad dog, but I could reach him anyway. And this dog was -- once he got himself loose, and he jumped the fence, and he -- across the -- near the fence, it was a farmer who had the sheeps -- how you call sheep male, you know, the --

Q: A ram, or a -- ram?

A: Ram, ram.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: And he scared the ram, and the ram ran away and he hit he -- with head, our fence, and he die. So I remember confusion and the farmer run to my father because I don't know how much money the ram costs, and my father had to pay for this ram. So that was kind of event which stay in my mind.

Q: And your dog, what happened to your dog?

A: Nothing, he was chained back again.

Q: What kind of dog was he?

A: I think it was a mutt, but big one. His name was Aggo.

Q: Aggo. And there were two other dogs, smaller dogs that ran around?

A: And he had -- my father had the elder terrier, he -- that he bought in England, and he was with all the papers, you know, and he -- I had a-another mutt, which was little one, which my mother bought from the Gypsies, because there were plenty of Gypsies passing by. And they wanted to kill this dog because it was a litter -- they had the litter, and my mother caught them drowning those little dogs. So she save one, it was a little -- it was white with black eye. And she decided that he needs to be small. So we used to go to this grandmother [indecipherable] to her restaurant, and they gave him -- gave him alcohol to drink because he not supposed to -- have he -- he grew up --

Q: To stunt his growth?

A: Stunt his growth, I don't know where it came from, but he grew fast.

Q: And he was your dog?

A: And was my dog, yes, and his name was Jolie. Not more and not less. Not pretty.

Q: And was Aggo -- did you have that dog as a watch dog, or did he just end up being --

A: No, he suppose --

Q: -- he -- he was supposed to be a family dog.

A: -- no, no, he supposed to be watch dog.

Q: Oh, he was a watch dog.

A: No, he was a watch dog. Nobody bother with him. The family dog was the -- a [indecipherable] which was the -- my father dog, elder terrier, and my dog was Jolie, which used to go everywhere with me.

Q: And who was Aggo supposed to be watching out for? I mean, there was a lot of traffic.

A: The house.

Q: Okay. In case no one was there?

A: Well, he was -- he -- he had this chain on the wire, and at night he was release and he used to run around the house on the wire. So nobody could really approach the house. I don't know why, probably there were a lot thieves, I have no idea. The people were poor.

Q: Do you remember the address of the house?

A: [indecipherable] it was -- only name.

Q: What was the name?

A: Wanska [indecipherable] and Dr. Kleinman. That's how it was, everybody knew where to go. They didn't have -- I don't remember any street names. There are no -- there were some streets, but everything was -- probably there were numbers, house number. It's a good i -- I -- I don't remember. I have to go there and look today how it looks like.

Q: A-A-And did your parents entertain a lot? You talk about them going out a lot, did they have people in a lot?

A: Yes, yes. Yes, you can see on the pictures, you know, the -- the people used to come to our ho -- they invited family. My mother brother, who's studying to sle -- h-he was in medical school in Czechoslovakia, because he couldn't get to medical school in Poland, it was numerous clauses in Poland, so you could not get -- a Jew could not get -- go to university. So he and his friends studied in yugosl -- in Czechoslovakia. The second brother that my father had his -- he went to

France, and he study in Toulouse in France. And he stay there. And my uncle, when he graduated, got his diploma, was trying to get license in Poland, so he had to go back to university in Wilna and see -- verify his diploma. And he was -- on that time it was again riots against Jews on universities. And he was severely beaten, so he really never verify his diploma, only when germ -- when Russians came in, he could became medical doctor. But he never came back to Poland, he went to Russia. He never returned to Poland.

Q: Y-You talked about going places with your father on the sled to -- when he made his visits.

Was there anything special that you did with your mother besides the swimming?

A: Oh yes. She used to walk a lot, because she was watching her weight. So -- I was the thin one walking with her, because whenever we walked those kilometers to the next village, she visits the house of -- you know, of the farmer that she used to know. The -- the farmer used to bring eggs and butter that she -- she bought meat that she bought from farmers. And of course, they ask her to sit down, and it was this wonderful loaf of bread they took off, and wonderful butter and cheese, and she couldn't resist, so she ate. I was so tired I couldn't eat, so I used to be slim, while that poor mother of mine, she was always trying to exercise. She used to take me to -- she was pretty friendly, she knew some farmer wives, and e -- so I -- I went with her to many, many farmer houses. Otherwise, she was a busy at home, she ke -- kept perfect house, the cooking and shopping, and -- and she wrote me -- she used to read for me and she used to -- I used to read for her. But mostly, you know, reading and she used to may -- do lesson with me. She used to play with me, you know.

Q: She would do -- if you had lessons to do at night, like your homework, she would help you?

A: Yes. I had a lot of homework and she used to supervise, she didn't help me, but she supervise. Oh, I played piano, see, that was something too, which I had to play four hours a day

Q: Four hours?

A: Four hours practice, that my mother -- and I was dying. That was --

Q: How long did that go on?

A: About three years. And then was war, so I stopped. And after war I continue and it was not the same. And I really didn't have any talent, but I still can play, but you know [indecipherable]

Q: Can you talk a little bit about spending summers with your grandfather?

A: With my paternal grandfather, he had this brick factory, and they have a house built on the hill, in -- in -- near the factory. And the family used to go there on summertime, and my aunt who returned from Palestine with her little daughter, the daughter's name was Zula, and she -- they lived in the house. And the entire family used to come visit, and quite often they left me with my cousin and aunt, so we were just playing in this house. We used to go to brick plant, watch, you know, people doing the brick, it was mechanized brick plant. My grandfather came from Nowy Sacz, and he had this driver, he didn't have car, he has the horse and buggies, you know, the [speaks Polish here] we used to call that, and drive, and he -- horseman, every day used to bring him from Nowy Sacz to -- to the brick plant and -- so we -- we just spend some time with my grandparents. My grandmother quite often stay in the house of my aunt. It was kind of ples -- pleasant stay, I -- I liked to be -- to be there. I liked my aunt very much. She was sweet, sweet woman.

Q: And what was her name?

A: Regina, Regina Grosbatt.

Q: And her daughter was Zula?

A: Zula, yes. She l -- she -- she survived the war. Actually, the -- our housekeeper that work for my non, she saved Zula.

Q: Your non?

A: From my -- no, the housekeeper that worked for my aunt, she saved Zula during the war. She was staying -- she worked for Germans -- for German men who actually run the -- my grandfather brick factory for Germans. And she was housekeeper in his house, and he had the roo -- she had the room upstairs. So Zula stay in her room, and nobody knew that she is there. She was hiding her in her room, and there were children in the house. For two years. It was a brave thing to do.

End of Tape One

### Beginning Tape Two

Q: I want to shift now to find out when you began realizing that something was going on in Europe, perhaps the first time you heard about Hitler or any concerns people began having about Poland being safe.

A: Well, I don't know, I think when the -- '38, I know that my grandparents used to have Jews that were thrown out of Austria. There were a few Jews from Austria and they live in my grandparents house. And on that time was kind of atmosphere of fear, they talk about Hitler. I-I was eight years old, I was not really concern what's going on, but I learn that this -- you know, I knew that there are some changes. And I -- also I heard that my grandmother and grandfather family from Vienna left. My grandfather family -- grandmother family left to United States. By the way, they lived in Washington. And my grandfather brother, he escaped to Palestine and he lived in Jerusalem. So --

Q: What were the names of your grandfather's family who lived in Washington?

A: Amarcus Shtan, and his two daught -- one daughter and two sons. They are grown up with families already, you know, and e -- they live in Washington, D.C.. Probably they die already. I met them once when my father came here to visit, and he went to see his aunt, because -- and I know that my grandf -- mother, corresponded with his brother in Washington.

Q: And -- and where do these events fit with your experience going to the Horowicz grocery store? What -- what came first? The experience that you had at the grocery store, or hearing about these events? Do you remember?

A: And no -- no, Horowicz store was already just before war.

Q: Oh, okay. So -- so these --

A: Was later, yes.

Q: -- other -- these events were happening before?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: So we knew about, you know, the -- I heard about Hitler and -- and they were -- they were a lot of jokes about Hitler, you know, in Polish press, and they laugh, of he's a bastard and he's, you know [indecipherable] the way he talk, you know, he -- I remember I went once with my mother to movie and it was the chronicle on that time, we didn't have television. And they were showing Hitler talking, you know, and it was very funny the way he talk. Even today when you look at, you cannot imagine that somebody took him seriously.

Q: Do you remember hearing your parents talk about it at all?

A: Not really. I was never really privileged to sit next to -- you know, in the room when his fr -- the friends were talking, I was always sent out.

Q: And how were things going at home? What -- were your parents proceeding as normal? Were they just continuing to furnish the house for instance, and --

A: Yeah, yes. Life went like -- as normal. I remember it was the World Fair in the United States, just before war. I don't know it was '39 or '38, in New York, and my parents consider to go to World Fair, and they supposed to stay with grandmother. And in the last minute my mother decided that maybe we shouldn't go. They should take me and go. But it was -- I remember that they talk about it at home.

Q: And d-do you remember anything shifting in your town, in -- in Wanska in terms of -- anything other than the incident at the grocery store in terms of friends, and the way they treated you, or anything?

A: No, no, I didn't feel that myself. But it was the atmosphere of my -- at home my parents spoke about the raise of anti-Semitism. The -- they blamed the Polish government on that time for the raising this issue anti-Semitism. I -- I really don't know if they felt -- probably they did. I -- I didn't -- actually the first time I have this fear, when we had to leave the house. That was very traumatic for me, I know that, because we left and we didn't take anything, you know, just nothing. My mother packed all the suitcase and my father supposed to send stuff. And we really took nothing from the -- whatever I found later on, the priest and one woman went to the house and they took stuff from the house and hide it, so my mother porcelain, and crystals and -- and some, you know, other stuff which -- lin -- linen, you know, that was very important. That what she hides. And of course, it was returned to us after war.

Q: Go back to that day, or perhaps it was an evening when you went, what did your mother say, and what was going on in the house?

A: Well, she was very nervous. It was this nervousness in the house. And I don't know how they came to the decision, but they decide -- my moth -- my father was mobilized, he was going to the army. That -- what I remember, this huge, you know, sign on the wall, mobilization, it was a black -- big, black letters mobilization, mobilizatia. He -- and he -- so when they came home from school I saw e -- that my father uni -- army uniform was hang out, he was the [indecipherable] I don't know how i-it -- corf of -- m-medical cor --

Q: The medical corps.

A: Corp, yes, so it was -- uniform was hanging and see -- our maid was cleaning it of course, and pressing, and he used to go to army and on the same day he decided that my grandparents from Nowy Sacz, my aunt and her daughter, and my second aunt and her daughter from [indecipherable] from the -- was my father's sisters, we all have to go to Pinsk to my

grandmother, because it was German very close, Germany, they might cross the border, they already crossed Czechoslovakia -- to Czechoslovakia and we are leaving, to the end of the war, when d -- you know. Nobody expected they are going to capture entire Poland, you know, people -- so we left. We went to Nowy Sacz. My father took us by car to Nowy Sacz and he -- I stayed with my Aunt [indecipherable], which [indecipherable] and they packed quickly and we all went by train to Warsaw and from Warsaw to Pinsk. It was still before war.

Q: What it -- what -- do you remember what date this was, or have you been able to --

A: No.

Q: Is it after September first?

A: No, before.

Q: It's before.

A: Before, yes.

Q: So it's in August?

A: Probably.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Maybe few days before because when we came to Pinsk, maybe week later Russian army crossed the border.

Q: So this occurred even before Germany invaded Poland, but it was very near?

A: Days, days.

Q: Days.

A: Days, yes.

Q: And again, back to the house that your mother packed, were you allowed to take anything?

A: I didn't take anything. Absolutely nothing. She packed probably my things and I didn't even have a doll or anything, anything.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Somehow, I don't know if I miss anything, I don't -- I'm thinking about it. I-I think it's -- that was the -- that why I started to get afraid, you know? Now I miss more than before all that stuff, yes.

Q: Do you remember anything they told you?

A: No.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Sorry. I shouldn't feel sorry for myself, it's very fortunate.

Q: Was there anything else going on in your town that day?

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't -- I simply don't remember.

Q: And do you remember saying good-bye to your father?

A: No. No, I -- I just don't remember. I went with -- we all went -- oh, but I remember that in the train -- we were on the train and somebody make a comment about the Jews, and my aunt said, well, let's go to another compartment. And we just left to another compartment. That I remember, just now. The Jew are riding away, something like that.

Q: Did the train stop in Wanska?

A: No, no, it was no train in Wanska. Wanska didn't have anything except the poor roads, and river, you know.

Q: Ho-How -- where did you go to get the train?

A: To Nowy Sacz.

Q: Just --

A: Yeah. They had ra -- railroad station, we went to Kraków -- and actually to Warsaw, and we stay like one day. My mother's sister used to live in Warsaw, she moved from Krinice to Warsaw. Her husband was pharmacist and he -- we stay in her house, in her apartment, all of us in Warsaw one day and then we took train to Pinsk. And my grandmother prepare, you know, whatever room he -- sh-she had. So my grandparents live in one room, my aunt live in another room, and my mother and myself we live with grandmother in one room. So simply, she opened the house for the family.

Q: And what -- what were the trains like?

A: I think were Pullman's, nice trains, you know, with the --

Q: But were they -- were there -- was there a lot of activity on the trains at that point?

A: No, I don't so --

Q: Or did it feel pretty normal?

A: -- just normal -- pretty normal, yes. Probably it was, I have -- it was my first train ride in my life, so I don't know, I cannot compare anything. I never went by train anywhere.

Q: Do you know what triggered this decision? What triggered the decision to leave the house and the town?

A: Probably my mother didn't want to stay away from her family. Maybe she's -- felt safe, you know, away from German borders, and with her family. And maybe she convinced my grandparents that it is a good idea to just leave. A lot of people -- a lot of Jews on that time escape from that central Poland to eastern Poland in the -- hoping that Germans won't reach

them. And you know, it was already -- they already knew about the hay -- Hitler behavior toward Jews in Austria and in Germany. So Jews were just escaping.

Q: So how many were you altogether, when you were making the train ride from Warsaw?

A: It was my mother and myself, and one -- my aunt and her daughter, my grandfather and my grandmother and my second aunt and her daughter, because men went to the army.

Q: Right. Do you know where your father was going to when he was mobilized?

A: No, no, we knew that he is going to fight Germans, that what we knew, and he -- very short, I don't -- I cannot redefine how time on this moment, but he just came back, came to Pinsk, and he was in army uniform, extremely tired, with his medical bag. He escape because Russian captured his unit, and he escaped. If not, he would end up in Katyn.

Q: Where?

A: Katyn. Katyn was the place where Russian killed Polish officers. So he managed to -- you know, just to -- he decide -- he saw probably that war is over, army is being defeated, so it was not point for him to wait, and he decided to come to Pinsk. And it was -- I remember it was night when he came in, and h -- I couldn't recognize him, because he was so dirty, and he was unshaved, with this army uniform, the long coat. And Russian was there, so immediately some friends of my mother -- she had a lot of friends in Pinsk because she came from the town, gave him the suit. And he -- when he rested, my aunt -- my uncle, one that studied medicine in -- it was already Russian were there, so he was a doctor already, he arranged for him to work in clinic in hospital, so he went to work.

Q: In Pinsk?

A: In Pinsk. And Russian wanted everybody to get Russian passports, and my father was a great Polish patriot, and he would never take Russian passport, so he decided to go back to Germany --

to Germans. And my grandfather decided, well, Germans are cultured people, whatever they said about them is not true, I'm not going to deal with those Russian underdogs, we are going back.

So we [indecipherable] to go back to Nowy Sacz. And we didn't know that Russian are rounding these people and sending them to Siberia. So we started to hide from exportation in -- to Siberia, and we had to leave Pinsk, and we went to some small village, I don't remember the name, and later on through Lvov, and later on through Turka, where my father had cousin and her husband was a dentist and he knew Russian -- he was treating Russians and he arranged for a passport -- finally he -- they decided to take Russian passport to -- you know, to -- not to be sent to Siberia. I wish they would send us to Siberia.

Q: Now let me go back, you actually covered a lot of ground there. When you're in Pinsk, h-how long do you stay there?

A: I went to school over winter, so we stay probably til spring. Yeah, because I used to go to Russian school all that time.

Q: So maybe eight months, seven, eight months?

A: Maybe five --

Q: Five months.

A: -- six months, yes, something like that.

Q: And describe where you're living again. You're at your grandmother's house?

A: Yes, and later on we moved, and we live in our aun -- uncle house, in Lolla. My -- so we live --we -- they gave us one room and we live in this one room. We really --

Q: Who -- who lived in the one room?

A: Ma -- our family, my father, myself and my mother. We had -- we live in one room that they gave us. And he -- I don't think they wanted to stay in Pinsk because they never look for any

apartment. And I don't think in this point they have money. They didn't have any money to rent apartment, and --

Q: So you don't think when they were packing they were able to grab any money?

A: Maybe they had some, but you know, the money have changed, that they have Polish zloty, which was nothing. So the things that my mother used -- used to sell the jewelry, and -- to get some money. And then my father work, so he used to have whatever he could add.

Q: So your mother did bring some jewelry with her?

A: Yes.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I'm sure she di -- she did.

Q: Yes.

A: They had some dollars, I know that, they have some, they used to change -- but the Polish money was worthless. Whatever they had, it was nothing.

Q: And did you have any idea what was happening back in [indecipherable]?

A: No, no we didn't have any contact.

Q: Okay.

A: That was Germany, and it was no contact whatsoever.

Q: And so your father during this time -- well, first of all, how long had you been there before your father arrived?

A: Maybe a month.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Maybe -- maybe less, yeah.

Q: Did he -- did he say how he escaped from the s -- the Soviets?

A: Probably yes, but I don't know. Don't forget that I was not privileged to -- to grown up information.

Q: Okay.

A: I know that he escaped.

Q: Somehow he escaped.

A: Somehow he escaped, yes.

Q: And -- and once he was in Pinsk, was he worried that the Soviet army would find him?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Probably not. Didn't have any data about him, you know, that --

Q: No.

A: When the -- in the moment he was out of uniform, there were so many people, the only thing that he -- they -- they needed a registration, and they register to go back, so they knew that. Otherwise -- but there were so many refugees on that time. People from western part of Poland, tremendous amount of refugees. Even Polish people that escaped from Germans.

Q: And did you feel safe in Pinsk?

A: No. No. It's funny, you know, the moment we -- I left the house, I have this feeling that something is happening. Well, my safety was over, you know, that -- my family was in danger. We -- we didn't have home. My powerful father was nobody, you know, and my grandfather, who knew everybody was suddenly no one, and i-it -- it change. I think it was a time when I suddenly knew who I am, and we had contact only with Jews, we didn't have any more contact with these Polish people. With my mother family, and the friends that my -- my father used to meet, they were like him.

Q: Were there some people you tried to contact in Pinsk who were not Jews, who weren't ab -- who -- who chose not to see you?

A: I -- n -- well, no, not really, not really. I even didn't have any friends, except the children of my mother friends, which were Jews. It was quite a big Jewish population in Pinsk, it was practically a tremendous number of Jews living in Pinsk. And she had a lot of friends, because she used to go to school there, so she had -- and some of her friends came back, you know, escaped when they were -- they were in central Poland, they came back to Pinsk.

Q: How did the Jewish community in Pinsk treat you or accept you?

A: It was the chaos and fear. It was not a normal time. Nobody treat anybody, you know, the -- everybody tried to survive and to -- even people that lived there for -- they settle in Pinsk, they live in Pinsk, everybody was afraid. It was a big confusion what might happen, what will happen. The -- there were some number of people who were Communists, they were happy that Russian came, and -- I really don't know, it was -- that was our immigration, you know, we live in one room, we didn't have -- we didn't own anything. And then from Pinsk my parents decided to -- as I told you, we had to leave because we were rounded, and we didn't want to be sent to Siberia.

Q: I-I -- what -- what was the specific threat, were there actually round-ups going on?

A: Yes, yes, they be [indecipherable], which was the Russian unit, used to come to the houses, usually at night and take these people who didn't have the passport, they didn't have the papers, to the railroad station and pack them to the cars and ship them to Siberia.

Q: And what kind of passports did they need to have?

A: Russian. Russian passport, yes.

Q: And you had Polish passports at that point?

A: Well, we register to go back, so whoever register to go back was enemy of the state. So need to be -- they didn't want people to go back to Germans.

Q: Right.

A: They want them -- so they were sent to Siberia. Siberia was empty place, you know, [indecipherable]. That why you have those Jews which survive war in Russia. You were simply forcefully sent to Siberia.

Q: Was there debate within your family about this choice?

A: Yes, my mother was -- hated co -- Russians and Communists. Probably it was something that was left over from revolution, and she definitely didn't want to go to Siberia, it was kind of -- so they decided that is much better off -- nobody expected the German are going to kill people. It was beyond the imagination. So it was better to go back and stay, you know, in our place, to go to [indecipherable] and we had home, and house and friends.

Q: S-So when the round-ups started, how quickly did you go back, leave pink -- Pinsk?

A: I don't know, but suddenly we -- my father decided we have to move. And there was entire family, so first my aunt went through. I don't remember this name of this little town. And then she sent the messenger, some -- someone that we should all go -- come. So we came.

Q: To where?

A: To -- I think it was Yaroslow that's ti -- I don't know, I'm not sure the name of this town.

Q: Bu -- but it was -- it was --

A: Eastern part of Poland.

Q: Eastern part of Poland?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So you [indecipherable]

A: Toward Lvov.

Q: Toward Lvov?

A: To dista -- yes, and then we stayed near Lvov for awhile and my parents didn't feel that we can stay in Lvov. They didn't have anybody, you know, and friends. Then we went to Turka where my father cousin invited us and he -- well, we can -- we can arrange something for you.

Q: So at this point, who is traveling together?

A: My mother, myself and my father.

Q: [inaudible]

A: Yes. And my grandparents came later, and my aunt came later.

Q: And when -- tell us where Turka is, it's also known by two names? Turka and th --

A: Netstrian, yes.

Q: And then Turka.

A: Tor -- Turka Netstrian --

Q: Okay.

A: -- actually. That's full name. That was the place, little town, actually town near Druhobich Sember in eastern part of Poland. That was -- they were quite number of Jews living in Turka, and my father cousin was a dentist over there.

Q: And who was in control at that -- the Germans were in control?

A: No, Russians.

Q: Russians?

A: Russians.

Q: Oh, the Russians.

A: It's Russians -- it was still Russian --

Q: Oh, okay.

A: -- control, yes. So my -- they arrange for papers, my father started to work in hospital and see my -- the first -- we used to live with my father cousins. Later on my parents left -- rent a little apartment, like two rooms and kitchen, where we stay with -- entire family used to stay there, you know just those two rooms.

Q: What kind of papers did they arrange for?

A: Pa -- Russian passport.

Q: So why was it safer in Turka than Pinsk?

A: They cross in pi --

Q: I-If the Russians were in charge in both places?

A: Because probably in Pinsk, authority knew that we want to go back to i -- to -- you know, you couldn't arrange a passport any more, because they knew where we want to go back, so we were done of the -- we actually -- they actually looking for us to send us to Siberia. They didn't -- had our names. And in Turka it was a chaos, it was a war. A-Authority didn't know about it, so it was simpler to arrange papers in another place.

Q: You were more anonymous in other words.

A: Ano -- yes, exactly, exactly.

Q: So f -- a fer -- at first you and your father and mother arrived, and how -- when did other family members come and who came?

A: I don't remember the sequence, but everybody came. It means my father, two sister and parents. And two sister with husbands. Husbands already came and managed to come back from the war, you know, because Polish army was -- and it was another aunt, the youngest one, with her husband, but they decided to go to Romania. They felt that -- somebody told them -- they

didn't have any children, and they decided, well, we are going to Romania. And they survive in Romania. So they escaped through the border to Romania.

Q: Before we go on with Turka, did your family ever discuss leaving Poland altogether, and this would have been in maybe '38 or '39?

A: No. No, my father was -- my family was so patriotic Polish that all the -- the culture was Polish culture, you know, that was totally unthinkable that we can leave Poland. It was our country. My father fought in the war, and he fought for independent, and it was his language and his -- was his culture. And he had Polish friends and all others were just skunks, you know? But he consider Polish people extremely noble, and he -- he had friends from any, you know, layer of society, and he felt very, very liked, and so I don't think that with -- my mother maybe more than my father, but he definitely wouldn't leave Poland.

Q: So when the family first left Wanska, it -- it -- it wasn't so much that the family -- that your father felt that you and your mother would be in danger, it was just because of the war, per se --

A: Yes.

Q: -- not that -- that the Germans would come and then it would be followed by a Holocaust.

A: Well, nobody thought about Holocaust. The Holocaust was something that nobody consider. It -- that was very good example -- my grandfather, who was actually Austrian, he consider himself Austrian culture, you know. In Turka he was surrounded on the street. The German -- it was raining and German truck, big army truck was stuck in the mud. And so they rounded the Jews, mostly older Jews to lift this truck from the mud, and it was probably more game than they needed to lift this truck. And my f -- grandfather was around that, and he was always very well dressed, and -- and he had the medal from the first World War. And that he was privilege of even before, you know? So he went to this German, he showed him this cross that he had, and he said,

well I am Austrian, and I fought for Franz Joseph, or whoever it was, naively. And then this man -- he was beaten so badly that somebody brought him home, my father took him to hospital, and he actually didn't recover after that. He die later on, he had internal bleeding, I don't know if his [indecipherable] but -- and I remember him laying in bed, because we had only two rooms and kitchen, and he was -- it was funny, because he was -- how you call it? Crying and -- in Yiddish. He said [speaks Yiddish here]. Have me out of pain, or what have you.

Q: And did he d-die at home?

A: No, he die in hospital. My father arranged to take him to hospital and he died in hospital.

Q: And this was Simhar?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was his full name?

A: Simhar Kleinman.

Q: So even when people began to sense that none of the rules were the same any more, there was still the belief that some things were the same?

A: Yeah. Grand --

Q: Your grandfather felt that --

A: My father felt that that is the culture, you know, and he really, really liked the German culture. He considered them -- you know, he simply didn't believe that they can be cruel like that.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He considered them, like German themselves, superior probably. [indecipherable] superior. Some -- it was a family, they si -- when things were so bad it was -- I don't remember the name of these people, they have daughter my age and it was -- father was a doctor and his wife, they

decided to commit suicide, and they poisoned themselves, including the child over there. My father found them.

Q: And this was in Turka?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was that ever considered by your family?

A: I don't think so. There was such will to live, you know. We need to be probably depressed, tremendously depressed to try to take the life, now or never. Now, now or never, never. My mother was fighter. He would never consider to take her life.

Q: When you first got to Turka -- I wonder if we can go through some of the details, you said that the family arranged papers and then, can you talk a little bit about your father getting a job?

A: Yes, in the -- when he had those, you know, papers, he started to work in hospital, and he -- probably he was helped by his cousin and his connections. And he really befriended a lot of people in hospital. I even remember the director of hospital was -- that was Ukrainian town, too, quite a number of people were Ukrainian, there were Jewish Ukrainian and Polish people. And director of hospital, his name was Garbovsky, he was Ukrainian, was a -- and there were some Ukrainian doctors, and it was a Polish doctor, his name was Gibywa. Probably Gibywa is Lithuanian name probably was -- was -- was from Leepfa. And he became very close friend of my father. He was -- he didn't have family, he lived in hospital. His mother lived in town. And they -- they just -- just clicked, they became friends. My father -- there were number of Jewish doctors, there was Dr. Rebach, and doctor -- some invited my parents, you know, just to -- because they knew they didn't know people. And he was kind of like the --

Q: Was your father known as a Jewish doctor, or because of the Russian papers was he --

A: No, no, he was Jew.

Q: -- pretending to be something --

A: No, he was Jew.

Q: Okay.

A: He had papers --

Q: He was a Jew, he had his own name?

A: He had his own name --

Q: Okay.

A: -- he -- he simply had [indecipherable] papers, acquired papers, passport, yes, that's what they call. He -- so he -- finally -- we had a problem with food, food was so scarce, people used to be -- get hung -- be hungry and more and more and more, even Polish people. So the only way to have food was to buy them from farmers. And we didn't have too much money, or at least as much as my father earned. So my grandmother used to cut whatever pieces of fabric we had, and she was very handy. She used to crochet, and she -- and exchange, you know, whatever she sew, for food.

Q: This your maternal grandmother?

A: Fat -- no, my maternal grandmother stay in Pinsk.

Q: Oh, okay, this is your paternal --

A: Paternal grandmother, yes. She used to be very handy. And that a -- how we really survive.

And another source of food was sending me to the stores, a Polish stores, nobody really knew me in Turka, and was staying in the line, and buying this -- after f -- many hours, you get little loaf of bread, or some milk, or whatever was ration on that time. A -- another sort of food that was very important --

Q: At that point were you passing for Polish?

A: Yes.

Q: Ah.

A: Ah Jews in di -- veris -- well --

Q: So you wouldn't have -- if you were Jewish --

A: There was a Russian time, on the Russian time we didn't have this problem, but when German came to Turka, that where problem started.

Q: Okay.

A: In the Russian time my father worked freely, and food was available, and fe -- they did not prosecute Jews. So when German came -- oh, that was also -- before German came, when Russian decided was escape from German, he gra -- they grabbed my father to the army because they needed medical corps.

Q: Again?

A: Again. And he escaped again. He was like two weeks -- German came in and he was missing, so --

Q: Did you know where he was?

A: No, no. But the German defeated the -- the Russian units, and he managed to come back. So he came back and again he went to hospital, and they didn't care, they really like him, so that he work in hospital.

Q: He went to the same hospital?

A: This -- yes, it was only one hospital. It was outside the town and he -- it was one hospital building, that was it. It was a little town.

Q: Do you remember the name of the hospital?

A: Hospital. Just hospital, that's it. It's -- they didn't have any official name probably, because it was government hospital, it was paid by government. It was not private hospital.

Q: So you arrived in Turka in the spring of 1940?

A: '40 -- yes, in 1940. 1940.

Q: And then so from the -- from the spring of 1940 until the invasion of the Germans in 1941, being in Turka was -- was chaotic, you said, but it was okay?

A: It was okay. I went to school, and he -- the f -- life was normal, you know? We didn't have what we used to have, but we didn't feel any danger -- danger, or anything like that. It was shortage of food, everybody suffered, but life was kind of normal. We didn't feel in danger at all.

Q: Mm-hm, yeah. Were there -- in that period, were there ever any good times that you remember? Where you might have gone for a hike with your mother, or -- or thing -- a picnic or something like that?

A: No, no, no. We didn't have money. Everybody was preoccupied with other things. We had to survive. But I have some friends. I went to school, so I had friends. Ukrainian girl which I used to play and go to her house. And my cousin -- my cous -- my one year older than myself cousin, the dentist's son that I used to play with. And he -- no, it was kind of normal and pleasant, for me it was pleasant.

Q: And in -- in -- in school were you being taught in Russian?

A: That was Polish school, my mother send me to Polish school. It was Russian school and Polish school, so somehow I went to Polish school. They allowed to. We learn Russian. I don't remember anything, but we used to re -- write and read Russian, was Russian language mandatory. The school was Polish school.

Q: In -- what do you remember about the Germans invading?

A: Oh, I remember that because when -- then Russian grab my father and maybe few hours later, we had just period that nobody was in. No Russians, and no Germans, no Poles. It was empty. And then a Russian army invaded, and it was scary.

Q: The Russian army in --

A: No, in -- the German army. And was scary. They came with full power. You know, tanks and army and dogs and Gestapo immediately. It was very, very different. Russians were much more pleasant. They were not so powerful.

Q: And do you remember when it was that they invaded?

A: Was end -- end of '41.

Q: So it was winter?

A: Winter.

Q: December, maybe?

A: No, no, no. It was like -- don't remember. It was rather, end of summer. End of summer.

Q: And wer --

A: '42 I left home. Yes, it was kind of summer of '41.

Q: And you said they came with full power, how did you see it?

A: Oh, because my aunt live -- they had the house, a little house. It was very close to the train station, and when Russian left they -- they bombed the bridge. So bridge was not there, railroad bridge was. And they enter, you know, the main road, I think. It was just underneath the viaduct. So I remember when the -- those tanks, you know, they just passed by. And my cousin, myself -- my cousin Philip, that was the -- my uncle dentist' son, we of course went to watch, because the kids used to go and watch.

Q: Oh, y-you weren't just up above, you were in the crowds watching?

A: No, there was no crowd but on the side [indecipherable] on the road, the kids used to watch.

The kids are very curious, you know. They watch.

Q: [indecipherable] Can you tell me how things changed in Turka when the German arrived?

A: They -- actually they immediately started to terrorize Jews. The Gestapo became very active.

And I know that on that time there were some Jews from the Austria, temporary living, that they left in '39, living in Turka. And he -- things have changed, the Gestapo started terrorize people right away. And it was this -- I cannot tell you -- give you facts because I really don't remember -- I don't know, I didn't know. But it was this fear. They immediately rounded and took some men and send them to work, you know, to road work and mostly Jews, of course. I stopped going to school, school was not available. And he -- on that time we moved to the house, I told you that, my parent -- parents ran and in the house, it was small house, belong to the old Jew who live in one room. And one little apartment block was rented by family. I don't reme -- I even remember name, his name was Buchman. And that was elderly couple with a son. The son used to be the teacher in high school. And he was hiding, he didn't go out at all. He st -- was staying at home. We build in the basement, it was the -- the entrance to the house was the -- went through the kind of patio, cover the how you call that --

Q: Porch?

A: -- porch, we cover porch. And there was a basement and windows underneath the porch. And of course, house didn't have the bathrooms, you -- you went out -- outs -- the outside bathroom, which every family has a key from his own place. So we built in one -- one part of the basement was so well hidden that we really couldn't figure out what happened and so they built their own hiding place with the camouflage doors. They put shelves you know, and you could just move those shelves and open it [indecipherable] this room. And they had water in the place, and food

stored, some dry food. And it was kind of crawling space that you could get to the garden outside and escape. So they were talking about hiding.

Q: Who?

A: Those two families, my -- my parents and Buchman and this old man. That was common for this entire house. The German used to inspect the house, the Jewish houses and of course they raided them, they took whatever was -- had the value. So poor young Mr. Buchman used to stay always in this place because they were afraid they will grab him. They --

Q: Did they ever come to the house?

A: Oh yes, oh yes. They used to come to our house. It was funny thing because this Gestapo officer was -- I don't remember his name, I could still see his face, used to -- they used to come with the dogs and with his soldiers and himself. He, who had syphilis, and my father treated him. So he used to come, my father used to treat him. In one of the rooms he arrange his little office, and next day the same man with dogs officer used to come and take everything whatever we had. Of course, he didn't pay. And they were always looking for something which was hidden, so when -- by the way -- when they left, the house was totally disordered because they always suspected we might have a lot of money or whatever, jewelry. And was at least once a week. I don't know why they raided us all the time, probably some other people too. And also Buchmans, and also this man.

Q: So the young man, would he just be in hiding a lot of the time in anticipation of the raids?

A: No, he could escape really, when they were banging on the door.

Q: He would escape and then sneak into the basement hiding place?

A: It was the entrance inside the house to the basement.

Q: Did you ever hide there?

A: Once, once. It was terrible, I couldn't get to the basement, so I lay on the -- on those shelves.

But they didn't come. They were upstairs, they didn't come down.

Q: You just laid on those shelves trying to be flat?

A: Yeah.

Q: Why -- why did you hide that time?

A: ...It was the -- they used to call it the aktion that when they rounded Jews, and these -- or kill them, or si -- took them with their cart to the forest. Because on that time they did not really export anybody to concentration camp. Most of the time they used to take them to the -- to those big cars, we call them buda [indecipherable] the covered car. And they take them to the forest and they killed them in massive graves. And we already knew about it. There were -- a lot of people were swollen from hunger, begging for food. And you couldn't give them any food because it was what you need to survive. So when somebody told us it -- the German care -- buda is approaching, so everybody run to hide. And bu -- I don't know what really happened, how come I was along. And I know they went to this basement, and they couldn't open this door any more, and I didn't now want it. So I felt that I am so small and skinny, so I can fit on the shelf. They didn't come to our house. So, you know, we were lucky, but was first time I really escape --

End of Tape Two

### Beginning Tape Three

Q: Can you tell us more about how things were going in Turka when the Germans -- once the Germans arrived? You were no longer in school. Did the Germans create any laws that you had to obey?

A: Oh yes. First they started with the -- the armband with the blue star, David star. And I remember that we used to fabricate this at home. And it was -- my father found kind of plas -- Plexiglas, you know, the ple -- it was not plastic on that time, that we used to embroider star, but it has the -- it was small, so you could turn it around if you need it, and hide it. And that was very handy. When they caught you, the game was, oh, I didn't know it turned. I didn't wear it, from the first moment. I don't why I didn't, and nobody ever stopped me. But my mother used to wear that was made out of piece of fabric of this, you know, sle -- one which was made out of piece of Plexiglas. So we had s -- entire collection, and it was very important I remember, to have this star done very precise and right, you know. And then I learned how to make the triangle, which has same -- same lengths of arms, you know, so -- so e -- the second rule, which was the worse rule that I remember, was to cut the hair. The men had to shave the heads, and the women supposed to have hair which are only three centimeter. So my mother -- at the first she didn't cut my hair. I had braids, long braids, but I wear the scarf on my head, and my hair was -- so every Polish girl used to wear a scarf, so I look really like a Polish girl with my hair st -- hanging. And my fa -- my mother immediately made the permanent -- perm, you know, so it curls your hair, so she could have it longer, not three centimeter. And my aunts also, they all wear with curls. But that -- they were those terrible rules. And then you couldn't -- it was marshal law. You couldn't get out of the dark.

Q: Why didn't your mother cut your hair, wasn't she afraid not to?

A: She didn't want me to be marked. I don't know why. It was a wise decision. Also, I used to go and buy food for the family, and few people knew me. Really, one that knew me, really didn't care. So she was afraid, you know, the German way, you are marked right away. I don't really know, but I was very happy she didn't -- decided not to cut my hair. So I had this long hair which, I was unmarked, really.

Q: Y-You could pass for a Polish girl.?

A: I could pass for a Polish girl, Ukrainian girl. I was not -- also my behavior, you know, was not very Jewish, because I grew in the Polish community. My language was perfect, no accent whatsoever. So when I open my mouth, no I didn't -- I never spoke Yiddish, so I -- I didn't have any accent in my Polish language.

Q: Were you aware when you went out without the star and with your long braids, or your braids under a scarf that -- that you were passing for a non-Jewish?

A: I tried to think about it. I tried to believe that I am not pass -- I am passing, yes. I used to go to stores, for instance. I -- one of the doctors had friend who ran the milk -- how you call that? When they collect milk from --

Q: The dairy?

A: Dairy, dairy. And of course they took cream out of milk, and what was left is skim milk that nobody wanted. Course today everybody wants it. Nobody wants skim milk. So he arrange with this friend of his that I could come and collect the skim milk. So I was going there every day, and we had s-skim milk. My father -- my mother used to give it to Buchmans, and we drank as a water, which is probably very good. So that was my -- I used to stay in the long line, it was like - I started very in the -- early in the morning before store opened for bread, a loaf of bread, and it was only for Polish people. So I used to stay there, you know, and behave myself, that nobody in

anger will suddenly recognize me and point it out, or s -- throw me out. And I was lucky, I never had really problem.

Q: You said you were very aware, and you knew that you were passing, and that you tried to act a certain way. What was that way? I mean, when you were so young.

A: I tried to be unvis -- invisible. I tried not to -- to be very polite, very, you know, on the same time, try to be secure, to feel secure. I don't know really, it was kind of natural probably, cause I -- I don't know even if I act -- I try not to be afraid, that was the main thing, I try not to be afraid.

Q: And wa -- and was that something you figured out on your own --

A: No, it was --

Q: -- or had your mother or father told you?

A: No, it was kind of natural, I think. No, they never told me anything. No, we -- it was no discussion. I just felt it where I have my hair, and nobody really knows me in this town, and I can pray, I can cross myself, and it is totally natural, because I did it from childhood.

Q: At this point you're 10, maybe 11?

A: 10 - 10.

Q: 10.

A: 10.

Q: Okay.

A: 1940 - 1941, I was 11 in May.

Q: Did you ever go to the hospital where your father worked?

A: Oh yes. I went there every day because another source of food was whatever was left from my father. And he used to get -- he stay in hospital later actually permanently, because he took -- he -- he stay on call, covering the Ukrainians and Polish doctors. So he -- and actually, he lived

in the hospital. And he -- he used to get food and bread, and most important bread, and piece of meat. So I collected it every day, and I used to bring it home to my parents, because food was something -- we never -- the hunger is something that you have to experience to understand. When person is really, really hungry, and he -- we didn't have any water, you know, no oil. And piece of bread was something that you couldn't get. My mother used to get grain, buy grain from the peasants. And she used to grind it in the coffee mill, three or four, five times. And of course grain has the left over hot skin that was grinded and she used to bake with mayb -- with pe -- with the -- make flour like that, and she used to -- if she had egg, she added egg, but most of the time it was water and saccharine as a sweetener. And she used to bake on the plate kind of cookies, and yo -- if you ate these cookies, the -- this hard part of the grain sticks into your gums, and it was like ne -- they were like needles. And we used to spit that, you know, you ate that and you spit those pieces. And we used to call it pluey carli because you spit it. Pluey, it is to spit. And that was food that we had and the -- some soup. I used to go out to the fields and collect -- you know, it's funny how many field wheat is eatable, and is very good. So she used to make spinach out of certain -- o-of certain grasses, which I collected, it was kind of sweet. And she used to cook it, and s -- it was kind of spinach, with a little salt, a little bit sweetener, and we used to eat that. And of course we had the garden, little garden whenever was place around the house, that she planted. She liked to work in the garden when -- even before war, she always had a vegetable garden, she like gardening. She used to plant whatever seeds she could get, and we ate that. So food was something that you couldn't get. Meat was absolutely inaccessible.

Q: When you went to the hospital, did you have any interaction with people at the hospital?  
Nurses, doctors?

A: No, only this Dr. Gibywa was very gracious to me and he liked me, he was -- used to pick me up, you know, and I like him very much. He was very friendly with my father. And I used to know some Jewish doctors, which of course I used to say politely good morning, and they don't - - didn't talk to kids, you know, so -- and nurses, not really. And at the beginning I went through the main entrance, which had guard always. And later I discover the hole i-in the fence. Ho-Hospital, like everything in Poland was fence. So it was a big fence, and it was the hole under, so I used to go under in the -- through the hole, specially in the evening.

Q: Why did you change your [indecipherable]

A: I didn't want -- I was afraid of guard. I didn't want him to see me. I didn't want him to s -- to see me taking food. So -- and my fr -- room that doctors used to stay, that my father slept, it was a room with two beds, usually two doctors, a big cupboard, actually big closet was separate more than cabinets that you hang your -- usually was locked, everything had a lock, everything was locked in Poland. Apparently people were stealing stuff. So the key were you -- it was key to everything, to every little drawer had the key, you locked everything. And I used to knock to the window, it was pretty high, you know. Maybe it was not high, but I was small. Anyway, I had to step on something to knock to this window, to batter the window, and they used to pull me up, open the window and pull me up.

Q: Who pulled you up?

A: Dr. Gibywa, or my father, you know, when I knock. So, I didn't want to go through the corridors. And then -- oh, they used to lower, you know, the container with food or bread, usually there was paper bag that I took home. And --

Q: And people were waiting at home for the food?

A: Oh yes. Especially my grandmother, and my grandfather. They were first, the older in the family and that's -- they should have. They really couldn't eat this grass and s-stuff. My fath -- my grandfather had ulcer, you know, so he -- they were elderly people. And everybody had waited for food.

Q: Who was in the hospital? What kinds of patients were in the hospital? Were they German soldiers who'd been hurt?

A: No, no, the Polish people, Ukrainian from nearby villages. Some Jews from the town. The local population. It was --

Q: So this point it's --

A: -- yes --

Q: -- fairly normal.

A: -- it was a big outbreak of typhoid fever, because of hunger and dirt and the lice that everybody had. And so it was separate pavilion in hospital of typhoid fever. It was also [indecipherable] in winter, one winter I remember, the wolves came to the village and they bite some of the people. From the forests. There were big forests over there, and they had wild animals. And people develop distemper. And they br-brought to hospital. The first time I saw person with distemper, and on that time I stay overnight because fa -- my father was taking care of the infection -- infected -- nobody wants to go to infect [indecipherable] my father was one, and I saw the person with distemper, it was horrible. Horrible, like wild animal. The first time I saw it. But mostly typho -- typhoid fever, and my father was infected, too, he was sick with typhoid fever. I knew some nuns in -- the nurses were mostly Catholic nuns in this hospital. They were, you know, al-always walking with a white se -- dress -- had this dress, and they were nurses in the hospital. And they were very friendly with my father because when the Russians

were in, they really wanted to get rid of nuns. And my father suggested to this head nun that helped me later on, why didn't you just dress? Take off your dresses and dress normally, then they wouldn't even notice. So they did. And they liked him. They were very friendly with him. And he was always, you know, v -- working hard and very helpful and friendly. He -- he was liked, my father. He had this quality of the person that you like.

Q: At this point in Turka are -- what are your parents saying about how long you might stay there? Is there a feeling that that's a place that your -- the whole family will be able to stay for the war?

A: To the end of the war.

Q: Mm-hm. Oh, really?

A: Yes. All the time we secure. We didn't want to move. All the time my father work, and you know -- we were expecting that war will be over, we all are going to go back and life is going to be the same as before. But probably the human expectation. And that what I felt, that it was no -- it was no place to escape, you couldn't -- where could we go? We didn't have any money. No -- nobody wanted us.

Q: Some of the photographs in the collection that you donated to the museum are identified as the Turka ghetto. Now, is that where you lived, or wer -- later were there -- was there a [indecipherable]

A: No, I think that is a mistake. It was no ghetto in Turka. The Jews concentrated most -- together most of the time. If somebody had better apartment you had to move, to vacate this apartment to German, or to the kra -- Ukrainians or whoever. But it was no defined ghetto like -- in Turka like it was in Lvov, or in Warsaw. It was no really -- real gathering of Jews in one place. We had to move to the lesser pla -- apartment, or to one room only. Or they combined

families together. They have to vacate those villas, or houses, or apartments which were once for prominent people. But it was no ghetto in Turka.

Q: And so there was never one period where there was a big upheaval and people were moved here and there, wa -- it would just be one at a time, you have to move out of that apartment.

A: It was -- yes, yes.

Q: Okay [inaudible]

A: It was now -- the only time the German really terrorize, when they deported people. They used to catch men and take them to the camp, to work in camp. Later on every man wanted to go to work in camp because they felt it is a way to survive; they need me, so they are going to protect me. That was the feeling.

Q: What was your understanding of what the Germans were doing? At this point were y -- you hearing any inklings? Well, what was your understanding of what the Germans were doing with Jews? Were you hearing anything about other -- what was going on in other places?

A: Probably my parents did, because they were so much afraid of transportation. We heard -- later on I was, you know, the place was small, so I was more privileged to listen, they were talking about killing. We are afraid to be around it, we are afraid to being taken by train to -- it was the camp, th-they didn't know what exactly are doing in this camp, bel -- in Belzyce, that was the closest camp, and was only camp they kill, so they -- we were afraid to go to Belzyce. You have to completely give up all your property and go, and we didn't know what they are going to do with us. We knew about killings, they kill on the street. They kill, you know, they -- we knew about being taken to the car and driven, and they kill by gas, gassing people inside the car, we knew about those cars. But it was always somebody else, it was not us. Everybody wanted to protect, you know, his family and his life. And he -- it was so -- i -- I-I -- I think that it

was psychologically so horrible that they did. They simply immuned people by feeling sorry for other people. You were worrying about your own life, your -- your family, and was -- we knew about others, but nobody cry or feel sorry for them. It was one more day for us. And nobody really -- people used to escape, probably -- I want to survive. It was secrecy. If we had a hiding place, nobody knew about it. And we were afraid of Jewish, it -- it was Jewish police as well as, you know, the -- they had this Jewish police which supposed to deal along with Ukrainian and Germans, with the order, you know, whatever. So whenever was si -- they notified they have aktion that you have to pack 20 pounds and go to the train, the Jewish policemen used to go around and talk to Jews. And he -- they collected furs, every fur that you have, you should be giving to German because they were freezing on the eastern front. So they took fur from the coats, you know, every little girl had the fur collar, they took that and -- and the Jewish police -- police collected it. And they were obliged to point out who hide the fur, and they did. They did. And we hated Jewish police, you know, they considered them horrible people. But they were like e-every one of us.

Q: W-Was there a time that the Jewish police came for your mother's furs or your fur collar?

A: Well, it was the -- they came from house to house to let us know, and we all collected everything, and my father has the coat which was line -- it was fur, it was very elegant coat. And he gave it to Ukrainian doctor, and this man wear this coat, and every time I pass by, I saw my father coat, and I was wondering, is he going to give it back to us after the war. It was one that had friends, you know, in the da -- dairy place where he used to collect me, so he gave him his coat.

Q: When your grandfather was beaten and then died, did that shift anything in the family? Or how did that shift?

A: Not really. My grandmother was suddenly crying nonstop. And I don't know how the other people feel, but I was so angry with her. I felt that she disturbed the peace in the family. It was cruel of me. But you know, child doesn't -- I was very angry. I didn't feel sorry for her at all. And she cry for si -- weeks and weeks when she cry. I wanted her to stop. It was so much going on on that time that --

Q: W-Was the family able to have any sort of burial service?

A: It was something, but I was not there. I know they buried him in Jewish cemetery.

Q: Oh?

A: Yes. Yes, they -- he die in hospital, so he was buried, yes. I don't even know where is his grave, but probably my father knew.

Q: At this point di -- do you think that your mother and your father are making preparations in case something happens? Do you th -- do you know?

A: Well, I think they were trying to obtain the false papers. But I don't think they have any source that they could do it. And on this point they didn't yet. When things in 19 -- end of 1941, it was a really -- a t -- horrible -- the -- the German probably decided to get rid of Jews whatsoever. And the terror start -- was really unbearable. Every time they were rounding people on the streets they -- there were more and more killing, and e -- and there were two big aktions. They wanted to -- that everybody need to -- needed to report to railroad station with 20 kilograms, or whatever it is, for deportation. And every time -- probably some people went and were deported. But we always managed to get postponement, because my father was in hospital, and he -- so we stay. The family stay, the same [indecipherable] you know, the dentist, they stay. And he -- only in -- it was before cri -- after cris -- after Christmas or New Year, on fr -- '41 - '42, Christmas '41 and New Year '42 that it was this final aktion and he -- I remember the -- my

father was on the hospital on that time, and the po -- [indecipherable] Jewish policeman came over and talked to my mother. He -- I don't know if he was his patient, or he like him, or -- he gave -- tel -- he told her in secrecy that in the morning, early in the morning, go and hide, because Germans going to round everybody and that is end of us. And that was a time when my mother spoke to my grandmother, you know, and -- and Buchmans, and she send me at night, send me to hospital to notify my father that she doesn't know what to do, that we are going all to die. And that was a night that she really -- it was late, it was maybe one o'clock at night that I went. And I remember the day, it was seven of January, 1942, it was Ukrainian Christmas. Because they were walking, you know -- they had a tradition also in Poland, they walk with the star and with the -- with the Bethlehem marionet -- you know, little dolls and they go from house to house and they play and they get money for showing, you know, having the show, marionette show, the doll show. And they were still walking on -- those young, young people, on the roads. So when I run to hospital, I went through the fields to avoid them, to -- if -- I didn't want to meet everybody, I was afraid. And when I heard voices, I used to just lay down in the ditch. It was a road, and every road has a ditch for water. So I was just laying down in the ditch, waiting for them to pass by. And you feel like trying to go underground, you know, to the tunnel, to hide. And he -- of course, when I reached the hospital, the lights were on, so I had to really knock and Dr. Gibywa, that was the one that pull me up to the -- and she gave me this little bag to give it to my father, one that I found which had papers and money left over, his diploma, my birth certificate. The marriage license of my parents. The insurance policy from Italian, you know, insurance firm that my father took before war. She felt that it's very important, we have to have it after war. And -- and pictures. Were loose, you know.

Q: She put these in a bag, and locked the bag?

A: It was not a bag, it was like her cosmetic bag. It was like little -- little suitcase, leather, very heavy leather and had a very heavy lock. It was completely locked, and had the little handle, and the -- she always used to lock it, that was her safe. And she gave it to me, said give it to Father, because I don't know, they might steal it, they might take it. It was always hidden.

Q: Go back to before, when she sent you out and what -- what did she tell you was happening when she gave you the case and told you to go to the hospital?

A: She didn't tell me anything, I knew. I knew. She didn't have to explain anything. On that time I was, you know, I was privilege to all the discussions. I knew. We didn't talk about it. She said, just give it to your father, and be careful. And tell him what's happening.

Q: So you ran from the house, did you -- did you encounter anybody? Were you dodging -- you were dodging the young people --

A: I was -- no, I didn't, it was night, it was really nobody around. I was afraid of Germans, I was afraid of Ukrainian police, and I was afraid of the youngst -- young people that might spot me and really take me to Germans, so -- because we were not allowed to walk after dark.

Q: A-And once they pulled you up into the hospital, Dr. --

A: Gibywa.

Q: -- Gibywa pulled you up, what -- what happened then?

A: Well, he hide me. They knew already. They already knew, you know, the news were spread all over, probably somebody who was friendly with them notify. They knew, and he was very concerned, and he locked me in this big closet. So I -- and said, "Stay quietly here, I don't want you -- anybody to know you." And he went for my father, and then they went, and they -- when he came back, it was this nun who took me and she took me from this closet, and it was the bathroom, men bathroom. And one of the compartment was used for the other clean -- janitor

closet. So she opened this compartment, she had a key -- I told you, everything has a key. And she said to me, you have to sit on -- that was the -- no, lavatory over there, so she said, you have to pull your legs, and you have to sit there quietly because -- and I'm going to fetch you [indecipherable] and get some --

Q: So you were in a locked lavatory stall?

A: Yeah.

Q: With your legs pulled up?

A: With my legs pull up, and it was a little louver -- o-only on this stall, it was window above, but I couldn't raise the window, it was a louver outside, that I could see what's going on outside. But it was night, so I was sitting there, when s -- when I heard the door open, somebody went to use the lavatory, I used to pull my leg up, you know, and sit there and I was just sitting there, trying not to sleep, and trying not to -- til morning.

Q: So you would be in there and people -- men, came in and used the lavatory a few times?

A: Yeah, yes, yes, the patients, that was patient -- they didn't have -- they had only one place, you know, so the patient used the -- or they use the [indecipherable] or whatever, or they -- it was a man lavatory [indecipherable].

Q: And what was the name of the nun?

A: [indecipherable] Sister Jadwiga, I -- she was -- I don't really know, I -- I don't even know her last name. She was a older person, but she was the head nurse, she was a head nurse.

Q: Did your father come visit you?

A: No, no. Nobody. Nobody even -- it -- nobody visited me. I had to stay there and behave. But was the worse, it was already night, so probably three or four o'clock, and at six o'clock I heard the German cars, you know, those trucks, big trucks, you could hear that, and they have

[indecipherable] for I -- I was familiar with the sound of those trucks, and dogs and Germans shouting, and Ukrainian police, and so I looks through the louver, and they were on the yar -- on the hospital grounds, and yelling and shouting, and they knock to the -- they have the main entrance, which was always locked, everything was locked in Poland, you know. So they open -- the doorman opened this door, and they run upstairs and to get all the Jews out. So I saw those patients, some on the -- they were taking and loading them to the truck.

Q: On stretchers? Laying down?

A: Some on stretchers, some si -- you know, in the gowns, undress, in the gowns, sick people, loading them to the truck. And infectious one they used to kill and throw on the truck. And then I saw some -- Dr. Rebach was a Jewish with a white coat, he was loaded, and my father was loaded to the truck. And, you know, some nurses which were helps -- people working with Jews were on the truck. And apparently somebody called this doctor, what was his name? I s -- Garbovsky, so he came from the house, and Dr. Gibywa was standing and talking to Germans and -- and when this director hospital came, they unloaded doctors. So I saw my father -- because on this point I wanted to go, I didn't want to stay there, I wanted to be with him. I was afraid to be completely alone. So they unloaded the doctors, and I saw, you know, let them know -- apparently he said he doesn't have doctors, it's a typhoid fever, he needs to have doctors. If not it will be total disas -- so they unloaded.

Q: And you saw that?

A: I saw that, yes. And it's funny, you know, you [indecipherable] things, and you know you don't and you are totally helpless, and you are afraid, and you don't want to be a hero, and you're trying to just hide.

Q: But were you considering leaving and running down there?

A: Yes, I couldn't. The door was lo -- I -- I did consider it.

Q: I believe you.

A: I couldn't. I wanted, and I was afraid. I was there and they -- I was petrified what will happen to me.

Q: So how long was it before someone came to --

A: When that was over, she came and she took me from this place. And she hide me in one room which was empty, she put me to the beds. And later on she locked me in another closet, and then I was in the basement. And then I was on -- on the attic. Every time she used to take me some other place, you know, and -- and finally, after week or two -- I haven't seen my father at all, and [indecipherable] Dr. Gibywa, she used to take care of, she used to hide me. And he -- then one day she took me to the tower and I stay in the nun's apartment. And also I stay in the clo -- I was not allowed to walk, because they could hear the steps, and to make sure that I won't walk, she locked me in the closet again. So I was staying there til she comes back and --

Q: You would be in a -- a dark closet all day?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What did you -- what did you do?

A: Nothing. You are numb, nothing. In evening she used to come back and you know, [indecipherable] and s -- nuns that used to live with her, we both knew. And then maybe -- I don't know how long it was, it was -- my time was just -- when things were quiet -- I was told that my mother is fine and my father is fine, my grandmother is fine and I shouldn't worry. That I was told. And he -- one day she -- it's -- she came and she took me to railroad station, there was evening train to Lvov.

Q: This is Sister Jadwiga?

A: Yeah. And Sister Blanche waited for me on the railroad station, a second, another one that I didn't know. And she was such a sweet, young, with smiling face, and I feel very comfortable. Before they took me, they braid my hair differently, they dress me differently in poor, you know, long skirt, because I used to wear those short coat and they gave me diff -- dress me differently, and she gave me prayer book to my -- you know, to my little bag, and she -- and rosary, and I -- probably she had some papers for me too. And I went with her with -- to Lvov, and nobody really bother us on the way at all.

Q: But before that, that -- I had understood that at some point when you were staying in the apartment with Sister Jadwiga, was she teaching you something?

A: Yes. She was teaching me prayers, which I knew, practically, and she was si -- talking to a [indecipherable] she was ta -- teaching me who I am, my new name, where I was born, my mother maiden name. And that was kind of -- she -- she used to do that every day, I had to repeat that and tell her and she used to wake me up, what's your name? To make sure that I really know.

Q: D-Do you remember?

A: Yes. Marisha Borofska. I was born on 29 of different -- February 1929. [indecipherable] and my mother was Laguinsky, and father -- and my father left her, she -- she die and sh -- he die and she die and I don't know anything about the family. That's it. And I was in orphanage.

Q: So what -- you would get up in the morning and she would make you recite prayers in front of her?

A: No, not prayers, because --

Q: Okay.

A: -- I knew prayers, but I have to give my immediate who are you, what's your name, just to make sure that I really know what is my name, that I won't hesitate.

Q: So she was teaching you your new identity?

A: My new i -- identity, yes. She wanted to make sure that I am not going to hesitate.

Q: And did your father come visit you at all?

A: No, no. In that point I haven't seen my father and I never saw my mother again. Yeah.

Q: Do you know if your mother knew what was happening?

A: Yes. She knew because they even knew where I am even I was in Wamina, because she used to send me, though the nuns, she used to send me some cookies that she bake. It must be -- I don't know how much she paid [indecipherable] to cook them, to do that. Or melted butter, I remember. You know, in the [indecipherable] she melted the butter, because it holds longer, and she send it to me. And of course, I couldn't have that, so sist -- Sister Sophia call me at night, late at night to her room and she used to give me piece of bread that she brought from her supper, and she put this butter on, and she said that's from -- from your mother. And I couldn't say to anyone, nothing. So she knew where I was, and she -- later on I met someone from Turka and the person said that my mother told everybody that I was killed, I was taken by Germans. So she didn't want anybody to know [indecipherable] question. And it was such obvious things, that nobody questioned. But what happened, when I arrived to Lvov, this Sister Blanche let me loose, she didn't want me -- she was afraid that I might -- somebody might see me. And to make long story short, this Ukrainian girl with her mother was on the railroad station in Lvov and they saw me, and they look at me, and I pretend that I don't know who they are. And they didn't even get close to me. But when they came back, the mother went to my mother and said, "Don't worry,

she's alive, I just saw her in Lvov." So -- but they didn't know, you know, I was alone because they ask me to leave station alone.

Q: I mean, your -- your father never came to you and said this is who's going to take care of you --

A: No.

Q: -- it was just th-the -- the nurse came and then another nun, and --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- you just trusted.

A: I had no choice. I knew that he -- that was arranged. I knew that. Without him, probably nobody would take care of me. But he didn't -- we didn't talk, y-you know, we didn't have any explain -- they never explain anything to me, it was like that to the end, when I was grown up. It -- we had to -- my father and myself, he expect me to know. It was -- he -- we never talk about personal things at all, it was absolutely obvious. There was no explanation whatsoever.

Q: Y -- you talked about the last time you saw your mother, from what you learned later, what happened to your mother? Did she stay in Turka for awhile, was she actually deported in the aktion?

A: No. When I -- when I left, I was totally [indecipherable]

Q: Yes.

A: I was not there. My parents tried to escape to Hungary. In Hungary apparently it was simpler to -- to stay alive, and probably they -- they knew somebody, I have no idea why to Hungary. And they left with widow of one of the doctors and her son. I was told that by her son. I don't know how true it is, but I met him in Germany later, after the war, and -- and he -- actually, he didn't know who I am. I remember him when I was a little girl, and he was like 20 on that time.

So when I introduce myself, suddenly he con -- I said, well, you know, I -- we used to escape with your mother and your father to Hungary. And I know they were escaping. And he told me story which shaked me. I have no idea if this true or not, but why should he lie? That they were escaping and they were caught by Hungarian patrol, border patrol. And they wanted to return them to Gestapo, to Germans. That was like death sentence. That my mother kneeled in front of these people and they told -- she told them, please don't do that, I have a daughter and she is waiting for me. And they let them go, but they had to return. So they went back to Turka. I-It was very close to Hungarian border. And he -- so he -- this man and his mother somehow were hidden and they survived the war. He's still alive, he's -- he lives in Germany. My father never mentioned that and I never talked to him about it. He didn't talk at all. Whatever --

Q: So he didn't tell you what happened?

A: No. When I ask him once, he said just, I don't want to talk about it. Is over. Is nothing to talk about, is over. So i-it was unsuccessful. So later on my father managed to find -- hide this place for his mother from aunt -- from my grandmother, and he -- papers for my mother that was sent from Lvov, and sh -- the only thing that she needed to reach the place. And on the way she was recognized by someone, or suspected by someone, we have -- we have no idea. And she was taken off the train in Druhobich and taken to the prison. And she insisted that is not true, that she's not Jewish, and she is so and so and so and so. And my father got news from Jewish committee over there that he -- they can arrange for her release if he pays so much money. So apparently my father sent the money. Somehow he managed to get bribe, but money was gone, but he was told he's too late. So we really didn't know what happened, if they killed her over there, or they send her to the camp, or -- but we know that she was -- she died. But all my aunts die. They were taken to concentration camp from Lvov, they went to Lvov. Their husband were

killed before. And two daughters, my -- each of -- we -- it was only single child in every family in our family. So one, Zula, that I mentioned to you, she was hidden by my grandmother and my aunt's maid. She was wonderful, and we -- we loved her, she was such a -- she like family member in our house, in their house. And second one, which was older, she was 18, and she was blonde with blue eyes, Irena Trepper was se -- somehow arranged for the papers and she went straight to Germans and she said she was to go to work in Germany because on that time Polish people used -- were taken for work in Germany, taught organization. So she went -- they sent her to Hamburg and she worked for German family as a maid. And these people loved her. I don't really know because she never talk about it, she lives in Israel, she's still there. And after war she decided not to go back to Poland, and she went through Cyprus to Palestine. She knew language, she used to go to Hebrew high school in Nowy Sacz, her father was a Zionist, but it was very important. She was not the religious [indecipherable] not the same, but they were determined to go to Palestine one day. That's what she did.

End of Tape Three

### Beginning Tape Four

Q: I want you to talk a bit about leaving Turka with Sister Jadwiga.

A: With Sister Blanche.

Q: Blanche. Tell us -- tell us that story. At this point you have gone home with the nurse from the Turka hospital. You've been given your life story, your false identity, and if you could just sort of walk us through what happens.

A: Well, she took me to Lvov, and they had hom. It means an orphanage near Lvov, on Korkova Street in Lvov. I -- I -- they had two orphanages, one on Swidova, and one on Korkova, and [indecipherable] which I went to. But it was this orphanage and he -- many children, we had the -- our bedrooms were like 20 beds in one bedroom, one next to another, the old s -- open space, big open space and beds. So I got to one of them, and he -- actually I didn't go to school at the -- what we did -- I don't even remember. We work in, you know, in the kitchen and I didn't go to school over there. It was some kind of fe -- they had some kind of activity. And I went -- I was there a very short time, because the first what happened, that somebody, one of the girls came to me and said, well you are Marisha Borofska, we had Marisha Borofska here. It was the name of the gir -- one of the girls, probably they pick out those papers which existed. So nuns got scared. So Sister Blanche came again. She was a courier actually. She used to bring children from those -- children with -- Polish children without the parents, orphans from the charitable organization to the orphanages. And probably they were paid by those organizations some money because you have to -- they didn't have money to -- to support those kids, but they really took care of those kids. So she came, and when she came back with the new papers, and she change my name to Marisha Vorshinska and she took me away from there to Wamina. And --

Q: Hm, one question. When the little girl said oh, we know maris -- Mariasa -- the first identity --

A: Marishka -- Mari --

Q: Did you -- did you sort of immediately run and tell the nun?

A: No, I didn't say anything.

Q: So -- so how did it sort of come out that this little girl was --

A: Apparently it came out.

Q: Okay.

A: Apparently it came out, because I didn't say anything, I didn't react it. I didn't know what to say. I didn't react it. And he -- probably they felt insecure. Later on the Mother Superior of this convent in -- she became Mother Superior of entire convent, you know, those nuns, Franciscan nuns, but in that time she was simply in charge, Mother in charge in the convent in Wamina. She knew -- actually, she was one that agree -- send -- send up [indecipherable] to take me. And he -- apparently she was -- it was just taking place for me, Lvov. But later, after war when I spoke to her, she said to me that in Lvov they were afraid to keep me because apparently they were in the middle of the town and they were simply afraid. So she decided to take me to Wamina. Wamina was close place, it was little Ukrainian village. The only Polish place was this monastery, and orphanage. And they have some fields and gardens and cows and the whole thing. They have a farm. The nuns were running this farm, which support them a little. But he -- I was really the first -- maybe not me, because it was another girl, she was the daughter of the judge from Sember or Druhobich, I don't know exactly. Her name was Ursula Piper. She was the Jewish girl, and she was very, very Semitic. Very dark, olive skin and very, very dark hair. So -- and I was actually the second Jewish girl that came to this place.

Q: This is in Wamina?

A: Wamina, yes. It was beginning on '42. It was somewhere in February '42.

Q: So you went from Turka to the second orphanage in the space of about a month?

A: Yes.

Q: In -- in Lvov, what do you -- why do you think the little girl said that, and if she was making noises, what was her --

A: No, because it was another girl by this name, that it was -- that once used to be in Lvov, and later on she would transfer somewhere else, so they remember that girl. No, she didn't try to -- she didn't have anything in mind except that it was another girl like that.

Q: When you were in Wamina, when you were introduced with your -- tell us about your new identity again. The second identity.

A: Well my -- second identity was ma -- Maria Vorshinska, and they call me Maryla because it was so many Marias that they have to change those Marias a little bit.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And when she brought me to Wamina, I felt very comfortable because they have the nun which was in charge in school and children, was the wonderful, wonderful person, Sophia -- Sister Sophia. She was full of talent, she was running the chorus, she play on organs, she dance, she organize theater. We -- you know, she was very artistic, and also she was tremendously good pedagogue. So everybody was in love with her. On the same time she -- everybody was afraid of her because she was very rigid. And she took me after -- under her wings. I don't know if she was -- felt pity for me, you know, and she was really extremely good to me. The -- years later when I met someone from Wamina, the girl says to me, oh you were the favorite of doct -- Sister Sophia, and I think I was. She really like me. It doesn't mean that sh -- I have any privilege, but I felt that she is really my friend, and I needed it. So I felt very, very comfortable about that. And I loved her, you know, I could kill for her. She was just wonderful person.

Q: You mentioned that one girl looked very Semitic, but did you think that she was Jewish, or perhaps even know that she was Jewish with you?

A: Oh, I could -- I took one look at her and I knew who she is. You know? You don't -- you just take one look at the person and you -- you know she is Jewish. It is a way I recognize others later on and I'm pretty sure they did, too.

Q: Recognize you?

A: Yeah. And we never talk about it. We never even get close one to another. It was something strange, you know, the danger.

Q: So you might feel fairly comfortable with the other girls, but if there was another Jewish girl in the group, you'd keep your distance?

A: I kept my distance. Yes, I kept my distance. So we -- we all did that.

Q: And would the nuns ever tell you that little girl over there is in the same situation as you? No.

A: No, no. No, there was no discussion whatsoever. Even nuns really, the only two that knew who we were, except some could suspect, because that was sus -- was Sophia and Blanche and Sister Budnofska which was the -- she made the decision whom she should take, she was authority in this place.

Q: Is Sister Blanche Blanka Pigwaska?

A: Pigwaska, yes.

Q: Yes.

A: Blanka Pigwaska.

Q: And she was the one who was very, very young and she was the courier?

A: Yes. She was a courier, she was a secretary, she was always -- she used to arrange money, you know, and she run errands and travel to Warsaw and -- and deal with authorities and she was

one which was representing. And she work for the mu -- superior, the Sister Superior which was in charge, and it was Sister Budnofska, Tekla Budnofska.

Q: Di -- di -- just -- so when you're in Wamina, the -- it's Sister Sophia and Sister Tekla Budnofska --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- who you're having the most contact with?

A: They knew exactly who I was, yes.

Q: Okay. And would they ever acknowledge it to you in the kind of maybe --

A: Yes, well, she used to give me news about my parents.

Q: Which one?

A: S-Sophia. Budnofska didn't talk to anybody, she was above everyone. We used to kiss her hands. You know, she was the --

Q: She was the Mother Superior.

A: -- Mother Superior, yes.

Q: Is it Sister Sophia then, who shared the butter with you?

A: Yes, yes, yes. I was very thin, and she used to bring soup from her supper, and I'm pretty sure they didn't have too much, and call me at night and ask me to eat her soup, extra food. I don't know, maybe she did it to others too, because everything was kind of secretive. But she used to feed me, you know, just because I was extremely, extremely thin. I have the -- it was a period of time that I have the lack of vitamins and food, so I develop boils all over my body including my face. Here, and nose, and -- of course I am not talking about lice and that stuff which live after this -- under the skin. It was horrible, it was horrible. And whenever I cut myself it was immediately boil, you know? So that was the -- probably lack of vitamins and I didn't have

anything at all for -- for awhile ye -- also. So it was -- in some times -- it was winter on '42 already, end of '42, when one day she walked me out and she -- I don't know what was first, when she told me about my mother when she die? No, that was first. She walked me out at night and she let me -- asked me to dress [indecipherable] and took me to the second -- the con -- it was church in the middle, school and girl's quarter was on one wing, and second wing was nun wings, and guest wings. So she took me to nun wings, and it was a tunnel underneath the church that you could -- in the basement that you could walk through. And she opened the door in one of the guest room and it was my father. Apparently he was sent by German with group of Jewish doctors to the nearby villages to immunize against typhoid fever, because it was again out -- outbreak of typhoid fever. And he managed to contact Sister Budnofska and she asked him to come. And he -- so he saw my boils and he gave me something, I think. They were suspecting that maybe I have syphilis or whatever, what the hell I [indecipherable] I had that stuff on my face. So she gave me some kind of medicine which I don't know it helped me, I don't remember. Finally it went away. But they fed me a little bit better so it went away. But I saw him on that time, and he -- later on in that morning I saw him in church. He probably -- and he -- I don't know how long he stayed. And wa -- what was the reason, but he was there.

Q: Tell us about that meeting, when you -- the door was opened and your father was there.

A: Yeah, and I didn't react. I didn't react at all. You know, you see those [indecipherable] kissing, no, I didn't react. Okay. Well, apparently he knew where I am, yes. And second experience I had, I think it was beginning '33 -- '43, I dreamt that my mother died. It's funny because I probably cry. And, you know, we have this big bedroom, 20 beds, you know, and so somebody, one of the children wake me up, and then s -- and I couldn't wake up. So when I wake up I saw Sister Sophia stand -- and it was night, and she took me away. And she told me that my

mother die, was killed. So they knew everything about the family, they follow it, you know, they were attached to.

Q: Going back to when -- when you did see your father and you didn't react, how long were you and your father together? And you --

A: Few hours.

Q: Eventually -- do you remember anything about what was spoken or --

A: No.

Q: -- what he said?

A: No. The Sister was -- were in the room, and you know, we didn't have any secrets with S-Sophia, and Superior, and later on I left and they still stayed, probably talk.

Q: Did he say anything to you about what was going on, or --

A: No. He asked me if I behave, he asked me to be a good girl. And Sister Superior complained that I am too daring, that I -- you know, when I -- we have these German inspections and -- and probably I was too visible, they should stay. And that was it.

Q: And then you saw him the next day in church, did you have any contact at all?

A: No, no, no, I pretend I don't know he was here. Cause we used to go to church every day for morning prayers, you know.

Q: So what was it like to have your father appear out of nowhere? Did it --

A: I don't know, I cannot -- I'm afraid to think back. I was numb. I didn't express any emotions or anything like that, I didn't cry. Now I am crying more than that. Now. Probably I was happy that he is fine, but -- it gave me certain security that he exist, you know. I didn't ask what happen with rest of family, nothing. I didn't know what to talk about.

Q: And is that how you normally were at the orphanage? Were you very quiet and numb?

A: Yes. Yes. One of the girls later on is -- much later told me that I was very reserved. You know, I didn't want to lie, so I didn't want to get close, really. I didn't want to talk about anything which personal. So we talk about, you know, everyday stuff, but I was not -- I couldn't -- I didn't want to tell them, you know, about family and stuff like that, so I was -- I never wanted to get close to anyone. I was kind of waiting. It was time when we had in -- we didn't go to s-school, school is in orphanage. They have certain classes, but priority was work. So whenever was a field work, we had to do that, the washing, you know, the laundry. It was done by girls, and there was plenty of, you know. And they were small, they used to have very small children, they wet beds, you know, so you have to wash every time all those huge sheets and -- and laundry was a good place to work because you got extra bread, and don't forget we were hungry, all of us, was no food. So -- and also I was older than my real age, my papers were that I am older, so I belong to older children. And also, older children used to hide when German came because they tried to take Polish children to work in Germany. So we used to hide, and we had this hiding place, they have a big [indecipherable] stage and under the stage it was the -- and we used to crowd there, and whenever was German inspection, we lay one and next to another in this little corner, which was invisible even if you light, and later on Sister Sophia used to go up and just knock, and everybody crawl out. And there were older children, Polish girls, and there were some -- not children, but youngsters, 18 years old that work at the orphanage, and they were hiding as well because nobody wanted to go to work in Germany. In -- so I was -- they ask us to -- every morning Sister Sophia used to either read names of girls which go to kitchen to peel potatoes, or they -- another group goes to the laundry, and another group goes to the garden, and another group cleans, you know, rooms, we have to -- they were parquet floors, that you have -- they a need -- needed to be absolutely, you know, shining, so that was a lot of work to --

to [indecipherable] you know, to -- to polish those floors. So there were groups working, depends how old you are, and -- and sh-she used to rotate those groups so not everybody -- so quite often I used to go to laundry, and was a great place because you have this extra bread with cheese, with bowl of cheese on top for -- for second breakfast. And of course I had to have a chair because I couldn't reach, you know, and you didn't have the washing machine, but you have to use those, you know, how you call that stuff?

Q: The washboard?

A: Washboards, yes. And I couldn't twist that. I was practically left handed, except that I was forced to work with my right hand, so I was twisting with left hand and the Sister in laundry used to say, "Maryla, don't twist like a Jew." Because it's different, left hand. It was the -- and I used to fake, because I couldn't get rid of those stains. So you wa -- that was a white laundry, you have to wash it, and then you -- she -- look at that, is absolutely [indecipherable] now you have to do it again. And then you -- they used to boil it, it was big boiler, and you used to -- and it boils, and after it was boiling, you wash it again, it was white. So I was waiting for her to turn so I could throw it into the boiler. And somehow I was pretty successful doing that. Probably somebody else di-did the same. Someone very strong and they washed well, and they were very proud of it. But -- and then we used to peel potatoes and work in the garden, and they didn't like it very much. And the fo -- on the fall we used to pick up potatoes, you have to -- in the field, that was very hard work, extremely hard. It was a machine that you have to go and pick up everything. Today probably people are leaving that stuff. And so we -- we work very hard, you know, in addition to goin -- going to school.

Q: A question about the ner -- the -- the nun who said don't twist like a Jew. Did she know that you were Jewish?

A: I don't think so. She wouldn't say that.

Q: And so how did you understand her comment?

A: I was afraid. I was afraid. But I -- even today I am doing it with left hand, I cannot do otherwise. And I didn't mention anything to the nuns. I felt that it's much better when I am going to be quiet.

Q: Do you think she was sending you a message?

A: I think so. You know, they were different people. The only thing they were -- kept extremely under control by Mother Superior, so they wouldn't do anything to -- you know, to misbehave, and they could be punished or sent away, you know, the -- it was tremendous power of Superior over the nuns.

Q: In the time that you were there, or in any of the different orphanages, was someone in hiding ever discovered?

A: No. No. And they were daring. On the end it was many, many Jewish children in this. She used to admit quite a lot. And not only older one, but also boys in orphanage, the small, little one, we used to call them [indecipherable] the little one, which were like two years old, three years old, there were some boys. And I -- when things were worse, I saw much more children. And we could recognize them, they were absolutely [indecipherable] different. And also the children my age, and older people -- younger, they came, it was several names that I can mention, were saved by those nuns. Later on --

Q: Do you want to mention those names?

A: Yes. The [indecipherable] it was a girl from -- probably older than I was, very smart, and definitely hiding. And it was Teresa Branoff, she came and she was shaved, you know, that -- and she -- probably -- she used to dance pretty, probably she used to go to ballet school when she

was a little girl. And it was the girl with a brother, a brother was a little one, and he sh -- her name was Kovalska, Teresa Kovalska. Let's see, Teresa Rogashinska, and few more girls. And I didn't know except wa -- oh, Janka Davidovich that I have still contact with her. Her name was on that time Markofska.

Q: The girl whose head was shaved, now what did people make of that?

A: Nothing.

Q: Didn't that just identify her as Jewish?

A: I knew. I don't know if the other people knew. She looked very well. She didn't look Jewish at all. But I knew. She's -- she lives in Poland, she stayed in Poland.

Q: Di-Did Sister Sophia or any of the nuns ever say anything to you about why they were doing what they were doing?

A: No. After war, Sister soph -- Tekla wrote -- well, I wa -- used to correspond with her, and this letter is amusing that she wrote me because I sent her a letter and I said, I don't know how I should thank you for what you did. And she send me a letter that she didn't do anything. That was her mission to do what she's supposed to do, and she was guided by God. And from her I thi -- I learned that was like fa -- 500 children saved by this -- not by her, but entire -- this nun organization. So -- and I also kn-knew some other people, it was the professor gynecology in [indecipherable], Professor Justaporsky who was save by them, and many, many people, I am pretty sure that they help my father as well, as much they could.

Q: You -- you called it a nun organization --

A: Those --

Q: -- was it a fra -- did it have a name? That -- it was a Franciscan --

A: Yes, they were Franciscan -- I think Polish [indecipherable] I don't know how to translate that. Franciscan order of -- Sister of Maria.

Q: Go ahead and say it in Polish also.

A: [speaks Polish here] -- I have mental block. I have mental block, yeah.

Q: If you think of it, just say it [indecipherable]

A: Yes, I will.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I know it by heart.

Q: Is the question about --

A: [speaks Polish here] now that's what is, yeah. [indecipherable]

Q: You described yourself as very reserved, afraid sometimes --

A: Well, I was conf -- constantly with the -- I was afraid. I had this -- I was numb. I couldn't express anything, I was afraid.

Q: W-Was there anything that you did for yourself, or in your mind, maybe late at night, in a way to kind of reassure yourself or reaffirm your own identity, who you were, Lidia, in -- anything that you did, in your mind I suppose it would have have to have been.

A: No, I don't think so. It was something probably that I behave like -- like -- like a moron sometime, because I was so uptight. Then, quite often, Sister Sophia, who was such a good friend of mine, she called me, Maria, you ha -- how you call the child of cow --

Q: A calf?

A: Calf.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You dumb calf, she used to call me. You know, this used to be the calf. In Polish it sounds horrible, you know. Maria [indecipherable] you si -- Maryla [indecipherable], you stupid calf. Because probably she wanted me to react somehow, and I wa -- had always delay reaction. And I know she was wonderful friend of mine, but even so, you know, she was -- she wanted to stimulate me somehow, and I couldn't.

Q: Did you sleep well?

A: Yeah. Oh yes. I was tired. Oh, I was overworked and tired, I could sleep anywhere.

Q: And wh -- how much did you think about your father or the rest of your family, your mother, until you knew?

A: I didn't really. I was hoping that I am going, when everything's over, I'm going to end up staying forever in -- over there, because all the children, you know, the -- they have, the Polish orphans, they didn't have parents, or they have dysfunctional family, or they were children they never had any parents. They're all orphans. And they were actually, as far as parents condition, they were in the same situation. And the way they raised those children, we didn't have -- they didn't have any vacation. So they supposed to be na -- nannies, or maids, cooks, or whatever, you know, the lowest of the lower. And actually, they -- most of them got education because of the Communistic parliament. You know, they -- they were taken away from them when Communists came in. And it was always freedom to get the communa -- education, that's actually what Communists did, to one that didn't have anything. So I didn't want to be a maid, and I didn't want to be -- so next step, if you learn a little bit, you could be a teacher. So when they ask what do you want to do, I always write I want to be a teacher. I don't know if I want -- probably not, but then I was thinking, what happened? Where I am going to go? I was sure that it is no Jew left in the world except this little, you know, clique that we are hidden. And I was not

sure of my parents. I knew my mother was -- die, and I didn't know anything about my grand -- the rest of the family. And I was sure that it was no Jew left in Poland, everybody was killed. And in Wamina, it was very close to Turka, and it was in the village, and there were big forests over there, and we heard those shots. They used to bring Jews and kill them, you know, they dig their own grave, and from the roof of the -- you could see, you know, this -- what is going on. Not close, was pretty far. And it was every day going on, and I was sure it's -- no one is left. So what I am going to do? I'm not going to be a Jew, I don't want to be a maid, I don't want to stay there. I didn't know what's -- what might happened. When even -- when we went to Warsaw already, during the Warsaw op -- uprising, Sister Sophia used to guard me against the -- they was -- they were underground Polish organization, and they organize hospital exactly, and [indecipherable] Jews to help him. And I was not allowed to show my face, but they were afraid that they might kill me. They were not Germans. But she asked me to stay in the basement. She arranged -- they arranged the little chapel in the basement and we used to pray 24 hours, you know, novena for the safe [indecipherable] from Warsaw because we were under shells, and i-it was horrible, horrible time, and the bombs, you know, Germany used to bombs, and American used to bombs, and everybody, you know, and we were there, you know, in the middle of this shooting. So i -- 24 hours somebody should pray, and I was one that it was 24 hours in the chapel.

Q: Now, I want to talk more about that, but just tell us how you went from Wamina to Warsaw, and apparently the -- the Germans were involved.

A: Yes, so one night, it was end of, I think '43, the Ukrainian band, you know, the troops, whoever it was, in [indecipherable] was name of the group, they invaded monastery, and they

wanted to -- they were after Polish people working for Germans to register cows and pigs. And so they were after these people, and of course they found them, they kill some of them.

Q: But just -- before you go on, th-th -- these people had been given the job of --

A: Going from the -- from the farm to farm, and tried, you know, register cows and pigs, and they used to put marks on them. So the peasant couldn't pi -- kill those pigs, they had to give them as a conthing -- condint -- give them to Germans, It was for German army. They wanted to have ready -- registration, and whoever killed the pig was severely punished. So they hated these people because they wanted -- they raised those pigs. And he -- so they deci -- they came, and they really didn't want to have Polish group, a Polish settlement over there. So they killed some of the civilian workers, and I think some nuns, and they set fire in the building, and the German saw the fire --

Q: In your building, in your --

A: Some of the buildings, you know.

Q: Nearby where you lived?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: The buildings that belongs to. And they came from room to room, I remember, I -- I -- I hide under the bed, be -- some -- some kids run away, you know, and the German ca -- saw the fire -- actually it was Gestapo, I think, and they came, and it -- this band run away, but she -- Sister Superior was told, you better get out of here, because we will get you, so they decided to leave the place. They knew that they are going to -- if not they are going to be killed. They left only one sister to guard, you know, the place, and German supply the cars, you know, the big trucks,

and we simply took everything. Everybody was worrying about his possession, so we took as much as we could. And we moved to Lvov, and later from Lvov we moved to near Warsaw.

Q: W-Were you carrying anything?

A: Yeah, everybody got his belongings, and so I got my little suitcase, and I have couple of -- I used to write diary. So I have my diary, and I have my w-we -- I didn't own anything, really, except this little suitcase which had my name on, so she gave it to me and everybody -- because everybody had to guard his own stuff. And that how we got -- went to Warsaw.

Q: I-Is this the same suitcase --

A: Yes, yes, with picture.

Q: -- that your mother gave you?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yes.

Q: And he -- so we went to Warsaw by -- to Lvov by car and later train, and he -- German in -- and we were disperse in different homes. I was i-in [indecipherable], they have homes in [indecipherable].

Q: Okay.

A: But I remember before I went there Sister Sophia called me and said to me, listen, is a priest over there and you have to go and take Communion and he -- you know. So when he's going to ask you if you are baptized, or you are Jewish, you should tell him -- y-you are Jewish, you should tell him no, and is not a lie. Because then -- i-inside you should say no for you. And that for you, you should s-stay quiet. So it was like look [indecipherable]. So she simply told me, you just have to lie. And is not going to be a big sin, God will understand.

Q: Did the lying ever bother you?

A: No. Oh, I was a perfect liar. I could lie, too. I could lie and I could steal. Didn't bother me at all.

Q: When did you steal, you haven't told us about that?

A: It was in Warsaw, we were very hungry, so we used to go to market, and we used to distract the -- you know, the -- the -- the stable keeper and we used to steal tomato, onion, stuff like that. Like crazy. I didn't need anything else. The only thing that I steal was food. We were hungry.

Q: After the priest, what -- what happened when you did meet the priest?

A: He didn't ask me. He never asked me, he never bother. He didn't -- probably he didn't suspect, you know, whatever. I didn't have this problem, but she told me to lie. She said is not a lie because now I'm -- not for you, not for you.

Q: Be-Before we move on a little bit more to Warsaw, there -- there was a Father, and I'm not sure if it was in Wamina or Lvov, Franz? Father Franz?

A: Caesar?

Q: C -- yes.

A: Oh no, that was much later.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: He didn't know anything about us.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: We met him when we -- after Warsaw uprising.

Q: Okay, well then let's -- let's just touch on --

A: Yes.

Q: -- that one when we get there. So when you arrive in Warsaw, where -- where are all the orphans and the nuns located?

A: Well they -- we were dispersed to different houses, and I was on the outskirts, in the orphanage outside of Warsaw. And -- but later on e -- Sister Budnofska made his point that he wanted all her children with her. So she -- and the first the Jewish children, she wanted them -- you know, to guard them. And she took me i-in -- they got the place in section of the ghetto. A house which was -- used to be a ghetto hou -- belonged to ghetto. So we had to -- she got everybody back, we had to clean this building. We got few floors on this house because -- and we have to clean the building completely, and that was a hard thing to do because it was so many papers and photographs on the floor. When they took these people away, you know, those papers were -- and later on somebody plundered the house. They didn't have use for photographs and papers and documents. And I remember cleaning that, and we used to read those documents, and it was very hard for me, at least. In -- and he -- so we settled there til Warsaw uprising. And more childr -- Jewish children came on that time. On that time she -- we had the yon -- Janka Markofska, Janka Davidovich, and s -- a few more children, and [indecipherable]

Q: But what was it like being in the ghetto, was -- was it basically empty, that area of the city?

A: It was empty already, totally empty. Some building were occupied by Poles which moved in, because Warsaw was very crowded, and it was -- there were building available, so they moved in. But basically it was empty. And they moved the wall of the ghetto, so exactly in, behind this building it was the wall, which street was divided by the wall, and it was backyard of the building, became backyard. So it was a wall of the ghetto. I don't know if ghetto was still, but it was -- there was still some activities over there, sho -- the shooting, and German were looking for people that were hiding, you know, and things like that.

Q: So it -- it was right next to the ghetto, it was a --

A: Next to the -- it -- it used to be once ghetto, and they move, you know, but when ghetto became smaller, they used to move --

Q: The walls.

A: -- the walls, yes.

Q: And what did you -- how long did you stay there, and what -- what was a normal day like there? I mean, what -- what was going on there?

A: Well, it was the same. It -- we learn a bit more, it was a school because we didn't have a guard then and -- and we have to wash the clothes and we had to clean and we had to peel potatoes. And also -- what we did also, the n -- it -- nuns found they -- they were -- were shorted of money, so we used to make the buttons. You know, the buttons that you make out of thread? They were some steel rings, and you just thread those buttons, so we used to make those buttons and they s-sewed the buttons. Used to paint the pictures and they sold the pictures. The older children used to go and clean in Polish' people houses, so we used to have jobs like that. I was never sent to clean other people house.

Q: Was Sister Sophia still waking you up sometimes and giving you food at this point?

A: No, no, no, she didn't, no. She didn't. It was the -- I was older a little bit, and more, you know, familiar with everything. I was the part of the establishment already. I was a oldtimer.

Q: And how long did you stay there?

A: We stayed in Warsaw til the Warsaw uprising. And he -- they organize hospital [indecipherable] you and we stay like a month during the uprising.

Q: Oh, the nuns organized the hospital?

A: Yes, inclu --

Q: In -- in the -- in the [indecipherable]

A: Apparently they had something to do with underground -- Polish un -- underground activity. So they probably knew something. There were some preparation for uprising. You really were much more free to walk, when I was in Warsaw. For instance, we used to go to clinic. I suddenly si -- I lost my vision. It was a period of time that I couldn't see anything, I hardly could see. So Sister Sophia took me to eye clinic. They discover that I have a shortage of vitamin A, and I have night -- I have the night blindne -- blindness, I couldn't see anything. So they gave me a little bit more vitamins and then my teeth were terrible, so I used to go to dentist, it was on [indecipherable] it was in different part. They -- I -- she used to take me around, it was no real problem, and I really didn't have any problems, I was kind of lucky, I -- we used to ride the tram, because everywhere you -- you know, you need to get -- to reach the -- Warsaw is a large city. And the activities are very limited, mostly work -- work, you work and work.

Q: But you ha --

A: We used to embroid, but I was not good in that, couldn't do it.

Q: Did you have a uniform, or something that sort of clearly identified you as a [indecipherable]

A: No, we have rags.

Q: Rags?

A: It means that if -- our clothes are terrible, in the pieces. And I did not have the dress which was mine. If I needed the clean dress, I used to go to -- I don't remember the name of the sister, and sh -- once a week, after when we washed, we used -- she [indecipherable] us something, and we try it, it's too short, it's too long, it's too short, somebody else got this one, I got another one. And we have only uniform, which we used wear over, but again, you know, when somebody -- it was the bishop that used to visit, so you have to be dressed. So we had those uniforms, you can

see on photographs, which we'll wear over, and again you try, it is too long, or is too big, and whatever fits you is yours for -- for an hour of day, or whatever.

Q: But when you were --

A: I didn't have anything which was my own. I didn't have shoes. The coat -- for instance, if I used to go out, I got a coat. But next day somebody else needs to wear this coat. We didn't have anything. We used to mend, and sew, you know, holes, and in addition we were extremely dirty. You know, lice, ha -- everybody has the lice. In the head, on the body. It was just horrible.

Q: H-How old were you at this point?

A: I -- ni -- 13.

Q: So do you have a chance to bathe, or --

A: No, we didn't have any bathroom, we just wash. You just wash, and if you have too many lice, we used iron them. You know, they were in the seams. The only thing that you could use iron, or you c -- you could use the neft on your hair for a night.

Q: Neft?

A: It's horrible, you know what is that? That what you make benzene with -- kerosene, kerosene. And some -- I didn't have any reaction, but some kids used to have horrible reaction from kerosene, it's poison. Poisoned lice and poisoned skin as well. It was something that we lived every day with.

End of Tape Four

### Beginning Tape Five

Q: I wonder if you could just talk a bit about Jewish identity and that situation when you were in hiding.

A: Well, I didn't consider myself Jew, and I would not admit to anyone that I was a Jew. I remember when I was -- I went to Lvov first time, and the nuns talked to me in her house. She told me, even if they will kill you, you cannot -- if they catch you, you cannot admit you are a Jew, because that is a death sentence for us and for yourself. If they want to -- they want to kill you, they should kill you as a non-Jew, and you cannot admit that to anyone. And remember that if you admit that, it will be death sentence for whoever is helping you, and for you. So I -- it was just -- I don't know if I remember even that, but I became non-Jew. And I wouldn't admit to anyone, ever, who I am. And after -- worrying haunted me for a long time. This not being -- no problems. I have no Jewish problem, I am not a Jew. I remember that I didn't have this identity. I knew I am a Jew, but I didn't have this implanted identity or religious background, or -- or national background when I was a little child. I came from very assimilated house. So that was the -- I didn't have problem who I am, I was Polish. I was not Catholic, but I was Polish. And that's how I felt.

Q: Did it make you anxious that s-some people did know you were Jewish, for instance, the nuns?

A: No. I just didn't want to have -- I didn't want to -- I didn't want to think about it. I -- I identify myself as a non-Jew. And that was it. I lie to myself.

Q: And then it took time to stop lying?

A: Oh yes. It took quite a long time. It was a fear involved when I stopped lying. I felt uptight. Like you change your skin color, you know?

Q: Tell us what happened during the Warsaw uprising.

A: Well, we were mostly hiding in the basement, praying 24 hours novena, you know, we change and pray to -- I don't remember what saint it was. I think that's Thaddeusz, Thad, so whatever. He is supposed to be saint of whatever is save you. And he -- we were mostly waiting things to stop. There was nothing to do. You couldn't go upstairs because we were bombed constantly. So, there were no -- it was no glass in the windows any more. The bomb came so close that some of the walls fell off. So the only safe place was this basement. So we were mostly downstairs in basement with nothing to eat. It was horrible. I remember somebody found the sack of the beans, dry beans. We used to keep those beans in the mouth that it soak completely, and it was so delicious, raw. Com -- and he -- it was really end -- that wi -- was this hospital and I was not allowed to show my face. So some of the girls used to go there to help, I was not allowed to show my face, so I didn't, and I was afraid. Finally, the German capture the section that we were in, it's Volnush, Ritza Volunush, it was corner of Volnushti and Jelazinna, where this house was located. And the German came in, they chase everybody from the house, from the bi -- from the building. And he -- the way of walking through the street, they used to make holes from building to building and walk on the first floors through the apartments to the end of the block, because the very tight building in European. But they chase everybody. Whoever wanted to escape, escapes through the holes and to the canal, and from the -- through the canal, but nun didn't -- they didn't feel they need to escape, it was nowhere to escape. So the home army people escaped, but they -- we stayed. And they took us to the street. They immediately pour gasoline in the building and set building on fire. So here we are on the street, and all the buildings are on fire. It was -- and they f -- when they got everybody from the buildings, old people, and then people with children, and -- we walk -- they walk us through those burning streets, it was -- I still

have that in front of my eyes, just burning streets, and terrible smoke. They walk us to the railroad station which was -- I don't remember, it wasn't a main railroad station because in the city that was gone. Some side railroad station. And then we st -- and when we walk -- and Germans on both sides, you know, and he -- with the dogs and he -- and the machine guns, and he -- on some of the building which were still burning, we could see the people with the -- funny, you know the -- when you have the handkerchief and you tie four corners and you make a cup, they have those cups with handkerchief with tied four corners. And they were taking bodies from the burning buildings. So they have those flat cars full of bodies, black, black, burned bodies. And he -- so that was on the way when you walk. And we finally went to railroad station, and was group of Gypsies the German found somewhere. They were guarded, and they gave us soup. It -- it was made from this horse. And doesn't matter how hungry I was, I couldn't eat this meat, it was sweet, and I just couldn't eat that meat. And they pack us on train, which was like -- it was not regular train, it was these freight wagons, parked one next to another, we climbed there, they took us to the railroad station, they set camp in [indecipherable]. And he -- they -- some of the -- they kept us for awhile, and finally the -- the Sister Superior, the -- Tekla, which spoke perfect German -- she spoke non-accented German because she was raised by her family in Berlin. Her father, or whoever it was, she told me, worked for Polish embassy in Berlin and she was raised in Berlin and she went to school in Germany, so her German was totally untouched by accent. She managed to work our release. And we walk later on by foot to -- no, we walked, I think, 10 kilometers or more to the nearby forest. It was -- nuns used to have their retreat and school, and we stayed there to the end of the war. And she -- they said, you know, in -- one of the classroom they gave us, and we slept on the floor, all next to another.

Q: So was it -- how did Mother Superior Tekla, how was she able to get you released from the Germans?

A: Well, apparently she had power on persu -- of persuasion, and they were extremely polite to her when she opened her mouth in -- you know, the -- she was a nun, and she was not very pretty nun, very stern, you know, type of person. And she was -- she had this power of persuasion. So she decided she has children, orphans, Polish orphans and who happen to be in Warsaw, and we want to go to our retreat, and you have to let us go. Because what they are going to do with children, you are going to send them to work camp. And she managed to arrange that, and -- and that was when we met this Father Caesar, he also escape from Warsaw and he supposed to go to the man monastery, which was somewhere else, but she changed his direction and he went with us to Kostovitz. And we stay in Kostovitz from -- it was in '44 yes, til end of the war, which was actually when German army passed by, because -- German -- Russian army -- because you know, during the uprising, the army was on opposite side of Vistula, and they didn't want to take any action because it was different group fighting, that was London group fighting in Warsaw.

Q: Which army was on the other side of the Vistula?

A: Russian army, with the Polish army, which was fighting with Russian army. And they simply waited for Warsaw to bleed to death. And after uprising actually, they move -- you know, they have invasion, they moved with new invasion and they pushed the Germans away. So it took til January, '45.

Q: And where exactly is --

A: Kostovitz?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Very close. It's like 20 kilometer past Warsaw. Very close to Warsaw.

Q: Was it a -- a full town, or just --

A: No, it was a village, and it was the big farm which belong to -- to the Polish prince over there, the noble [indecipherable] it was -- it -- the big farm, and nearby was a little village which was -- name was Kostovitz, I don't know how -- and nuns used to run school and orphanage in Kostovitz. So they have this school building which they converted to the orphanage for other orphans which escaped from Warsaw. So they -- and they were -- it was more orphanages in Warsaw and they all came to Kostovitz. It means that were the same nun organization.

Q: And when you got there, you say they gave your group a -- a room.

A: Every group got couple of school rooms, which we used to convert to the -- to our living space during -- at night, and we used to take all those -- we didn't have mattresses, so it was a straw mattress. So you put the straw on the floor, and some kind of cover over it. And during the day we used to move this straw against the wall and our tables, you know, school tables back in order so we could have the class. And at night we used to move everything back and have a straw. And was funny, I remember we moved the straw, it was plenty of fleas jumping up. So, in addition to our lice, we used to have fleas as well. We felt like dogs.

Q: Where would you go to the bathroom?

A: It was a clou -- i-it was -- they had the bathrooms, main bathrooms which we went to. I remember -- I don't remember it was outside or inside. I think it was inside they used to have those bathrooms wash space. They had electricity over there. It was electricity and we had the regular water, running water.

Q: Now you were 13, are you maybe going on to 14?

A: Yes, I was born in May, so it -- I was 13 and a half.

Q: Did any of the other girls, or did you at the point begin menstruating?

A: Oh yes, we --

Q: And did you know what that was?

A: Yes. Well, it was the trouble, because we really were not prepared, and we didn't talk about it. So I remember that when it happen, I went to Sister Sophia and she gave me fact of life. That was -- I -- that was very embarrassing for me, but she talk, and she was very obvious and she did it very well, so -- apparently she did that with all her girls.

Q: An-And was it difficult to -- to just take care of yourself, to have a -- a way to -- to --

A: No.

Q: -- menstruate and --

A: No, we had the pads.

Q: -- use napkins? Okay.

A: Napkins, and we had to wash them. It was not like a disposable. So it was kind of -- everybody did it very discreetly, so --

Q: So you didn't ask any of the other girls --

A: No, no.

Q: -- you went right to Sister Sophia?

A: No, no, no, no. We didn't talk about it, it was a sin, deadly sin talk about sex, and that kind of stuff.

Q: And at this point is your hair still long?

A: No, no. My hair were cut when I have those terrible boils and lice. I have so much boils that -- and they decide to cut my hair because they couldn't comb -- take away the lice. So I had already shorter hair. But I was still growing it, and I had some pony tails. I have to look at the pictures, I should have -- no, I have a shorter hair.

Q: And wh-what can you tell us more about Father Caesar?

A: Oh, he was -- it was kind of accident, he s -- he -- he glue to me after war, really. He knew me during the -- from Kostovitz. I'm not sure if he knew who I was. He wanted to be some kind of mentor, you know. And he was kind of funny, we all laugh at him. He used to take a lot of photographs and he was trying to play with us. It was kind of embarrassing. And nuns didn't like us to [indecipherable] very much with him. But he was a decent person, very s -- helpful, and he became also teacher, he used to teach us Latin and til today I don't know anything. And he -- so he organized the school, really, with another priest which was our chaplain. And he was actually -- he was not -- he was priest, but he was the francis -- from Franciscan convents. He was a monk, that what he was. And after war, when he really learn who I was, and he came west to visit me [indecipherable] was my father, he tried to keep contact, which for me was very uncomforta -- I don't know why, I just didn't want that any more. But he -- he was not one that I -- he help me out, he help anyone. I don't know, I don't know if he really was any help for Jews, or for any -- anywa -- body. And he -- later on after war he tried to make [indecipherable] and he used to -- he -- he was very resourceful. He helped to rebuild the monastery -- Franciscan monastery in Warsaw. And he used to also collect money, you know, donations, and stuff like that, so he was very visible man. And he then visit me in Israel once, it was funny because on that time, it was before six year war, so Jordan and Jerusalem was divided. And suddenly I am getting phone call fro -- in my office from this secret agent in Israel. And he ask me, listen, it is somebody in Jordan asking for you on Mandelbaumgate, and he want to come to Israel [indecipherable], he's with group of Pilgrims. And he -- who is this man? And he is trying to spell his name, and I couldn't figure out what this man is talking about. So before I left the phone it was -- the agent was already in my office, waiting. And I said, "I don't know what you are

talking about.” And he said, “What kind of contact do you have with people in Jordan?” So the agent was in my office, and he again ask me, and I said, “Can you write it down?” When he wrote it down, I saw Barron, that is th -- and I said, “Oh yes, I know him.” And of course I have to say, well I knew him during the war, when I was a child in convent and he’s priest, and he -- you shouldn’t worry, he’s not a spy, he’s not the Arabic agent. He is so and so and so. So I invited him to Tel Aviv, he came, he stayed with us few days and then he left back. And he was very resourceful because it was communistic Poland. Tho -- he -- he went to Rome. In Rome, he got the papal passport, separate. Well, he got Israeli and Jordanian visa. So when he was back in Poland, his passport was totally clear.

Q: How long are you in this town?

A: Which one? In Kostovitz?

Q: Kostovitz.

A: Oh, I -- we were til probably spring, early spring of '45. And he -- there were already some parents [indecipherable] picking up Jewish children, and nobody picked me up. And finally nuns decided they need to settle somewhere, you cannot live in the classroom, so e -- they got the building, a house from authorities, which was in another town. It was Lubon Kwiofsky. We got the house, which was once mansion of one of Polish noble, which was empty, and we moved there with all the belongings and -- and there where my father found me, it was May, May third. Apparently he -- he was moving with the army, Polish army, from eastern Poland, and he was -- he knew the nuns, and the nuns told him where I was. He also lost track of me because we were moving so much, but they told him a possibility that I might be in Lubon, and he suddenly, one day he just appear. And -- and his clotheses were torn, he took his army uniform off because actually he left the army. He didn’t continue in the corps with the army. So -- and he looked like

a bum. He was unshave. Terrible. I didn't -- never seen my father looking like a bum, dirty. And nuns, of course, help him [indecipherable] and he -- I remember they -- I was doing something, so su -- Sister Sophia as -- one the girl said that I have to go to Mother Superior, so I went in, she took me and it's -- that was my father. And again, I didn't feel anything. And he said, well -- she ask him to rest for a few days, and then we took off. He just hija -- you know, hiking -- hijacking, yes?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In some Russian truck because it was no transportation whatsoever.

Q: Hitchhiking.

A: Hitchhiking, hitchhiking, yes. The Russian truck took us to [indecipherable] and then it was the train, which went to another town. It was still tremendous army movement. And we ended up in Warsaw, it was nine of May, which was my father's birthday, and then that was the end of the war. That was the same day. So he managed to get to -- again to army train to medical corps, and we went to Kraków. And in Kraków my father had a friend, same architect Felibook, Jan Felibook. We stayed in his house for a few days, and then he took me to Wanska to his friend priest, and he left me in Wanska with him til he reorganized something. And my grandmother was still on the eastern Poland, she was waiting for transport from Russia.

Q: Paternal grandmother?

A: Paternal grandmother, yes, because she was hidden by his patient, this woman was his patient. And we end up in Sacz again. My grandparent -- grandmother brother used to have apartment building and one apartment was -- before war in Sacz, and one apartment was vacant, so our family just moved to this apartment. And he -- Aneila -- Aneila was the maid that saved my cousin. She moved with us, with my cousin. And he -- we waited for whoever survived to

appear. And then my aunt came from Romania few months later. And I went to school. It was kind of --

Q: I-In your town, what had happened to your house? I mean, did your father consider --

A: Moving back? No, he didn't want to go back to Wamina. This house was occupied during the war by Germans, and later on Polish authority -- the city or town, village offices were set in this house, and my father just left it the way it was. He didn't want to deal with this problem. He definitely -- they wanted him, it was even delegation of people that he would move back, but he didn't want to do that. He want to stay away from the region. And so when war ended, really, we moved to siles -- lower Silesia, which was German territory once. [indecipherable]. And -- but that where we settle.

Q: Di-Did your father feel that people in that town hadn't supported him and that's why he didn't want to go back?

A: I don't know. He simply didn't want to go back. He felt that too many people die in this town, and he said, I don't want to live in graveyard, in graveyard, that how he put [inaudible]

Q: When your father came back tho -- to pick, you up from the orphanage, and again you said you didn't say very much, but he was there for two days and do you remember anything from that time? Conversation --

A: Well, I ask him, he said, well let -- let's not talk about it now. So he told me about my mother when she survive, and -- and [indecipherable] family, this dentist family, they were hidden by one of his patient in the village. They said -- they were peasants and they had the barn, so they close one -- they build one wall inside the barn, and these people live -- the family, which was grandmother, son, wife and husband, they live in this narrow, like two and a half feet space. And in -- evening used to throw from the top, you know, from the -- used to throw food and pick up

the -- you know, bucket with the -- sometimes two days they [indecipherable] hadn't eaten the pears who was nearby. But they survive. Was interesting story because my cousin told me how they quarreled, for anything, you know, they fight. Being stuck in this little space.

Q: How exactly did your father survive, it sounds like he's with the army, and -- as a medical corps, but not all the time.

A: No, he -- it was in -- very interesting. I don't have this paper any more because I was so angry that I got rid of that. I should have kept that. He was immunize villages in one -- this small village. The name of wi-willage -- village was Washinitz, I learn it aft -- from my cousin after the war. And he -- the way Germans acted, they kept-- they kept the doctors over there, and when epidemic was over they used to kill these doctors. And they got the new one. So my father was in one of the group. And somebody run and said, well Gestapo is in that town. So he knew that when the Gestapo came to the town they are going to liquidate it. So he run. He run to the Ukrainian church. It was Ukrainian church, the -- not Roman Catholic, but Orthodox church. And he hides in this church. And the pope, Ukrainian priest came over and saw him. So he said, please save me, I am a doctor in the village. And Gestapo came and -- so he opened the -- the -- one of the block in the floor, said, go down. But my fa -- it was totally pitch black and my father said, later on when they came i -- it was a woman sitting in -- in this cave. Apparently she was a doctor from previous time. So he saved my father, and this woman, young doctor, it was another seven months when army came back. And my father said -- he was a funny man, he used to drink a lot. So my father said, we used to get drunk, totally drunk every evening. Totally drunk, and he had the daughter and son-in-law who was extremely unhappy about the situation. And also he had very sick wife. So my father treated this wife. She was very sick and he -- he -- that how he survive. And he like the old man. After war, he die. The ji -- Russian wanted to immediately

prosecute him, but my father testify, so that was -- they left him alone, but he was a old man, and he die, his wife die. But when we [indecipherable] already [indecipherable] in Yagura, one day my father told me that his son-in-law and his daughter came in, and they very Ukrainian. And his son-in-law was immediately arrested, and he was sentenced, I don't know for what. So my dad again went and testified that he saved, blah, blah, blah, but actually the old man did it. And he s - - his son-in-law was lawyer, or some kind of judge once. It was Ukrainian family.

Q: What -- what was written on the paper that you threw away?

A: What happened, my father was not alive any more, and hi-his wife, some co -- somebody came from [indecipherable] Yagura and this Mr. Yanofich or Yanofsky told him that he saved my father, and they started that I should do something about it. You should do something about it. So I wrote to Yad Vashem -- and there was another lawyer in Israel who was nagging me about that, and they knew very little about it. I knew very little as well. So I wrote to Yad Vashem, and I wrote them what I heard from my father, that this man Rostoski, saved my father, and his family saved him. And I didn't realize that name of this man, not his father-in-law, came, he got the awa -- paper from Yad Vashem. But I just decided not to do anything about it, I just want -- few years ago he wrote me a letter, the old man, very angry letter, that he supposed to get some kind of money from a claim [indecipherable] whatever, because everybody who got this award gets money. And I was kind of shocked. So I wrote him a letter that it's true that I testify, but actually I testify for your father-in-law, not for you. Cause I heard from my father that not you, but your father-in-law saved him. [indecipherable] and he was a pope. So he wrote me a long story, how it happen, how my father, you know, came to this place, and what happen that he run without breath and blah, blah, blah, and he used to pick up the -- you know, his dirt and -- and see that he has a child, and he had to -- afraid the German, somebody might discover it. I'm

sure he was afraid. It was very brave. But it was a long, long story, full of anger. And also he was angry about this woman doctor, that she never really k-kept contact, and she's well off, and she said, when your father left Poland the German pay him a big reparation and it shoul -- part of the money belongs to us. You know, it was kind of -- and I was so angry that I didn't responded at all. I did show it to someone and I decided, let's get rid of that. It's not a document, it's just angry letter. But the story was that his -- this drunk man really save him.

Q: I -- I want to turn to the case that you had with you all the time, which I'm presuming from the story that you'd never opened it.

A: No, I couldn't. It was -- it has the lock, a very strong lock, I didn't have any key. And I simply couldn't open it. I could s -- so this case, when I was in Wamina, was in with nuns, you know, with the -- in the storage place, and later on they couldn't keep that because everybody was moving. So I kept that, and it was dirty. And it has the cover, and I used to keep my books and everything between the cover, in between the space so you can't [indecipherable] out. So when I left, the nuns gave my father -- it was something else that my mother sent to them, that they gave her back some kind of tablecloth, part of that they sell. My mother used to have beautiful, beautiful hand embroidered tablecloth, and some from Italy, and so -- whatever they sold, they sold, but rest they gave to my dad. And of course I have this case, and when we were at home, he just pry open the lock. So lock was not good any more because it was opened. But I still kept that, you know, this case. And I kept the photographs inside, because nobody was interested in photographs, it was something. But document and policy and all that stuff my, father used.

Q: When you opened it, what -- what -- what did you find, and -- and what was that like? Were you with your father when he opened that?

A: Oh yes, he open it, I was curious --

Q: Oh, okay, yes.

A: -- what was inside. They were all the papers, which like marriage certi -- my father's diploma, medical diploma, which is in New York, I donated it to museum in New York, and it was in display for awhile. And my father documents, you know, that he work, he has a [indecipherable] in Vienna, and then he has -- you know, all the papers, including the policy that he used to get money for that, but it was in Polish zlotys, it was worthless, totally. That was Italian policy, life policy of what kind of insurance policy. And my birth certificate is -- my mother and father marriage license -- marriage certificate. And he -- some documents. My mother, for instance, she belonged to hiking organization, so it was the hiking, you know, club. And all the documents, he -- probably some money. I think some gold dollars, which my father took, of course. Was not mine. And he -- everything what she considered of value.

Q: Including the photographs.

A: Including photographs.

Q: Why do you think she put the photographs in there?

A: I don't know. I don't know why sh-she took them from home. They were in the little box, my daughter -- well, also the -- it was the leather box, which was from chocolate, I don't know why she kept that. My mu -- my daughter has it. She wanted it, so I gave it to her. And she put some kind of little photographs in this box. Why she took that, I have no idea.

Q: There are a lot of photographs.

A: Yes.

Q: There were 270?

A: I don't know, I never counted them.

Q: I think that's right.

A: And they were not all because my -- well, my ite -- aunt came in, she took some which were dear to her, for -- from her wedding, that I have a copy here. And then my cousin, my little cu -- Zula, she wanted all for the photographs where her par -- her parents were on. She wanted them, so she took them. And some probably were lost on the way, because they were loose, completely.

Q: I think we should look at some of the photographs.

A: Okay.

Q: Th-This is going to be -- okay, Lidia, what are we looking at here?

A: That is the view of Wanska Nadunietsin, which was town what I -- my parents and myself lived before war. That's a view of the church.

Q: And who is this here?

A: That is my paternal grandfather, Abraham Schwartzman from Pinsk.

Q: And about what date was this would you think?

A: I think it was about 1932 or '33.

Q: So just -- when we start again, Lidia, just say this is a correction and just do -- just say what it is.

A: Okay.

Q: Lidia, this is who, this one?

A: This is a correction, yes, that was my maternal grand -- grandfather, my mother father, in Pinsk, it's about 1932 -- '34, something like that. Abraham Schwartzman.

Q: And who is this here?

A: That was my maternal grandmother, Basha Kagan Schwartzman, and the picture was taken in 1935. She was in -- lived in Pinsk.

Q: Go ahead.

A: She was killed in Pinsk together with her daughter Berka and her husband, and her -- and my cousin, Ola Vineberger. And he -- she wanted to save Ola, so she a -- si -- told to German that if they save Ola she is going to tell them where she buried her silver. So sh -- they promise her that they are going to save her, and they took Ola to show them silver, where it's buried. When they found it, they shot her exactly where they found the silver. The story was told to me by one of the people from Pinsk.

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: It is a picture from my aunt wedding, an -- Aunt Nina to her husband f -- Fred Rubel. And it happen 1938. The entire family was there, except of course, children. Myself, I was too young and my cousin Zula was not there. It was my grandmother and my grandfather and my mother and father and the two sisters, Ripka Treppor, and her husband Schlomo Treppor and their daughter Irena Treppor. And he -- my f -- mal -- grandmother sister, and her brother and rest of the family, some cousins and relatives, which I really don't know and recognize any more. The -- most of these people were killed during the war, including my fra -- father's -- my father's sisters, and he -- and cousins. And if -- and my grandmother survive, and my father, and who was that? And her sister, maybe four or five people on this picture survi -- survived. That is picture from 1946, after war. And that is our -- whatever was left from our immediate family. My grandmother, my Aunt Nina, Dad, myself and my cousin Zula.

Q: Okay.

A: That was in about 1945, that was myself and -- in Wanska, with my Uncle Lawla, was the brother of my mom, and he studied medicine in Czechoslovakia. He survived the war, and -- but he went ba -- to Russia and he stay in Russia til he die, I think in 1980.

Q: And how old do you think you are here?

A: Here, I was five, and he was about 20? He wa --

Q: Wh-What about this shot?

A: Oh, that's myself and my father in 1945 -- 1935, in my room.

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: Well, I have so many photographs because sometimes on -- about this time my father bought Leica, and he started to shoot a lot of pictures, and that why he will have so many pictures in family. They were much more, but that what survived. On this picture, it is my friend, Yerzhika Pelovich who lives one floor below us, and myself, and I think -- his father was a policeman, and I think that was his motorcycle. I'm not sure about that, but we always play together, Yershik and myself.

Q: And this picture?

A: This picture is from the beach in Wanska near Dunietz, and that's my mother and myself and my cousin Ola.

Q: And what year would this have been, perhaps?

A: I was right here, you know, hiding my face.

Q: And this shot here?

A: Yes, that was my mother with her friend, Marisha Felibook, the daughter of Mrs. Felibook. My father used to -- bought pra -- medical practice from her -- from her father when he retired. And the family became very friendly for a long time.

Q: And who's this group?

A: Ah, this group were my father friends, and I think that was one of the first airplane that [indecipherable] own, and they were all flying with airplane. But it was gathering of my father and company, friends. My father is on the picture on the very back.

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: That is again on the same beach with my grandmother Basha, and my mother's sister Berta and myself. And my mother is on the side. Probably summer of '35 or '36.

Q: And who's this group?

A: Yeah, here is -- I was probably six year old, and my friend Yerzhika Pelovich and his sister Sacha, and my cousin Ola, skiing. It was behind our house. We had a great skiing areas in Wanska. It was mountainside and you could walk hours and ski down 10 minutes.

Q: What about this picture?

A: That is on the terrace of our new house that my father completed just before war. And he -- that's my mother, and he -- my grandmother Basha and myself.

Q: And this picture?

A: Oh, that is of our new house from the garden side, just taken before war. And my father stan -  
- started to plant the apple orchard on the back, so you can see those little apple trees.

Q: And this was very contemporary for the times?

A: Oh yes, very much. Very much, yes. And was finished in stucco, it had flat roof, green flat roof of the [indecipherable] and th -- plenty of terraces. It was terrace over the garage, and si -- terrace on the back.

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: That is my mother, and myself, and my dog Jolie. It was a mutt which my mother bought from the Gypsies.

Q: Go ahead.

A: It was the last picture of -- of my mother, it is from Turka. It's about 1941, it was taken during the war when we were in Turka.

Q: And here?

A: And this one is my picture, also in Turka, I was about 11 on this picture.

Q: And you had your braids.

A: I had my braids, yes. They were thick. [indecipherable]

Q: Okay, this picture?

A: Ah, now? That's my father in Turka. It was about 1941 in the hospital, next to the x-ray machine.

Q: And who's this?

A: That is myself in 1942 in the convent in Wamina. Probably it was during the holidays because we're -- we were dressed up. We used to make those shoes. They were from fabric and from rope, and I made them. If not, I had nothing to wear.

Q: Okay.

A: That is our group, the older children group with Sister Sophia. And si -- I am on the right side and next to me, a bit higher, is another Jewish girl, her name was Helena Zwiñnietska. And se -- rest of the girls are just gi -- girls from our group, group age. And that's probably during holidays because we are again dressed up.

Q: Okay, this group?

A: That is a group of children in Wamina. The occasion was the visit of Mother Superior brother and his family. And I am standing behind Sister Sophia, and because she mentioned that I have very Semitic face, I scratch my face, just not to show -- if somebody looked at the picture on that time, then it's not that I have a Jewish face.

Q: Ju-Just to clarify, you saw the photograph, and then you scratched [indecipherable]

A: She gave me -- she gave me photograph.

Q: Okay.

A: She -- because the man who -- who was hiding on that time, he used to make a lot -- he was photographer and he used to make a lot of photographs. And she warned me, don't be photograph because on photograph you look very Semitic. And she gave me this photograph and she was angry, so she said, look, you -- how Jewish you look. But se -- so I, when I got this photograph, scratched my face.

Q: And what house is this?

A: That is a house which was given temporary to the nuns in Lubon [indecipherable] after -- after war was finished. We moved from Kostovitz to this place. And that was the place where my father found me. So actually, it was the last place I was in with nuns. Probably it was one of the nun birthday, or Sister Sophia birthday, cause we celebrate everyb -- sister birthdays with a dance and songs.

Q: When is this picture taken?

A: That picture was taken about 1948, in Jelenia Gora on the swimming pool. I was probably a graduate high school, and there was ready to go to college, to university. And it was last summer that we had together with friend of mine on the swimming pool.

Q: And you got your long hair back.

A: I -- yes, not -- it's -- I got my -- only one.

End of Tape Five

Conclusion of Interview